

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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No. 266.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 26, 1904.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND BLACK JACK? OR, TRACKING THE NEGRO CROOKS.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE



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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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No. 262.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 29, 1904.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS' MOTT STREET MYSTERY;

OR,

The Case of Mrs. Ching Chow.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MATTER OF THE MYSTERIOUS BOX.

For once the Bradys had no case of any kind on hand, nor had they had any for more than two weeks.

Everything in the way of writing up notebooks and journals was also completed, and the famous detectives actually found themselves with a little spare time on their hands, something which very seldom occurred.

Old King Brady was sitting in his little office on Park Row on the day referred to when, at a quarter past ten o'clock, the telephone bell suddenly started its call.

The old detective found at the other end of the wire a call for business, which promised mystery, if nothing else.

He had just hung up the receiver when Young King Brady, or Harry, as he is really named, came into the room.

"Well, well! What is this?" he exclaimed. "You are jumping about as though you had a lot of business on hand."

"It's business, all right, Harry," was the answer.

"Glad it has come at last. Don't like this being hung up high and dry, not for a cent. What has struck us, and how did it come?"

"Came over the wire in the shape of a telephone call from the firm of Brander & Co., importers of Chinese and Japanese goods."

"Never heard of them. Where are they located?"

"Beaver street, near Broad. They are an old and reliable firm."

"What do they want?"

"Why, this is a new one on us, Harry. Some one has sent them a mysterious box. They think it is an infernal machine, and before sending it away to be opened they want us to see it fully and post ourselves as to the circumstances attending its arrival, so that we can trace out the sender."

"What do they think—anarchists?"

"No; they suspect some Chinese merchant in Mott street. They have quite extensive dealings with Chinatown, they claim."

"When are you going down there?"

"Right now; and I think you had better go with me. It may prove an interesting case."

The Bradys now prepared to depart.

Old King Brady wore the famous long-tailed blue coat, with brass buttons, style of 1840; the big white felt hat, with its broad brim; the old fashioned stand-up collar and stock, etc., all of which have become to a certain extent trademarks with the detective.

Harry, as usual, was quite up-to-date in his personal appearance.

As they walked down Broadway they presented a striking contrast.

Many turned to look at them, for the Bradys are very widely known, probably more so than any detectives in the land.

Brander & Co., at the time of which we write, occupied the whole of one of those old-time brick stores on the south side of Beaver street, between Broad and the alley which runs in behind the New York Produce Exchange.

Time out of mind the firm had been in existence. There was not a seaport in the far East where they were not well and favorably known.

Mr. Brander, whose presence the detectives were at once shown into, was a stiff, prim old gentleman of at least seventy, who wore a ruffled shirt front, and a brown wig, set slightly askew on his head.

"Gentlemen, I am glad to see you," he said, coming out from behind a high desk. "You probably do not remember me, Mr. Brady, but many years ago you managed a defalcation case for my brother-in-law, Mr. Edward Rust."

"I remember you very well now," said Old King Brady, "although at the time I received your telephone call I had forgotten. Now, Mr. Brander, what is it about this mysterious box that you spoke of? If we can help you in any way we shall be glad to do so."

"Just so. I understand that you have done considerable work of late among the Chinese of the New York colony."

"We have, sir."

"A strange people, Mr. Brady. It is really quite useless for Americans to waste time trying to understand them. As for the case in point, I can explain it in very few words. This morning, at a little after nine o'clock, which is always my hour for arriving at the store, a truck backed up here, driven by a white man, who had a young Chinaman on the seat.

"On the truck was an oblong box with several holes bored in the sides, which the two men brought into the store.

"Our porter started to question them as to where the package was from, and what it contained, but they made no answer whatever.

"For this reason the porter was doubtful about receiving the box, and he told the men to wait until he could consult me. Still they made him no answer. In fact, they did not pay any attention whatever to him, but hurried out of the store, leaving the box behind them, jumped on the truck and drove off."

"Rather a mysterious way of delivering a package," said Old King Brady. "What makes you suspect it to be an infernal machine?"

"Why, you can hear the clockwork ticking inside of it," replied Mr. Brander, excitedly. "You see we had the misfortune to offend a certain Chinaman in Mott street, who belongs to the society of the Highbinders. The Chinese are very much more revengeful than is generally supposed, and I have been fearing trouble for some time. But come and take a look at the box. I will tell you more about the matter later on."

Mr. Brander led the way to the rear of the store.

Here upon the floor stood a case about five feet in length and a little over two feet in width.

In each side of it two half-inch auger holes had been bored.

"Looks like a small sized coffin box," remarked Young King Brady.

"It certainly does," replied Mr. Brander. "Listen! Don't you hear?"

The detectives listened intently.

The regular ticking, as of a small clock, could be distinctly heard inside the box.

"This certainly is very peculiar," remarked the old detective. "Do you know, Mr. Brander, I think you have exhibited a good deal of courage to keep that box in your store as long as you have."

"Why, the fact is, I don't know exactly what to do with it," was the reply. "Anyhow, I wanted you to see it, so if it does prove to be an infernal machine we may trace it back to the sender."

"You have absolutely no clew to the sender?"

"None, Mr. Brady."

"The number of the truck license was not observed?"

"Unfortunately, it was not."

"If it had been it would have been an easy matter to trace up the sender of this box."

"It was not. What do you think about it, Mr. Brady? Does the box contain dynamite ready to go off and blow us all out of existence as soon as that clock reaches a certain point, or what do you suppose it all means?"

Old King Brady sat down on the box, crossed his legs, and lit a cigar, after passing his case around.

"That's as much as I fear it," he said.

"You are running a great risk, in my humble opinion," said Mr. Brander, gravely.

"No more than you are in standing alongside of me, my dear sir."

"No; but pressure may do the fatal work."

"I do not believe it. I see the box bears an address; but I judge from the way you put the matter, and the fact of your having sent for me, that you suspect who sent it."

"I admit that such is the case."

"If you will inform me as to your suspicions it will help us."

"That, strange as it may seem, I cannot do."

"You mean will not?"

"Y-yes! Better say 'must not.' I want you to trace this box up to the sender on your own account, without hint or help from me."

"Certainly a very peculiar state of affairs, Mr. Brander!"

"I know it."

"You send for a detective to help you out of a fix, and you are not willing to help him to help yourself."

"I know it; it seems peculiar almost to absurdity, and yet so it has to be."

"Another would not care to undertake such a case, Mr. Brander."

"I appreciate that. If you consent to take it I will not only pay liberally, but shall consider myself under great obligations to you as well."

"All right," said Old King Brady. "I'll try and help you out. Do you insist upon turning this box over to the police?"

"I do not know what else to do with it. I dare not permit it to be opened here."

Old King Brady got off the box, and crouching down on the floor, listened at one of the auger holes for fully two minutes, during all of which time the ticking could be distinctly heard.

"That is no clock," he said, at last. "That is simply a cheap dollar watch. I am positive of it. Mr. Brander, I cannot believe that this is an infernal machine."

"What do you advise?"

"I am not a bit afraid to open it. Give me a hammer and a cold chisel and I'll tell you in two minutes what is inside that box."

"No! No! Not here! I couldn't think of it!"

Mr. Brander was very much disturbed.

"Very well, then. I will tell you what I will do. Just around in Front street there is a vacant store which is shortly to be pulled down. The agent of the property is a friend of mine. I have no doubt he will permit me to open the box there."

"If that is so, it will be the very thing."

"You consent?"

"Certainly."

"Harry," said Old King Brady, "run up to Pine street and see Mr. H. H. Hamman. Tell him the circumstances and get the key of No. — Front street, if he consents to let us use the place, as I have no doubt he will."

"Shall I engage a truck?" inquired Young King Brady.

"How about that, Mr. Brander?" asked the old detective. "You have a truck of your own, perhaps."

"We have, and it had better be used."

"Very well. Harry, lose no time."

Young King Brady departed.

After he had gone Old King Brady tried his best, in his quiet way, to draw Mr. Brander out.

The attempt was quite useless.

The importer seemed greatly troubled.

"Don't question me any further about the matter, Mr. Brady, he said. "I cannot answer. I cannot, indeed."

"Very well; we will drop the subject," said Old King Brady. "You know the Chinese pretty well, I daresay?"

"Far better than you will probably ever know them. I was born in China, and all my early life was spent there."

"Indeed! And you speak Chinese?"

"I speak the old Chinese—the Canton dialect—as some call it. It is altogether a different language from the Chinese spoken at Pekin."

"But it is the language spoken by our New York Chinamen?"

"Very nearly all. There are as many different languages spoken in China as there are in Europe."

"So I have been told. I daresay you find your acquaintance with these people very useful in your business?"

"It is my acquaintance with the Chinese people that has made my business, Mr. Brady. I—but here is your partner back again!"

Harry had returned with permission to use the vacant store, and had the key.

"I'll call the truckman," said Mr. Brander. "He has no idea of my suspicions about this box. I wouldn't mention anything to him. He might refuse to handle it, which would spoil your plan."

The truckman came, and was cautioned to handle the box carefully, as it contained valuable goods.

The box was not heavy, weighing perhaps a hundred pounds.

The truckman let it drop on the truck, in spite of the caution.

Mr. Brander turned deathly white as he saw it go.

"That would seem to settle it," he said afterward, with an air of relief.

"Not if it should contain modern dynamite," replied Old King Brady. "You could throw it on the sidewalk with perfect safety."

"Is that so?"

"Certainly. It takes a cap to explode dynamite. Why, I was reading in the paper the other day of a carload which was in a railroad wreck and did not explode."

"All the same, I should rather be excused from having anything to do with it."

"Very likely. Now, let me have a hammer and cold chisel and we will soon solve this mystery, as far as the box is concerned."

The Bradys hurried around to Front street, reaching the vacant store ahead of the truck.

Harry opened the door and helped the truckman to carry the box inside.

It had been arranged that the detectives should at once return and report to Mr. Brander.

The importer, however, could not restrain his impatience.

After the Bradys had gone he also left the store and went around to Front street.

He did not enter the vacant store, nor, indeed, go within several doors of it, but stood watching anxiously, fully expecting to see the front of the building come tumbling out.

Nothing of the sort occurred.

He waited there for fully fifteen minutes.

At the end of that time the door opened, and Old King Brady came out alone.

Mr. Brander hurried up to him in a state of great agitation.

"Well, sir! Well?" he demanded. "And what is the report? Have you opened the box?"

"We have," replied Old King Brady, gravely. "It does not contain an infernal machine."

"What, then?"

"Come with me, Mr. Brander," said the detective. "The case is surprising enough. Instead of the mystery being explained, it has only grown deeper. It remains for you to say what steps shall be taken next."

"Good heavens, man! Explain yourself!" cried Mr. Brander. "Tell me what is in the box."

"No," replied Old King Brady. "Come with me, Mr. Brander. I prefer that you should see for yourself."

Filled with anxiety, Mr. Brander followed Old King Brady into the vacant store.

CHAPTER II.

THE BRADYS FIND THEMSELVES WITH A STRANGE CASE ON THEIR HANDS.

Old King Brady gave a double knock on the door of the vacant store on Front street, which in a minute was cautiously opened by Harry.

"Well," demanded the old detective, "and how is she now?"

"Just the same," was the reply.

"She!" exclaimed Mr. Brander. "You speak as though there was a woman in the case."

"And indeed there is a woman in the case," replied Old King Brady. "Come and be introduced to her and understand for yourself."

The old detective led the way to the rear of the store. Here the box stood, with the cover removed, but there was no woman anywhere in sight.

Mr. Brander looked around, saying:

"Where is the woman?"

"Look in the box," replied Old King Brady.

"In the box!"

"Yes. Just take a look."

Mr. Brander pressed forward, and looking down into the box, knew then that there was a woman in the case in more senses than one.

In the box, cushioned on a dainty bed of Chinese silk, lay what the Bradys had been at first inclined to take for a Chinese doll.

The figure in the box was no automaton, but a genuine Chinese woman.

Dead she looked to be, but dead she was not, as Old King Brady by the briefest examination discovered.

There was nothing else in the box but the silken bed upon which she lay.

The appearance of this strange find was so peculiar as to require particular description.

Mr. Brander's explanations to the Bradys will cover the ground.

The importer stared down at the apparently slumbering woman with all curiosity, but at the same time there was upon his face an air of relief.

"What do you make of this?" he asked.

"What do you make of it, seems to be the question," replied Old King Brady.

"The woman is not dead?"

"Oh, no! She is not dead."

"Apparently she has been drugged."

"I should say so, from the way she sleeps."

"Strange!"

"Is it not? How do you account for it?"

"I cannot account for it. This is no common Chinese woman, however."

"She looks just like a wax doll," remarked Young King Brady.

"She is a woman of the highest caste," said Mr. Brander.

"How can you tell?" Old King Brady inquired.

"By the feet—by her dress."

The dress of the queer little figure was of the richest description; fine linen, silk beautifully embroidered, gold-threaded lace and such costly fabrics united in her make-up.

Her hair had been fearfully and wonderfully gotten up.

It stood out all around her head like a black embroidered halo, all stuck full of paper flowers, and gold hairpins studded with what Old King Brady at first took to be imitation gems.

Her feet, which could not be seen without slightly pulling up her petticoats, had been compressed to a size so small that, even if the queer little creature had been the doll she seemed, would have been ridiculous.

And such was the Bradys' find in Mr. Brander's mysterious box.

"This woman is either the wife or daughter of some Chinese Mandarin of high rank," declared Mr. Brander.

"The feet tell that?" questioned Old King Brady.

"Only the higher caste Chinese now compress the feet of the female children," was the reply.

"Absurd custom," said Old King Brady.

"Certainly. Nevertheless, when we come to think of it we Americans are about as bad. Look at the modern lady's shoe, with the heel in the middle of the foot!"

"True. I quite agree with you. But you judge also by the glass ornaments about the hair, I take it?"

"Glass! Why, man, those are the real thing!" Mr. Brander exclaimed.

Old King Brady clapped on a pair of eyeglasses.

"Upon my word, you are right," he declared. "It is a real sapphire in this hairpin—worth a hundred dollars, at least."

"Look at the emerald in the hairpin on the other side. That is worth a good many times a hundred," said Mr. Brander.

"Right! I was not sharp to let those escape my notice. But I was so taken aback!"

"You are perfectly excusable."

"I started right out to find you and bring you around here."

"Right again."

"But you don't know quite all. There was a letter found in the box addressed to you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; lying under the woman."

"Oh, you took her out, then?"

"Yes; we lifted her out of the box. At first we thought her dead."

"Give me the letter, Mr. Brady. Stop a minute! I still hear that ticking. What does it mean?"

"Why, it is so easily explained," replied Old King Brady. "Look here!"

A heavy gold chain hung over the neck of the unconscious woman.

At the end was a watch attached and thrust into the modern leather belt which encircled her waist.

"Look at the watch!" said Old King Brady, drawing it out of the belt.

"Cheap!" said Mr. Brander.

"New," added Harry.

"It ticks the loudest I ever heard," added Mr. Brander.

"I think that in the watch lies our clew to this mystery," said Old King Brady, "and I think also I shall take possession of it. You will particularly take notice that it was found on this woman, Mr. Brander."

"Yes, yes!" replied the importer. "I am going to read my letter now."

The letter found in the box was enclosed in an ordinary envelope.

It was addressed to:

"George Brander, Esq., No.— Beaver street, New York City."

In addition to this address in plain English it also had a Chinese address on one side.

Mr. Brander glanced at these characters with all curiosity; but he no longer displayed fear.

Tearing open the envelope he held up the enclosed sheet of paper.

"Don't you wish you could read that, gentlemen?" he remarked.

The letter, which filled the entire sheet, was written in Chinese.

"Can you read those flytracks?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Certainly I can," was the reply. "Just give me a minute."

Mr. Brander stepped to the light with the letter.

"We mustn't forget that we have a living being here in this box," remarked Harry, in a whisper.

"I am not forgetting. She goes to the hospital. Give me a minute still."

Old King Brady was expecting help from Mr. Brander's perusal of the letter.

He got none.

When Mr. Brander turned around again his face was ashen gray, his lips fairly blue, and the hand which held the letter shook.

"This—this matter can go no further," he said. "Mr. Brady, is there any way in which this Chinese woman can be taken off my hands without the matter being made public?"

"Don't know," replied the detective. "You don't pro-

pose to tell us anything of the contents of that letter, I take it."

"I cannot! I dare not!"

"And having read the letter, your only idea is to get the woman off your hands as quick as possible?"

"That is all. I do not care to press the matter in any way."

"Owing to what you have read in the letter?"

"Yes."

"There is only one thing to do. The woman must go to a hospital. The police should be notified."

"The hospital for this district is——"

"Hudson street."

"If she is taken there it will be impossible to keep it out of the papers."

"Next to impossible."

"But look, Mr. Brady! The woman is not dead. We are not obliged to turn her over to the authorities."

"No one said you were. It was your own proposition to get her off your hands, and——"

"Yes, yes! But it must be done without publicity. Can't you think of some private hospital to which she can be taken and restored to life?"

"In your name, Mr. Brander?"

"Most decidedly not in my name, Mr. Brady. I want to keep out of it altogether."

"I see. You want me to manage the whole affair?"

"I do. I will pay you well."

"That cuts no figure. We only want to do the right thing. I do know of such a hospital as you describe."

"We might bundle the woman up and take her there in a cab," mused Mr. Brander.

"Or nail the lid on the box again and ship her there by express," added Harry.

"The cab plan is the best," said Old King Brady. "I suppose, Mr. Brander, you would like to know where this hospital is?"

"Please tell me nothing about it," said the importer, hurriedly. "Mr. Brady, if you would be obliging, I don't want to even know the name. I leave the details all to you. Will you undertake to help me out of this hole?"

"I must," replied Old King Brady. "It seems to have come my way to do it, and yet, working in the dark is not pleasant, by any means. You feel that you can't give me the slightest clew to this mystery?"

"I can't—I really can't. My lips must be sealed."

"May I ask if you understand it yourself since you read the letter?"

"Well, I do, and I don't. It's hard to say."

"Excuse me a minute while I talk to my partner. Then I will give you my answer."

"Just a moment, Mr. Brady. What I want is to be able to walk out of this store as unconcerned, so far as this case goes, as if it had never happened. If you can help me to do that, and can take this Chinese woman off my hands I shall consider two thousand dollars a low

price for the relief afforded. Think it over and see what you can do."

Old King Brady nodded and walked with Harry to the extreme end of the store.

"This is a very strange business," he whispered.

"It is," was the reply.

"For the sake of solving it we shall have to pretend to chime in with this man."

"And work on the line of the clew?"

"Yes."

"I agree with you. You don't think the woman is in any danger?"

"I do not. I think she has been heavily drugged—nothing more."

"Are you going to take her to a hospital?"

"Nothing of the sort. I should have taken her to St. Peter's, in Brooklyn, but since Mr. Brander prefers not to know where she is going I propose to try altogether a different plan."

"Yes; and I can guess what it is."

"Don't breathe it. Now, Harry, you prepare to shadow that man, and make a thorough job of it. Let there be no mistake."

"Enough said, Governor. You can trust me, I think."

"Thankful to say I can, dear boy. We will get a move on now."

Old King Brady returned to Mr. Brander after giving Harry a few whispered instructions.

"I have come to a determination," he said. "I will do just as you say."

"There, Mr. Brady! Let me walk out of here and forget this business, if I can, and when all is done send in your bill."

"Yes, yes! Proposition accepted. The door lies behind you, Mr. Brander. Leave this infernal Chinese machine to the Bradys. Put your mind entirely at rest."

"Ah, if I only could!" they heard him mutter.

Then, turning on his heel, Mr. Brander hurried out of the store.

"Slide, Harry!" whispered Old King Brady.

The next moment and Old King Brady found himself alone with the slumbering mystery in the box.

CHAPTER III.

HARRY LOSES HIS MAN IN CHINATOWN.

Old King Brady waited long enough to give Mr. Brander and Harry a fairly good start and then opened the door and went out himself.

Carefully locking the door behind him, he hurried around into Pearl street, where he popped into a butcher's shop, one of the few retail stores in this part of the town.

A few minutes later saw the old detective back at the vacant store again.

Here he carefully screwed on the cover of the box, and with a marking pot and brush, which he had brought from the butcher's, he addressed the box as follows:

"Dr. Wing Wum. No. — Mott street, New York."

Having done this, Old King Brady put aside the marking pot and waited.

At last a cart rattled up outside, and there came a knock on the door, which Old King Brady hastened to open.

He helped the young man who stood there to remove the box to the butcher's cart.

Mounting to the seat himself, the old detective was driven rapidly away.

Meanwhile Harry had been right up to his business.

His orders were to shadow Mr. Brander.

This shadowing was to be attended with several surprises, which we are about to relate now.

The first surprise came when Brander turned out of Broad street on to Beaver.

He turned the corner on the lefthand, south side and for the instant Harry, who was coming along the right-hand side of Broad street, lost sight of him.

This Harry had expected.

He assumed that Mr. Brander would go straight to the store, and it looked as though such was his intention until suddenly Harry saw him skimming along on the north side of Beaver street, where he darted into a doorway and stood peering about.

"He sees something over by this store all right," thought Young King Brady. "Wonder what it can be?"

Just at that moment he became aware that it was a time of general excitement.

Office boys and messenger boys were on the run, and all heading for that particular block on Beaver street.

Even grown men were pushing their way around the corner while Mr. Brander stood watching.

Harry, who had slightly disguised himself with a few quick moves, joined the crowd.

The cause of the excitement was plain enough once Young King Brady was around the corner.

Mott street appeared to have been let loose, and Beaver street was getting the flood.

The whole block was crowded with Chinks, one might say.

They were pushing each other, all seemingly trying to crowd into the store of Brander & Co.

There were certainly fifty Chinamen crowded about the store.

They were not saying much, for a big crowd was rapidly gathering.

Harry could see more than one of the Chinks look nervously behind them.

What did it all mean?

Were they waiting for some one who had gone into Brander & Co.'s store?

Such seemed to be the case, although not a few of the Chinamen were trying to force their way in.

The porter, a truckman and a clerk guarded the door and tried to keep them back.

As is usual on such occasions in New York, no sign of a policeman was to be seen.

Of course Harry's first thought was to push ahead and find out what the matter was.

His detective training came in right here.

"I'm shadowing Brander," he said to himself. "I'm not losing sight of my man."

He also slipped into a doorway and stood watching Brander.

"That man is scared out of his seventeen senses," thought Harry. "He acts exactly as if he thought that crowd of Chinks were after him, and maybe they are. I wonder what he will do?"

Harry stood watching.

He soon came to the conclusion that the only thing that was keeping Brander quiet was fear.

"He don't dare to show himself," thought Young King Brady. "Wonder what he will do?"

Mr. Brander did not try his patience much longer.

In a minute he slipped out of the doorway, made a quick dash around into Broad street, immediately subsiding into a walk when the corner was turned.

Young King Brady sauntered after him.

The reason for Mr. Brander's sudden change of gait was instantly apparent.

A man rushed up to him and seized his hand.

Harry saw him quickly but politely pull away.

Again Brander started when a man came up behind him and clapped him on the back.

This was one of the boisterous kind.

"Hello, hello, Brander! What the blazes is the matter around at your place?" he demanded, loud enough to be heard across the way.

"Ah! To be sure!" was the reply. "What is the matter now? I haven't been to the store for some time. Has it burned down?"

"Burned down nothing. It is flooded with Chinks. They are crowding in there like rats."

"Ah!" said Mr. Brander. "We are the agents for a ship which has sunk out in the Indian ocean with a good many Chinamen on board. These fellows are no doubt looking for information about their friends."

It was an explanation which did not explain.

Harry, who heard it from a nearby doorway into which he had slipped, was satisfied that the man had made up the story on the spur of the moment.

"Aren't you going around to see?" was demanded.

"No; haven't time now," Brander replied.

"Well," said the man, "it's none of my business, of course, but there's a big mob in front of your door just the same."

"I don't doubt it!" laughed Brander. "I'll go around pretty soon."

At last he was able to shake the man and resume his hurried walk.

And this time he made good his escape.

Sliding into Exchange place, he shot on through that dismal canyon into Hanover street, and thence into Pearl street.

He was now dodging about in one section of New York which is a little twisted, and Harry had to hustle in order to follow him without being seen.

It ended down by the Wall street ferry.

Here Mr. Brander sprang into a vacant cab and was driven off uptown.

Young King Brady lost no time in following him.

Harry could only get a hansom.

He was making something of a show of himself, but as the driver of the cab ahead never once looked back Harry assumed that Mr. Brander had given him no orders to be on his guard.

On rattled the cabs up Wall street, up Broadway, up Park Row, and through Chatham square to Mott street.

It was just as Young King Brady had anticipated.

While Chinatown was invading Mr. Brander's Beaver street place Mr. Brander was invading Chinatown.

"The man with the motive," the importer might have been styled..

Here was a man who had sent for detectives to help him solve a mystery and then would not help them with such information as he had.

Now his flight to Chinatown in face of the invasion only served to make matters more mysterious.

Young King Brady watched the cab and saw it slow down in front of a noted Chinese restaurant on Mott street.

Mr. Brander jumped out and the cab was driven on.

Harry lost no time in shaking his hansom.

He was satisfied that the going into the restaurant was only a blind.

"That man fears shadowing," thought Young King Brady. "He has been shadowed before."

Harry had gone a little further with his disguising while in the hansom.

He had not much fear of being recognized now, so he boldly crossed the street, passed the restaurant, and looked in through the window.

Mr. Brander stood talking with a Chinaman who sat behind the little counter near the door.

Harry pushed right on, not wishing to do the least thing to attract attention to himself.

Crossing the street, he turned back and went down on the other side of the way.

He had not yet reached the square when Mr. Brander came out of the restaurant and walked in the same direction.

Harry saw him slide around into Doyers street.

Here Mr. Brander entered the Chinese theater.

By this time it was after twelve o'clock.

Chinamen were passing in and out of the theater door. Presumably there was some noon matinee on hand.

"This is a nuisance," thought Young King Brady. "I shall lose him here, surest thing."

It took time for Young King Brady to get into the theatre.

There was a ticket to be bought, and the doorkeeper to pass him in, and all that sort of thing.

By the time he had got inside several minutes had elapsed.

It was "jumping day."

Some wonderful athletes were giving an exhibition of their skill, ascending ladders and jumping from a great height, to land upon the upturned breast of another Chinese athlete who stood waiting below.

Harry did not dare to watch the jumpers—each took his turn on the ladder—for, contrary to his expectations, he had already located his man.

Mr. Brander had taken a seat down in front where every Chinaman in the house could plainly see him.

This seemed puzzling enough to Harry, who had assumed that the man was afraid of the Chinese and had avoided returning to the store on that account.

It didn't look very much like being afraid now.

Harry sat in the seat he had chosen for a good two hours, watching Mr. Brander.

Other white men drifted in and out.

The regular play of the afternoon was on now.

Chinamen in strange and most elaborate costumes came upon the stage and made long speeches and did something in the way of acting.

As there is little scenery in a Chinese theater the action of the performers really amounts to very little.

The entertainment is mostly dialogue and athletics.

At the back of the stage the crash of cymbals, the roll of the drum, and the twang of the moon banjo and squeaking of a one-string fiddle produced a din almost deafening, and yet, strange to say, there was something sleepy about it all.

To one who has only "just dropped in" on a Chinese theater to be told that the performance is sleepy would be to draw the laugh.

Yet so it is, just the same, to any one who has to sit and listen for a long time.

The thunderous din of the orchestra had just that effect upon Harry.

Again and again he caught himself nodding.

At last a particularly loud crash of the cymbals suddenly brought him up with a round turn.

He looked down in front to the seat occupied by Mr. Brander.

It was empty!

The importer had vanished in those few seconds during which Harry had slipped off into the land of Nod.

Enraged at himself, Harry, having become satisfied that the man was nowhere in the audience, hurried out on to Doyers street.

"He was on to me from the first," he said to himself. "He was watching me somehow, although he never seemed

to turn his head. What shall I say to Old King Brady? Tell him that I dropped asleep and lost my man? That will never do. I must find him again—but how?"

Chinatown New York is a hard place for a detective to do shadowing in.

Although the district only embraces a few blocks, those blocks are like an immense ant hill, swarming with life.

One can't stand still and watch on Mott or Pell streets without drawing the attention of the whole neighborhood.

Harry had shadowed here often enough before to know all that, and he realized that he had to keep on the move.

Nothing but the greatest good luck could help him.

Brander might have gone up Doyers street into Pell, or down to Chatham square—it was but a block either way.

Once on Pell street there were a hundred ways of hiding to one as familiar with Chinatown as this man evidently was.

Young King Brady walked through to Pell street in rather a despairing state of mind.

At the corner stood a young woman talking with a "Low Gow Gui," one of the small army of boys who wait on the Chinese women, who are never allowed to appear on the street.

The girl recognized the young detective, in spite of his slight disguise, and Harry knew her, for he and Old King Brady had found occasion to use her in one of their cases not long before.

"Hello, Annie Weigand! What are you doing here?" asked Young King Brady, pausing on the corner.

The Low Gow started to pull away, but Harry caught him by the collar.

"Hold on, bub!" he said. "I want to see you."

"Lemme go!" whined the Low Gow. "I hain't done nothing. Lemme go!"

He tried to wiggle out of Harry's grasp, but it was no use.

"Stand where you are, or I'll run you in," said Young King Brady, sternly.

Annie, in the meanwhile, had returned the detective's salute.

"What are you prowling about Chinatown for, Brady?" she asked.

"Business," replied Harry. "Perhaps you or Low Gow can help me. Annie, I was shadowing a man in the theater and he gave me the slip. He must have either gone this way or out on the square. Did you see him, I wonder?"

"I could tell so much better if I knew what he looked like," Annie replied. "Say, Brady, tell me all about it and I'll help you if I can for the price of a couple of shells of dope."

"The price is yours anyhow, Annie," replied Young King Brady, slipping the girl a dollar. "All the same, I wish you would cut out the dope for good and all."

"Can't do it, Brady. Much obliged. I'll remember you in my will. Now about your man."

Young King Brady carefully described Mr. Brander. He saw at once that he had made no mistake. Annie and Low Gow glanced at each other. "Dat's de bloke, surest thing," said Low Gow. And he added:

"Say, boss, where do I come in on this deal if I give you de tip?"

"You come in right on top," replied Harry, adding: "Come, Annie, that man passed here."

"He did just a minute ago," was the reply. "He went up Pell street. This here Low Gow knows where he hangs out. He was just a-telling me dat, Brady, when you came along."

"Here you are, boy," said Harry, slipping the Low Gow a dollar. "Another comes if we find him—see?"

"All right," chuckled the Low Gow, pocketing the dollar. "Dat's de way to talk, boss! You just come along wid me."

"So long, Annie," and he started up Pell street at the heels of the Low Gow.

CHAPTER IV.

UP AGAINST A MOTT STREET MYSTERY.

While Harry was having hard times in Chinatown Old King Brady was starting for that same delectable locality in a butcher cart.

The old detective went directly through Beaver street and saw the crowd of Chinks in front of the store of Brander & Co.

They were not trying to force their way in now, but, on the contrary, were all marching up toward Broadway in a body, followed by a hooting crowd.

Of course Old King Brady was immensely interested in all this.

Equally, of course, he showed no interest when the driver of the butcher cart began to talk about "them Chinks" and to wonder what brought such a bunch of them down to Beaver street.

As quick as he was able, the detective turned the man from the subject, and yet he was immensely interested, just the same.

He did not doubt for an instant that the odd little image lying asleep in the box was what brought those Chinamen to Beaver street.

Of course Old King Brady's butcher cart soon got ahead of the Chinamen.

Some boarded the cars, however, and went flying past him.

Old King Brady felt certain that in a very short time he would be able to find out what it all meant.

Upon reaching Chinatown the wagon was turned into Mott street and came to a standstill at last before a dilapidated old brick house which carried several Chinese signs at the doorway.

"Wait," said Old King Brady to the butcher's man. "Don't you make a move until I return."

Old King Brady ran up the steps of the house and was gone for some little time.

Nobody paid the least attention to the butcher's cart. Curiosity forms but a very small part of the Chinese make-up.

"This is the place," said Old King Brady, returning. "You will help me carry the box upstairs."

"All right," said the driver. "I guess the horse will stand if nobody don't interfere with him."

He dismounted, and with Old King Brady's assistance carried the box up to the second floor hall and placed it in front of the door of the rear room.

"That is all," said Old King Brady, giving the man a dollar. "Much obliged."

The man retreated, filled with curiosity.

He had no idea what was in the box.

His employer, the butcher, was a friend of Old King Brady, and this man had been instructed to do as he was told and ask no questions.

He had carried out his contract all right, and here was Old King Brady in the heart of Chinatown left alone with this mysterious box.

But the detective was not to remain long alone.

On the door was a sign in Chinese and another in English.

The English sign read:

"Dr. Wing Wum. Advice Free. Walk In."

Old King Brady, however, did not walk in.

On the contrary, however, the door opened and Dr. Wing Wum walked out.

He was a little, dried-up old Chink, with a long gray mustache, and had a pair of big, ugly horn spectacles on his nose.

"Belly well! Dat is de box!" he said, in a queer, gabbling voice.

"That's the box," said Old King Brady. "Shall I bring it in?"

"Yes; I help."

The Chinaman seized one end of the box, and Old King Brady taking hold at the other, between them they carried it inside.

Dr. Wum's reception room was a very primitive place; bare floor, curtainless windows, hard-bottomed chairs and a cheap pine table all combined to give the room anything but a comfortable look.

The doctor stood by the table eyeing the box suspiciously.

"Mr. Blady! You dell me dere vas womans in dere?" he said.

"Yes," replied Old King Brady. "I'm going to show you."

The detective produced a small screwdriver, which was one of the tools he always carried, and proceeded to open the box.

Dr. Wum adjusted his spectacles and looked at that

strange, doll-like figure without changing a muscle of his countenance.

"Where you get?" he asked.

"No matter, doctor," replied Old King Brady.

"You no want tell?"

"I don't want to tell. I must not tell."

"Belly well. You take her out, or I take her out?"

"I'll do it, if there is some place to lay the little thing."

"Lay on table."

Old King Brady picked up the sleeping Chinese beauty, bed of silk and all, and placed her on the table.

Dr. Wing stepped to the door, opened it, hung out a sign with Chinese characters on it, shut the door, locked it and returned.

"Now noboddy make no bodder," he said. "Me putee sign what say 'gone me brudder's funeral. Back again next week."

"Good!" replied Old King Brady. "See now what you can do for this woman, for she still lives."

Dr. Wing Wum listened at the heart of the little Chinese girl.

"Yes, she lives," he said. "Me fixe her."

"Do you know what makes her sleep so?" inquired the detective.

"Oh, yes, Blady."

"And what?"

Belly strong medicine. You Melican man no sarvee."

"But you know its nature? You have the antidote?"

"Blady, you Melican talkee too much talk for me. Wait! I fixe her allee light. You see."

Dr. Wing Wum vanished behind a red curtain.

Old King Brady could hear him pouring some liquid and then pounding something in a mortar.

After a few moments the doctor came out with a small bottle containing a reddish liquid, which he was shaking vigorously.

Producing a spoon, he poured from the bottle into it, and forcing open the lips of the sleeping beauty, turned the contents of the spoon down her throat.

For a few minutes there was no other result except a slight twitching of the muscles.

"In a minute, Blady! In a minute!" said Dr. Wing Wum.

"How long do you think she has been so?" asked Old King Brady.

"No sarvee. Two, tree day, mebbe."

Just then the mysterious woman from the box heaved a faint sigh.

A moment later she opened her eyes and sat upright.

Old King Brady spoke to her, but she only stared.

"Wait! Wait!" breathed Dr. Wing Wum. "Not yet."

They stood by in silence for a few minutes.

The Chinese woman looked from one face to the other. She rubbed her eyes and shook her head uneasily. Then at last she addressed herself to the doctor in a few unintelligible words.

At least they were so to Old King Brady.

Dr. Wing Wum evidently understood and answered her in Chinese.

A conversation lasting fully ten minutes followed.

That was the time that Old King Brady wished he could understand Chinese.

At last Dr. Wum turned to him and said:

"Dis muchee stlange, Blady."

"Yes. What does she say?" asked the detective.

"Her name Mrs. Ching Chow."

"Yes, yes."

"She just come from China with her husband."

"Yes. How did she come to get into that box? Where is her husband? What is it all about?"

"She cannot tell. She was on steamer. Her husband big Mandarin. He go to Washington by Chinese Minister Wu."

"Yes, yes. Did he drug her so?"

"She say no. She cannot tell. She noting know. She sleep in room on steamer. She wake up here. Vat den? Noting. She can no tell."

"I see. Her husband is connected with Minister Wu?"

"Yes, Blady. She say he go to Washington."

"I see. Ask her if she ever heard the name of Brander."

"Blander?"

"Yes."

The Chinese woman was listening, but she showed no interest in the name.

"She not know Blander!" declared Dr. Wum, after putting the question.

"Doctor, what shall we do with her?" asked Old King Brady. "If her husband is actually in Washington I must see him and let him know that his wife is here."

"Yes. Dlat de best way."

"Can she stay here a few days?"

"Blady, I not no vife have. I live allee lone. What den?"

"You do not want her here?"

"No, Blady. P'haps makee muchee whole lot trouble—how I can tell?"

"Very well, doctor. I don't want to make trouble for you. The woman must go somewhere else."

"She no must go on street—dat is bad for big Chinese lady. Her husband mebbe sell her den," said Dr. Wum.

Old King Brady was rather puzzled.

He knew enough of the Chinese to be quite aware that women of the higher caste are never seen on the street in the different Chinese colonies of the United States.

This is considered a disgrace.

The old detective could readily believe that the husband of this queer little creature might sell her as a slave, as Chinese women have ever been and ever will be bought and sold if they break the rule.

"Do you know any Chinese family here in Chinatown who would take care of her until I have time to look up the matter?" he asked.

Dr. Wing Wum knew of no such family.

Old King Brady reflected a few minutes, and then said:

"I think I can find a place for her. At all events, I must try. Let her stay here for half an hour or so until I return."

To this Dr. Wing Wum readily agreed.

Mrs. Ching Chow listened to all this in silence.

It was the strangest sight to see the little Chinese woman sitting there on the table while she was being discussed, and to think how impossible it was for Old King Brady to discover what was passing in her mind.

The detective now opened the doctor's door and hurried downstairs.

Old King Brady left Mrs. Ching Chow at Dr. Wing Wum's with the greatest reluctance.

He felt that the doctor was not telling him all.

He deeply regretted that he had not brought some one with him to watch the woman during his absence.

This could not be helped now, however, and there was nothing for it but to trust the doctor.

Old King Brady's acquaintance in the Chinese colony is as extensive as any one's. But who can ever hope to get thoroughly acquainted with the Chinese?

The old detective visited several of his Celestial friends before he found what he wanted, consuming much time.

He was very careful to conceal the story of the box.

His story was that in the course of his business a high caste Chinese woman had been left on his hands, and he wanted to find some one who would take care of her for a few days, for which he was willing to pay well.

Having found the place, the next thing was to get the woman away from Dr. Wum's.

Old King Brady engaged a hack from the stand on Chatham square and returned to the doctor's house.

With one thing and another more than two hours had been taken up.

The detective hurried up the stairs and knocked on Dr. Wing Wum's door, receiving no answer.

Again and again he rapped, but the result was just the same.

"As I feared. This long wait is going to make trouble," thought Old King Brady.

He tried the door and found it open.

Then came the surprise.

Old King Brady found himself up against a Mott street mystery.

The room had been stripped of its furniture during his absence, and it was also so with the room beyond.

Not only had Dr. Wum and Mrs. Ching Chow vanished, but all the doctor's belongings appeared to have gone with them.

Not a trace of the fugitives was left behind.

Indeed there was nothing in the room at all, except the mysterious box in which had rested Mrs. Ching Chow.

CHAPTER V.

MR. BRANDER CALLS OFF THE BRADYS.

Old King Brady leaned against the wall in a state of mind which was anything but agreeable.

"I have made a sad botch of this business," he said to himself. "I ought to be ashamed. Confound these Chinese! They are the hardest people on earth to work among. I might have guessed when Dr. Wum was so reticent that he had a knife up his sleeve for me."

Old King Brady's acquaintance with Dr. Wing Wum was quite a recent one.

"Well, after all. I don't know that it makes so very much difference," the old detective said to himself, after a little reflection.

"What Brander wanted was to get this Chinese woman off his hands. As far as one can judge, I have accomplished this most effectually. I suppose the only thing I can do is to get back to Beaver street and make my report, if Brander is to be found there, which I am inclined to doubt."

He had closed the door behind him upon entering the room, and he was just starting to open it now when it was suddenly opened from outside, and a dirty, ragged boy looked in.

He pulled back with a sudden exclamation at the sight of the detective.

Old King Brady sprang to the door and threw it open, to find himself face to face with Harry, who had just come upstairs in the wake of the Low Gow Gui.

"Governor!" exclaimed Young King Brady, starting back, "you here?"

"And why not, seeing that you are here?" Old King Brady replied.

"And—you know who? Is he here?"

"If you mean Mr. B, he is not."

"Bad luck!" cried Harry, falling back against the banisters. "Governor, I have a confession to make. This is the time I have lost my man."

Old King Brady smiled grimly.

"Well, Harry, you need not take it so much to heart," he replied. "I also have a confession to make. This is the time I have lost my woman!"

"The deuce you say! What——"

"Come inside. We don't talk business in a Mott street hall. Who is this boy?"

"A Low Gow Gui."

"Have you paid him?"

"No."

"Any further use for him?"

"Wait a minute. Bub, are you sure this is the place?" Harry asked.

"Dead sure, boss."

"Come inside! Come inside!" said Old King Brady, drawing the boy into Dr. Wum's room.

He closed the door and shot the bolt.

"What is all this, now?" he asked.

Harry hastily told his story.

Old King Brady produced a five dollar bill.

"Tell me all you know of this man and you get this," he said to the Low Gow.

"Say, boss, I'll tell it straight," was the reply. "I don't know nothin' about him, only I often see him hangin' about Chinatown. I seen him come in here many a time."

"Know Dr. Wum?"

The Low Gow knew the doctor by sight, but that was all.

Satisfied that no further information was to be obtained from him, Old King Brady handed him the bill.

"Do you know me?" he asked.

"Yes, boss."

"Right! And your name?"

"Danny Ryan, boss."

"Correct. Now, Danny, you keep a sharp eye out for this man we want, and also for Dr. Wum, who must have moved about an hour ago. Find out where he has gone and there will be another five coming. You know, perhaps, where my office is."

The Low Gow didn't, so Old King Brady gave him the number and dismissed him.

"Now, Harry, for a few moments' talk," he said. "These Chinamen are full of their tricks, and a pretty slick one has just been played on me. Listen to what I have to say."

Old King Brady then told his story.

"If Brander came here that may account for the disappearance of Dr. Wum and this Chinese woman," Young King Brady remarked.

"It may. It may mean the end of the case. I should be very much inclined to think so but for one thing."

"What is that?"

"Why, as I was passing through Beaver street I saw

"A big crowd of Chinks around Brander & Co.'s store."

"Yes. Did you see them?"

"I did."

"We can decide nothing then until that mystery is explained."

"So it seems to me. I think we had better get right down to Beaver street. Were you thinking of working out this mystery on your own account?"

"Can't tell yet. I am not ambitious. If Brander is to be found at the store and says drop it, I think I shall let it go."

"We had better get down there at once, then, and find out what this Chinese invasion means."

The Bradys then left the building, first, however, ascertaining that Dr. Wum was the only tenant on that floor.

Harry was for making inquiries as to the doctor's sudden move, but Old King Brady decided to postpone this until they had visited Beaver street, and they made all haste downtown.

There were no Chinese by the Produce Exchange when they reached Beaver street.

When they entered the store the bookkeeper, an elderly man, came hurriedly out from behind the desk.

"I am glad you have come," he said. "I am very much concerned about Mr. Brander. Where have you left him?"

"The last seen of him was in Chinatown," Old King Brady replied.

"Chinatown!"

"Yes."

"And what took him there?"

"That is more than I can tell you."

"What about the infernal machine? Did you open the box?"

"We did. There was no infernal machine."

"What was in the box?"

"Really, mister——"

"McLeiss is my name."

"Really, Mr. McLeiss, I don't feel quite justified in answering that question without Mr. Brander's consent."

"You must please yourself. Mr. Brander has not been here since he went away with you, but so much has happened since——"

"You refer to that Chinese invasion?"

"You may well call it an invasion! Why, I was almost crazy. Did you know?"

"That an army of Chinese came here; yes. But I did not know what they wanted."

"Mr. Brady, it was the strangest thing. They kept coming one after another until the place was blocked with them. They all wanted a woman—a Mrs. Ching Chow."

"And did they expect to find her here?"

"So it seemed. Each one who got in—and there were as many as a dozen who did—asked for Mrs. Ching Chow. I can't imagine what it all means."

"And the rest wanted this Chinese woman, too?"

"I have no doubt they did. We managed to make the foremost of that party understand at last that we did not keep Chinawomen in stock. I suppose they must have told the others, for after that they all went away."

"Strange!" mused Old King Brady.

"Most remarkable and very annoying," added Mr. McLeiss.

"I can readily believe it."

"Why, at one time it looked as if there was likely to be a riot here. I had already telephoned for the police when the mob began to move."

"And you have no idea of the meaning of it all?"

"Not the least in the world? Have you?"

"How should I? My acquaintance with Mr. Brander only began to-day."

"I thought he knew you years ago?"

"We had met, that is all. I know nothing of his affairs."

"Faith, then you know as much as I do," muttered Mr. McLeiss, as the Bradys started to withdraw.

"Well, and what do you think of that?" demanded Harry, once the detectives were clear of Beaver street.

"It's part and parcel of the whole business. A matter of revenge against this man Brander, of course."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, the person or persons who sent him that box clearly did it for revenge or hate. The sending of these Chinamen means the same thing. You remember how agitated Mr. Brander was."

"Indeed I do. As soon as he saw those Chinks crowding around his store he hid in a doorway and lost no time in dodging around into Broad street."

"Exactly. He knew his danger. The man is either an opium smuggler who has gone back on the gang, or has been mixed up with some other kind of Chinese crookedness. Upon that you may depend."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"Await developments. I shall make no further move now."

The Bradys returned to their office and took up with another matter which they found awaiting them there.

Next morning, upon looking over the mail, Old King Brady came upon the following, mailed at the general postoffice:

Old King Brady:

Dear Sir:—I must request you to drop the case which I placed in your hands yesterday. I have adjusted the affair in a manner entirely satisfactory to myself. I enclose check for \$2,000 as per agreement.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE BRANDER.

This was certainly conclusive. It looked as if the Bradys had seen the finish of the case of Mrs. Ching Chow.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRADYS BECOME NEIGHBORS OF MR. WING WUM.

For three weeks the Bradys only thought of the case of Mrs. Ching Chow as one which had brought them in a large profit for very little work.

Another and very important matter took the detectives out West.

Upon their return, as Old King Brady happened to be walking down Beaver street one day, he thought he would stop in and see Mr. Brander, as he felt a certain curiosity to know what became of the little Mrs. Ching Chow, if the importer was disposed to tell.

He found Mr. McLeiss in the store at his usual desk.

"Is it you?" exclaimed the bookkeeper. "Well, I am glad to know that you are back in town again. I tried mighty hard to get hold of you a couple of weeks ago."

"Indeed! And did Mr. Brander desire my services?" Old King Brady asked.

"Mr. Brander has not been seen nor heard of since you were here last," replied the bookkeeper, gravely.

"Is it possible!"

"Yes; such is the case."

"What do you suppose can have become of him?"

"Mr. Brady, it is up to you to help me find out, seeing that you were the last man to see him. Moreover, he paid you——"

"He gave me a check for \$2,000, which more than covered the work I did for him, you were about to say."

"I don't know what work you did. The man ought to be looked up, however."

"Are his people very much disturbed about him?"

"He has no relatives that I know of, except Alfred Harper, who is his partner here. He don't seem to be as much disturbed as one would suppose he might be, I must confess. Still, he wants his uncle found."

"Naturally. Is this young Harper Mr. Brander's heir?"

"Sole heir."

"Considerable property, Mr. McLeiss?"

"About half a million outside of the business."

"A tidy sum. Well, I'm ready to help find Mr. Brander. Can I see Harper now?"

"He is in Boston to-day. I expect him back on Thursday."

"Meanwhile I will get down to work. Anything new about that raid of Chinamen looking for Mrs. Ching Chow?"

"Nothing. Haven't heard of it since; but say, Mr. Brady, it seems to me that under the circumstances you might tell me what was in the box?"

"I think so, too. I was just going to do it."

"Well?"

"Mrs. Ching Chow."

"Mr. Brady——"

"You don't understand. Therefore let me explain. Mrs. Ching Chow was in that box."

Of course McLeiss was more puzzled than ever, and Old King Brady had to tell the whole story before the bookkeeper got straightened out in his mind.

The man's amazement was genuine and great.

"I cannot account for this," he said, in answer to Old King Brady's request for any information which he might be able to give him. "I can't help you—not one bit."

"You can give me a few facts about Mr. Brander, however," said the old detective. "In the first place, where did he live?"

"Of late he has been boarding at the Waldorf-Astoria."

"No information can be had about his movements there, of course. I understand that he has been a frequent visitor in Chinatown. Can you tell me why?"

"I can't, for I didn't know that such was the fact."

"Very well. Then I shall have to go it alone," replied Old King Brady, and after a few more remarks he left the store.

Later, meeting Harry at the office, Old King Brady posted him fully on the disappearance of Mr. Brander.

And having again taken up the case of Mrs. Ching Chow, the Bradys went systematically to work.

Harry was assigned to Chinatown for that evening.

He was to look up the Low Gow Gui, Danny Ryan, and also to ascertain the particulars of Dr. Wing Wum's sudden move.

Furthermore, he was, if possible, to find out what drove the crowd of Chinamen to Beaver street on the day of Mr. Brander's disappearance.

Old King Brady himself started out on other lines, for the old detective, it will be remembered, had found a clew in the box which as yet he had not used.

Still all this was old business now that weeks had passed.

During those weeks Old King Brady had done just one thing in connection with the case of Mrs. Ching Chow.

That was to write to a detective of his acquaintance in Washington to look up Mr. Ching Chow, if such a person actually existed.

The answer that Old King Brady received was that there was no such man on Minister Wu's staff.

This made the detective think that Dr. Wing Wum had deceived him altogether.

Such was the situation when Old King Brady started in at about five o'clock that afternoon to work up his clew.

Old King Brady proceeded at once to the Bowery, and passing up that noted thoroughfare for several blocks, entered one of the most noted retail hardware stores in New York.

Many people imagine the Bowery is just given up to concert saloons, gambling houses, etc.

Nothing can be further from the truth.

The Bowery was always one of the most important business streets in the city, and is still.

Old King Brady found the manager of the hardware store and presented his card.

"I have here a wash leather watch case," he said, producing the article. "It bears your name and carries a number. I am most anxious to trace up the person who bought that watch. Do you suppose you can help me in any way?"

"I think it is very likely," was the reply. "This is the Blaisdell dollar watch. We have the sole agency and have advertised it extensively. We number each watch and keep a record of the original purchaser. Of course the chances are that this particular watch went with others to some dealer. However, we will see."

The manager went into the office and consulted with one of the bookkeepers.

After awhile he came out and said:

"It is a little strange, Mr. Brady. That watch was sold to a Chinaman. Of course you will find it difficult to trace up a clew with one of that race."

"No more so than any other race," replied the detective, in great satisfaction. "Have you the Chinaman's name?"

"Yes, and address, such as it is. That is our rule. Here it is."

The name on the paper was Wing Wum. The address was the number on Mott street where Mrs. Ching Chow had disappeared.

"You seem pleased," remarked the manager of the hardware store.

"I am," replied the detective. "Nothing could be more satisfactory. Can you add to the obligation by telling me the circumstances under which the watch was sold?"

"Yes, I inquired about that particularly," was the reply. "Our young man says that about three weeks ago, just at night, a closed carriage drove up here and this Chinaman got out and entered the store. He asked for the watch, got it, and drove away."

"An old man wearing spectacles?"

"Yes."

"That is Dr. Wing Wum."

"It is the man you wanted to trace the watch up to?"

"Well, yes; I suppose I might as well say so. It is just what I wanted to know, at all events, and I am very much obliged."

Old King Brady now proceeded to Chinatown.

He had arranged with Harry to be at Mock Tow's restaurant on Pell street at six o'clock, if possible.

There the Bradys met, and at a private table over a plate of chop suey compared notes.

"I have made fine headway, Governor," declared Harry.

"Glad to hear it," was the reply. "I have accomplished one thing. I have traced the watch up to Dr. Wing Wum. There seems to be little doubt that I took Mrs. Ching Chow just where she belonged, and perhaps just where she came from."

"And that is all you have to report?"

"That is all. Now for your tale."

"You will remember that your orders were to first look up Danny Ryan, the Low Gow Gui?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is what I did. I found him easily enough, and he proved to be the whole thing, for he really knew all about Dr. Wing Wum and where he had moved to."

"Good enough! Where is the doctor located now?"

"On Pell street. I have the number."

"Anything about Mrs. Ching Chow?"

"No; Danny does not know anything about her."

"It is not to be expected. The Chinese are always most secretive about everything concerning their women. But does he know how the doctor came to move so suddenly?"

"No; but he tells me Dr. Wing Wum bears a very bad reputation, and that he is generally regarded as a wizard by the Chinese around here."

"Oh, yes! I had heard that before. What about Brander?"

"Danny has not seen Brander since that night."

"Anything else learned?"

"About the Chinese invasion of Beaver street?"

"Yes, yes! Well, what about that?"

Danny says it was the talk of Chinatown for a week. Mrs. Ching Chow was the girl wife of a Chinaman of very

high rank who was murdered by Highbinders in San Francisco some time ago."

"Indeed! Then the story of her having just come from China was——"

"All nonsense."

"As I supposed. Why was Ching Chow murdered?"

"Danny says nobody knows. The woman came from San Francisco and was received at the Grand Central depot by Dr. Wing Wum."

"Well?"

"That was two days before the box went to Brander."

"Yes."

"On that day when we opened the box every member of a certain Chinese secret society, the name of which Danny does not know, received a letter stating that Mrs. Ching Chow had gone East and would be at Brander & Co.'s store at eleven o'clock.

"Each member was told that the woman wished to see him personally and would give him the name of her husband's murderer's, and each was informed that he had been selected to receive this information and bear it to the society."

"And so all these Chinks went down there thinking that he was the only one?"

"That's it. You know how excitable the Chinese are. They went wild when they found that they had been fooled. There was almost a riot. You see the letters were all signed by the name of the leader of the society in New York, and he swears that he wrote none of them. Who did actually write them is not known."

"A queer piece of business."

"Very."

"Is that the extent of your discoveries?"

"That is all. It seems to me that I have done pretty well, considering the time I have put in."

"It's all right. Now comes the question what to do."

For some time Old King Brady remained silent.

"It is so hard to know what to do," he said, at last.

"Of course you have disguised as a Chinaman many times and have held your own among the Chinese themselves by pretending to have come from some out of the way province in China where a different language from the one commonly spoken here is used, but I have no hope that you would be able to deceive such a shrewd man as Dr. Wing Wum."

"I don't think it would be worth while to try it. I think we had better try to play the spy, if possible. We will both disguise as Chinamen and see if we can't hire rooms in the same house with the doctor; that is, providing there are rooms to rent."

Harry gave an exclamation of surprise.

"Strange that you should have hit upon the very scheme which occurred to me," he said.

"Ha! You thought of that?"

"I went so far as to go to the house and take a look. Dr. Wum is located on the second floor, rear. There is a room in front to rent."

"Indeed! Who is the agent?"

"Manders, on the Bowery, is the agent."

"Exactly."

"Probably he has gone home by this time. Well, we can only call around there and see."

A few minutes later the Brady presented themselves at the agent's office.

Once more fortune seemed to favor them, for Mr. Manders had not yet gone home.

"Old King Brady, the detective," said Mr. Manders, looking at the card presented. "I have often heard of the Bradys. What can I do for you?"

"We want to hire the vacant room at No. — Pell street for a short time," said Old King Brady.

"Yes. And why, may I ask?"

"We are working on a case of great importance which requires us to take up lodgings in that house."

"With the intention of interfering with the other tenants?"

"With the intention of ferreting out crime."

"Ah," said the agent. "That's another thing. Well, I suppose I can't refuse you. If I did I should only get the police down on top of me. Isn't that so, now?"

Old King Brady gave a smile which seemed to settle it, for he got the keys for the vacant rooms, and the agent got a month's rent in advance.

The Bradys did not take possession that night, however.

The case required care and time to develop.

So cleaners were engaged to put the rooms in order, and furniture of the style generally used by the Chinese was sent there.

A young Chinese boy superintended the arrangements.

This was Hip Hop, a Chinese boy picked up by the Bradys on their last trip to San Francisco, who at the time was acting as cook and steward for the detectives at the old house on Washington square, where they kept bachelor's hall.

Two evenings later the detectives prepared to start on their perilous undertaking.

On that evening at a little before eight o'clock a closed carriage drove rapidly through Pell street and stopped before the house in which Dr. Wing Wum had taken up his residence.

Two young Chinamen, stepping out, assisted an aged Celestial to alight.

This man was tall and bent over. His pigtail was now white, and he had a long white mustache which hung drooping in the Chinese style.

He wore green silk breeches, and a blouse trimmed out with gold buttons, always a sign of wealth with the Chinese.

The younger Chinks assisted him upstairs, and the hack drove away.

Many saw them come, and among others Dr. Wing Wum was a spectator, for he slightly opened his door and peered out as the old man was brought up.

What Dr. Wum thought of his new neighbors it is impossible to say, for he merely closed the door and locked it.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD KING BRADY FINDS HIMSELF UP AGAINST ANOTHER MOTT STREET MYSTERY.

Hip Hop had arranged everything very comfortably for the Bradys.

Any one entering the rooms would have supposed that the new tenants had come there to stay.

Yet the detectives would never have dreamed of bringing the Chinese boy along for their own comfort.

He was entirely necessary to the success of their plans, for they simply had to have some one with them who could talk Chinese.

Hip Hop had a good supper ready, and while he was serving them Old King Brady instructed him in what he had to do.

This consisted in getting acquainted with Dr. Wing Wum and his ways.

The Bradys expected to spend perhaps a week in doing this.

At the end of two days Old King Brady discovered that he was not going to find out anything about Dr. Wum by any such methods.

The doctor kept strictly to himself, and during that time never ventured beyond his door.

Old King Brady did the same, but Harry showed himself outside several times, always in company with Hip Hop.

They visited different Chinese stores in the neighborhood and made small purchases, taking pains to let every one see them.

Hip Hop did all the talking.

He explained that Harry, who was splendidly made up, was deaf and dumb, and even pretended to talk to him in sign language.

Hip Hop spoke in dialect himself, and was very shrewd with it all.

One evening, about four days after the Bradys had located in Chinatown, Harry, who had ventured to visit the Park Row office for the purpose of getting any letters that might be there, came in, to find Old King Brady alone, reading the evening paper and smoking a cigar.

"Where's Hip Hop?" he inquired.

"I sent him up to the house to get a few things," replied the old detective. "What's the news at the office?"

"Nothing special. Anything new here?"

"Not yet. The doctor has had several patients this evening. The last of them has just gone."

"This is getting to be slow business. I wonder if anything will turn up to-night?"

"I have an idea that something will. I—hark! There goes the bell again."

The bell was Dr. Wum's.

It was an old fashioned pull bell on the outside of his door.

Now it rang out loudly. Old King Brady slipped into the dark room which divided his apartment from those of the doctor.

Here the detectives had carefully bored two peepholes, so located that they could scarcely be discovered.

Fixing his eye to one, Old King Brady was able to see something of the interior of the room beyond.

The doctor was just opening the door, and Old King Brady saw him admit a woman, to whom he handed a chair.

Old King Brady immediately took his eye from the hole and clapped his ear there instead.

At once a woman's loud voice could be heard.

Harry at the other hole was listening also.

Louder and more angry the conversation grew.

Suddenly Old King Brady pulled away from the peep-hole, and began rapidly changing his clothes.

"Going to head her off?" breathed Harry.

"Yes."

"Know her?"

"Yes, I think so."

"What am I to do?"

"Stop here. I shall bring her back if I can."

"Wait. Be patient. Did you not hear Brander's name mentioned?"

"Yes; but I could not understand what was being said."

"Hold your ground. I am off now. That woman unquestionably holds the clew, to a part of the mystery at least."

Old King Brady was now the old original article again, and he lost no time in gliding downstairs.

Crossing Pell street, he took up his station in a doorway on the opposite side of the way.

The window of his apartments was partially open, as the night was rather warm, and the detective had not, as usual, drawn down the shade.

No woman had appeared in the doorway as yet, nor did any one appear for the next ten minutes.

Just then Hip Hop passed in.

Old King Brady was just beginning to wish that he had not been in quite such a hurry when all at once, glancing up to the window, he saw a shadow pass in front of the light.

"Heavens! Dr. Wum is in our rooms! What does this mean?" thought the old detective, recognizing the Chinese physician.

But there was no time, either to think or investigate, if he intended to carry out his own plans, for at that same moment a white woman wearing an expensive wrap appeared in the doorway.

This was the woman Old King Brady had been watching for.

Of course his whole attention was attracted at once.

The woman's face wore an expression of triumph.

She was strikingly beautiful.

The woman was an entire stranger to him.

Indeed he could not remember to have seen her before during his wanderings through Chinatown.

"Here is my job. Harry will have to look after himself," he thought.

The woman glanced around. She evidently saw Old King Brady in the doorway, but she paid no attention to him.

"She is no New Yorker," thought the detective. "I would be willing to bet that she is from Frisco."

He turned and followed her along into Pell street and on into Mott.

Here the woman showed herself a stranger by looking up at numbers.

At last, selecting the house from which Dr. Wing Wum had removed, she ascended the steps and passed in through the open door.

Old King Brady glided after her.

Noiselessly he ascended the stairs.

The woman was trying to fit a key into the door of Dr. Wum's former rooms.

Crouching on the stairs, the detective watched her through the bannisters.

The door opened, and as it did so the woman uttered a slight cry.

It was pretty dark in the hall, but the detective saw hands come out from behind the half open door and seize her.

"Help!"

Just once the cry sounded, and then the door closed upon her.

Old King Brady bounded upstairs, his rubber-soled shoes giving no sound.

As he threw himself against the door the cry for help came again.

The door flew open at his touch.

Some light came in through the window, and by it was seen a flash of knives.

The sound of a heavy fall, the scampering of felt-soled feet fell upon the detective's ear, and all in an instant as he forced his way into the room the excitement ceased and all was still.

"They have done her up!" thought Old King Brady, whipping out his revolver and also a dark lantern, which he flashed around.

There lay the woman on the floor all in a heap.

"Don't kill me! Don't kill me!" she panted, as the detective raised her up. "I take it all back. I'll never tell."

"Look up, daughter," whispered Old King Brady. "I'm no enemy of yours."

Then the girl seemed to get some comprehension of the situation and turned a white, scared face toward the detective.

"Oh," she murmured. "Help me out of this! Let me go! Am I under arrest?"

Old King Brady opened the lapel of his coat and silently showed his shield.

The girl staggered to her feet and leaned against the wall.

"Who are you?" she gasped.

"A detective, miss."

"Is this part of the programme? Are you going to finish the work of those yellow fiends—speak!"

"I'm down on no programme, miss. It's fortunate for you that I heard you cry and jumped in here in time to save your life."

"You saved it all right. In one instant I should have been dead, if you had not burst into the room."

"Who attacked you?"

"Chinks! Didn't you see?"

"It was too dark for me to see distinctly. Where are they now?"

"They fled through that door into the next room."

"We will leave this place at once."

"Why am I arrested?"

"Ah! Cannot you guess, you who just left Dr. Wing Wum?"

The girl moaned and fell back.

"It's a lie!" she gasped. "I had nothing at all to do with the murder of Ching Chow."

"We are gradually getting down to business," thought Old King Brady. "If I can only get her out of here without interference and back into my own rooms, or some other safe place."

He advanced toward the door, intending to see if there was any one lurking in the hall.

He had left it ajar, and expecting to find it so, started to push it open.

To his surprise, the door was not only closed, but tightly locked.

Once more Old King Brady found himself up against the mystery of that old Mott street dwelling.

He was now alone in the room.

The wounded woman had vanished. All was as still as death.

Old King Brady, clutching his revolver, started for the door dividing this room from the one beyond.

At the same instant a deep voice called out:

"Stand where you are, Old King Brady. Not another step as you value your life!"

CHAPTER VIII.

WUM THE WIZARD.

With Old King Brady, after several days of inaction, matters in the Mott street mystery had begun to move at last.

With Harry there had been also a new and strange turn to affairs, which must now be described.

Old King Brady had scarcely departed when Harry was startled by a knock on the door.

Startled because he had heard no one come upstairs or down, and there was now supposed to be nobody on that floor but himself and Dr. Wing Wum.

And Dr. Wum it proved to be.

The little, dried-up old Chink stood there staring at Harry through his hideous horn spectacles.

As the door opened he said something in Chinese.

Harry touched his fingers to his lips, and then to his ears and shook his head.

Again Dr. Wum tried it.

He reeled off a lot of gibberish, and pushing his way into the room, closed the door behind him.

Harry stood by the table, smiling and nodding.

That was the time Dr. Wing showed himself at the window.

Just at this juncture Hip Hop opened the door and entered.

Harry gave him a secret signal, previously arranged.

In case of meeting Dr. Wum Hip Hop had been fully instructed as to the part he had to play, and he started right in on his job now.

"No can hear! No can talk!" he said, adding a few words in Chinese.

What he said was that he was a Korean and could speak very little Chinese.

"Ha!" said Dr. Wum. "So, so! You cannot understand?"

"No," replied Hip Hop, and then the following conversation in broken English on both sides took place:

"This boy—he can no hear? He no can talk?"

Hip Hop assented.

"Where old man?"

"Gone out."

"When come back?"

Hip did the finger act.

Harry held up two fingers.

"In two hours," said Hip Hop.

Dr. Wum's eyes flashed. He looked at Harry with a most curious expression of countenance. Then he started in with Hip Hop in Chinese.

The shrewd Chinese boy, who understood every word, let him finish what he had to say and then coolly informed him that he could not understand a word.

Instead of being disturbed by this Harry, who had been closely watching the countenance of the Chinese doctor, could see that he looked greatly pleased.

"Can he write?" he asked—to follow out the doctor's pigeon English is tedious, and we propose to drop it.

"No," said Hip Hop.

"Has he always been deaf and dumb?"

"Yes," said Hip Hop.

"Is he Korean, too?"

"Yes."

"The old man is his father?"

"Yes."

"And he will not be back for two hours?"

"That is what he says."

"Yes," said the doctor. "Good-by."

He moved toward the door, when, suddenly wheeling around, he faced Hip Hop and pointed at him a short, slender rod of brass, which he must have slipped out of the flowing sleeve of his blouse, at the same time fixing upon him a pair of burning eyes.

The horn spectacles were gone now.

Such eyes Harry had never seen.

They seemed to fairly flash fire.

Hip Hop fell back before them, a strange expression coming over his face.

His own eyes were fixed upon the brass rod.

"They call this man a Wizard! By heavens, he is a Chinese hypnotist! That's what he is!" Young King Brady thought.

He had heard of such persons many times before.

Nearer and nearer the doctor came with the rod, until it touched Hip Hop on the forehead.

He then pronounced a few words in Chinese.

Hip Hop backed toward a lounge and sank down upon it in a deep sleep.

"He has got him, by gracious!" thought Harry, "but he can't get me."

He threw into his face a look of wonder, at the same time setting the full force of his will against Dr. Wum.

Up to this time the doctor had not even glanced at him.

Now suddenly he turned and faced him, and Harry saw him raise the rod.

Then a very singular thing happened.

From the minute he fixed his eyes upon the rod—and in spite of his determination not to, he did it—Harry could not remove his gaze to save his soul.

In silence they stood facing each other, and then, instead of advancing, as he had done in the case of Hip Hop, Dr. Wum began to back away.

Resolved not to follow the man, Harry found his resolution fly away like smoke.

He simply could not help following him.

And yet, let it be understood, Harry was not then unconscious. He knew just what he was doing now, and through most of all that followed.

The fact was, if he had but known it, Young King Brady was up against one of the most remarkable hypnotists of the age.

Dr. Wum came of a race which has practiced hypnotism in all ages.

This style of doing it is little known to the Western world, but in China it has long been recognized.

Young King Brady was destined to learn a lot about it before he got through.

And this was the way Young King Brady came to go into his neighbor's room. Once in, the door was closed and locked.

Not a word from Dr. Wum yet. He had not reached his proper place.

Still controlled by the power of the rod, or the eyes, or the doctor's will, or all three, Young King Brady was drawn into an inner room and again the door was locked.

This room was a small one—a "dark room," as such are called in New York. It had no window, but a small transom, which admitted air from the lightshaft.

On one side was a sort of workbench littered all over with bottles and flasks and queer chemical apparatus, some quite modern, others evidently Chinese.

In the middle of the floor stood a three-legged arrangement made of brass, with an open pot resting on the legs. Beneath the pot was a lamp.

Now Dr. Wum called out one Chinese word in a loud voice, repeating it three times.

This was the only time Harry lost consciousness.

It could only have been for a few moments.

When his wits returned he stood amazed.

Surely it was no exaggeration to call this man a wizard.

Young King Brady began to feel afraid.

He stood by the brazier, beneath which a fire had been lighted, entirely naked, except for a silken scarf tied about his middle.

His false pigtail had vanished, the yellow stain on his face and hands must have plainly showed.

Opposite to him stood Dr. Wum, still holding the rod and looking very grave.

"American boy," he said in his broken English, "you are exposed; you are no Chinaman. Probably you are a detective. Speak, I command you! You know you are not deaf and dumb!"

"It is so! I am not!"

Harry simply had to make this reply.

Dr. Wum threw a handful of dried herbs into the pot and a brilliant scarlet flame flared up, continuing to burn steadily.

"Watch the flame!" he ordered. "I remove the power of the rod from you. Watch the flame and tell the truth. Why are you here?"

"Because you ordered it."

"You feel that you must obey my orders?"

"I must. I cannot help it."

"Why did you come to this house?"

"Because I was told to by Old King Brady."

"It was Old King Brady who has been with you in that room for the last few days disguised in Chinese dress?"

"Yes."

"He is looking for Mr. Brander?"

"Yes."

"Now, Brady—I shall call you by your name—listen to me. Can you hear me very plainly?"

"I can hear you. It seems to me that I could not hear anything else but the sound of your voice."

"That is as it should be. I am now going to tell you something. Listen, please."

"I am listening."

"When I went into that room I went to get you. I never guessed that you were not what you seemed to be. My object was to try upon you the experiment of making a deaf and dumb person speak through the force of my will. I ordered you to prepare yourself for the ordeal and you obeyed me. You, yourself, removed your disguise and showed me what you were. Now that I know, my plan is different. I am seeking to learn through what you Americans call hypnotism certain secrets. You are to be my subject. You shall help me. I am ready now! Attention! I command! You obey! You know no power, acknowledge no force but the force of my will."

And to this long speech Harry listened in silence.

"You hear and understand?" demanded Dr. Wum.

"I hear all and understand all," Young King Brady replied.

"You are willing that I should use you for a subject for my investigations?"

"I am willing. I cannot refuse."

"Then watch the flame and behold!"

Reaching for a bottle from the workbench, Dr. Wum shook a handful of a whitish powder into the brazier.

Again the flame flashed up. Not scarlet this time, but an intense red.

"Look into the flame and tell me what you see," ordered the doctor, waving the brass rod several times. "Speak slowly in order that I may understand."

Then Harry saw nothing but the flame.

Dr. Wum seemed to understand and to be willing to wait.

At last a wonderful change came.

A perfect picture seemed to grow in the fire.

It was all in miniature. The figures were very small, but clear and distinct.

"Do you see?" demanded Dr. Wum.

"I see," replied Young King Brady. "I see an underground room. It seems to be a cellar. There are men moving about."

"Yes. White men?"

"No; Chinamen. There is a white man lying on the floor."

"Do you know him?"

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

"He is Old King Brady, my partner."

"What!"

"He is Old King Brady, my partner."

Dr. Wum was perplexed and astonished, but he checked himself and demanded:

"What else do you see?"

"I see a woman. She is a prisoner. Her hands are tied behind her."

"A tall white woman?"

"Yes."

"You are sure that she is a prisoner?"

"Yes."

"What else do you see?"

"Now I see a door opening. A man is coming into the cellar."

"A white man?"

"Yes."

"Describe him."

"He is tall and dark. He wears a high hat; he is fashionably dressed. Some would call him handsome, but his face has a wicked look. I think he is a bad man."

"Yes. Now let the picture make its changes and tell me what you see."

"The white man is talking to the woman. She seems to be angry with him."

"Next! What next!"

"He points to the wall. There is a hole in it. They have removed a stone. He looks into the hole. It is empty, and yet he seems to think there should be something in that hole, which there is not."

"Ha! ha!" chuckled Dr. Wum. "So I have fooled them! So I have fooled them all!"

CHAPTER IX.

ALONE IN THE DARK.

Old King Brady standing in the doorway could see no one as that stern voice called out the word of command.

"What brought you here?" demanded the voice.

"My business," replied Old King Brady. "If I am interfering with yours, my friend, then open the door behind me and let me go."

"The proposition is well put," said the voice. "You are interfering with my business by your presence in this place. I demand to know what brought you here."

"If you have any demands to make of me, why not step out into the light of my lantern and show yourself like a man?"

"For the excellent reason that I do not choose to do so. Answer my question, please."

"I cannot answer your question without exposing my business to one whom I cannot see, and that I do not choose to do."

"Do you fancy yourself still working on the case of Mrs. Ching Chow?"

"Yes, since you persist. I am working on the case of Mrs. Ching Chow."

"You were distinctly ordered to cut it out and you were most liberally paid for so doing. Why do you persist?"

"You seem to know all about my business. I will therefore tell you that there are those who desire to find a certain man missing since the beginning of this mystery."

"You refer to Brander, of Beaver street?"

"I do."

"Brander, of Beaver street, does not wish to be found."

"Am I to take the word of one who is ashamed to show his face for that?"

"You are to take the word of Brander himself. He so wrote you at the time he sent you a two thousand dollar check."

"I admit that is true, but it is a matter of three weeks ago."

"What has the lapse of time to do with it? An order is an order. Mr. Brander put no time limit upon his order, I believe?"

"That is so."

"Then listen to me. You have no right to take your orders from Mr. Brander's bookkeeper, who is not in his confidence. I am in his confidence. It is Mr. Brander's order that you immediately depart from this place and concern yourself about his affairs no longer."

"Very well. Under the circumstances I will take my departure if you will open the door."

"Enough," replied the voice. "It will be impossible for me to open the door you came in by, but I will open the one in this room which leads into the hall. Pass out and trouble yourself about this business no further. Death awaits you if you do not heed this command. Come, now!"

Old King Brady advanced into the room.

He still had his dark lantern in commission and the light showed him a tall man wearing a high hat standing close to the outer door.

He wore a black silk mask on his face and held a cocked revolver in his hand.

"Good night, Mr. Brady!" he said, in a deep voice.

"Good night," replied Old King Brady, still advancing toward the door.

Then came the surprise.

Suddenly the floor sank beneath them, and not only Old King Brady, but the man with the mask went whirling down.

It was an accident, of course.

"Ten thousand fiends!" Old King Brady heard the fellow shout as they went down.

And as they fell the revolver was discharged.

Old King Brady landed on a feather bed with the man on top of him.

The fall had been a long one, and the old detective was pretty badly shaken up.

Before he could move, the masked man had him by the throat.

"You yellow fiend!" he roared. "What did you open the trap for with me standing on it. Here! Quick! A light! I've got the detective foul. Hurry up, there! Lose no time!"

They were in total darkness, for Old King Brady's lantern had been put out of business by the fall.

A light flashed and several Chinamen came running in.

The man's grip was like iron. To shake him off as he lay there was quite impossible for the old detective to do. Then the Chinamen fell upon him and tied him hand and foot.

By this time Old King Brady had, to a certain extent, taken in his surroundings.

He lay on the floor of a cellar. The feather bed alone had saved him.

Near by stood the woman, with her hands behind her tied to a post.

It was a clean knockout for the old detective, and he could only abide the result.

The man now burst out into a torrent of abuse against the Chinks for opening the trapdoor without having received the signal agreed upon.

His speech was a mixture of slang and Chinese, and by no means easy for Old King Brady to understand.

Meanwhile the detective was studying his face, for the man's mask had dropped off, leaving it exposed.

"I don't know that fellow at all," thought Old King Brady; "but he looks something like Mr. Brander, too. I shouldn't wonder if I was dealing with Alfred Harper, the nephew. I suppose I shall find out by and by."

The man now began to cool down, for it takes two to keep up a quarrel, and the Chinamen had said very little in reply.

"So, Mr. Brady," he said, "I cannot let you escape after all. I suppose you don't want my word for it that it was all an accident, seeing that I took a tumble myself."

"I don't need your word for it. I am quite satisfied that it was an accident," Old King Brady quietly replied. "But what's the matter with still letting me go? I have seen nothing and heard nothing."

"You have seen me," the girl spoke up, "and you hear me now when I say that I am a helpless prisoner in the hands of this fiend. Won't you plead for me, too?"

"Marietta, you're a fool," hissed the man. "If you had kept your mouth shut I might have spared you. Now it is too late. You must either tell what you know or take the consequences. As for Old King Brady, you have nothing at all to do with him. Leave him entirely to me."

"Kill me if you dare!" cried the girl. "That will help you a lot. Best thing you can do is to promise to marry me this very day and let me tell you where Ching Chow hid his wealth."

"Ah! And so Dr. Wing Wum did tell you, did he?" cried the man, turning fiercely upon her.

"Tell what?" drawled the girl, in a sneering tone.

"Haven't I just told you what?"

"Dr. Wum told me of a secret hole in this cellar, Al Harper, if that is what you want to know!"

"Cut names out of it!" stormed the man, stamping his foot in a rage. "At least if you have to call names, why not give a fellow his own and not another's?"

The girl laughed mockingly.

"This is an old quarrel, and he is Alfred Harper all right," thought Old King Brady. "I'm afraid there is but little hope that Mr. Brander still lives if this fellow is sole heir to his wealth."

And while these thoughts were passing through Old

King Brady's mind the man stood whispering to Marietta, in a voice too low even for the detective's sharp ears.

"You promise?" demanded Marietta.

"I promise," he said.

"Then once more I'll take you at your word. I'll tell you what Dr. Wum told me. It is that wall which you are now facing. Count four stones to the right from the corner of the second tier and you will see a small staple driven into the stone."

"I see! I see!" cried the man, flashing the lantern which he seized from one of the Chinamen against the wall.

"Well, then you see the hiding-place of Ching Chow's treasure as told by Dr. Wing Wum. It's all I know and all you will ever find out through me. Now make the most of it and make me your wife, as you have promised. You might get a duller one and a worse looking one, isn't that so, Al?"

The look he gave her was one of fierce hatred.

He turned away without a word and advanced toward the stone.

Setting down the lantern, the Chinamen standing by watching his movements, he seized the staple and pulled.

The stone moved outward, seemingly set on hinges.

The man flashed the lantern in through the opening and sprang up with a cry of rage.

"You have fooled me!" he shouted. "The place is empty. Tell me what became of the money? Tell me quick or you die!"

For the first time a look of real terror came over the girl's face.

"Hold on, Al! Hold on!" she cried. "Don't kill me, for heaven sake. I've told you, what Wing Wum told me. That's all I know."

He stood regarding her gloomily and looking into the empty hole in the wall.

Just as Young King Brady had described the picture in the fire, so it was here now.

"Well, I guess you are telling the truth, Etta," he said, at last. "Still you may be fooling me. I'll get around to Pell street and tackle the doctor myself; meanwhile you and this old meddler can stop where you are. I'll decide your fate later on."

"Come on, boys!" he added, turning to the Chinamen. "We don't get the cash this trip, but we will the next."

As he thus spoke the man stepped back out of sight, the Chinamen following him.

In a second the light vanished and their footsteps ceased to be heard.

"He has gone," said Old King Brady. "We are left here alone. Now is our chance to escape!"

"Escape! What good would it do me to escape?" groaned the girl. "That's all right for you, but it's different with me. I love that man, but he hates me. If I can't be his wife I had rather be dead."

"That sort of talk may suit you all right, but it don't suit me," said Old King Brady, who was working at his

bonds. "For my part, I don't see why a likely girl such as you are should waste her affections on a man of that sort. Why not cut him out and begin all over again. Come now, you want to think about that."

The girl made no reply. Old King Brady could hear her sobbing.

"I wonder who she is and what she knows?" thought the old detective, as he continued to tug away at the cords.

He was surely loosening them. In a moment he would be free.

Suddenly the girl broke out with a hysterical laugh.

"I'll do it!" she exclaimed. "If you can get me out of this I'll do it. I have had enough of Chinks and hop fiends, and that's what that man is. But how to get free?"

"I am free!" cried Old King Brady, springing to his feet. "Now then, daughter, do you know the way out of this place?"

"That's what I don't," was the reply. "Look out! You will cut my hand in the dark."

"I shall cut nothing but the cord which holds you a prisoner to that post, but you want to cut out that man."

He severed the cord as he spoke.

"I'll do it!" repeated the girl. "I'll stand in with you, Mr. Brady. What you say is true. Al Harper hates me and I will never crawl at his feet again."

"Well resolved, and see that you stick to it," said Old King Brady. "Tell me what you know and we will act together, but first tell me if Alfred Harper is really that man's name."

"Of course it is. He is a scoundrel, and——"

"And the nephew of the wealthy Mr. Brander, who has been missing for weeks. Help me to find him if he still lives and is held a prisoner by this fellow and I have no doubt he will reward you well."

"Do you think so?"

"I'm sure of it. Do you know——"

"I know that Mr. Brander lives and is held a prisoner by Al Harper, as you say."

"Good! And you know where?"

"I do. I saw him not an hour ago."

Matters were growing interesting.

"If I can only keep the girl in this frame of mind I may win out in this case yet," thought Old King Brady.

"Where is he?" he quietly asked.

"In a room up the Bowery. I forget the number, but I can take you to the place if we can only get out of here."

But there was the big if.

What was to be done there in the darkness?

For five minutes and more Old King Brady groped about along the cellar walls, working as best he could by feeling, but he could find nothing like a door.

During this time the girl made one or two remarks, but now for several minutes she had not spoken.

"I'm afraid we can't do much this way," said the detective, at last. "Unfortunately I seem to be out of matches. It's a bad job."

There was no answer.

"Didn't you hear me, daughter?" cried Old King Brady.

"Why don't you speak?"

Still there was no answer.

"Speak!" called Old King Brady, still louder.

Still the same mysterious silence.

"Good heavens! The girl has found a way out and has given me the slip!" thought Old King Brady.

With his hands spread out before him he pushed about the cellar this way and that, but could find no one.

"She lied to me!" murmured Old King Brady again.

"She did know the way out and I have let her escape!"

Evidently it was so.

The girl had gone and Old King Brady was left there in the darkness alone.

CHAPTER X.

EVERYBODY OFF FOR BOSTON.

If Old King Brady was in a bad fix Harry was in one almost as bad.

As for the Mott street mystery, it appeared to have grown more mysterious than ever.

In fact, it was such a tangled snarl as to look almost hopeless.

At least such was Old King Brady's thought, as he groped about in the darkness of the cellar.

As for Young King Brady, his thoughts just then were Dr. Wing Wum's thoughts.

On his own account Harry was not capable of thinking anything at all.

Wum, the wizard's, next move smacked very much of the ways of the cheap fortune teller.

He went to a drawer and took out a paper, and from the paper drew out a lock of hair.

This he placed in Harry's hand and directed him to put it against his forehead.

"Now you see more pictures in the fire," he said. "Look! Look! Tell me what you see."

It was the same as before. For several minutes Harry could see nothing.

Then the pictures began to come.

"I see a man lying in a bunk," he said.

"Yes," replied Dr. Wum. "Do you know the man?"

"I do. It is Mr. Brander."

"Good! This is what I want. Tell me what else you see."

"There is nothing to tell. It is just a little room with almost no furniture."

"But the room is in a house and the house is on a street. Get out of the house and see what street it is. Let the picture come."

It came.

"I see!" said Harry. "This looks like Chinatown, but not this Chinatown. Some other."

"Well."

"I have been in this place before. Let me see—it is not San Francisco. I have it! This is Chinatown in Boston."

"Yes, yes!" cried the wizard, much pleased. "The street! The number! Be quick! Let the picture come!"

"I can see a lamp-post. It has a street sign. It reads Harrison Avenue."

"That's it. The number."

"I can see the front of the house. I think it must be the house where I saw Brander. I cannot see any number. I don't think there can be any on the door. I——"

Suddenly the lock of hair dropped from Harry's hand.

As it fell Dr. Wum gave a chuckling laugh.

"That is enough!" he cried. "Awake now. Be master of your own mind again!"

He shook a grayish powder into the brazier and the flames were instantly extinguished.

At the same time the Wizard lit the gas.

Restored to full consciousness, Harry forgot no part of what had occurred.

He was disturbed and somewhat frightened.

"Where are my clothes?" he demanded. "Do you mean to keep me a prisoner here? I don't like this kind of work. I——"

"Take it easy," said Dr. Wum, in his broken way. "You are a detective. You want to find George Brander. So do I. All I have done is to help you. Now, you help me and I will pay you well. Between us we will find him. You have done much business in your way, but this business shall pay you better than all the rest if you will work for me. Do you agree to this?"

"Yes, providing you will take my partner in the deal, too."

"Will he agree?"

"He will if I ask him."

"It shall be so. Listen. The pictures you saw are true pictures. Your partner is now a prisoner. I will help you to release him. We must be cautious, though. We are working against bad men."

"What men?"

"You have heard of the Highbinders?"

"Yes."

"They are the men. They will kill us both if they suspect what we are going to do. There is also another, the white man you saw. He is worse than all. Very likely he will be here in a minute. He thinks I know what I do not know. He will try to make me tell, and if I refuse to tell he will very likely kill me. Hark! I hear someone on the stairs! Come! Be quick!"

"But where would you go?" demanded Harry, holding back. "I have no clothes. I——"

"Only to your own room. We shall be safe there."

Dr. Wum opened the door and they slipped into the room the Bradys had hired, locking themselves in.

Hip Hop still lay asleep on the lounge and Harry's clothes lay near him.

At the same moment a heavy step was heard in the hall and there was a furious ringing of Dr. Wum's bell.

"Put on your clothes! Quick," said the doctor. "He may come here—he must not suspect."

Harry quickly resumed his disguise even to adjusting the false pigtail.

Meanwhile the racket next door continued. Suddenly there was a crash.

"He has kicked my door in!" cried Dr. Wum. "Ha! He will find the cage empty and the bird flown. I will wake up the boy. If that man comes in here he shall do the talking and we will hide."

He made passes over Hip Hop, who immediately sat up on the lounge and stared about him.

"Did I go to sleep, boss?" he asked, in a confused way.

"What is the matter with me?"

"It is all right, Hip. I am going away with Dr. Wum," replied Harry, who was quite recovered now. "If Old King Brady comes give him this."

Hastily producing his notebook, Harry tore out a leaf and wrote as follows:

"Governor, I am standing in with Dr. Wum. If I should not see you, follow me to Boston. Look for me on Harrison avenue, Chinatown. H."

Dr. Wum eyed the paper suspiciously. "Read it," he said.

Harry did so.

"Good," said the doctor. "That is right. However, we will find him. Now let us go."

The noise in the next room had ceased. They could hear the man's footsteps descending the stairs.

"You go first," said the doctor. "If he has gone whistle and I will come after you."

Harry descended to the street. He could see no one except the usual crowd of Chinamen moving about and he whistled.

The doctor immediately joined him.

"Come with me," he said. "If they have not killed Old King Brady we shall find him."

He led the way to the Mott street house.

There were a few Chinamen standing around the doorway, but nobody paid the least attention to them.

Dr. Wum led the way down into the cellar.

It was very dark, but the doctor had matches and he struck one.

"I can do better than that," said Harry, and he produced his little electric dark lantern.

He immediately perceived that the cellar was much narrower than it should be. It only extended under half the building.

Dr. Wum walked over to one corner of the wall and, stooping down, pressed some hidden spring.

One particularly large stone swung back.

"In there," said the doctor, and Harry flashed his light inside.

He found himself looking into another cellar about the size of the one they were in.

The place was deserted, however.

They passed in and Harry recognized this cellar as the one he had seen in the picture in the flames.

There was the opening in the wall; there were the cords lying on the floor.

"He is gone! We are too late!" said Dr. Wum. "We must give it up."

"Is there no chance that these people have hidden him somewhere in the house?" demanded Young King Brady.

"No," replied the doctor. There is no chance. He is not here. Where he is gone I cannot tell, but we must go to Boston, if you still intend to keep your word."

Young King Brady had already made up his mind to do so.

A clew had come into his hands in a manner most strange. Where it would end it was, of course, impossible to say; but it was something to have put himself next to Dr. Wum, and Harry determined to stay there.

As for Old King Brady, no one knew better than he did that the old detective was amply able to take care of himself.

"When do you want to go to Boston?" he asked.

"Just as soon as we can," was the reply. "What time is it now?"

Harry looked at his watch and saw that it was nine o'clock.

"There is a train at ten," he said, "and another at eleven. Both will get us in early to-morrow morning. The first goes a longer way."

"No matter. Let us take it," said the doctor. "We will return to my place and get ready. I don't think we shall be disturbed again to-night."

When they reached Pell street Hip Hop met them at the door.

"Boss, he come here," he said. "I give him letter. He gimme ddis."

He handed Harry a scrap of paper doubled up.

Harry spread it out and read as follows:

"Harry: I have your note. Strange! We both seem to have struck a clew. I go to Boston, too. I am going on the 11 o'clock train. It is best that you should not be with me, but work your clew your own way, therefore you had better take the 10 o'clock train if this comes into your hands in time. Look for me in Chinatown. I think we are on the road to success.

"Yours as ever,

"O. K. B."

"What does he say?" demanded Dr. Wum.

Harry felt that he could not do better than to show full confidence in the doctor, so he read the letter.

It seemed to disturb Dr. Wum.

"I don't know! I don't know!" he said. "But we shall see him in Boston. Then we know. We can do nothing else but go right along."

And so it came about that Young King Brady, still in his Chinese disguise, departed for Boston on the 10 o'clock express via Springfield.

Old King Brady, accompanied by a young Chinaman, left on the 11 o'clock train on the same line.

How this came about must now be explained, and in order to explain it we must return to the cellar where we left the old detective a prisoner in the dark.

Not more than two minutes from the time when Old King Brady discovered that the girl had vanished there was something doing.

Old King Brady had started in to make a thorough examination of the walls of his prison again.

This time he felt his way along inch by inch.

Not within his recollection had the old detective been caught minus matches. He could not understand how he came to be without them now.

Old King Brady had reached the end of this line of wall and was just starting on the next, when all at once a light was flashed down from above.

It streamed down the still open trap and a voice was heard calling:

"Hey, boss! Boss Brady! Is youse down dere? Is youse alive?"

Looking up Old King Brady could see a hand holding a lantern and a dirty face peering down at him through the open trap.

"Hey, boss!" cried the voice again. "Jest holler if youse is alive down dere. Hey, boss! Hey!"

Now Old King Brady shouted.

He had caught sight of the face and knew with whom he had to deal. It was little Danny Ryan, the despised waif of Chinatown. Danny, the Low Gow Gui.

CHAPTER XI.

OLD KING BRADY GOES OVER TO THE ENEMY.

Old King Brady had seen and talked with Danny Ryan. Before the Bradys moved into the Pell street room Harry introduced Danny to the old detective, who spoke kindly to the boy and promised him a reward if he would keep his eyes open for Mr. Brander, as he drifted about Chinatown.

Danny promised, but as Old King Brady had seen nothing of the boy since he had about given up thinking of him.

Most opportunely the lad had turned up now.

"And are you there, Danny?" called Old King Brady. "Good boy! What's the word."

"Say, boss, I was a watching you," called Danny. "I knowed dey meant to do yer, and here I be wid a rope, so I can pull you up."

"Good boy, Danny! But you never can pull me up in the world."

"Yes I kin. I've took a turn around de door knob. I'm stronger dan you'd t'ink for. I kin do it. Mebbe you kin help yourself a bit by climbing, too."

"Sure I can. Let the rope come, Danny."

It came rattling down and Old King Brady caught it.

"Now, then, I'm coming up hand over hand, and you pull, too, Danny!" he called.

There was a time when Old King Brady could do almost anything on a rope, and he has not forgotten how even yet.

With Danny pulling at the other end, which was some help, the detective found himself back in Dr. Wum's old rooms in no time.

"Give me your hand, Danny Ryan!" he said, heartily.

"I owe you a lot for this, and you will get it, too."

"And would you shake hands wid a Low Gow, boss? You, one of de biggest detectives in de hull' world?"

"Sure I would, and here's the shake. Now let us get out of this," Old King Brady replied.

"Hold on, boss! Hold on! You are in de greatest danger here. Mebbe you don't know dat dere is Highbinders what live on de floor below."

"I'm not surprised to hear it."

"Besides dat, dere's a bloke what's swore to do yer. He jest went outer here awhile ago. I was a shadowing on you, and I seen you go in here. You come down Pell street after Big Etta Fonducq. You went in an' you didn't come out, so I says to myself, Old King Brady is in danger and I must help him, so I sneaks up here and come near falling into de trap. I listened and heard der talk. Den I went for de rope an' de lantern, an' as I was comin' along I seen Harper going out, an' in a few minutes I seen Etta come out, too. You see, I waited 'cause dere was Highbinders a-standin' in front of de door. I watched my chance and slipped in, and here I am, and say, I've got a whole lot to tell you and mebbe you will teach me to be a detective when you hear, and you've gotter go to Boston if you wanter find Brander, and dat's de way it all is."

Danny was breathless when he had finished, and then saying, "Look at dese papes—mebbe dey'll tell you something about it all," he thrust three letters into Old King Brady's hand.

Here was a valuable ally. Old King Brady merely glanced over the letters and then, thrusting them into his pocket, said: "Come. I'll see to the Highbinders. We must get out of here right now."

There were no Highbinders below now. In fact, there was no one at all around the door.

Old King Brady hurried the Low Gow through to Chat-ham Square and took him into the back room of a saloon.

Here he produced the three letters and read them through to the end.

"Where did you get these, Danny?" he asked.

"In High Jack's hop joint, boss. Dat bloke Harper was smokin' in dere dis afternoon an' I swiped 'em. I was cooking for him and I heard him tell Big Etta Fon-

ducq, what was smokin' wid him, dat dey was goin' to put you out of business if dey got de chance. An' den he spoke of de papes, an' said what you would give to get hold of dem. When dey got asleep I swiped 'em. Dat's all."

"Did you read them, Danny?"

"I can't read, boss; but I took dem to a feller who can, and he said if you was looking for Brander you'd have to go to Boston to get him. An' so I t'ought mebbe you'd take me along. I can understand Chink talk an' talk it, too. Mebbe I could be of some use to yer. Youse need watchin'. What would youse have done widout me to-night—say?"

"Danny, you are right," replied Old King Brady. "I do need you. I shall go to Boston and you shall go with me. Come, that's settled. We will start right now."

The clew discovered by Old King Brady was a most important one.

In fact, the letters contained a clew to the whole mystery, and will be referred to again later.

Now Old King Brady, with the Low Gow at his heels, hurried to the Pell street rooms to find Hip Hop alone and to receive Harry's note.

"Astonishing!" thought the old detective. "Can the boy have struck the same clew? How that can be I can't understand."

Hip Hop's story did not help much.

He told how Dr. Wum came in and put him to sleep by pointing a brass rod at him; how, when he woke up, he found Harry with no clothes on, and how somebody came and broke in the doctor's door.

It was all a jumble, and Old King Brady could make nothing of it.

He gave up trying, left the note and departed.

Taking Danny to Muller, the Bowery costumer, he rigged the boy out with a perfect Chinese disguise and presented him twenty-five dollars, which to the Low Gow was a fortune.

At eleven o'clock Old King Brady started for Boston.

Not wishing to interfere with Harry's arrangements, he had stated in the note that he thought he had better go alone.

Danny went to sleep in his berth as soon as the train started, but Old King Brady took his seat in the smoking compartment of the sleeper and was just preparing to read the letters again when a gentleman entered.

Old King Brady hastily thrust the letters into his coat pocket and proceeded to light a cigar.

He was the only person in the smoking-room except the man who now stood staring at him in the doorway.

For a moment neither one spoke a word.

The newcomer was the first to break silence.

He dropped into a seat opposite the detective, exclaiming: "Well! This beats the band!"

"What band?" demanded Old King Brady, quietly. "Do you refer to the Order of the Golden Sun?"

The man straightened up and clenched his hands.

"Of course you are Old King Brady, the detective?" he gasped. "I am making no mistake?"

"None whatever, my friend. I am just as surely Old King Brady as you are Mr. Alfred Harper, of the firm of Brander & Co."

"How did you come here?"

"Pardon me. That isn't what you mean to say. You mean, how did I come to escape from the prison to which you consigned me, where I should most likely have been murdered by Highbinders by this time if I had remained."

"That's what you would."

"So I thought. Now, Mr. Harper, you have been playing a bold game, but bold as you are, you will scarcely dare to attempt my murder here, particularly as I am well armed, so let us sit down and have a little friendly talk."

For a moment Harper hesitated as to his reply.

"All right, so be it," he said. "Let us be friends. I don't see where it is going to pay us to be enemies. Let's have a smoke together. Come, what do you say?"

"It's what I have just said. You take my words out of my mouth."

"That's all right. Now, Brady, what is your understanding of this case?"

"Do you expect me to tell you?"

"To be frank with you, I don't."

"Then I am going to surprise you by doing just that very thing. Listen to me."

"Oh, I'll listen. Don't fret yourself on that score."

"Well, my understanding of the case is just this: Your uncle, Brander, is the son of an old China merchant, and was born in the city of Canton, where he lived until he was thirty years old. He had a foster-brother who was a Chinese boy, the son of his nurse. His name was Ching Chow. They grew up like brothers, and only separated when Brander returned to this country. Later, Ching Chow settled in San Francisco, where he made money in opium smuggling. Your uncle was in the deal, and also made thousands out of crooked hop."

"Where did you learn all that?" cried Harper, in amazement.

"No matter; listen. Both George Brander and Ching Chow belonged to the Chinese secret society of the Golden Sun. Probably Brander was the only white man ever admitted. One of the rules of the society is that when a man dies his wealth is divided among all the other members. Ching Chow was murdered by Highbinders. He long expected it, having incurred their ill-will. The members of the Golden Sun should have protected him, but they did not; he grew angry with them on that account and pulled away. Fully anticipating death, he turned his wealth into cash and sent it East to Brander. It reached him a few days before the murder. Ching Chow expected to follow his money, but he never got the chance.

"All true, every word of it!" cried Harper, "but I cannot understand how you learned it all."

"Never mind. Ching Chow was married to a Chinese woman of the highest caste, a princess of the royal blood,

it is said. Such women are always kept secreted by their Chinese husbands, and are almost worshiped as goddesses by the common Chinese. Mrs. Ching Chow was so secreted. By her husband's direction she was to be sent to Brander after a certain time had elapsed in case of his death. This was done; but, being done, it came to the ears of the New York Highbinders, who had sworn to kill Mrs. Ching Chow. To protect the woman she was consigned to one Dr. Wing Wum. This by Brander's directions. He was not aware that Wum was a Highbinder. He thought him his friend."

"True—all true! But——"

"Listen. Mrs. Ching Chow was met at the station by Wing Wum. This man is known as a wizard among the Chinese. He is a skilled chemist and also a powerful hypnotizer. He had sworn to protect Mrs. Ching Chow, and he feared to take her to Chinatown; so he drugged her, boxed her up and sent her to Brander, partly out of spite, no doubt. The Highbinders got wind of it—the job was done in a Bowery laundry. They visited Brander's place in full force, all eager to get a look at the woman, but she was not there."

"You had taken her away, Brady."

"True, and I did it at your uncle's request. Not knowing what else to do with her, and he was most anxious to get rid of her, I took her to Wing Wum, who was now glad to receive her. He had fulfilled his promise to your uncle, and, getting the woman back, he promptly sold her to the Highbinders, who sent her back to Frisco, where she is now."

"True again. It beats all how you found it out."

"Never mind that, but hear the end. Your uncle is an inveterate hop fiend and smokes in the joints. Fearing the Highbinders, he took it into his head to disappear. He went to Boston, secreted himself in Chinatown there and then you saw him the other day, hearing of him through the girl Etta Fonducq."

"That is all so."

"He sent you word that Wing Wum had Ching Chow's money in charge and you believed it until to-night. The Fonducq girl and you visited Dr. Wum. You put in a claim for the money, pretending that your uncle was dead.

"The doctor told you that he would give it up in exchange for a lock of Brander's hair. Why he wanted it you don't know, nor do I; but Etta Fonducq visited Brander in Boston, got the hair and took it to Dr. Wum to-night. In exchange, the doctor told the girl about the secret cellar in Mott street and how the money was concealed there. You believed it. You went there; you quarreled with the girl, as you always do; she refused to tell until you promised to marry her. Then she told and you found you had been fooled. As for the rest, the girl escaped after I set her free and now we are both on our way to Boston to look up Brander and learn the truth about the money. That, I think, Mr. Harper, is the end of my story. Now you may say your say."

"What I say is that you are a most wonderful man, Mr.

Brady. I'd give a whole lot to know how you ever found all this out."

"That you never will know, but you know my position now. How stands the case between us? Is it to be peace or war?"

It all sounded so mysterious to Harper, and yet it was so simple.

The letters in Old King Brady's pocket given him by the Low Gow Gui contained most of the story. They had been written by Brander to his nephew explaining all. They also contained directions as to the business, but gave no address where Brander could be found.

As for the rest of Old King Brady's statement concerning Harper's dealings with Dr. Wing Wum and the Fonducq girl, Danny Ryan had told that to Old King Brady, drawing the information from the conversation which took place between the pair while he was cooking opium pills for them in the Mott street joint.

For some time Harper puffed his cigar in silence.

"Brady," he said at last, "let there be peace between us. The whole amount of the matter is my uncle is a back-number and I am a high-roller. I am his only heir and I want his wealth before I get too old to enjoy it. Stand in with me and if we succeed in getting hold of Ching Chow's money and my uncle should happen to die in a Boston hop joint there will be a rakeoff for you which will make your head swim. Come, now! What do you say?"

"Well," thought Old King Brady, "I have had a good many queer propositions put to me in my time, but here is one to have me turn murderer. That's brand-new. I'll stand in with this man and see what comes of it."

"That's all right, Mr. Harper," he said, aloud. "Let there be peace between us on your own terms."

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

On the ten o'clock train going to Boston Dr. Wing Wum undertook to instruct Young King Brady in the art of hypnotism, Chinese style.

According to Dr. Wum, if you wanted to locate a missing person a lock of hair was essential.

He informed Harry that since Brander gave him the slip he had gone to great lengths to find him, and that when the girl, Etta Fonducq, turned up claiming to know where he was, he struck a bargain with her to get him a lock of Brander's hair, in order that he might be able to locate the man in case he should get on the move.

Just what he expected to do with Brander when he found him, Wing Wum did not explain.

The idea seemed to be to get the importer away from his Chinese associates and into some private place where Dr. Wum could deal with him alone.

Harry assumed that this was Highbinder business, and probably he was right.

When they reached Boston Harry took his Chinese doc-

tor to a small hotel on Kneeland street and engaged rooms. After breakfast the doctor wanted to try his hypnotism on him again.

"What's the use?" said Young King Brady. "It won't help us any; besides, you haven't got that brass furnace of yours."

Dr. Wum explained that the fire and rod were merely for the purpose of fixing the mind of his subject upon one thing so that he could better control it, and in his broken English he launched out into a long dissertation on hypnotism again, keeping it up until Harry grew tired of listening and cut him short.

"Now come, Doctor," he said, "we are only wasting time with all this talk. I have been thinking a good deal about the matter, and I tell you what I propose. You want Brander, but you seem afraid to make the rounds of the hop joints for reasons of your own. Let me do that first alone and in my proper dress. If I don't succeed in finding him I will turn Chink again and we will try it some other way."

To this the doctor assented, and Young King Brady, resuming his usual dress, started out in the early morning to do Chinatown.

Young King Brady steered for Harrison avenue and Essex street and began his inquiries in the opium joint of one Hop Lee, a place to which he had been several times before.

Hop Lee recognized the detective and received him in true Chinese style, with that smile which was child-like and bland.

"Blander!" he exclaimed. "Yes me know Blander. What want him for?"

"I want to talk business with him," said Harry. "He has been away from his place of business in New York for several weeks now, and there are many things which need his attention. If you can tell me where he is you will lose nothing by it."

"Allee light," replied Hop Lee. "Me know. You come. How much you give?"

"Ten dollars."

"Not enough muchee. Mebbe you hunt long time and no find Blander. Give me twenty dollar and me takee you to him right now."

It was a question in Young King Brady's mind if it was worth it. Perhaps, after all, Brander did not want to be found, but at last he paid the cash.

Hop Lee then took him up Harrison avenue and pointed out an old house, the front of which had been altered over in Chinese style.

"Dat de place," he said. "Go upstairs. Blander now is in joint; he have plivate room top floor. He live dere tree weeks now. He come my place yesterday. He most dead. Too muchee hop."

Thus saying, the Chinaman turned on his heel and departed, leaving Harry considerably disgusted with himself, for it looked to him very much as if he had paid his money for nothing.

But he could not hold Hop Lee without creating a scene, so he pushed on upstairs, meeting no one.

There were four rooms on the top floor.

Three were locked, but when he tried the door of the front chamber it yielded to his touch.

Harry pushed it open and found himself looking at a strange sight.

In one corner stretched out in a bunk lay an elderly man, whose face was as white as chalk, either dead or in a profound slumber, to all appearance.

He was dressed only in his underclothes, and by the side of the bunk was an opium layout upon a little stool, all but the pipe, which was clutched in the man's hand.

At the head of the bed stood a table, upon which lay piles and piles of greenbacks. There was a paper and pencil also. It looked as though the man had been engaged in counting money when overcome with sleep.

"It is Brander!" exclaimed Harry, pressing forward. "Heavens! Look at the dough! Is the man dead?"

He bent over the table and began handling the bills.

There were thousands of dollars. Harry had hastily counted up to ten thousand, mostly in fives and tens, when all at once Brander opened his eyes and, with the yell of a demon, leaped out of the bunk and before Harry could pull away he had clutched him by the throat.

"My money! My money!" he shouted. "How dare you rob me! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! I know! You are a fiend! You grow out of the hop! But I'll fix you! I'll fix you! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

It was impossible for Harry to disengage himself.

With a dextrous twist of his leg Brander tripped him up and threw him to the floor.

Tighter and tighter he pressed Young King Brady's throat.

It looked as though Young King Brady's last hour had come.

* * * * *

After a little further talk with Alfred Harper, Old King Brady left him and retired to his berth.

No sleep came to the old detective until almost morning.

He could not get his mind off the Mott street mystery, which, in spite of the explanation contained in the letters, was to his mind a good deal of a mystery still.

The letters were worded in a strange, wild way.

Old King Brady was half inclined to regard them as the production of a brain crazed with opium.

How near right he was in that conclusion the reader already knows.

As for Harper's proposition to himself, the more Old King Brady came to think it over the more firmly convinced he grew that it was mere bluff.

"The man is as shallow as a saucer," he said to himself. "He knows perfectly well that I would never stand for murdering his uncle. All this talk of dividing Ching Chow's wealth with me is just hot air and made to gain time. I shouldn't be at all surprised if he tried to give

me the slip in the morning, and I think I will let him do it and do the shadow act myself. Undoubtedly the girl has told him where his uncle is hiding and that is what is taking him to Boston. If I want a guide to take me to Brander I can't do better than to dog his steps."

Then he fell to wondering what clew Harry could have struck and why he was going to Boston.

And while he was thinking on these lines Old King Brady fell asleep.

When he awoke he found the car at a standstill and Danny Ryan shaking him in the berth.

"You want to get up, boss," said the Low Gow Gui. "We've got to Boston."

Old King Brady had been caught napping. The train was already in the Southern station and the car was sent off on a siding before the detective could dress.

Old King Brady felt thoroughly disgusted with himself and gave the porter a blessing for not calling him on time.

Of course nothing was to be seen of Harper. It was just as Old King Brady had expected. Coming suddenly upon him as he did, of course the man had to say something. His talk had been mere bluff.

"You leave it to me, boss," Danny said. "I can find dis guy all right. Jest let me strike some Boston Low Gow and he'll gimme de steer."

There seemed no better way of managing it.

So Old King Brady took up his stand on the corner and let Danny go to work, and it was not long before the Low Gow returned with a boy who seemed to be one of his own kind.

"Dis feller knows his hangout, boss," he said. "He'll tell for a dollar."

Of course Old King Brady paid the dollar, and the Boston Low Gow pointed out the very house into which Harry had entered some little time before.

* * * * *

The next thing Harry knew after that terrible choking, he found himself lying on the floor with his hands tied behind him.

Brander sat at the table counting the money and making notes on the paper.

Every now and then he would give that wild laugh and all the time he was muttering to himself.

Thus matters remained for several minutes, when suddenly Brander raised his head and looked down at Harry on the floor.

"Ha! So you have come back to life!" he cried. "I thought I had killed you. Never mind, I'll do it in a minute. Be patient—wait! I've got to count this cash first. It won't come straight. It won't come straight. I don't know what's the reason. Perhaps you can tell me now."

"Perhaps I can count it for you," said Harry, with all the calmness he could assume. "You don't have to kill me, you know."

"No, no! I want no help. I can do it alone. This is

my money. All mine. Know where I got it? No! Of course you don't. Well, I will tell you. I inherited it from a Chinaman. That sounds strange, doesn't it? It's mine. All the Chinks in Chinatown are after it. I've fooled them all. They tried to make me give it up. But they didn't know where it was. They thought I had it in New York, but I had it in a bank in Boston all safe. Yesterday I drew it out. Ever since I have been trying to count it. I can't make it come straight."

"How much is there supposed to be?" asked Harry.

"Sixty thousand dollars. Ching Chow's wealth. He left it to me. My nephew wants it. He's a scoundrel. He thinks I'm rich, but I'm not; I'm bankrupt. I lost every cent I am worth in Wall street speculations. This cash will put me on my feet again, if I can only count it, but I can't. Ha! Ha! Ha! I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give it up! I'll burn it! That's the talk! That's the talk! Money to burn! Money to burn! I'll burn it and you shall burn with it. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! Ho!"

He sprang up and, going to the stool which held the opium layout where there were matches, lit one and set fire to the bedclothes in the bunk.

"So, so!" he yelled, seizing a handful of bills and tossing them upon the flames. "That's the talk! See it burn! See it burn! Ha! What is this? More fiends came to torment me!"

There was a knock on the door.

Brander started to open it. The bedclothes were all on fire now and the room was filled with a stifling smoke.

Before he could reach the door it was thrown open and the man Harper sprang into the room.

Of course Harry did not know him, but Brander made no mistake in his identity, mad as he was.

"Ah! You fiend!" he yelled, and made a spring at his throat.

"Look out! He's mad!" shouted Harry. "He'll choke you to death if he can."

"Not he!" hissed Harper, whipping out a knife. "Take that, you lunatic!"

He dodged, and, bending down, struck at Brander, burying the knife in his side, when at the same instant, through the open door, Old King Brady sprang into the room.

"Help, Governor! Murder here!" cried Harry.

Brander had dropped to the floor and Harper, with a fierce snarl, made a thrust at Old King Brady, missed him, and in a twinkling the knife was wrenched away.

"Game's up, you villain!" cried Old King Brady, thrusting a revolver in his face. "Back! Back against the wall!"

He was dealing with a coward, as he instantly learned.

And Old King Brady had dealt with such before. It was not the most difficult task he ever had to get the handcuffs on Harper's wrists.

To get Harry free and tear the burning bedclothes from the bunk was but an instant's work.

The Bradys stamped out the flames and Harry ran for an officer, who was readily found.

Harper was landed in jail and Mr. Brander, who was not dead, was taken to a hospital in the ambulance.

He lived and recovered his physical health. He is living still, but his reason has never returned, and he is to-day an inmate of a Massachusetts lunatic asylum.

He had not gone bankrupt. His estate to-day is worth nearly a million. He did not draw the money on the table from a Boston bank. Inquiries started by the Bradys revealed the fact that no such payment had been made.

Instead of sixty thousand there was one hundred and ten thousand dollars on the table, to say nothing of what had been burned.

Where did Brander get it?

Outside of the statement in his wild letters to his nephew no one ever knew, nor did the Bradys learn, what ever became of Mrs. Ching Chow.

Probably the statement in the letters that the little Chinese woman was sent back to San Francisco was true enough, and no doubt the Bradys could have proved it so if they had taken the pains to inquire, which they did not.

There was nothing in the matter for them, and so they let it drop.

Even Dr. Wing Wum was cut off as a source of information, for when, later in the day, Harry started to look up the doctor, he found he had vanished.

After much deliberation Old King Brady concluded not to press the charge of assault with attempt to kill against Harper, and the man was freed after some weeks, pleading self-defense to the charge of having stabbed his uncle.

He still conducts the business of Brander & Co.; he did not marry the Fondueq girl, and no doubt will inherit his uncle's wealth if Brander dies without recovering his reason, as he probably will.

There are many mysteries which are never explained.

Perhaps Brander's letters were true, and perhaps they were but the ravings of a diseased mind.

At all events they afforded the only explanation ever had of The Bradys' Mott Street Mystery.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' BLACK BUTTE RAID; OR, TRAILING THE IDAHO 'TERROR,'" which will be the next number (263) of "Secret Service."

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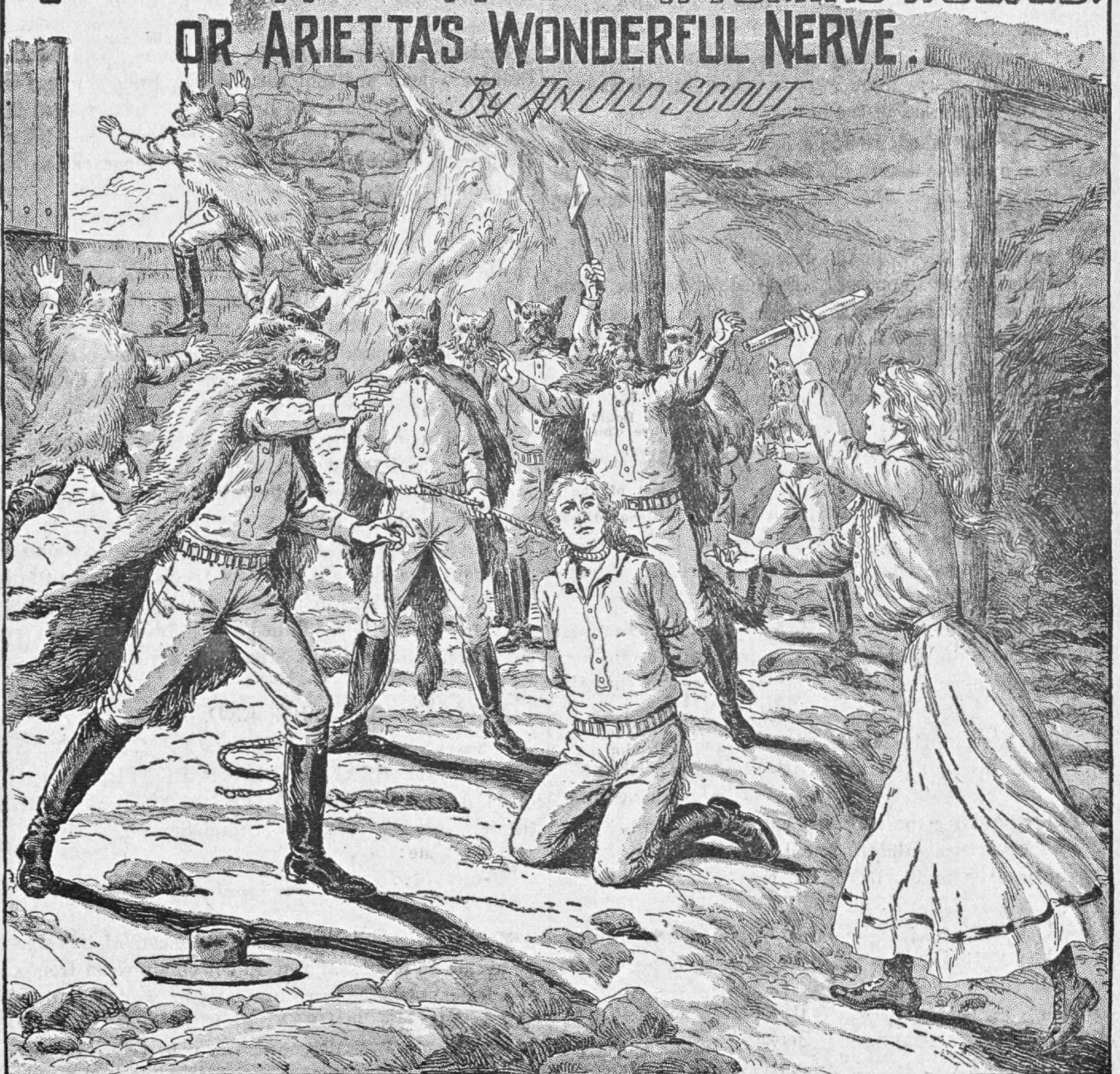
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