

# SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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

No. 294.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 9, 1904.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADYS AND THE HOP HITTERS; OR, AMONG THE OPIUM FIENDS OF 'FRISCO.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



"There they are! Those are the Bradys! They have come at last!" screamed the woman, excitedly; and as she pointed a mob of Chinamen came rushing out of the extension door, some armed with old swords and some with clubs.





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# The Bradys and the Hop-Hitters

OR,

## Among the Opium Fiends of 'Frisco.

**BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.**

### CHAPTER I.

#### CALLED TO CALIFORNIA.

The twinkling lights of San Francisco loomed up over a wide stretch of territory, forming a fairy picture only to be appreciated and understood by those who have lived in that most remarkable of cities, the great and ever-growing metropolis of the Pacific coast.

The two gentlemen who stood on the front of the Oakland ferryboat watching the lights had been in Frisco many times, but still neither ever claimed permanent residence there, and the younger of the pair was trying to figure out the full meaning of the lights.

This young man was dressed up to the minute, but the get-up of his elderly companion was a century behind the times.

He wore a long blue coat rigged out with flat brass buttons, a high-standing collar, an old-fashioned stock, and, to crown all, an ancient white felt hat with an unusually wide brim.

Such a description particularly fits a man whose fame now extends all over the United States.

We refer to Old King Brady, the detective.

In short, these were the Bradys.

Old and Young King Brady, or "Harry," as the old detective's partner and pupil is named, were back in California again on a special call.

The month was September, the year shall be nameless, the hour was 11 p. m., and the detectives, wearied with their long ride across the continent, were anticipating a good night's rest before looking up the matter which had again brought them out to the Pacific coast.

"What are you thinking about, Harry?" asked Old King Brady, after a long silence, as the ferryboat made her way among the shipping in the harbor.

"I was trying to locate those lights, Governor," was the reply, "and I confess I am finding myself pretty well mixed up."

"That ought not to be, seeing that you have been here a number of times before. Those high lights on the right are the houses on Telegraph Hill; those next on the left are on Russian Hill, or 'Rooshan,' as the old-time Friscans persist in calling it. There, as I point, lie the lights of Nob Hill, where the descendants of the old bonanza kings are supposed to reside, although as a matter of fact most of them now make headquarters in New York. Next beyond that——"

"Oh, I know all that, Governor. It's the lights in the big buildings which are puzzling me."

"Oh, that's a different part of speech. These skyscrapers are springing up here almost as rapidly as they are in New York, and I, who once knew San Francisco so well, don't pretend to keep track of them. Do you know, in old times people out here were horribly afraid of tall buildings on account of earthquakes, but they don't seem to mind them a bit now; but look here, let us study our neighbors for a minute. Do you remark that melancholy looking young man looking over the rail on our right?"

"Why, yes; but what is there peculiar about him?"

"Two things."

"He looks pale and sickly; beyond that I can see nothing unusual in his appearance."

"Is it so? Brush up your powers of observation a bit. Imagine that we were on this young man's track; that we had his photograph to go by, what would be the first pecu-

liarities you would light upon in his appearance? You need not be afraid of looking at him closely. He is deeply lost in thought."

"Oh, I see now," replied Harry, leaning forward a little in order to get a better look at the young man's face. "Although his hair is brown he has a patch just above his right eye which is decidedly yellow, and by the way, your eyes are pretty good to see that under his hat in this uncertain light."

"My sight is still good, thank heaven, and his hat is pushed back an inch beyond the line of his hair."

"All the same I should not have noticed it, Governor."

"Your powers of observation need considerable cultivation yet. Well, and the others?"

"I give it up. His pale face has the yellowish tinge of an opium smoker, but you have often told me that such a color is often due to disease."

"Quite so, Harry; nevertheless, that fellow is an inveterate opium smoker."

"You see something else."

"And you have forgotten part of your lesson. Don't you catch the redness around the eyelids? That is the sure sign of a hop-fiend."

"I do see it now that you direct my attention to it," said Harry, "but I did not see it before."

"Keep it in mind. Such points are to be remembered in our business. But here we are coming into the slip. Once more in Frisco, and I am wondering what sort of a case we have to deal with."

As often happens, the Bradys did not even know why they had been called to California.

They had received a letter from one of the richest bankers in the city, enclosing a draft for \$500 as a retainer, and requesting that they call at his office with the least possible delay.

As the man's reputation was world-wide, and his check good for millions, the detectives had not hesitated to respond, and now, having made the quickest time possible across the continent, they were ready to begin business next day.

But, as it often happens with the detectives, they were not to be allowed even a night's rest.

Old King Brady usually stops at the Lick House on Montgomery street when in San Francisco.

They took a cab at the Oakland ferry, and drove directly to the hotel.

The clerk at the desk, to whom they were both well known, greeted them cordially.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen," he said, "and I have reserved rooms for you; but I am afraid you won't have a chance to occupy them just yet."

"How is that?" inquired Old King Brady. "Have they still to be vacated?"

"Oh, it isn't that," replied the clerk. "Of course, I have no idea why you are here, but I have just received a telephone message from John Aylsford, the banker, asking if you had arrived. I told him that you had wired for rooms

from Reno, and he directed me to say that his carriage would call for you at eleven o'clock, and would you please come directly to his house if you were not too much fatigued."

"And it is ten minutes to eleven now," said Old King Brady, glancing at the clock behind the desk. "I suppose there is no help for it, but I did want to get a night's sleep."

And thus it happened that the Bradys had no more than time to visit their rooms and wash up than the banker's carriage was announced.

The detectives were driven to the Aylsford mansion on California street, which, as everybody knows, is one of the show houses of San Francisco.

They were at once shown into the banker's library, where they were received by a stout, bald-headed man of pompous appearance, who made an effort to appear cordial, but without very much success.

"Be seated, gentlemen," he said. "Permit me to ring for wine and cigars. I must apologize for calling you here at such an hour, but the fact is I am so troubled and anxious that I am unable to sleep, and I thought you would have no serious objections to receiving your instructions over night. It will save time."

"It is all right, Mr. Aylsford," replied Old King Brady. "Never mind the refreshments. Proceed with your business at once, if you please."

"The case concerns my only son, Arthur," said Mr. Aylsford, as the detectives seated themselves. "He has been missing now for three weeks, and under very peculiar circumstances. The best detectives in San Francisco have been working on the case, but they seem to make no headway. You have been highly recommended to me by a party with whom I am intimately acquainted, who does not care to have his name mixed up in the matter, therefore I sent for you. From the fact of your being here I presume you are ready to undertake the case."

"We are ready to hear what you have to say," replied Old King Brady. "Our decision will come later. Proceed, please."

"It is this way," continued Mr. Aylsford. "My son has been educated at Harvard College; he is twenty-two years of age, and about a year ago became my partner. I am a plain man, Mr. Brady, and not one of those fools who persists in deceiving himself with the idea that his own geese are swans. Arthur was never a bright proposition. He is vain, stupid, nervous, easily led by others, and an inveterate cigarette smoker. He failed in all his studies, and was not able to pull through college. I had to take him away, for he would never have graduated. I have tried to make a banker of him, but he has proved himself as dull at that as at everything else. You are following me, my dear sir?"

"Closely, Mr. Aylsford. Proceed."

"Such are Arthur's bad qualities, but like most of us he has his good side as well. He is strictly honest and plodding, always trying to learn, and greatly troubled over his failures. He is truthful to a fault, and—well, there is no need of saying any more. The boy is a failure, and he knows

it. Still, his mother is dead, and he is my only child, and I am half insane over his disappearance. To make matters worse, a hundred thousand dollars in cash vanished with him, which I naturally would like to get back if it isn't too late, as I have no doubt it is."

"And such are the outlines of your case, sir," said Old King Brady, as the banker paused. "Now, for the details, please."

"The details are so simple that it will take but a moment to tell them," replied Mr. Aylsford. "One afternoon just before the close of business, about three weeks since, we had certain notes to meet at the Bank of California in connection with a stock transaction which need not be described. Instead of sending a draft, as is usual, I sent Arthur around with the cash, for special reasons. He never reached the bank. He has not yet returned, nor have I heard from him directly, yet I have every reason to believe that he is alive, for he has been seen by three different persons on the street. Of course, I met my notes with other money, and that very much to my inconvenience. I want my son, and I want my money, so there you are. As neither the local police nor detectives could find him I sent for you."

"Who are the parties who saw him?" inquired Old King Brady.

"He was seen first about three days after his disappearance by one of my clerks who was riding on a Pacific street cable car. Arthur had just turned out of Dupont street. The clerk jumped off the car, but Arthur had vanished before he reached the sidewalk. Where he went to the clerk was not able to tell."

"And his next appearance?"

"He was seen at the Poodle Dog restaurant with a stylish looking woman much older than himself. A business acquaintance of mine who was not aware of his disappearance saw him, and mentioned the fact casually to me next day."

"He did not speak to him?"

"He bowed, and Arthur returned the bow, that is all."

"And his last appearance?"

"I heard of that through a friend. It is claimed that he was seen in Chinatown late at night with the same woman. Of course I cannot vouch for the truth of that."

"These matters will bear looking into later. We will take your case, Mr. Aylsford."

"Thank you. I can only hope that you may meet with more success than our local sleuths have been able to do."

"And now a question or two. Is your son a dissipated person?"

"I never knew him to be under the influence of liquor, although he was out nights invariably, and often to a late hour. So far as I know his only dissipation was in the matter of cigarettes."

"Which in itself is serious enough to turn his brain."

"Indeed, yes. I tried my best to make him abandon the habit, but it was no use."

"Did he gamble?"

"I have frequently questioned him, and he always denied that he did."

"Can it be possible that he went a step beyond the cigarettes, and smoked opium in the Chinese joints?"

"Such a thing has never occurred to me. There were times when he was dull and drowsy, but I never thought of attributing it to anything but the cigarettes and his general dislike for business."

"It is a matter to be investigated. Have you a picture of your son?"

"Right here, ready for you," replied Mr. Aylsford, opening a drawer in a handsome desk.

Old King Brady started as he glanced at the picture.

He passed it to Harry, who gave a slight exclamation.

"You seem to be surprised, gentlemen," said Mr. Aylsford, excitedly. "What does this mean?"

"One or two questions more, Mr. Aylsford," said Old King Brady. "Had your son an unusually pale face?"

"He had."

"Was there a redness about his eyelids?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And his hair, is it brown with a patch of yellow over the right temple?"

"It is so! You have seen the boy!"

"To-night on the Oakland ferryboat," replied Old King Brady, "and let me tell you one thing, Mr. Aylsford, your son hits the hop beyond the shadow of a doubt."

## CHAPTER II.

### AN ADVENTURE IN CHINATOWN.

Mr. Aylsford was greatly disturbed at the revelation made by the Bradys.

"What a pity you did not know of my case in advance!" he exclaimed.

"It is indeed," replied Old King Brady. "If you had only gone into details and enclosed this photograph in your letter, in all human probability your son would now be in this house."

"It is too late to report it. You think you will be able to find him? You feel sure you are making no mistake?"

"Of the last I am positive. I recognized in this young man a heavy opium smoker, and particularly called my partner's attention to the fact. As for finding him, I see no reason why he should not be found if he is still in the city, as I have no doubt is the case."

"It is queer that you should come here with a clew when our San Francisco detectives have been able to make nothing out of the matter."

"It is accident, purely. Has your son's disappearance been noticed in the papers?"

"Not yet. I have so far managed to keep it out of the papers, and a pretty penny it has cost me."

"It is generally rumored around town, however?"

"I think it likely."

"At the bank?"

"He is supposed to be in New York. When my clerk came to me with the story of having seen Arthur on Dupont street I laughed at him and so turned it off."

"I think we have covered the entire ground," said Old King Brady. "We will go right to work."

"I wish you would. I trust you will begin to-morrow morning, gentlemen."

"We shall not wait for morning. We have already begun, and we shall continue our work to-night," replied Old King Brady, and a few moments later the detectives withdrew.

Mr. Aylsford had offered the detectives his carriage to take them back to their hotel, but the offer was declined, the Bradys preferring to go by themselves.

As they walked down California street hill Harry asked the old detective if he was really intending to go right into the case at that late hour.

"I am, and for reasons," replied Old King Brady. "Night is our time for this sort of a case. If we are right in our guess, and the young man we saw on the Oakland boat was really Arthur Aylsford, then he is probably hitting the hop in some joint at the present moment."

"And you intend to make the rounds of the joints?"

"You anticipate my explanation, but you have not hit the truth. I may do that incidentally, but my real purpose is to try and get on the track of the woman who is undoubtedly at the bottom of the whole business, and for that I shall have to use you as the bait."

"I am willing, providing you don't hurt too much putting me on the hook."

"My intention is to have you make up like this young hop-hitter, and parade you through Chinatown."

"Expecting to have the woman pounce upon me. More likely it will be one of these Frisco sleuths who are trying to run this case."

"In which event you will have to turn them off. But what do you think of the plan?"

"I think it is one which is very likely to lead to some interesting adventures."

"And end in our discovering our man."

"I am not so sanguine about that; but do as you like, Governor; there is no kick coming from me."

The Bradys walked on down to Stockton street, and turning aside there entered a small cigar store which still remained open.

An old man with a horrible wart on his nose sat behind the counter smoking a pipe with a case full of cigars before him.

He sprang up at the sight of Old King Brady, and held out his hand across the showcase.

"Mr. Brady, I'm delighted to see you!" he exclaimed. "When did you strike Frisco? How kind of you to look me up!"

"How are you, Mandsley?" replied the detective, shaking hands. "Just hit the town to-night. I happened to think of you because I need help to disguise this young man in a peculiar way, and all the regular costumers must be

closed; but even if they were not I don't believe they could do me very much good."

Harry stood listening, thinking that there was simply no end to the acquaintance of his chief.

It was invariably so in every city in which they found themselves.

Old King Brady's friends, indeed, seem to be endless.

It is one of the old detective's peculiarities that he seldom, alludes to these people.

When Harry turned out of California street into Stockton, he had no idea where Old King Brady was heading for.

And now here was a new one. What could this ancient tobacconist know about disguises, Harry asked himself. He was soon to learn.

"Your son, Brady?" asked Mr. Mandsley, shaking hands with Harry.

"No; my partner and pupil."

"Glad to meet you, young man. Gentlemen, won't you smoke?"

Cigars were then produced, and Old King Brady explained.

Producing the photograph he handed it to Mandsley, saying:

"We are tracking this young man. It is part of my programme to have Harry made up to look like him. It is little beyond my skill for reasons. You see this peculiar shading of the hair over the right temple. Well, that is because the original of this picture has a yellow lock in a brown head of hair. Can that be done?"

"Easily."

"Another point. The fellow is a hop-hitter. His skin has the usual parchment yellow hue; his eyelids have the red tinge. Those points I could manage myself, but when it comes to the yellow lock I am not in it, I fully admit."

"I can help you out," said Mandsley. "How about the clothes?"

"Those the boy has on will do. His coat is so arranged that it can be made to assume several different appearances. I'll attend to that."

"And attend to the store, too, for a few minutes. I'll slip inside and see what can be done."

Mandsley vanished behind a curtain.

"Now, who on earth is this fellow?" inquired Harry. "It does seem as if there never was any end to your men?"

"Used to be costumer for Edwin Booth years ago," whispered the old detective. "He is a back number, of course, but all the same he is one of the most expert men in his line."

Mandsley soon reappeared with a brown wig in his hand.

Sure enough, the part which would rest over the right temple was yellowish.

It certainly looked very much like the head of hair which the detectives had commented upon on board the Oakland ferryboat.

"How's that?" asked Mandsley.

"It's all right," replied Old King Brady. "Off with your hat, Harry, and try it on."

"Not just yet," said Mandsley. "Give it a moment to dry. That patch of hair will hold its color for about twenty-four hours, but no longer."

"It can be renewed, I suppose?"

"Certainly. Do you want me to make up the boy's face?"

"I wish you would."

Mandsley took Harry into the back room, leaving Old King Brady to watch the store.

When they returned Harry's face wore the true opium tint, and the redness about the eyelids was perfect.

"How do I look, Governor?" he asked.

"Most satisfactory," replied Old King Brady. "Take the photo and compare yourself in the glass there."

"It seems to be a perfect disguise."

"And it is. How much, Mandsley?"

"Not a cent. That's an old wig I happened to have on hand. I'm not in the business now, as you very well know."

"When you say not a cent that don't mean not a dollar, and here are ten."

"No, no!"

"Yes, yes, man. Say no more. If you want to get square with me tell me what you used to bleach that hair. That's a new one on me."

"I swore I would never tell," said Mandsley. "I got that receipt from the celebrated tragedian, Charles Fechter, dead years and years ago. I won't tell you, but I'll write out the recipe. It may come handy to you; it will never be of any further use to me."

The Bradys soon left the cigar store, and turned down Dupont street.

Harry had so altered his dress that he now had a decidedly shabby look, which corresponded with the appearance of the young man on the ferryboat.

"Now, then, you take one side of the street, and I'll take the other," said Old King Brady. "Keep a sharp lookout. It is probably too late to do anything to-night, but something may come of this. If not we will try again to-morrow night."

The Bradys parted at the corner of Sacramento street and Dupont.

They were now in the very heart of San Francisco's Chinatown, in comparison with which New York's Chinatown is just nothing at all.

Here a population of some 60,000 Chinese is congregated, the region embracing many blocks on Dupont, Stockton, Pacific, Sacramento, Jackson, Clay, and other streets.

Things are not done here as in New York, where no Chinese woman is ever seen on the streets.

In Chinatown, Frisco, the streets swarm with them.

They go about dressed much as the men are, only their blouses are longer—every woman wears trousers here.

They never wear hats, however, and by this they can readily be distinguished from the men, which, were it not for this and the fact that their hair is plastered out right and

left in great stiff wings adorned with tinsel and paper flowers, would be rather difficult.

Every man is John, and every woman Mary.

Not until away along toward morning do the Marys and Johns disappear from Dupont street, which was thronged now.

The buildings on Dupont street are for the most part low, old-fashioned structures built in the early days of California.

Their fronts are gaily painted in gaudy colors, and abound in balconies, above which paper lanterns are hung, and here Chinamen can be seen seated in great numbers on warm nights.

On the ground floor these buildings are all cut up into little shops with huge upright signs in black and gilt beside the doors.

The interiors of some of these shops are most elaborately fitted up and the Chinamen do plenty of business and get rich.

At night they are particularly crowded, and many white people visit them.

On this night, late as was the hour, Dupont street was thronged.

It seemed to Old King Brady that something unusual must be going on. He had never seen such a crowd.

All this, of course, made it very difficult to keep an eye on Harry, who was strolling along on the opposite side of the way, and he felt that it was very necessary for him to keep his wits about him.

It is easy then to imagine Old King Brady's disgust when he suddenly found himself seized by the arm, and turning saw a garrulous, light-brained fellow whom he had been the means of placing on the detective force of the San Francisco police some years before.

"How are you, Mr. Brady!" the man exclaimed. "I'm right glad to see you. When did you strike town?"

"Excuse me, please!" replied the old detective, pulling away. "I am working on a case. I shall miss my man."

He hurried on, but to his disgust found that quick as he had been the mischief was already done.

Harry had vanished. He could see nothing of him on the other side of the way.

Old King Brady tried it for a minute only, and then shot across the street, elbowing his way among the Chinamen, who have a faculty of crowding the horse-way as well as the sidewalks.

It was too late!

Find his partner he could not.

Old King Brady pushed on as far as Broadway street—that thoroughfare whose name always proves so amusing to New Yorkers—but still he could not locate Harry.

"It is too confoundedly bad," he muttered. "Something must have happened to turn him into one of the joints, but which one?"

Old King Brady kept on, but he had about reached the end of the Chinese quarter in that direction.

As he crossed the street he saw a young man come reeling up the steps of a notorious underground opium den.

"There he is now! Heavens! What can have happened?" he thought.

The young man reeled against the building, almost collapsed, and stood there with his head hanging down.

Old King Brady was at his side in an instant.

As he threw his arm around him the young man fell heavily against him.

Old King Brady with the other hand raised the head. It was not Harry!

Instantly he saw that instead of the counterfeit he had got the original.

He was supporting the young man whom he had seen on the Oakland boat!

### CHAPTER III.

#### HARRY AMONG THE HOP-HITTERS.

It was certainly a very fortunate thing that the Bradys determined to tackle the case that night.

Circumstances had thrown Old King Brady right into this case which had proved such a mystery to the San Francisco detectives, and Harry was destined to have a similar experience.

While Old King Brady had mistaken the original for the counterfeit for the moment, Harry had already been mistaken for the original, which accounted for his sudden disappearance from Dupont street.

It was all done in an instant.

As he was pushing his way among the Chinks someone suddenly seized Harry's arm and dragged him into a little Chinese shop, the nature of which could only be known to the initiated, as the goods on the shelves were all wrapped in colored papers.

There are many such shops in San Francisco's Chinatown, and one often finds himself pretty well puzzled to know what sort of business is being transacted within their walls.

The person who had thus captured Young King Brady was a young man, tall, slender, and rather good-looking, but with a generally dissipated air about him, which caused Harry at once to put him down for a crook.

"Say, Arthur!" he whispered, while an aged Chinaman behind the counter sat blinking at them through a pair of huge spectacles, "where in thunder have you been? I've been looking all over for you, and Nell is wild."

"Heavens! I've hit it off with a vengeance," thought Young King Brady, as he replied:

"Why, I was over in Oakland. I've been looking around for you, old man."

"The deuce you have! Then you knew well enough where to find me. You've been hitting the hop again, more than likely. You said you wouldn't. If you ever expect to find the money you will have to cut it out for one day at least."

"Well, I'm all right now," said Harry. "What about it? What's doing, anyway?"

He was at a terrible disadvantage, and he knew it. Secure in the belief that Old King Brady's eye was upon him, he was trying to feel his way as best he could.

"What's doing!" cried the man. "Have you forgotten your engagement with Nell? Say, you're the worst! Actually, I believe you will forget your own name some of these days."

Young King Brady threw into his face a stupid look. He had personated an opium fiend before, and he knew just how it was done.

"Say," he replied, "you never spoke a truer word. My memory is all gone. I'm a wreck. You will think I am crazy when I tell you something—but no, I don't dare."

"Tell it."

"No, no. I shall remember. It will all come back to me in a minute."

"Tell it, I say. We are talking at cross-purposes. We want to get down to tacks."

"I can't remember your name to save my life. Ha, ha! Say, isn't that strange?"

It was a dangerous venture, and Young King Brady almost hesitated to try it.

The result, however, was gratifying enough.

"Well, I'm not surprised at that," was the reply. "You have only seen me twice. Jack Judd. There! Now, don't forget it again, for that makes the third time I've had to tell you."

"Sure enough!" said Young King Brady. "Jack Judd! Jack Judd! I'll say it over two or three times, and then I'll not forget it again."

"I'm not so sure of that," replied Judd in a whisper. "But say, have you remembered about the money yet?"

"Not yet. I'm beginning to think I never shall. I think sometimes that the best thing I can do is to give it all up and go home to my father."

"Don't think of such a thing!" whispered Judd, excitedly. "You'll be arrested as sure as you do it. You know what you told me, that he told you that if he ever met with any heavy loss through your forgetfulness he would go for you just as though you were a stranger. I suppose you haven't forgotten that?"

"As though I could forget it, Jack!"

"Sure not! Have you been hitting the hop at all to-night? Honest now."

"No."

"Come and have just one small pipe—you know where—and let it go at that."

"All right," replied Harry, resting on the assurance that Old King Brady had already spotted them talking in the little store.

Trouble was the old detective struck across Dupont street further down.

But even if he had known Harry would have gone with Jack Judd just the same.



Taking such risks is a regular feature in the detective business, and is wholly necessary.

The point is to be prepared for the emergency; neither to seek trouble nor to attempt to avoid it, but to be prepared to strike with a strong hand in case trouble comes.

Jack Judd led the way out on to the street, and entering at the hall door of the second house below, passed through to the notorious China Alley.

This is the toughest hole in Chinatown, and altogether a dangerous place for whites who do not know the ropes.

Harry had been through China Alley many times before, and knew all the regular opium joints well enough.

Still, such places are constantly changing, and when Jack Judd turned in at a dark doorway Young King Brady could not feel sure that this was not a new one on him.

Most of the opium joints are in the basement, but instead of going downstairs Jack Judd went up two flights, rapping in a peculiar way upon a door at the head of the second.

"Who is there?" called a voice inside.

"Open the door, Nell. Here's Arthur!" whispered Judd, putting his mouth down to the keyhole.

There was a shuffling of feet heard inside, and in a minute the door was opened by a woman of some thirty years of age.

"Come in quick, boys!" she whispered. "There were a couple of detectives prowling about here this afternoon, and we can't be too careful. Arthur, you're a rascal! I thought you had given me the shake altogether. Why don't you say something! It seems to me you are dumber than ever to-night."

She was a tall, queenly looking creature of perfect form and considerable beauty of a certain sort.

Her dress was dark, and she wore a loose pink kimona, and her hair was tumbled about.

Harry felt sure that she had not been alone in the room when Jack Judd knocked.

He realized that his position was one of the greatest danger, and that he could not be too careful what he said and did.

What puzzled him most was to know why his voice had not betrayed him.

It seemed most remarkable, but the woman seemed to be no more suspicious than the man.

"Oh, I couldn't get round before," he replied. "It isn't too late now, I suppose?"

"It is never too late for you, Arthur," replied the woman, with a fascinating smile. "Won't you have a pipe? Sit down; you don't seem to be making yourself one bit at home, as you usually do."

"Do you know what I would like to have most of all, Nellie?" Harry said, in a dreamy sort of way.

"No. What? Anything I have got to offer is yours, my dear boy."

"A nap. I'm almost asleep now."

"Oh, you sinner! You have been hitting the pipe over in Oakland. That accounts for you being so dumb."

"Well, perhaps I have. Do you mind if I lie down on that lounge and take a sleep, Nell?"

"Not if you don't sleep too long. There isn't such an awful lot of time—is there, Jack?"

"Oh, it's no use starting for an hour yet," replied Judd, consulting his watch. "If he wants to have his sleep let him. Chances are he has done hop-hitting enough for one day."

Harry flung himself down upon the lounge and closed his eyes.

If he was expected to play dummy then he could do it to the Queen's taste.

In a moment he was breathing regularly, and had every appearance of a person asleep.

This was a shrewd move on Young King Brady's part.

He felt sure that these people would talk out freely before him, and thus there would be some chance of learning something.

He was not deceived, but the third party, whom he fully expected to see come on from an adjoining room, did not appear.

Nell sat down in a rockingchair, and began rocking slowly.

Jack Judd lit a cigarette, and seated himself by the table. For some minutes neither spoke.

Harry, who was keeping a sharp lookout from the corner of one eye, knew that they were watching him.

"It is wonderful how perfectly I have fooled them," he thought. "But can I be so sure? Well, I shall soon know."

Nell broke silence at last.

"He's off, the little idiot," she whispered. "Now we can talk. Thank heaven you got him, Jack."

"It's the greatest wonder in the world that he didn't fall into the hands of the detectives," said Jack. "Do you know, I don't see how they ever came to miss him."

"Maybe they are not looking for him."

"They must be."

"Oh, I don't know about that. John Aylsford is a mean old hunk. He may have grown tired of putting up for them."

"Oh, don't you fool yourself. Don't you suppose he wants his money back even if he don't care anything about his son?"

"Well, that's so, too. He must not be allowed to slip through our fingers again in any case."

"I don't intend that he shall. Everything is ready. We go down to-night."

"I'd rather see him hit a pipe or two. He may make trouble."

"I don't believe he will. The more hop we give him the less likely he is to remember what he did with the money, and after all that is what we want."

"Did he say anything about it?"

"No."

"Did he tell you where he had been?"

"Nothing more than that he had been over to Oakland. I don't believe he knows himself."

"The little fool! All the same I'd get a divorce from you and marry him to-morrow if I was sure he wasn't already cut off in his father's will. At the rate he has been hitting the hop he won't live a month."

Jack yawned and threw out his long legs.

"What's the matter? Have you got the yen-yen, too?" asked Nell, referring to the dreadful sensations which come to the opium smoker after the effects of the pipe wears off.

"I reckon I have," replied Jack. "What's the matter with you and me having a pipe while we are waiting, Nell?"

"Nothing," replied the woman. "We'll do it. Don't you think I'd better give him a pill?"

"No, I don't. I'm sure he will go without the least trouble."

"Well, I'll take your word for it," said the woman, rising.

She opened the door of an adjoining room, and dragging in a soft Persian rug, threw it down upon the floor.

Then, placing a pair of heavy pillows, she brought in an opium layout, the lamp, the pipes, long pins—the "yen-hok"—upon which the opium is held in the light of the lamp, and the other necessary appliances.

Jack lit the lamp and Nell took a small lump of opium from a little box and cutting off a small portion smeared it upon a card.

They then threw themselves down upon the rug, and Jack proceeded to roll the pill, and smearing it with the yen-hok, held it in the lamp.

Young King Brady watched all these proceedings.

He was among the opium fiends of Frisco.

He knew, of course, that Jack Judd could be nothing less than a crook.

Opium smoking seems to deprive one of all conscience.

There never was a confirmed opium smoker yet who would not lie and steal.

"They are a pair of hop-hitters," Harry said to himself. "I must be very careful. All the same this is great luck, and if I play my cards right I ought to learn the whole story of this missing boy before long."

Jack had now finished turning the pill in the light, or "chying" it, as it is called.

He placed it in the bowl of the opium pipe, and taking a few long steady draws, passed the pipe to his companion.

Nell drew in upon it, and the room began to be filled with the disgusting fumes of the deadly drug.

#### CHAPTER IV.

OLD KING BRADY, HAVING FOUND HIS MAN, HAS A HARD JOB TO KEEP HIM FROM DYING ON HIS HANDS.

Old King Brady had made a lucky strike, but all the same he had his hands full in more senses than one.

The young man seemed about to relapse into complete unconsciousness.

Yet no one paid the least attention to the pair as they stood there in the doorway.

Such sights are by far too common in Chinatown.

Old King Brady did not move.

With a strong hand he held up the sinking boy, watching the passers-by.

In a moment a ragged colored boy came hurrying along.

The old detective immediately recognized him as one of those degraded hangers-on of Chinatown, who run errands for the denizens of the dives, the "low gow gui," as they are called.

"Hist, boy! Look here a moment!" called Old King Brady.

The low gow gui heard and came hurrying up.

"Gee! But hain't he got a load on!" he exclaimed.

"He's a load on me as matters stand, and I want to get him into a cab," said Old King Brady. "Run down to Portsmouth Square and call one, quick! There'll be half a dollar coming."

"Can't," said the boy. "I'm on a job. I'll come in a few minutes, though."

"A few minutes won't do. Let whoever you are running for wait. You go for me and I'll make it a dollar."

"Know'd you would," chuckled the boy, and away he went.

"Harry will have to take care of himself," thought Old King Brady. "I do actually believe that this poor fellow is dying. I must get him to Dr. Low Quong Tai as quick as I possibly can."

Dr. Low Quong Tai is one of the noted Chinese physicians of San Francisco.

His practice among his own race is enormous, and yet he seldom leaves his office, and then only for a large fee.

Many white people resort to him.

It is enough that his cures are many, whatever his methods may be. Old King Brady had known the old Chinaman for years.

The cab came and with the help of the low gow gui Old King Brady got the now unconscious boy inside.

"Drive to Dr. Low Quong Tai's," was his order.

"You will hardly see him so late at night, mister," said the driver. "Dr. Low Quong is getting to be an old man now."

"He'll see me," replied Old King Brady, and so it proved.

Leaving the boy with the cab driver, Old King Brady ascended the stairs at the corner of Jackson and Dupont streets, and rapped loudly on a door.

A young Chinaman soon answered.

He spoke perfect English, and repeating the detective's name two or three times, went into another room to report to the doctor, who had gone to bed.

"He will see you, sir," said the Chinaman, returning.

"It is not for myself," replied Old King Brady. "I have a young man in a cab below who is very sick. I want to bring him up."

"You can do so," answered the Chinaman. He smiled and added:

"It is not everyone who could see the doctor at this time of night."

Old King Brady hurried downstairs and with the help of the driver got the young man up and upon a lounge in the doctor's office.

"You can wait below," he said to the cabby. "I shall want you again in a little while."

As the cabby went out by one door Dr. Low Quong Tai came in at another.

He was a man far advanced in years, and after the custom of old Chinamen, wore a long, drooping mustache.

"How do, Blady," he said, extending his claw-like fingers. "You comee Flisco again?"

"Here again, doctor," was the reply. "I've got a case for you and it's a bad one, I am afraid."

"Too muchee hop?" inquired the doctor.

"I'm afraid so. Examine him, please."

Dr. Low Quong Tai made his examination of heart and pulse just as any other physician would have done.

"He belly bad," he said. "Mebbe he die."

"Don't tell me that. Try your best to save him, and you shall be well paid."

"Me try. If me no can save him den nobody can. Too muchee hop. Him hop fiend dis long time. Look at him eyes."

The doctor rolled back the right eyelid, showing the redness or inflamed condition in which it was.

"Who him, Blady?" he asked.

"I can't tell you, doctor. I just picked him up in the street."

"Yes? Dlat was foolish. Most likely him no good."

Old King Brady made no answer.

He was too anxious to have the doctor get down to business to continue the conversation, for he also thought that the chances were the boy was dying.

The doctor opened a glass case which occupied the whole of one side of the room, and was filled with bottles and boxes, each bearing a Chinese label.

He took down two bottles, one containing a bluish liquid and the other a brown.

Pouring a small portion of each into a little porcelain dish he stirred the mixture rapidly.

It assumed a watery appearance as he did so, all color vanishing.

"Hold up him head, Blady," he said, and he pried open the boy's set jaws with his skinny forefinger and poured the liquid down his throat.

"Ten minutes. Den we know," said the doctor.

And he went on to explain to Old King Brady that it would take the medicine that length of time to act on the heart, adding that if the dose failed he could do nothing more.

But Dr. Low Quong Tai, as usual, proved himself a skilful physician, for the dose did not fail.

In about the time named the boy broke out into a pro-

fuse perspiration, and the doctor announced that he was now safe.

A little later and he opened his eyes, sat up on the lounge, and feebly asked for water, which was given him.

He then showed signs of drowsiness, and was about to lie down when Old King Brady stopped him.

"You must come with me," he said. "Stand on your feet, young man."

"I don't know you," was the reply. "Who are you, and where am I?"

"This is Dr. Low Quong Tai's."

"Oh! Was I so bad?"

"You would have died but for the doctor."

"Is that so?"

"It certainly is."

"And who are you?"

"A detective."

Old King Brady showed his shield.

"Am I arrested?"

"That depends. I know you."

"Ah!"

"You will go with me quietly?"

"Oh, yes. I have not got strength enough to make any resistance, even if I was so disposed, which I am not."

"How many times have you hit the pipe to-night?"

"Oh, I don't know. A whole lot. I've been hitting it all day."

"You came very near putting yourself out of business."

"Did I? Well, I shouldn't have cared if I had."

"Others might have cared."

"No."

"I say yes. Put on your hat and come with me."

Paying the doctor's fee, Old King Brady with some difficulty got the boy downstairs and into the cab.

"Now, listen to me, Arthur Aylsford," he said, as they started. "You want to brace up. I am going to take you home."

"For heaven sake don't do that!" cried the boy, with sudden energy.

"And why not?"

"There are good reasons."

"You are Arthur Aylsford?"

"I don't deny it; but please don't take me home."

"Name your reasons."

"I can't do that. You are a stranger to me."

"My name is Brady. I am a detective employed by your father to find you. The very best thing you can do is to confide in me."

Arthur was silent for a few minutes.

Meanwhile the cab was climbing Jackson street hill and he seemed to suddenly become aware of that fact.

"Look here, Mr. Brady," he suddenly exclaimed. "I can't go home yet. Take me somewhere else till we can have a talk. You have saved my life all right, and I shall never forget it. Complete your kindness by taking me to a hotel till morning, anyhow."



The old detective had already made up his mind to do this.

The ordering of the cab in the direction of John Aylsford's home was mere bluff on the detective's part, to see how the boy would take it.

The finding of Arthur Aylsford had been an unexpected streak of luck, but it was only half the battle.

Old King Brady had not forgotten the hundred thousand dollars which had disappeared with the lad.

He wanted to get the money as well.

So the detective leaned forward and ordered the cabby to drive to the Lick House.

Just as soon as Arthur found that their direction had been changed and his mind grew easier, a drowsiness came over him again.

Dr. Low Quong Tai had warned Old King Brady of this, and he had also directed him not to interfere with the lad, but let him sleep.

It was a hard matter to arouse him when they reached the Lick House, but at last the old detective had the satisfaction of seeing him safe in Harry's bed.

He had made no effort to question him.

Lighting a cigar, he seated himself by the window and waited for Harry to return.

But morning began to dawn, and as yet no Young King Brady.

Old King Brady, having finished his fifth cigar, had dropped asleep for a few minutes, when he was suddenly awakened by someone saying:

"Mr. Brady! Mr. Brady! Is that you?"

He jumped up to find Arthur seated on the edge of the bed, with a wild look in his eyes.

"I can't see you clearly," the boy cried. "I am half blind. I've got the yen-yen to beat the band. If you don't let me hit the pipe I shall go mad."

"Lie down," said Old King Brady, soothingly. "Get back into bed again. I'll fix all that."

He produced a box of pills which Dr. Low Quong Tai had given him for the purpose, and administered two.

In a few minutes Arthur was perfectly calm, and fairly clear-headed.

Now with the first effects of the opium upon him—for, of course, the deadly drug found the principal ingredient in the pills—he wanted to talk.

"Are you Old King Brady, the famous New York detective?" he asked, suddenly.

"I am that man."

"Did my father send all the way to New York for you?"

"He did. Your father is most anxious about you. He wants you to return even if you have lost the money."

"Oh, the money! That's where all the trouble comes in."

Old King Brady said nothing. He was determined to let the boy get at it all in his own slow way for awhile at least.

As for his attempting to escape, Old King Brady had

no such fears, for the unfortunate fellow was evidently so weak that he could scarcely stand on his feet.

"Where did you run across me?" Arthur suddenly asked.

"You came reeling out of a basement hop-joint on Dupont street near Broadway," replied Old King Brady.

"I don't know any such place."

"I can't tell you whose place it is, for it is a new one to me."

"I have no recollection whatever of being there. Was I very bad?"

"So bad that if I had not understood your case you would have died."

"You took me somewhere."

"To Dr. Low Quong Tai's."

"Was that the place?"

"Yes. Can't you remember being there?"

"I just barely remember it. I shall forget it pretty soon, for I am forgetting everything now."

"That's the hop-hitting—it's killing you, my boy."

"I know it."

"Why not cut it out before it cuts you out?"

"I can't."

"Go to a cure."

"I'm afraid."

"Of dying? You will be a dead man inside of a year if you keep on so."

"What are you going to do with me, Mr. Brady?"

"Help you to make it right with your father."

"That I can never do. You know about the money, I suppose? He told you that I ran away with a hundred thousand dollars and over, some three weeks ago—or is it longer? I was told it was three weeks by somebody—I can't remember who—I've lost all run of time."

"It is about three weeks. Yes, I know about the money. Your father told me all."

Arthur burst out into a passionate fit of weeping, something which always occurs with opium fiends at the least provocation.

"Oh, I'm ruined! I am ruined!" he wailed. "You can't tell me. I know my father better than you do. He will never forgive me—never in the world!"

"He will forgive you and welcome you home, money or no money. I am giving it to you straight. I am also waiting to have you tell me what became of the money, Arthur. Take your time."

"I can't tell you! Oh, I wish I could!"

"What do you mean? Did you lose it?"

"Oh, no! I hid it in a hop-joint. I know just where I hid it, too, and I am sure no one can ever find it but myself."

"Then for heaven sake, man, what's the matter with you? Why don't you go and get it?" Old King Brady cried.

"Because I can't find the hop joint," groaned Arthur. "I have looked for it everywhere, and I can't find it!"

These words were almost shouted.

Then once more Arthur Aylsford burst into tears.

## CHAPTER V.

## YOUNG KING BRADY'S TROUBLES.

To personate a hop-hitter as far gone as Arthur Aylsford was is certainly a difficult undertaking.

Harry would have considered it even more so than he did if he could have seen Arthur Aylsford in Old King Brady's hand just then.

As it was he lay there listening to the drone of the conversation between Jack Judd and the woman Nell.

Now, Young King Brady, as is well known, is as keen as a needle, and it did not take him long to put this and that together and come to a pretty shrewd understanding of what all this was about.

The true state of the case was summed up in a few words by Arthur in his statement to Old King Brady that he had left the money in some hop-joint, the location of which he had forgotten.

Harry learned by his listening that Arthur was well acquainted with the woman Nell.

It appeared that Arthur had been wandering about from joint to joint trying to remember in which one he had hidden the money.

He had confided his troubles to Nell, whom Harry took to be Jack Judd's wife, and she in turn had done all she could to revive his memory, finally telling Judd all about the affair, which she had not done at first.

Together they had formed some definite plan, the nature of which Harry could not make out, and in order to complete it they needed Arthur's help.

It appeared that Arthur had been stopping in this wretched Chinese tenement with the Judds, but the day before he had in some way given them the slip.

It took a great deal of ingenuity on Harry's part to piece all this together, but by the time the talk ceased and Jack and Nell fell asleep he felt that he had a fair understanding of the situation up to date, but to his disgust they had not dropped even an inkling of their plan except that it was necessary for all three to go somewhere shortly after midnight, and that the arrangements for the trip were all made.

"I never could have fooled them if I hadn't caught both half-doped," thought Young King Brady. "I must play my game very carefully. I guess the Governor intends to let me have full rope, but I can't say I have very much hope that anything will come out of all this, though."

So Harry lay waiting when he could easily have escaped.

At last he grew tired of lying there, so he stretched himself, got up, lit a cigarette, and began to walk about the room.

The striking of the match aroused Jack Judd, but the woman slept on.

"Hello! Are you awake!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I am feeling better now," replied Harry. "How is it with you? Did you enjoy your pipe?"

"Oh, it was good enough. I wish now I hadn't hit it, though."

"And why?"

"It makes me dull and stupid. Say, have you remembered about that money yet?"

"Not yet."

"Strange you can't recollect what joint you hid it in?"

"Well, I can't."

"Nell says you took out a piece of loose plaster from the wall behind the bunk, and slipped the money in, putting the plaster back again. You will excuse me if I say that's a very unlikely story. Are you sure you remember that part of it straight?"

"That's the way I remember it—I can't say any more."

"And yet you and Nell have visited every hop-joint in Frisco. Trouble is you have smoked in them all, and now you can't tell 'tother from which."

"That seems to be the difficulty."

"It's the blamedest strangest thing I ever heard of; but say, we want to help you. I'm going to wake Nell up now. She is going to carry out her promise. We will take you to the swellest hop-joint in town."

"I'm ready. Where is it?"

"That's what I can't tell you."

"But I could never have gone to the joint if it is as secret as all that amounts to."

"You might have drifted in there. According to Nell you doped yourself pretty nearly to death that day. In fact, you were just about dead when you came tumbling in here. It's a wonder you came, you were so afraid of me then."

"You see, I didn't know you so well then, and I guess I didn't know what I was doing, anyhow."

"You bet you didn't. If Nell hadn't sent for a Chink doctor to look after you, why, then you would have died that night, all right, all right. But there's no use chinning any longer. It is one o'clock now, and we start at half past. I must wake up Nell and give her a show to get ready."

It was a hard job to wake the woman.

When at last Jack accomplished it he led her into another room, and Harry could hear the splashing of water.

"They are just a pair of crooks," he thought. "If this thing was straight and they were to get the money that fellow Judd would put a knife into my back as quick as a wink."

He made sure that the revolver in his secret pocket was all right, for he felt that even as matters stood he could not be too cautious in his dealings with these Judds.

Jack now went out, and soon returned, calling out to Nell in the other room that the carriage was waiting for them on Jackson street.

Nell now appeared, gorgeously gotten up, but Jack Judd had not changed his clothes, which were shabby enough in all conscience.

They passed through China Alley to Jackson street, and were whirled away in a cab.

The woman was very silent—indeed, she scarcely spoke.

Jack talked races and baseball, trying to draw Young King Brady out, but Harry followed Nell's example and held his tongue.

They ran down Jackson street to Drum, where they got out and walked to a wharf.

Here a handsome steam launch was lying.

The watchman on the wharf nodded to Nell, glancing curiously at the two young men.

The woman took him aside and they talked in low tones for a few moments, after which they went aboard the launch which was in charge of a foreign looking fellow who wore a duck yachting cap and a fancy raincoat.

The launch appeared to be the property of some rich man, and Harry was altogether puzzled as to where they were going, for the man in the raincoat headed directly across the bay for Sausalito, winding up at the foot of extensive grounds well laid out, apparently the estate of some wealthy man."

"Now, Arthur," said Nell, "you and I go ahead. Jack will stop here with the launch. Mark the way we go well, for you will have to come back by yourself, and in case you are successful you know that it won't pay either one of us to get mixed up. By the way, do you remember ever having been in this place before?"

Nell put the question suddenly, and turned and faced Harry in the moonlight.

"I can't remember anything much," Young King Brady replied.

"Pshaw! Don't tell me that!" cried the woman. "I know better! You owned up to me that you were a member of the Dragon Club, and in spite of what you said the other day it is my belief that you left the money here."

"Maybe I did. I can't remember."

"Of course you will know when you see the place. You want to brush up your wits now."

"I shall recognize the place when we get there, I dare say," mumbled Harry.

The situation was getting strenuous.

Young King Brady had never heard of this Dragon Club, of which he was supposed to be a member.

"If I can't do any better I shall have to throw a fit or something, and spar for wind," he thought. "I'm getting into deep water, that's sure."

They soon came out from among the trees and shrubbery, which grew thick on the lawn, and beyond lay a small but handsome house, standing alone and surrounded by extensive grounds within a high stone wall.

Lights burned dimly in some of the windows, but for the most part the house was dark.

"Now don't you recognize the place?" asked Nell.

"I think I do. Have you been here before?"

"I've told you that I have danced twice here at the club smokers. You seem to be forgetting everything to-night."

"That's what I do, and I can't help it, either. You'll have to pilot me. My head is all mixed up."

"It's a pity about your head. We are going to strike Mr. Honeychurch, the steward. He is in my confidence. He

will let us go through the smoking room; the boys who are here must all be deep in the dope by this time. When I say we, I mean you, for of course it would not do for me to be caught in there."

More and more puzzled as to the proper course to pursue, Young King Brady walked on in silence.

Nell led the way around to the rear of a house, and knocked at the basement door, twice in a peculiar way.

"Now, Arthur," she whispered, "the idea is this: Honeychurch the steward is mashed on me. I've given him a yarn about you which it would take too long to explain, so I am not going to try. You go right to the smoking-room and see if I haven't brought you to the right place at last. If so, then it is up to you to get the money and get out the best way you can. Get right back to the boat and I'll soon give Honeychurch the shake and join you. If I don't come, and there is any reason for doing it, why you and Jack just strike for my rooms and wait for me there. Have you got all that into your stupid head, Arthur? Quick now, for I hear my Honey coming to the door."

"Yes, yes," said Harry. "I understand, and I think this is the place."

"I am positive sure it is, for I have traced you here," replied Nell, hurriedly. "I know for an actual fact that you came to the Dragon Club on the day you left the bank."

The conversation was now cut short by the opening of the door by Mr. Honeychurch himself.

He bowed respectfully to Harry, hardly noticing Nell.

"Here he is, Honey," said the woman. "Now you do what I told you, and then come back here."

"This way, Mr. Aylsford," said the steward, and Harry followed him through a dark hall and up a flight of narrow stairs.

"You haven't been to see us lately, sir?" said Honeychurch, when they came out into a long, carpeted hall, dimly lighted by a handsome hanging lamp.

"No," replied Harry, almost gruffly, acting on the idea that he was supposed to be one of the members of the Dragon Club, whatever that might be.

"You will excuse me, sir, if I say you are looking very bad," said Honeychurch. "I wouldn't hit the pipe very heavy to-night if I was you; all the same you know your own business, sir. I expect you will find the gentlemen all asleep, but I will wake up little Charlie Chin to cook for you, and Mrs. Judd will be ready to see you home when you are through."

It was an immense relief to Harry to hear the steward speak thus.

It showed him that there was no plot on foot against him to be carried out in this house.

"My disguise must be perfect," thought Harry. "Even this steward thinks I am Arthur Aylsford. That man Mandly has done his work wonderfully well."

Honeychurch now opened a door, and Harry entered a long room.

The description of what he saw—and it was most remarkable—must be reserved for another chapter.



At the first glance Harry knew that through Nell's ingenuity he had been able to penetrate into a secret resort of some of the high-toned opium fiends of Frisco.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ARTHUR TELLS OLD KING BRADY ALL.

Both the Bradys were certainly making rapid strides in their work on the Aylsford mystery.

So it sometimes goes with these famous detectives.

The Bradys have often been known to settle up a case in a day or a night which has puzzled other detectives for weeks.

Arthur Aylsford was laboring under the greatest excitement, and Old King Brady felt that the first thing he had to do was to get the boy calmed down.

He rang and ordered black coffee for two.

Strong coffee is the best-known antidote for an overdose of opium or the after-effects of a long debauch with that deadly drug.

He easily persuaded Arthur to drink the coffee, and after the boy had swallowed both cups he declared that he felt much better.

"Why, it is wonderful, Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed. My head is really quite clear again. I wouldn't have believed it. That must be wonderful medicine you got from Dr. Low Quong Tai."

"It was probably mostly a preparation of caffeine, or the essential oil of coffee," declared the old detective. "Have you never heard that it was the proper thing to drink strong coffee after too much hop?"

"Never!"

"Then your education has been sadly neglected. But that's the way with you young fellows. You go dipping into these drugs without studying either their effects or their antidotes."

"I never knew anything about it."

"Where did you learn to use the stuff?"

"In Chinatown, Boston, while I was a student at Harvard."

"You unfortunate boy! Instead of applying yourself to your studies and trying to make your father some return for the money he was spending on you, it seems that you spent your nights in reckless dissipation, ruining your health and wrecking your future. Take an old man's advice and cut this out before it is too late."

"It is that now. I can't live without the hop."

"That is utter nonsense. Hundreds have been cured. Put yourself in the hands of a specialist. Go abroad and shake off your vile companions. Try to be a man."

Old King Brady talked at some length in this strain.

He finally exacted a promise from Arthur that he would make the attempt.

By this time the boy had become quite docile, and was ready to do anything the old detective told him.

Breakfast was served in Old King Brady's room, and it was while they were eating that the detective broached the matter of the money again.

"Now we want to talk about that money," he said. "Tell me the whole story without reserve."

"Well, I will," replied Arthur. "You see, it was this way. I was trying to shake a certain woman with whom I have been in the habit of smoking. I met her first in Hop Toy's joint on Dupont street, but she and her husband have rooms of their own, and I used often to smoke there. So I had not been near her for a week, and I had not touched the hop in the same length of time."

"Was this the longest time you had gone without the stuff since you began smoking regularly?" inquired Old King Brady.

"About the longest. I was almost wild for a smoke," replied Arthur. "When father gave me that money to take to the bank of California it seemed to me that I would just go crazy if I could not smoke one pipe. I had not slept a wink all the night before, nor much of any for several nights. Once I got on the street the fit seized me stronger than ever, and I yielded to the impulse and went around to Hop Toy's. You see it was early in the afternoon, and I was sure I would not meet many people there. I thought I would just take two or three whiffs to quiet me down and then go on to the bank. It was the most foolish thing I ever did, for with that all my troubles began."

"And you went to Hop Toy's?" asked the detective.

"I did."

"In what shape was this money?"

"It was in drafts and bills. There were three drafts amounting to over sixty thousand dollars which we had accepted, which of course makes my father responsible for them. The rest was in hundred dollar bills."

"How were you carrying them?"

"I had the drafts and some of the bills in an old wallet which I always carried. The rest of the bills were divided into three packages, and I had them stowed away in different pockets."

"Just so. Then what happened?"

"Well, that's where I can't remember."

"Of course you smoked several pipes at Hop Toy's?"

"I must have. Anyhow, I went completely dopey, and never got to the bank at all. Of course, I was horribly scared when I came to myself, for it was then midnight, so I determined to stop where I was till morning, and then make a clean breast of it to my father. I think I had some idea of committing suicide after I had told him, but I suppose I was too far gone to think clearly. Indeed, I have not been able to do so since."

"Was the money safe then?"

"Oh, yes! It had not been disturbed. You see, I had often smoked in Hop Toy's. No one would interfere with me there."

"And you remained there until morning?"

"Now, that is where I begin to be mixed, Mr. Brady. I just can't tell you how long I remained there, nor what

happened afterward. The only thing I can recollect is coming to my senses in some other joint and feeling that I was probably going to die. I was lying on a rug with the opium layout at my side. I thought of the money, and feeling for it discovered that it was still all right. Then my eyes lit upon a point in the wall where there was quite a piece of loose plaster which had slipped down out of place. Someone must have kicked against the laths behind and broken them. I could have easily done it as I lay there. It came to me that the best thing I could do was to hide the money, so I pushed in the laths and broke them off. I put my hand in through the opening and could feel that the floor boards ran under the base behind the laths. It seemed to me that this was the very place I wanted, so I put the wallet and the money packages in there, and then put the piece of plaster back. It fitted exactly, and by wedging in with the ends of a couple of matches I made it stay in place."

"What did you do then?" asked the detective.

"I hit the pipe again, and from that moment I don't remember a thing until I came to my senses in Nell's rooms."

"By Nell you mean this Mrs. Judd whom you mentioned just now?"

"Yes."

"How did she explain your presence there?"

"Oh, she found me wandering about Chinatown so badly doped that I didn't know where I was, and took me to her rooms."

"And where have you been since then?"

"Mostly with Nell. I gave her the shake yesterday and went over to Oakland, thinking that I might be able to locate the joint where I hid the money over there."

"You told Nell all about the money?"

"Oh, yes. She's all right."

"And you have been through every joint trying to find the money?"

"Everyone I could think of, everyone Nell knows—and she knows almost all."

"You must have been crazy to trust this woman. Do you think for a moment that with a hundred thousand dollars in sight, or say thirty thousand, for I suppose she would not have been able to use the drafts—she would have let you walk off with the cash? Never!"

"But, Mr. Brady—"

"Don't say a word! That woman is your enemy. More than likely her husband would have killed you, and they would both have lit out with the money. Do you know her husband well?"

"Not very well. I have only seen him a couple of times."

"Then there you are. Of course, those two are a pair of crooks. I will not tell you that you are a fool, Arthur, for your own common sense must tell you that. But enough of this. What we want is to find that money, and get you safe back to your father, who is sure to forgive you. Now, try and get your wits working while you have the chance. See if you can't remember in which of the many joints the money was left."

"Oh, I can't; I've tried and tried, but it just isn't any use."

"You must try again, and keep on trying. Perhaps I can help you. You say you found yourself lying on a rug close to this wall. Now the common Chinese opium joints don't supply rugs; they have bunks, as you very well know."

"That's so!"

Arthur brightened up as though he had made a wonderful discovery, which only went to show how completely stupefied his senses had been.

"Consequently you must have been in one of the high-toned joints. There are several such in San Francisco."

"I know; but I never patronized them. I thought I had dreamed about the rug."

"It is not likely. Then you have not been to these high-toned joints?"

"I have been to two of them with Nell, but I could not recognize either of them as the place; the others are private clubs. By gracious, it might be!"

"What?"

"Oh, I was only thinking."

"Out with it. I must know all."

"It is very strange, but I never thought of this before."

"Thought of what? Why don't you speak out plain?"

Arthur looked greatly perplexed.

"I'm under oath not to tell," he said, "and yet—"

"You must tell. Do you belong to one of these clubs?"

"Yes."

"I thought as much. Which one?"

"Oh, I can't tell. I must not. It isn't possible that I could have gone there."

"It is out of the city, I take it?"

"Yes."

"If you refuse to tell there is only one thing to do, and that is for me to send for an officer to guard you here while I go for your father."

"Don't do that, Mr. Brady! Please don't!" cried Arthur in great alarm.

"Well, I shall have to then. Be sensible. Doubtless this club has helped along your ruin. You want to cut it out with all the rest."

"Well, perhaps you are right. If I must tell I must. It is the Dragon Club."

"Never heard of it. Where do they hold forth?"

"We have a house at Sausalito."

"And meet there to smoke?"

"Yes."

"Who belongs?"

"Oh, I can't tell you that."

"I don't ask for names. I mean what sort of people?"

"Some of the highest-toned fellows in Frisco. I haven't been a member very long. In fact, I have only been there three or four times."

"Have you any recollection of going there during this debauch?"

"No; but they have rugs in the smoking-room there."

"Can you cook your own opium pills, and do you?"

"I do sometimes. At the club we have Chinks to cook them for us. Ah! I remember now!"

"I thought I would rouse your memory if I only kept at it long enough!" cried Old King Brady, triumphantly. "What have you remembered now?"

"That was the place!" exclaimed Arthur excitedly. "I remember that after I hid the money I called little Charlie Chin and he cooked the pill for me."

"This Charlie Chin is a Chink, of course?"

"Yes, and he cooks at the Dragon Club. It is very strange, but I never remembered this before."

"We must go there at once," said Old King Brady.

"They won't let you in."

"They will—they must. The money must be found. Trust me to manage it, my boy."

"Then I am done for in Frisco."

"Done for among the hop-hitters, and so much the better. You have had a bitter experience, and you want to let it teach you a lesson. The sooner you cut out the Dragon Club the better. We will go there without delay."

And they went.

It was half-past ten when they reached Sausalito.

Arthur was so nervous that he could scarcely walk, but he was able to point out the house in the garden where the Dragon Club held forth.

Old King Brady and his charge approached it from the street, and not as Harry had done from the bay.

Arthur produced a key which opened a gate set in a high stone wall, and they walked to the front door, to which Arthur also had a key, and without seeing a soul.

Opening the door, Arthur led the way into the long room to which Harry had been conducted the night before.

It was unoccupied. The same silence reigned.

"This is the place!" said Arthur. "I remember all now. I did come here. It was over on that rug that I lay when I hid the money. Look! Look! Mr. Brady! The plastering has been removed!"

The old detective strode to the spot, and bending down, ran his hand into the opening behind the laths.

"Too late!" he exclaimed. "If this is indeed the place, then someone has been here ahead of us, for there is nothing but emptiness here."

A sharp exclamation attracted the old detective's attention, and he turned to find himself facing a man who came running along the room.

Old King Brady found nothing but an empty room, but in Harry's case it was altogether different, for when he entered with Steward Honeychurch there were in the place as many as thirty unfortunates, all supposed to be respectable, and all opium fiends.

No outsiders were supposed to be admitted to the Dragon Club; certainly, as far as the records of that singular organization seem to show, none were ever admitted to smoke in the now notorious long room.

Men, scantily attired, lay scattered about on rich, costly rugs in every direction, their heads supported by silken cushions, with opium layouts on Turkish stools beside each rug.

Some lay alone and some in pairs. A number lay with white-robed Chinamen, the opium cooks, who were as deep in the dope as were the white fiends themselves.

But it was now nearly three o'clock in the morning, and out of the entire company not one was awake as far as Harry could see.

With benumbed brain and paralyzed limbs, all lay sleeping off the effects of this horrible debauch.

There was little or no furniture in the room, but each rug was worth a fortune, and the carved oak buffet at the end which was loaded down with costly wines and the remains of rich dishes, could never have been put in place for less than a thousand dollars.

So with the three great hanging lamps, studded with imitation gems, which hung from the ceiling and turned down low spread a mellow light over the faces of the sleepers through their colored shades. The place had a decidedly Oriental look.

On one side Harry caught a glimpse of an elaborate bathing room with a big marble swimming tank in the center, and porcelain-lined shower bath booths right and left.

The entire ceiling was occupied by an elaborate fresco representing a huge dragon, whose tail was twisted in a hundred folds.

Such was the Dragon Clubhouse, as Young King Brady saw it.

A year later the place was pulled, and its dreadful secrets exposed, to the great scandal of Frisco's swagger society, as we have already said.

"Well, here you are," said Honeychurch. "You see there is no one to interfere with you. Do you want to hit the pipe?"

"Of course. That's what I came for," replied Harry, who had again assumed the dazed look of the professional opium fiend.

"I hope I don't have as much trouble with you as I did last time you were here," said the steward, in a low tone. "You hit the pipe so many times then that I thought you were going to die on my hands. Perhaps you don't remember, sir."

"I remember. I won't do it again," replied Harry. "Can I have the same cook I had then? He suited me all right, and I would like to have him again."

## CHAPTER VII.

### STIRRING ADVENTURES AT THE DRAGON CLUB.

Thus it will be seen that at different times and by entirely different means both Old and Young King Brady had been introduced into the home of the notorious Dragon Club, whose exposure created such a sensation in San Francisco a year or so ago.



"Certainly. Your cook was little Charlie Chin. If I can get him awake you shall have him. He has been cooking all night."

"Let me see; I'm kind of mixed up. Which place do I take?"

The steward gave Young King Brady a curious look, but made no reply, and led him to a particularly handsome rug which was vacant and lay in a corner close against the wall.

Harry took off his hat and coat, and unbuttoning his vest, threw himself upon the rug.

"Heavens, that woman is a sharp one," he said to himself. "If what I overheard her say to Jack Judd is straight she may have lit upon the very place where Arthur Aylsford hid the money. But we shall see."

Harry had to wait fully ten minutes.

The horrible stench of the opium fumes which filled the place was beginning to make him drowsy, and he was almost asleep when suddenly he felt someone come against him on the rug, and rolling over he saw a little Chinese boy lying beside him whose age could not have been more than sixteen.

He was almost naked, wearing only undershirt and drawers. His skin was a sickly yellow, and it was easy to see that, young as he was, the deadly drug already had a firm hold upon him.

"Hello, boss!" he said in the low tone always adopted by these Chinese opium cooks. "Me cookee for you again?"

"Hello, Charlie," Harry replied. "Yes, I'm here once more. Fix me up a pipe. I shan't smoke very much of it, though, only one or two whiffs; and say, Charlie, here's a five-dollar gold piece for you. I think I forgot you when I was here before."

"No, boss; you tippee me den."

"Take it just the same. Hurry up with the pipe; then I want you to stay here with me a little while and keep me company. You can do that, Charlie?"

"Yes, boss. Me stay till morning if you likee."

"All right. Now for the pipe."

Charlie Chin prepared the pill in the usual way, and having taken the first draw himself, as is always the custom, he passed the pipe along.

Harry pretended to draw, but he only blew in the pipe. Not for worlds would he have inhaled the opium smoke; he knew its subtle influence only too well.

Passing the pipe to Charlie, who laid it back on the stool. Harry stretched out at full length, and with the China-boy beside him, began a whispered conversation.

"Charlie, was this where I smoked last time I was here?" he asked as a starter.

"Yes, boss; you lie here allee day and allee night. Me cookee for you. You no remember?"

"I can't remember a thing about it. Was I very bad, Charlie?"

"Ho! I should say so! Belly bad. Boss Honeychurch him get affaid."

"That I would die?"

"Yes, boss. Dlat was it. Oh, yes; it was belly bad. You no smokee more? You no hab hittee dat pipe half."

"You finish it, Charlie," said Young King Brady. "I think I'll take a sleep first, and then you can fix me another pipe."

But Charlie Chin had to obey the rules of the club, which prohibited the cooks from taking more than a draw or two while attending to business, so he laid the pipe on the Turkish stool, and curling himself up on one corner of the rug, was soon fast asleep, for he had cooked many pills that night.

Harry was now getting used to the closeness of the place, and was as wide awake as he had ever been in his life.

He had already made a discovery.

Of course, his first move was to examine the wall close down by the base board, for he had heard the story told by Arthur Aylsford fully discussed between Jack Judd and Nell.

Close to his head there was a loose piece of plaster which, broken away from the wall on all sides, had been put back into its place and braced there by a couple of matches.

Harry waited only to assure himself that Charlie was actually asleep.

He had kept the boy with him so that attention need not be particularly attracted to his movements, for so long as a hop-hitter has a cook by his side, it is to be assumed that he is either smoking or intends to smoke.

Honeychurch had now disappeared, and the only sounds in the room were the snores of the sleepers.

Turning over on his right side Harry pulled out the matches and without difficulty removed the piece of plaster.

It slipped from his hand, and falling to the floor broke into a hundred pieces.

"What in thunder was that?" called a voice from a distant part of the room.

Harry dropped back upon the pillows and lay quiet. The call was not repeated. Charlie Chin slept on undisturbed.

Again Young King Brady returned to the charge.

And this was the moment of his triumph, for from the hole he took two oblong packages of greenbacks and an old leather wallet, which contained drafts and hundred dollar bills.

Harry breathed hard as he slipped these into his pocket. "There never was such luck!" he thought. "I've got the missing money, whatever has become of the boy. Now, the question is how to get out of this without attracting attention."

He waited for a moment to see if he was being watched, but as near as he could see Honeychurch was not in the room, and everyone present was sound asleep.

"I must use Charlie Chin," thought Harry. "If I go prowling about looking for the front door myself I shall get into trouble, surest thing."

He had to shake the boy several times before he could arouse him.

"What m'latter?" demanded Charlie, sleepily. "You wantee n'loder pipe?"

"Charlie, I'm feeling sick. I want to get out of this," whispered Harry, most anxious lest the boy should discover the hole in the wall.

"Sick! Whatee m'latter? Your stlomach?"

"Yes."

"You pullee off your clothes and takee swim."

"No, no! I want to go. My head is all mixed up. You show me the way out, Charlie, that's a good boy."

"Allee light, you say so," replied Charlie. "Bletter let me callee Boss Honeychurch, dough."

"No, no! That's just what I don't want. He will only think I have been smoking too much again, and you know that I haven't smoked even one pipe. Lead me to the door, Charlie. I'm half blind."

Harry stood up and put on his coat and hat.

Charlie then took his hand, and leading him to a door at the end of the passage, opened it.

The rush of fresh air was the most grateful thing Young King Brady had ever experienced after the foul odors of the opium den.

"Good-night, Charlie!"

"Good-night, boss!"

The door closed behind him, and Harry started for the gate, which he could see set in the high stone wall.

He was just congratulating himself upon the complete success of his undertaking, when the man Honeychurch suddenly darted out from behind a clump of bushes growing there on the lawn.

"Hold on there, Mr. Aylsford!" he exclaimed. "Not that way! You go back as you came. You must go with me."

If Nell was with the man Harry did not see her.

Nor did he hesitate, although Honeychurch had one hand in his pocket, and Harry was sure he grasped a revolver.

"Out of my way!" he cried. "What do you mean by this interference?"

Then, before the fellow could reply, he struck out, and landing a stinging blow between the eyes, felled him to the ground, planted his knee upon him, and wrenched the revolver away.

"Spare me! Spare me, Mr. Aylsford!" gasped the steward. "I only tried to stop you for your own good."

"You lying plotter!" hissed Harry. "I know you. Go back to that woman and tell her that you saw me. Follow and I'll give you a double dose of your own medicine—see?"

Then, springing to his feet, Young King Brady bounded off toward the gate.

It would not open.

The lock was of peculiar construction. Harry saw at a glance that his skeleton keys would not work.

The wall here was too high to climb; moreover, its top was covered with broken glass set in cement.

"If this runs around the entire place I'm in a hole," thought Harry, and for the moment he paused to reflect.

There seemed but one way and that was to make for the water at the foot of the lawn.

But there he ran the risk of coming up against Jack Judd and the man who had brought the steam launch across the bay.

Keeping close to the wall, Harry ran on down the grassy slope.

All at once a sharp whistle sounded behind him.

"Signals!" thought Young King Brady. "I shall do well if I escape without another fight."

He could now hear someone running behind him, and there was also someone running toward him on ahead.

"Hot times," thought Harry. "But that means there is only one person left in the boat. If I could only get it now! That would be great. I could run her back to Frisco and surprise the Governor by dropping this money into his hands."

He dropped behind a thick mass of shrubbery and waited.

In a few seconds he saw Jack Judd go flying by.

"Jack! Jack!" Nell's voice called. "He has been playing it on us! I believe he has got the dough! Head him off! He's trying to escape."

But Jack Judd was evidently turned around.

Instead of retracing his steps he ran on toward the sounds of the call.

This was Young King Brady's opportunity.

He slipped out from behind the shrubbery, and dashing on toward the boat, had gained the shore a minute later.

"What's the matter?" demanded the man in the launch.

"That's what's the matter!" cried Harry, jumping in and planking the revolver at the fellow's head. "Start her! Be quick, or I'll fire! You are going to take me across the bay."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ALL AT SEA AGAIN.

"What are you doing here, Mr. Aylsford?" cried the man who came hurrying up the long smoking room of the Dragon Club toward Old King Brady and his companion. "Haven't I had trouble enough with you? Don't you know it is against the rules to admit a stranger in here? What in thunder brings you back, anyhow?"

The man was Steward Honeychurch, and he was in a state of intense excitement.

"Slow and easy, friend!" cried Old King Brady, drawing his revolver and displaying his detective's shield.

Honeychurch wilted.

"I knew it would come to this," he growled. "Now I shall lose my job, I suppose; but I'll get square with you, Aylsford. I'll have you bounced for bringing a detective in. You had better look to yourself when you strike Chinatown next time, too. There are them there that will lay you out."

"Spare your threats, or I'll arrest you, man," said Old

King Brady, sternly. "I'm an officer, and I don't propose to stand this monkey business an instant longer——"

"I'm done," growled the steward. "What is it you want here?"

"Was I here one day about three weeks ago, so full of dope that I didn't know what I was about?" demanded Arthur, excitedly, finding a chance to get in a word at last.

"You've been that way every time you came here until last night," snarled Honeychurch. "You knew what you were doing then, all right."

"I wasn't here last night. What do you mean?"

"Hush, Mr. Aylsford," said Old King Brady. "Let me talk to this man. I think the only way will be to arrest him, but if he answers questions perhaps we may decide to let him go."

But Arthur had lost his head.

"This is the place where I left the money," he shouted. "I hid it in that hole in the wall, and you say it is empty now. This fellow must have found the money. That's why he is trying to bluff us off this way."

"Stop that talk!" roared Honeychurch. "I won't stand for it even if I am only a steward, and you the son of a millionaire banker. Are you doped again, or what's the matter with you? Do you pretend to tell me that you don't remember being here early this morning and taking that money away? If you don't I do then. You can see the mark on my head that you gave me now. You stole my revolver, too. I'm bound to get square with you for all this."

Old King Brady let him talk, for he was learning something from every word he uttered.

"Good boy, Harry!" he said to himself. "Once more you are in ahead."

It was perfectly clear to him that Young King Brady had got the money and had a scrap with the steward, but had he succeeded in holding on to it, and where was he now?

These were the all-important questions, and Old King Brady started in to get answers to them without further delay.

"I want you both to stop talking or there will be trouble!" he cried. "Arthur, there is a misunderstanding here which must be immediately straightened out. Now, keep silent, please, and you, Mr. What's-your-name, answer my questions if you want to avoid arrest."

"My name is Honeychurch!" snarled the steward, "and I'll thank you to call me by it. I'm as good as you."

"A great deal better, perhaps, and as for your name, it combines religion with sweetness. Now, then, at what time do you say this young man was here?"

"I'm not on the witness stand. If you are a detective you are not a judge—you can't make me tell!"

But Old King Brady could, and Honeychurch found it out in a second.

At slipping on the bracelets the old detective is a perfect artist, as everybody knows.

The next Honeychurch knew Old King Brady had him up against the wall, and while one hand held him by the throat pinioned there, the other served the detective to enclose the man's left wrist with a handcuff.

This was done almost before the steward had time to know what he was about.

The next move was just as efficient.

Suddenly letting go of the fellow's throat, Old King Brady's leg went plump into the pit of the steward's stomach almost winding him.

At the same instant the other hand was captured and corraled.

"There, my sweet religionist! Now will you talk?" Old King Brady panted, for the effort had about taken his breath away.

Honeychurch was conquered.

Of course, the man was a hop-hitter himself, and the victims of the opium pipe never have any great amount of physical strength.

"Don't take me out of here, boss," he whined. "I'm a ruined man if you do."

The chances are the steward was alone in the place at that hour, for he made no further resistance to Old King Brady's demands.

As for Arthur, he had subsided entirely; he seemed to be afraid that his turn would come next.

"At what time did this young man come here?" said Old King Brady, putting the question again.

"It was about three o'clock. Are you going to pull me out of this?"

"Not if you answer my questions. Who came with him?"

"A woman."

"What woman? Don't attempt to conceal her identity."

"I don't know her name. She does turns in the dancing line for smokers."

"Nell Judd," put in Arthur.

"What's the use of trying to conceal her name? He knows it," growled the steward. "What's the use of pumping me anyhow, when he knows all about it. Why don't you make him tell?"

"Let me show you how mixed you are, and then you will understand," said Old King Brady. "This gentleman is Mr. Arthur Aylsford, but the one who came here with the Judd woman was my partner made up to look like him. Now do you tumble?"

"Is that so?" growled Honeychurch. "Have I been played for a fool? It looks that way."

"Out with it all, and let me pull off those bracelets."

"Oh, well, all there is about it, Nell came to me and told me that Mr. Aylsford had lost a lot of money, and that he believed that he had left it here. She said he was so badly doped that he did not know what he was about, and that he was in her hands. She wanted to bring him here secretly, and for me to give him a show in the hope that he would find the money for himself. As for what her plan was for I did not ask her. I listened to the girl, and I believe the

fellow got the money, but he gave us the slip and lit out. Honestly, that's all I know."

"I believe you are speaking the truth," replied Old King Brady, who had been carefully watching the fellow's face. "I am just as sure of it as I am that you would have done my partner up between you if he had not been too sharp for you."

The steward was silent.

"You tried to lay him out and instead he laid you out," continued Old King Brady. "Now tell me how he left this place, and where he went, and I am through with you, my friend."

"He came in a steam launch, and he went off the same way," replied Honeychurch. "Where he went to I don't know."

"Did he go with the Judds?"

"No, he didn't," grinned the steward. "He captured the launch and went away in it. The Judds had to get back to Frisco the best way they could."

"Every blessed thing I know, boss."

"You saw no money?"

"Not I."

"Or you would have promptly frozen on to it. Arthur, I think our work is done here."

"He's done here," snarled the steward. "He better not try to come into the Dragon Club again."

"He never will," said Old King Brady. "Mark you, man. Nothing will be done about this if you keep your mouth shut; but if I hear that you have stirred the matter up in any way I shall make it my business to land you behind the bars."

Then Old King Brady removed the handcuffs and retired with Arthur Aylsford.

They had just time to catch the return boat for San Francisco, and Old King Brady hurried his charge on board.

It was not until the boat had started that Arthur began to talk.

"Mr. Brady, I'm getting so nervous that I am almost dead," he first said. "Can't you do anything for me. The temptation to smoke in that place was horrible. You don't know anything about it, sir, unless you have been there yourself."

"Well, I can fix you off," replied the detective, and he administered two more of Dr. Low Quong Tai's pills.

"Now smoke this strong cigar," he added, "and you will be able to pull yourself together."

"Oh, I feel better already," said Arthur, as he took a light. "What is to be our next move? Do you suppose your partner will bring the money to the Lick House?"

"He undoubtedly will, and there we shall find him unless he is interfered with in some way."

"How could he ever make up to look like me so as to deceive Nell? I can't understand that."

"Well, you can see for yourself that he did deceive the steward. Perhaps he did not try to deceive the Judd woman in that particular. She may have thought she was standing in with him all the while."

"That's more likely."

"Nevertheless he may have deceived her, too. I made the boy up from a photograph of yourself which your father gave me. The resemblance was perfect. Such doings are all in the line of our business, you know."

"And you expect me to go to my father with the money?"

"I do. I shall insist upon it. We will go directly to the bank, and I can promise you that he will forgive you and pass this business over if you promise to reform."

"Which I do promise!" cried Arthur, with more animation than he had yet displayed.

"Oh, Mr. Brady!" he added, "how can I ever thank you? I really believe you have saved my life!"

Arthur began crying again then, and the old detective let him alone until the fit had passed, and then gave him such good advice as the occasion seemed to call for.

Arriving at San Francisco, they went directly to the Lick House, but only to meet with disappointment.

Young King Brady was not there, and had not been there. Arthur's spirits sank to the lowest depths.

"What can it mean?" he exclaimed. "Excuse me if I ask it, Mr. Brady, but is your partner entirely reliable?"

"As reliable as the sun," was the reply. "If you think he has run off with that money you were never more mistaken in your life. Come, we must at once go on his trail."

Old King Brady called a cab and in a few minutes they were rattling up Montgomery street.

"And where are we going now?" inquired Arthur.

"That is for you to say," replied the detective. "My directions to the cabby were to drive to Chinatown. I am going to interview the Judds, and you must tell me where they live."

"If I hadn't seen you handle Honeychurch the way you did I should be almost afraid," said Arthur, "but as it is I reckon you will be good for Jack Judd."

"Don't you fret yourself. I'm good for any hop-hitter in Frisco. You need not be one bit afraid."

Arthur gave the address then, and Old King Brady communicated it to the cabby.

Thus they wound up in China Alley.

Arthur's nervousness was pitiable as they ascended the stairs to the rooms occupied by the Judds.

There can be no doubt that he was greatly relieved at the result.

The rooms were empty.

There was abundant evidence that the Judds had gathered up their belongings and hastily left for parts unknown.

"All at sea again," exclaimed Old King Brady, in a tone of deep vexation.

"Harry has fallen into trouble surest thing, and nothing remains but to track him out."

## CHAPTER IX.

### HARRY'S ADVENTURES ON THE BAY.

What had become of Young King Brady?

After the very effective way in which he handled affairs

at the Dragon Club one might have expected to see him land the Aylsford money safely at the Lick House, but it did not work that way.

The man in the launch gave in without question. In fact, after his first startled exclamation, he never said a word.

Harry kept him covered until they were well out in the bay, and then said:

"Now, my friend, throw over your revolver and we will cry quits. All I ask is to be taken back to Frisco without trouble, and no harm will come to you."

"I have no revolver," growled the boatman.

"Throw it over and say no more."

"I tell you I haven't any revolver."

"Very well; then I shall have to keep you covered all the way to Frisco."

The man glared, but after a moment produced a revolver and handed it to Harry, who pocketed it.

"Now the knife," said Young King Brady, in the same quiet, persuasive tone.

The knife came, too.

Of course, Harry had no means of knowing whether the man had other weapons about him or not, but he determined to let it go at that and take his chances, so he pocketed his own revolver then.

Meanwhile they had run out of sight of the grounds of the Dragon Club, following one of the many bends in the coast "over the bay," as this section is always called.

"May I have the privilege of saying a word now?" demanded the man.

"You have had that privilege, right along," replied Harry, whose eyes never left him. "Say whatever you please."

"Then what became of the Judds?"

"We left them behind us."

"Just as if I didn't know that much. Perhaps you take me for a fool because I went into this thing, but all the same I've got some common sense. Did you do them up?"

"On the contrary, they started in to do me up. I gave them the slip and got first to the boat. Now you know it all."

"You are a queer hop-fiend to have so much energy."

"I've got energy enough."

"And are no hop-fiend. You are a detective, of course."

"Why, certainly," laughed Harry, and he displayed his shield.

"I might have known. Say, what was it all about?"

"Didn't Nell Judd tell you?"

"No, she didn't."

"Then I am very much obliged to her, and I shan't tell you either."

The man bit his lip, and looked off over the bay.

At some little distance a steam launch of similar pattern to their own could be seen approaching from the direction of the Golden Gate.

Harry watched it for a minute but the man merely glanced at it.

All at once he put up his hand and pulled the whistle twice in quick succession.

"See here! What are you doing that for?" demanded Young King Brady.

"You don't want that fellow to run me down, I suppose?" the man sullenly replied. "It's the law."

The other launch answered the signal.

Harry was suspicious.

Still he was not familiar with the rules of the road in the bay of San Francisco.

The launch man was an ugly, bull-necked fellow, with little foxy eyes; a dangerous man, beyond a doubt.

He kept silent now as they sped on, and Harry watched him closely, but as he never even looked in the direction of the launch the detective came to the conclusion that there was nothing in his first suspicion after all.

He was soon to learn his mistake.

As the two launches came abreast the other suddenly turned and shot toward them, while Harry's man shut off steam.

"Here! Go ahead there!" cried Young King Brady, pulling out his revolver.

The man never even winced.

He did not start the launch, either.

"I'm unarmed, young feller," he said coolly, "but if you do me up you'll be done up yourself. Look around."

Harry did it at the risk of being jumped on.

In the other launch sat a man with a rifle which was pointed directly at Harry's head, and at the same instant the light of a dark lantern held in the hands of a second man was turned full upon the young detective.

"You see where you are at now," said the launch man, coolly. "I don't think it will pay you to shoot me, so you might as well give me back my revolver and knife, and your own along with them. I suppose your own common sense will show you that the tables are turned."

Young King Brady caught his breath.

He saw that he was in for it, and there seemed to be no way out.

Chances are he don't know anything about the money," he hurriedly thought. "I don't believe that either Nell or Jack Judd would tell him. If I try to stand out against these people I'm a goner. I may as well appear to yield.

"This is one on me," he said aloud. "You seem to have got the drop on me, all right. Here, take the gun."

He tossed over the two revolvers and the knife.

"Your own knife—don't forget that," said the man.

Harry threw him a knife.

He still had another and a revolver, too.

"Hello, Abe! Got him corralled?" called the man from the other launch, which was now close alongside.

"Yep!" replied Harry's companion. "He's all right still."

"Who is he?"

"Detective. He's been playing some kind of roots on Jack Judd and Nell."

"The deuce you say."



"Yep! Take him aboard, will yer?"

"Say, we can't. We are going on a cruise."

"Can't help that. Take him aboard. I've got to go back after Jack and Nell."

"Where be they?"

"Dragon Club, over at Sausalito."

"Is this guy one of the Dragons?"

"Thunder, no! Didn't I tell you he was a detective? He is made up to look like one of them—Arthur Aylsford, the banker's son."

"Oh, ho! I see how the cat jumps. Nell has been trying to work that young fellow's bank account. I seen 'em at the Poodle Dog together the other night."

"Still, don't you waste no time talking," said Abe. "Take him along. Fetch him to the holdout and hold him for Jack and Nell."

"He may make us trouble."

"Then dump him in the bay."

"Well, I kinder hate to do it, but I suppose I've gotter, seeing as it's Nell's business. Say, what's it all about?"

"Oh, for heaven sake can't you cut it short? I tell you Jack and Nell are in trouble. I've got to get right back to the Dragon Club to help 'em out. Will you take him on board?"

"Let him come," growled the man, still keeping Harry covered all the while.

"I go aboard that launch under protest, gentlemen," said Young King Brady. "Understand me, I'm through with my business with the Judds. All I want is to be landed somewhere, and to go my own way, and they'll never hear from me again."

"Why don't you take him at his word, Abe?" asked Still.

"I can't and I won't," was the reply. "I can't run the launch and watch him, too. Even if I was to tie him he would be up to some trick. Jack and Nell are in trouble over there, and I've got to help them out. Will you cut this short and take him aboard?"

"Settled," said Still. "No more chin music goes. Come aboard, young feller. If you make the least bit of resistance I'll end this matter by boring you full of holes."

This settled Young King Brady's fate for the time being.

The launch was brought up alongside, and he stepped aboard still under cover of the rifle.

A few hurried words spoken in low whispers passed between the two men.

Then the launches separated. Abe turned back toward Sausalito, while Still headed his down the bay.

There were three white men in the launch and one Chinaman lay curled up astern, apparently sound asleep.

So far not a word had been said about the money to Young King Brady's immense relief.

As soon as Harry came aboard Still put down his rifle.

"I suppose he has disarmed yer," he said, "and I hain't going to take the trouble to hold you covered, nor yet to search yer. All I've got to say is that if you do happen to have a gun concealed anywhere about yer and you try to draw it you will be shot dead before you can get your hand

on the trigger. That's no man living on earth any quicker on the draw than I be."

"You needn't be afraid," replied Harry. "Your friend got my gun and my knife, too. I'm helpless in your hands."

"You bet you be," replied Still. "You're that anyway, gun or no gun. A feller has to get up mighty early in the morning to get in ahead of Still White, and that's me."

"I should judge so," replied Harry, dryly, "and I don't propose to try."

The launch shot on.

The men talked with each other in low tones.

Young King Brady wondered what their business could be.

"It's a smuggling racket of some sort," he said to himself. "Either Chinks or opium, one of the two."

They were now pretty nearly down to the Presidio, and Still White began to talk.

"Say, you look almighty like Arthur Aylsford," he said. "I seen him at Jack Judd's. Sure you hain't the man himself?"

"Your friend Abe told the truth," replied Harry. "I'm a detective. I am made up to look like Aylsford."

"You be, hey? What's your lay? You may as well come out flat-footed. It won't do you no harm."

"Oh, I'd just as soon do that as not," replied Harry. "Abe has made a whole lot out of nothing. The case is really very simple. Young Aylsford is missing, and I have been hired by his father to look him up. There is nothing more to the matter than that."

"And what were you doing with the Judds?"

"Oh, it was just that my disguise fooled them. They picked me up thinking that I was really young Aylsford. I was just standing in with them hoping to locate my man. Jack got rather fresh over there at Sausalito, and I was afraid, so I gave them the shake, held up the launch, and was trying to get back to town. I assure you there is nothing more in it than that. You can believe me or not, just as you please."

"I do believe you, young feller. It strikes me that you are as green as the grass that grows. All the same that won't save you. Jack Judd is my friend, and I intend to give you up to him. It's for him to decide whether you are worth all the trouble I am taking on your account or not."

Harry made no reply, and the conversation was not renewed.

Meanwhile the launch had passed through the Golden Gate, and was heading out to sea.

It was now getting on toward morning.

Whatever crooked work was to be done would have to be done pretty soon, Harry thought.

But the launch was a very swift affair, and there was still time to get back to San Francisco before daylight if matters were brought to a head soon.

And they were.

A few moments later a big black steamer hove in sight out of the fog, which lay thick down the coast, although in the bay it was clear enough.

"There she comes!" cried the engineer.

"I see," replied Still. "Sheer off a bit."

He produced a powerful night glass and continued to watch the steamer until she had passed.

She was either one of the Panama steamers or a Pacific liner, Harry concluded.

As Still made no attempt to approach her, Harry was more mystified than ever.

"Did you see anything?" asked one of the men.

"Not a thing," was the reply. "All the same I reckon we are in it. Start up there. We must cover her course and be blamed quick about it, too."

The Chinaman roused up now.

"No comee?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, comee, Wong Ark," replied Still, "and gonee, too. You want to get ready for business."

"Me alleddy," replied the Chink.

Harry now noticed that the buttons of Wong Ark's blouse were solid golden nuggets. The Chinaman was evidently a man of means.

"It's probably opium smuggling," thought Young King Brady as the launch sped on toward the steamer's trail.

## CHAPTER X.

### LOOKING FOR HARRY.

"Are you sure this is the right place?" demanded Old King Brady, turning suddenly upon Arthur Aylsford as they stood looking about the deserted rooms of the Judds.

"Oh, yes, absolutely certain," was the reply. "Why, you must remember that I have been living here for the past three weeks."

"Yes, but in your condition it is so easy to forget."

"It is impossible, I tell you. I have been coming and going here for a year."

Old King Brady now proceeded to examine the leavings of the Judds, for there were various articles of old clothing and other odds and ends scattered about.

Picking up an old pair of trousers, the detective felt in the pockets, more from mere habit of making a thorough examination of whatever he undertook than anything else.

In one of the pockets he found a letter addressed to Jack Judd.

It ran as follows:

"Dear Jack: I enclose the ticket. If you want to get next to Charley High now is your time. They are going to bring in some sort of a high-cockalorum for the Jackson street theater. He's a magician or something of the sort—blest if I know. Of course, you won't give me away or the Highbinders will make short work of me, but it ought to be good for a thousand. Charley High will surely be able to pay that much rather than see the Chink deported. I enclose a slip done in Chink talk that will tell you all about

the man. I suppose either you or Nell can get it translated, but be mighty careful or you will both get yourselves into a hole and pull me down with you. How's graft? Hope you are well and happy. How is Nell making out with that young squirt, the Aylsford boy? She was telling me last time I seen her that you had agreed to get a divorce, and let her marry him if you could be sure he was down in his father's will. Poor wretch! He wouldn't last a year once Nell got her clutches on him, for if she couldn't induce him to dope himself to death she'd blame soon do the job for him. But all that's none of my biz. By-by.

"Your friend,

"Still White."

Enclosed in the letter was a slip of yellow paper scrawled with Chinese characters down its entire length.

This Old King Brady put into his pocket, and without comment handed the letter over to Arthur, whose pale face actually turned red as he perused it.

"Mr. Brady, it can't be!" he murmured. "That woman likes me. Her husband abuses her shamefully, and—and——"

"Oh, you little idiot!" cried Old King Brady, impatiently. "You need a guardian—that's what's the matter with you. Those people are just a pair of crooks. I won't ask you if you have promised to marry the woman if she gets a divorce from her husband, for I have no doubt you have. You can see by this letter that it is all cut and dried between herself and her husband. Let me tell you that you have had a very narrow escape."

"May I keep this letter?" asked Arthur in hollow tones.

"Yes, keep it. There will be no arrests made in this case if we only succeed in getting the money. Your father has particularly requested that it should be so. Only for that it would give me particular satisfaction to land that pair in San Quentin, and I could easily do it, too. I have no idea they have left the city. I shall surely come up with them yet."

Arthur put the letter in his pocket and without commenting upon Old King Brady's remarks asked what was next on the programme.

"To read that slip of paper," replied the detective. "If it was not for you I should take it to the chief of police and get one of the regular Chinese detectives to do the reading, but that won't do, for you would surely be recognized, and I want to have the honor of restoring you to your father myself."

"And you are afraid to trust me out of your sight, I suppose."

"I won't deny it."

"Still, you might safely do so. I am fully determined to take your advice and reform."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, my boy. Shake on that!" cried the detective heartily. "Don't think I mean to be too hard on you. I only want to arouse you to the true sense of your situation—that is all."

They had some further talk then, Arthur listening respectfully to the old detective's good advice.

"The paper must be read," Old King Brady said finally. "I think I know a party who can be trusted. Come with me."

While the acquaintance of the Bradys among the San Francisco Chinese is by no means as extensive as it is with the Celestial colony in New York, Old King Brady knows many influential Chinamen, men against whose interest it is to break the law.

"If I can only get a hold over these Judds it may be a help in case Harry has got himself in trouble with them," he thought. "I may as well spend my time on this as anything else. Besides, it may bring me up against a clew to the boy's whereabouts, which is what I want most of all now."

Old King Brady accordingly went down Sacramento street with Arthur, and entered the mercantile establishment of Wet Gong.

Here they found themselves in a store which though small was most expensively fitted up in the Chinese style, for Wet Gong was an importer on a large scale, and his credit was second to that of no white importer in town.

A young Chinaman wearing a green silk blouse came forward to greet them.

"How do, Mlister Blady," he said, shaking hands. "You wantee see boss?"

"Yes. Is he in?" inquired the detective.

"Him go to Joss house up Jackson street," was the reply. "You go see him dere? Yes?"

"Oh, I wouldn't like to do that," replied the detective.

"Oh, him no care. Him talkee you in Joss house allee light."

Old King Brady knew that this was so, and right here we may as well explain for the benefit of those not posted the lines on which a Chinese joss house is run.

It bears no resemblance whatever to a Christian church, and there is nothing sacred about it in the eyes of the Chinese, as is generally supposed to be the case.

Even the images are not regarded as idols, nor are they worshiped as gods, as most people imagine. The scheme is different altogether.

The Chinese worship their ancestors, and believe that their spirits have a constant watch over the business and social interests of their living descendants.

If a Chinaman is in trouble, or is about to embark in a business venture, or wants information concerning the future of any kind, he consults the spirit of the ancestor whom he believes for reasons which it would take too long to explain to be most deeply interested in his affairs.

To do this he goes to a joss house and kneels down before the high altar, upon which are packed the images representing powerful spirits which have been in use by this strange people for thousands of years.

John Chinaman then prays, not to the wooden god, but to his father, brother, grandfather, or whatever spirit he believes to be his guardian in the unseen world.

He firmly believes that the spirit of one of the ancient

gods represented by the image will help his friendly spirit to draw near and help him.

Having finished his prayer, he lights an incense stick, places it on the high altar, and while it is burning takes from the altar a round box containing joss sticks, thin pieces of wood inscribed with Chinese characters meaning "yes," "no," "doubtful," or some other word.

Again he kneels before the altar and shakes the box, mixing up the sticks, and then gives them a throw upon the floor exactly as an American would shake dice.

The spirit of his ancestor is supposed to control the movement of the sticks, and the one which lands nearest the altar counts.

"Shall I buy the laundry or shall I not buy the laundry?" John asks his particular joss, and away go the sticks over the floor.

If the stick landing nearest the altar says no nothing could induce John to invest.

If it is yes he hurries off to close the transaction, after paying his fee to the keeper of the joss house.

If the answer is doubtful, such as wait, take time to think, or something of that sort, John holds off, and calls around again.

It is all very simple when one understands it.

The Chinese are firm believers in the powers of their ancestral spirits to help them, and the keeping of a joss house is merely a business, although sometimes meetings are held there and men who are regarded as particularly saintly hold forth on the beauties of the faith of the Fo, as this strange religion is called.

Old King Brady, knowing all this, had no great hesitation in looking in on Wet Gong at the famous Jackson street joss house, the oldest if not the largest in San Francisco.

Wet Gong had a long list of business questions to ask his joss, and he was on his knees in front of an altar loaded down with hideous images when Old King Brady entered, shaking the joss sticks for all he was worth.

Old King Brady watched his chance and tackled him between shakes, whereupon Wet Gong immediately put down the box, and getting on his feet, shook hands.

He was a man far advanced in years, and his fat cheeks and sturdy form showed that he was no hop hitter.

Some people imagine that all Chinamen use opium, but this is a great mistake, for there are many thousands among them who never touch the deadly drug.

Old King Brady produced his paper and asked Wet Gong's help.

The Chinaman drew the detective and Arthur over into a corner by a window, and putting on a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, studied the paper in silence for a few minutes.

"Blady," he said then, "if I telle you about dis plaper what den? It allee about a man who belong to my company; he comee here to Flisco. You tellee and have him sent back to China again?"

"No, no!" replied the old detective. "Surely not. I have nothing to do with the man at all."

He then went on to explain that the information was merely to be used as a clew to other matters.

Wet Gong seemed to be perfectly able to follow him, and to have entire confidence in the detective as well.

"He is actor," he said. "He come Flisco on City of Tokio, she come in ddis morning. He gettee off somewhere some way, ddis paper no tellee how; Melican man meet him down bay in boat and bring him up. He come here to ddis joss house and hide from de detectives. Bimeby he play in Charley High's theater, down street."

"Hello! Then he may be here now?" exclaimed the detective.

"Maybe. I no can tell. You want to see him, Blady?"

"No. I don't want anything to do with him. What I want is different. You know my partner, Wet Gong?"

"Sure, Blady. Mlister Harry! Oh, yair."

"I have reason to think that he may have been mixed up with the people who brought this actor into the city. I want you to find this out for me, and to find out where Harry is now if this is so. You can do this?"

"Oh, yair!"

"I know there are secret rooms underneath this joss house where new arrivals from China are often hidden for a time. My partner may be there, too. You help me, Wet Gong, and I'll pay you well."

Old King Brady knew the old merchant well enough to be sure that whatever money came his way would not be refused.

Old Wet Gong was perfectly willing to do his friend the detective a favor, but just the same he was out for the stuff.

"I no can do noting now, Blady," he said. "You come my place one hour. Mebbe I tellee you ebltying den."

Old King Brady immediately withdrew and still keeping Arthur with him returned to the Lick House to make sure that Harry had not turned up during his absence; but there was no Harry and no word from him.

Old King Brady now grew seriously alarmed.

It began to look very much as if Harry had been done up for the money.

There was nothing to do but to wait, however, and at the end of the hour he turned up at Wet Gong's again. The old Chinaman met him in a state of excitement.

"Dey got him, Blady. Him up by joss house. Dley hold him plisnor, but no makee trouble. You get him allee light."

Here was startling news.

Just the same it was an immense relief to the detective, for now he knew that Harry was at least alive.

## CHAPTER XI.

### YOUNG KING BRADY TRIES A BOLD BLUFF.

If Wet Gong was to be believed, then Young King Brady had not been able to get out of the clutches of Still White,

and we must return to the steam launch and show how it fared with Harry while his partner was scouring about Chinatown trying to find him.

In cases of this kind Young King Brady had long ago learned that the proper thing to do was nothing at all.

So he just sat still and watched.

The launch having struck the track of the steamer, which was none other than the City of Tokio, turned and followed it along for some little distance.

The dark lantern was now brought into play, and its light thrown right and left upon the water.

Wong Ark, the Chinaman, had now taken his place in the bow of the boat, and was keeping a sharp lookout.

All at once he gave a loud shout, rapidly speaking some words in Chinese.

"See anything, Wong?" demanded Still.

"Not yet," replied the Chinaman. "Me no see, but p'laps somebody see me in de light."

He had no more than uttered these words than an answering shout came over the water.

"By thunder, he is there!" cried Still. "Strange we can't get a sight of him! Keep your eye peeled, Wong. It won't do to miss him now."

"Allee light! Allee light," replied Wong Ark. "No talkee. Me find him. Pullee much quick."

Harry was watching, too, for all he was worth.

It was he who made the discovery.

Just outside the range of the light he suddenly caught sight of a man's head and body raised well above the water.

"There you are, White!" he cried. "Man in the water! Looks as though he was walking there. Turn your lantern a little bit this way."

"By jove, you've got the sharpest eyesight of the bunch!" growled Still.

He followed Harry's suggestion.

Now the figure became plain enough.

It was a Chinaman. He seemed to be standing half out of the water, and was bobbing up and down with the swell.

Wong Ark began shouting excitedly, and the man in the water answered him, waving his hand.

In a moment they had come up with him, and the men helped him into the launch.

Of course, Young King Brady was not in it. All he could do was to watch and listen, but as the new-comer in the launch only talked Chinese with Wong Ark, the latter did him little good.

The man was the tallest and most athletic Chinaman Harry had ever seen, with the exception of a Chinese giant whom he had once seen in a museum.

His coat was fastened tight around the waist with a belt, and was made with rubber, with air bags under the arms and over the breast and back, which being blown up, gave him a most peculiar appearance until he removed it.

The coat was, in fact, a great life preserver, and Young King Brady saw that the man must have jumped overboard from the steamer.

The launch was now immediately headed back toward San Francisco.

Still White and the other men shook hands with this latest importation from the Flowery Kingdom in Chinese style, and seemed to regard him with the greatest respect, and all they could do was to return the hand-shake and grin, for Wong Ark did not seem to be disposed to translate what he said.

Once they were started, Still White grew more sociable and, shifting his position nearer to Harry, asked him if he had any chewing tobacco.

"Not a bit, I'm sorry to say," replied Harry, "but I've got some good cigars. Have one yourself and pass the rest around."

"I'll take one," replied Still, "but if you are a smoker you had better keep the rest; you may need them for yourself before you get through."

"What's your name?" was the next question put after Still began to smoke.

Harry gave his name as "Bob Smith."

"Belong in 'Frisco?" asked Still.

"No; I'm from the States."

"How come you to get on this Alysford business?"

"I was sent for by John Alysford."

"Seen anything of the young fellow?"

"Not yet."

"No, nor you never will. Say, it is a pity you had to run up against Jack Judd and his wife. You seem a clever fellow. I wish I could turn you loose."

"What's the matter with doing it? I give you my word, I shan't interfere with the Judds in anyway."

"Oh, I couldn't do it nohow. I don't never butt into nobody's business. All I have to do is to keep you safe till I can see Jack. You'll have to settle with him."

This was decidedly an unpleasant prospect, but Harry wisely dropped the subject, and White went on with his talk.

"Say," he whispered after a moment, "I s'pose you are wondering who that Chink is and why we went to so much trouble to get him off the City of 'Frisco."

"I've got my share of curiosity, of course, but as you say, I never butt in."

"Oh, I don't mind telling you. You don't look like a fellow who would go out of his way to make trouble. Do you know, I've taken a big liking to you somehow, although, for the life of me, I couldn't tell you why."

"Whatever you tell me is safe. I have nothing to do with your affairs. I wish your liking for me was strong enough to induce you to turn me loose when we strike 'Frisco."

"I'll talk to Jack and see what he says. About this here Chink; he's a big actor from some Chink teayter in Shanghai. They say he can do the high jump to beat the band. He's going to appear at the Chinese theayter on Jackson street in a couple of weeks."

"He's never been in the country before?"

"Oh, yes. He's been here twice. That's his way of

beating the inspectors. Slick, isn't it? He had that coat made in London. He's travelled all over the world, they say."

"And yet he don't seem able to speak English."

"Oh, he can talk it all right if he wants to, you can bet. These Chinks are a queer lot of guys. They keep to themselves. That other one is his brother. He runs a big importing house on Jackson street. They say he is as rich as mud. He's putting up for this."

"These fellows are opium smugglers as well as Chink smugglers," thought Young King Brady. "I shall have to fight for my freedom, if not for my life, I'm afraid. They'll never let me go after what I have seen of their doings. If they even suspected that I had such an amount of money about me as I have, my life would not be worth a cent."

It was just daylight when the launch ran in among the bathing houses at the North Beach.

Their arrangements had all been made for them, of course, and they were met by an ugly looking white man, one glance at whose face showed Harry that it would be utterly useless to appeal to him.

A covered wagon stood in readiness on the street, and into this Wong Ark, the actor, and Harry were unceremoniously hustled. Still White getting in, too, and seating himself on the floor of the wagon beside Young King Brady, he informed him cheerfully that he intended to put a bullet right through his head if he made any fuss.

They rattled through the streets, going up and down the hills, for which San Francisco is so famous, all in silence save for the occasional gabble of the two Chinamen, but they spoke in whispers when they spoke at all.

"Say," breathed Still in Harry's ear after a little. "I don't think I have to blindfold you, do I? You can't escape. You won't make me any trouble if I just take you by the arm and lead you along?"

Harry promised, but it was with the mental reserve that his promise certainly should not hold if he saw the least chance to escape.

But no such good luck came his way.

The wagon stopped at the entrance to an alley—Harry was not able to make out what street he was on, but it was somewhere in Chinatown, all right; for there were as many as a dozen Chinamen standing about, with their hands concealed in the sleeves of their blouses.

There was no doubt that they were Highbinders, hired to protect the actor, for with these people robbery and murder is a regular trade.

From the wagon into the alley was but a step, and Harry was hustled through, the crowd following closely in the wake of Wong Ark and the actor.

No policeman was in sight, and as the Highbinders crowded after them into the alley, it would have been mere madness on Young King Brady's part to have attempted to escape.

They entered a house half way down the alley, and in the dark hall three of the Highbinders closed upon Harry



and hurried him down a dark stairway, where he was pushed through a door, which was instantly closed and locked behind him.

Still White had been lost in the shuffle, and Young King Brady now found himself alone.

The room was small, dirty and dark, the only light which penetrated it coming from a little slit of a window away up by the ceiling, which was protected by bars.

There was a dirty cotbed in the room and a single chair. The walls were green with mould, and the place had a damp, musty smell.

Harry climbed up to the window, standing on the chair, and peered through the grimy panes.

The window was on a level with the ground, and he found himself looking into a dirty courtyard.

Even if the bars had not been there, Young King Brady could not have crawled through, the opening was so small.

"I am in the basement of some rear tenement in Chinatown," thought Young King Brady. "I am in the greatest danger. That fellow, White, will go straight to Jack Judd and he will come here and search me, surest thing. If the money is found on me, I'm a lost man, for he will turn me over to the tender mercies of the Highbinders, and I shall never be heard of again."

Such was the situation as Young King Brady sized it up.

He felt that he could not act too soon.

"Nothing but bluff will save me," he said to himself. "But how to bluff 'em? That's the point."

He sat down and tried to think. In a few minutes his mind was made up.

Getting down upon his kness and pulling the cot away, he carefully examined the baseboard all around the room.

It proved to be as he had hoped.

He soon found a place where the board had become so rotted by the dampness that he could easily pull it away.

Behind was an opening under the lathing between the studs and into this he slipped the wallet and the packages of bills, restoring the board to its place and pushing the cot up against it.

"There!" he muttered. "I fancy the money will be safe in there for a while at least. The next thing is to clean up."

He tackled his face first, and with some difficulty succeeded in rubbing off most of the preparation with which it was covered.

Pulling off the wig, he hid it inside the mattress, pushing it through a very small hole, which he cut in the ticking. Then he turned his coat, and Young King Brady looked something like himself again.

He then took his spare revolver, which fortunately he had been able to hold onto, and laid it on the little window-sill, where he could reach it, placing a scrap of torn newspaper over it.

"Now I am ready for you, Mr. Jack Judd," Harry said to himself. "You can come along as soon as you please."

But Jack Judd did not come for the calling.

Hours passed and Harry remained alone in his underground prison.

Again and again he tried to force the door, but it was made of live oak and resisted all his efforts.

He could hear a constant coming and going in the courtyard above, and he amused himself by watching the Chinamen go shuffling by, but he made no effort to attract their attention, for he knew it would not be the slightest use.

At last a key was heard in the lock and the door opened to admit Jack Judd, accompanied by two Chinamen, each armed with a revolver.

They were wicked looking fellows, with scarred faces. Highbinders beyond doubt.

They ranged up on either side of Harry, covering him with their revolvers.

Judd stopped to fasten the door and then turned and faced the detective.

"Gee!" he exclaimed, "what infernal blunder is this? Who the deuce are you?"

"Come," thought Harry, "these hop bitters are the easiest marks up to date. I can fool them every time."

And aloud he added in a voice entirely disguised:

"Well, I'm glad somebody has come at last to tell me who I am and where I am and what in thunder all this means."

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

"You are sure, Wet Gong?" inquired Old King Brady, eagerly. "You are making no mistake?"

"I make no mistake, Blady. What I telle you. I tellee you true."

"And what can be done to get him free?"

"Me not know, Blady. You fix. Me no can nloting do. Me finde out. Me sendee my young man show you de place, dat's all."

"I see. You are not butting into your neighbor's business."

"Dlat's it. Me no buttee in. Why you no go police?"

"I can attend to my own affairs," replied the detective, slipping Wet Gong a ten dollar note. "All the same, I am very much obliged to you. I—"

A sharp exclamation from Arthur cut the detective short.

"Heavens! What shall I do!" gasped the boy. "Here comes my father now!"

A handsome automobile had stopped in front of Wet Gong's door, from which John Aylsford alighted and in a heavy, pompous way ascended the Chinaman's steps.

Old King Brady drew Arthur behind a tall Chinese screen.

"Stand here!" he whispered. "My advice to you is to make your presence known, but take a minute to cool down."

Wet Gong stared, wondering what it was all about probably.

The banker entered with a patronizing air.

Wet Gong evidently recognized him, for he bowed low and placed a heavy oak chair for his visitor.

"You did not call, Wet Gong," said the banker, seating himself.

"No, mister Aylsford. Me no could decide too quick. Me go muchee slow. Me decide now."

"Good. I thought I would call around and see you. If you want to place that \$50,000 out on a loan, I can give you gilt-edged security. I have the chance open for the day only. So I thought I would give you the first call."

"What it?" inquired Wet Gong.

The banker named a well-known San Francisco industrial company.

"They want to borrow that amount for three months, and they must have it to-day," he said. "Can you raise the cash?"

"What per cent?"

"Twelve per cent."

"No, no. Fifteen."

"No, Wet Gong, twelve."

"Den me no go in. Flifteen."

They laughed for some minutes and finally the shrewd old Chinaman won, for Mr. Aylsford agreed to the fifteen per cent.

During all this, Arthur grew more and more nervous, and stood clutching the old detective's arm.

"I can't do it! No, I can't!" he whispered twice.

"You must!" breathed Old King Brady. "It would be wicked to let your father go out of here without seeing you. It must not be."

The transaction was now completed.

Wet Gong agreed to deliver the money in gold at Aylsford's bank within an hour's time, and the banker rose to depart.

Suddenly Old King Brady stepped from behind the screen, dragging Arthur after him.

"Good morning, Mr. Aylsford!" he said. "Here is your son!"

The banker gasped, fell back and then threw out his arms.

"Arthur!" he exclaimed. "Oh, my poor boy!"

Arthur Aylsford fell sobbing into his father's arms, while Old King Brady turned aside to speak to Wet Gong, whose astonishment was unbounded.

"What matter, Blady?" he whispered. "Him hittee too much hop. Oh, gee!"

"Mr. Brady, how can I ever thank you sufficiently?" said the banker, after a few moments. "It is really most remarkable that you should have succeeded so promptly, where all others have failed."

"My dear sir. I think I know my business," replied the detective. "These young fellows are all very well in their way, and I know that the modern notion is that after a man passes forty-five, he ought to be taken out and

shot; but when it comes to detective work, it is the experience that counts after all."

"You are quite right," said Mr. Aylsford. "Permit me to say that you are a truly wonderful man. Arthur has told me something of it all. He says that you have strong hopes of recovering my cash."

"It is so," replied Old King Brady. "My partner undoubtedly got the money, and I have sufficient confidence in his methods to feel sure that he will be able to hold on to it. I expect to connect with him very shortly. Meanwhile you had better take your son with you. Deal gently with him, Mr. Aylsford. He should be put in the hands of a skillful opium specialist without delay."

"And you can't thank him enough, father," broke in Arthur. "Mr. Brady saved my life! He has been so kind to me."

There was more of it.

We need not give it all here.

Soon afterward the banker and his wayward son departed, leaving the old detective to explain the situation to Wet Gong as best he could.

"And now show me where they are holding my partner a prisoner," said the detective. "I must get right down to work."

Wet Gong summoned his assistant, the intelligent young Chinaman who had received the detective when he first entered the shop, and spoke a few rapid words to him in his own tongue.

"Go now, Blady!" he added. "Fong Tek will show you the house. You must do de rest you ownself."

And following Fong Tek, Old King Brady hurried up Sacramento street, turning down Dupont and up Jackson, until he again reached the Joss House, where he met Wet Gong.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jack Judd was clearly in no shape for business. He had been hitting the pipe again and was badly doped.

"I don't know you!" he snarled. "How did you come here?"

"And I don't know you," replied Young King Brady. "As to how I come here, that is easily explained."

"Explain it, then?"

"Will you set me free if I do?"

"I don't know whether I will or not. Who brought you here?"

"A fellow named Still White. I don't know him, though."

"Were you with him down the bay last night?"

"Yes."

"That makes it all the more mysterious. But say what you have to say in your own way."

"Why, it's like this. I am a detective——"

"A detective! Thunder and guns!"

"Hold on! Hear me out, please. I was set to watch a swell hop-bitters' joint, called the Dragon Club, over at Sausalito. While I was hanging about the grounds last night some people came in a steam launch and landed at

the foot of the garden. There were two young fellows, and I think you were one of them, and a girl and also the man who ran the launch."

"Well?"

"Well, I saw the three go into the clubhouse by the back door; after awhile one of the fellows came out. He was attacked by a man on the grounds, and he knocked him out and dusted over the wall in spite of the broken glass. Others came running up. Everybody was hollering and yelling. I got scared and, finding that I couldn't get to the gate to which I had a false key, I ran down to the launch, held the fellow up who ran it and made him take me aboard and put out into the bay."

"Ah!"

"He turned the tables on me, though, and got my gun away. Then he put me in another launch, which was run by this Still White. I guess you know all about that. I told White it was all a mistake, but he wouldn't believe me, and so he landed me here, and here I've been ever since. Now let me go, like a good fellow, and I swear I'll never squeal about what happened down the bay."

"That's a fine yarn," said Jack. "Somebody is lying. All the same, you sure hain't the fellow I expected to see."

"Who is that, may I ask?"

"Arthur Aylsford, the banker's son."

"He's missing."

"Yes."

"I was hired to see if I couldn't find him. I told White that."

"Then, by thunder, I believe you did find him and helped him to escape."

"That's where you are dead wrong, for I never saw the fellow in my life."

"I believe you lie! Did he give you any money last night?"

"I tell you I never saw him."

"Rats! The fellow who was with me and my wife was Arthur Aylsford."

"He that knocked out the steward?"

"Yes."

"You don't say!"

"I do say, and I have the word of my friend, Abe Dixon, the fellow in the launch, that it was the same man who held him up. I believe you were personating him. I believe you have got the money now."

"What money? You are welcome to all the money you can find about me if you will only let me go."

"Then I'll take you at your word. Strip! Take off every rag you have on you—see?"

"What for?"

"Do as I tell you or you are a goner. I have only to wink, and them Chinks will fire. They are two of the hottest Highbinders in Chinatown. Now you know what you are up against. Strip!"

Unfortunately Harry was not near the window where he could reach his revolver. There was nothing for him but to obey.

In silence he removed his clothes, tossing each garment over to Jack Judd, who searched it.

Nor did Jack spare him. He made Harry strip to the buff, but, of course, no money beyond three one dollar bills and some small change was found.

Jack was greatly chagrined as well as deeply puzzled.

"By heavens, I believe you are telling the truth!" he exclaimed. "Abe Dixon had been hitting the pipe. He got all mixed up. White said as much. He told me that I was on the wrong track, and I believe it now."

"Of course, you are. May I put on my clothes now? There's no fun standing here naked."

"Yes, put them on. Say, what's your name?"

"Bob Smith."

"Where are you from?"

"The East—Chicago."

"That jibes with what Still White said. Say, will you stand in with me on a good thing?"

"Sure I will!"

"There's a pot of money into it. I can't explain before these Chinks. I know you're a detective, all right, for I seen the shield on your vest. Come along with me, and we'll have a drink and talk it over."

"Is it the money young Aylsford got away with?"

"Sure it is."

"It's a bargain," said Harry, beginning to dress.

While putting on his clothes he moved over toward the window gradually, until he stood right under it.

Jack Judd now said something to the Chinamen and they departed, leaving the door unfastened behind them.

Everything seemed to be working Young King Brady's way.

All at once he reached up, seized the revolver from the window ledge, and wheeling about, covered the opium fiend.

"You villain!" he cried. "Do you think I'd sell out to such a wretch as you are! Throw up your hands or I'll do you up where you sit!"

Jack howled for mercy.

He fell all to pieces, after the usual style of opium fiends.

In a moment Harry was outside, and had locked the door upon him.

"Now you stay there three or four hours and see how you like it," he called through the keyhole. "I'm off about my business now—I'll attend to your case later on."

He ran up the stairs, but had hardly gained the passage above when a door flew open and an ill-looking, slatternly young woman came bouncing out.

"What's all this row about?" she exclaimed. "Who the mischief are you?"

Then all of a sudden she threw up her hands and gasped out:

"Young King Brady, the detective! Oh, I know you!"

"Mag Ryan, stop your noise and let me pass!" breathed Harry.

He recognized the woman as a miserable creature married to a Chinaman whom he had formerly had dealings with

in New York, and whose hatred for Old King Brady was intense.

"I won't!" screamed Mag. "I know what you are after! You are snooping around here looking for lately landed Chinks. I've only got to scream to bring the Highbinders down on you, so here goes."

Then the woman began yelling at the top of her lungs.

\* \* \* \* \*

"D'lat's de place, Mr. Blady," said Fong Tek, having led the way up a narrow alley which connected with another in the rear of the joss house. You go through dere and you come to noder house in back behind. Downstairs under dlat house am your plartner, yes."

"I will go in and investigate. Your come along, too."

"No, no! Me no can go," said the Chinaman, and he was going on to say more when all at once the side door of the house fronting the alley flew open, and who should come running out but Harry himself, while behind him the piercing screams of a woman could be heard.

"Governor!" gasped Harry. "What luck! You are just in time to help me. But we mustn't stand here. That's Mag Ryan yelling. She will have the Highbinders down on us in a second."

"The money! What about that?" breathed Old King Brady, seizing Harry's arm.

"It is hidden in the house in the rear. It won't be safe for you to go in without the police."

"But, by heavens, I will, though! Do you think I am afraid of a lot of Chinks? And—why, here come the police now! And who is this with them? A custom house inspector looking for lately landed Chinks, as I live. Why, here is my old friend, Captain Clark, at the head of the push!"

"What in thunder brings you here, Brady?" demanded the captain. "It can't be that you are on the same lay as myself."

"Altogether different, captain. Help me five minutes if you can."

"There must be no delay," put in the custom house inspector.

"There will be none," said Harry. "If you are after the Chinese actor who was landed from the City of Tokio early this morning then by helping us you will be helping yourself."

Without further talk Old King Brady, Harry, and Fong Tek entered the hall and passed through to the courtyard beyond, the Chinaman, awed by the police, making no objection now.

The Ryan woman had now ceased screaming, and Harry had a faint hope that they might not encounter her, but there she stood at the top of the two steps which led down from the extension of the old house.

"There they are! Those are the Bradys! They have come at last!" screamed the woman excitedly, and as she pointed a mob of Chinamen came rushing out of the extension door, some armed with old swords, and some with clubs.

It proved Harry right.

There would have been a hot time for the Bradys but for the police.

Old King Brady's whistle was promptly answered, however, and when the Chinks and Mag Ryan saw what they were up against they promptly fled back into the extension and were seen no more.

"The underground rooms lie this way," said Harry, and he led the officers through the door and down the stairs.

Here the Chinese actor was ultimately captured, but not until after a long search.

The Bradys broke in upon Jack Judd and treated him to a sight of the Aylsford money, which Harry took out from under the baseboard before his eyes.

"Sneak!" said Old King Brady to the trembling hop-hitter.

It was the last they ever saw of Jack, but it would have been otherwise if the banker had not given positive orders that there should be no arrests.

Half an hour later the Bradys had the satisfaction of laying the cash and drafts upon Mr. Aylsford's desk.

Having won out once more, the Bradys promptly left for New York with a good fat reward in their pockets, and were soon back in their old haunts.

Six months later Mr. Aylsford wrote Old King Brady that his son Arthur had completely reformed, and was attending to business in a most satisfactory way.

The Judds jumped the town, and were never heard of again.

Harry felt a deep interest in the unfortunate Chinese actor, who had taken such risks to get back to the United States, so he prevailed upon Old King Brady to write to some of his influential friends in Washington in the man's behalf.

Enough to add that the actor was not deported, and is to-day playing at the Doyers street theater in Chinatown, New York.

The Dragon Club was allowed to go on in its evil way until a year later, when it was pulled, to the great scandal of Frisco society, as we have said.

What brought this raid about we cannot say, but one thing is certain, it had nothing at all to do with the case of the Bradys and the Hop-Hitters.

THE END.

Read 'THE BRADYS AND 'BOSTON BEN'; OR, TRACKING A TRICKSTER TO TENNESSEE,' which will be the next number (295) of "Secret Service."

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