

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. 337.

NEW YORK, JULY 7, 1905.

Price 5 Cents.

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OR, AFTER THE CHINESE FREE MASONS.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE



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CHAPTER I.

OLD KING BRADY GOES FISHING FOR CHINKS.

When the big liner *Balleric* reached her pier and was finally docked, one of the persons to come down the gang-plank was a good-looking young man dressed in a tourist's suit, with an alligator grip instead of the conventional dress-suit case in his hand.

The first victim for the custom's inspector, one of those pleasing personages so highly appreciated by foreigners, strange to our Yankee customs, promptly made a rush for him.

"Anything dutiable in that bag?" came the question, so trying to some.

"Don't know," was the reply. "I wish you would find out quickly, though I had rather you would take the whole bag than to delay me here."

As he spoke the young man lightly threw back the lapel of his coat, displaying a detective's shield.

"Oh, I thought I recognized you," said the inspector, in a low tone, as he proceeded to open the bag. "You are Harry Brady."

"I am, and you are Old King Brady's friend Adams," was the reply.

"Not so loud. It won't do for us to appear to be acquainted," said the inspector. "I'll let you right out. Give my regards to the old man."

"I'll do so," said the traveler, and in a moment the bag was chalked and he was off.

Hurrying to the Hoboken ferry, Young King Brady, for this was indeed the partner and pupil of the world-famous detective, crossed to New York and proceeded to the shabby little office on Park Row, which is the headquarters of the firm.

Young King Brady was just back from London, having made a flying trip across the big pond on particular business.

Here at the office he expected to meet his chief, but in this he was disappointed, for when he tried the door he found it locked.

Opening it with a key, Harry found a note from the old detective lying on his desk, which read as follows:

"Dear Harry: I intended to be on the wharf to meet you, but I found it impossible. I received your cable, and opportunity offering I decided to go to work at once. Open the closet and you will find materials for a Chinese dis-

guise. Put yourself in shape and come to the store of Ting Fo and Co. on Pell street, where you will present the enclosed paper to whoever challenges you. Should you find a line of Chinks push by them and go directly in. There you will find me."

O. K. B."

Harry tore up the letter and threw it into the waste basket.

The paper was a yellow slip with Chinese characters scrawled upon it, after the style of a laundry ticket.

Of course, Young King Brady could not read it, so he stowed it away in his note-book and hurriedly donned the Chinese disguise.

It was really wonderful the rapidity with which he worked, and the complete change of appearance the disguise effected.

"I guess that will do," muttered Young King Brady, surveying himself in the glass. "I wonder what the Governor has struck? I did not look to see him get to work before my return."

Young King Brady now stowed his grip away in the closet and proceeded to examine a few letters which he found on the desk.

This done, he left the office, and locking the door behind him, shuffled up Park Row on his way to Chinatown.

His disguise was perfect.

Anyone would have taken him for a Chinaman.

But for detectives there is always one trouble with Chinest disguising when the intention is to work among Chinamen, and that is the language.

It is to be doubted if any European or American ever succeeded in acquiring that language so as to deceive a native.

Indeed, it is doubtful if one detective in a hundred is aware of the fact that there are as many languages spoken in China as in Europe.

The talk we hear the Chinese laundryman jabbering to his companion is the Quang Tong—or Canton—dialect, differing as widely from the language of the educated Chinese gentleman as Yiddish differs from Italian or French.

Often when Young King Brady has been called upon to play the part of a Chinaman he has professed to be deaf and dumb.

How he was going to get around the troublesome old obstacle on this occasion Harry had not the least idea.

Passing through Chatham Square, Young King Brady passed into Pell street, and headed for the big bric-a-brac

shop of the Ting Fo Company, the location of which he knew.

He had no sooner come in sight of the place than he perceived a line of celestials reaching forty of fifty feet away from the store.

They were mostly young men, and as Harry stepped across the street to observe them he saw one admitted to the store by an elderly Chink, who waved the others back.

"This must be part of the Governor's operations," thought Harry. "What in the world is he up to? It beats the cars how he goes at these things."

Harry now crossed the street, and made directly for the store door.

Several of the Chinks called out to him, doubtless protesting against his cutting in ahead of them.

To this, of course, Young King Brady paid no heed.

When he opened the store door the elderly Chinaman started to push him back, but as soon as Harry presented his paper the old man drew him inside.

"You comee with me," he said, and Harry was conducted to a room in the rear of the store.

A Chinaman passed out as they entered.

In the room, seated in a corner, was the famous old detective.

Near by, sitting behind a table, was a Chinaman wearing American clothes, a man whose face showed his intelligence.

He spoke to Harry in Chinese as he came in, whereat his conductor laughed and Old King Brady joined.

"Doctor, this is my partner," said Old King Brady. "You compliment us by mistaking him for one of your own race."

"Ah! So?" replied the Chinaman behind the table. "He is well made up. I confess I was deceived."

"Harry, this is Dr. Yong Duck, from the Chinese legation at Washington," said Old King Brady.

"Glad to see you, doctor," remarked Harry, extending his hand.

Dr. Duck shook hands heartily.

"And so I to see you was glad," he said, speaking in that studied fashion which the educated Chinese are apt to adopt.

"Come over here, and sit by me, Harry," said Old King Brady. "Friend Fo, let the men come on."

Old King Brady then shook hands with his partner, and made a place for him upon the bench on which he was seated.

"Don't try to talk to me now," he whispered. "We want to get rid of that mob outside as soon as we can, or we shall have the police butting in here to find out what I am about."

Fo departed, and after a moment another Chinaman was ushered in and stood before the table.

An animated conversation in Chinese followed.

It appeared to Harry that Dr. Duck was questioning the man.

Evidently the answers were not satisfactory, for the fellow departed looking immensely disappointed.

Another and another was admitted; it continued up to fifteen. All seemed to fail to pass the test, whatever it might have been.

Harry was filled with curiosity.

He knew why he had been sent flying over to London, but he had not the most remote idea what this all meant.

The sixteenth man was as near to a handsome Chinaman as Harry had ever seen.

He was not over twenty, with plump face and well-knit frame.

He wore a pig-tail coiled under his hat, and was dressed in a neat business suit.

While unmistakably a Chinaman, his face showed an intelligence far beyond his class.

Dr. Duck tackled him in the usual way.

The conversation had lasted about as long as the others had done, when all at once Harry saw the doctor's face light up with satisfaction.

He turned to Old King Brady and said:

"This is your man."

"Good!" replied the detective. "Does he speak English?"

"As well as I speak my own language, sir," replied the Chinaman.

"Mr. Brady, I turn him over to you," said the doctor. "But first I would talk with you alone."

"Very well," answered Old King Brady. "There is no need to examine the others, I suppose?"

"No need. If this young man will not do then the others will not."

"Very well. Let Ting Fo send the rest away."

Dr. Duck opened the door and called out into the store.

"Young man, your name?" questioned the detective.

"Tip Ling," replied the Chinese boy, for he was little more than eighteen years old, Harry thought, and he afterwards knew that he was right."

"Step outside; I'll see you in a moment," said the detective.

The Chinese boy left the room.

Dr. Duck then turned to Old King Brady and said:

"You can rely on him, I think."

"What makes you so sure?" asked Old King Brady.

"I judge by his face."

"He speaks the Chuen Shan language?"

"Yes."

"How did he learn it?"

"From his father."

"Was he born in China?"

"No; in San Francisco."

"Then is it likely he talks it fluently?"

"He does. I conversed with him. Could you not see a difference in the last of our talk?"

"No."

"It is so strange."

"I take your word for it, doctor. What is it you wanted to say to me?"

"Simply to warn you to be careful how you trust him."

"I thought you said that you considered him reliable?"

"And so I do. But I do not know him. I have done my best."

"And for that I am very much obliged to you, doctor. Is there anything to pay?"

"Nothing. All will be paid by the Chinese minister to England."

"Very well. And you return at once to Washington?"

"No; I have other business here."

"Very good."

Old King Brady seemed singularly reticent.

Harry realized that he was through with the man, and wanted to be rid of him.

But Dr. Duck did not seem disposed to go.

"Is there anything further, doctor?" asked Old King Brady.

"May I ask a question?" was the reply.

"Surely."

"What does all this mean?"

It was the same question that Harry had been asking himself.

He got no satisfaction then.

"Dr. Duck, I am working for the Chinese minister at the English court," said Old King Brady, courteously. "My orders are definite and positive. I cannot tell you what this means."

Dr. Duck was all smiles.

"Oh, very well. Then so I say good-by," he exclaimed. Shaking hands cordially with both the detectives, he left the room.

"That settles Dr. Duck," muttered Harry.

"Hush!" replied Old King Brady. "Call in that boy."

"In English?"

"Of course in English! Can you speak Chinese?"

"Don't bite a fellow's head off, Governor. I merely meant that I could not speak Chinese."

"Very well. Call him in."

Harry opened the door and beckoned to the China boy, who stood leaning against the counter.

Tip Ling came back into the room and the door was closed.

"What shall I call you?" asked Old King Brady.

"Call me Ling," replied the boy, with hardly a trace of Chinese accent.

"Very good. Ling, why did you come here?"

"I read the advertisement, boss."

"And you want that hundred dollars?"

"Yes."

"Look here, Ling, do you know me?"

"Yes."

"Who am I?"

"Old King Brady, the detective."

"Exactly. Did the men outside know that I was here?"

"No, I think not. I did not hear them say so."

"Very well. Now, Ling, if you are true to me you are surely going to get that hundred dollars. If you are sharp and shrewd, and help me to succeed in what I have undertaken, you will get two hundred dollars. Do you understand?"

"Yes, boss."

"Well?"

"I go for dat two hundred, boss."

"Good! When will you be ready?"

"Ready now, boss."

"Right. Harry, go to the square and get a cab and come with it here."

Young King Brady departed.

"Come," he muttered, as he walked down Pell street, "I don't know what sort of fish the Governor thinks he has caught, but one thing is certain—now that he has got him on his hook he don't mean to let him escape."

CHAPTER II.

OLD KING BRADY EXPLAINS.

Harry had no sooner departed than Old King Brady began to put Tip Ling through a course of sprouts.

"How did you know me?" he demanded.

"I have seen you in Frisco," was the reply.

"Where?"

"At Tom Ling's, on Dupont street."

"Ha! The lottery man. How came you to be there?"

"It was ten years ago. He is my uncle. I lived there."

"And your father?"

"He is dead."

"What is your business?"

"I am a waiter."

"In Chinese restaurants?"

"Yes, and in American private families."

"How long have you been in New York?"

"One week."

"What did you come here for?"

"I wanted to see the country."

"Have you any friends here?"

"No."

"Where are you staying?"

"At a lodging-house on Mott street."

"Your things are there now?"

"I have nothing."

"No clothes except what you have on your back?"

"No. I am very poor, Mr. Brady. It took all I had to get to New York."

"You keep yourself looking well."

"Yes, boss."

"Now, I suppose you want to know what it is that the police have for you to do?"

"Yes, boss."

"It is strange, but as it happens you are wanted as a waiter."

"Yes, boss."

"You saw the young man who was here just now?"

"Yes, boss."

"Did you think he was a Chinaman?"

"Yes, boss."

"He is not. He is my partner in disguise."

"He disguise belly good, boss. I think he Chinaman."

"You mean what you say?"

"Oh, yes. I speak true."

"Very well. You are to come with us to my house. There you will be told what you have to do. You are ready to go to work to-night?"

"Yes, boss. Me ready any time at all."

"Very well. We will talk no further now. Here comes my partner, and we must go."

Old King Brady knew Harry's step.

Immediately Young King Brady entered, and announced that the carriage was ready.

The Bradys and Tip Ling then entered the cab.

Pell street had cleared itself of the line of candidates, for Old King Brady's mysterious job, but it was crowded with Chinamen for all that, as it always is.

It was not strange that so bright a proposition as Tip Ling had recognized the old detective.

As is well known, Old King Brady affects a peculiar costume.

Now, as always, when not in disguise, the old detective wore a long, blue coat of antique cut, trimmed with a double row of brass buttons, in the style of 1840.

Following the same style, also, he wore an old-fashioned, high-pointed collar, with an ancient stock taking the place of a modern scarf.

Add to this the big white hat, with its broad brim, and you have Old King Brady as the world sees him, and once seen is never forgotten.

Thus, as we said before, there was nothing strange in the fact that Tip Ling immediately recognized the man.

During the ride there was no attempt at conversation between the detectives.

Old King Brady was silent, and Harry knew that it would be useless to attempt to question him now.

The cab landed the detectives at the old house on Washington Square, in which they have for some time kept bachelor's hall.

Here Tip Ling was turned over to Julius, the colored servant who looks after the welfare of the Bradys, with instructions that he be given a good supper and made at home generally.

The detectives themselves adjourned to the library, where, having carefully closed the doors, Old King Brady announced himself as ready to listen and talk.

Harry then delivered certain letters to his chief, and made a brief statement concerning his trip abroad.

"Good," said Old King Brady. "And now I propose that you shall make a move to-night."

"I'm ready any time, Governor."

"Of course, and that is as it should be. Now let us review our case."

And Harry settled back to listen, knowing that when Old King Brady started in on one of these reviews it generally took time.

"As you are aware, Harry," began the old detective, "some three weeks and more ago we received an important letter from the English detective bureau at Scotland Yard.

"This letter informed us that there had been a robbery at the Chinese legation at the court of St. James.

"A string of black pearls of great age and fabulous value had been stolen from the wife of the Chinese minister by a man-servant whose name was unknown, as the name 'Hing Gee,' under which he had been engaged at Pekin, was known to be false.

"This string of pearls had once been part of the regalia of the grand master of the Hip Sing Ling, a secret and sacred order among Chinamen, usually known to European travelers as the 'Chinese Free-Masons,' although its secret ceremonies are not believed to resemble those of our Free-Masons to any extent.

"It was supposed that the robbery was planned at Pekin by emissaries of this order for the express purpose of recovering the pearls which were taken from the Hip Sing Ling over a hundred years ago, at the suppression of their grand lodge by one of the Chinese emperors.

"Although the Hip Sing Ling is supposed to be an extinct order in China, it is well known that its members still secretly meet, and that lodges have been instituted in the United States. All those whose families either openly or secretly bear the name of Ling are or have been members of the order, and all speak an ancient dialect, known as the Chuen Shan language. You will note that our boy bears the name of Ling, and also speaks the language.

"After the robbery was discovered, and there can be no doubt as to this man Hing Gee being the thief, according to what you tell me, the Scotland Yard detectives obtained positive evidence that the fellow fled to this country, and landed in New York, and we were requested to take the matter in hand. We failed to accomplish anything during the first days of our investigations, and as time had been lost and further delay could hardly affect our chances of success, I sent you to London to confer with the minister and the Scotland Yard people. Through your cablegram I was able to communicate with the Chinese minister at Washington, who informed me that one of his secretaries, a Dr. Duck, understood the Chuen Shan language, his father having been a member of the Hip Sing Ling, and the young man was ordered to help us with our work."

"Excuse me a moment," put in Harry. "Do you suppose Dr. Duck is himself a member of the Hip Sing Ling?"

"I'm assured not by the Chinese minister at Washington,

but you know what these people are, Harry. How far they are to be trusted one can never tell."

"Go on."

"Practically I have finished the review of the case, Harry," continued the old detective. "The point now to cover is the business in which you found me engaged."

"Exactly. Mysterious business it is, too."

"Not so mysterious as you think for. Dr. Duck was sent to me by the Chinese minister at Washington in order that he might post me thoroughly in regard to the Hip Sing Ling."

"And has he done so?"

"I can't say that he has told me very much. He professes to know but little about the order himself. I told him at the start off how anxious I was to get next to some member of the order, and——"

"Oh, one second, Governor. Does Dr. Duck know what your object in looking into the Hip Sing Ling actually is?"

"Indeed he does not. He knows nothing at all about it, and I don't intend that he shall."

"Very well. Go on."

"After talking with Dr. Duck," continued Old King Brady, "I requested him to go through Chinatown with me in the hope of ascertaining if there was a lodge of the Hip Sing Ling in New York. He consented to this, and we started out together with the idea of interviewing several Chinamen whom I know, and whom the doctor would have questioned in their own language, when as we were passing the bulletin board at the corner of Pell and Doyers street, where all those little red notices are posted up, you know——"

"Yes, I know, Governor."

"Well, as we passed there I saw the fellow give a start; he caught my arm and pointing to a certain notice which hung rather loosely against the wall, informed me that he had found what he wanted, and that there must be a lodge of the Hip Sing Ling in town."

"Well?"

"Yes; the notice, you see, was in the secret language of Chuen Shan, used only by the Hip Sing Ling, and understood by few others, and those the descendants of such as had once belonged to the order."

"And what did it say?" demanded Harry, becoming intensely interested.

"Here it is," replied Old King Brady, producing one of those red slips which one sees posted about Chinatown. "The thing was very loosely pasted against the wall, and as no one happened to be looking at the time Dr. Duck pulled it off, and we went back to the office, where he translated it."

"And?"

"It is an advertisement for a Chinese waiter and a man house servant, Harry. The waiter must be able to speak the Chuen Shan dialect; it says nothing about the house servant. The address is in the lower part of West 3—th

street, one of those old-fashioned brick dwellings—you know the row."

"Yes, yes! Same row where we raided that fake doctor who bleached out skeletons and sold them to anatomical museums."

"It's the same house, Harry, as you see by the number here on the paper, which is in plain figures."

"Well, when was this?"

"Only yesterday."

"And what did you do about it?"

"The notice had been freshly posted, as the paste was quite wet. After some thought I concocted the scheme of myself hiring a Chink to take the job, and having you go with him as the house servant."

"But suppose someone has already taken the place?"

"In that case my plan falls down. I had Dr. Duck write a notice in Cantonese, offering \$100 to any Chinaman who was willing to help the police in a certain matter not named. Directions were given to call at the store of Ting Fo & Co. to-day at the hour you caught us at our work. Dr. Duck examined each candidate to see if he could find one who spoke the Chuen Shan dialect; you came along while we were at it, and the success we met with you have seen for yourself."

"It's a great scheme, Governor. Of course, you have inquired about this house?"

"I have, Harry. It is occupied by two well-dressed and seemingly prosperous Chinamen who carry on no business there so far as is known. The name of the man who rents the house is on the agent's books as Moy Jing. He pays his rent promptly and is a quiet tenant. That is all the agent knows."

"And the neighbors? Surely they have their story to tell."

"Of course; and equally of course I investigated it."

"Well?"

"They report that the two Chinks come and go, interfering with nobody. There is also a third one there, an old man who seems to be a servant. Every Friday night there are many visitors at the house; sometimes as many as ten or fifteen. They arrive about seven o'clock, coming in couples and singly, and all go away together at a late hour, sometimes as late as one a. m."

"It looks like a lodge, Governor!" exclaimed Harry.

"It certainly does," replied Old King Brady, "and if it is a lodge of the Hip Sing Ling then there in that house is the place for us to begin to make our search for the minister's lost pearls."

CHAPTER III.

HARRY AND TIP LING TACKLE THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.

And such was the mystery which the Bradys had undertaken to solve.

Harry's journey to London had been taken to get points on the pearls, the details of the robbery, a description of the thief and other things, without a more accurate description of which than the Scotland Yard officials seemed able to give by letter, Old King Brady was unwilling to undertake the case.

But now all that ground had been covered, and the detectives were ready to get down to actual business.

A Chinese case is never an easy one, and is pretty apt to be long drawn out; but the Bradys, as is well known, have a habit of succeeding in what they undertake, and in this instance Old King Brady by no means despaired of success.

"Do we go to-night?" asked Harry, after the talk was finished.

"Certainly," replied Old King Brady, "and upon your success in getting into that house the whole thing hangs."

"And suppose we fail?"

"Then I have another plan which it is time enough to discuss after the first has failed."

The old detective now called in Tip Ling, who appeared bland and smiling.

"Now, Ling, I suppose you want to know what this work is to be?" he said.

"Yes, boss."

"Sit down and I will tell you. Did you ever hear of the Hip Sing Ling?"

The Chinaman started.

"What do you know about the Hip Sing Ling?" he asked.

"I know that it is a secret order. We call it the Chinese Free-Masons."

"It is secret like the Free-Masons, boss. My father belong to the Hip Sing Ling."

"And you?"

"Oh, no. I never did. I am too young."

"You mean to join when you get older?"

Ling grinned and said that he would wait and see.

"And so you see that I know," said Old King Brady.

"Now, Ling, read this."

The detective handed him the red slip.

"You want me to take that place?" demanded Ling.

"I do; and you are to take my partner here along with you as the house servant."

"But he no can, boss. He no can speak the Chuen Shan."

"You will notice that he is not required to speak this secret language of the Hip Sing Ling."

"That is so. It does not say that he must."

"He goes as a man who is deaf and dumb. He is willing to work very cheap on that account."

"It is well; but why?"

"Why do you go at all?"

"That it."

It was useless to try to hold back the secret motive from this young man, and Old King Brady was prepared to tell him all.

Tip Ling listened to the story of the pearl robbery without change of face.

"Did you ever hear of these black pearls?" Old King Brady asked then.

"Yes," said Tip Ling. "My father has told me how they were taken away from the Hip Sing Ling by the emperor many years ago."

This frank admission pleased the old detective immensely.

"You would be willing to help get them back, Ling?" he asked.

"Sure, yes," was the reply. "What do I care for the thief. I do not know him. I want that hundred dollars, boss."

"Good! I hope you may earn it. Do you know any member of the Hip Sing Ling in New York?"

"No."

"You agree with me in thinking that these Chinese Free-Masons must meet there?"

"It looks so, boss. Why else they write in Chuen Shan?"

This was just the question Old King Brady had asked himself, and Dr. Duck had put forward the same idea.

The talk which followed was about Harry's disguise, and the part he was to play.

Ling seemed very doubtful about the dummy part of the business.

At a loss to understand his repeated objection to that, for Harry had frequently worked the same game before, and with perfect success, the old detective put the question rather abruptly to the Chink.

"Oh, I don't know," he replied, evasively. "Perhaps they no like."

"It won't do, Ling. This thing is no go unless you make me understand what you mean," Old King Brady then said.

Tip Ling looked troubled.

"I would tell you, but I cannot make you understand," he replied.

"Yes, you can make me understand, too. I am no fool. Tell it out."

Then with many words and in a most roundabout way, Tip Ling explained.

It appeared that the Hip Sing Ling was confined to the people who came from the great Chinese province of Sze Chuen, over in the mountain region on the borders of Thibet.

These people, it seemed, are highly superstitious, and Ling explained to the Bradys that by them deaf and dumb people are all supposed to be possessed by certain spirits who prevent them from hearing or talking, so that they—the spirits—may force them to write prophecies about family matters when consulted.

Thus in Sze Chuen dummies are used as fortune-tellers, and often hire themselves out to rich mandarins or commercial companies for that purpose.

Thus Ling expected that Harry would be subjected to

the closest scrutiny, and very likely could be expected to go into a trance and write "luck cards" or prophecies.

The Bradys let Tip Ling talk himself out, and make everything plain in his own way.

"Well, what do you think about it?" asked Old King Brady then.

"I'm willing to take the chances if you say so," replied Harry. "Tell me, Ling, did you ever see anything like that done yourself?"

"No," said Ling, "but then I only a boy. My father tell me all about it. He often see it in Sze Chuen."

"It's a dangerous point; there is no doubt about that," said Old King Brady. "But then, Harry, unless you go as a dummy I fail to see how you can go at all."

"I'll go," replied Harry. "Let's cut it out."

Old King Brady, taking his partner aside, then gave him the following wise bit of advice:

"Now, suppose you are caught in that snap," he said. "I'll tell you what to do. Write for them, and pretend to be in a trance. Make any old fly-tracks which resemble Chinese letters, always remembering that the Chinese write from the top of the sheet to the bottom instead of across as we do. If you do this they will put you down as a wonderful prophet, who writes his prophecies in an unknown language. Do you see?"

"I hear," laughed Harry, "but I am afraid, Governor, that our New York Chinks are educated a peg or two above that sort of thing. They will put me down for a wonderful fraud."

However, Harry agreed to try it, and shortly after seven he and Tip Ling started uptown to tackle the mysterious house.

The moment they got on the street by themselves Ling began to question Harry further about the pearls.

He wanted to know all the details of the robbery, what sort of looking person Hing Gee was, and other things.

Without trusting the fellow in the least, Young King Brady determined to satisfy him in this regard.

If any who read this have ever been questioned by a Chinaman they know in what a business-like way he goes about it.

Ling kept it up until after they had left the elevated railroad at 34th street, and started west toward the mysterious house.

The exact location of this house we do not care to state.

It is enough to say that it was one of a row of old-fashioned three-story brick dwellings located in the region that has since been cleared to make way for the new station of the Pennsylvania railroad.

It was dark when the detectives reached it—we must style Tip Ling a detective, too—and the house was the only one of the row which showed no light from the street.

Harry watched Ling's face narrowly.

He was satisfied that the boy had never seen the house before from the curious way in which he regarded it.

"Well, that is the place, Ling," he said. "I suppose we try our luck now."

That was the time Ling wanted to bargain.

"See," he said, "so we find de pearls den it worth more as one hundred dollars for what could you do alone?"

"Now, look here," replied Harry. "I've got nothing to do with that. You made your bargain with Old King Brady, and you must stick to it. If you do the right thing very likely he will give you more."

"He get plenty money for pearls?"

"I don't know anything at all about that. Old King Brady is a very good man. If you are good to him he will be good to you—see?"

"Allee light," said Ling, cheerfully. "But say, Blady, what you Chinese name shall be?"

"By Jove, we want to settle that point right now," said Harry, "and we don't want to stand here talking about it, either. I'll leave it to you."

"Sam Yup. How dat?"

"All right. Sam Yup it is. Come on. Mind, now, you don't speak to me except by signs after we get into the house."

The sign part had all been discussed beforehand, so everything now being arranged they ascended the steps and rang the bell.

There was a long wait.

Again and again Young King Brady pulled the bell.

It began to look as though they were not going to get in at all, when at last a light appeared in the hall, and there was the sound of a chain being let down and the door was cautiously opened by the most Chinese looking Chink Harry had ever seen.

He was a small man, with eyes so almond-shaped that they seemed mere slits in his face.

He wore a pig-tail which extended down to his heels, and the rest of his head was shaved smooth.

But his dress was the most peculiar feature.

This consisted of a pair of green silk breeches beautifully embroidered with gold lace.

There were gold stars on his knees, and golden birds on his hips.

His blouse was of white silk, also embroidered, but with silver lace, and the buttons were lumps of solid gold.

But of course Harry could only look. The talking had to be left to Ling, who began jabbering away the instant the door was opened.

The Chinamen let them in after the first few words, and they were ushered into the room which had once been the front parlor, which was plainly furnished in Chinese style.

The Chinaman sat down at a table, and Ling stood up before him.

Harry, not knowing what to do, remained standing near the door.

A long conversation now followed.

While it was in progress another Chinaman entered, and seating himself by the table, joined in.

Neither of them gave Young King Brady more than a casual glance.

It was perfectly evident that they did not see through his disguise.

Nor was this any surprise to Harry.

His Chinese disguises are the outcome of long and careful study.

The Bradys do not make their disguises to have them detected, and as a matter of fact, they seldom fail.

Harry paid close attention to the conversation, but he could not catch even one familiar word, and yet there are many Chinese phrases familiar to him.

All at once the sounds changed.

Were they talking the mysterious Chuen Shan language now?

Another stream of conversation followed, lasting some ten or fifteen minutes.

All at once Harry saw Tip Ling start back and throw up his hands.

Involuntarily Harry's hand went toward his hip pocket.

Was there going to be trouble?

The two Chinamen sprang up, and coming close to Ling, stared him in the face in the most curious fashion.

Now the talk grew more animated.

All three seemed to go at it at once.

Suddenly the Chink in the green breeches came up to Young King Brady and took him by the arm.

He clutched him firmly and led him out into the hall.

For the moment Harry was tempted to resist him, but a sign from Tip Ling restrained him.

It was the sign that they had previously agreed upon should mean "all right."

So Young King Brady submitted.

The Chinaman led him upstairs and into the back room on the top floor.

This was fitted up in American style comfortably enough, containing a double bed, wash-stand, dresser, etc.

The Chink lit the gas, and pointing to the bed, made signs that Harry should get into it.

Then, uttering a few words, he withdrew, leaving Harry to himself and his curiosity to know what all this meant.

"Queer ending! I don't even know whether we are engaged or not," thought Young King Brady. "What in thunder am I to do?"

He slipped over to the door and tried it.

The door was not locked.

This did not look much like being held a prisoner.

Harry stepped out to the head of the stairs and listened.

Down on the parlor floor he could hear a moon banjo twanging.

Curiosity was rapidly getting the best of Young King Brady.

He slipped down the two flights of stairs, and crept along the hall, for the music came from the back parlor, and both parlor doors were closed.

Still the music continued, and Young King Brady caught the odor of burning joss sticks.

Dropping on his knees before the back parlor door, he put his eye to the keyhole.

"For heaven sake, what is going on in there?" thought Young King Brady, amazed at what he saw.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOINGS OF DR. DUCK.

Old King Brady does not always tell his partner all he knows about a case at the start, although he always makes everything plain at the end.

This is not at all for the reason that he does not fully trust Harry, but because he always regards it as best not to have his assistant too well informed, for what one does not know one surely cannot tell, and in the working up of a mystery such as the Bradys had tackled now secrecy is sometimes the whole thing.

Harry had no sooner departed than the old detective telephoned for a cab, and was driven back to Pell street, where he entered Ting Fo & Co.'s shop again.

Mr. Ting came forward to meet him.

"You come back too soon," he said.

"Better too soon than too late, Ting," replied the detective. "Come into the back room. I want to talk to you."

"Allee light, Blady," said the Chinaman. "Whatever you say go."

He led the way to the room where the old detective had held his seance with the Chinese waiters, and the door was closed.

It was curious to note the respect shown Old King Brady by this son of the Flowery Kingdom.

And there was a reason for this.

In New York as well as in some other cities, Old King Brady has many acquaintances among the criminal and semi-criminal classes who are absolutely devoted to him, for the excellent reason that in times of trouble he has stood their friend.

It is not every criminal detected by the great detective who is rushed off to prison.

Far from it. If Old King Brady thinks there is a chance for a man or woman to reform he helps them to take that chance, even going to unusual length to do so in some cases.

Such favors are seldom forgotten; such people are often of the greatest use to the Bradys in their work.

Besides criminals Old King Brady helps many others whom he thinks may thus serve him.

When he first began his work in Chinatown he realized the necessity of making friends there, and he made them. Ting Fo was one.

Originally the fellow had been a laundry helper.

Old King Brady, taking a fancy to him, advanced him money and set him up in the bric-a-brac business.

Long since Mr. Ting had paid back his borrowings—Chinamen always do that.

But the debt of gratitude Ting Fo regarded as something which never could be paid.

This also is strictly Chinese, for with that strange race it is once a friend always a friend.

It would be just as well if some Americans would copy this singular people in that regard.

"Now, Ting," said Old King Brady, "I want you to listen to me, and I am going to tell you something about the case I am working on, for I want your help."

"Allee light, Blady," replied the Chink. "So me can help, so me will."

"I know that. Ting, this is a case where a string of valuable pearls have been stolen by a Chinaman."

"So?"

"Yes. They are black pearls. I suppose you know how valuable black pearls are?"

"Me know. Dley worth muchee thousand dollars."

"So muchee thousand dollars, Ting, that I can't tell you how many thousands they are worth."

"Tief steal dem in New York, Blady?"

"No; in London."

"Oh, yair. Me sabee London."

"Of course. You would be a fool if you didn't. Well, Ting, the thief is supposed to have brought the pearls to New York. Perhaps he will want to sell them, perhaps not. I can't tell, but in case he should be looking for that chance we want to put it in his way."

"And what you want me to do, Blady?"

"Write one of your Chink advertisements, and post it through Chinatown, offering to pay the highest price for black pearls, and see if you cannot get a bite."

"Me do dat, and so dey come, den what?"

"Then, of course, you will find out all about the man. You will have your Chink friends follow him, and find out who he is and where he lives, and let me know. If you can make an appointment with him to bring his pearls to your place, and in some way arrange it so that I can get a look at them, why so much the better. We will do whatever seems best, and—who is this?"

There was a knock on the door interrupting them then.

Ting Fo hastened to open it, admitting a young Chinaman.

This was one of the clerks in the bric-a-brac shop, but as he spoke no English Old King Brady had to wait to find out what he wanted.

But in a general way he knew what was coming, for Old King Brady himself had arranged with Ting Fo to have this young fellow follow Dr. Duck.

So the detective listened to the jabbering impatiently, and Ting Fo, realizing that, made short work of his questions and dismissed the man.

"Well?" demanded Old King Brady.

"He know about pearls, Blady?" demanded Ting.

"I don't know. I did not tell him. He may know. Well?"

"He go to Tiffany from here."

"Ah, ha!"

"Den he go to more jewelry stores on Broadway."

"So? And then?"

"Then he get cab and go over to West 3—th street."

"Yes? Did your man follow him in another cab as I told you to have him do?"

"Yes. He go to No. —."

It was the mysterious house!

Ting Fo appeared not to suspect that it was occupied by Chinese.

"And after that?" asked the detective.

"He come back den, my man. He waitee long time, but Dr. Duck no comee out."

"That's all right," said Old King Brady. "How much money did your man spend?"

Ting named the sum, and the detective having paid it withdrew.

"It is just as I suspected," thought Old King Brady. "Dr. Duck surely lied to me. He is a member of the Hip Sing Ling, and their meetings are held in that house. The chances are, also, that he knows all about the loss of the pearls."

Old King Brady then went to the nearest telephone station and called up a man who occupies an important position in the Tiffany's retail store, who was well known to him.

Fortunately he found his man at home, and in a few minutes he had him on the other end of the wire.

After the preliminaries the following conversation took place:

"Yes," said the Tiffany man, "it is as you say; there was a Chinaman in our place this afternoon, inquiring for black pearls."

"Will you describe him?" asked Old King Brady.

The description which came over the wire fitted Dr. Duck exactly.

"Did he give a name?" the detective called.

"He did not," was the reply. "He said, however, that he was connected with the Chinese legation at Washington."

"Did you show him black pearls?"

"We did."

"What happened then?"

"He asked prices, but he did not seem to be satisfied with the goods."

"Then what?"

"Why, then he asked us what we would pay for black pearls in case he brought us a lot."

"And you told him what?"

"That we did not care to buy outside of the trade. The fact is, the man's actions were suspicious, and we made up our minds that if he had any black pearls for sale they were probably stolen goods."

"And he left then?"

"Left without any further talk. What is there about it, Mr. Brady? Has there been a robbery of black pearls?"

"There has, but that is all I am at liberty to say about the matter at the present time. Should this Chinaman call again I would take it as a favor if you would let me know."

Here the conversation ended.

Old King Brady now called up the Waldorf-Astoria, at which hotel Dr. Duck was supposed to be staying.

The information he obtained now was rather peculiar, for it was to the effect that Dr. Duck had left for Washington by the noon train, when as a matter of fact the man did not part from Old King Brady till after four o'clock.

"Trickery," thought the old detective. "It is just as I said to Harry. In a matter of this kind you cannot trust a Chinaman. Dr. Duck is surely playing a double game, and I think I may be able to get on to his curves to-night."

So much for Old King Brady's intimate knowledge of the Chinese race.

When he first met Dr. Duck one glance was sufficient to show the old detective that the man was an opium smoker.

Such being the case, it was pretty certain that he would not let the evening pass without trying to get his smoke.

"I'll have to do the hop-joints," thought the detective. "If I can only come upon the fellow I will undertake to shadow him myself."

CHAPTER V.

GUESTS OF THE HIP SING LING.

What was it which Young King Brady saw through the key-hole that interested him so?

Certainly it was about the last thing he expected to see.

Tip Ling was standing in the middle of the floor, with the two Chinamen kneeling at his feet.

Ling had a hand laid on the head of each Chink, and his own head was bowed as if in prayer.

At the back of the room was a sort of rude altar, a raised platform covered with red cloth, joss-house style.

Upon this altar was just about the ugliest little idol Harry had ever seen.

It represented a fat little figure with hardly any legs, and immensely long arms.

The open mouth displayed a double row of ivory teeth, with two huge fangs on the upper jaw, which were painted black, and extended down over an inch in length.

Two stumpy little horns rose from the forehead; the face was all twisted up into knots.

The only redeeming feature of this image was that to all appearance it was solid gold.

At the side of the altar, seated on a bench with his legs doubled under him, was a Chinese boy, naked except for a breech-cloth about the waist, strumming on a big moon banjo.

There were many little bronze images on the altar, the same as one sees in any joss-house; also cups of joss sticks, two of which were burning before the idol, sending out a sweet perfume.

Chinese lanterns hung from the ceiling, and there were

scrolls on the walls in the usual style; but the place was lighted by an ordinary gas jet, projecting from the wall.

Harry took all this in at a glance, and then fled back to his room again, for he did not dare to run the risk of getting caught.

"Heavens! Ling has caught on with a vengeance," he thought. "Can it be that the boy is deceiving me? I must look sharp. Positively you never can trust a Chink."

For half an hour Young King Brady waited uneasily.

More than once he was tempted to give it up and to try to get out of the house unobserved.

But each time this thought came to him he thrust it aside, for it seemed foolish to abandon his ground until he had again seen Tip Ling.

At last footsteps were heard in the hall, and the door was opened by the Chink with the green silk breeches, who ushered in Ling.

He only glanced at Harry, and then, bowing low before Ling, retired, closing the door.

Instantly Ling sprang forward and shot the bolt.

"Don't talk now, Blady," he whispered in Harry's ear. "Come to bed, put out the gas, and then I will tell you what happened to me down there."

Harry decided to obey.

He could see that Ling was greatly excited, and his own curiosity was aroused.

"Just tell me one thing," he whispered. "We are safe here?"

"Oh, yes. All safe, for now, anyhow. I don't know what come bimeby."

Ling then began to pull off his clothes.

When he had stripped to his undershirt he rolled up his sleeve and showed Harry a remarkable piece of tattooing.

Ling's left arm was entirely encircled by a snake done in blue, with red scales down the back.

It began with the tail just above the wrist, and wound round and round the arm, the head resting on the China boy's shoulder.

"You see dat snake?" he whispered. "Well, dat is the mark of the Hip Sing Ling, these men tell me."

But this was all Ling told until the gas was out, and he and Harry were in bed.

Ling then drew the clothes up over their heads to prevent the possibility of his words being overheard, and began to talk.

"I get dat money, Blady," he said. "I get dose pearls, too. They will come here."

"Good!" replied Harry. "They are not here now, then?"

"Not now. You wonder what make me stay so long down stairs?"

"Yes, I wondered."

"It was like this: When I talk Chuen Shan Woo Long ask me my name, and my father's name, and where I was born, and all dat."

"Yes, yes. Which is Woo Long?"

"Dat man what come here. He wear green pants."

"I know. Well?"

"Den he surprise me, for he ask me if I have dat snake on my arm. I say yes, but I don't know what it means. He say, dat is the sign of what you call priest—you understand?"

"I understand; and you did not know that?"

"No; my father die in Flisco when I was a little boy. My uncle was my mother's brother. He tell me about the Hip Sing Ling, but not about the snake. Woo Long he tell me that my grandfather was the big priest of the Hip Sing Ling, and that now I must be. He say dat they look for me everywhere, but no can find me. It is so very strange."

"I should say it was strange. What did they do then?"

"Then they take me into another room, where they keep the god of the Hip Sing Ling, a boy make music, and Woo Long and Foo Ling, the other man, they kneel down and kiss my feet. I no like dat, for I Clistian. I go to Slunday-school in Flisco. I don't know what to do."

"Do!" exclaimed Harry. "Why, let them do as they like. You have got them where we want to get them, that's sure. But what about the pearls? You did not speak of them first, I hope?"

"No, no. I no such big fool like dat. Woo Long he tell me dat in old times there was many black pearls around the neck of the Ling god, and dat they were stolen by the soldiers of the emperor of China."

"Yes, what else?"

"He tell me dat—dat—oh, I don't know how to say it—dat de Ling god he speak, and say dat when the priest is lost and found then the pearls they come back again—you see?"

"I understand. It is a prophecy. They have found you—you are the priest—now they expect to find the pearls. Is that it?"

"Dat it. Woo Long he say the pearls now sure come."

"I am afraid that don't amount to much," said Harry. "But we may find out more. Did they say anything about me?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, what?"

"What I tell you. So you are dumb den you was a prophet. They glad you come."

"Do they mean to use me for a prophet? I am afraid they will have a hard job."

"It is what I tell you, Blady. I tell you dat before we come away from house."

"That's so, Ling. Well, you intend to stick to me?"

"Why not?"

"Didn't know but you had got the big head from all this nonsense."

But Ling assured Harry that it was nothing of the sort.

He declared that he had not the least idea of joining the Hip Sing Ling, but only intended to do the detective work for which he had been engaged.

And with this Harry had to be satisfied.

They talked a long time, and at last, nothing occurring to disturb them, both fell asleep.

It was a strange position in which Young King Brady found himself next day.

He had come to play the Chinese servant, helped out by Tip Ling.

Instead of that he found both himself and his companion treated like honored guests.

It was late when the two boys went to sleep, and late next morning when they awoke—after nine o'clock.

Harry got out of bed first, and the moment he began to move around there came a low knock at the door.

Somebody had evidently been watching outside.

It proved to be the little Chinese boy who had played the moon banjo.

He wore a suit of pajamas now, but was barefoot.

When he spoke to Harry in Chinese Young King Brady put his finger to his lips and shook his head.

Ling took up the talk from the bed, and the boy withdrew.

"What does he want?" whispered Harry. "Speak very low; for us to be caught talking together will spoil it all."

"He want to give you a bath," said Ling. "He be your servant. You must say yes."

Harry made a face, but there seemed no help for it, so that was the time Young King Brady found out what a Chinese valet was like.

The boy, whose name, it appeared was Mon Jock, soon returned, and threw the door wide open.

There was nothing to do but to follow Ling's lead. Fortunately Harry's body was stained yellow like his face.

They were conducted to a bath-room on the floor below, where, both standing naked in the tub, Jock threw hot water over them and rubbed them with soap and then washed them down with cold water and rubbed them with some sort of sweet-smelling oil.

It was a sort of double Turkish bath, Chinese fashion, and after it was all over and Harry had got into his clothes, he was obliged to admit that he felt fine.

He would never had dared to submit himself to the process if Ling had not assured him that no water would be put upon his head, as they were expected to wash their own faces in their room.

And so it proved; thus Young King Brady's disguise was not interfered with, which he was very much afraid would be the case.

The bathing over, they were taken down into the basement, which was furnished in Chinese style, and here breakfast of rice, bread, and coffee was served.

As Harry knows how to manage the chop-sticks, he had no difficulty in playing his part.

It was eleven o'clock before breakfast was over, and up to that time they had seen nothing of the two Chinamen, but they found Woo Long in the room upstairs, hitting the pipe, after they were through.

The stuff he was smoking appeared to be a mixture of tobacco and opium, and not the pure hop.

He put the pipe aside when they entered, and bowed low before Ling, as he had done the night before.

Then, taking Harry by the arm, he led him to a big bamboo chair in the corner, and provided him with a pipe.

Another was produced for Ling, and Woo Long, filling up his own, he and Harry's strange assistant started in on another of their endless talks.

They were still at it at twelve o'clock, and with no signs of a let-up.

To Young King Brady it was one of the most tedious things he had ever encountered.

At last Woo Long got up and abruptly walked out of the room.

Ling made a sign to Harry that he would be back in a minute, and followed him.

When he did return a few minutes later he was alone, and had his hat on and was carrying Harry's in his hand.

He pointed to the street, and made signs for Harry to follow him.

They left the house unchallenged, and thus ended the first part of one of Young King Brady's queerest experiences; but then everything one has to do in connection with the Chinese race is queer.

"Don't speak till we get away off from the house," breathed Ling, and they walked on down Eighth avenue several blocks before he opened his mouth again.

"We are all right now," Ling then said. "Yes, Brady, it is all right."

"Glad to hear it," replied Harry, looking behind him. "We don't seem to be followed, at all events. Now tell me what it is all about."

"We go back to-night," said Ling.

"To-night!"

"Yes. Den meeting of the Hip Sing Ling."

"And we have got to attend the meeting."

"Yes, Blady. I promise dat we be there."

"How do you know that these fellows are not fooling you, Ling?"

"No fool me. Look here. I get pay to make sure."

Ling thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out a fat roll of bills.

"Hundred dollar, Blady," he said, with a chuckle. "Good job! Me get more out of Old Kling Blady when me get black pearls."

"Upon my word, this fellow is no slouch," thought Harry. "He is out for the stuff, and he is getting it, too. He is working the case at both ends."

But Harry was far from satisfied.

Tip Ling seemed to have got everything, while he had got nothing.

After putting in the night at the mysterious house he was not much wiser than when he passed through the door, except that he had every reason to believe that it was the home of the Hip Sing Ling.

CHAPTER VI.

DR. DUCK AND HIS DOUBLE.

Old King Brady had no expectation of seeing Harry again that night, for he felt sure that the plan he had so carefully laid would succeed.

The old detective therefore contented himself with telephoning to his house, and being told by Julius that Young King Brady had not returned, he set out to put in an evening among the opium joints of New York.

These sinks of iniquity where the body and soul-killing drug is smoked, have been so often described that it seems scarcely necessary to particularize upon them here.

Many persons labor under the delusion that all or nearly all of them are located in the Chinese quarter of New York.

This is a great mistake.

Only a very small proportion of the joints are so located, and those in Chinatown are the lowest and most dangerous of their kind.

Uptown in the so-called Tenderloin are many opium joints, fitted up in the most elaborate fashion.

These are, as a rule, patronized by sporting men and professional crooks.

Nearly all are furnished with Chinese attendants, and in some Chinamen are allowed to smoke, but of course such Celestials who would patronize a high-toned hop-joint must consider themselves a peg above their fellows.

How would it be with Dr. Duck in this regard Old King Brady now asked himself.

The man spoke almost perfect English.

Indeed, there were some points about his appearance which had set Old King Brady to wondering if he actually was a full-blooded Chinaman.

It would be next to impossible to do all the opium joints in New York in one night, and Old King Brady was puzzled to know at which end to begin.

He sat in the waiting-room of the Astor House—he had taken supper there—for a long time pondering on the problem.

"Where did that fellow learn his English? I wish I had asked him," he said to himself. "Like as not it was in London. I don't like his doings since he struck this town. There is something very mysterious about his actions. He is certainly playing a double game. I think I will consult Queenie Doyle."

The thought came almost as an inspiration, it popped into Old King Brady's head so suddenly.

Long accustomed to acting on these sudden ideas, Old King Brady hurried back to Chinatown, and walked up Mott street and down Pell, eyeing every Chinik he met.

At length he turned into Doyers street, where he suddenly stopped in front of the Chinese theater and laid his hand upon the shoulder of a good-looking young Chinaman whose fat, red face showed that he had nothing to do with the deadly hop.

"Hello, Mr. Blady," said the man. "How you to-night?"

"All right," replied Old King Brady. "I needn't ask Low Tai how he is feeling. He is looking fine."

"I allee light, Blady. What's de news?"

The man was a Chinese detective in the employ of the New York police.

There are several such in Chinatown, and as a rule they are very faithful in their work.

"Low," said the detective, "the news is that I want to find out something about one of the secretaries of the Chinese legation at Washington—Dr. Duck."

But Low Tai did not know Dr. Duck, and consequently had no information to give.

"Is Queenie Doyle around nowadays?" inquired Old King Brady. "I want to see her, too. I came here looking for you, Low, for I thought you would be able to tell."

"Yes, she is around allee light," replied Low. "What you want?"

"Only to talk to her."

"She like you, Blady; she tell anything you want."

"Where would I be apt to find her? Does she live in Chinatown now? I haven't seen her in a year."

Fortunately for Old King Brady's purpose Low Tai had seen the woman earlier in the evening.

He informed the detective that she might be in the theater, and offered to go in and see.

And so Old King Brady waiting, was presently rewarded by seeing Low Tai come out accompanied by a tall, handsome young woman with blond hair—the very person he wanted to see.

"What's up, Brady?" she asked. "I am waiting for my Chink husband in there, and I am expecting him inside of half an hour. I can't say that I am enjoying the play very much, seeing that I don't understand a word they are saying. I can give you that much time if I can serve you in any way."

"Perhaps you can," replied the old detective, "and there will be something coming if you do. Where can we talk?"

"I don't care to go in anywhere," replied Queenie. "I am married and my husband doesn't like to have me go into the saloons. Suppose we stroll up the Bowery and talk as we walk."

"That will suit," replied Old King Brady, and they pushed on through Doyers street to Chatham Square.

"And now, what is it?" demanded Queenie, once they were clear of that crooked alley.

"I'm working on a London case," replied Old King Brady.

"My old home. I married my first Chinese husband there, as you know."

"I know. That's why I am here. Tell me, did you ever hear of a Chink in London who went by the name of Dr. Yong Duck?"

The woman gave a quick start.

"Brady," she said somewhat excitedly, "whatever sent you to me on this errand to-night?"

"Business."

"And that means you won't tell. Very well; keep your secret. You stood my friend when I needed one three years ago, and I am willing to help you out now. Yes, I know Dr. Yong Duck."

"I would tell you if I could, Queenie," replied the old detective, mildly, "but it might mix you up with matters you had best keep out of. What about the man?"

"He is the brother of my first Chinese husband, now dead; the one I married in London, and who brought me to this country three years ago."

Here was a discovery!

"Well," said Old King Brady, "what about the man?"

"Is he wanted?"

"No. He is one of the secretaries of the Chinese legation at Washington. He has committed no crime, so far as I am aware."

"I did not know that, but I do know he was in town this afternoon, for I met him on Pell street."

"Yes; he was here. I saw him. Were you speaking with him?"

"No, indeed! Not I! I hate the wretch, and for good reasons."

"He saw and recognized you?"

"Yes."

"Tell me all about him."

"I know very little. He came to London when quite a boy. He was used as a detective by the Scotland Yard people to work among the small Chinese colony in London. Later he studied medicine and graduated; then he went back to China. I have never seen nor heard of him from that time until I met him on Pell street this afternoon."

"A detective, eh?" said Old King Brady. "Well, well, that interests me. It fits in with what I know about the fellow, too. Anything more to tell me, Queenie?"

"Yes; I was curious to know what the doctor was up to, so I followed him."

"Ha! And where did he go?"

"To a house on Mott street. I can show you the place."

"Who hangs out there?"

"It's a tough joint. There is a fan-tan game in the basement and Highbinders live upstairs."

"I think I know the place. Did the doctor strike for the Highbinders or the fan-tan players?"

"He struck in at the basement, Brady, but not alone. In front of the house he met a man and stopped to talk with him. You may think me foolish, but I stand ready to swear that the fellow was a white man disguised as a Chink, and he was so made up that he looked exactly like Dr. Duck. I think he must have used the doctor for a model. They looked like twin brothers almost."

"This is very important, Queenie. Anything more?"

"That's all, except that I want to warn you about that place. They say the Highbinders have done men up in that house, and that there are secret rooms there. If you tackle it you can't be too careful, old man."

"Thank you a hundred times, Queenie," said Old King Brady, slipping the woman twenty dollars. "Now, one

thing more, look at this picture, and see if you recognize the man. You ought to be a good judge of Chinks."

"I am," replied Queenie, with a short laugh.

She took the photograph which Old King Brady passed to her and studied it carefully.

It represented a thin-faced Chinaman in richly embroidered dress.

Queenie stepped to the window of a cigar store, where she could get more light.

"It seems to me that I have seen that face," she mused. "What is the name of your Chink supposed to be?"

"Hing Gee."

"The name is strange to me. Is the man supposed to be in Chinatown?"

"He may be. It is hard to say."

"This fancy coat he wears is deceiving. Is he a member of the Chinese legation?"

"London legation."

"So? He is the man you want?"

"He is the man."

"Could you let me keep this photo a day or two? I'm sure to find the fellow if he is in New York."

"I couldn't possibly, Queenie. You will have to trust to your memory of the face. Try your hand at it. If you succeed in locating the fellow you will be well paid. And now show me this house."

The woman assented.

Her time was almost up, she declared, but if they hurried she thought they might make it.

So she led Old King Brady around into Mott street, and sure enough pointed out the very house the old detective had in mind.

It was a most notorious Chinese gambling den, and had several times been raided by the police.

Here Queenie left the detective, promising to do what he could in the matter of Hing Gee.

Old King Brady had now abandoned the idea of working the opium joints.

At the beginning of the case, when the Bradys were ordered by the Scotland Yard people to take the matter up they were notified that if at any time they needed the help of a man who could speak the Chuen Shan dialect, if they would apply to the Chinese minister at Washington such a man would be sent to them.

Old King Brady had so applied, and Dr. Duck came in answer to the summons, professing to be entirely ignorant of why he was wanted, and as has been seen, Old King Brady did not enlighten him in that regard to any extent.

It was rather startling, therefore, to learn that this man had once been a Scotland Yard detective himself, and that he was associating with a double whom so shrewd a person as Queenie suspected of being a white man in disguise.

"No ordinary bait will catch that fish," thought Old King Brady. "If they came to this house once they will come again. Perhaps they are in there now, but of course I can't find that out. I must shadow the house, and that is not so easy either. Still, it can be done."

And it was done.

Old King Brady hurried around to the Elizabeth street station to get help.

It was readily afforded him, and that without question as to what the old detective's work was.

A plain clothes man was detailed to go with Old King Brady to a house on the opposite side of Mott street to the fan-tan joint, where they were allowed to watch from a window.

The plain clothes man remained only a short time. Having introduced Old King Brady to the tenant of the house, he had done his part.

And here until long after midnight the patient detective remained on the watch.

At one o'clock he had given up all hope.

It seemed to him then that Queenie must have been mistaken; that Dr. Duck's double was really a Chinaman, and that the two had simply gone into the place to play fan-tan, leaving after a game or two.

But Old King Brady had resolved to remain all night, and perhaps all the next day, so, having nothing better to suggest to himself, he determined to remain until daylight, at all events.

It was well that he did so, for at half-past one, when Mott street had quieted down for the night, his patience was at last rewarded by seeing two Chinamen come out of the house by the basement way.

The first to appear was Dr. Duck!

The man who followed him certainly bore a very strong resemblance to the doctor, as far as Old King Brady could judge in the uncertain light.

Indeed, Old King Brady was not prepared to say which was the doctor, nor would he have ventured to assert that his companion was a white man disguised.

They turned down Mott street toward Chatham Square, and inside of two minutes Old King Brady was out of the house and at their heels.

The detective had now so disguised himself that he was not afraid to pass the pair, and he did so a little way up the Bowery.

"Queenie was right," he thought as he turned into Canal street ready to double on his game. "The outside man is Dr. Duck, but the inside one is surely a white man in disguise."

CHAPTER VII.

HOT WORK FOR OLD KING BRADY.

Thus while Harry and Tip Ling were comfortably sleeping in the headquarters of the Hip Sing Ling, Old King Brady was having rather a strenuous time of it in his own way.

Resolved to shadow the real Duck and the mock Duck wherever they might lead him, Old King Brady, slipping out of Canal street after they had passed, once more got

behind his men, but on the other side of the Bowery, for it was of the highest importance that no suspicion should be attached to his movements now.

He soon discovered that the pair were merely putting in time until the first uptown Third avenue car came along.

When at last it turned up the two Ducks boarded it.

So did Old King Brady.

Never once did he look at them.

Pulling out a paper, he pretended to read.

There were but few passengers in the car, and the two Ducks were seated opposite the old detective.

In such shadowing, where it is simply impossible to avoid being seen, Old King Brady has always considered that the best way is to show oneself boldly, but never to closely observe the shadowed men.

Following out this plan, he was soon rewarded in a way he little suspected would happen.

Fancying, doubtless, that no one could hear them above the mumbling of the car, the two Ducks began to talk.

They spoke at first in the lowest of whispers, and with the rising and falling inflection which all Chinamen employ.

At first Old King Brady thought they were actually talking in Chinese.

He rustled his paper, held it up in front of his face, and crowded closer to the light, doing everything in his power to make it appear that he was not watching them, but actually listening intently to the whispering in progress on the opposite side of the car.

And Old King Brady is a bad listener for the criminal to come up against.

The old detective's ears have been carefully trained in this regard.

He knew what everyone does not know, that if one intently listens, sounds at first inaudible will make themselves heard.

And it was so now.

In a moment the old detective had made a discovery. The two Ducks were discoursing in English, and not in Chinese.

Still another moment, and Old King Brady began to distinguish words.

Dr. Duck was speaking.

"I think we can congratulate ourselves," he said. "I believe we are surely on the right track."

"For which you may thank me," was the reply.

"I know it. You did well."

"Told you I would get it out of him in time."

"You are sharp, but it would have been no go if I had not been with you to translate. You don't want to forget that."

"And you must not forget that I am the one who found Hing Gee."

"Which means that you want more than half."

The mock Duck gave a cackling laugh.

"We were well met, brother," he said. "I might have succeeded without you; I don't deny that you have been a

help. You put me on to the curves of the Bradys, and showed me that matters had to be settled to-night."

"Hush! You are speaking too loud," said the doctor, and he himself spoke louder, but in Chinese.

The other listened impatiently.

Old King Brady felt sure that he could not understand what was being said.

After Dr. Duck stopped talking his companion whispered something in his ear, and the conversation ended.

For the rest of the ride they were a pair of dumb Ducks.

But the old detective had heard enough to prove to him that he had made no mistake in undertaking the shadowing of these men.

"They are on the track of the pearls; it can mean nothing else," thought Old King Brady. "I hope this don't mean trouble for Harry. I heartily wish he had not gone away with that fellow now. Who can tell what passed between him and Dr. Duck; not I, that's one thing sure."

He arose and went out on the rear platform, remaining there until he saw the double Ducks get up to leave the car.

This happened at 34th street.

Old King Brady started east at a rapid pace, not even turning his head until he had gone part way down the block.

It was not necessary.

He could hear their footsteps behind him, and he had observed that there was no one else on the block when he left the car.

He glanced back now and saw them coming, but he did not look again until he reached First avenue, for their footsteps were still to be heard.

Now he paused and asked a policeman if he was going right for the Long Island City ferry, following the question up with other talk.

And so he let them pass him, and saw them go through the ferry gate.

It was easy and safe to keep out of their way then, and Old King Brady did it.

No need to detail all his methods in the shadowing which followed.

Enough to say that the shrewd old detective landed his Ducks away out on Jackson avenue, Hunters Point, diving into a doorway when he left the Dutch Kills car.

He saw them pass him, wholly unsuspecting, talking in low tones.

From this doorway Old King Brady watched them until they had covered the block, when they turned down the cross street.

Quick work was necessary now, and Old King Brady got over the ground in lively style.

On the corner was a saloon, now closed.

Beyond were vacant lots, sunken below the grade.

The neighborhood was sparsely settled, and those who dwelt there, as Old King Brady well knew, were the toughest of the tough, for he had now followed his Ducks to the notorious Dutch Kills.

Old King Brady approached the corner with the greatest precaution, and peered around.

It was the only time during all his shadowing that he felt afraid he had lost his men.

But no!

There they were standing together before a low, one-story brick building, over the door of which was a Chinese laundry sign reading "Jo Gee."

Matters were now evidently coming to a head.

Old King Brady drew back and waited.

If he could have seen a policeman he would have nabbed them both, but it was now half-past two o'clock in the morning, and there was not a soul in sight.

Again the old detective peered around the corner.

The Ducks had vanished, and the door of the laundry was still closed. Had they gone inside?

He crept forward and peered through the store window.

No light burned in the place.

The usual interior of a Chinese laundry was to be seen—nothing more; and there was the usual red curtain cutting off the back room beyond.

There was a vacant lot next to the building, which extended around behind it.

Old King Brady crept on and peering around the end of the fence behind the laundry, he saw that a gate stood open leading into the yard.

"They have gone in that way," he thought. "Those fellows mean mischief. I wouldn't wonder if it was murder. I must look sharp."

He crept to the gate, and peered through, keeping his body in the shadows.

It was burglary, at all events.

One of the Ducks—Old King Brady could not tell the false from the real now—had a jimmy at work.

He was prying up the window-sash.

The window went up even as Old King Brady looked, and the fellow, crawling through the opening, was lost to view; but the other remained outside.

In a moment there was a loud outcry in Chinese.

At the same instant the other Duck sprang in through the window, and a dark lantern was flashed.

By its light Old King Brady saw the first Duck covering a half-naked Chinaman with a revolver, while the other called out something in Chinese.

Now a second Chink came into view, tumbling out of a bunk.

The mock Duck—it was he who held the revolver, as Old King Brady now saw—rapped the man over the head with his weapon, tumbling him into a corner, while Dr. Duck seized the covered man by the throat.

It was time to interfere, for murder was clearly intended if the purpose of the Ducks could be accomplished in no other way, and Old King Brady, drawing his revolver, slipped noiselessly into the yard, intending to show himself at the window, but at the same instant he saw the laundryman drop on his knees and throw up his hands, as if begging for mercy.

The revolver was not discharged, and Dr. Duck let go of him then.

Old King Brady drew back to the gate, determined not to "butt in," but to continue his watch.

He saw enough in a minute.

Dr. Duck kept jabbering away, making some demand, whatever it was.

The Chink, still on his knees, waddled to the bunk and thrust his hand under the mattress.

Plainly Old King Brady saw him pull out something like a necklace or a string of black beads.

"The pearls!" thought the detective. "My place is here by the gate!"

Dr. Duck made a grab for the necklace, and got it, springing out of the window as his hand closed upon the precious thing.

"Here! Hold on there!" cried the doctor's double. "Wait for me!"

He turned to climb out of the window.

Fatal move.

Like a flash the cowering Chinaman whipped out a knife and buried it in the man's back.

"Murder! Murder!" the man shouted as he fell across the window-sill with a despairing groan.

All this Old King Brady saw as he closed upon Dr. Duck.

In the struggle the old detective's hat flew off, carrying the wig which he wore with it.

"Ole Kling Blady!" gasped the doctor. "Oh, oh!"

He struggled violently in the detective's grasp, but with a stinging blow between the eyes Old King Brady downed him, and wrenched the pearls away.

"Murder! Murder!" came the cry in the yard again.

Thrusting the pearls into his inside coat pocket, Old King Brady dashed into the yard, for Dr. Duck did not move after he fell.

His double had crawled or fallen through the window, and lay on the flagging as the detective approached. He managed to get upon his hands and knees.

"Save me, Brady! Save me!" he cried. "I am a detective like yourself!"

It would have been all day—or rather all night—with him if Old King Brady had not come, for the laundryman was just coming through the window with the knife in his hand.

Old King Brady fired, shattering the glass above the fellow, and he crawled back and dropped to the floor.

Meanwhile the other Chink had run into the shop, and was bawling "Murder!" and "P'lice!" at the top of his lungs.

Safe in the possession of the pearls, Old King Brady cared nothing for these laundrymen, even if one should prove to be the thief, although neither bore much resemblance to the photograph.

He seized the wounded man by the arm and lifted him to his feet.

"Come!" he cried. "If you are a detective I will aid you. Come with me!"

"Great heavens, man, I am dying!" gasped the assumed Chinaman as he staggered toward the gate.

They passed through.

Now Old King Brady saw that Dr. Duck had only been playing possum after all, for he had vanished.

"Your partner has gone. Are you really a detective?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Yes, yes," was the reply, and the man raised his hand and pulled off a scalp wig and pigtail.

"Brady, I am dying! Save my life," he gasped.

"Who are you?"

"Jack Albright, formerly of Scotland Yard."

"And later of Sing Sing! I know you."

"Help me! Help me, man! There is big money in this! Where is Dr. Duck? He has got away with thousands of dollars' worth of pearls!"

"No, he hasn't!" replied the old detective grimly. "I've got those. You come along with me if you are able, Mr. Man. You are a disgrace to the fraternity, as you know right well."

"Murder! P'lice!" the laundryman was bawling at the door.

And the slow cops were coming at last.

Old King Brady, supporting his man around upon Jackson avenue, ran right into their arms.

And such was the strenuous work which Old King Brady found to do while Harry and Tip Ling calmly slept in their bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD KING BRADY'S BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT.

Parting from Tip Ling at the City Hall with a promise that he would come to the office at six o'clock, Harry went there himself, hardly knowing whether he had done right or wrong in separating himself from the young Chinaman.

But there seemed to be no other way.

Tip Ling was anxious to go off by himself, and without running the risk of losing the fellow's services altogether, Harry felt that he could not hold him, and so reluctantly he let him go.

When he tried the office door Harry, to his great satisfaction, found it open, and there sat Old King Brady at his desk, poring over one of the big scrap-books in which the Bradys keep pasted newspaper cuttings referring to criminal affairs.

"So you are back safe," he said, scarcely looking up. "Well, Harry, I will not deny that this is an immense relief."

"There has been nothing to worry about, Governor. I have had a very comfortable time of it clear through."

"Did you and that Chink get the job?"

"It didn't go that way at all, Governor."

"What do you mean? If you didn't get the job where have you been all night?"

"Do you want to hear the story now?"

"I certainly do."

"Then let me get off this Chink rigging, if it is only for a few minutes. Would you believe it, I had to take a bath with this bald headed wig and pig-tail on."

"That was a risk if anybody was watching you."

"Well, there was an attendant, but fortunately it doesn't seem to be the custom for that breed of Chinks to wash their heads."

"Come down to business, Harry," said Old King Brady, closing the book with a deep sigh.

"Hello! And what's the matter with you, Governor?" demanded Young King Brady. "You are grunting as if you had lost your last friend."

"I've had troubles of my own since I saw you, Harry. But go on with your story. We must take one thing at a time."

"So you have been at it, have you? Anything doing in the black pearl line?"

"Harry, I recovered those black pearls."

"Good for you!"

"Exactly. I was very fortunate. But the case isn't ended yet. That story, if you please."

"It's coming now," replied Young King Brady, dropping into his chair. "I had to let go of that Chink. I'm afraid you will blame me for that."

"I am not in the mood to blame you for anything to-day, so you may safely tell your story."

Harry then reeled off the story of the happenings of the night.

"There seems to be no question about your having caught on to these Chinese Free-Masons," said Old King Brady then.

"It looks so, Governor."

"It seems to me that it is likely to prove very unsafe for you to go to that house again."

"Is it going to be necessary to go now that you have found the pearls?"

"I'm afraid it is, Harry. You want to look sharp after Tip Ling, too, if you do go. Now that he has discovered that there is money to be made out of the Hip Sing Ling he will be selling you out, surest thing."

"But what will be the object in musing with these Chinese Free-Masons now that you have got the pearls?"

"It is one thing to get and another to keep, Harry. The fact is, I have lost the pearls!"

"Lost them! I thought you said——"

"That I found them. I did say so, but it was only to lose them again. Hear my story now."

And Old King Brady related his end of the happenings of the night, up to the point where he and Detective Jack Albright ran up against the policemen on Jackson avenue, Long Island City.

"But you say you put the pearls in your pocket," broke in Harry.

"Thought I did," replied Old King Brady. "But strange as it may seem that I should do such a thing, I must have missed my pocket, and in the confusion they fell to the ground unnoticed."

"Governor! Whoever heard of your doing a thing like that?"

"I know it. Isn't it perfectly ridiculous? Still, that must have been what happened, and no doubt my bold Dr. Duck saw it happen, and so made off with the pearls as soon as my back was turned."

Harry gave an exclamation of disgust.

"It's the worst ever," he said.

"Go on; I deserve all you can give me," replied Old King Brady dismally. "I'm getting past my usefulness, I guess."

"Never mind, Governor. If you found this Dr. Duck once you will find him again."

"I don't know about that. I have been on the hunt ever since, but can discover no trace of the fellow."

"Have you wired Washington to have him held if he returns there?"

"Oh, yes; that has all been attended to. It's a bad job, but it can't be helped."

"Cut it out for the moment, and tell me how it all ended."

"Well, we took Jack Albright to the station. He was very badly wounded, and as soon as we could get an ambulance he was taken to the hospital, I going with him; in the meantime the police gathered in one of those laundrymen, but the fellow who did the stabbing, the one who had the pearls, you know, had disappeared when they got around to it. You must remember that it was half-past three in the morning, and impossible to get help. Albright seemed to be dying, and it was all the cop and I could do to get him to the station."

"Did he die?"

"He was alive an hour ago when I telephoned the hospital, but there is no hope for him."

"Did you get a confession out of him, Governor?"

"Oh, yes; he told me all. You see, I have met the fellow before. He was formerly a detective in the Scotland Yard, London, but was dismissed for crookedness. Then he came here and I helped him to get a job with Rooney & Nolan, but he again went crooked, and Sing Sing got him next. I had forgotten all about the man."

"What was his story?"

"Simple. I told you that Dr. Duck also was a detective at the Scotland Yard. It was there he became acquainted with Albright. It appears that Duck was informed of the robbery by someone connected with the English Chinese legation. He knew what we were after as soon as he got word to come to New York. He did not come straight to us; he looked up Albright and they started to find Hing Gee, and did so. Through another Chink whom Albright knew they enticed Gee into the fan-tan joint on Mott street, loaded him with opium, and made him a pris-

oner. After working over the fellow for a long time they forced a confession out of him, and he told them that he had given the pearls to his brother for safe-keeping, and gave them the address. It was the laundryman at Dutch Kills, and they went directly for him. How it all come out you know."

"Did you arrest Hing Gee?" asked Harry, when Old King Brady had finished his story.

"I did not. I telephoned Elizabeth street, and the plain clothes men gathered him in quietly."

"You have seen him?"

"Just came from the Tombs now. He is a stupid fellow, and so charged with opium that I could get very little out of him. His arrest cuts no ice. I doubt if we even hold him. It is the pearls we want."

"And you believe Dr. Duck waddled off with them?"

"I can't doubt it, Harry. There was no hole in my pocket. I can only conclude that the pearls never got into it, but were dropped there by the gate."

"Of course you went back after them?"

"Why, certainly; but it was not until after I had left the hospital that I discovered the loss. I searched the ground thoroughly, finding no trace of them. It's a bad job."

"Isn't it possible that Hing Gee's brother got them?"

"It certainly is; still I have little belief that such was the case. Dr. Duck is undoubtedly the culprit, and we know how shrewd he is. I have little hope of ever seeing the pearls again, unless——"

"Well?"

"Unless you can come up with them at the Hip Sing Ling house, Harry. Dr. Duck called there in the afternoon, after he left us on Pell street. There isn't the least doubt in my mind that he is a member of the order."

"It may be so."

"Depend upon it that it is so. This prophecy which Tip Ling told you about means a lot in my eyes. Dr. Duck may regard the pearls from a religious standpoint. If so he will have already have taken them to that house, I suppose."

"Why not raid the place and scoop those two Chinks in?"

"It would be useless, Harry. You can't treat these Chinamen like ordinary mortals. They are so sly that they get the best of you every time. I have made a bad break, and I've got to stand for it, I suppose."

Never had Harry seen Old King Brady so depressed.

"Come, cheer up, Governor," he said. "Sicker horses than this have got well. I'll go back to the Hip Sing Ling house and see what I can find. If they really are going through with their incantations to-night perhaps the pearls will show up, and even if I don't get a chance to put my hand on them it will be something to know that they are there."

"It is running a terrible risk, Harry. It was one thing to have you go into that house as a deaf and dumb servant to whom but little attention was likely to be paid, but to have you go there to be used in their incantations is quite

another part of speech. I don't feel like consenting to that."

"Oh, but you must. I won't hear of anything else," declared Young King Brady. "What we want to do is to think up some plan by which you can take a hand in, too, and help me out in case of trouble. I agree with you that the chances are ten to one that Dr. Duck will bring the pearls there; if the Hip Sing Ling will give our friend Tip Ling a hundred on the bare chance of the prophecy being fulfilled, what will they give for the pearls themselves?"

"Not as much as Dr. Duck might get for them elsewhere, perhaps. Still, there is the chance, and as there seems to be no other hope, I suppose——"

"That I had better go?"

"You are not afraid?"

"Not a bit of it, Governor. I'll hold my own, you bet."

"Well, I yield," said Old King Brady. "If Tip Ling calls for you then you shall go; but of course you will be absolutely mum about me having found the pearls."

And Tip Ling did call at the office at six o'clock, as agreed.

Both the Bradys were on hand, and Old King Brady was more than ever impressed with the young Chinaman's sincerity.

He told about the prophecy of his own accord, and exhibited the money which had been given him.

He laughed at the Hip Sing Ling in a contemptuous way, and altogether made it very plain that he cared nothing for the discovery he had made that he was the hereditary high-priest of the order.

But it was with many doubts that Old King Brady saw Harry go away with the fellow.

It is a very dangerous matter to attempt to penetrate into the secrets of these Chinese religious organizations, and the Hip Sing Ling could be considered nothing else.

There was always the chance that Harry's disguise would not serve him again, and to have it fail might mean death.

CHAPTER IX.

WORKING WITH DETECTIVE LOW TAI.

Before deciding to let Harry take this dangerous step Old King Brady had already determined upon his own course of action, for he had no intention of allowing his partner to run all the risk.

"Go on," he said to himself, as Harry left the office, "but I too will be on deck, and you may see me when you least imagine it."

The old detective's plan then was to engage the services of Low Tai, the Chinese detective, and as soon as Harry had gone he started to close the office, intending to go to Chinatown and look for the fellow, when to his surprise and satisfaction the door opened, and in walked Low Tai himself.

"Hello, Blady," said the Chinaman, with the bland smile of his race. "You just de man I want to see."

"What now?" thought Old King Brady. "Whatever has brought this fellow here?"

"Well, Low, and how are you?" he said aloud. "Sit down and tell me the news."

"Me got whole lot news," replied Low, slipping into a chair. "Me got big case, private case for one of my own people, Blady. I come so you tell me what to do."

"I'll help you all I can, Low," said the detective. "What is the story?"

"It is about a robbery," answered Low. "Pearls!"

Of course, Old King Brady was all attention now.

"Dere comes a Chinaman to me to-day, who name Jo Gee," continued Low Tai. "Him keep laundly over by Long Island City. Him got bludder who get 'lested for stealing big lot of pearls in England, him bludder give pearls to Jo Gee to keep for him, and men come to his laundly and steal dem last night. He want to get dem back, so he come to me, and I come to you, Blady, for help. Jo Gee will pay whole lot so he get back de pearls."

"Does this man know that I am mixed up in the matter?" thought Old King Brady, eyeing Low Tai attentively.

It was impossible to tell, and it might spoil all to ask.

Low Tai had been doing detective duty in Chinatown for a number of years. He was regarded by the police as a very reliable fellow.

He was under some obligation to Old King Brady, and the old detective was under many to him.

"How can I help you, Low?" he asked.

"Dese pearls are what you call sacred," continued Low. "It is hard for me to make you understand, Blady. Dey like tings what belong to you church—sabe? Dat's why dey get stole."

"One minute," broke in the detective. "Has Jo Gee any idea who stole them?"

"Yair, Blady. He tink it one man name Woo Long, who is boss of de Hip Sing Ling. You no sabe Hip Sing Ling?"

"On the contrary, Low, I sabe it very well. It is a secret religious order made up of men from the southwestern part of China; they have a lodge here in New York up on West 3—th street. We call these people the Chinese Free-Masons."

"Dlat it, Blady! Dlat it. Me see you know. Me tink you know ebytying. You vas smart man."

"Don't flatter me, Low. I know more about this matter than you think for. I heard all about it up at the Elizabeth street station. I suppose you know that this fellow Jo Gee is wanted for stabbing a man at his laundry last night?"

"Yair; dat de man who steal pearls."

"You are mistaken. The man is an English detective. He was in disguise as a Chinaman when he went to Jo Gee's laundry. He is now dying over there in Long Island city at the hospital."

"I know, Blady; I know; but he only one. Dere go with him a real Chinaman. He get pearls. Dat man was Woo Long, boss of de Hip Sing Ling."

"Which he wasn't," thought Old King Brady, "and I wonder now if you actually believe he was.

"All right, Low," he added aloud. "I suppose you know. I am only telling you what I've heard from the police. Where is this Jo Gee now?"

"Me no tell, Blady."

"Say, man, you are liable to get yourself into trouble if you hide that fellow."

"Me know dlat. Me no hide him long. Me get pearls, so you help me, den me gib dem to p'lice and get leward. Me got Jo Gee alle safe; me gib him up den."

Low Tai spoke with every appearance of sincerity, yet it was quite impossible to tell whether he actually was sincere or not.

But already Old King Brady had resolved to act on that supposition.

It has long been the old detective's rule in difficult cases to drift with the tide, so to speak, following up any clew, however slight and uncertain, which offered itself, no matter what the danger in so doing may be.

"Well, what do you want me to do for you?" he asked. "Out with it."

But it was not so easily got out of the Chinaman.

He now entered into a long-winded description of the Hip Sing Ling.

He assured Old King Brady that the organization in no way resembled the Highbinders, or Hip Sing Tung.

It was purely a religious and social order, Low declared.

Old King Brady thought that the man was trying to impress him with the idea that there was nothing to fear from a visit to the Hip Sing Ling, for this was what he wound up by proposing.

"You and me go up dere, Blady," he finally said. "We see Woo Long. We make him gib up de pearls, den we get big leward."

"Well, Low, I don't know that I object," replied the old detective. "When shall we tackle these people?"

"What say to-night, Blady?"

"All right. What time do you want to go?"

"Now! How dlat suit you?"

"I can't go now. I'm finishing up some work. Come in half an hour and I will go with you. But it seems to me you could do just as well alone."

"Oh, no! Suppose we have to 'lest Woo Long? I no can take him troo streets uptown. You know dat. Dere would be a whole big mob after us. We get in trouble."

This was true enough, of course, so Old King Brady assented, and Low Tai left, agreeing to come back in half an hour's time.

This gave Old King Brady the opportunity he wanted to telephone to the police station nearest to the Hip Sing Ling.

He had already talked with the captain of this precinct about the house, and he now explained that he proposed to visit it, and asked to have plain clothes men put on the watch outside with direction to raid the place if he remained inside more than a certain length of time.

This done, Old King Brady called up the Elizabeth street

station and got into communication with the sergeant there on the subject of Low Tai.

The Chinese detective had been there talking about the Dutch Kills affair, just as he had stated.

The sergeant assured Old King Brady that his name had not been mentioned in connection with the matter.

It began to look as if Low Tai might be straight.

Jo Gee certainly could not have known that Old King Brady was mixed up in the matter, unless he was a far shrewder Chink than the old detective believed him to be, so if Low Tai did know the information must have come from Dr. Duck.

But there was no way of proving these points.

There was always the chance that Jo Gee had seen the old detective in Chinatown, and did actually recognize him in the dark.

Determined to take his chances, and actually pleased at so good an opportunity to connect with Harry, Old King Brady now stopped pondering on the matter, and settled down to wait for Low Tai.

In due time the Chinaman put in an appearance, and Old King Brady, closing the office, started uptown with him.

Low talked pearls all the way.

He dilated on the great value of these particular pearls, and seemed to be filled with the idea of getting a big reward for their recovery. He also talked more about the Chinese Free-Masons, and told stories about their doings in China.

Altogether Old King Brady had never struck so talkative a Chinaman as Mr. Low Tai.

At last they reached the house, which Low Tai appeared to locate with some difficulty.

He was not sure of the number, he declared.

Old King Brady professed ignorance also, for he wanted to see what Low Tai would do.

What the Chinaman did do was to ascend the steps of the right house at last, and pull the bell.

The place was entirely dark, and no answer came to the ring.

Old King Brady looked around for the plain clothes men, but could not make out that anyone was watching the house.

Again and again Low Tai rang the bell, but it seemed a hopeless case, for no one responded nor seemed likely to.

"That will do now, Low," said Old King Brady at last. "We will have the whole neighborhood aroused first thing you know. Let us see if we can't get into this place."

"Dlat makee trouble, Blady—yes?"

"We will take our chances. At all events, these Chinks don't intend to let us in."

"Don't believe they do," growled Low. "I give him up." "Then I don't," replied the old detective. "You follow me."

He hurried down the steps and paced off the distance to the corner, much to the mystification of Low Tai, who seemed to be greatly disturbed.

"What you do, Blady?" he asked anxiously. "We no can do noting so we can't get into de house."

"We will get in. Come along with me," replied the detective, and he led the way around onto the street in the rear.

Here, as Old King Brady knew, the neighborhood was of a different kind.

Instead of the old-fashioned dwellings, there were some flat houses, with the door in the middle open at all times, night and day.

Old King Brady again carefully paced his distance, doing it in such a way that was not noticeable to the crowd in front of the houses, for the night was warm, and everybody was on the street.

At length he made a dive into a certain building, and pushed his way straight through the hall to the yard in the rear.

Low Tai followed close at his heels, very nervous, for if there is anything a New York Chinaman dreads it is such a neighborhood as this.

But Low Tai wore American clothes, and his pig-tail was carefully coiled under his derby hat.

It was dark on the block, and so rapid had been Old King Brady's movements that nobody paid particular attention to them.

Better luck still came their way in the back yard, for there was no one in it, and the tumble-down fence at the end made it easy to get through to the yard behind by merely pulling away a board.

So it was all done in a minute, and Old King Brady and his Chink detective passed into the other yard unobserved.

But were they in the right yard, after all?

This was the question.

The house which they now faced was entirely dark, the blinds at every window being closed.

"Blady, so we bleak in here we get in de soup," whispered Low Tai. "You sure dis de house?"

"Pretty sure, Low. I am taking chances. Remember we are both officers, we have our shields."

"My shield allee light down Chinatown, but it no good up here."

"Mine is, anyway. Come on."

They stole along the yard, passed into the areaway under a back stoop, and stopped at the basement door.

This was locked.

Old King Brady gently shook it.

"No chain here," he whispered. "The front door was chained, but this is not."

Out came his dark lantern, and he examined the key-hole.

"Better still, the key is not in the lock," he said. "If the door is only not bolted now, and I don't think it is, we are safe to get in all right."

Then Old King Brady produced his skeleton keys, which are good for any ordinary lock.

They were good for this.

The door flew back in a moment, and the detective flash-

ed his dark lantern along the hall, after a moment of listening.

The floor was bare and there was no sign of furniture.

"Follow me," whispered Old King Brady, and he opened the kitchen door.

One glance was enough for Low Tai.

"Dlis allee light, Blady," he whispered. "Dlis here. Chinee house!"

CHAPTER X.

IN THE LODGE OF THE HIP SING LING.

If Old King Brady had trouble in gaining admittance to the house of the Hip Sing Ling, then Harry had none at all, for the door flew open as soon as Tip Ling pulled the bell.

There was a little China boy, all smiles, and they were ushered into the parlor once more.

In a moment Woo Long appeared, still sporting his green silk pants.

He broke out on Ling, and Harry looked for another hour's sitting, but the talk was only on tap for a few minutes, and then Woo Long led the way downstairs to the front basement, where supper was at once served, the other Chinamen not being present.

They had chop suey and chicken stewed with rice, with candied lychee fruit for desert, and tea in little cups after all.

A very good supper it was, Harry was forced to admit, and after it was over Tip Ling led him up to their room and bolted the door.

"We are to wait here till they send for us," he whispered in Harry's ear.

"It won't be long, I hope?" inquired Harry. "I want to get through with this."

"You don't get through so soon. They have meeting of the Hip Sing Ling to-night. You will have to be there, you know."

"What am I to do?"

"Just whatever comes to you. I cannot tell."

"You will tell me all you can by the signs we arranged on coming up here, Ling?"

"Sure, I will. You watch me sharp. You can tell whole lot."

"They have no suspicion that I am not a Chinaman?"

"Sure no, Blady. I tell you true, but we must not talk. See, when I know dley suspect you den so I twist my little finger dis way—you see?"

"All right," said Harry. "No more talk now."

The conversation, indeed, had been carried on in the faintest of whispers, but even that was dangerous, of course.

Harry was greatly pleased at the way Ling handled himself.

It seemed to him now that the young Chinaman hardly could be a fraud.

Ling produced cigarettes, and they smoked, waiting for the summons.

Meanwhile they heard the door-bell ring many times, and loud voices were heard in the hall.

It was evident that this was one of the visiting nights, and many Chinamen were coming to the house.

There was an hour of this sort of thing, and then Woo Long knocked on the door.

"Mr. Green-pants" bowed before Tip Ling as though he had been an emperor, and, throwing the door wide open, stood aside to let him pass.

He motioned to Harry to follow, and they descended to the back parlor, the room in which the golden idol had been seen.

It was not there now, however, nor was the altar.

The room had been cleaned out except for a table and a few chairs.

More than a dozen Chinamen were present, all wearing American dress except Woo Long himself.

This made it easier for Harry, who was also so dressed.

Indeed, little attention was paid to him.

If there is one thing above another which Young King Brady does understand it is how to make up like a Chinese.

Now the talk all took one direction, and that was Tip Ling's way.

First the Chinks stared at the boy, chattering away like so many monkeys.

Next Tip Sing barred his arm, exhibiting the tattooed snake, and all crowded around to have a look.

The chattering was fiercer than ever now, and Ling seemed to like it.

At last all of a sudden Woo Long called out something in a loud voice, and every Chink in the bunch dropped on his knees and touched the floor with his head facing Tip Ling.

"This is serious business," thought Young King Brady. "Ling is sure the real thing with them, and if they find out that I am not they will make it hot for me—that's all."

Ling himself made a few remarks then, the Chinks keeping their heads against the floor all the while.

After that they got up again and all had tea, which was served by the China boy in little porcelain cups with the saucers on top.

Harry got his cup, and although it was without milk or sugar he was obliged to admit to himself that it was the best tea that he had ever tasted.

This ended the ceremonies in the back parlor.

Woo Long now threw open the door and led the way downstairs, Tip Ling following first.

Harry thought they were bound for the basement, but instead of that Woo opened another door, and led them down a flight of rough wooden steps into the cellar.

Here a narrow space had been cut off from the main cellar by a rough board partition, reaching from floor to ceil-

ing, leaving just about space enough for the Chinamen to huddle into.

This place was lighted by a gas-jet overhead, and here for some minutes all hands stood in silence, waiting for something, but for what Young King Brady could not tell.

At last Woo Long, stooping down, clapped his ear to the keyhole of the door in the partition.

"Chung lung bung!" he muttered—or at least it sounded that way to Harry.

The Chinks made a murmur of assent.

Five minutes more passed, and again Woo Long listened at the keyhole.

Everyone seemed to be getting impatient, and there was more or less murmuring among the Chinks.

Then all at once a deep-toned gong rang out behind the door, striking twice.

Woo Long sprang back, and the door flew open, revealing a man dressed in the most elaborate silk robes Young King Brady had ever seen, even in the Chinese theater, and wearing a hideous, horned mask which covered his entire head.

In his hand he held a huge sword, and uttering some words he pressed the point against the heart of Woo Long, who made an extended reply.

This talk gave Harry the chance to observe the room more closely.

It was just a rough cellar stoned up on the sides, but the end was cut off by another partition where a door stood open.

Behind the door Harry saw the "altar" and the golden idol which he had seen the night before in the room upstairs.

There were little lamps burning on the altar, and beside it was a brass gong hanging between two uprights.

The little China boy, now dressed in a white flowing robe, stood by the gong, holding a bronze hammer.

This was all. There was no attempt at decoration about the cellar, even the rough floor beams overhead being exposed.

Woo Long having satisfied the grim doorkeeper of this strange lodge room, now turned to the partition and gave it a push on both sides of the door.

To Harry's surprise the boards seemed to fold up, the partition separating in the middle, and Woo Long continuing to push, flattened them against the wall, so that they became hardly observable, leaving the cellar clear.

The Chinks now lighted cigarettes and cigars, and stood about with their hats on, talking and laughing just as one sees them on the stage of the Chinese theater, while the play is in progress.

If Harry had been a dummy made of cloth and paper they could not have paid less attention to him.

Now the masked man retreated into the other room, and stood by the altar.

Tip Ling led Harry in there, too, and Woo Long fol-

lowed them, explaining something to Ling, who then placed Harry directly in front of the idol with his back toward it.

The priest, as we shall call the masked man, stood on the right, and Tip Ling on the left.

It looked as if the ceremonies of the Hip Sing Ling were about to begin.

The next was the sounding of the gong.

It rang three times, and then Woo Long, turning the gas down to a mere glimmer, went outside.

The priest now straightened himself up and began to talk.

The address which he delivered may have been the most eloquent effort ever made in a lodge of the Hip Sing Ling, or just the reverse for all Harry could tell.

At all events, it lasted for an interminable time, and nobody appeared to pay very much attention to it except Tip Ling, whose eyes never left the mask.

When the speaker finally finished joss-sticks were lighted on the altar, and the cellar was filled with the fumes of incense.

The priest ducked before the idol once or twice, or rather before Harry, who had not changed his place, and then the murmuring of the Chinks in the cellar suddenly ceased—they had even kept up their talk through the address of the priest.

Harry wondered what was coming next, and he speedily found out, for the priest, thrusting his ugly mask close to Young King Brady's face, suddenly raised his hands, and began to make passes.

"Hypnotism, by gracious!" thought Harry. "I must look out for myself. The fellow might catch me, and Tip Ling can't help me a bit."

Harry had been prepared for this, for he and Old King Brady have been up against Chinese hypnotists before, and both well know the power they possess.

Harry saw but one way of avoiding being caught in the hypnotic spell, and that was to quickly pretend to be caught.

So he began to wink and blink, and in a minute he closed his eyes and let his head drop forward, playing the part of a person entranced.

This settled the business.

The priest stopped his gesticulations.

Determined not to keep his eyes closed, Harry opened them again, and looked fixedly at the mask, doing his best to throw a vacant expression upon his face.

Then the priest addressed him in Chinese.

This was what he dreaded.

Did they expect the dumb to speak?

Evidently they did, for now in louder, sterner tones the priest addressed him again, and the Chinks in the cellar crowded about the door, staring at Harry with intense interest in the dim light.

Then something very strange happened.

To all appearance Harry did speak.

He heard the Chinese words uttered in a clear, distinct voice, wholly unlike his own, and they seemed to come from his own lips.

A murmur of approval went up from the Chinks, and they clapped their hands noisily.

But Young King Brady, who was never more on the alert in his life, had not uttered a word.

CHAPTER XI.

HOT WORK AMONG THE CHINESE FREE-MASONS.

Who had spoken?

Whoever it was kept it right up.

Fortunately for Harry, the truth dawned upon him in an instant, although it was not until later that he knew that it was the truth.

Tip Ling was a ventriloquist.

It was he who was speaking.

Assuming this, Young King Brady made his lips move in response to each question, just keeping his eyes fixed upon the mask all the while.

And now we must make it plain what the talk was about, in order that this strange situation may be intelligible to the reader.

It was all made plain to Harry later by Tip Ling himself.

The talk was about the prophecy and the missing pearls.

The pearls had for ages, so it seemed, adorned the neck of the golden idol of the Hip Sing Ling, having been stolen by imperial Chinese troops during an insurrection over a hundred years before.

As we have already stated, some priest of the Hip Sing Ling—Tip Ling believed it to have been his great-grandfather—had uttered the prophecy that when the snake on the arm again appeared in the lodge of the Lings, and the legitimate hereditary priest was restored to the order, then the pearls would come back, and the idol be restored to its former perfection.

And it was all about this that the talk ran now.

It was over in a few minutes.

The ventriloquism of Tip Ling was perfect, and the Chinese Free-Masons were completely deceived.

Later Harry knew that Ling told them that the pearls might be brought to the lodge that night, or it might be some weeks before the prophecy would be fulfilled.

As Ling afterward said, he was satisfied with the discovery he had made that the pearls were not then in the possession of anyone present, of which he had not been certain at first.

The questioning at an end, the priest stepped forward and made a motion with his hand for Harry to lie down upon the floor.

Fortunately his intention was plain, and Harry stretched himself upon the bare ground, for there was no wooden flooring.

All hands then walked out of the little enclosure, and the door was shut.

It was an immense relief to be alone, if only for a few moments, for the strain had been great.

'Now a great talking and laughing could be heard outside, which kept up for some time.

Young King Brady's feelings can be better imagined than described.

Even yet he did not fully trust Tip Ling, and he had no possible means of knowing what was coming next.

Nevertheless the China boy was true blue, as Harry was to learn later.

He had certainly managed his end of the affair with consummate skill, and he was now only waiting for the meeting to end to go to Young King Brady's relief.

But the affair was not destined to work out that way at all, for even now Old King Brady and Detective Low Tai were in the house.

We left the old detective just opening the kitchen door.

The room was vacant; so was the basement beyond.

Low Tai led the way upstairs, and they went from room to room, expecting to run into the Chinks any moment—or at least Old King Brady did.

They encountered nobody, for the reason which the reader knows.

The Hip Sing Ling were in session in the cellar, and had not heard the sounds made by the detectives overhead.

"This is very strange," remarked Old King Brady, when they had descended to the parlor floor again. "There seems to be nobody here."

He had his dark lantern out now, and he glanced at the bell-wire.

"Why, this wire has been disconnected from the pull," he muttered. "We might have pulled that bell forever."

"What can it mean?"

But they were in the right house; the Chinese furniture showed that.

Low Tai had now become very silent. Indeed he had scarcely spoken since they entered the house.

"We are through except for the cellar," Old King Brady now remarked. "I suppose we may as well examine that."

"Dley no can be dere," replied Low. "Mebbe dley all go down to Mott street. Who can tell?"

It seemed so probable that such was the case that when Old King Brady opened the cellar door he never dreamed of what was to come.

The door was a tight-fitting affair, and not a ray of light had found its way to the hall above, but now it burst forth, and the clatter of voices could be heard below.

Then all in an instant Old King Brady had the mistake he had made in trusting Low Tai brought home to him.

The Chinaman had kept a little behind him, and now all

in an instant he sprang upon the unsuspecting detective, and giving him a violent push sent him headlong down the cellar stairs.

It was a wonder that Old King Brady's neck was not broken.

As it was, he landed on all fours on the cellar floor, with a gibbering mob of Chinks about him.

Harry, in the other room, heard the fall, and the outcry which followed, without guessing what had occurred.

"Woo Long!" shouted Low Tai in English, "here he is! Dlat Old Kling Blady! He got de black pearls!"

Black pearls! It was black treachery, and it came from the one Chink whom Old King Brady had really trusted, instead of from little Tip Ling, from whom treachery had been expected.

Harry's heart sank as he listened.

"What on earth made the Governor come butting in at this unfortunate moment?" he thought. "He seems to have gotten this case aM by the ears!"

What was he to do?

To show himself and attempt a rescue might only make matters worse.

The greatest jabbering in Chinese ever listened to by the Bradys followed the intrusion.

While it was at its height Tip Ling opened the door, and slipping inside closed it behind him.

Dropping on his knees beside Harry he whispered:

"The old man come! Dley think he got the pearls. Don't you move; leave everything to me."

"Tip Ling, you must save him!" breathed Harry. "Don't you let him be killed."

"Trust me!" whispered Ling. "You keep dark, or dley get you too—see?"

He was gone in an instant, leaving Harry in agony.

It seemed to him that he just must go to Old King Brady's assistance, and yet he knew that it would be madness to make the attempt as matters stood.

Meanwhile Old King Brady was having troubles of his own, and he was getting them good and plenty.

Strangely enough, he had not been hurt much by his fall, and as he started to regain his feet the Chinks jumped on him and began searching his pockets.

Now, as everyone who has followed up the adventures of Old King Brady knows, the detective has many a secret pocket in that wonderful blue coat of his.

Hundreds of times the old detective has been searched without the searcher ever dreaming of the existence of these secret pockets, but the Chinks are sharper in their way than any race on earth.

They found them all!

Thus Old King Brady lost his revolvers and his knife.

His money and other belongings were not taken from him, but the search made included every part of the old detective's person.

No English was spoken then.

Low Tai kept urging Woo Long and the priest, who did the searching, to keep it up.

The latter had now laid aside his hideous mask, and Harry would have recognized him as Too Ling, the other Chinaman whom he had originally met in the house of the Hip Sing Ling.

While the search was in progress Old King Brady did not attempt to speak.

Several times he fixed his eyes on Tip Ling as they tumbled him about.

Once or twice the China boy made signs to him, he thought, but he could not tell what he meant to convey.

"Where is Harry?" he asked himself, and he feared the worst.

Unnecessary to say that he now bitterly regretted having been so ready to trust himself in the hands of Low Tai.

But the search ended at last, and, of course, there was no result, as far as pearls were concerned.

Woo Long was furious.

He shook his fist in Low Tai's face, exclaiming in English:

"So you lie to me! Dlat man no hab pearls!"

"He has got dem," said Low Tai, stubbornly. "Jo Gee he tell me so. He see him put pearls in his pocket. Blady, now vas dlat so?"

"Low, you are a treacherous fraud," replied the old detective, speaking in that calm fashion which he always assumes in times of emergency. "Hear, now, what I say; your day is all over in Chinatown. I'll break you with the police."

"You no can. You no nebber see p'lice again," sneered Low Tai. "So you no gib up pearls or tell where you put dem so me go get dem, so me kill you, Blady, so dere."

"I have not got the pearls. I lost them on the ground where they were taken. That is the truth."

"You were dere, den? Dlat so?"

"I was there. I got the pearls. I thought that I put them in my pocket, but I was mistaken. They must have fallen to the ground and someone got them. Now you know all that I know about the pearls."

"You lie, Blady! You lie!" cried the Chinese detective. "Who can get dem?"

"How can I tell?"

"Who dlat Chinaman who go wid de English detective?"

"That I will not tell you."

"You tink he get pearls?"

"I do think so."

"Then tell who he is."

"That I will not do, Low Tai. Now, let me warn you again; this house is being watched by the plain clothes men of this precinct. If I do not come out in a minute they

will come in. You know what that means to all of you; so beware what you do to me."

Low Tai gave a chuckling laugh.

"Blady, you one big fool," he said. "You tink you can get de best of me? Nebber! When you send me out of office and tell me to come back again you tink I no know what dlat mean? So, of course, I know you telephone p'lice. So what I do? I telephone p'lice just before I come back to you. I say: 'Me Low Tai. Mr. Old King Blady he tell me telephone an' say p'lice no wanted at dat place where he tell you send dem little while ago. So, Blady? So! Dere is no help for you; tell where are de pearls or you see what comes next.'"

It was a long speech for a Chinaman, and Old King Brady's reply was brief.

"Low, I have not got the pearls. I know nothing of them. I have said so several times, and I shall not say it again, so do your worst."

"You fool! You tell, or so we kill you! Me fool you! So you no get into dhis house me show you how get in. You too sharp. Me let you take your own way. Me fool you, but you no fool me or you get killed ebley time."

Low Tai was growing incoherent and more and more enraged every minute.

Now he relapsed into Chinese and all hands joined in the clatter.

Harry strained his ears to catch every sound.

He was almost ready to jump in on them now, even at the risk of his life.

What were they about?

There seemed to be a great scuffling going on in the cellar now.

Suddenly there came a creaking sound like a rope running through an uncoiled pulley.

Then a shout went up from all hands and Harry distinctly heard his chief give a deep groan.

It was too much to endure.

Throwing caution to the winds, Harry sprang up and burst into the cellar.

There was Old King Brady with his hands tied behind his back hanging head down from one of the floor beams, a stout rope having been made fast to his feet.

He did not speak—perhaps he could not—his face was deeply flushed.

But the dumb spoke then!

"You infernal Chinks! Drop that man!" shouted Harry.

He would have drawn his revolver then, but before he could make a move the Chinamen were upon him.

By his haste Young King Brady had blocked his own way.

Now he had all he could do to defend himself, for he was set upon on all sides.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Harry fought like a tiger, tumbling the Chinks about as best he could.

The situation was most desperate, as Old King Brady hung by the heels, could not be expected to long survive.

It looked doubtful which would win.

To make matters worse, one of the Chinamen had seized Harry by the pigtail and pulled off his Chinese wig.

"Dlat de odder Blady! Dlat de young one!" yelled Low Tai.

Leaving Woo Long to manage the rope, the treacherous Chink dealt Harry a blow which sent him half unconscious to the floor.

It is doubtful of the Bradys ever found themselves in a worse fix.

But for the hope these Chinamen had of recovering the black pearls of the Hip Sing Ling, it is doubtful if the detectives would have come out of it with their lives.

And what part did Tip Ling play in all this?"

Up to the moment of the attack on Harry the China boy kept singularly quiet, saying nothing, but observing everything.

Old King Brady had noticed this, and his only hope was in Tip Ling.

At the moment of the attack, when everybody's attention was engaged, Tip Ling quietly sneaked.

He vanished up the stairs unobserved, and the old detective could only imagine that he had suddenly taken to his heels.

Such was the situation when Harry went down, and then came a change.

Of course, all the talk was in Chinese now.

We cannot attempt to explain what was said; all hands were talking at once and they kept it up pretty much all the time.

Old King Brady was now lowered to the floor.

Bleeding from the blow he had received, weak and dizzy with it all, Harry had just sense enough left to play 'possum. He closed his eyes and lay there white and still.

Low Tai searched him, taking away his revolvers, but Harry never moved.

Doubtless they thought he was dead, for no further attention was paid to him.

Low Tai now turned to Old King Brady and said:

"Now den, Blady, me gib you one big dose. You tell where de pearls are now?"

"Nothing to tell," replied Old King Brady, faintly. "It is all no use, Low Tai."

"We see about dlat," snarled the Chink. "Now me leab you to tink about it. Me comee back again blime bye."

It was a relief to get rid of the gibbering crew, at all events.

Old King Brady lay there gasping.

He believed Harry dead then, and the blood was so in his head that he expected every moment would see his own finish.

Thus it was cheering when Harry's voice reached to his ears:

"Brace up, Governor! We are all right for the moment! We may escape yet!"

"My dear boy, are you still in the land of the living!" panted the old detective.

"You bet. I was hard hit, but I'm not a dead one yet, by any means."

Old King Brady, with a great effort, rolled over and faced his partner, who was just staggering to his feet.

"You look terrible," he gasped. "Are you so badly cut? Your face is all covered with blood."

"It is nothing, Governor. The loss of a little blood won't hurt me. It would be a good job if you lost some. I thought you would die of apoplexy sure."

"Not I! What are you going to do?"

"Untie those cords—set you free."

"I wouldn't. They may be back any moment and you will have to play 'possum again."

"How ever came you here? I was getting on all right."

"It was another of my mistakes. I seem to have blundered in this case from start to finish. Wait a bit, Harry. Let us think."

"Wasn't that fellow Low Tai, the Chink detective?"

"Yes; if I ever do escape I shall make short work of him. Hark! What are they doing upstairs?"

"I should say that most of the Chinks were leaving. What became of Tip Ling?"

"Oh, he sneaked when the rumpus began. He is just like all the rest."

"No he isn't, Governor. He helped me out when I needed help; do you know the fellow is a wonderful ventriloquist? He beats the band. Let me tell you——"

"Don't Harry. My head hurts me so I can't think, and I won't. I am getting too old for this business. I think I shall retire after this case."

"You will do nothing of the sort, Governor. Cheer up. There, don't you hear them going down the steps? We are rid of the mob, anyway. There are only two of them who live in this house and Low Tai makes three. We still have a fighting chance."

For ten minutes or so the Bradys talked.

Meanwhile, things were happening upstairs which we must pause to explain.

As Harry had guessed, the Chinese Free Masons had now taken themselves off, leaving only Woo Long, Low Tai, the priest, Too Ling and the little China boy in the house; but five minutes later, while the three Chinks were chattering together in the parlor, there came a peculiar knock on the front door.

Woo Long hastened to open it, for the knock was the secret signal of the Hip Sing Ling, and who should walk in but Dr. Yong Duck, whose treachery had been the real cause of the Bradys' troubles with this peculiar case.

Now what passed between Dr. Duck and the worthies of the Hip Sing Ling is something we cannot tell, having no report of that end of the business.

But certain it is from what followed that he was informed of the presence of the Bradys in the house and what had happened.

Equally certain is it that Dr. Duck was a member of the Hip Sing Ling, and a bad one, for he had now come to the house for no other purpose than to give his friends the "double cross," so to speak, and to enrich himself at the expense of the order for whose interests he was supposed to work.

All this the Bradys reasoned out later.

All they knew about the business now was that they heard a step on the stairs, and when the door opened who should walk into the cellar but Dr. Duck, and he came alone.

And the Bradys were ready for him!

A moment before Harry had persuaded Old King Brady to allow him to cut his bonds; it was done with a little knife belonging to Harry which had escaped the Chinamen's search.

Old King Brady was lying as the Chinamen had left him, and Harry dropped upon the floor, playing 'possum again, when he heard the step on the stairs.

With that far-famed smile of the Chinaman—"the smile that is child-like and bland"—Dr. Duck beamed on the Bradys through his gold spectacles and carefully closed the door.

"And so, my good friend, Mr. Old King Brady," he said in his perfect English, "I find you in trouble. Would it

not have been better if you had taken me into your full confidence? Possibly, then, by this time you would have accomplished your object and recovered the black pearls of the Hip Sing Ling."

And in that moment Old King Brady read the whole story of the pearls in the fellow's face.

"When I dropped them he picked them up," he thought. I see it all now."

"Good-evening, Doctor," he said, quietly. "You have come here on business, I see."

"I have. You are right."

"Then oblige me by coming to the point at once."

"You speak like a man to whom time was precious. You are in almost as big a hurry as you were last night when you thought you put the pearls in your pocket and didn't. But I will humor you. I suppose your life is in danger here? You see, your partner is already dead."

"He is, Doctor, and I realize my own position fully. Kindly tell me why you came here."

"It is business—purely business. You followed me up last night. You know what happened. Of course you know that I have the pearls."

"I have already guessed that. Well?"

"But you are supposed to have them, or rather to know where they are. I have no use for the things beyond what they will bring me in cash. I came here to-night to sell them to the people in this house. I have learned what has happened. Rather than mix up in the matter any further I prefer to sell the pearls to you. What will you give me for them if I will turn them over to you and set you free?"

"I don't know that I am prepared to make a bid that way, Dr. Duck," replied Old King Brady. "I could not pay you now. I——"

"I do not expect it. I know that you are a man of your word. Give me your word that you will not proceed against me and that you will give my messenger a certain sum for the pearls when they are brought to you and that will be sufficient. I trust you—you trust me."

"And if I refuse to deal with you?"

"Then I go back upstairs and leave matters to take their course. I have been sent here to talk with you because they think I may make you confess. These people have no suspicion that I have the pearls, but I can sell them to the Hip Sing Ling later on and you need not hope to reach me, for when I leave here I disappear. The Chinese minister will soon go back to China. I have no desire to go with him. I shall not return to Washington again."

"I see; but I would like to see the pearls before I make my bid."

As he lay on the floor, Old King Brady faced Harry, to whom Dr. Duck's back was turned and he was able to convey his intentions to his partner by a secret sign.

And that sign said:

"We will jump on him and take our chances!"

Harry responded with a sign of assent.

In the meanwhile Dr. Duck was fumbling in his pocket.

He produced a little pasteboard box wrapped in paper.

"Let me listen!" he said. "If those people upstairs are watching me I am in as much danger as you are yourself.

But there was no one watching except the Bradys.

Dr. Duck had never been suspected by Woo Long or Low Tai.

And as he watched, Harry could not but think how strangely the ancient prophecy of the Hip Sing Ling had been fulfilled, for was it not a fact that Tip Ling turned out to be the hereditary priest of the order, and was it not also a fact that the black pearls had been brought to the golden idol then standing on the altar in the other room?

These certainly were facts.

Strangely enough, the prophecy had been literally fulfilled.

Dr. Duck unwrapped the box, opened it and displayed the pearls.

"There they are, Brady!" he cried. "It is I who win! I was notified of the loss of the pearls from London long before you heard of it. Where you fail I succeed. Now make your bid!"

He had not heard Harry.

Noiselessly Young King Brady had in the meantime risen to his feet.

"This is my bid!" he cried, suddenly seizing Dr. Duck by the throat.

And then, while Harry jammed his knee in the fellow's back and pulled his head over, Old King Brady jumped on Dr. Duck and snatched the pearls away.

It was as neat a bit of work as the Bradys had ever performed.

Harry squeezed the doctor's throat so firmly that he could not utter a cry.

Quick as lightning Old King Brady jammed a handkerchief into the Chinaman's mouth, effectually silencing him.

Then they threw him and tied him up, all being accomplished with scarcely a sound.

"We win out, Governor!" breathed Harry, when all was

over and Dr. Duck lay glaring at them helplessly from the floor.

"And the next thing is to get out," replied the old detective. "Come, let's slope."

They stole up the cellar steps and opened the door.

All was quiet, and they crept through the hall to the basement door, unbolted it and threw it open, only to find themselves up against two policemen.

At the same instant there was a thundrous knocking on the front door upstairs.

* * * * *

"Well ended, Harry, even if badly begun," said Old King Brady, when he and his partner entered their own house some time after midnight. "We have won out, thanks to Tip Ling, the faithful fellow, and here our case ends."

It was so!

Tip Ling had left the house for no other purpose than to bring help.

It came just in time to aid the Bradys at the finish.

Woo Long, Too Ling and Detective Low Tai were gathered in; likewise Dr. Duck.

But the Bradys entered no complaint against these Chinamen with the exception of Low Tai, who went to the island for six months on charge of assault.

The rest the Bradys allowed to go free.

The pearls were sent to London, and in due time the Bradys received a most liberal reward.

Detective Jack Albright died in the hospital.

Detective Low Tai, stripped of his shield, disappeared from New York after the expiration of his sentence.

Tip Ling, through Old King Brady's influence, got his job, and is now a power in Chinatown.

Nothing more was ever heard of the Chinese Free Masons, who promptly gave up their house.

And such was the satisfactory ending of the case of the Bradys and the Hip Sing Ling.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' DIAMOND SYNDICATE; OR, THE CASE OF THE 'MARQUIS' OF WALL STREET," which will be the next number (338) of "Secret Service."

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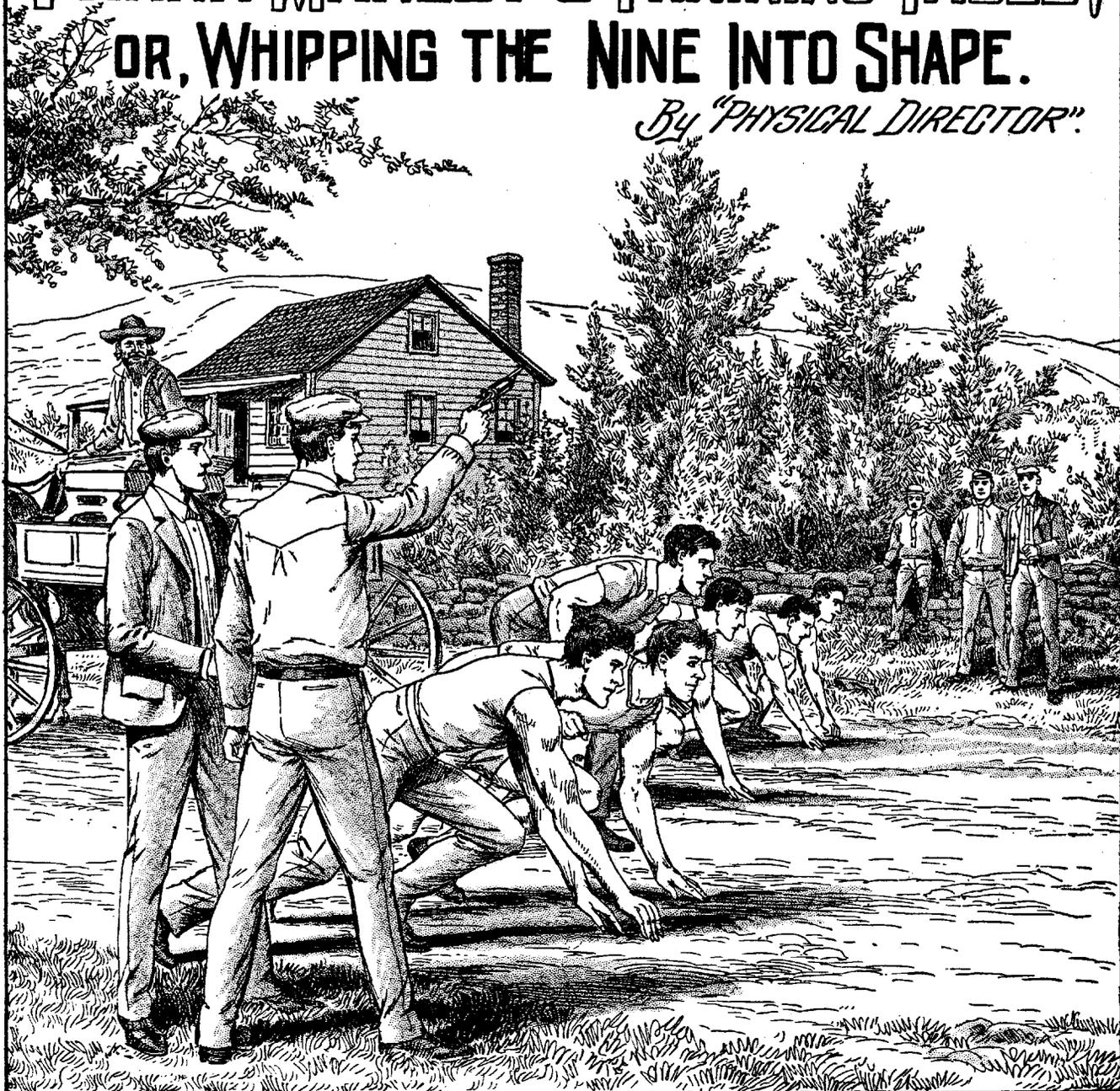
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