

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. 372.

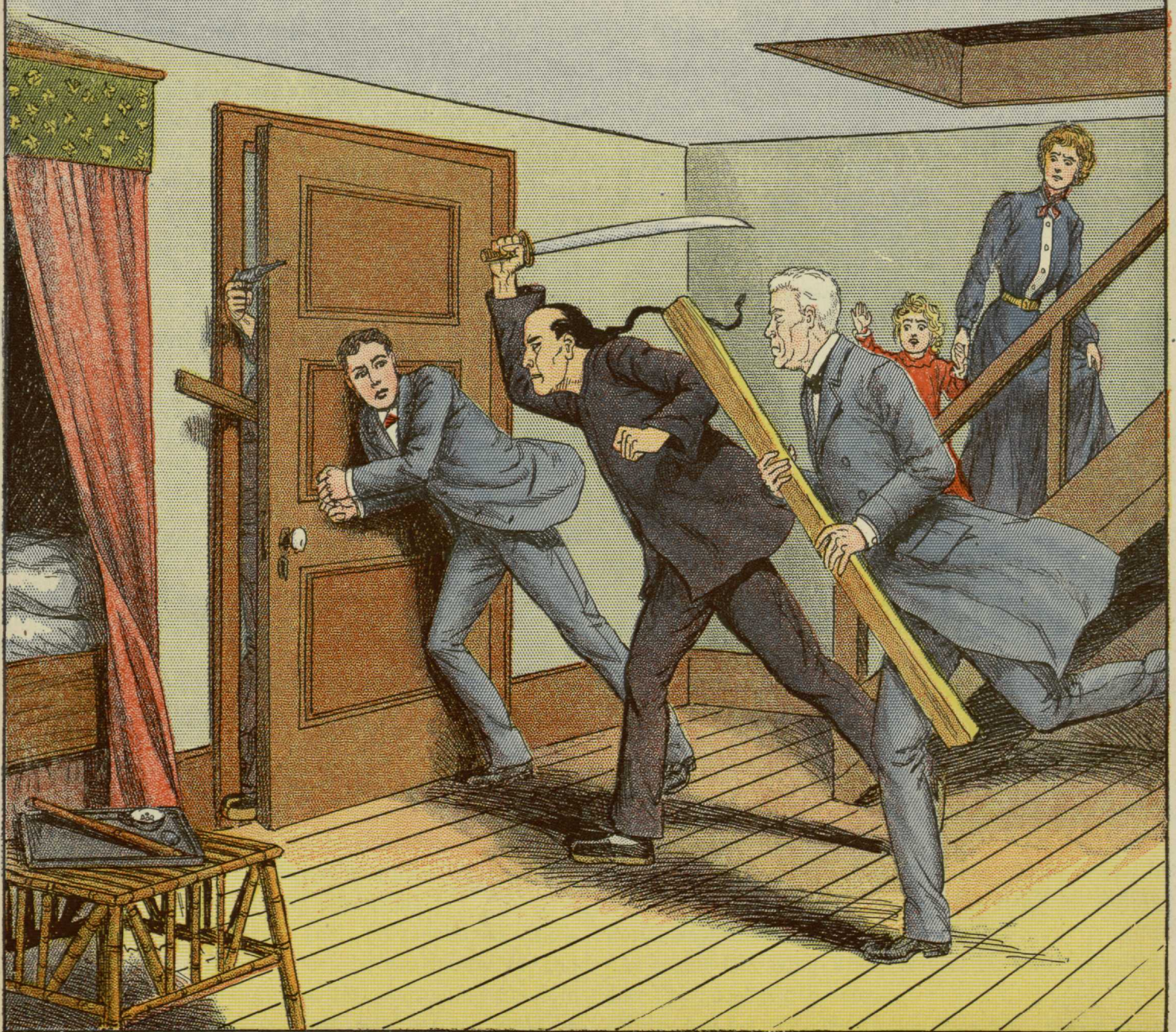
NEW YORK, MARCH 9, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND GOVERNOR GUM;

OR, HUNTING THE KING OF THE HIGHBINDERS.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



And then as the door slightly opened a hand holding a revolver came into view. Harry threw his weight against the door. Old King Brady rushed forward with his club. Governor Gum slashed at the hand with his sword.

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CHAPTER I.

ABOUT THE VANDERBECK CASE.

The Bradys had just reached their office on a certain morning in March when the word came to Wall street that Theodosius Vanderbeck, the railroad magnate and possessor of many millions, had dropped dead of apoplexy at the Union League Club the night before.

The news was not in the morning papers, but as soon as the Wall street offices began to open up it came to be generally rumored, and the ticker positively confirmed the rumor by ten o'clock.

At nine "Charley" French, the well-known stock broker, who has frequently been employed by Old King Brady in his own stock operations, called up the old detective, and the following conversation took place over the telephone:

"You heard, perhaps, that old Vanderbeck was dead?" asked Charley, once he got Old King Brady on the wire.

"No; I had not heard."

"It is said to be a fact."

"So? What struck him?"

"Apoplexy."

"Ah!"

"Yes. Dropped dead at the Union League Club last night."

"Indeed!"

"From the way you speak I take it that you are not particularly interested."

"That is so. Did you call me up on purpose to tell me this?"

"Yes."

"Do you know I can't imagine why?"

"I suppose not. But I am about to explain."

"I wish you would."

"Vanderbeck was in my office yesterday; you know, he had a queer way of poking about, and was always turning up unexpectedly."

"I know."

"Well, he came to see me about a certain stock in which I am interested, and while we were talking he suddenly turned on me and asked what sort of a man you were."

"Ha! Now you are growing interesting."

"I thought I would interest you. He mentioned casually that there was a case in which he was interested, and that it was a very delicate matter, demanding absolute secrecy. He inquired if you and your partner could be

depended upon, and I told him yes. He left, saying that he was going to call on you before the day was out."

"Well, he did not call."

"Then I suppose that ends it, although you might hear from some of the family yet."

"I hope not," replied Old King Brady. "I never care about working for these multi-millionaires."

This was the first the Bradys heard of the matter, which they came to call the case of "Governor Gum."

Two weeks passed.

Theodosius Vanderbeck was buried with all the pomp demanded by his wealth and station, and the newspapers and the public found themselves guessing about his will.

None had been offered for probate.

Upon that subject the family were absolutely dumb, as were the lawyers of the deceased.

For a few days Young King Brady lived in expectation of being summoned by the family, but as no such summons came he soon ceased to speak of Charley French's communication.

As for Old King Brady, he never gave it a thought after he had once reported to Harry what the broker had said over the phone.

But the summons came after all.

One bright morning, about two weeks later, Old King Brady found the letter on his desk.

It was in a plain envelope, and the detective opened it without the least suspicion of its contents.

The paper bore the names of the famous law firm of Mercer, Marrin, Whitesides & Spooner.

The letter read as follows:

"Brady & Brady, New York:

"Gentlemen.—You are hereby requested to send a representative of your firm to this office. I desire to consult you in an important matter relating to the affairs of the late T. Vanderbeck. Be prompt, as the business demands haste.

Yours,

"G. W. Mercer."

It was just the sort of letter not to enlist Old King Brady's sympathy or interest.

If there is anything the plain-spoken old detective detests it is the growing insolence of the rich, and the dictatorial ways of their legal representatives.

As a rule Old King Brady refuses all cases which are offered by people of this class.

Harry had not yet come to the office, and the old detec-

tive tore up the letter and tossed the scraps into the wastebasket.

Next morning he was late, and when he came in Young King Brady had something to report.

"I have just heard from old Vanderbeck's lawyers, Governor," Harry said. "The person who talked over the telephone was quite fierce. He wanted to know why you had not called at their office; said he wrote you yesterday, and ordered you to come."

There was a twinkle in Harry's eye.

He expected an outburst on the part of his great chief, and he got it.

"Ordered!" cried Old King Brady. "That's just it! The letter they wrote was too much in the nature of an order. I won't be dictated to by these millionaires or their hirelings."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Nothing."

"But Mercer, Marrin, and what's their names expect some answer."

"What did you tell them?" demanded Old King Brady, fiercely.

"Why," said Harry, "I told the man at the other end of the wire that if the wording of the firm's letter was anything like the wording of his talk to me, that I did not wonder you had not responded. I added that I did not believe you would undertake his case at any price."

"Good boy!" cried the old detective, his stern features relaxing.

After that the matter dropped.

It came up two days later, however, and this time in the shape of a call from Mr. Mercer himself.

This gentleman, at one time ambassador to England, and noted for his exclusive haughtiness, entered the Bradys' shabby little office on Park Row at a little after nine o'clock.

Old King Brady, who knew him by sight, looked up from his desk with a frown.

"Did you wish to see me, sir?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the lawyer, with the greatest urbanity. "If I am not trespassing upon your time."

"I am busy, but I can give you a few moments if you will be brief."

"My name is Mercer. Here is my card."

"Well, Mr. Mercer?"

"I wrote you some days since. You did not respond."

"No."

"May I ask why?"

"Too busy. Don't care for a new case just now."

"So? Mr. Brady, if you are firm in that determination you put me in a sad dilemma."

"Can't help that. I am not forced to take up people's cases."

"Certainly not. My situation is, however, peculiar. May I explain?"

"Yes."

"The matter about which I wish to consult you concerns the affairs of the late Theodosius Vanderbeck."

"So your letter stated."

"On the day of his death for Mr. Vanderbeck I drew up a new will, and he signed it in my office, naming me as one of his executors. In that will he orders me to retain your services in a very important matter."

"It is this ordering business that I don't like, Mr. Mercer."

"My dear sir, we cannot quarrel with a dead man. If you can help me to carry out the last wishes of my client I shall be very grateful."

Harry, who was listening at his desk, knew that Mr. Mercer had won the day by this soft speech.

The truth was the Bradys were not busy.

In fact, for the first time in some months they found themselves without a case.

"Tell me all about it," replied the eccentric old detective, whose pride was now appeased.

Mr. Mercer glanced at Harry.

"My dear sir, this matter is most confidential," he said.

"Have you no private office attached to this?"

"No, sir; this is my only office. The young man is my partner. He will have to share in this confidence in any case."

"Ah! I see. Very well. I will proceed. Are you at all acquainted with the affairs of the Vanderbeck family?"

"Not in the least."

"Then let me begin by informing you that the late Mr. Vanderbeck leaves, as we believe, two children. A son, Richard, aged thirty, and a daughter, Lillian, who, if she actually does live, is now about twenty-eight years of age."

Old King Brady bowed.

"Of this daughter," continued Mr. Mercer, "the world knows nothing. It has been given out that she is in Europe, which is false. Some believe her to be in an asylum. Others have spread the rumor that Mr. Vanderbeck kept her locked in a room, owing to her insanity. Since her mother's death, seven years ago, Lillian Vanderbeck has been dead to the world."

"And the truth?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Is this," continued the lawyer. "Lillian was of a highly excitable nature, and mentally lacking. Her childhood was marked with several severe illnesses which reduced her to this condition. She took her mother's death very hard, and a noted doctor in this town, who should have known better, kept her under the influence of morphine for weeks. The result was fatal. The young woman became a confirmed morphine fiend, and worse."

"How worse?"

"Denied her drug at last, she one night escaped from her nurses, and was missing for weeks. She turned up in Chinatown, the inmate of an opium smoking den."

"Sad, indeed!"

"Terrible, Mr. Brady! It broke her father's heart, and shortened his days."

"What did they do about it?"

"Three times she was rescued and taken to her home, but each time she managed to make her escape. The last time she was unheard of for a year. Her father spent thousands on detectives. At last they located her in Chinatown, San Francisco. She was married to a Chinaman and had a child. Yes, it was all very sad."

"And what was done then?"

"Her father cut her off, disinherited her, and refused to acknowledge the child, although proofs were shown that Lillian was married to Gum Dock, the Chinaman, by a Methodist minister. The husband is said to be a very proper person, a Christian, and well-to-do. Nothing further was done in the matter, as Lillian had no desire to return to her people. So matters remained until about three months ago."

"And then?"

"And then Mr. Vanderbeck, feeling death approaching, again made an attempt to recover his daughter. He was even ready to take up with the child. It was, however, too late. The man Gum Dock had left San Francisco with his family, and no trace could be found of him. Thus matters stand to-day."

"And we are wanted to find this woman and her child?"

"Yes. On the day of his death Mr. Vanderbeck called at my office and dictated a new will. He was determined to have his way, and would listen to no suggestions. Revoking his former will, he left his daughter a life interest in her full share of his immense estate, the principal to descend to the child at her death."

"Is the child a boy or a girl?"

"A girl."

"Name known?"

"No. Nothing is known concerning her."

"How does the son take this?"

"He is furious. He is a very different character from his father. Dissipated, proud, insolent, and as I believe positively vicious. I consider him capable of doing murder in order to retain his sister's share of the estate, which reverts to him if her death and that of the child can be proved."

"And you say that the will directs that the case be placed in our hands?"

"Yes; Mr. Vanderbeck had made careful inquiry about you. He learned that you had much influence with the Chinese colonists of New York and San Francisco. The will directs that you be requested to take the matter in hand. It orders the executors to pay all bills rendered by you without question, and it provides for a reward of \$5,000 in case you succeed in producing these missing heirs alive, either one or both of them, the same sum to be paid to you upon production of proofs of their death."

"That is putting it up to me pretty strong, Mr. Mercer."

"It is as I state. It was Mr. Vanderbeck's intention to call on you the next day, but that night death claimed him."

"Who is your co-executor?"

"Richard Vanderbeck, the son. Now, Mr. Brady, I have been perfectly frank with you. You see my position. You understand why the Vanderbeck will has been withheld from probate; but it has to go on record now within a few days. Secrecy is impossible."

"Why have you delayed?"

"It was at Dick Vanderbeck's request. He claimed that he had news of his sister, and that the whole business could be privately settled. I now know that he lied."

"He was fighting for time?"

"Yes, Mr. Brady; for time to give his detectives and hired assassins a chance to find this woman and her child and put them out of the way, as I believe."

For some moments the old detective sat pondering, with his head resting on his hand.

"Whatever the mother may be the child should not be made to suffer," he said at last.

"Quite so," replied the lawyer.

"There are worse people in the world than the educated Chinese."

"Indeed, yes."

"It may be a long hunt."

"You think you can succeed?"

"If anybody can I ought to be able to succeed. Don't misunderstand me. Experience counts in a case like this."

"It certainly does. Will you take the case?"

"Yes," replied Old King Brady. "Under the circumstances I can scarcely refuse. Yes, I will take the case."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HAPPENED AT VAN DYKE'S.

That day was a busy one for the Bradys.

Having once decided upon a certain course, Old King Brady never hangs back.

He jumped into this case with his usual energy.

Several hours were spent in the offices of Mercer, Marin, Whitesides & Spooner later in the day.

The Bradys went over the whole matter in detail with Mr. Mercer.

By this gentleman they were assured that the Vanderbeck estate amounted to considerably over two millions of dollars.

Of this vast sum thousands had been bequeathed to various charitable institutions.

The balance formed the fund to be divided between the brother and sister.

Among other things Mr. Mercer showed the Bradys positive written evidence reflecting upon the character of Dick Vanderbeck.

That the man was a scoundrel there could be no doubt.

Mr. Mercer then made the statement that he proposed to keep a close watch upon Vanderbeck, and to apply to the courts for his removal as executor if he went beyond the limit in his transactions.

It was five o'clock by the time the detectives had finished with Mr. Mercer, and they went directly to the old

house on Washington Square, where Old King Brady has kept bachelor's hall now for some years.

"This ought to prove a very profitable case for us, Governor," remarked Harry while they sat at supper.

"It will pay us if we get the \$5,000. I shall look for no more."

"The Chinamen may chip in. You know how liberal these Chinks are sometimes."

"I am looking for nothing of that sort, Harry. I merely wish to see justice done."

"What is to be your first move?"

"That will be made to-night."

"A trip to Chinatown?"

"Exactly."

"You think you can pick up information in New York?"

"Very doubtful. It must be tried, however. If we fail then it is San Francisco, first train."

"Do you anticipate any trouble from these detectives and thugs in the employ of Dick Vanderbeck?"

"I certainly do. After the evidence shown us by Mr. Mercer I don't see how we can expect anything else. But that should be the least of our troubles. The main thing is to locate this Gum Dock."

"So hard with a Chinaman."

"Indeed, yes. They seldom if ever use their true names in this country. As they shift from place to place they are apt to use different names. But we can only try."

The conversation had reached this point when Julius, Old King Brady's colored man of all work, announced that someone wanted to speak to the old detective over the phone.

"Find out who it is," said Old King Brady.

"I done ask him," was the reply. "He say he Mister Candlewick."

"Candlewick, Julius!" laughed Old King Brady. "Are you sure it was not Vanderbeck?"

"Suffin like dat, boss."

Old King Brady went upstairs, and the following conversation took place over the telephone, beginning with Old King Brady's first "hello."

"Is this Old King Brady, the detective?"

"Yes. Who are you?"

"My name is Vanderbeck."

"Well, Mr. Vanderbeck?"

"I understand that you have undertaken a commission from Mr. Mercer."

"Such is the case."

"I want to have a talk with you."

"Very well."

"Will you call at my house this evening?"

"I prefer to do business in my own office, Mr. Vanderbeck. This matter will keep."

"You are on Park Row, near Chambers?"

"Yes."

"When can you be seen?"

"By appointment at any time you say."

"I suppose I can come; still, my time is filled up for to-

morrow. Is there any real reason why you cannot call on me this evening. I'll send my carriage for you."

Old King Brady thought a moment and consented.

The address given was a certain number on Fifth avenue near 38th street.

This the detective knew to be the house in which the Vanderbecks had lived for many years.

"Harry, you will have to do Chinatown alone to-night," said the old detective as he re-entered the dining-room.

"I have decided to go up to Vanderbeck's."

"Hadn't we better both go, Governor?"

"Good heavens, boy; there is no danger that the fellow will try to murder me in his own house, I suppose."

"Who can tell what such a person may take it into his head to do."

"Nonsense, Harry! He would never dare to do me up at the first interview. I am not a bit afraid."

"All right. Have your way. But who shall I see in Chinatown? I really don't know how to begin."

"You want to strike for some old-timer. Mayor Tom Lee first. He may remember the man. He knows you, and likes you. If he does remember he will surely tell."

And so the Bradys parted company.

Harry left for Chinatown directly after supper.

At that time no carriage had come for the old detective. Striking through Eighth street, Young King Brady walked down the shabby old Bowery, that much-maligned street, which is now as quiet as a Sunday-school in comparison with what it used to be thirty years ago.

Reaching Pell street, Harry strolled through that end of Chinatown, and thence passing down Mott street without encountering any one he knew, he turned up at Tom Lee's.

This ancient Celestial has long been recognized as a leader among the Chinese.

Although he is called the "mayor" of Chinatown, he is really the leader of one faction only, the On Leong society, who are the bitter enemies of the Highbinders, or the "Hip Sing Tong," as these ruffians are called in Chinese.

Tom Lee can speak perfect English when he chooses, which is not always.

He opened up to Harry, however, whom he knew very well.

But he had never heard of Gum Dock, so he declared.

He informed Harry that the name Gum in a certain Chinese dialect signified Governor.

He further added that there were very few Chinamen from that part of the Celestial Kingdom in America.

He finally stated that he thought they would have a great deal of trouble in finding the man.

From Tom Lee's very affable manner and a certain queer twinkle in his eye Harry went away with the idea that he was being deceived.

"He knows, but he won't tell," Young King Brady said to himself. "It takes the Governor to deal with that sly old fox. I'm not in it. I'll try Quong Lee."

Now, Quong Lee is the keeper of a basement opium joint on Chatham Square.

This man is under many obligations to Old King Brady, and is always ready to aid him.

He is not a particularly bright proposition, however, as he uses too much of his own poison.

It is not always that he can be seen, or when seen that he is in shape to do business.

It proved to be so on this occasion.

The doorkeeper informed Harry that Quong was smoking, and that it would not be the least use to try to talk to him.

Here was a second balk.

Young King Brady was in despair.

Chinatown is a hard place to work in always.

Harry walked up and down Pell street several times, wondering what he ought to do next.

It was while he was thus idling away his time that he suddenly perceived that he was being followed.

A man with a slouch hat pulled down over his eyes had passed him three times, and each time shot a quick, nervous look at him.

This was no Chinaman.

As near as Harry could read his face he appeared to be a German or something of that sort.

Even the best of us and those most familiar with the foreign types of New York are incapable of distinguishing a German from a Hollander or an Austrian or Bohemian.

Even the Hungarians may be classed in the same category.

To us all these widely differing people look about the same.

"That fellow seems deeply interested in me," Young King Brady said to himself. "Now I wonder who he can be."

It was a case where the only way was to take the bull by the horns.

Harry pushed on into Doyers street, and took his stand in front of the Chinese theater.

It was but a few minutes before the stranger, now behind him, came paddling along.

Again he peered at Harry and this time he stopped and extended a very dirty hand.

"Hello, Brady!" he exclaimed, in a hearty way. "Don't you remember me?"

"Can't say I do," replied Harry.

"You see I know you, though."

"Many people know me."

"Look at my face. You ought to remember me."

He pushed back his hat, and then, sure enough, Harry did remember him.

"I know you now. You are Jack Grossman," he said.

"That's me," was the reply. "Been in Frisco lately?"

"Not for some time. How are things out there?"

"On the bum as far as our business is concerned. That's what brought me East. Nothing doing."

This man was a private detective in San Francisco whose particular forte was Chinatown.

The Bradys knew him, and knew little to his credit.

Beginning with the Pinkertons, Jack Grossman had worked for all the different detective agencies, and had been discharged by all for drunkenness or crooked work.

Naturally Harry did not see very much use in wasting time over Jack Grossman, and he was about to pull away when the fellow suddenly said:

"But I've struck a good lay now, Brady. I've got in with a regular nob. A millionaire. He's trying to find his sister, who married a Chink some five years ago."

Here was important information.

Right at the start Young King Brady had run against one of Dick Vanderbeck's sleuths, it would seem.

"What's the name?" he asked quietly.

"Oh, I can't give that away, you know," replied Grossman, with a grin. "I'll tell you the name of the Chink, though. It's Gum Dock."

"Never heard of such a person."

"I s'pose not."

"Do you expect to locate him in New York?"

"Oh, bless you, no! I'm off for Frisco in the morning. As I was telling you, this thing, this marriage, happened five years ago. The gal is living in Frisco now, so they think."

"Well, you ought to be able to locate her if anyone can."

"That's so. Of course, I am pretty well posted out there. But then there are so many white women married to Chinks nowadays that you can't tell. I've been trying to catch on to the past history of this one here for a day or two. He took up with the gal in New York."

"How have you made out?"

"Oh, not at all. In fact, I have given it up; that's how I came to be on the move. Perhaps you might remember her face if you saw her photograph. I've got it here."

"It's possible. I have had a lot to do with the white women in Chinatown one time and another, but Old King Brady would be better."

"Sure. Is he in town now?"

"Oh, yes."

"Could I see him to-night?"

"I guess you can."

While this conversation was going on Jack Grossman was fumbling in his pockets.

"Bad luck take it!" he exclaimed. "I must have left the thing in my room. 'Twon't take a minute to show it to you if you would like to come along."

"Where is your room?"

"The Van Dyke Hotel. I'm staying there."

It was only around the corner.

Harry knew the old house well, and although used by a low class of patrons it was many grades above the cheap lodging houses, and in its way respectable enough.

Thus Young King Brady did not hesitate to follow Jack Grossman upstairs in the Van Dyke House.

The detective let himself into a dirty little room at the end of a dark corridor.

"This is a rotten old joint," he growled. "I wouldn't have stopped here after I got my job, only it was so handy to Chinatown where I was putting in my time."

He had left the door open and was fumbling for a match.

As he lighted the match he kicked the door shut and moved toward the gas.

Suddenly the match went out.

"Confound the luck!" growled Grossman.

"I've got a match," said Harry, feeling for his match-safe.

At the same instant there in the darkness he got a stunning blow in the face.

Young King Brady reeled, and fell heavily to the floor.

CHAPTER III.

THE TIME OLD KING BRADY DID NOT GET DRUGGED.

Thus it will be seen that just what Young King Brady feared for his chief had come to himself.

No ordinary person could have caught Harry napping thus easily.

It was, however, not so strange that a detective could turn the trick.

It was nine o'clock before the carriage came for Old King Brady.

And the "carriage," by the way, proved to be an automobile.

The chauffeur, a civil-spoken young foreigner, rang the bell and sent word in to the old detective that he had come from Mr. Vanderbeck.

So Old King Brady was whirled up Fifth avenue in accordance with the latest style.

The Vanderbeck house was a gloomy old brick affair, occupying a double lot.

There were old-fashioned green blinds to its windows and these were all closed.

The house wore a neglected appearance, but as Old King Brady well knew it had been in this condition for several years.

The detective was admitted by a butler, and upon announcing his name was at once ushered into a library in the rear.

Here there were many books and pictures, and much expensive though antiquated furniture.

An open fire burned on the hearth, but there was also furnace heat.

The room was warm and cosy; Old King Brady took his place with his back to the fire, waiting for someone to appear.

It was ten minutes before Mr. Vanderbeck turned up.

He came into the room in full evening dress, and approached the old detective with a slide, hand out.

"Oh, aw, Mr. Brady! So glad to see you!" he drawled. "So kind of you to come. Be seated, pray! Will you have

a glass of wine? A little whisky or a highball and a biscuit? Make yourself at home."

The man rattled all this off like a machine.

Even if Old King Brady had been disposed to answer it would have been difficult for him to have got in a word.

The whole manner of the fellow was contemptuously patronizing to the last degree.

Old King Brady allowed his hand to be taken in a fish-like grasp.

"You are Mr. Vanderbeck?" he asked, quietly.

"Yes; aw—yes."

"You wished to see me. Why?"

"Why? Because you have been retained in—oh, confound it! You know why."

"I have been retained by Mr. Mercer, your fellow-executor, to look for your sister. Is that why?"

"Certainly it is. Do sit down. Will you have a cigar?"

"Neither drink nor cigars, Mr. Vanderbeck. I am all business. State yours, please."

Old King Brady took a seat by the table as he spoke.

There was something about the presence of this man aside from his white, pasty face and sleek hair which was intolerably disgusting to the old detective.

It would have been the same even if he had not been shown the millionaire's record written down in black and white.

Vanderbeck seated himself on the other side of the table and began to laugh.

"Oh, come, Mr. Brady," he cried. "I see just what kind of a man you are. Nonsense don't go down with you, not for a little bit."

"Business, business, Mr. Vanderbeck," was the reply.

"Just so. That's me. You have engaged with Mercer?"

"I have."

"Did he tell you to see me?"

"He did not."

"And yet I am his fellow-executor. I have my rights. He doesn't like me, but that cuts no ice."

"You undoubtedly have your full rights as executor, Mr. Vanderbeck. That is why I promptly answered your summons to-night."

"Do you think you can find my sister?"

"I hope to, but to be plain with you it almost seems to me that she had better remain unfound."

It was Old King Brady's first feeler.

He never doubted from the moment he laid eyes on Vanderbeck what was coming.

How accurately he had sized the man up will soon be shown.

"You judge from what Mercer has told you," was the reply.

"Yes."

"And you are quite right. Of course, I love my sister, but, Mr. Brady, she has brought no end of shame and disgrace to us. Just think of it! She would escape from

this house and be found days later overcome with opium in those dreadful dens in Chinatown."

"So I am told."

"But the details, Mr. Brady. The details! They are too horrible! Then to think that she should end it all by marrying a dirty Chink! Can you imagine my feelings? No; I don't think you can."

"How long since you have seen your sister?"

"It is five years."

"May she not have reformed?"

"Do such people ever reform?"

"The Chinese have ways of curing opium fiends which we know nothing about."

"But should she be found. What can I do? Of course, I can't live with her here if she insists upon coming."

"Is that required?"

"Certainly not. But think of her parading around New York with her Chinese husband and half-breed brat tagging at her heels. And she a Vanderbeck! Oh, it makes me sick."

"I don't blame you a bit for the way you feel."

"There! I thought you would take a sensible view of it!" cried Vanderbeck. "Now, Mr. Brady, you say you are all business; then so am I. What is the necessity for finding my sister at all? Why not let sleeping dogs lie?"

"Ah! That is your game, is it?"

"Well, what do you say?"

"It is up to you."

"What?"

"To say."

"You think it can be arranged?"

"Anything can be arranged."

"What I want to arrange is to have this search dropped."

"But the will?"

"Mr. Brady, considering the length of time you have been in the detective business you are certainly very slow to catch on."

"Not at all. The search must be carried out, and by my firm, according to the terms of your father's will."

"I see your drift. It is the same as mine. Of course, you will have to pretend to make the search. You thought I was arguing that this should not be done."

"Oh! Now we are beginning to understand each other."

"Do you agree?"

"You have forgotten one important thing, Mr. Vanderbeck."

"What is that?"

"To name your price."

"It is your price we are wanting to get at, Mr. Brady," replied Vanderbeck, with a peculiar smile.

"The will allows me five thousand."

"I guarantee that in any case."

"Well?"

"You must positively name your price, Mr. Brady."

"I positively won't. It takes a liberal man to bribe me, Mr. Vanderbeck."

"Oh, don't use that ugly word. It jars me. Call it arrange."

"Call it what you like; only come to the point."

"Suppose I guarantee you as much more?"

"Let me understand you definitely. Do you know that your sister is alive?"

"I do not actually know, but I have reason to believe that such is the case."

"Do you know where she is, then?"

"No."

"He lies," thought Old King Brady. "I can read it in his face."

"Then the only thing to do is for me to go out to Frisco, stop there a couple of weeks, and come back reporting failure," he said aloud.

"That is it."

"All right."

"You agree?"

"Oh, yes. When do I get the cash?"

"I am prepared to pay you half to-night. The balance will come when you induce Mr. Mercer to give up on the search."

"Very well."

"It's a go?"

"Yes."

"I will give you a check."

"Hold on! Checks don't go."

"I can pay you the cash if you prefer."

"That will be much better."

"Without further talk Mr. Vanderbeck went out of the room and presently returning counted out to the old detective fifty \$100 bills.

"Do you want a receipt?" asked Old King Brady.

"Oh, no. In cases of this kind the fewer papers the better, I always think."

"You are quite right."

"And now, Mr. Brady, that we have come to an understanding, won't you join me in a glass of wine?"

"Thanks, no. I don't care to drink."

"Oh, but just a drop. It's a cold night. You have a long ride before you."

"Why does he persist in trying to make me drink?" thought the old detective.

A sudden idea came to him.

He determined to work it out.

"Oh, very well; since you are urgent," he said.

"What shall it be? Sherry, champagne, claret? Anything you wish."

"Let it be champagne."

Vanderbeck laughed.

"Odd," he said. "I have got everything but champagne right here in the sideboard."

"Oh, well, make it sherry?"

"Not at all. There is plenty of champagne on ice downstairs."

Vanderbeck crossed the room and rang the bell.

He now began talking volubly about his father, his peculiarities, and the manner of his death.

His face was flushed, and his manner nervous and excited.

Old King Brady lay back in his chair, watching him.

If it was odd that there was no iced champagne in the library, then it struck Old King Brady as being still more so that the butler did not answer the bell.

"What can be the matter with my man?" exclaimed Vanderbeck, after a minute. "Has he gone to sleep down there?"

"Let it go."

"No, no! When I start to do a thing I finish it. I will go for the wine myself."

Vanderbeck bolted out of the room.

"It is as I thought," murmured the detective. "He has no idea of leaving this money with me. There is some plot to drug me and get it back."

It was not all owing to the detective's shrewdness that this idea had occurred to him.

Part of the record of Vanderbeck's career which Mr. Mercer had shown him referred to escapades in which drugged wine had played a prominent part.

In a few minutes Vanderbeck was back again, carrying two pint bottles.

Presumably they contained champagne, but neither bore any label. They had just come out of the water.

It looked as if the labels had been soaked off.

"The fellow has been at the wine, and is sound asleep!" said Vanderbeck, with a short laugh. "He let the ice all melt and the labels have come off the bottles. The carelessness of these servants, Mr. Brady! We need a housekeeper. Ours left after father's death. I have been keeping bachelor's hall ever since."

"Oh, we can't drink the labels," replied the detective. "The wine is all right, I daresay. But why two bottles? A glass will be all I want."

"It is well to have enough," replied Vanderbeck, placing the bottles on the sideboard.

He carried one in his right hand and one in his left.

Old King Brady noticed that he stood them upon the sideboard wide apart.

There would thus be no trouble in telling which was which.

Vanderbeck was fumbling for a corkscrew when Old King Brady suddenly whispered:

"Surely there is someone listening outside that door, Mr. Vanderbeck!"

"If there is we will blame soon know it," was the reply.

Vanderbeck stepped into the hall.

Quick as lightning Old King Brady reversed the position of the bottles.

"There is no one here. Look for yourself," Vanderbeck said, re-entering the room.

"Probably I was mistaken," replied the detective. "Let's have our drink."

The wine was poured and they drank.

Old King Brady took but a swallow, and put the glass down.

"What is the matter?" demanded Vanderbeck.

"Oh, I'm a poor hand at champagne, or indeed wine of any sort. I really am no judge, but it seemed to me that the stuff had a strange taste."

"Nonsense! It is fresh off the ice. I——"

Suddenly Vanderbeck shot a quick look at the detective.

A strange look came over his own face. He staggered back a few steps and pressed his hand to his head.

"My dear sir! What is the trouble? Are you ill?" demanded Old King Brady.

"No, no! Just a trifling faintness. The room is warm. I shall be better in a minute."

He sank into a chair.

"Can I do anything? Shall I call the butler?"

"No; I shall be better in a minute."

"Try another glass of wine."

Old King Brady seized the bottle which he now no longer doubted had been drugged.

"No; I don't want it."

Vanderbeck spoke thickly. There was a sickly smile on his face.

"Well, if I can't help you I'll be going," said the detective.

There was no reply.

Old King Brady turned his back on the fellow, and going to the hall, clapped on his hat and let himself out.

The automobile was still at the door.

Old King Brady staggered down the steps.

He had all the appearance of a drunken man.

The chauffeur rushed forward and helped him into the auto.

Not a word was spoken.

Down the avenue they flew.

Two or three times the chauffeur looked back at the old detective.

What he saw each time was quite sufficient to convince him that he had a very badly intoxicated man on his hands.

"I don't care if it kills him," thought Old King Brady. "If it does his death is on his own head."

CHAPTER IV.

YOUNG KING BRADY LOCATES "GOVERNOR" GUM.

Thus it will be seen that a deliberate attempt had been made to do up both the Bradys before they could start on their mission.

With Harry it was a close call.

If he had been one bit less alert Young King Brady would probably have met his death there in the dark room of the Van Dyke hotel.

But Harry is as quick as lightning in everything he does.

He heard Jack Grossman make the turn, and instinctively he knew what was coming.

He was able to pull back out of the way just far enough to fail to get the full force of the blow.

Thus, instead of being knocked out, Harry was only playing possum.

He flung himself on the floor backwards.

Harry has practiced all sorts of falls, and was well able to do this.

"Brady! Brady!" called the San Francisco detective in a hushed voice.

No answer from Harry.

What he feared now was that Grossman would shoot.

But this fear left him almost as soon as it came.

It is a dangerous business to risk a shot in a hotel room.

"If he will only come down here I'll fix him," Harry said to himself.

He was boiling with rage to think that he should have allowed himself to be so deceived, and yet he was cool and deliberate in all he did.

Receiving no answer Grossman struck a match and lighted the gas.

There lay Harry with his eyes closed.

"Gee! I must have given him a stunner!" muttered Grossman. "I didn't look for anything like this!"

Then he bent down to examine, and that was the time he missed it.

Quick as lightning Harry's right hand, which was behind him, came out from beneath his back.

It clutched a cocked revolver, which was pointed in Grossman's face.

"Back, you treacherous dog! Back, or I'll drop you in your tracks!" Harry hissed.

The detective fell back, startled enough.

Like a flash Young King Brady was on his feet.

"Stand back against the wall! Hands up!" he said, sternly. "You needn't think I shall hesitate to wing you. This isn't Frisco. The Bradys are a power in this town."

Probably Grossman was aware of this fact.

He backed against the bureau and stood there with hands raised.

Meanwhile Harry's fall had attracted attention.

"Anything the matter in there?" shouted a voice outside, and someone banged on the door.

"Come in!" cried Harry.

It was the manager of the hotel, a man who knew Young King Brady well.

"Oh, it's you!" he exclaimed. "What's the row?"

"The row is, Mr. Enright, that this guest of yours tried to do me up."

"The deuce he did. You seem to have turned the tables on him all right, Brady."

"Yes."

"Shall I call an officer?"

"Yes; if he refuses to answer my questions I'll put him through. If he answers, I propose to let him go."

"I'll answer," said Grossman, quickly. "I have no desire to come up against Old King Brady."

"Wise man," said the manager.

"You bet he is wise," replied Harry. "It will be the Island for his if the Governor gets a squint at him. Just keep him covered, Mr. Enright, while I take down his answers. After I know all he has to tell I have no further use for him."

Enright took the revolver, and Harry pulled out notebook and pencil.

"Who are you working for?" he demanded, sternly.

"Bill Overton."

This man was a disgraced ward detective, who since his dismissal from the police force had been engaged in many dirty jobs.

"You were hired to lay for me?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Two days ago."

"It was either me or Old King Brady, I suppose?"

"Either or both."

"Were you hired to look for a Chink known as Gum Dock?"

"Yes."

"Do you know anything about Gum Dock?"

"Yes, I do. Say, I'm going to pull out of this now. It won't pay me to make a report of this affair to Overton. If you'll pay me for it I'll tell you where you can find Gum Dock."

"Grossman, if you can prove your statement I'll not only pay you, but I'll be liberal."

"How liberal?"

"Proofs first. Hold on. Have you reported to Overton in the matter?"

"No; I only learned where the Chink was to-night."

"I wouldn't give him a blame cent," said Enright.

"I'll pay," replied Harry. "But the proof?"

"I'm just east from California," said Grossman. "When Overton engaged me for this job I was sure that I knew the Chink he wanted, and just where he was, but I didn't say a word. Of course, I couldn't be absolutely sure, so I wrote down to a friend of mine, and to-night I got an answer. You can see it. You will see for yourself that it is straight."

"All right. That goes."

"How much?"

"How much was Overton to give you?"

"Hundred."

"You can get that from me."

"I'll go you," said Grossman. "Let me feel in the inside pocket of my coat, and I'll give you the letter right now. You can keep it, and show it to the old man."

"Go ahead," replied Harry. "But if you try any funny business, Grossman, I will shoot."

It was all right, as it proved.

Grossman handed out a letter, which read as follows:

"Dear Jack.—Yours received. Yes, Governor Gum, as the Chinks call him, is still here; but his wife and child are gone—where no one knows.

"The story is this: A few nights ago Highbinders broke into Gum's store and did him up. They nearly killed him, and they carried off his white wife and the little girl.

"They had a big start, for Gum was not found until morning. He was badly beaten, but is likely to recover. The job is supposed to be the work of a Chink known as Wang Dang, the king of the Highbinders.

"Whether he carried the woman into Mexico, or whether he fled to Frisco no one seems to know. Of course, a sharp detective like you could easily find out. No one has really tried. If I can do anything more for you let me know.

Your old pal,

"Tom Spencer."

This letter bore the postmark of El Paso, Texas.

Harry saw that it was unquestionably straight.

"Is that all you know?" he asked.

"Everything," was the reply.

"All right. Here's your hundred, and I keep the letter."

"What a fool!" cried Enright.

But Harry did not think so.

"Let him go about his business," he said, and he immediately left the hotel.

As it happened, this was just at the time when Old King Brady was starting away from the Vanderbeck mansion.

When the automobile reached Waverly Place it suddenly stopped.

To all appearance the old detective was pretty far gone by this time.

The chauffeur gave one look at him, and then got out of the auto.

"Whasermasser?" demand Old King Brady, thickly.

"The power has given out. I can't go any further, sir. You'll have to walk the rest of the way," was the reply.

He then helped the old detective out, and propped him up against an iron fence just below the alley, which of late years has been dubbed "Washington Mews."

There Old King Brady stood reeling, with his head hanging down.

He was curious to see where all this would end.

The five thousand dollars was still in his pocket, but he felt assured that it would not long remain there if Vanderbeck's plot could be worked out to a finish.

Evidently the chauffeur had done his part, however.

He jumped into his seat and drove the machine up the avenue.

No policeman was in sight, nor did Old King Brady need one.

He had but a moment to wait.

Already he had caught sight of a villainous-looking face peering at him out of the "Mews."

The man looked up and down the street, as though expecting to see someone else.

The man stepped out of the Mews and came forward.

A moment later he had clutched Old King Brady's arm and was whispering:

"I'll take you home, boss! Just hold onto me!"

Old King Brady was holding on to the fence rail with his right hand.

The man, who had taken him by the left arm, was suddenly treated to a surprise.

All in an instant a revolver which the old detective had up his right sleeve, was thrust into his face.

Instead of a drunken man the thug found himself dealing with a very different proposition.

"Not so fast, my friend," said the old detective. "Who hired you to do this job?"

"Hully Jerusalem, Mr. Brady! I was only trying to help you home!"

The thug would have run for it then.

But Old King Brady promptly checked him.

"Don't you move!" he cried. "If you want to get out of this easy, answer me!"

A policeman turned the corner at that moment, strangely enough.

"Is it you, Mr. Brady?" he exclaimed. "What's the matter here?"

"The matter is this man was trying to drag me into the Mews and rob me," chuckled the old detective.

"Was he then! I'll run him in."

"No, officer; this is only part of a plot to do me."

"Look at that now!" said the officer, clutching the thug by the arm.

"Hold him," said Old King Brady. "If he answers my questions I'll let him go."

"He ought to be run in, sure."

"It would interfere with my work to have it so, officer."

"Oh, then that's another matter, so."

"Who told you to lay in the alley for me? Who is putting up for this job?" the detective demanded. "Speak freely if you expect to escape."

"Bill Overton," was the reply.

"Ah, ha! What was the game?"

"I was to lay for you and go troo yer and give up to a feller what Bill introduced to me."

"For how much?"

"A tousan'."

"Describe this man."

Enough to say that the description was that of Dick Vanderbeck.

"That's all, officer," said Old King Brady.

"Do I let him go, Mr. Brady? It seems a shame."

"Yes."

The policeman gave the fellow a kick, and he slunked away.

The policeman got his tip then, and Old King Brady hurried home, to meet Harry a few minutes later.

And it was thus that the plans of Dick Vanderbeck against the Bradys came to naught.

Both had escaped.

Old King Brady had \$5,000 of the young spendthrift's money, which he turned over to Mr. Mercer next day.

Harry had made a bigger strike still. He came out of his scrape with positive information of the whereabouts of Governor Gum!

CHAPTER V.

THE BRADYS AT EL PASO.

El Paso, Texas, from the frontier town it was but a few years since, has developed into quite a flourishing city in its way.

It was just after sundown on a certain evening a few days after the events of the preceding chapters that the Bradys stepped from the train at this important Texas point.

That they attracted immediate attention goes without saying.

Old King Brady always does that when he appears in his usual attire.

This, as everybody knows, is decidedly peculiar.

Its peculiarities consist of a famous broad-brimmed white felt hat for one thing.

Then there is a long blue coat of peculiar cut with its double row of flat brass buttons.

Nor must the old detective's peculiar neckgear be forgotten.

This consists of an old-fashioned stock and high, pointed, stand-up collar, style of 1840.

Indeed, this alone is sufficient to make the old detective a marked man.

Old King Brady was not acting blindly in thus jumping from New York to El Paso.

While he believed in the genuineness of the Spencer letter, he still went to the trouble of verifying it.

"Is there a Chinaman in your town named Gum Dock?" was the message which flew over the wire to this remote corner of Texas.

The answer came back within a few hours:

"There is."

This was from the chief of the El Paso police.

"Shall you go to the hotel or go direct for the Chink?" inquired Harry, as they walked uptown from the station.

"Chink first if we can locate him," was the reply.

This did not prove difficult.

Having understood that Gum Dock kept a bric-a-brac store, Old King Brady made inquiry, and soon located the Chinaman on Houston street.

The store proved to be quite an extensive affair.

Before leaving New York Old King Brady had called on Tom Lee and from the mayor had obtained a letter in Chinese endorsing him.

To the old detective Tom Lee admitted that he knew Governor Gum, but claimed that he did not know his whereabouts.

The Bradys presented their letter to one of the Chinese clerks.

He retreated to an upper room, and soon returned with word that Governor Gum would see the detectives.

They were escorted upstairs and into a handsomely furnished living room.

There was little or nothing to indicate that this was the home of a Chinaman except for a few Chinese scrolls hanging against the wall.

Seated in a chair was a Chinaman wrapped up in a sort of robe made of a blanket.

His face was a sickly yellow, and had been badly cut under the left eye, but the wound was now pretty well healed.

"You are Mr. Old King Brady?" he exclaimed in perfect English. "Why do you come here?"

"Yes, I am Old King Brady," was the reply. "Are you Gum Dock?"

"Yes. Here in El Paso they call me Governor Gum. I am somewhat of a leader among the Chinese in this place."

"I come here to see you about your wife," said the detective, drawing up a chair.

An expression of intense mental agony swept over the Chinaman's face.

"Ah! She is dead? You come to tell me that? My child?"

"No, no! It is not that at all. I know nothing about your wife or the child, except that I have been told she have been stolen from you."

"Yes! It is so. But let him wait! I will get him yet."

"You are referring to the man who stole her?"

"Yes. Yes. Will you help me find them? I will pay you. I have money. I never thought you would work for a Chinaman, or I would have sent for you. I have heard so much about the Bradys here and in San Francisco, too."

"We are hired to find your wife by some one else Dock."

"Is that so. But call me Gum. That is the name I am known by. Her father, you mean?"

"Her father is dead," said Old King Brady quietly.

The Chinaman half sprang from his chair, but immediately sank back again with the air of a man who is very weak.

"Dead! He leave her money?"

"A million between her and the child."

"Million!"

Governor Gum almost fainted.

"You tell me true?" he gasped.

"Yes; did you not know that her father was a very rich man?"

"Oh, yes! I know, but——"

"We know all about your wife. Does she smoke opium?"

"No, no!"

"Morphine?"

"No, no, no! I cure her of all that. He will put her back to it again. Oh, oh, oh! This is bad, very bad!"

The Bradys had a weeping Chinaman on their hands now.

Presently he cried out:

"Save her! Save little Lilly! They are mine! I marry her in church in Frisco! He has no right to take her so! Oh, oh, oh! What shall I do? I will give you all this money if you bring her back again."

"Be calm!" said Old King Brady. "We don't want your money nor your wife's. We get our pay from the other end."

Governor Gum then told his story.

To give it in all its details is scarcely necessary.

The story boiled down was about as stated in the Spencer letter.

Governor Gum was found one morning beaten to a state of insensibility, with his cash drawer robbed and his wife and child gone.

It appeared that the clerks in the store were away that night, and the Gums were alone in the house.

All that Governor Gum knew about it was that he was dragged from his bed by masked Chinamen, and terribly beaten.

He had recognized his old enemy Wang Dang, otherwise known as the King of the Highbinders, by his voice.

It had been all in vain that he had applied to the El Paso police for help to find his wife and child; they would pay no attention to him.

For more than an hour the Bradys continued to talk with Governor Gum.

They were alone in the room with him.

He begged them not to tell anyone about the money which had been inherited by his wife.

"And now," said the old detective, after the Chinaman had talked himself out, "answer a few questions, and we will be ready to begin our work."

"I will tell you anything I know," was the reply.

"You say that your wife had entirely given up the use of opium?"

"Yes; for two years."

"She was a bad case?"

"She was almost dead when I took her, Mr. Brady. First I get her so she used a little less, then a more less, until at last she give it up altogether."

"Did she know Wang Dang?"

Governor Gum's brow grew dark.

He admitted that Mrs. Dock had known Wang Dang in San Francisco.

"Does Wang Dang know that she was a rich man's daughter?" the detective asked.

But this Governor Gum could not answer.

He wound up by saying that just as soon as he was well enough he intended to start for San Francisco in search of his wife.

The theory that the Spencer letter had given out that the King of the Highbinders had fled over the border into Mexico Governor Gum utterly repudiated.

"Why should he do that when perhaps he never could come back again?" he said.

"A very intelligent Chink," remarked Harry when at last they left the man.

"He certainly is," replied Old King Brady.

"And yet it would seem that he had really done very little toward finding his wife."

"He is terribly handicapped on account of his race. Then this is the South. White wives of Chinamen are not popular here."

"I suppose so. I don't see how Wang Dang ever got the woman off by the railroad if he went with her."

"She went alone, of course."

"But would she not be recognized?"

"You know how Chinamen are about their wives? They are never allowed outside the house, if they can help it. Governor Gum said as much, you will remember."

"Yes, that is so. But to get back to the point. If this woman left El Paso alone with her child she must have gone of her own free will."

"Not necessarily. She may have been under the influence of opium. Then again, she may have been hypnotized. You know as well as I know that the Chinese are among the most expert hypnotizers in the world. But we shall see. First let us interview the chief of police."

This official did not fall into the Bradys' arms, by any means.

He was a Colonel Bagstock.

His reception of the detectives was decidedly cool.

"Oh, yes, I knew about the case," he said. "I don't take any stock in it, anyhow. If this woman left one Chink and went off with another it is nothing to me. If I had my way I'd chase them all out of town."

"But this is a peculiar case, colonel," replied Old King Brady.

"How peculiar?"

"This woman belongs to an old New York family."

"Do your old New York families let their daughters marry Chinamen? We don't stand for such business in Texas, suh! I tell you that straight."

"The unfortunate woman was a morphine wreck. Her people had cast her off. This Chinaman rescued her and married her."

"And now her people want her back? Is that it?"

"The woman's father is dead. He has left some property. It is necessary to find her in order to settle the estate."

"That's nothing to me."

Old King Brady made no reply for a moment.

Then rising, he buttoned up the old blue coat and motioned to Harry to follow him.

"Good-day, Colonel Bagstock," he said, with the utmost politeness, and out he walked.

"We will go to the Border House now, Harry," Old King Brady said.

They proceeded to the hotel, registered, and went up to their room.

"I suppose you think I went off mad from Colonel Bagstock's office?" the old detective suddenly remarked.

"It rather looked that way, Governor," Harry replied.

"I know it; but there can be nothing further from the truth."

"Well?"

"Oh, well, I got a tip from the enemy, that's all."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"You noticed, perhaps, that mirror directly behind Colonel Bagstock's desk?"

"I did."

"But you did not happen to observe the letter file which hung against the copying press?"

"No, I did not."

"Harry, you must learn to be more observant. That letter file was plainly reflected in the mirror, and I was thus able to read the letter which hung outmost."

"Hello! That was rather stupid of me, I must admit."

"Brighten up your powers of observation, my boy. That letter was by no less a person than Dick Vanderbeck."

"And what did it say?"

"It was brief enough. It read: 'Thanks for information. Very satisfactory. I start for Frisco to-night. Please find check enclosed.'"

"Well! There is only one conclusion to draw from that letter."

"Only one. Dick Vanderbeck has been supplied with information as to the movements of Mrs. Gum Dock by this man Bagstock through your friend Jack Grossman. While we have been wasting time with Governor Gum he has gone on to San Francisco. That this spells death for his sister unless we can head him off I am well assured."

CHAPTER VI.

BEGINNING BUSINESS IN FRISCO.

"Governor, you are a shrewd one and no mistake!" exclaimed Harry, admiringly.

"Not at all," replied Old King Brady. "I lay claim to no special shrewdness in this discovery. It is merely that I have learned to use my wits and to keep my eyes open for what is going on around me—that is all."

"No wonder you took the first opportunity to get away from that fellow. And so we jump to Frisco?"

"If the letter had not alluded to a check I should have the fear that it might all be a put-up job; but such being the case it seems to me that it must be straight, for no man in his senses occupying Colonel's Bagstock's position would have left a letter so worded exposed. Still, there is the chance that by jumping to Frisco we are also jumping at conclusions and thus making a great mistake."

"Then what do you propose?"

"To wait until morning; in the meantime to wire our friend, the chief of police at San Francisco, to ascertain if Wang Dang has been seen about Chinatown and inform us at once."

"A good idea. There is a Western train leaving at seven o'clock to-morrow morning. We ought to get an answer in time to take it."

"I think so; at all events, we can make a try for it."

And in this way the Bradys settled the matter between themselves.

The telegram was despatched at once.

The detectives went in to supper and had scarcely seated themselves at the table when the colored head waiter brought in the following letter from the local chief of police:

"Mr. Brady:

"Dear Sir.—Kindly excuse any seeming abruptness on my part this afternoon. I am far from well, and have been in a highly nervous condition of late, which must be my excuse.

"After you left it occurred to me that a certain party in this town, whose name I do not care to divulge, might be able to throw some light upon the disappearance of this woman and her child, and I made personal inquiry in that direction.

"I am now able to assure you positively that such a woman crossed to Mexico on the night this man Gum was assaulted. She bought tickets for herself and the little girl for Durango.

"If you will call upon me to-morrow at about nine o'clock I will give you full details. I consider this a definite clew.

Yours truly,

"J. C. Bagstock."

Old King Brady passed the letter on to Harry.

"Is the man an idiot that he thinks we can be fooled with any such trash?" the latter exclaimed.

"Shallow!" replied Old King Brady. "He has done me a great service, though."

"In what way?"

"Proved that he is shallow enough to clap that letter from Vanderbeck on a file in front of a mirror, and that said letter is genuine. Now it is Frisco for us, whether we get an answer to our telegram or not."

Such was Old King Brady's decision, but the answer came, just the same.

It was to the effect that the King of the Highbinders had been seen on Dupont street, San Francisco, within two days, but that his residence could not be learned.

During the evening Old King Brady called again on Governor Gum.

He informed the Chinaman that he had reason to believe that his wife and child had been taken to San Francisco, and that he proposed to start for California with his partner by the morning train.

Governor Gum showed the greatest satisfaction when he heard this, and Old King Brady left him lamenting that his condition prevented him from going, too.

Thus it came as a positive surprise to the Bradys when they found Governor Gum at the station next morning, with his ticket bought and all ready to go along.

"I must go, even if I die on the road," he declared. "I cannot sleep. I cannot rest. I have placed my business in the hands of my young men. I am going with you to San Francisco to help find my wife and child."

And thus the Bradys slipped into El Paso and slipped out again, taking with them Governor Gum.

In due time the party turned up in the Golden City.

During the ride the Bradys became as well acquainted with Governor Gum as it is possible for any white man to become acquainted with a Chinaman.

To be sure, he told them little or nothing about himself or his private business, but one thing was made certain.

Governor Gum was devoted to his wife and child.

Leaving the Bradys at the station he gave them a certain address on Stockton street, where he assured them they could learn of his movements at any time.

"I shall put myself in Chinese dress and disguise as well as I can," he said to Old King Brady at parting. "You must not mention my name, nor let anyone know that I am here. I may be able to help you greatly in locating my wife and child, and when that is done it will be the time you can help me."

It was a little after six o'clock when the Bradys registered at the Lick House on Montgomery street.

Here they always put up when in San Francisco.

"Can we do anything to-night?" asked Harry, "or do you propose to wait until morning?"

"We jump right in to-night," was the reply. "Every instant we delay gives the enemy advantage over us. Remember, we have every reason to believe that Dick Vanderbeck is in the city, and ready to tackle us the instant we appear."

"I was thinking that I might look up Hing Mack, if he is still to be found down on the wharf."

"A good idea. As for myself, I shall go at once to Charley Wing and see what he can do to post me. That is, if we don't hear from the enemy meanwhile, in which case I may see fit to change my tactics."

"I think I will go down to Hing Mack's right now, and eat supper in his place."

"Go," answered Old King Brady, and Harry at once left the hotel.

Now, this Hing Mack was a person admirably adapted to the Bradys' purposes.

He was a half-breed China boy whom the detectives some five years before the time of which we write had rescued from a desperate gang of Highbinders who sought his life.

Through the kindness of Old King Brady the boy had been started in a little restaurant business down on lower Sacramento street near the head of the wharf.

Here he catered to the wants of the Chinese fishermen who land their beats near by.

It was a beautiful evening, mild and spring-like.

Harry elbowed his way through the crowd which haunts Montgomery street by night as well as by day, and turning into Sacramento street, entered the deserted business section.

But in a minute he was in a totally different region.

He was drawing near to the water front.

Here were cheap lodging houses for sailors, and cheap eating-houses, to make no mention of cheap saloons.

Harry steered past them all and brought up at a little hole-in-the-wall of a Chinese restaurant.

Hing Mack had his trade. He knew where it was coming from before he ever put up the red curtains in his little window and hung out his Chinese sign.

Let a white man enter and he saw nothing but a cigar-case and a little sawed-off Celestial with his face dreadfully scarred tending shop behind it.

But when in the early morning hours the Chinese fishermen began to come in with their big baskets, many a one of them turned in at Hing Mack's, passed behind the cigar-case, and got what they wanted in the mysterious regions beyond.

When Harry entered the scarred-face Chink gave an exclamation of joyful recognition.

"Hello, Hally! You comee Frisco 'gain?" he cried.

"That's right, John," replied Harry—he had forgotten the fellow's name. "Where's Mack?"

Now, Hing Mack was supposed to be Irish on his father's side. What his real name was it is doubtful if he knew himself, but the Mack filled the bill.

He was more of a Mack than he was a Hing, and as smart a street gamin as one could have found in Frisco.

The scarred-faced one assured Harry that Mack was not only in, but that he would be glad to see him.

So Young King Brady passed around behind the cigar-case, and entering the now deserted restaurant, pushed aside a red curtain and tumbled unceremoniously into the kitchen, where Mack was found in the act of making that most mysterious of all mysteries, chop suey.

The half-breed boy—he was little more than a boy—gave a jump and a shout, and in a moment was shaking hands vigorously.

We pass over the first talk.

"You got a case in Frisco, Harry?" he asked, after he had produced a box of fearful cigars, one of which Young King Brady was forced to smoke.

"Yes, Mack, and a very important one. We are after your old enemies, the Highbinders, again."

"So? They leave me alone now, and I leave them alone. I very seldom go up to Chinatown."

"You don't have much time, I suppose?"

"Not much. I am here all night, and every night. We don't keep open in the daytime. But tell me, Harry, who is the man?"

"Wang Dang! They say he is called the King of the Highbinders. There are so many they call King. We never heard of him before."

"He's boss of the lodge in Galveston, Texas," replied Hing Mack, promptly. "I know him. He's a bad one, Harry. Smart, though! Used to be a steward on a United States warship. He speaks as good English as you do. When he's dressed up you would hardly know him for a Chink."

Harry briefly stated the case

Of course, he did not tell Hing Mack that Mrs. Gum Dock was heiress to millions.

He put it that her people wished to find her and to acknowledge the half-breed child.

His face lighted up as Harry continued to talk.

"Say, I think I can help you," he said.

"Good!" replied Harry. "I know you will if you can."

"It's like this," continued Mack. "One of my customers was telling me about a white woman and a little girl who are locked up in a room in the house he lives in up on Jackson street. He said they had just come from the South, and that the woman was dopey all the time, but yet not so bad but what she could take care of the girl."

"Can you give me the address, Mack?"

"Sure, Harry. I'd give you my head if it would do you the least good, but you could never get in there alone."

"And why?"

"It's a rear house, and every man in it is a Tonger."

Mack meant a Highbinder.

The real name of this organization of murderers is the Hip Sing Tong, as we have mentioned before.

"I guess I can find a way to get in," replied Harry.

"What if I make time to go with you?"

"Are you not afraid?"

"No, no! They won't bother me now. My enemies among the Highbinders are all either dead or gone away. I'll go, but you will have to make up."

"What time?"

"The best time for me will be ten o'clock, when the fellow who helps me with the cooking comes in."

"I'll be here then, made up as one of your countrymen in my very best style."

"All right, Harry," said Mack. "I'll be ready for you. Perhaps in the meantime that feller may come in here. He keeps his boat by the wharf, and sometimes he starts over to Oakland for his fish early in the evening. It all depends upon the tide."

Young King Brady left Mack's restaurant within a few minutes, and returned to the Lick House.

Here he found a note from Old King Brady awaiting him which disturbed him not a little.

It read thus:

"Harry.—Instead of having to look up Charley Wing, would you believe it the fellow came here and looked me up."

"His information was rather startling. He has been approached by someone with a proposition to betray us into the hands of the Highbinders.

"This he claimed that he agreed to do, and said that he called to put me wise. I don't exactly understand it. You know the confidence I feel in the fellow. Still, there is big money involved in this case, and Chinamen sometimes sell out their friends, as well as other people.

"Anyhow, I have gone with him, and the chances are you won't see me back before morning.

"Yours,

O. K. B."

CHAPTER VII.

WORKING WITH CHARLEY WING.

At the time of which we write Charley Wing was one of the shrewdest and most intelligent of the Chinese detectives in San Francisco.

He had often worked in connection with the Bradys, and had assisted them in many ways in their different California cases.

For these services he had been most liberally paid.

Naturally he was the man to whom Old King Brady's thoughts turned when he struck San Francisco, charged with the search for the King of the Highbinders.

Harry had scarcely left the Lick House when Old King Brady was called up in his room over the office telephone and informed that Charley Wing wished to see him.

"Send him right up," was the reply.

The detective appeared, and cordial greetings were exchanged.

"What brought you here so quick, Charley?" demanded the old detective. "How did you know I was in town?"

"Oh, I hear, Blady. You see I get de tip."

"Tip from who?"

"Flom a feller in New York. He slend me telleglam. He say you go see so-and-so right away. I go. He tell me look out for Old Kling Blady. You bling him so-and-so and you get big pay."

"And what am I to be brought to this place for, Charley? To be done up?"

"Yair. Dlat's it."

"And you have come to warn me?"

"Yair. I come to give you straight tip."

"These people—who are they?"

"Dlat's what me no know. This New York feller he I no know."

"A Chinaman?"

"No. He no Chinaman. See, here is de telleglam."

The message read as follows:

"Look out for your friend Old King Brady. You go see Wo Yet, No. — Dupont street. He will explain. Big money.—Overton."

"Ha!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "This is not just as you put it, Charley, but I understand."

"You know dlat man?"

"Very well. He has been hired to kill me."

"So I think."

"What did you do?"

"Oh, I go to Wo Yet."

"You know him?"

"No. I see him. He tly to blibe me to bring you to him place. He gibee me five hundred dollar and promise me five hundred more."

"What shall we do?"

"Whatever you say. I fight on your side evely time."

Old King Brady reflected.

He believed in the man as much as he believed in any Chinaman of his class.

But as he had hinted to Harry in his note, there were millions at stake in the Governor Gum case.

That Charley Wing was giving it out just straight the old detective could not feel quite sure.

"And you are to take me to Wo Yet's," he said. "What sort of a shop does he keep?"

"Now you got me," replied Charley. "He old, old man. He livee in room upstairs. He no tellee mee nloting why."

"Why they want to kill me?"

"Yair. Mebbe you can tell?"

"Oh, I think I could if I tried. I am hunting a Chink known as Wang Dang, the King of the Highbinders. Do you know him?"

"I hear about him. He no Flisco man. He comee Galveston, Tlexas."

"What sort of a man is he? Does he speak good English? Does he dress in our way or like a Chink?"

"Oh, I hear say he muchee Melican man. Him steward on man-of-war one time."

"Indeed! Then he has become Americanized all right. Well, Charley, I will tell you that this man has been seen in Frisco recently, according to the chief of police."

"What he do?"

"Ran away with the white wife and child of a Texas Chinaman named Gum Dock, or Governor Gum."

"Gum mean Gubernor, Blady."

"So I am told. This man lives at El Paso, Texas. Ever heard of him?"

"No."

"Well, I should have looked you up to-night to ask your help."

"To find Wang Dang?"

"Yes."

"I'll help you."

"Of course, I knew you would. But about this other matter. I have reason to believe that there is a white man in this town who does not want me to find this woman and her child. He it is, no doubt, who put up the five hundred which you have pocketed. He will do me up if he can."

"Belly vell, Blady. Me see you know ebyting. Me do whatever you say."

"Well, you sit here and smoke while I go downstairs and get a bite to eat," replied the old detective. "When I come back I shall have made up my mind what is best for us to do."

Old King Brady is ever a light eater.

He was gone only a short time.

When he returned his mind was fully made up.

To venture into the den of this man Wo Yet was rather too risky an undertaking under the circumstances, he thought.

He carefully explained his views to Charley Wing.

"You go to Wo Yet and tell him that I am waiting for you in Portsmouth Square," he said. "Tell him that I

am afraid to come and you can't make me. See what he says, and then come to me and report."

"And you will be in de Square, Blady?"

"Yes; in disguise."

"How I know you?"

"See this handkerchief with a blue border?"

"Yair."

"Well, if I pass that over my face then you will know."

"Allee light. S'pose odders come with me? S'pose dey want to do you up?"

"I'll be the judge of what is to be done in that case. If I want to connect with you I'll show the handkerchief. If not you don't find me—that is all."

"Allee light," replied Charley Wing, cheerfully. "Me do my best."

Then they left the Lick House together and parted on Keaney street.

Old King Brady went to a certain costumer's, whose services he has often had occasion to employ.

Here he fixed himself up to resemble one of the many hundreds of seedy old has-beens who hang around the edge of San Francisco's Chinese quarter.

One can see dozens of these human wrecks holding down the benches on Portsmouth Square any night.

Old King Brady took a seat near the fountain, and put in a patient hour.

At last Charley Wing came in off Washington street.

With him was a white man, and they started to make the rounds of the Square.

Within a minute they had passed the old detective.

Charley Wing never tumbled, for Old King Brady did not even raise his eyes.

But for all this by those methods which he knows so well he was able to get sight of the white man's face.

He was rather an undersized person, of middle age, to all appearance.

His face was painted, he wore a wig, his clothes were a shabby business suit.

"Disguised, of course," thought Old King Brady. "It might be Bill Overton. Then again he is just about Vanderbeck's build."

Once more they passed him.

"It's a case of shadowing," thought Old King Brady. "If I could fully trust Charley Wing I would make myself known, but I can't."

Charley Wing looked rather puzzled by this time.

As for the white man, he seemed to be pretty well disguised.

"You have been fooling me!" Old King Brady heard him say as they passed. "I don't believe he is here at all."

"Me no can helpee," was Charley's reply, and they passed beyond hearing.

Old King Brady got up and shuffled after them.

They walked up Washington street to Dupont.

Here they entered a Chinese cigar store.

It was Charley Wing who bought the cigars.

He seemed to be disposed to placate the man.

Some high words had evidently passed between them.

"I'll fix you, you yellow bilk!"

This threat Old King Brady distinctly heard uttered as they came out on the street.

The white man turned and mingled with the Chinese crowd.

At night Dupont street is over-thronged.

Thus it will be seen that Dupont street is a difficult place for shadowing.

Old King Brady knew all about that.

He was quite prepared.

Off he darted like a shot, keeping close to the heels of his man.

In a moment Charley Wing was at his side, for the old detective had trailed the blue-bordered handkerchief behind him.

"Well?" he whispered, as the Chink came up.

"Blady, dley killee you, allee light. Dlat's de game!" whispered Charley.

"Oh, of course."

"You in de Square?"

"Sure."

"Know dlat man?"

"No, I can't say I do. Keep your eye peeled, Charley, or perhaps you know where he is going?"

"No; me no know. He awful mad."

"I could see that."

"He tink I fool him."

"Naturally. Did he say in so many words that they want to kill me?"

"Gee, Blady! Dley show me trap-door. Dley mean to dlop you down into secret room and killee you."

"That is at Wo Yet's?"

"Sure."

"You met the man there?"

"Yes; he comee out from back room when I tellee Wo Yet you aflag to come."

"I see. I was quite right in holding back, then?"

"You bet."

"And this faithful fellow is all right," thought Old King Brady. "He would not sell me out. I see that now."

Meanwhile they were having little trouble in shadowing their man.

He had slowed down as soon as he left Charley Wing.

At last he struck Pacific street, and started up the hill.

They were now in the most dangerous part of San Francisco, the far-famed Barbary Coast.

Here there is such a conglomeration of nationalities all jumbled in together that it is difficult to say what's what or who's who.

The man pushed his way slowly through the crowd, passing music halls, dance halls, and beer palaces.

"Him no livee Flisco," whispered Charley Wing.

"Certainly not. He doesn't know where he is going," Old King Brady replied.

"He lookee for somebody."

"That's it. Ah! He has 'em now."

It was a notorious hall in front of which the disguised man had halted.

He pulled a memorandum book out of his pocket and consulted it.

Then he pushed open the swing door and entered the place.

"We lose him? What we do, Blady?" whispered Charley Wing. "Mebbe he go out on de alley. Den we nebber see him again."

"I'll go in," said Old King Brady. "Get over on the other side of the street, Charley, and watch. He must not see you whatever happens."

Old King Brady then pushed open the swing door and shuffled in.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARRY SCORES A FAILURE.

Harry got his supper at the Lick House instead of feasting on chop suey as he had intended.

He then went to the Kearney street costumer's where Old King Brady had been before him.

Many times has Harry successfully personated a Chinaman.

It is not as difficult to disguise as a person might imagine.

The trouble lies in the language.

To learn it in this country is quite impossible.

Thus when Harry has undertaken to pose as a Chinaman he has always personated a dumb one.

On more than one occasion he has made this ruse work.

It worked so well this time after he left the costumer's in his Chinese disguise that twice he was stopped on the street by genuine Chinks who tried to talk to him.

What they wanted Harry had not the faintest idea.

In each case he merely pointed to his lips, shook his head, and passed on.

When he reached Hing Mack's restaurant he walked directly into the back room, the scarred-faced guardian of the cigar counter paying no attention to him.

Even Hing Mack failed to recognize him until he spoke, for he called out in Chinese to know what he wanted to eat.

"You're great, Harry," he said. "What a pity you can't speak Chinese!"

"How well do you speak it yourself, Mack?" Young King Brady asked. "As well as you do English?"

"Oh, no! Nothing like as well. I can understand all they say and can make them understand most everything I want to, but I can't read a word of the blame language."

"Is that so? I thought you could read it."

"No. What good would it do me if I could? Then, as to the talk, you must remember that almost all these people come from one part of China, that is the province and city of Qwang Tung, or Canton, as you will call it. Their language is as different from what other Chinamen

speak as English is from French or German, so they tell me."

"Yes, I have heard that. But do we start now? It is after ten o'clock."

"You will have to wait a few minutes till my helper comes, Harry. He ought to be here now."

The helper came in about twenty minutes.

Hing Mack, who wore ordinary dress, then turned matters over to him, and he and Harry started for Chinatown.

They walked up Sacramento street to Dupont, and down Dupont to Jackson, where they pushed on up the hill about half a block, and then took to an alley.

Here by way of a little gate in a fence they entered a courtyard, and came in front of a small three-story stone house in the rear of a Jackson street saloon.

Several Chinamen were standing about the yard, and there was one leaning against the open doorway.

Hing Mack went straight up to the man at the door, and exchanged a few words with him.

Then, beckoning to Harry, he led the way upstairs to the second floor, and rapped at a door in the rear.

It was opened in a minute by a thin, shrivelled Celestial, whose yellow face showed his fondness for the opium pipe.

He grinned at Hing Mack, and opened the door wider for them to enter.

The room was about the dirtiest place Harry had ever seen a Chinaman occupy.

This strange people, as is well known, are exceedingly clean in caring for their own persons and the rooms they live in, while on the other hand they care nothing for outside surroundings.

Mack pointed to Harry, said something, and laughed.

Young King Brady grinned, and pointing to his lips, shook his head.

Then they sat down, and the Chinaman brought out preserved ginger, little cakes, and cigars.

He also made tea, which when it was ready he served scalding hot in tiny cups.

All this time Mack and he were hinging and wonging, and having a regular Chinese palaver, which Young King Brady would have given much to understand.

It was slow work for Harry.

With all impatience he was waiting to hear something said about the woman and child.

At last Mack got up, and motioning to Harry to follow him, they left the place.

An hour had been consumed.

It was now after eleven o'clock.

Mack hurried Harry around on to Dupont street, where they entered a noted Chinese restaurant.

Mack picked out a table where they could be by themselves, and having ordered an elaborate supper of the most expensive Chinese dishes, he said in a low whisper:

"And now, Harry, I am ready to talk, but you can't answer too cautiously."

It was the first word he had spoken to Young King Brady since he left the Jackson street place.

Feeling that he had his reasons for silence, Harry had not pressed him to speak.

"Did you find out anything?" he now whispered.

"Not much. The woman and child were taken away last night."

"Then we are too late?"

"I'm afraid so. They were taken away by Wang Dang, the King of the Highbinders, as you call him. That old fellow knows the man. He is sure that it was he who took them away."

"Is that all you learned?"

"Not quite. He thinks the woman was not doped, but influenced by Wang Dang. What do you call it in English when they put a person to sleep and make them answer questions?"

"Hypnotized."

"That's it. He told me that several Chinamen came to listen to the woman's talk last night; he himself was listening outside the door just from curiosity. He said that one of these was a priest, as you would say, from the Jackson street joss-house. He thinks they have taken her there."

"Do the Highbinders run that joss-house?"

"No; nobody runs it that way. It is open to everybody."

"Then you think they mean to keep this woman there to tell fortunes and so on."

"I do. That's what he thinks. I don't think I can do any more for you, Harry. I wish I could."

"You couldn't get me into the Jackson street joss-house?"

"Sure, yes; anybody can go in, but——"

"Oh, I mean into the secret rooms downstairs."

Mack shook his head. "It never could be done," he said.

"There will be a big reward coming on this, Mack."

"I'd like to get it. I don't see any way, though."

"Perhaps it will come to you," said Harry. "Let us eat our supper or dinner, or whatever you call it. You can think about it meanwhile."

The dinner was soon served.

It was the best Chinese meal Harry had ever eaten.

They had almost finished when who should come shuffling into the restaurant but Charley Wing.

Harry recognized him instantly.

The Chinese detective was alone, and his face seemed to show Young King Brady that his mind was much disturbed.

Passing to a table near by he dropped into a chair and gave his order.

Twice he glanced toward Harry, but he did not seem to penetrate his disguise.

"Do you know him?" Young King Brady whispered.

"Yes," replied Mack. "That's Charley Wing, the detective. You ought to know."

"I do. Get over there, Mack. Tell him who I am. Ask

him if we can't get a private room where we can all three talk without being overheard. They have them here, as I very well know."

Mack lost no time in obeying.

Charley Wing showed excitement on the instant.

He called the waiter, and in a few moments all three were alone in a room on the floor above.

"Hally, you well made up!" said Charley, as soon as it was safe to speak. "I so glad I findee you. Old King Blady he gettee into touble, I afraid."

"Hello! What about that? I thought he was in your care?"

"Oh, I do my best, Hally. He boss."

"You bet he is boss. Tell me what has happened."

"He go into Andetti's hall on Pacific street with a fakir. He no come out again. I no can findee him. I dunno what to tink."

"Let's have the whole story."

Charley Wing then told all that had happened to himself and the old detective in his peculiar way.

If it had not been for the freedom with which he spoke of the five hundred dollars he had taken from Wo Yet, Harry would have been suspicious.

But as it was he could not doubt that the man was sincere.

"Did you stick close to your watch?" Harry asked.

At first Charley Wing said he did, but then, after a moment he admitted that he had stepped inside a Chinese fan-tan joint for a moment to see a friend, after he had been about half an hour on the watch.

After that he had waited an hour.

At the end of this time he went into the hall to look for Old King Brady, but could find nothing of him.

He explained about the place having a side entrance on the alley.

To all of this Harry gave close attention, and then said:

"They would never try to do the Governor up in Andetti's. I'm sure of that. Old King Brady is well known there."

"But he was in disguise, Hally."

"He had only to make himself known. Don't you think he may have come out to speak to you while you were away?"

"It was only a minute."

"The Governor would not wait a second if he had business on hand. After that did you go back to Wo Yet's?"

"Yes. The door was locked. I no could gettee in."

"I'll have to go, Harry," said Mack at this point in the conversation. "Very sorry I wasn't able to do more for you."

Harry bade him good-night, and then took Charley Wing in hand.

"If the Governor has given us the slip then you and I will work together," he said. "Now let me tell you how I come to be here as I am."

"I your man, Hally," declared Charley Wing enthusiastically, as soon as Harry had stated the case.

"I thought as much."

"I can take you into every hole and corner of the joss-house, unless they have some particular reason for keeping us out."

"Good! If they turn you back from one of their secret rooms we may well suspect that Governor Gum's wife is hidden there."

"Dlat sq. Will you comee now?"

"As soon as you have finished your supper. There is not such great haste. The joss-house is open all night, I suppose?"

"Always open, Hally. Not likee you Clistian church. Chinaman he can go dere and try him luck with the joss-sticks any time, night or day."

"How will you manage?"

"Oh, leave dlat to me. You play dummy, dlat all."

"Look here, Charley, I have heard that sometimes your joss-house priests like to get hold of a dummy."

"Yair. Dley tink it good luck."

"They hypnotize him and make him talk. I have seen that done myself."

"Well, dlat so, Blady. But dley no will dare touch you. I am officier. Dley know dlat."

So Charley Wing finished his supper, and just before midnight he and Young King Brady started for the Jackson street joss-house.

CHAPTER IX.

PROF. MCINTYRE TELLS ALL.

Old King Brady in following the disguised white man into Andetti's Hall ran against something wholly unexpected, as we shall now proceed to show.

There are so many ins and outs to every detective case wherever the Chinese are involved.

And yet in nine cases out of ten where the Chinese are accused of crimes the hand of a white man will be found in the pie somewhere.

Andetti's place consisted of a big saloon nearest the street, a billiard room behind, a bowling alley downstairs, and a dancing hall on the floor above.

Old King Brady knew the place perfectly well, and had consequently entered it without the slightest fear.

The disguised man passed through the saloon to the billiard room, and there made for the washroom.

Old King Brady took a seat on one of the high chairs, and waited, watching a game of pool in which several young fellows were engaged.

In a few minutes there came out of the wash-room a man with a long criminal record, whom the old detective knew well.

One glance was enough to show him that it was the man whom he had been shadowing, minus his disguise.

"There!" thought Old King Brady. "I was sure I know him! How mistaken one can be!"

It was neither Dick Vanderbeck nor the notorious detective Overton.

Devoutly Old King Brady wished now that he also was rid of his disguise.

The man steered directly past him.

It was evident that he had come into Andetti's for no other purpose than to make this change.

"Professor McIntyre!"

In a low voice Old King Brady pronounced the name as the man passed between the pool table and his chair.

The fellow evidently heard.

He gave a quick, nervous glance behind him, and made a bolt for the door.

Old King Brady was too quick for him, however.

"Professor McIntyre! Just a word with you!" he called out, as he darted after the man.

It was useless to try to escape without creating a scene.

This, evidently, Professor McIntyre was not anxious for.

He halted and let Old King Brady come up.

That was the time he got sight of the detective's shield.

His face turned deathly pale.

"You are making a mistake, mister," he said. "You are taking me for some one else."

"I am taking you for Tom McIntyre, the fake spiritualist medium," was the quiet reply.

"And that is the biggest kind of mistake."

"Not at all, Tom! Not at all!"

"Who, for heaven sake, are you?"

"A disguised detective. Step over to the corner here. We will sit down together and talk it out."

Tom McIntyre did not hesitate.

His record was well known to the old detective.

The man had once posed as a medium and fortune-teller in New York, where he was instrumental in swindling a rich woman out of a large sum.

Arrested, the victim herself had in some mysterious way been induced to go bail for him.

The natural result followed.

Medium McIntyre promptly disappeared.

"I don't know you," he said, as he dropped into one of the chairs in a remote corner of the big billiard room.

"No?" replied Old King Brady. "Well, professor, you flatter me. I must be made up well."

"You are a detective, of course, but who?"

"Who were you looking for in Portsmouth Square to-night in company with that Chink detective?"

"Jerusalem! You don't mean to say that you are Old King Brady?"

"No one else. Old King Brady, and ready to bag you on the spot for that latest New York deal of yours unless you open up and tell me all about this plot to do me."

"Hold on, Brady! I know you to be a man of your word. We must come to an understanding before I'll talk."

"The easiest thing in the world with me if one is half fair."

"Are you gunning for me?"

"No."

"You were as much surprised to see me as I am to see you?"

"Yes."

"Odd!"

"What?"

"How this has come about."

"Come, come, professor; time presses."

"Oh, I'll explain. I'll let you know everything if you will promise not to interfere with me on the old charge."

"I positively promise providing you play fair with me."

"I give you my word that I will. You may not consider that very valuable, but it is all I have to give you."

"I'll take it on trust."

"Well, then, first let me say that there is a rich New Yorker in this town gunning for you."

"His name?"

"Don't know it. That's honest."

"Have you seen him?"

"Saw him to-night."

"Where—at Wo Yet's?"

"I see you are posted. Yes, there; but he did not see me, for I was in another room."

"Describe him."

The description fitted Dick Vanderbeck to a dot.

It was evident that Governor Gum's brother-in-law was working matters himself.

"Then it was he who hired Wo Yet to do me up?"

"Yes. He was taken to the fellow by a bum detective named Beasley, who is working with him. But Wo Yet would not have done you up, Brady. Oddly enough, he wanted to find you on his own account, or rather on the account of a friend of his, one Wang Dang, of Galveston, Texas, otherwise known as the King of the Highbinders."

"Just so."

"Do you know that Chink?"

"I know of him."

"You know of everything."

"I know a good many people. I want to know now why this particular Highbinder wants to do me up?"

"He doesn't want to do you up, Brady. He wants to keep you alive."

"Ha! Explain!"

"Just what I am about to do. Now, don't interrupt, but listen. You know my business. You believe me to have been and to be a rotten fake as far as my mediumship is concerned.

"I admit that I have been crooked, but I am a good hypnotist, and hypnotism is true.

"When I quit New York between days I drifted to Galveston. There, through my unfortunate use of opium I fell pretty low, but that fall threw me among the Chinese, and I became acquainted with the master of the Highbinders' lodge there, if you may call him that—this same Wang Dang. You are following me, I hope?"

"I am following you, all right," replied Old King Brady.

"But cut it as short as you can, for I've got a man waiting for me outside."

"It is one of those stories which won't be cut short, Brady. You will have to let me tell it my own way."

"Go on."

"This Wang Dang may be a Highbinder and a murderer and all that sort of thing, but he is also one of the most powerful hypnotists himself that you or anyone else ever saw. He hypnotized me right along, and I told fortunes for the Chinks. Brady, what I said came true."

"Go on!"

"Well, some weeks ago, while I was in a trance I told Dang his own fortune. I told him that I saw a chest full of gold lying a few feet under water down near the Seal Rocks in Frisco Harbor. I described the wreck of the steamer Rio Janeiro, and told him that the chest came from the treasure room of that steamer. It was consigned to a Chink. It was money left him by a relative in Shanghai, China, which had been shipped in that form. The name of this Chink was Gum Dock; he formerly kept a store here on Dupont street. Later he went to El Paso, Texas, where he is now."

"Well?" said Old King Brady, careful not to display the interest he felt.

"Well, sir, my description went further," continued Professor McIntyre. "I described what I saw in my trance, and that was the finding of this chest by Wang Dang. These things come to my mind as pictures. This picture showed me Wang Dang diving for the treasure chest. He is a most expert diver. That used to be his business in China. It showed me a white woman and a little half-breed girl standing near. It showed me an old man with a long blue coat and a big white hat standing on the other side of this woman, and a Chinaman was in the picture, too."

"Yes? And who are these people?"

"The Chinaman is Governor Gum, the woman is his wife, and the child is his, also. The old man in the blue coat was the only one Wang Dang could not recognize, Brady, but when he told me about it after I came out of the trance I instantly recognized that man as yourself."

"The description certainly fills the bill. And what did Wang Dang do?"

"He believes in it. He means to get that chest. The first thing he did was to go to El Paso and try to interest Governor Gum."

"Was he willing to divide with him?"

Professor McIntyre laughed.

"Not he! His only idea was to make the picture perfect. But there was more to it."

"What more? Finish up."

"I could not describe the exact location of the chest, but I told him that I saw him hypnotizing Mrs. Gum, and that she would tell him just where to dive."

"Ah! I see. He told this to Governor Gum?"

"Sure; everything except where the chest was supposed to be."

"Well?"

"Well, they quarrelled over it. Governor Gum was willing enough to lend his wife and go into the deal, but he wanted two-thirds of the gold, while Wang Dang would

only agree to half. Up to that time I think he was in earnest about letting Governor Gum share with him, but anyhow, they quarreled, and it ended up in Wang Dang breaking into Gum's place in the night. He beat the Chink almost to death, hypnotized the wife, and made her run away with him, taking the child along. He brought them to Frisco, and here they are now."

"Just so; and where do I come in?"

"Well, Wang Dang didn't see how he was going to get hold of you, and he thought that possibly I was mistaken about it being you, but he happened to know Wo Yet, who is a Highbinder. They got talking. He learned that Yet had been hired to do you up, and that you were expected in town. A Chink detective had been hired by Yet to bring you to his room. I was sent there to lay for you. We meant to capture you and then bring you down to the shore a prisoner."

"I see. That would have filled the bill."

"Yes."

"But Gum?"

"Wang Dang couldn't get him, so he meant to get along without him, I suppose. That's all there is to it, Brady. You have heard the whole story now, and what do you think of it all?"

"If you want my candid opinion, professor, then it is all a hodge-podge, worthy of a crazy medium and a Chink who believes in such trash; but——"

"You are very complimentary."

"Hold on. Don't get your back up. I said but——"

"Well, but?"

"But there is big money in this deal for you if you will take me to where Mrs. Governor Gum and child are concealed. The woman has inherited money in New York. That is probably what your dream about the chest of gold means, if it means anything at all."

"I can do it."

"Will you?"

"I must if you say so. The way I am situated I can't afford to stand out against you."

"Is it a dangerous undertaking?"

"Not at all. Wang has gone down to the Cliff House tonight to look around, as he has done a lot of times before. I have a key to the rooms where we have the woman and child concealed."

"Oh, you are living with them, then?"

"Sure."

"Where is this place?"

"Right around on Jackson street."

"All right. Come on."

Old King Brady then led the way out on to Pacific street, intending to take Charley Wing along with him.

As luck would have it the Chinese detective at that moment was in the fan-tan joint.

There Charley Wing lingered longer than he had given Harry to understand.

Old King Brady waited a few moments for him, and then finding that Professor McIntyre did not seem to care

whether the Chinese detective joined them or not, he concluded to venture without him.

And so it came about that Old King Brady was taken to that same rear house where Harry went.

He arrived there just after his partner had left.

With his hand upon his revolver Old King Brady followed the fellow upstairs.

McIntyre slipped a key into the lock and threw open the door.

"They are in the back room," he said. "Let me light up here. I'll call them."

He lighted a lamp, revealing a room furnished in American style.

Upon the table lay a letter addressed to the professor in a queer, scrawly hand.

"Hello!" exclaimed McIntyre. "Here is a note from Wang. Let's see what he has to say."

He tore it open, glanced at the contents, and gave a howl of rage!

"So much for trusting a Chink!" he cried. "He has shaken me! He has taken the woman away."

"Make sure!" cried the old detective, starting for the door which led into the next room.

The room was empty.

It was as Harry had learned earlier.

Mrs. Governor Gum and daughter had been taken away from the house.

CHAPTER X.

THE RESCUE OF MRS. GOVERNOR GUM.

Harry had certainly struck just the right man to engineer a trip into the secret chambers of the Jackson street joss-house.

Charley Wing was decidedly a power in his way in San Francisco's Chinatown.

The Jackson street joss-house is the largest institution of its kind in California.

It is an ugly, two-story building on the rise of the hill.

The entrance is by a low doorway, which usually stands open day and night.

The reader must not imagine that a Chinese joss-house is in any sense a church.

It is very far from that.

There are many forms of religion among the Chinese. Many are Buddhists, pure and simple.

Others belong to the faith of the "Fo," as it is called.

In west China there are numerous sects, the very names of which are unknown to Europeans.

The joss-house should properly be termed a "luck house."

Here the Chinaman resorts for no other purpose than to shake luck- or joss-sticks, much as we shake dice.

To each stick is attached a motto.

These mottoes cover every conceivable situation in which a Chinaman is liable to find himself placed.

As the sticks fall in reference to the idols when John

Chinaman throws them from the joss-box, so the mottoes are to be interpreted.

John does not believe the idol is God any more than we do.

What he does believe is that in these images the spirits of his ancestors find a temporary lodging place when he is present in the joss-house, and that they are able to control the movements of the joss-sticks, and hence his luck.

When Harry and Charley Wing entered the joss-house they found as many as a dozen Chinks on their knees before the long altar, throwing joss-sticks.

Upon the altar were many idols, great and small, each one seemingly uglier and more hideous than the one next to it.

Two or three attendants were moving noiselessly about, trimming the smudgy lamps—gas is seldom used—collecting fees, gathering up the sticks, and attending to other duties.

There were as many as a dozen waiting their turn, in spite of the lateness of the hour.

Charley Wing had cautioned Harry to continue to play dummy, and upon no account to utter a sound.

Charley passed directly through the main room and entered a small apartment beyond.

This was gorgeously furnished with rich rugs, silk hangings, bits of old armor, and Chinese pictures.

It looked for all the world like a bric-a-brac shop.

A Chinaman of great age arose to greet them.

Charley pointed to Harry, touched his lips, and began a long harangue.

In this the old Chink took full part.

It lasted ten minutes; then Charley slipped the old fellow a twenty-dollar gold piece—Harry had told him to spare no expense—and a door was unlocked.

A dark stairs lay behind it, leading down to regions below.

Charley, motioning to Harry to follow him, hurried down the stairs.

This brought them to a narrow, unfurnished corridor off from which opened various small rooms.

These were the cells or retreats of the joss house.

Here Chinamen sleep under certain conditions, believing that they will be shown what to do in their dreams.

There was no one here to interfere with them, and Charley hurried Harry though to the end of the corridor, where he threw open another door.

It was not locked, but there was a bolt on both sides.

Charley shot the bolt behind him.

"Now," he whispered, "She is here if anywhere. At the end of this is nodder door. Dlat leads out on alley. We see."

"Do you mean to get her out that way?" Harry breathed.

"P'laps! We see! Can't tellee yet. Wait!"

Charley looked into various rooms—there were as many as a dozen here.

Some were supplied with cot-beds and were otherwise furnished.

At length they came to a locked door.

"Quick! Mebbe in dere!" breathed Charley. "Hully up, Hally! Me come back in minute."

Then Charley Wing turned into still another corridor, and darted away.

Harry needed no second invitation.

Whipping out his skeleton keys, he tackled the locked door.

In a moment he had found a key which would do the work.

The door flew back.

A small lamp burning within the room showed him enough at a single glance.

Stretched upon a dirty bed lay a woman fully dressed and in a profound sleep, while beside her was a little girl of five or six.

The child sat up as Harry entered and said something in Chinese.

"Look here, little one, what's your name?" whispered Harry.

"Lilly Dock. That's my mamma," replied the child.

"Can you wake your mamma?"

"I don't know. Sometimes I can and sometimes I can't. I want to go home to papa. Will you take me home?"

The child began to cry, but the woman did not stir.

"That's what I want to do, to take you to your papa," replied Harry, "but you must not cry. Try if you can wake your mamma—but wait!"

Charley Wing had entered.

"You have found them?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Lock 'em in again quick!"

"Do we come back?"

"Yes."

"Get your mother awake, Lilly. Tell her that help is coming," Young King Brady said to the child.

He quickly locked the door then.

"I fix it," breathed Charley. "Comee with me."

He led Harry into the other corridor.

At its end was a door opening on the alley.

This Charley had unfastened, as he showed Harry.

"We must go out by the way we came," he said in his broken fashion. "You must get a cab and come into the alley. You will want help perhaps. You must come in by that door and come out quick."

Charley now led him another way, showing him several rooms in which there were strange idols.

This, he explained to Harry, he did in order to make certain that they were not being watched.

At last they returned upstairs.

Then there was more talk with the old Chinaman.

At last they went back into the main room of the joss house and passed out on Jackson street.

"Now, Blady, what?" demanded Charley.

"To the alley! Show me where that door opens," Harry exclaimed.

They hurried down Jackson street.

"Charley, you are great," Harry said, approvingly. "Old King Brady will see you well paid for this."

"I do what I can, Hally."

They passed into the gloomy alley and Charley pointed out the door.

"You gettee cab," he said. "Hully up! Say, me no can do no more."

"Oh, you don't want to be here when I take her out?"

Charley shook his head.

"I'll let you off, then. I don't want to get you into trouble, Charley."

"Allee light," replied Charley cheerfully. "We go down to Square. Plenty cab dere."

"Do you come, too?"

"No, I go 'way, Hally. Tellee Ole Kling Blady I do my best to helpee you."

Seeing that Charley Wing was growing decidedly nervous, Harry shook hands with the fellow and let him go.

Young King Brady went on down to Portsmouth Square, and was just bargaining for a hack when someone touched him on the shoulder.

There stood a shabby old party who might well have been taken for one of the loungers in the Square.

"Young man, will you take me to ride with you?" he asked in a harsh, croaking voice.

"Go on! Don't bother me," retorted Harry.

And then to the astonishment of the hack driver, he suddenly added:

"Get in, quick!"

"A friend of mine; did not know him at first," he explained.

"I am no Chink. We are after a white woman and a child who are hidden in Chinatown. Drive us to the corner of Jackson street and the alley, holding your cab there."

"All right," said the man, who had received double fare, and was ready to do anything.

Harry jumped in and slammed the door.

"Governor, I never knew you until you gave me the sign," he said.

"I'm made up well, then. So are you."

"There isn't a moment to talk. I've located Mrs. Governor Gum and daughter. I'm after them now. Was going to police headquarters for help, but I don't think I need it now that I've got you."

"No. Are you going to turn the trick in that rig?"

"Yes; that was my intention. Any objection?"

"It's your job. Do you want me as I am or shall I change?"

"Change by all means."

Inside of two minutes Old King Brady was himself again.

Briefly Harry explained what had happened.

"Good for Charley Wing!" exclaimed Old King Brady.

"And to think that I suspected the fellow! My story will have to keep, Harry, for here we are."

The cab had stopped.

Harry jumped out, followed by the old detective.

"Follow me," said Harry. "There must be quick work here."

They slid into the alley, and Young King Brady opened the door.

The coast was clear in the corridors.

In less than a minute they threw back the door where the woman and child were concealed without even taking the trouble to knock.

Mrs. Gum Dock sat on the edge of the bed with her child in her arms.

She looked scared to death, as she gasped out: "Who are you?"

"Oh, that's the man, mamma! That's the man!" cried Lilly.

"We are here to take you to your husband, Governor Gum Dock," said Old King Brady. "Will you go?"

"Gladly."

"Follow us! Lose not an instant!"

The woman sprang to her feet and tottering followed them to the alley.

Without hat or wrap the unfortunate woman and her child were helped into the cab.

"Where do we go?" demanded Harry. "I should have taken them to the hotel if I hadn't met you."

"Take her to her husband. We have no right to take her anywhere else," said Old King Brady, emphatically.

The order was given, and they were whisked around to Stockton street in a hurry.

The house here was an old-fashioned frame structure on a block where many of the better class of Chinese live.

Harry jumped out and pulled the door-bell three or four times before receiving any answer.

At last an upper window was opened, and a Chinaman looked out.

Seeing one of his own race on the stoop as he supposed, he called out something in Chinese.

"We want Gum Dock," said Harry. "Tell him his wife and child are here."

A few moments later and the front door flew open, and there stood Governor Gum.

"Papa! Papa!" screamed Lilly from the cab.

Old King Brady set her upon the ground and she flew to her father's arms.

Then Mrs. Dock was helped out, and Old King Brady helped her up the steps, ordering the cabby to drive away.

Governor Gum wept and laughed, and Mrs. Dock seemed as delighted to see him as he was to see her.

He led them into a poorly furnished room in the rear, where a stair led to the floor above, and there was a curtained bunk, Chinese style.

Near the bunk on a stool was an opium layout.

Evidently Governor Gum had been hitting the pipe on his own account, but he showed no effects of it.

"Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed, "you are a great man! I thank you so much!"

Then he caught his wife in his arms again, and they wept together, talking in Chinese.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

There is no one on earth so liberal as a Chinaman if he thinks a real service has been performed for him.

Governor Gum wanted to pay the Bradys for what they had done right then and there.

But Old King Brady would not have it.

"I get my money from the other end," he said. "This wife of yours is heiress to millions. What you want to do is to take care of her. Can it be done?"

"Sure! It must be," was the reply.

"Let her go with the child to some other room. I want to talk to you."

"Wait; I will take them upstairs," said Governor Gum.

"Then we can talk."

He departed with his wife and child.

"Change, Harry. I am going to tell my story as soon as he comes down, but we don't leave here until morning. There may be some move made to recapture this woman for all we can tell."

It took Harry but a few minutes to slip off his Chinese disguise, his own clothes being underneath.

Then Governor Gum returned, and was going to insist upon making tea and bringing out refreshments.

"No, no," said Old King Brady. "We don't want a thing. I have got something I want to say to you, Gum, and I want you to listen attentively. But first of all let me tell where my partner found your wife and child."

"Oh, I know. Lilly has told me all. You found her in the joss-house."

"Yes. Where Wang Dang took her. This wife of yours is a pretty valuable piece of property. Do you realize that she is going to come into many millions of dollars?"

"Sure, Mr. Brady; I know."

"Then do you propose to fool with Wang Dang over an old chest of gold which if it exists at the most can only contain fifty thousand dollars or so?"

Governor Gum gave a start.

"Who told you that?" he demanded.

"I have been talking with Professor McIntyre."

"Oh!"

"I know all about this business. I want my partner here to know, too, so I am going to tell what I have been doing. You listen and you will find out just how much I know."

Old King Brady then rehearsed his interview with Professor McIntyre.

He wound up by telling Harry that he had parted from the medium, and was on his way to the Lick House when they met in Portsmouth Square.

"Well, that's all so," said Governor Gum, coolly enough. "I believe in that sort of thing. I was ready to stand in

with Wang Dang. We quarreled about it. That is where the trouble came."

"And you will drop and help me to bring this business of your wife's to a head?" Old King Brady asked.

"Sure!"

"You are wise. Now, understand, you and your wife are in the greatest danger. Not only from Wang Dang, but also from her brother and his detectives. What I propose is that you start for New York at once and place yourselves under the care of the police. You will not go near Chinatown, but find some hotel which will receive you, and stop there."

"I will go."

"How is it that you did not know where Wang Dang had taken your wife, when you knew all about this treasure business?"

"Ah," said Governor Gum, "I did not know the story as you have told it. He did not tell me what the name of the steamer was or where it was wrecked. It might have been Mexico, it might have been California. I could not tell."

"And now about your wife," said the old detective. "There must be no more of this hypnotism business, no more opium smoking. You told me she had stopped it, but it is evident enough that she is half-doped to-night, and here I find you hitting the pipe yourself. You both want to cut all this out."

Again Governor Gum shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, it is only once in a while," he said. "We'll be good. I'll get her around all right again."

"Bring your wife down now, and I will make her understand what all this means," he said.

So Governor Gum went upstairs and brought his wife and child down again.

Old King Brady now explained to Mrs. Gum about her father's death, and her brother's enmity against her.

The woman listened without saying very much.

She showed no sorrow whatever for the death of her father.

"It is all right, Mr. Brady," she said. "I am what I am. I know I'm not very bright. I am glad of this for Lilly's sake, and for Gum; as for myself, I don't care much. I would not go back and try and figure in New York society on any account."

"That is up to you," said Old King Brady. "As soon as your father's will is probated the income of this vast sum will be absolutely at your disposal, and the principal will come to the child at your death. Your brother——"

"I hate him. He hates me!"

"You must have nothing to do with him."

"I don't need you to tell me that."

"You must not even allow him to see you. I believe him to be capable of any crime."

"I know that. I shall have nothing to do with him. Is there no way to protect me from him? I believe he would kill me if he could."

"We will get you to New York safely; then a way to protect you will be found."

Old King Brady decided that he would not ask the unfortunate creature anything concerning her experience with Wang Dang.

That he regarded as her own business and that of her husband.

The talk continued on the same lines.

It was now long after midnight.

Old King Brady was just instructing Governor Gum to be ready to start for New York by the train which left San Francisco at noon, when there came a low knock at the door.

Governor Gum was on his feet in an instant.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"Does that door open on the alley?" asked Old King Brady in a whisper.

"No. There is a yard. The alley is behind."

"And behind that is Dupont street."

"Oh, don't let them get me, Gum! Don't let them get me!" Mrs. Gum screamed.

Again came the knocking, this time a little louder.

"Who's there?" called Harry, going to the door.

The answer was a gabble of Chinese.

Governor Gum turned pale.

"They are asking for me!" he gasped.

He seized an old Chinese sword which hung against the wall.

"Keep cool!" said the old detective.

At the same instant whoever was outside began banging the door with something heavy.

The crazy lock seemed on the point of yielding.

"Tell them to get out! Tell them the police are here!" cried Old King Brady.

Governor Gum shouted something in Chinese.

Still the din continued.

The door seemed on the point of bursting in.

Harry pushed against it.

Old King Brady picked up a queer carved club which stood in one corner and stood ready to crack the first head that appeared.

Still the pounding.

The striking plate of the lock broke away, and a Chinese foot came in, also a bit of joist.

And then, as the door slightly opened, a hand holding a revolver came into view.

Harry threw his weight against the door.

Old King Brady rushed forward with his club.

Governor Gum slashed at the hand with his sword.

Mrs. Gum and Lilly took flight now and fled upstairs.

Suddenly there was a flash and a report.

The revolver had been fired, the bullet sung past Old King Brady's ears.

At the same instant Governor Gum brought the sword down upon the hand.

There was a yell of pain, and the revolver dropped to the floor.

Instantly the hand and foot were withdrawn.

Old King Brady picked up the revolver.

"Throw open the door, Harry!" he cried. "We must bring this business to an end."

Harry obeyed.

Three Chinamen were seen in the yard.

One was just in the act of dropping over the fence.

The second instantly followed.

The third, the man with the wounded hand, stood at bay as the Bradys dashed into the yard.

His hand had nearly been severed.

He could not climb. He leaned against the fence like a man about to faint when Harry seized him, and made an effort to pull him to the door.

Groaning and muttering, the fellow held back.

But Old King Brady got hold of him on the other side, and they dragged him in, when he promptly keeled over and fell fainting to the floor.

"Hammer and nails, Gum, if you can get them!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Nail up that door. Harry, get out and see if you can't find a policeman. Tell him what has occurred."

Both commands were obeyed.

Although Old King Brady scarcely expected it, Governor Gum did get the hammer and nails, and the door was secured.

Meanwhile Old King Brady, tearing strips from the Chinaman's blouse, staunched the bleeding, and tied up the wounded hand.

"Do you know him?" he demanded of Governor Gum.

"No. I never saw him before."

"So? See, he is coming to. Question him now. Find out who sent him here."

The man revived on the instant, and sat up on the floor. Governor Gum tried it, but it was of little use.

"Ask him if he was working for a white man?" said the old detective.

Governor Gum put the question.

"He says yes, and that he was hired to kill me," he answered.

Just then Harry came in with two policemen.

Old King Brady quickly explained.

"This fellow is a noted tough, Mr. Brady," said one of the policemen. "You have had a narrow escape. We will soon make him tell who hired him once we get him locked up."

"All right. You take charge of him," replied the old detective. "I will come around and see the chief of police about this case."

Presently the patrol wagon came up, and the wounded Chinaman was taken away.

In the meanwhile Governor Gum had been upstairs to reassure his wife, and other Chinamen living in the house had forced themselves into the room.

"You now see your danger, Gum," said Old King Brady, taking the Governor to one side. "You can't stay here. You had better let me call a carriage and take your wife and child to the Lick House, where they will be safe."

"I had rather stay here. Those people won't dare to come again."

"You are very foolish, and are running a great risk."

"I don't like to go to a hotel with my wife. Everybody would be staring at me, even if they would take us in."

"I tell you I can arrange all that. There will be no trouble at all."

Old King Brady could not persuade him.

And so he was obliged to give it up.

The patrol wagon took the wounded Chink away.

Harry went with the policemen to lodge the complaint.

At daybreak, finding that Governor Gum had plenty of company, Old King Brady also left.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

"That was quick work, Governor," remarked Harry, as the Bradys were discussing their case at the breakfast table.

"It certainly was," the old detective replied.

"To run a Chinese case through in one night is a thing almost unheard of."

"Quite so. I don't remember that we ever had a shorter one; but then, Harry, are you quite sure that we are really out of the woods yet?"

"I suppose we can't feel that way until we are safe in New York."

"We certainly cannot."

"Do you intend to abandon your hunt for this King of Highbinders?"

"What good purpose would we serve by continuing it?"

"None, I suppose. And Dick Vanderbeck?"

"I'm going to have him arrested, and bound over to keep the peace."

"Good idea, but then why do you wait?"

"Oh, I've done some quiet work over the telephone while you were washing up. Vanderbeck is at the Palace Hotel, right alongside of us here. I have ascertained that he did not go to bed until five o'clock this morning, so I fancy he is safe to stay there for a while. I'll clap him in jail, and unless he finds it easier to get bail than I imagine may be the case in a city where he cannot be over-well acquainted, we may be able to keep him there long enough to allow us to get to New York."

This was Old King Brady's plan, and immediately after breakfast they started to carry it out.

The chief of police at that time was a warm friend of Old King Brady's.

The detectives had no trouble at all in securing his cooperation.

"I'll have the fellow locked up without bail," he declared. "I can arrange to have his examination postponed for a week if necessary. There will be no trouble about it at all. What is more, I will go with you to the Palace, and help in the arrest myself."

At half-past eight the detectives, the chief, and two

officers forced their way into Mr. Dick Vanderbeck's presence.

In spite of his protests Vanderbeck was locked up, and Old King Brady was once more able to breathe freely, for the wounded Chinaman confessed that he had been engaged by Vanderbeck to shoot Governor Gum.

The Bradys now started to visit two or three persons with whom they were acquainted.

Their intention was to be at Governor Gum's lodging place by half-past ten.

Harry bought tickets and secured Pullman berths.

Everything was in readiness for the journey overland when the Bradys at ten o'clock again called at the Lick House for their mail.

They had just received their letters from the clerk when an Americanized Chinaman in a high state of excitement came rushing up to them at the hotel desk.

It was Governor Gum.

"Mr. Brady! Mr. Brady! Oh, my wife! Oh, my child!"

This excited exclamation, again and again repeated, covers the whole case in a nutshell.

While Gum was hitting the pipe, in some mysterious fashion Mrs. Gum and Lilly had been spirited away.

Of course, this upset everything.

The Bradys hurried to the lodging-house with Governor Gum, but they were able to learn nothing.

The police were notified, and Harry went with officers to the shore beyond the Presidio, and the whole line down to the cliff house was searched without avail.

Governor Gum went with them, but Old King Brady started at once to find Professor McIntyre, in the hope that he could locate the unfortunate woman and her child.

But when night settled down over San Francisco all their efforts had come to nothing.

Equally, of course, Charley Wing was working on the case at both ends.

At six o'clock he reported failure to Old King Brady at the hotel.

Here the old detective had Governor Gum in a state bordering on insanity.

He pleaded hard to be allowed to drown his sorrows in an opium joint, but this Old King Brady sternly refused.

"We will start out, all three of us, at eight o'clock, and see what we can do," he said. "If we keep up the search for McIntyre all night it won't be time lost."

But it did not go that way.

At ten minutes of eight Charley Wing turned up at the hotel, bringing the "Professor" with him.

The ex-medium was in a sad condition, thanks to the money Old King Brady had given him.

If he was altogether a fake and never under the influence of spirits before, he certainly was then, and very much under the influence, too.

"Wha—I—tell yer, Brady?" he "hicced." "Didn'—I—warn yer look out, shay?"

"That's all right," replied Old King Brady. "You

want to brace up now, professor, and see me through with this business. Can you give any help?"

"Course I can," he replied. "Course I can. You want to have a sitting with me, zhat's what."

So the professor was taken to Old King Brady's private room, where in the presence of Harry, Governor Gum, and Charley Wing, he pretended to go into a trance.

For some time it seemed as though he was asleep.

Then all at once he began to talk in a voice which was certainly different from his own, and which showed no traces of intoxication.

"I see the ocean," he said. "I see rocks. I see a little hut with one Chinese letter in gilt over the door."

"I know where that place is!" cried Charley Wing.

"I see a tall lady. I see a little girl who is part Chinese and part white," he continued. "They are in that house, and there are Chinamen with them. One of them has hypnotized the lady. He is asking her questions. All this I see, and I shall see no more. Good-night, friends, good night."

This is what the Bradys got out of Professor McIntyre.

Be the explanation of it what it may, certain it is that after a minute the professor appeared to wake up again, and when he did he was as incoherent as ever.

"Did you get anything, Brady?" he asked.

Old King Brady reported what he had said in his trance.

"All right. You follow up zat clew and you get her," growled the professor. "Two dollars, please."

To humor him Old King Brady handed out the money.

Without attempting to solve any of these occult mysteries, Old King Brady called a hack, and they all got in, taking a policeman on the box.

Charley Wing declared that the hut described did fill the bill with a certain Chinese fisherman's hut which was located at some distance beyond the Cliff House.

It was a long drive.

McIntyre slept most of the way.

When he woke up after they had passed Lone Mountain Cemetery, he seemed to be quite himself.

"You can sneer and scoff at my way of doing business all you like, Brady," he said, "but I tell you we are going to win out to-night."

"Hope so," replied the old detective, shortly.

"What's more, the prophecy which I made in Galveston weeks ago is coming true. There is the woman and her child. There is Wang Dang, and here we go to fill up the picture. Old King Brady and Governor Gum. You'll see, and what's more, you'll see that the treasure chest will be found, for I saw that in the picture, too. Isn't that so, Gum?"

"That is what Wang Dang told me," replied Governor Gum.

So the talk ran as they rode on.

Old King Brady took no stock in it all.

At last they reached the Cliff House, where they left their hack and started along over the rocks on foot.

"We had better keep back a little from the edge of the bluff," said Charley Wing. "It won't pay us to be seen."

"How far is it?" asked Harry.

Charley thought it was about half a mile.

The policeman, who pretended to be acquainted with the neighborhood, declared that it was twice as far.

That he was mistaken was clear, for before they had quite covered a half-mile they came to a narrow path which led down to the edge of the rocks.

This led to the fisherman's hut, Charley declared, and sure enough, when they looked down over the rocks, there was a hut, and the rocks were here so broken that it would be an easy matter to descend.

"Shall we go right down and tackle the blame Chinks, Mr. Brady?" the policeman asked.

"Wait a minute," replied the old detective. "I hear voices. Down flat, all of you. Let's watch here a bit."

They lay down and craned their necks over the edge of the rocks.

In a moment two Chinamen wearing only bathing trunks came from behind the hut, and stood on the shore.

One had a big coil of rope and a lantern, which he flashed out upon the water.

"That's Wang Dang," whispered Professor McIntyre, pointing to the other man.

At the same instant out of the house came Mrs. Governor Gum and Lilly.

The woman walked directly up to the King of the Highbinders with the child clinging to her skirts.

Wang Dang made a few passes before her face, and then began talking in Chinese, receiving answers which the Bradys could not hear.

It was all they could do to restrain Governor Gum, who was for going down at once.

But the Bradys were determined to see the play through to the end.

After a few moments Wang Dang took a running dive and plunged into the water.

In about two minutes he appeared on the surface, and swam ashore.

"That man has been here before," thought Old King Brady. "I do believe he has actually located the chest."

Be that as it may, Wang Dang now tied the end of the rope about his waist, and after some talk took to the water again.

He remained under a little longer this time, and when he again appeared he was minus the rope.

He swam ashore and, seizing the rope in connection with the other Chinaman, they waded out into the water and began to pull.

And, sure enough, after several attempts they did pull up a sizable wooden chest and land it on the beach.

"Forward now!" breathed Old King Brady.

Down the bluff they scrambled, the Bradys, the policeman, and Charley Wing with revolvers in hand.

The two Chinamen fled to the hut and appeared with revolvers of their own, but when they saw the force there

was against them they threw up the sponge and were captured.

Governor Gum made a rush for his wife, the child screaming for joy at his appearance.

Mrs. Gum was certainly hypnotized.

Wang Dang, however, released her from the spell when Old King Brady so ordered it with a revolver at his head.

"There!" cried Professor McIntyre. "Now, who dares to call me a fake and a fraud? What I prophesied has all come true!"

Of the truth of the professor's claim there was no denying.

The chest bore Chinese and English characters.

It was not only addressed to Governor Gum, but in the end that fortunate individual came into possession of its valuable contents, for it was indeed filled with gold coin.

The Bradys' case ended there on the beach, to all intents.

Wang Dang was landed in jail on charge of abducting Mrs. Gum and child, and in the end went to San Quentin for a short term.

Two days later—it took time to settle about the chest—the Bradys and the Gums went to New York.

There was no difficulty there.

In due time Mrs. Gum Dock came into her father's millions.

Dick Vanderbeck abandoned his opposition.

He was removed as executor by the surrogate, and went to Europe when he got his share.

The Gums went to Shanghai, and at last accounts were living there in princely style.

Before leaving Governor Gum insisted upon paying the Bradys \$5,000.

This, with the Vanderbeck fee, made \$10,000.

It was a very profitable case.

At this time Governor Gum assured Old King Brady that both he and his wife had abandoned the use of opium forever.

It is to be hoped that they have adhered to their resolutions.

Old King Brady sent Charley Wing \$1,000, and Professor McIntyre half that amount.

And this to these two widely different individuals doubtless proved a satisfactory ending to the singular case of The Bradys and Governor Gum.

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