

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.

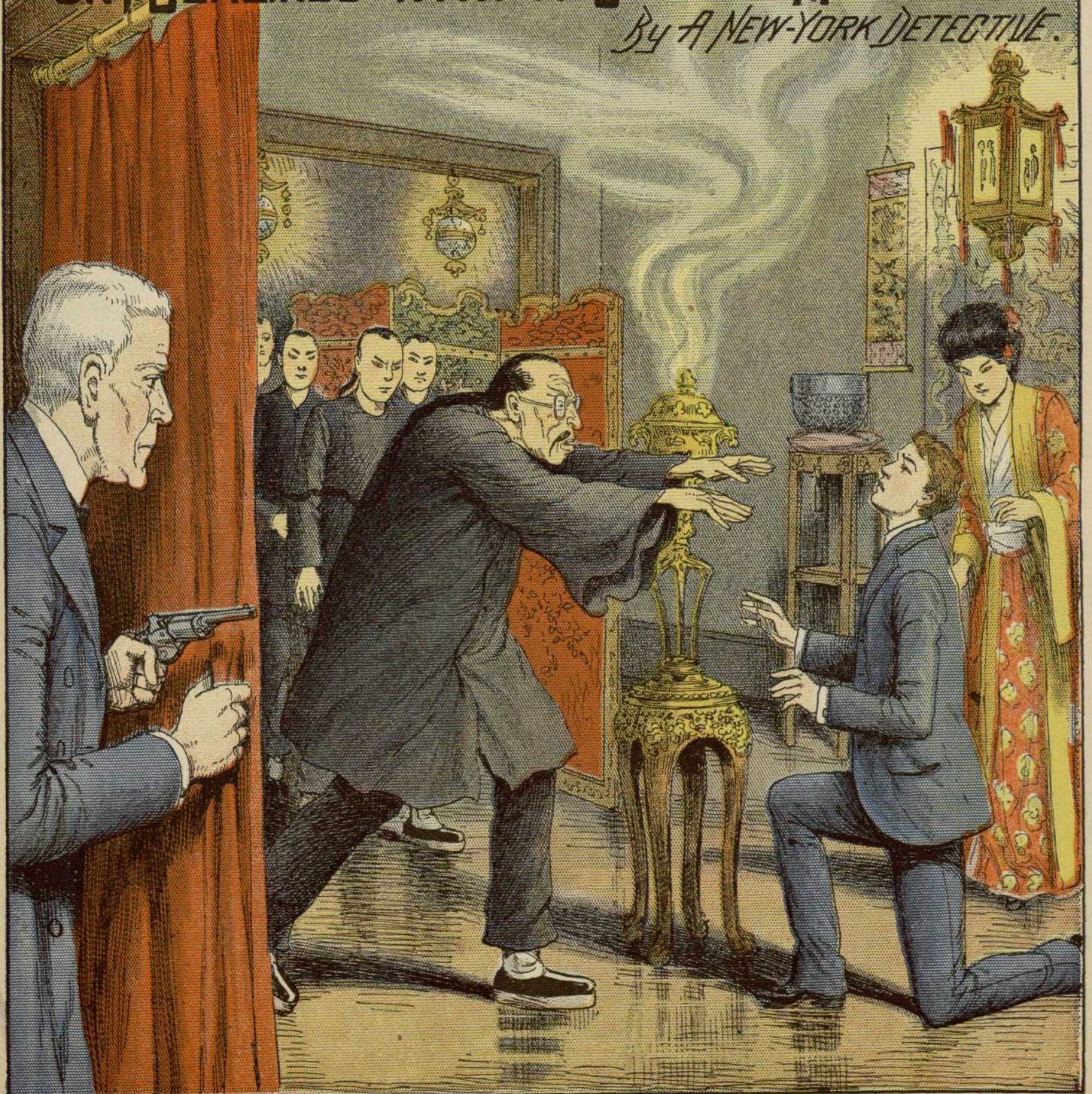
No. 381.

NEW YORK, MAY 11, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND DR. DING; OR, DEALINGS WITH A CHINESE MAGICIAN.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



As Old King Brady peered through the portiere he saw a strange scene. Harry was upon one knee before Hip Hop with his eyes closed. Mr. Magician's hands were extended. It was a case of hypnotism beyond all doubt.

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CHAPTER I.

THE ECHOES OF A CHINESE MYSTERY.

"I trust that young man will know me again when he sees me," remarked Old King Brady, the detective, as in company with Young King Brady, his pupil and partner, he left the elevated car at the Brooklyn Bridge.

"You mean that good-looking young fellow who stared at us so hard?" asked the younger detective.

"Who stared at me, Harry. You were not it at all."

"Well, you know why he did it, I suppose?"

"I supposed he recognized me."

"And how could he help it? You are wearing your trademark clothes."

Young King Brady's allusion was to the peculiar style of dress which America's most famous detective affects. This is almost too well known to require description.

Every criminal in the United States is familiar with the long blue coat, with its peculiar flat brass buttons.

This Old King Brady always wears when not in disguise.

Then there is the big white hat with its unusually broad brim.

Nor must we omit the old-fashioned stock and high, pointed stand-up collar, style of 1840.

Old King Brady, on account of these peculiarities of dress, always attracts attention wherever he goes, and it is one of his oddities always to appear surprised when people stare at him in public conveyances or on the street.

But in this instance the attention bestowed upon him by the young man who sat on the opposite side of the elevated car was most marked.

Once he spotted the old detective when they boarded the train at Ninth street, he never for an instant removed his eyes from his face.

Harry had observed the young man when they first came into the car, and he thought he had never seen a face which expressed so much sadness.

But as soon as he saw Old King Brady a change certainly came over it, and that change to Harry's eyes seemed to spell hope.

The Bradys have a shabby little den of an office on Park Row above New Chambers street, and thither they now bent their steps, talking of a case which they had just closed up as they walked along.

It was early one May morning, and this was the first visit of the detectives to their office that day.

There was mail to be opened, and certain routine work to be gone through with.

The Bradys were at it when the door opened, and the identical young man who had stared at them on the elevated train walked in.

"Good-morning," he said, politely. "Can I see Old King Brady for a moment?"

"You see him before you," replied the old detective. "What is it that you wish?"

"I would like to consult you about a matter, if it could be arranged."

"And why not? I am here to be consulted."

The young man smiled, rather sadly, it seemed to Harry, who was closely watching him.

"To be perfectly frank with you," he replied, "I am only a clerk on a small salary. I could not meet the amount of your fee unless it is much smaller than I suppose it to be."

Old King Brady looked the young fellow over carefully before replying.

"Proceed," he said. "We have no regular consultation fee. In your case I should be glad to advise you free if it will help you out."

"It will, indeed. I shall certainly pay you some time."

Old King Brady nodded.

"You can consider my bill when it is rendered," he said.

"Now, go ahead with what you have to say."

"It is rather a strange story, Mr. Brady. I hardly know whether you will be willing to credit it or not."

"We have heard many strange stories in our time."

"My name is Charles Staveley," continued the young man. "I am with the tea house of Harding & Randall, on Front street. Seeing you in the car I was seized with a sudden desire to confide my trouble to you, and here I am."

"Proceed, Mr. Staveley," replied Old King Brady. "I daresay you are in a hurry to get to your work. Tell us all about it, without unnecessary words."

"You are certainly very kind. It is like this: Some five years ago, when I was only nineteen years of age, I was sent out to China by our people, and for four years I was with the branch house at Tientsin.

"While there I became intimate with the family of the late J. J. Long, then American consul at that port, and much of my spare time was spent at his house.

"Mr. Long was then a widower, his wife having died

shortly after his arrival at Tientsin, and with him was his only child, a beautiful girl of about my own age.

"I don't suppose you care to hear a love story, or how it came about that Edith Long became engaged to me, Mr. Brady. Enough to say that we grew to be devoted to each other, and it was understood that we were to be married when I came of age.

"Everything was prosperous and happy with us, until one dreadful day when Mr. Long, in attempting to interfere in a quarrel between some Chinamen and two American sailors, was shot in the Chinese quarter of Tientsin.

"Someone notified Edith, and the poor girl in the first agony of her grief did what she never should have done, ventured into the crowded Chinese quarter alone, and attempted to make her way to her dead father's side.

"She never reached her destination. What became of her was never known, but of course the supposition was that she was captured by the Chinese, run up the country, and sold as a slave."

"I think I remember reading of that case in the papers at the time," said Old King Brady. "It happened about three years ago, did it not?"

"Three years the 20th of next month."

"Has nothing ever been heard of the girl since?"

"Nothing. I did all that man could do, and I had all the help the British consul could afford me, but it was all to no purpose."

"Did you apply to the American minister?"

"Oh, yes; but that went for nothing. He wrote that he would lay the matter before Congress, and ask them to act. Months later I learned that a resolution to inquire into the matter passed by the House of Representatives was pigeon-holed by the Senate. Nothing was ever done. Even the murder of the consul, Mr. Long, was glossed over, and called an accident."

"Unfortunately that is the way with our beautiful Senate. The British consul, I dare say, threatened the authorities with a warship."

"He did. He did all that man could do, and it was his belief that the Chinese authorities really tried to find poor Edith. Nothing came of it, however, and at last I came back to the United States."

"It must have been hard on you, young man."

"So hard that no words can express it. It has made me an old man before my time. See my white hair? All that came in that dreadful night. It was a year before I could think of it calmly, but I can now. Up to last night I had come to think of that dear girl as dead."

"And last night you learned something of her fate?"

"Not that, Mr. Brady. Last night I saw her. I know it! I am certain of it. The thought of it has driven me almost mad. But I am calm again now. Sorrow has made a strong man of me. All night I have paced the floor, wondering what I ought to do. I was thinking of consulting the police, but seeing you on the way downtown put the thought into my head that you would be the best person I could possibly consult."

"I won't say that, but I am glad you consulted me. Tell me the rest, and if there is any possible means by which I can help you it shall be done."

"You are more than kind to talk that way to a total stranger. It is like this: At the Fourth avenue theater, the famous vaudeville house, you know, there has been a Chinese magician exhibiting who passes under the name of Dr. Ding. The man is something out of the line of the ordinary Chinese or Japanese juggler. He pretends to do tricks which are much like the performances of spiritualist mediums. For instance, the well-known handcuff trick, the alleged materialization of spirits, and similar things. Perhaps you have heard of this?"

"No, I have not observed. I seldom find time to go to the theater. I was not aware that there was such a show in town."

"Well, I attended the performance last night. This Dr. Ding does not do these alleged spiritualistic tricks himself. He has an old Chinaman who attends to that, and whose name does not even appear on the bills, the Doctor acting as master of ceremonies, although some of the ordinary juggling he does himself.

"Passing over all details, I will come right to the point. The last trick performed was the so-called materialization. They had a cabinet in which the old Chinaman sat; the lights were lowered, and in a few minutes forms in white ran out on the stage. You have seen the trick performed, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; and you recognized one of these forms as your missing sweetheart?"

"Mr. Brady, I did," replied Staveley, striving to appear calm. "Don't think it was my imagination. I sat in the front row downstairs as close to the stage as one could get. This woman in white came close up to the footlights. The light in the house was poor, certainly, but the footlights were not even turned down. I saw her face with perfect distinctness. It was surely Edith Long."

"How long was the figure outside of the cabinet?"

"Oh, only about a minute. But she came out twice."

"And you had the chance to see her face both times?"

"I did."

"Did she appear to recognize you?"

"Oh, no! She did not even look at me."

"Hum! Strange!"

"You think it was only my imagination?"

"Well, I don't say that. How can I? But imagination plays one strange tricks at times."

"I know just how you feel, but I solemnly assert that the woman I saw was Edith Long."

"Well, and what did you do?"

"Went to the stage door, and bribed my way to an interview with Dr. Ding."

"He spoke good English?"

"Oh, yes. He solemnly assured me that there was no woman attached to his company. That the figure I saw was a real spirit. What nonsense! I wonder I did not strike him dead on the spot. I think I should have done

so if the manager had not already told me that there was no woman in the company which travels with this Chinese magician. So you see, I was in a measure prepared."

"I see. How did the manager account for the female form?"

"He did not pretend to account for it; he told me that he had no more idea how the trick was done than I had. It was he who introduced me to Dr. Ding."

"What excuse did you make for your inquiries?"

"I didn't make any. I simply told the man that I wanted to see the lady who had played spirit, and that she was a friend of mine."

"Did you mention her name, or refer to her disappearance at Tientsin?"

"I mentioned her name, but I said nothing about the rest."

"And then you came away quietly?"

"Yes. Can you help me, Mr. Brady? Will you do it? I don't suppose there would be the slightest use in appealing to the police."

"It would be the merest waste of time. Yes, I will try to help you, Mr. Staveley, but to be frank with you I cannot hold out much encouragement."

"When can you take the matter in hand?"

"I will call at the theater during the morning."

"Thank you a thousand times."

"Can I reach you on the telephone?"

"Certainly."

"Then let it rest so. If there is really anything in the thing you shall know it before noon."

With further expressions of gratitude young Staveley left the office.

Shortly after twelve he was called up on the telephone by Young King Brady.

The message he received was very unsatisfactory.

"We have been to the theater," Harry said. "I am sorry to tell you that Dr. Ding left town for San Francisco last night. Mr. Brady would like to see you again about five o'clock."

"Did he learn anything definite?" demanded Staveley, and Harry heard his voice tremble.

"Nothing definite," was the reply. "But he thinks he has a clew, and that is what he wants to talk to you about when you can come."

CHAPTER II.

THE BRADYS GO TO FRISCO.

The Bradys went to the Fourth Avenue theater together.

Old King Brady wanted to have a witness to whatever might be said.

Going to the office, Old King Brady presented his card, and inquired for Mr. McDougall, the manager.

"He is on the stage," replied the man in the box office. "I don't think you can see him. We begin our performance at half-past ten."

"I must see him," replied Old King Brady, displaying his shield. "Tell him so, or let me go in."

"I'll send word," said the man in the box-office, and a boy was despatched who returned with the request that the detectives come on the stage.

Mr. McDougall proved to be a young man.

He looked Old King Brady over as if he was some new species of wild animal, and curtly asked what he wanted.

"Information," replied the old detective. "You have a Chinaman named Dr. Ding performing here."

"No. He left last night for the Pacific coast."

"Indeed! This is a police matter. Better be accurate unless you want trouble."

"It is as I tell you. What is the trouble? Do you represent that young man who forced his way behind last night?"

"We do."

"He was either crazy or drunk."

"He was neither one nor the other. This matter will have to receive proper attention, my friend."

Mr. McDougall appeared to "take a tumble."

"All right. Fire away," he said. "I've nothing to conceal."

"You talked with Mr. Staveley, the gentleman in question?"

"I did."

"You know then that in the alleged spirit raised by this Chinese magician he thought he recognized a friend?"

"I do."

"Did he go into details with you in regard to the matter?"

"No. It's all nonsense, Mr. Brady. I don't know how that Chink does his tricks, of course, but the woman is only an allusion."

"What do you mean by an illusion? Doesn't she run across the stage?"

"People are made to believe that such is the case. He has us all hypnotized, that's all."

"I have no faith in that theory. I have seen the trick done. In some manner the magician introduces confederates into his cabinet."

McDougall laughed.

"Oh, very likely you know more about the matter than I do," he exclaimed.

"Listen, and I will tell you the whole story," replied the old detective. "You are a reasonable man, I am sure. I am not holding you in any way responsible for the doings of this Chinese magician."

Old King Brady then related what Charles Staveley had told him.

Manager McDougall began to grow interested.

Old King Brady saw the marked change which came over his face.

"He knows something," thought the old detective.

Then, as he finished up his story, he said:

"And now, Mr. McDougall, you see how serious it all is.

This young man is very certain that he identified the woman. Can you help us out?"

"You put a different face on the matter," was the reply. "It is possible that I can."

"Good!"

"In the first place, let it be understood that there is supposed to be no woman attached to Dr. Ding's company."

"Ah! You say supposed to be. Last night you positively told Mr. Staveley that there was none."

"And I didn't lie to him, either. What I said was true. There is a young man who goes by the name of Ed attached to the company. He is a mysterious sort of person, who never talks under any circumstances. He appears half doped all the time. I confess to you now that I believe him to be a woman in disguise, and that he acts as confederate for Dr. Ding in his materialization act."

"Ah!" said Old King Brady. "That is better. Now we are getting down to business."

"I can do better still for you," replied McDougall. "The doctor's baggage has not all been shipped yet. Among other things are his photographs which stand in the lobby. There is a picture among them which represents Ed doing the sleeping in the air act."

"And you can lend me that picture to show to Mr. Staveley?"

"He can see it here. I'll hold back the box. I can't take the photo out of the frame very well."

"Very well, Mr. Staveley shall call and look at it. I'm very much obliged."

"Hold on! I can do better than that for you, perhaps."

"How?"

"Look at this."

McDougall drew a ring out of his pocket.

It was a plain gold band carrying a round garnet of unusual size.

What made it more marked was the fact that the stone was set upside down.

Instead of the "table," as the flat part of a gem is called, being uppermost, the point appeared.

"Look inside," said McDougall. "There are letters there."

Old King Brady passed the ring over to Harry.

"Look," he said. "Your eyes are better than mine."

"C. S. to E. L.," read Harry. "There is a date here too."

"Make a note of it."

"Charles Staveley to Edith Long would fit all right," said McDougall. "That's what struck me while you were telling the story. Well, I found that ring on the stage last night after Ding went off. I've seen it on Ed's finger—that's all."

Here was what might prove to be a most important clew.

Further questioning of Manager McDougall did not develop anything of interest.

It was now up to Charles Staveley to identify the ring. As we know, Harry started the ball rolling by calling the young man up on the telephone.

At five o'clock Staveley called at the office of the detectives.

The worried look was on his face now for a fact.

"So they have gone to Frisco!" he exclaimed. "How unfortunate! It makes me sick."

"Wait!" replied the old detective. "San Francisco is only five days off. Perhaps I might run out there and look them up."

"But I cannot meet the expense, Mr. Brady."

"Will you stop talking about that? Answer a few questions for me now."

"Well?"

"Did you present Edith Long with an engagement ring?"

"I did!" cried Staveley, his voice trembling.

"Describe it."

"It was a plain band with a round garnet reversed."

"And the inscription?"

"C. S. to E. L., and the date."

"Is this the ring?"

Old King Brady handed out the ring given him by Manager McDougall.

Staveley almost collapsed.

"Then it is no dream!" he gasped. "This is surely the ring I gave Edith."

"I guess you saw the girl all right," replied Old King Brady.

"Where did you get the ring?"

"It was dropped on the stage last night by a young man known as Ed, who acts as an assistant for Dr. Ding."

"Is it so? I saw the fellow!"

"Pity you didn't study the face closer."

"You think——"

"The manager of the Fourth avenue theater believes this Ed to be a woman in disguise."

Staveley grew greatly excited.

He plied Old King Brady with questions.

Realizing his anxiety, the old detective was patient with him, and answered his inquiries as well as he could.

"And are you really willing to go out to San Francisco on this business without a cent from me?" Staveley finally asked.

"Why," replied the old detective, "as it happens, I have got to go out there pretty soon on my own account, and there is nothing to hinder me from going at once."

"If I could only go with you!"

"I will provide the money as far as that goes."

"How kind of you. I must see my employers first. Perhaps they will give me a vacation."

"And now come up to the theater with us and look at a photograph of this Ed," said Old King Brady. "That should definitely settle the question."

And it did.

No sooner had Staveley set eyes upon the picture than he declared that it was the missing girl.

He had a picture of Edith Long in a locket which he offered for comparison.

The resemblance was not to be questioned.

Manager McDougall had become deeply interested now.

He apologized to Staveley for his abruptness the night before.

"You are sure that Dr. Ding has gone directly to San Francisco?" Old King Brady asked.

"Quite sure," was the reply. "He worked east from there, and has now returned direct."

"What are his plans?"

"He contemplates a tour of the Pacific coast, and then goes to Mexico."

"Do you know how long it is since he came from China?"

But this the manager did not know.

That night the Bradys determined to go to San Francisco.

As Old King Brady had stated, they had another case which they intended to take up in that city.

As it was a matter requiring no haste the detectives had fixed no date for their departure.

Now, however, Old King Brady decided that it would be best for them to leave on the following night.

Next morning "Charley" Staveley, as he was familiarly called by his friends, turned up at the office about eleven o'clock.

He was in quite as excited a frame of mind as he had been the night before.

"Great good luck, Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed. "I can go with you without its costing you a cent."

"Good!" said the old detective. "How did you manage to bring that about?"

"Why, I told our Mr. Randall about it, and he immediately informed me that the firm had been for some time contemplating sending me out to the San Francisco branch as assistant manager. He at once said that the arrangement could be made immediately, and that the house would pay all expenses and give me two weeks' vacation after I arrived there."

"The very thing. Be ready then to start to-night."

"Oh, I couldn't do that. It will take a day or two."

"Very well. Then join us there."

"Couldn't you wait?"

"It is something I never do, to postpone a journey. I am superstitious about that."

It was so arranged.

That night the Bradys started for the Pacific coast.

At the end of five days they arrived in San Francisco, and registered at the Lick House, where they usually stop when in the Golden City.

"And now for Dr. Ding," said Old King Brady, as he and Harry came down out of their room.

"I didn't see him advertised on the bill-boards as we came up from the station," Young King Brady replied.

"Nor I. But he may be performing at some second-rate house. We will get the evening Bulletin, and see what we can find."

The paper did the business.

Dr. Ding was billed at the Berkeley theater on Kearney street, a continuous performance house.

The Bradys hurried through supper and went to the place.

They found that the Chinese magician did not go on until about ten o'clock.

"Time enough for us to take a turn through Chinatown," said Old King Brady. "We may be able to pick up a few points there."

So they turned their steps toward Dupont street.

CHAPTER III.

OLD KING BRADY TACKLES DR. DING.

Chinatown in San Francisco is many times larger than the same district in New York.

Here somewhere in the neighborhood of 70,000 Celestials are huddled together.

The district embraces certain blocks on Dupont, Jackson, Pacific, Sacramento, Washington, and other streets as you go up the hill.

It is very different from the little district on Mott, Pell, and Doyers street in New York.

It is, in fact, a bit of old China dropped down in California.

Many of the buildings have fronts in the Chinese style, with broad balconies and huge perpendicular signs displayed.

There are several joss-houses and several theaters.

Some of the restaurants are really elegant in their fittings.

The streets throng with Chinese men and Chinese women of the lower class day and night, whereas in New York to see a Chinese woman on the street is an unheard-of thing.

The Bradys are perfectly familiar with the district, and have many staunch friends among the Chinese.

Upon several of these they now called, particularly the manager of one of the theaters.

None of these people knew Dr. Ding.

The manager had heard of him, however.

He informed the Bradys that the doctor was from Hong Kong, and was more English in his ways than he was Chinese.

As he did not belong to the Chinese actors' guild, or society, he was not recognized.

Whether he had his quarters in Chinatown or was staying at some hotel the manager did not know, but he promised to ascertain.

At ten o'clock the Bradys went to the Berkeley theater. A clog dance was on when they entered, and Dr. Ding came next.

The magician proved to be a small man of not over thirty.

He began operations with an assistant, a mere boy, but to the intense disappointment of the detectives the boy bore no resemblance to the Ed described by the New York manager.

He was manifestly a Chinaman.

It was impossible to mistake him for anything else.

The tricks done were of the most ordinary description.

They were in every way inferior to those of a good Japanese juggler.

But the great trick of all, according to the bills, was the raising of spirits.

For the next night a handcuff trick was announced.

The programme stated that these tricks would be performed by Dr. Ding's assistant, Hip Hop.

When it came to this point the boy rigged up a little cabinet in the middle of the stage.

This consisted of some jointed uprights easily put together, over which a black cloth was thrown.

In the front this cloth was divided in such a way that it could be pushed back on each side like portieres.

A stout old Chinaman wearing a pair of huge horn spectacles now came out and Dr. Ding, who spoke perfect English, introduced him to his audience as Hip-Hop, the "wonderful medium."

"He will now enter the cabinet, ladies and gentlemen!" announced the doctor. "But before he does so I want you all to see that it is absolutely empty."

He threw back the curtains, and displayed the interior.

The old Chinaman now entered the cabinet, and seated himself in a chair, the only object it appeared to contain.

Dr. Ding drew the curtains and instantly a hand and arm was thrust from between them.

The Bradys had front seats, and were able to see the illusion at its best.

The hand appeared to be that of a white woman.

There was a bracelet around the wrist, made of many small white stones.

Whether these were real diamonds or not the detectives were, of course, unable to tell.

The hand was quickly withdrawn, and then two hands appeared.

All in the same instant came two more.

The strange part of it was they were all right hands.

"That's queer business," whispered Harry, at the same time calling Old King Brady's attention to this fact.

"Wax," said Old King Brady. "All fake. It's easy done."

Barbarous music was now heard within the cabinet.

It proceeded apparently from many instruments.

A whole Chinese orchestra seemed to be in operation.

The Bradys could distinguish a cracked drum, the moon banjo, the two-stringed fiddle, and other Chinese instruments.

Dr. Ding stood close to the entrance to the cabinet.

All at once, while the music was at its height, he threw back the curtain.

The music instantly ceased.

There sat old Hip Hop in his chair.

His head was thrown back, and his mouth stood open.

He certainly appeared to be asleep.

During this performance the Chinese boy was invisible.

Dr. Ding dropped the curtain and stepped to one side.

Within two seconds the curtain was thrown aside, and a female form in white darted past the doctor and ran toward the footlights.

The Bradys got a good square look at the face, although the form instantly backed into the cabinet again.

It was the face of the Chinese boy assistant, and no one else.

In a moment the tall figure of a man in Chinese robes came out.

Again the detectives got their look.

The face was manifestly a wax mask.

Their interest ceased then.

Three other forms appeared.

One, purporting to be a little Chinese boy, had the face of the assistant, although how he made himself so small the Bradys could not guess.

The other two were women, one purporting to be an old white woman, the other a negress.

The Bradys stood ready to swear that both wore masks.

This ended the performance of Dr. Ding, except that when he threw open the curtain Hip Hop had vanished.

But then it would have been the easiest thing for him to have gone down through a trap-door.

The Bradys at once left the theater.

"No sign of our missing girl to-night," said Harry, as they passed out on to Kearney street.

"She may be sick," said the old detective. "We shall soon know."

Old King Brady before leaving New York had procured a letter of introduction from Manager McDougall for himself, and another for Harry, under an assumed name.

His own letter was made out in the name of Jacob Schmidt.

It stated that Mr. Schmidt was about to start a theater at Seattle, Washington.

"You stay out, Harry," said Old King Brady. "I'll go in and try my luck with Dr. Ding."

Needless to say, Old King Brady had disguised himself for the occasion.

To accomplish this nothing more was required than an ordinary business suit and a derby hat.

Going around to the stage door the detective inquired for Dr. Ding.

He was informed that the magician had not yet left the theater, and his letter was handed in.

After some little delay word came out that Dr. Ding would presently join him outside.

Another wait followed.

Then came a young man of about thirty, very different

in appearance from the Chinese magician as seen on the stage.

Old King Brady perceived at once that he had a half-breed to deal with.

In his performances the doctor made up to look more Chinese than he really was.

"Where is the man who wanted to see me?" he demanded, in a quick, business-like way.

The door-keeper pointed out Old King Brady, who stepped forward.

"Is this Dr. Ding?" he asked.

"That's me," replied the magician. "What do you want?"

"My name is Schmidt. I am thinking of opening a variety house in Seattle. I want to find out what your terms would be for a week's stand."

"We can't very well talk here. Suppose we step into the cafe?"

"All right. I am with you," replied the old detective.

They passed into the cafe adjoining the theater, and sat down at a table.

Old King Brady was about to order drinks.

"You needn't do that," said the doctor. "I'll smoke a cigar with you, but I never drink anything outside of my own rooms, and very little there."

"A very good rule," replied the old detective, and he gave the order for the cigars.

"I was in front to-night, doctor," he said. "Really, that spirit-raising trick of yours is very wonderful."

"You were interested?"

"Very much so."

"It is the real thing. That old Chink is the greatest medium ever."

"It seemed to me that the forms which appeared were somewhat different from those I saw in New York."

"Ah, you saw us there? They differ each night—that is, nearly every night."

"I should very much like to see that thing done in private. At close range, I mean."

Dr. Ding smiled, and showed his glittering white teeth.

"So would many others," he said.

"I suppose it could be arranged if we could come to terms?"

"It might be; but Hip Hop don't like to do that. You see, it is very exhausting on the nervous system. He prefers to save his power for public exhibitions, and I prefer to have him."

"You speak very good English, doctor."

"Why not? My mother was an English woman, and I was born and brought up in Hong-Kong, where they speak nothing else."

The cigars came, and Old King Brady turned to business.

Dr. Ding named his terms for a week's engagement.

"It may be some weeks before I can get started," said the old detective. "How long do you remain here?"

"I shall be here a month," replied the magician. "After leaving I am booked for San Jose, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and San Diego. It will be fully two months before I could start north."

"Then there will be plenty of time to talk matters over. Where are you stopping, in case I wanted to call on you?"

"Oh, you can see me here any day for the next month," was the evasive reply.

"I shall certainly want to see more of your work. I will be on hand to-morrow night."

Further talk about the proposed Seattle venture followed.

Dr. Ding appeared to be familiar with the Washington metropolis.

He thought there was an opening for such a theater as the old detective talked about.

He finally declared that he must be going, and Old King Brady shook hands and parted with him when they passed out on the street.

Harry was standing near watching them.

The Bradys have a regular code of secret signs.

By means of these they are able to communicate quite freely without attracting attention.

Now, as Old King Brady turned away from the magician Harry got a sign which said:

"Shadow. Join me at the hotel."

Thus Old King Brady was able to walk off briskly in the opposite direction, and leave the work of finding out where the doctor went to in good hands.

It was over an hour before Harry turned up at the Lick House.

Old King Brady was seated in a rocking-chair in his shirt sleeves, smoking his inevitable cigar.

"Well?" he exclaimed. "What luck?"

"I traced him to a house on Stockton street, Governor," replied Harry, throwing aside his hat and coat, for the evening was decidedly warm.

"I thought he would hardly turn up in the heart of Chinatown. Is it a decent place?"

"Oh, decent enough, but it bears a very bad name."

"So? In what way?"

"It has the reputation of being haunted. It had been vacant for a long time before Dr. Ding hired it?"

"Who did you learn that from?"

"A cigar dealer who keeps a store across the street."

"A Chinaman?"

"No; he is a German; a queer old fellow. He evidently believes in the ghosts. It is a large house, and has been altered into two. The other half is to rent."

"So? It might pay us to hire it. Is it furnished?"

"It is, and that was just what I was thinking."

"Furnished for Chinese or white people?"

"For Chinese. It seems that an old Chink bought the property and started to keep a Chinese boarding-house. He was fairly successful until one morning he was found killed. Then his boarders immediately skinned out."

"Ha! So? Was the murderer discovered?"

"No; this was about two years ago, and the place has been vacant ever since practically. Of course, no white man wants it, and the different Chinamen who have tried to live in the place have been scared off by the old man's ghost."

"Are the two houses connected?"

"I believe they are. At least, that is what the cigar man said. Dr. Ding has hired only one half of it."

"Did you find out anything about his family—those who are with him, whatever relation they are supposed to bear to him?"

"Yes, I inquired particularly. There is an old Chinaman and a young one, a Chinese woman, and a young white man."

"Who might be Edith Long?"

"It seemed so to me."

"This must be looked into. The doctor refused to tell me where he lived. It would look as if he might have some special reason for hiring that house."

"What did you think of the man?"

"Well, he is a half-breed, and very intelligent. It is a ticklish case. He may be married to Edith Long if she is really with him. We have got to look the matter up carefully before we strike. The main thing is to get a private interview with the woman and hear what she has to say for herself."

"I am afraid we have got a long job on our hands, Governor."

"It looks so, my boy, but as I can't do any more about it to-night, I think I shall go to bed."

CHAPTER IV.

YOUNG KING BRADY HIRES A HAUNTED HOUSE.

Early on the following morning the Bradys received a telegram from Charles Staveley stating that for business reasons it would be impossible for him to join them for several days.

This satisfied Old King Brady just as well.

The old detective prefers to work with Harry, and never cares for outside help.

"I think," he said, "that we had better try to get you a job in the Berkeley theater as a supe, or something of the sort."

This remark was made to Harry while they sat at breakfast.

"I am ready," was the reply. "I agree with you that the chances of me catching on with the Chinese magician are mighty slim."

"They assuredly are, and even if you could succeed in doing so it might only arouse his suspicions and work against us, whereas if you were just working quietly around the theater you might be able to pick up points, and excite no suspicion whatever."

"How shall we arrange it?"

"I will see my old friend, the chief of police, and find out what he can do for us."

"Meanwhile, suppose I try to get into that house and get a look at the woman?"

"How would you manage?"

"I might pretend to want to buy the property. Perhaps the owner or agent would give me a permit to go through it."

"Better to go to some roofer and get his card."

Harry laughed.

"The old roofer, act!" he exclaimed. "How many times I have had to work that game! Well, perhaps it would be the best way."

"Try it," said Old King Brady. "Meanwhile, I will see what I can do with the chief."

So, immediately after breakfast, the detectives separated.

Harry went to the corner of Market and Kearney streets, where he happened to know that a certain gravel roofing company had their headquarters.

Here he inquired the price of their work, and readily obtained a card.

The next thing was to ascertain the name of the agent for the Stockton street house.

This was found upon the "To Rent" bill on the vacant half of the double house.

Having accomplished this, Harry went to a Kearney street costumer whom the Bradys always patronize when at work in San Francisco, and adopted a complete disguise.

As he turned out of Washington street into Stockton upon returning, he had the satisfaction of seeing Dr. Ding in the act of leaving the house.

Harry sauntered on, and after the doctor had turned the next corner he ascended the steps and rang the bell.

After a brief wait the ring was answered by the young Chinaboy who had acted as assistant to the magician the night before.

Harry tried to talk to him, without avail.

If the boy could speak English he kept the fact to himself.

After a minute he slammed the door in Young King Brady's face.

Another might have gone away or rang the bell again.

Harry, however, waited patiently.

After about five minutes the door opened, and there stood the old Chinaman with the horn spectacles, who had played the part of the medium in the spirit raising trick the night before.

He looked Harry over with one sweeping glance, and said:

"What want?"

"I want to come in and look at the roof," Young King Brady replied, displaying the card, and at the same time he mentioned the agent's name.

"No sabee," said the Chinaman, waving the card away.

"You fixee roof?"

"Yes."

"Den you fixee him bad. Wall is all marked with lain. But no matter. No lain now. Go way."

In California, be it understood, it only rains in the winter.

Between the middle of April and the middle of November no rain ever falls.

"Not much," said Harry. "The agent sent me here. I must see the roof."

It required some persuasion, but at last the old fellow allowed him to enter.

Harry made him understand that he would first have to see the stained walls, and then go on the roof.

The old Chinaman led the way upstairs, and showed him two rooms, shabbily furnished, the walls of which were badly stained.

That the roof was, or recently had been, in a leaky condition there could be no doubt.

Harry now started to open the door of the back room.

"No, no!" cried the old man. "No go in dere."

"But I must see all the rooms."

"No!" roared the Chink, placing his back against the door.

This appeared to be final.

Harry yielded to the inevitable, and ascended to the roof by way of a ladder concealed in the hall closet.

Here he waited a minute to see if the Chinaman would attempt to follow him.

The old man did not come, however, and Harry, having replaced the scuttle, walked about upon the roof.

"This thing is going to prove a fizzle," he said to himself. "What I want to do is to see the inside of that room, but it doesn't look as if I was going to get the chance."

He lay down flat, and leaning over the gutter in the rear, looked down.

The windows of the forbidden room were too low down for him to get a look inside.

One of them was open, and Harry waited a moment, listening.

All at once he caught the sound of a woman's voice.

"Yes, I hear what you say," were the words.

Then followed in detached sentences:

"I don't know who he is.

"No.

"Yes.

"He is not what he pretends to be. He is disguised.

"Yes, you want to beware of him. He is not a roofer.

"Yes; he will interfere with the doctor's plans."

"Great Scott!" thought Harry. "It sounds as though the woman was hypnotized, and someone was questioning her."

There were two voices.

The second was a man's, but he mouthed his words so that Harry could not understand what was being said.

"I'll make a try for it anyway," he muttered. "It is either that or nothing."

He very quietly raised the scuttle, and slipped down the ladder without attempting to close the thing.

The hall was deserted.

With one long stride Harry seized the door knob and turned it.

The door flew back.

There stood the old Chinaman with his hands extended toward a kneeling, boyish figure.

Instantly Harry recognized the Ed of the photograph. That the girl—if it was a girl—was hypnotized there could be no doubt.

But there was no chance for further investigation.

The old Chinaman turned upon him with a roar of rage.

"What for you comee in here, you man!" he shouted.

Whipping out a revolver, he raised it, and covered Young King Brady.

Harry waited for nothing further.

Turning, he went bounding down the stairs.

The Chinaman shouted after him in words which he could not understand.

Nor did he wait to have them interpreted.

Out of the door he went, and hurried away.

"Something done at all events," thought Young King Brady, after he had turned down Washington street and felt comparatively safe. "Now for the agent. I must find out more about that house."

The name of the house agent was given on the bill as Ronk, and his office was on Montgomery street.

Harry soon found himself in Mr. Ronk's presence, and he asked the rent of the vacant side of the house.

"It is thirty dollars a month furnished," said the agent. "But what do you want it for? You wouldn't live there."

"Might," replied Harry. "My father and I want to get a cheap place. We live alone by ourselves. We are away all day. I think the house might suit us."

"If you care to live in among a lot of Chinks."

"That would make no difference to us; but there is one thing I want to ask you about."

"What is that?"

"I am told that those two houses are haunted by a Chinese ghost."

Rook sniffed contemptuously.

"So you have been talking to the neighbors," he said, "and now you know why the place goes so cheap. Yes, that is the talk. I'll be frank with you, for there is no use in being otherwise. If you took the place you wouldn't stay in it."

"You speak as if you believed in the ghost yourself."

"I am no believer in any such nonsense, young man; but I tell you frankly there is something going on in those houses which I don't pretend to understand. Just now I have rented half of the premises to a Chinaman who pretends to be a magician, and who is performing at the Berkeley theater. He has promised to help me solve the mystery. We have had detectives at it off and on, but nothing has ever come of it. The noises go on just the same."

It seemed to Harry, who, by the way, had now resumed

his usual dress, that here was a chance not to be overlooked.

"I am a detective," he said, showing his shield. "I suppose I can say a few words in confidence to you."

"If there is any earthly way of clearing that house of spooks you can rely upon my keeping your confidence," said Ronk.

Harry now handed the agent his card.

"So? One of the Bradys?" the man said. "I have often heard of your firm."

"What we are after is to keep an eye on this Dr. Ding," said Harry. "That is why we want to install ourselves in that other house."

"Why, what do you think he is up to? Anything crooked?"

"We have reason to believe that such is the case."

"But what?"

"I am not prepared to state what Old King Brady's suspicions are. We will pay a month's rent in advance."

"Oh, you can go there. I see no objection. I'd like to know more about this Dr. Ding."

"And so would we. We propose to know more, too. Can you tell me under what circumstances he came to hire that place?"

"Certainly. It is no secret. He came to me of his own accord, and told me that he had heard of those houses being haunted, and that he thought he could lay the ghosts. Of course, we had a lot of talk over the matter. In the end I agreed to let him try."

"And what came of it?"

"Oh, I haven't seen him since."

"Then it is agreed that we take the house for a month?"

"Yes, if you wish."

Harry paid over the thirty dollars, and left the agent.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF TRANQUILITY.

Young King Brady met his chief at the Lick House later on.

"Well, it is all arranged," said Old King Brady. "You are to report to the manager at three o'clock."

"Does he understand why?"

"Not at all. He knows you are a detective, but he doesn't know who you are there to watch. The chief simply ordered him to put you on, and of course he did it. The house is violating the fire law every night it runs, so you see the police have a little pull in that quarter."

"All right. I'll be on hand. Now, Governor, hear my story. I've seen the girl."

"The deuce! That's luck."

"Perhaps I put it too broadly. I have seen a young man who looks exactly like Ed's picture. That might be better."

"Explain."

Harry told the story.

"You have done well," said Old King Brady. "I am

very glad you engaged the house; the only thing is, I hope that man Ronk don't give us away."

"I'm sure he won't, and I am sure you would think so if you could see the man."

"All right. We'll put in the night there. It is very strange that Dr. Ding should go straight to that house after being absent from Frisco for months."

"Looks as if he must have known something about it before."

"It does, indeed."

"Did you ask the agent if he had ever seen our Chinese magician before?"

"No; I didn't think of that."

"Well, it will all develop in good time. Let's go around there now. I suppose you have got the keys?"

"Yes. The agent gave them to me."

"Come on, then; we will see what sort of a place we have struck. Did he tell you what kind of business this particular ghost was supposed to do?"

"He said that strange noises were heard, and sometimes lights were seen. That is all he seemed to know about it."

"We will see for ourselves. Something will come of it, I am sure. Are there doors connecting with the other house?"

"I didn't ask."

"You should have done so, then. But come; we will do our own investigating right now."

The detectives now went up on Stockton street.

Dr. Ding's house looked to be as deserted as the other.

The blinds were all closed, and through the slats they could see that the curtains were drawn down behind them.

A strange musty smell pervaded the place.

Entering the parlor, Old King Brady's first move was to raise the window and let in a breath of fresh air.

The two parlors were scantily furnished with some semblance to the Chinese style.

This furniture had belonged to the murdered Chinaman, so Mr. Ronk informed Harry.

There were two handsome screens and an inlaid table of some value.

As for the rest, it was such stuff as one might pick up in a cheap department store.

Upstairs the bedrooms were similarly furnished.

There were no beds, but instead each room was provided with at least one bamboo couch, such as Chinamen of the better class usually sleep on.

On both floors were doors communicating with the adjoining house.

These doors were locked, and neither of the keys given to Harry by the agent fitted.

"Never mind," said Old King Brady. "We can easily open them with our skeleton keys when the right time comes."

Nothing of any interest was revealed in this hasty examination.

They left the house and went to dinner.

Later Old King Brady started off for Chinatown again, to make a second attempt to learn something definite about Dr. Ding, while Harry went to keep his appointment at the Berkeley theater.

"If you want to find out about a magician go to one in the business," the old detective said to himself. "There must be some ghost-raiser in this town."

He spoke from knowledge.

The Chinese are all believers in the return of the spirits of the dead.

The only trouble was in this case to find such a person.

The Chinese keep profoundly silent upon all such matters, and for a white man to penetrate the charmed circle of these sacred mysteries is next to impossible.

Up on Sacramento street Old King Brady had an acquaintance, an aged Chinaman who had accumulated a large fortune in his day as an importer of Chinese goods.

This was Moy Hop.

Moy's house was a two-story stone structure, which he occupied alone with his family.

It was in the dirtiest part of Chinatown, being directly opposite the market stalls on the right-hand side of Sacramento street below Dupont, as you go down the hill.

To look at the place outside one would never guess that it was anything more than a Chinese tenement.

But once inside the door one is amazed to find himself in a room furnished in princely style, after the manner of the Chinese.

Old King Brady ascended the steps and opened the door.

A little bell rang loudly as he entered.

This was Moy Hop's store.

Its counters and fittings were of solid mahogany, and most elaborately carved.

Upon the shelves were boxes and packages.

These contained samples of the goods the old merchant dealt in.

Moy Hop was a wholesaler strictly. There were no goods displayed.

Called by the bell out of the back room, an aged Celestial with a long drooping mustache came out.

We once heard a New Yorker remark that he never saw a gray-headed Chinaman.

Scarce they may be in New York, but they are plentiful enough in California. Moy Hop's hair was almost white.

"Ah! Mister Blady! Back again to Flisco!" he exclaimed.

He did not remove his hands from his sleeves.

Chinamen don't like to shake hands, and the old-timers among them never do it.

"Sit down," he continued. "You shall drink tea with me—yes? So glad to see you once more."

"And I am glad to see you, Moy," replied the old detective, dropping into a costly teak-wood chair. "It is several years since we have met."

"So? Yes, dlat is so. Next time you come mebbe I no be alibe," replied the old merchant tranquilly.

He took a chair on the opposite side of a little table, and tinkled a silver bell.

A boy appeared, and Moy Hop having said something to him in Chinese he left the room and presently returned with a tray.

Upon the tray was a tea-pot and two tiny cups of exquisitely thin china.

There was also a plate of candied ginger, some little cakes, and some Chinese nuts.

With the Chinese of the better class no business can be transacted without the utmost deliberation.

The offering of refreshments to the honored guest is with them the whole thing.

Old King Brady understands all this.

He drank his tea and nibbled at the ginger and nuts.

Meanwhile he and Moy continued to pay, each other compliments.

The tray removed, cigarettes were produced.

Moy Hop was then ready for business.

Old King Brady put the question:

"Do you know Dr. Ding?"

Moy had heard of him.

He did not reckon him a Chinaman, however.

Hip Hop, his associate, he knew nothing about.

It began to look as if no information of any value was likely to be forthcoming.

Old King Brady then shifted his tactics, and began to inquire about the Stockton street house.

The moment he mentioned it, Moy Hop's whole manner changed.

He inquired the number, and then abruptly asked why the old detective wanted information about the place.

Old King Brady told him the whole story.

Moy Hop was one of the most highly respected Chinamen in California, and far above the suspicion of being connected with any of the intrigues of the race.

When Old King Brady had finished his story he pondered for a few minutes, and said:

"And now, Blady, so I tellee you slometing you swear not to eber tell dlat I tellee you?"

"You can rely on me."

"Belly well. You no know my people. No Melican man can eber know. Some of dem takee wife dlat dey gettee tired of. Some hab old fader or mudder dlat won't die. Dley get sick, dley keepee sick many days, dere is no help. To die in a man's house is unlucky, so sometimes dley send 'em away. I would not do such a ting, Blady, but some would, you lunderstand?"

"Yes. I am following you closely, Moy."

"Belly well. Some time Chinees undertaker he keepee what we callee a house of tranquility. I get de word light? I takee heap tubble to get de word allee light. Dlat's allee light. House of tranquility."

"And they take the dying people there and let them die so that there can come no bad luck from letting them die in their own house?"

"Yes. Lundertaker he takee dem. He fixe dlat. So dey die, den he bury dem from he shop—you sabee?"

"Yes. I understand you."

"Good! Dlat man—dlat Chinaman what was murdered in dlat house on Stockton street, he work with lunder-taker. Him namee Jim Ching. Lundertaker him habee shop on China Alley. He 'flaid of dlectives. Him house of tranquility lunder ground. So anybody sick dley go to Jim Ching's; he put dem in house of tranquility—sabee?"

"Yes."

"Well, so. Somebody go dlat way. Somebody else no likee, so he fix Jim Ching—see?"

"I see. And the place was given up then?"

"Yair. Dlat so."

"Have you any idea who did the job, Moy?"

"No, no. Don't askee too much. Allee I say is ddis: so Dr. Ding takee dlat house den he habbee somebody what he puttee in house of tranquility. Sabee? Dlat one ting sure."

"But is it so sure that everybody who is put in the house of tranquility is really in a dying condition, Moy?"

The old Chinaman shrugged his shoulders.

"How I can tell?" he demanded. "I no know eby-ting. But I tellee you ddis much. So you wantee dlat white girl what you tink may be mallied to Dr. Ding, you better get her out of dlat house blame quick, or she go to de house of tranquility. Den you neber see her again."

Now, this was not the first rumor Old King Brady had heard of the house of tranquility.

Never before, however, had his business brought him in contact with it.

Whether such a thing exists in New York is doubtful.

At all events, Old King Brady never heard of one there.

The old detective left Moy Hop's, deeply impressed by what he had heard, but he did not doubt that the wily old Chink could have told him more if he had chosen to do so.

Old King Brady was sure that it was so after a visit which he paid then to the notorious China alley.

Here he found that directly in the rear of the Stockton street house was a Chinese undertaker's shop, just as Moy Hop had intimated.

That there are many underground ways and secret chambers in San Francisco's Chinatown everybody knows.

Old King Brady went back to the Lick House well satisfied with his afternoon's work.

CHAPTER VI.

YOUNG KING BRADY TURNS ASSISTANT TO DR. DING.

Harry came in about half-past five o'clock.

"Is it all right?" demanded the old detective.

"Oh, yes; I am engaged," was the reply.

"When do you go on?"

"To-night."

"There was no objection made?"

"None at all."

"Were you questioned as to who you were going behind the scenes to watch?"

"The manager said to me 'I suppose it's those Chinks you are after?'"

"What did you tell him?"

"Didn't say anything. I only laughed, and made him no answer."

"Well, do your best."

"Do we sleep in that house to-night?"

"We watch there. I doubt if there is very much sleeping done."

"Shall you go anyhow? I mean if for any reason I should be prevented from coming?"

"Yes, I think I shall."

"All right. When will you go?"

"Oh, about eleven o'clock. You can't get there much before."

"Shall you be in the theatre?"

"No, I think I will leave that end of the business in your hands, Harry. I've got some letters to write."

"Correct. I'm to be on hand at the theatre at seven."

Promptly on time Young King Brady turned up at the Berkeley theater.

Here he was turned over to the stage manager.

It sometimes seems as if the Bradys are exceptionally favored in their work.

Harry was put at cleaning up some old furniture which was to be used in one of the numbers of the evening.

He had not been working half an hour at it when Dr. Ding came on to the stage.

The Chinese magician brushed past him, and Harry noticed that he was laboring under some excitement.

He asked for the manager, and later Harry saw them standing together talking, and both seemed to be a good deal excited.

In a minute the magician entered his dressing-room and closed the door.

Five minutes later Harry was told to report to the manager in his private office.

He found the man—Rider was his name—busily writing.

"I'll see you in half a minute," he said. "Just wait."

He sealed his envelope, rang a bell, and gave it to the boy who answered to mail.

Then, turning to Harry, the following conversation ensued.

"Let's see, what is your name again?"

"Jack Wilson," replied Young King Brady.

"Oh, yes. Now, look here, I'm a particular friend of the chief of police. I don't want to pry into your business or his. When I asked you if you were to watch this Chinese magician, Dr. Ding, you didn't answer, and it was perfectly proper that you should not if you wanted to keep your business to yourself."

The manager paused.

"You don't answer now," he said.

"Well, I was waiting for you to finish."

"I was going to say that if you are I may be able to help you. I care nothing about these Chinks. As a juggler this

Dr. Ding is decidedly bum; as for his spirit-raising, the papers are all making fun of it, and—well, if he was to leave me to-night I shouldn't care such a deuce of a lot."

"I see he came alone to-night," remarked Harry.

"He did," replied the manager. "He is in trouble. That boy he has ran away. The old Chink who goes into the cabinet is sick, so he claims. Probably on a hop spree. He says he can't show to-night unless I can get him a helper, and he can't do his spirit-raising trick anyway, unless he can get the old man here."

"Well?"

"Well, young feller, it's none of my business what your business is, as I said before, but if you want to be the magician's helper, why, now is your chance."

"I should like that. But I want to ask a question first."

"All right. Let her go."

"Where do those spirits come from? Are there confederates?"

"Blamed if I know. I've watched two or three nights. I never seen anyone go into the cabinet. But the forms what come out all wear masks except that Chinaboy. There is no mistaking him."

"How did the old Chink get out of the cabinet at the end when he disappears? You see I was in front last night."

"Oh, he goes down through a trap door under the cabinet."

"Probably the boy went up the same way."

"No, he didn't; but say, the old Chink is made up fat, of course. The boy might be under his robes for all I know. They reach to the floor."

"Probably that is it. Well, I'll take my chance and go ahead."

"I thought so," said Mr. Rider. "I knew blamed well it was the Chinks you were here to watch. Come along, and I'll introduce you to this Dr. Ding."

They went to the magician's dressing-room, and when Dr. Ding opened the door in response to Mr. Rider's knock there stood old Hip Hop inside.

The old man's face looked yellow and drawn.

It was easy to imagine that he really might be sick.

"Here's a young fellow who is willing to do his best to help you out, doctor," said Mr. Rider. "You say it requires no particular experience. He is a good fellow, and will do his best."

Dr. Ding looked Harry over in silence.

Then he said something to Hip Hop in Chinese, and they talked for a few minutes.

"You are willing to do just as I tell you?" demanded Dr. Ding.

"Sure," replied Harry. "I am ready to help Mr. Rider out any way I can."

"You live here?"

"Yes."

"You got friends here?"

"I'm alone in the world if that is what you mean."

"If you suit me will you stay with me to the end of my

engagement? Will you come and stay at my house? It will cost you nothing. I can teach you tricks."

"How about the pay?"

"I give you fifteen dollars a week."

"That ought to suit. He only gets ten with me," put in Mr. Rider, anxious to help Harry out.

"You live in Chinatown?" demanded Young King Brady.

"I live on Stockton street. I've got a house to myself. You will be comfortable there," was the reply.

"I might try it. I shall want some time to myself during the day, though."

"Oh, that will be all right," said the doctor. "Then it is a go?"

"As far as I am concerned it is."

"Then I will try you. Thank you, Mr. Rider. You will leave the young man with me."

The manager withdrew.

"Sit down in that chair," said Dr. Ding. "I'll be back in a minute. Then I will tell you what you have to do." He left the dressing room and closed the door.

Meanwhile Hip Hop stood staring at Harry, who dropped into the chair.

Not a word did he utter.

It was very awkward.

"You speak English?" asked Young King Brady, after a moment.

He was beginning to feel very strangely.

There was a swimming, dizzy feeling in his head for which he was unable to account.

No answer came from Hip Hop.

Still he continued to stare at Harry through those big horn spectacles.

"Great Scott! I believe the old wretch is trying to hypnotize me," thought Young King Brady. "Blest if I want to stand for that!"

It was written in the book of fate that Harry would have to stand for it whether he liked it or not.

All at once Hip Hop, who was in full Chinese dress, threw out both hands, and leaned forward, uttering some words in Chinese.

Here was hypnotism with a vengeance.

The sensations which Harry experienced were much like those of a man taking a dose of ether.

He sprang out of his chair, and that was the last he remembered until he found himself seated in that same chair later in the evening, as we shall relate.

Old King Brady must be relied upon for the rest.

After Harry left the old detective went right at his letters, and finished them up in short order.

It then occurred to him that after all it might be a good idea to attend the performance again.

So he strolled down Kearney street, and once more bought a ticket for the vaudeville show.

As upon the previous evening, he was fortunate enough to get a front seat in the orchestra circle.

Old King Brady sat through the first numbers, scarcely heeding what was going on.

At last it was Dr. Ding's turn.

The Chinese magician came on dressed in an elaborate costume of red and yellow silk.

He wore the mandarin's hat with a big yellow fake jewel attached to the crown.

His red silk blouse was gilt-embroidered all over, with dragons and strange creatures.

A pair of yellow silk breeches came down to his ankles, and a false pig-tail hung down his back.

With him Harry came upon the stage, dressed in a tight-fitting suit of blue silk, perfectly plain, with the exception of a row of Chinese characters in gold running down the breast.

Standing in the wing the detective could see old Hip Hop.

The man wore an elaborate silk robe, which reached to the floor.

He appeared to be fatter than ever.

There he remained through the acts which followed, his eyes constantly fixed upon Harry, no matter what part of the stage he was on.

The tricks which followed were of too ordinary a description to call for any special mention here.

The only real good thing was the knife throwing.

And we need scarcely say that Harry was the mark.

Old King Brady was duly amazed when Harry first came on.

"Good heavens! The boy has got next with a vengeance!" he thought. "I wonder how this all came about?"

He tried to communicate with his partner by the usual secret signs.

But Harry would not respond.

He paid not the slightest attention to Old King Brady.

"Can the footlights blind him, or what does it mean?" thought the old detective. "He must surely see me. I can't understand it—ha! What if it should be?"

It suddenly occurred to the old detective that he had heard somewhere that the assistants of Japanese jugglers usually perform their tricks while in the hypnotic trance.

Might it not be so with the Chinese jugglers also?

Harry's eyes were wide open, but they were fixed and staring.

After observing his partner for a few minutes Old King Brady became convinced that he actually was hypnotized.

"Great Scott! I don't like this for a little bit," he said to himself. "But I can't do anything about it now."

When the knives went flying about Harry's head the old detective shut his eyes.

He just could not stand it.

He was thankful when the trick was over.

Then came the spirit-raising act.

Harry put up the cabinet.

Dr. Ding spoke to him in Chinese.

Harry seemed to understand what was said, and that was the strange part of it.

Once the cabinet was up Harry retired.

Old King Brady, who was taking in everything, noticed that Hip Hop disappeared at the same time.

And the old detective's sharp eyes caught on to something else after that.

When Hip Hop came on the stage in his Chinese robe a minute later Old King Brady saw that he had a strange, wabbling walk.

Closely watching, he caught sight of a pair of Chinese shoes under the robe which certainly could not have belonged to the old Chink.

They were turned backwards.

It was the heels which Old King Brady saw.

"By jove, I believe Harry is crouching underneath that old fellow's robe!" thought Old King Brady.

Probably it was so.

The actual truth of the matter neither of the detectives ever knew.

And then, after Hip Hop was seated, and the first form came out, it was that of a woman in white.

Again Old King Brady obtained a good look at the face.

It was Harry's face.

Of that there could not be the slightest doubt.

Once again he saw it when a mere boy appeared.

Here was something strange again.

How Harry could reduce his size to appear as he did the old detective was utterly at a loss to guess.

But it was Harry, all right.

There was positively no mistaking the face.

As for the rest, the faces were all masked.

The act ended with the old colored woman who was seen the night before.

The audience received it all coldly.

Old King Brady now hurried around to the stage door, determined to meet Harry when he came out.

He had about twenty minutes to wait.

Meanwhile Young King Brady had come back to life again, to find himself seated in the same chair in Dr. Ding's dressing-room.

It seemed but a second since he sprang out of it.

Of all that had happened in the interim he had not the faintest recollection.

CHAPTER VII.

YOUNG KING BRADY RESCUES DR. DING.

When Young King Brady came to his senses he was alone in the dressing-room.

He actually thought for the moment that he had been seized with a fainting fit.

Then, as the recollection of what had happened became clearer he was sure that it was not so.

"They have had me hypnotized," he said to himself. "But they could not fully control me. They had to give it up.

Just then the door opened, and Dr. Ding came into the room.

"Well, how do you feel?" he asked. "All right?"

"Why, yes, I am all right," stammered Harry. "You were not able to use me, then."

"Not able to use you! Why, of course we used you."

"Is the performance over?"

"Sure, it's all over. You did first-rate, too."

"But——"

"Oh, you don't believe it. But it is so. You have just finished dressing. Are you ready to go with me?"

"You have had me hypnotized, Dr. Ding."

"Of course I have. I could not possibly have used you in any other way. It won't hurt you a bit, though."

"I don't like it so very well."

"Rats! Hip Hop is the best hypnotizer on earth. His subjects never feel any bad after effects. Come out and have a drink with me and forget it, Jack."

Dr. Ding then hurried Harry out by the stage door.

Old King Brady stood in the alley.

The old detective was slightly disguised, but Harry knew him at once.

He gave him a secret sign which signified:

"I am going home with this man."

This was followed by another, which meant:

"I will try and communicate with you to-night."

So Old King Brady let him go his way, not feeling certain whether Harry had been hypnotized or not.

They went directly to the Stockton street house.

Here the door was opened by Dr. Ding's latch-key, and Harry was taken to what had originally been the back parlor of the house when it was occupied by a single family of white people, for whose accommodation it was originally built.

Here a young Chinese girl sat, doing embroidery work.

She looked up curiously, and at a word from Dr. Ding immediately left the room.

"That's my wife," said the magician. "I would introduce you, but it is not our custom, as maybe you know. She would only make it hot for me later on if I did. Now I'll show you your room."

He conducted Harry upstairs, and, to his surprise, the room into which he was ushered was the mysterious rear chamber where he had seen "Ed" in the morning.

There was a bed here, and the room was well furnished in the American style.

Dr. Ding called Harry's attention to this.

"This is the best room in the house," he said. "You see, Jack, I am not trying to make a Chink out of you. There would be no use in that. Now, make yourself at home, and when the bell rings come down to supper. Will you be going out again to-night?"

"Not to-night. I don't know as I care to eat supper so late."

"Oh, it won't hurt you. We always do. Just a bowl of chop suey and some of our Chinese cheese. I want you to be comfortable here."

Dr. Ding left him then.

"What have they done with the girl?" thought Young King Brady. "It seems mighty strange that they should have picked out this room for me."

He looked around.

A heavy curtain hung against the wall, concealing a niche.

Harry pushed it aside, and to his great satisfaction found that it concealed one of the doors leading into the other house.

"This ought to give me a chance to talk to the Governor before the night is over," he thought.

A few minutes later the bell rang.

Harry went downstairs.

He was met by a stupid-looking Chinaman, who led him into a small dining-room in an extension.

Here he was served alone to chop suey, cheese, tea, sweetmeats, and cigarettes.

The Chinaman waited upon him in silence.

Nobody else appeared, but when he got up to the room again there was Dr. Ding waiting for him.

"Did you get enough to eat?" he asked.

"Plenty," replied Harry.

"Good. And you are going right to bed?"

"Right away now."

"Would you mind going around on Dupont street with me?"

"Certainly not."

"I have to buy some things, and to tell you the truth, I am being followed by enemies in this town. If they see a white man with me they will think you are a detective and leave me alone."

"Does he suspect me?" thought Young King Brady. "Is this a trick?"

There seemed to be no chance to refuse in any case, so Harry put on his hat and they went around into Chinatown.

Dr. Ding certainly acted like a man who was afraid.

He kept looking behind, and kept very close to Young King Brady.

He went into one or two of the shops, leaving Harry outside.

"I guess it is all right," he said at last. "But the worst part of it—that is, the most dangerous part—is to come. I have to stop at a place in the Alley."

"China Alley?"

"Yes. I don't actually know that I am in any danger, but I think so. I'm going in, and if I don't come out again in five minutes you come in after me. Here, you can put this thing on."

He handed Harry a battered old fireman's badge, wherever he obtained it.

"You are not afraid?" he asked.

"No," replied Harry. "I'm not afraid; but suppose I don't find you—what then?"

Dr. Ding looked puzzled for a moment.

"I don't think there is any danger," replied the doctor. "They would like to do me, but they wouldn't dare."

They hurried around on China Alley then.

The place which Dr. Ding went into was the undertaker's shop immediately in the rear of the Stockton street house.

Harry did not know what business was being carried on behind the door through which Dr. Ding passed.

Old King Brady had taken pains to inquire, or he would have been equally in the dark.

It was unpleasant waiting there.

Chinamen went crowding by him.

Some jostled him, and seemed disposed to pick a quarrel.

The minutes dragged out, but still Dr. Ding did not appear.

Harry did not like to look at his watch, so he noted the lapse of time by counting.

"Time's up," he thought at last. "I suppose I shall have to go in or give the whole business up."

He opened the door and stepped into an unlighted room.

Light streamed from a room beyond, however, and from there he heard loud, angry voices talking in Chinese.

Probably his footsteps were heard, for a Chinaman suddenly darted through the dividing door.

"What want? Go 'way!" he shouted.

At the same instant Dr. Ding's voice made itself heard.

"Help! Help!"

Harry rushed forward, flashing the shield.

But the Chinaman threw himself in front of him, and spread out his arms.

Quick as a wink Harry whipped out his revolver, and thrust it in the fellow's face.

The man jumped aside, and tried to get in behind him.

But Harry was good for him.

Wheeling around, he dealt him a blow between the eyes which sent him sprawling.

Meanwhile Dr. Ding had called for help again.

Harry dashed into the back room, to find the magician putting up a brave fight against two Chinamen who were barring his way to the door.

The sight of Harry's revolver sent them on the run through a rear door, which appeared to lead out into the yard behind the house.

"Come! We want to get out of here!" cried Harry. "I don't stand for a Chinese mix-up. I've done as I agreed."

They ran through the outer room to the alley.

The Chink felled by Harry still lay sprawling on the floor, and seemed to be quite unconscious.

"Come! Come quick!" panted the doctor, whose coat was torn half off his back. "They'll kill me yet."

He ran down the alley toward Washington street.

But Young King Brady was not running.

China Alley is one of the most notorious places in San Francisco, and at night is crowded with Chinks.

"I'll only get a mob at my heels if I start to run," thought Harry.

He pushed on at a rapid walk, occasionally looking behind him.

If he was being followed he could not see it.

In a moment he was on Washington street, and he hurried on to Stockton.

Dr. Ding was waiting for him at the corner.

He looked to be the worst-scared man Harry had seen in many a long day.

"I am sure I am ever so much obliged to you for helping me out, Jack," he said. "Only for you they would have done me up."

"I did one of them up, all right, then."

"That's what you did, the snoozer! And I shall have to pay for it yet. But that can't be helped."

"I did just as you told me."

"Yes, and you did just right. If you hadn't jumped in as you did likely I'd be a dead one now."

"What is it all about? Have you had a quarrel?"

Dr. Ding shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, you wouldn't know if I was to tell you," he said.

"We Chinks are a queer people. To be sure, I'm only half a one, but that makes it so much the worse for me when I try to do business with them. Come on."

They hurried on toward the house.

"You won't say anything about this, Jack?" asked the doctor.

"Sure not. Who should I talk to?"

"Hip Hop."

"Who's he?"

"The old man who hypnotized you."

"Oh! He never spoke a word to me. Can he speak English at all?"

"Well enough when he wants to, but he won't do it as a rule. Come in now, and go to bed."

Dr. Ding was trembling all over.

"You can find your way up to the room, I suppose?" he said, as they entered the house.

"Sure," replied Harry. "Good-night."

"Good-night," said the doctor. "Oh, say?"

"Well?"

"If you hear any row in the night you had better stop quiet, unless I call you, in which case come."

"Right."

"Even if you have to break the door down—see?"

"Will the door be locked on me?"

"Well, I certainly shan't lock it, but someone else might."

But in spite of this he did lock the door.

After Harry got into the room he distinctly heard Dr. Ding come sneaking up the stairs and turn the key.

CHAPTER VIII.

INVESTIGATIONS IN DR. DING'S HOUSE.

Old King Brady got to the Stockton street house just after Harry went out with Dr. Ding.

In fact, if he had been a minute later he would have seen them leaving together, but as it was he did not know that they had left.

The old detective went upstairs and lay down on one of the bamboo couches.

He made up his mind that it would hardly be best to make a move before one o'clock, unless he had particular reason for doing so.

After lying there about half an hour, he heard voices out on the street, and recognized Harry.

Looking out of the window, he saw Young King Brady come in with Dr. Ding.

"They seem to be getting pretty thick, all right," he said to himself. "I only wish I could see the boy and have a few minutes' talk with him. If he really was hypnotized by that old Chink he will have to cut it all out, for I won't stand for that."

He returned to the couch and sat there for about twenty minutes, smoking.

It was now a quarter to one, and Old King Brady was beginning to think that it was almost time to make some move when he suddenly heard a knocking in the room behind.

Hurrying in there, he drew out his little electric dark-lantern, and stood listening, for he had been sitting in the dark.

Presently the knocking came again.

It was on the other side of the door which divided this house from the one beyond.

"That should be Harry," thought the old detective. "But we shall soon know."

He gave a peculiar answering knock.

This was part of the secret signal code.

The reply was prompt and correct.

"It's the boy," Old King Brady said to himself. "He wants me. We must see what can be done with the skeleton keys."

He produced his bunch, and in a minute had the door open.

There stood Harry, fully dressed, and looking pretty well alarmed.

"I'm thankful we have got together at last," he said. "There is strange work going on below, just as sure as we are standing here."

"What?"

"Didn't you hear the racket a minute ago?"

"Not a sound."

"Were you in the front room?"

"Yes."

"Well, this was in the back room, downstairs. Directly under me."

"What did it sound like?"

"Like a fight. I heard chairs knocked over, and the scuffling of feet. It sounded like a knock-down and drag-out to me, only there was no outcry."

"What shall we do? This is your end of the racket. Shall we go down and see what it's all about?"

"I'm locked in here, Governor. Whatever has happened has happened, and all is quiet now. I guess we may as well wait a minute while I put you wise on what has happened to-night."

"Go ahead."

"Shall we stay here or go into the other house?"

"Stay here. We can listen better. You are sure the door is locked?"

"Yes. I tried it just a minute before I knocked for you. I would have called you before, but it is only just a little while since I came in. I thought I would wait a few minutes and see how the cat jumped."

"Go on! Hold, though! Have you seen anything more of Ed?"

"No. This was the room I saw him in this morning. Whoever he or she may actually be I believe they have taken him or her away."

"That's a bad job, too. But go on! Let's hear all about it. Be as quick as you can."

Harry hurried through his story.

"This looks serious," said Old King Brady then. "It would seem as if Dr. Ding was bucking the Highbinders or something of the sort. One thing is certain; you must not go back to that theater. I will not have you put in the condition I saw you in to-night."

"What! You were there, then?"

"I was."

"Tell me all about it."

Old King Brady now proceeded to tell his end of the story.

"Then I must have been under Hip Hop's robes!" exclaimed Harry. "I can scarcely believe it."

"I guess you were there, all right."

"I'd like to understand this business better."

"You never will, then. These Chinks give nothing away. But we must get busy. This House of Tranquility business is a new one on me. From what you say about Dr. Ding introducing you to a Chinese wife, I am inclined to believe that he has put this unfortunate girl into the hands of the wretches who run that place; that he intends to get rid of her that way."

"Governor, what ever shall we do? If, as I suspect, Dr. Ding's enemies have got him, and have carried him off, the question is what move will they make against me?"

"Impossible to tell."

"I think you had better consent to let me drift along with the tide."

"That means you are willing to be hypnotized again."

"It hasn't hurt me any. You could keep a watch. It would be the quickest way to arrive at the truth."

Old King Brady pondered for a few minutes, and then said:

"Let's keep quiet a few minutes, and see what happens. After that, if all is still we will take a turn through the house and see what we can find."

For nearly an hour the Bradys remained talking in whispers.

If there were ghosts in these mysterious houses they certainly did not seem disposed to show themselves.

It was now about half-past two, and the old detective declared his intention of going downstairs.

"Of course, I don't propose to break open any doors," he said, "but we will just take a quiet turn around, and see what comes of it."

Harry was ready.

They now tackled the door.

The key was in the lock, but Old King Brady produced a tool which enabled him to turn it on a line with the opening and push it out.

They waited for a few minutes to see if the noise of its fall was going to produce results.

With his skeleton keys the old detective now opened the door, and both started on their mission.

They began by softly trying the doors on the floor where they were.

None of these were locked.

Each room they entered proved to be vacant.

The large room in front showed evidences of having been occupied by a Chinese woman.

It also looked as though everything of any value had been hastily gathered up and taken away.

"I am very much inclined to believe that Dr. Ding's wife is standing in with his enemies," said the old detective. "I should say she had run away."

They tip-toed down the stairs.

The first room they entered was the former parlor, into which Harry had been taken when he entered the house with the doctor.

Here there was no change in the appearance of things, but when they passed into the room beyond they found the evidence they sought.

Chairs lay overturned, and a table was pushed over into one corner.

From this a valuable Chinese vase had fallen, and lay in fragments upon the floor.

Dr. Ding's hat and coat were upon a chair near a bamboo couch.

A blanket lay upon the floor near by.

"They pulled the doctor off of that couch, all right," said Old King Brady. "There cannot be much doubt but what the man was carried off. Now to see if he was taken to the street or was disposed of by some secret way."

"Shall we finish up the search here?"

"Every room must be taken in, Harry. I begin to think there is nobody at all in the house."

And to cut it short, so it proved.

The Bradys went everywhere, even to the cellar.

Not a trace of anyone could they find.

Nor were they at first able to discover by what route Dr. Ding had been spirited away.

The outer doors were all locked and bolted on the inside, however.

This seemed to indicate that the doctor's mode of exit had been a secret one.

If Old King Brady had dared to light the gas something might have been disclosed.

It was hard working with nothing better to aid them than a dark lantern.

"It is probably through some secret passage opening out of the cellar that they took him," the old detective said at last. "Let us return there, Harry, and make a thorough search."

"It looks to me as though everybody in the house must have been against the doctor," said Young King Brady. "They could not have all been carried off."

"So it would seem."

"Just look at old Hip Hop! Why, he weighs a ton."

"Exactly. It may be that he is at the bottom of this plot against Dr. Ding. You never can tell about these Chinamen. There are so many cliques and secret societies among them that—ha! Look here! Were we blind that we did not see this before?"

The detectives had returned to the cellar now, and were examining the walls.

It would have taken a pretty keen-sighted man to observe on the fly what Old King Brady now called out about.

It is not an easy thing to get building stone in San Francisco, where everything is sand.

Of course, for the better class of structures it is always used, being brought in from the outside.

But in the case of the old frame houses downtown, which were built in the fifties, the foundation walls are usually of brick, or even wood.

Where brick was used the inside of the cellar walls is usually wainscotted with rough boards.

It was so in this cellar.

Old King Brady pointed to the board floor.

Here the boarding had been slightly scraped.

It looked as if something had been dragged over it.

"There's your secret door, Harry," said the old detective. "See, the thing has sagged. It dragged over the floor when they opened it."

"Guess you are right."

"Your eyes are sharper than mine. Flash your lantern up and down there."

"There is certainly a door here, Governor."

"So I think. See if you can't find the secret spring."

Harry continued his examination for a few minutes, and then whipped out his jack-knife.

Inserting the blade in a crack between two boards, he gave a slight pry, and a narrow door flew back.

"Not even locked!" muttered Old King Brady. "Well, boy, here we have our road to the House of Tranquility, if I don't greatly mistake."

A narrow passage boarded up on all sides extended underground in the direction of Dupont street.

Chinatown in San Francisco holds many such secrets, as the police and detectives well know.

In fact, the Bradys themselves have been the means of unearthing several of them in their time.

"Do we follow it?" questioned Harry.

"Hark!" was the reply. "It seems to me that I hear footsteps!"

"You're right!"

The pat-pat of Chinese slippers could be distinctly heard.

"Back to the room, Harry!" breathed the old detective.

They had already shut off their electric lantern.

Pushing the door shut, Old King Brady produced his now, and they hurried upstairs to Harry's room.

With his skeleton-key Old King Brady locked the door on the inside.

What he was not able to do was to restore the real key to its position in the lock.

"I'll slip into the other house," he whispered.

"Do I go with them if they ask me, Governor?" Harry asked.

"Ask? Probably they will take you. Yes, go on, and may good luck attend you. It is a risky business, but we have got to see this thing through."

CHAPTER IX.

YOUNG KING BRADY'S STRANGE EXPERIENCE WITH HIP HOP.

Old King Brady did not close the intervening door.

It will be remembered that this door was concealed by a curtain on Harry's side.

In the open doorway behind this curtain the old detective stood listening now.

In a moment Harry heard footsteps on the stairs.

They were particularly heavy

"Hip Hop, and I'll bet on it," Young King Brady said to himself. "I'm in for another hypnotizing, sure."

He did not so much care.

He could see no reason why the old Chinaman would want to take the risk of putting one who was an entire stranger to him out of the way.

In San Francisco the police have the Chinamen much better in hand than is the case in New York.

If a Chinaman disappears little is done about it unless he is a person of unusual prominence.

But let a white man mysteriously vanish, be he ever so insignificant, Chinatown is promptly turned inside out to solve the mystery.

All this Harry knew, and knowing in addition that he had Old King Brady at his back, he was quite content to let matters take whatever course they would.

The footsteps paused outside the door.

Harry threw himself on the bed, removing his coat.

He preferred to be found to all appearance asleep.

There was silence for a minute, and a ray of light came through the keyhole.

Then Harry heard whoever was outside pick up the key and insert it into the lock.

As might have been expected, it refused to turn.

This is very apt to be the case with a lock which has been opened by the use of a skeleton key.

After a good deal of fumbling the lock yielded, and old Hip Hop, carrying an ordinary stable lantern, walked into the room.

He flashed the light upon Harry, and placed the lantern on the floor.

Old King Brady, who was peering from behind the curtain, tried to read the man's face.

But who can read the Chinese?

Hip Hop's face was as expressionless as a block of wood.

He bent over Harry for fully five minutes, merely staring at him, and not uttering a word.

Never had Young King Brady passed through such a trying ordeal.

"He is trying to hypnotize me in my sleep," he said to himself, "and, by jove, I believe he will accomplish it, too."

Strange sensations were creeping over him.

At last it became impossible to resist them.

It was not that he was growing sleepy.

It seemed as if he just had to sit up and look the old Chinaman in the face.

And at last he did it.

Old King Brady saw that Hip Hop had him in his power.

But the old detective made no move to interfere.

He had resolved to let it go so.

"With me at their heels they can hardly do him any harm," he said to himself.

From the moment Harry's eyes rested upon the Chinese hypnotizer he was gone.

Hip Hop made a few quick passes before his face, and Harry remembered no more.

Old King Brady saw him rise and face the Chinaman.

Hip Hop picked up the lantern and backed out of the room.

Harry followed him, and the door was closed by his own hand.

"He's got him dead to rights," thought Old King Brady. "That man is no ordinary Chink. He must have been educated in some lamasary in the interior. What in the world is going to come of all this?"

He entered the room, and cautiously opened the door.

Peering down over the banisters he saw that Harry was now ahead, and the old man following.

"He must have a powerful hold over the boy to be able to do that," the old detective said to himself. "Usually they find it necessary to face their subjects, I believe."

He watched and saw them descend the cellar stairs.

It required great caution to keep close to them, but Old King Brady is well used to that sort of thing.

He was not one minute behind Hip Hop when the old Chink passed through the secret door in the cellar and closed it behind him.

Old King Brady counted ten, and opened the door.

He could see the light in the distance, moving along the passage.

With every caution he followed on.

The length of the passage was just about what he supposed it would be—namely, the length of the back-yard behind the Stockton street house and the shallower yard in the rear of the building which faced China Alley, where the undertaker's shop was.

It ended at a door through which he saw Hip Hop pass.

Harry, who was again behind him, followed, and the door was closed.

Old King Brady covered the remainder of the distance with a few bounds.

He did not dare to show a light, but he kept his hands extended before him, and they gave him warning when he came to the door.

Running his hands up and down, he tried to find some way of opening it.

This, however, did not go.

The door proved to be fastened by a secret spring.

This Old King Brady readily discovered when at length he ventured to use his lantern.

He now found himself in a narrow lobby, so to speak, from which three doors opened.

Upon each door Chinese characters were painted.

These, of course, told their own story, but it was all a sealed book to the old detective.

"Here's a bad job," he muttered. "What's to be done now? I don't want to go charging about these Chinese dens very much."

He tried each door in turn.

All were locked.

Once more he produced his skeleton keys.

There was no trouble in opening the door.

When a Chinaman builds anything it is always of the cheapest possible construction.

The lock readily yielded, and Old King Brady found himself standing at the foot of a narrow flight of stairs.

He stood still, listening, but could hear no sound.

"I might as well make a try for it," he thought. "Here goes."

He crept up the stairs, and came to a trap-door.

Raising this, he found himself looking into a cellar.

It was crowded with old barrels and boxes.

Over in one corner was a flight of steps.

Old King Brady came up, and closing the trap door made for the steps.

This time he walked heavily.

If there was anyone there he wanted them to make their presence known.

But no sound came, and he now crept up the steps, revolver in hand, and tackled the door at the top.

This proved to be unfastened, and he passed out into a dark hallway.

Further on, toward the rear, light came streaming through the keyhole of another door.

With the greatest caution the old detective crept up, kneeled, and listened.

He could hear a gabble of Chinese inside, but this, of course, told him nothing.

Stealing back along the hall, he listened at the door of the room in front.

Here all was silence.

Old King Brady tried the door, found it unfastened, and crept inside.

He now found himself in what at first glance looked like a carpenter's shop.

Light came streaming in through a half-open door which led to the rear room, across which one of those cheap red curtains which Chinamen use was carelessly drawn.

Thus the old detective was able to see well enough, and he at once perceived that he was standing in the undertaker's shop.

These Chinese undertakers make their own coffins, as a rule.

Three, partly finished, stood around.

"I'm still it," thought the old detective, and he stole up to the curtain.

As Old King Brady peered through the door he saw a strange scene.

Harry was upon one knee before Hip Hop, with his eyes closed.

The magician's hands were extended.

It was a case of hypnotism beyond all doubt.

Between them upon a low rest was a tall brass urn in which some aromatic incense smoked.

Behind Harry stood a young Chinese woman.

Back of Hip Hop, near a tall screen, were two Chinamen.

As Old King Brady looked, Hip Hop, who manifested intense interest, was muttering some Chinese words, while the woman bent her head as though in prayer.

To all of this Young King Brady appeared to be oblivious.

Now the magician addressed him in Chinese.

Again and again he called out, his voice assuming a tone of stern command.

There was no response whatever.

At last, after several attempts, he gave it up, and turning, spoke a few words to the Chinamen, who answered.

Then, again turning his attention to Harry, he addressed him in better English than Old King Brady had supposed him able to speak.

The meaning of all this was plain enough.

Hip Hop had tried to force his subject to answer his questions in his, the hypnotizer's, own language.

There are instances on record where this has been done, but they are rare.

In Harry's case the scheme evidently would not work. But now that Hip Hop tackled him in English it was different.

"You see? You see?" he called out.

"Yes, I see," replied Young King Brady, and then the following conversation ensued.

"You can read what I flink? Yes? No?"

"I can read your mind."

"What I flink? Tellee me."

"You want to find the money which Jim Ching hid in this place."

"You speakee true. You can hellup me?"

"If you can give me something which belonged to Jim Ching after he hid the money perhaps I can."

Hip Hop paused, and turning to the Chinamen, a gabble in their own language followed.

Old King Brady kept ever on the alert.

At any instant one of the party might decide to pass into the room where he stood.

But now, instead of that, one of them passed out through another door in the rear.

Hip Hop and the woman began talking.

They kept it up for fully ten minutes.

In the meantime Harry remained absolutely motionless, not altering his position by so much as a hair's-breadth, it seemed to his watching partner.

At length the Chinaman returned, carrying an opium pipe.

It was a handsome ivory mounted affair.

Old King Brady perceived that it was the sort of pipe upon which a Chinaman would place a high value.

Another confab followed after Hip Hop took the pipe.

At last he leaned forward and placed it against Harry's forehead.

"Take it! Holdee him yourownself," he then said.

Harry took the pipe, and kept it against his forehead.

"Now, den!" said Hip Hop. "Tellee me what you see?"

"I see a dead man," was the calm reply.

"A Chineeman?"

"Yes."

"How he comee dead?"

"He was badly wounded."

"Allee light. Gettee back a day, a mont', a year! Gettee back to de time when he hide him money so you can."

There was a long silence.

At last Young King Brady, of his own accord, said:

"I am there. I see this man. He has a box full of gold pieces. He is kneeling down over a hole.

"Allee light," cried Hip Hop. "So good! Tellee what he do?"

"He is putting the box in the hole."

"Yair."

"Now he shovels in sand on top of it."

"Yair."

"Now he lays boards down over the sand."

"Yair."

"Now he puts a mark on the wall near the boards."

"Yair. You can write dlat mark?"

"I can."

"Allee light. No writee now. Tellee me what you see around dlat place?"

"I see four walls boarded up."

"Yair."

"I see straw in one corner—a lot of it."

"Yair."

"On that straw lies an old, old man."

"Chinee man?"

"Yes."

"Is he dead?"

"He is dying."

"Yair. Anything else in dat place?"

"There is a bowl of rice near the man."

"Yair."

"There is a pipe like the one I have."

"Yair."

"And other things which I cannot see plain."

"Try."

"No; I cannot. The clouds are gathering. I don't think I can see any more."

"Wait! You writee dlat mark."

"I cannot do it now. It is all going away from me. It is getting dark."

Hip Hop turned and said something to the Chinamen. One came forward.

Old King Brady, intensely interested, did not realize what was coming until he saw him heading for the door.

But he caught the man's intention in time.

Gliding back among the coffins, Old King Brady slipped into the hall just in time to prevent discovery, for the Chink entered the undertaker's shop.

"The boy is safe enough," he thought, and he slipped down the cellar stairs. "Until they get what they want out of him they will not harm a hair of his head."

He paused to listen.

There was some confusion in the hall.

It seemed to the old detective as if someone had entered by the street door.

CHAPTER X.

OLD KING BRADY MAKES A BARGAIN WITH DR. DING.

For a moment loud voices were heard talking in the hall above.

Then these sounds died away, and silence followed.

Old King Brady waited for some fifteen minutes in the cellar before he ventured to make a move.

"I shall have to tackle them again," he said to himself then.

Once more he stole up the cellar stairs.

The same deathly stillness pervaded the hall.

Old King Brady saw that the light no longer streamed through the keyhole of the back room.

He crept into the undertaker's shop.

All was dark and still.

Half expecting to stumble over some Chinaman and get a knife between his ribs, he groped his way to the curtain.

The place was not totally dark.

Through the shop windows one of the electric lights strung across China Alley shone.

The rear room was now untenanted.

Before leaving Old King Brady brought his lantern into play, and satisfied himself of this.

"They have given it up for the night," he said to himself. "They have taken him away. But where? Out of the house, if those sounds I heard means anything. I have allowed him to slip through my fingers, worse luck!"

The old detective was disgusted.

"Shall I go for help and have the house searched?" he asked himself.

But this he concluded not to do, after a moment's reflection.

Old King Brady is fairly well posted when it comes to hypnotism.

He knows that there is a limit to what even the most expert hypnotizers can do.

"They have taken the boy away to rest, that is sure," he said to himself. "They are not through with him. I don't believe I run the least risk in waiting for an hour or so."

He determined to do it, and in the meantime to attempt to learn what lay behind the other doors.

"I am as liable to run upon Harry that way as any other," he said to himself. "No doubt each of those doors communicate with the adjoining houses on either side."

So he returned to what we have called the lobby.

Here he tackled the left-hand door.

It was no more difficult to open than the other had been.

Here it was just the same, a stairway leading up.

But it only ran up about five feet, ending at a low passage—a mere rat-hole—running off to the left.

In order to crawl through this Old King Brady was obliged to go on his hands and knees, and he did it.

He wound up in a little box of an enclosure, where there was a ladder built upright against the wall.

Flashing his lantern up, Old King Brady saw that this ladder extended up for a long distance—presumably to the roof of the building.

It was built between the partition and the party wall of the house.

"Who builds these hiding-places?" he asked himself. "It seems incredible that such things can be done without the knowledge of the agents or owners of these Chinatown buildings. Yet they are to be found everywhere."

He hesitated about tackling the ladder for a moment.

It was manifestly a secret avenue of escape, in case of a raid.

Doubtless it had been constructed in the interest of some fantan joint or opium-smoking den.

There was not a sound to be heard, and Old King Brady concluded to risk it.

It had to be done in the dark, however, as he had no way of attaching the lantern to his clothes.

Slowly the old detective made his way up the steep ascent.

He was watching for light, and listening for every sound.

He had ascended what he calculated would be equivalent to the cellar, first, and second floor of the house when suddenly he heard a voice.

Someone was swearing in English.

He paused and listened breathlessly.

Then came these words:

"Oh, what a fool I was to trust him! What a fool! What a fool!"

A deep groan followed, and it sounded to the old detective as if somebody was rolling over on the floor.

"By jove, it sounds for all the world as if somebody was a prisoner in there," muttered the old detective. "It can hardly be a Chinaman unless it is Dr. Ding."

It certainly was not Harry's voice that he had heard.

Producing his lantern now, Old King Brady flashed it upon the partition.

Here a secret panel was plainly visible.

The arrangement by means of which it had been worked was on his side.

"I'll risk it," thought the old detective. "Whoever the fellow is, he must be alone in there, or he wouldn't be talking to himself. Here goes!"

He drew the bolt, and pressed on the partition.

A little door flew inward, revealing a dirty, unfurnished room.

At the same instant an excited voice called out in Chinese.

Old King Brady could see no one, but it was now too late to draw back.

He sprang into the room with his dark lantern in one hand, and the revolver in the other.

The latter was not needed.

There, upon an old mattress, the only furnishing which the place contained, lay Dr. Ding in his shirt sleeves, bound hand and foot.

"By jove, I've come up with him at last," thought Old King Brady, "and I've got him in such shape that he will have to talk."

He turned the lantern full on the face of the prisoner, and stood motionless.

The Chinese magician half raised himself, and stared.

"You are a detective, I suppose?" he exclaimed.

"That is what I am, Dr. Ding."

"You see my fix; you don't need that revolver, old man."

"I may need it for your enemies, Dr. Ding."

"You seem to know me. Who are you?"

"Did you ever hear of Old King Brady?"

"Can't say I ever did."

"Enough for me to say, then, that I am that man."

"Were you sent by Jack Wilson to help me?"

"No. I am here on my own account."

"But how did you know that I was here?"

"I didn't know it."

"You seem to know me all right, just the same."

"I saw you perform at the Berkeley theater to-night."

"You know more than that about me, old man, or you would never recognize me dressed as I am now."

"He has me there," thought Old King Brady.

On the stage, be it remembered, Dr. Ding was dressed as a Chinaman, and wore a false pig-tail.

This costume he had abandoned for ordinary American dress before leaving the theater with Harry.

"It is my business to know people," said Old King Brady, "and I know you. It seems that you are a prisoner here."

"You see. Can you get me out of this?"

"Very probably I can."

"You don't seem to be in a hurry to make a move."

"No; I am in no hurry."

Old King Brady produced his cigar case.

"Have a smoke?" he said. "We can talk better so."

The half-breed magician grinned.

"Are you guying me, old man?" he replied. "How the mischief can I take your blame cigar unless you set me free?"

"Oh, I'll fix that."

Old King Brady cut off the end of the cigar.

"I'll put it in your mouth and give you a light," he said. "Then we will talk."

"You want to make some sort of a bargain with me, old man?"

"Exactly."

"I can't imagine what it possibly can be."

"I shall soon explain. Will you have the cigar?"

"I hope it isn't doped or anything."

"I'll prove that it isn't by smoking it myself and giving you another."

Suiting the action to the word, Old King Brady lighted the cigar and prepared another for the doctor, which he lighted in his mouth.

"Now," said the doctor, "what is it you want out of me? If it is money, say so. I'll pay to get out of this. I know your kind. I suppose that is what you want."

"As it happens, you are wrong."

"Then what can you want? I am all in the dark."

"I'll let the light in. The young man who appeared with you at the Fourth Avenue theater in New York, Ed by name, was seen and recognized by friends in whose employ I am. We know that she is a woman in disguise."

Dr. Ding gave a gasp, and the cigar fell on the floor.

"What are you talking about?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, you know! Come, doctor! Time is slipping by. Hip Hop and the undertaker who runs the House of Tranquility may pounce in upon you at any moment. They are your enemies. I will be your friend if you will only be frank and honest with me."

"Old man, I thought I was something of a magician, but you beat me," said the doctor. "Who has told you all these things?"

"Don't waste time. Tell me frankly all about that girl, and I will free you at once. There will be no arrest. Only put the girl in my hands."

"The girl was my wife. She is dead."

Dr. Ding made this blunt statement with a slyness truly Chinese.

But Old King Brady was not to be bluffed so.

"That may be," he said. "The girl is, or was, Edith Long, daughter of the American consul at Tientsin, China. Her father was killed by a Chinese mob some years ago, and she was carried off up the country. How you found her, I, of course, do not know, but find her you did, and you used her as a subject for Hip Hop to hypnotize. She was not dead this morning, and I don't believe she is dead now."

"You are a wise man, Mr. Brady. Perhaps you know more still about this matter. It would not surprise me at all."

"I know all about the House of Tranquility, doctor, and I believe you have put the girl in there in a drugged condition to die, in order that you might marry the Chinese woman who was seen in your house this evening before you were attacked in the undertaker's shop."

The doctor winked hard.

"I begin to see," he said. "You are not alone in this."

"No. You have been dealing with my partner. He saved your life once to-night, and I am prepared to save it again, if you will tell the truth, and help me to get that girl."

"And after that?"

"After that we pull out and leave you to get Jim Ching's buried money, or leave it for Hip Hop and his friends to get, just as you please. The only thing is, I must know all."

"You are certainly a wizard yourself," muttered the doctor. "How you ever learned all these things surpasses me."

"Don't let us waste time. See! My partner saved your life to-night."

"That's what he did."

"Then let me tell you that his own is in danger. He has fallen into the hands of Hip Hop and the gang."

"What?"

"Oh, it is so. They have hypnotized him. They are trying to use him to locate the hiding place of Jim Ching's hidden gold."

The doctor gave a fierce exclamation:

"If that is so he must be saved!" he cried. "We Chinese men never go back on a man who has performed such a service as Jack Wilson did for me. There is only one thing which makes me hesitate."

"You think I shall arrest you for murdering that girl."

"I own up to that."

"Then let me swear that I shall not do it if you will tell me the truth and help me now."

"Open that secret door. Flash your lantern out upon the ladder."

Without replying, Old King Brady obeyed.

"You see that there is no one there," he said. "You speak without witnesses, Dr. Ding."

"I see. Then I will say that you have hit the truth. I have grown tired of Edith Long. I did dope her and put her in the House of Tranquility, as you say. She may still be alive. If you can save her and take her away I don't care, so that I never see her again. And I tell you more: I wish I had never done it, for the Chinawoman I married this afternoon has betrayed me to my enemies, and put me here."

"Good!" replied Old King Brady. "Now, doctor, we begin to understand each other. Will you fight on my side?"

"I will! If you will do what you promise I will do everything in my power to help you. If you go back on me you will have a Chinese half-breed for an enemy, and you will soon find out that there is no worse enemy in the world."

"I deal square and I hope you will do the same," said the detective quietly.

Without further talk he drew a knife and cut the prisoner free.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE OF EDITH LONG.

Of all that happened to Harry after Hip Hop caught him in his toils he never knew a thing until he found himself lying upon an old mattress in a dark room.

It seemed to Young King Brady as if he had suddenly wakened out of a deep sleep.

He caught the sound of retreating footsteps, and saw the flash of a light.

Then a door slammed, and all was still, but in Young King Brady's mind was a dim recollection of someone ordering him to awake.

"I have been hypnotized again," thought Harry, and he lay still and tried to collect his thoughts.

It was hard work.

It seemed but a minute since he got up off the bed and faced Hip-Hop.

What had happened in the meantime?

This was the puzzle.

After a little Harry grew calmer, and began to take an account of stock, so to speak.

He got up and felt in his pockets.

Long ago Old King Brady devised a system of secret pockets with which he and Harry are invariably provided.

Thus one may search the Bradys pretty thoroughly without getting all their belongings.

But Harry now found that nothing was missing except the revolver which he always carries in his hip-pocket.

His money and even his little electric dark lantern was intact.

But his duplicate revolver, a small affair carried in one of his secret pockets, was likewise undisturbed, as were his skeleton keys.

"Come, it might be worse," thought Young King Brady. "I must look into this business while I can. Probably I am safe to be left alone here for awhile."

He produced the lantern, and flashed it about.

The place was a cellar, boarded up on all sides.

Harry could see no door, but there was a trap door in the boarded floor.

This was securely fastened on the under side.

There was absolutely nothing in the place but the mattress.

It was very hot and stuffy.

Not a breath of air seemed to penetrate.

"I shall be as good as dead if I stop here," thought Young King Brady. "What can I ever do?"

Just then a low moan reached his ears.

It was startling, and heard there in the dark it was not easy to determine from which direction the sound came.

Harry now began to examine the partitions.

The Bradys have a regular system for such work.

They take a wall and go over every inch of it.

In this way they have been singularly successful in solving many mysteries.

Harry heard the moaning several times before he got through with the first wall.

He now knew that the sound came from behind it, and before he had worked two minutes he realized that he only had a rough board partition to deal with.

"I'll call," he said to himself. "There seems to be somebody in trouble on the other side here."

He waited until the moaning was again repeated.

"Is anyone in trouble in there?" he called through one of the cracks between the boards.

There was silence for an instant, and then a woman's voice said:

"Who spoke?"

"A friend to you if you are in trouble," Harry called through the crack.

"I am in the deepest trouble," was the reply. "But it seems impossible that I can have a friend in this dreadful place."

"You are a woman?"

"I am! A woman who has lost all hope."

"Are you alone?"

"Quite alone. They have put me here to die, I think. I wish I might die. But you—you can't be a Chinese."

"Indeed, I am not. Nor are you, Edith Long!"

Harry tried it as a mere flyer.

Of course, the thought naturally came into his mind that he had the missing girl to deal with.

"You know my name," was the response. "How can that be? I hardly know it myself in these dreadful days."

"Wait!" cried Harry, overjoyed at the discovery. "I am one who would help you. I am a detective. I am employed by Mr. Charles Staveley to rescue you from these Chinamen. If you want that to come about, why, confide in me."

The answer came in the shape of a passionate fit of weeping.

It was painful to listen to the moaning and sobbing.

Harry tried to say something to comfort the unfortunate creature, but he could get no reply for several minutes.

In the meanwhile he continued his work.

But he could find no opening, and as the boards were nailed on from his side, it was impossible to pull them away.

At last the girl appeared to quiet down.

"You are still there, sir?" she called.

"I am right here," replied Harry. "Be brave! I am a prisoner like yourself, and I have got myself into this fix through trying to help you. Tell me, are you tied up in there?"

"No. I am not tied."

"Then come here and see if you cannot pound or kick one of these boards loose. It can be done from your side, but not from mine."

He heard the girl rise and come forward.

"I am very weak," she said. "I don't believe I can do much."

"Try, try! If we can only get together we may be able to find some way of escape. These boards seem to be old and rotten. I believe it can be done."

He heard the girl stagger forward, and then she struck feebly upon the board.

"That won't do," said Harry. "Throw your whole weight against it."

"There is very little of me, but I'll try."

She did it, and the board sprung a little. Harry thought that he could hear the nails give.

"Once more," he called. "It yields!"

Again she threw herself against the partition.

This time the nails at the top drew out further, and Harry was able to get his hands between this board and the next one, and with one strong pull he wrenched it away.

"Oh, you have done it!" cried the girl, drawing back. "Oh, sir, you won't harm me?"

"Harm you!" said Harry. "Why, I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head. I am here to help you, and for no other purpose. Just wait till I get that lantern of mine going again."

Harry had been obliged to pocket his lantern while working at the board.

Now he had produced it, and flashed its light through the opening.

To all appearance it was a young man who stood before him, but Harry instantly recognized the features of Edith Long.

"I'm coming in," he said.

The girl drew back.

As Young King Brady stepped forward the floor board crumbled beneath him, and one leg went down to a depth of two feet or more.

"Oh! Are you hurt?" demanded the girl, catching him as he fell forward.

If she had not done so a broken leg would surely have been the result.

"I don't know where I should have been if you hadn't caught me," panted Harry, pulling himself out. "This floor seems to have rotted away. Hello, hello! What is all this?"

He had not only gone through the floor, but through a box which stood in a hole beneath it.

As Harry flashed his lantern down he caught the glimmer of gold.

"Why, bless my soul; someone has been hiding money here!" he exclaimed.

"It is gold!"

"Certainly it is, and there is a lot of it."

If Young King Brady could have heard his own talk while in the hypnotic state he would have known what it all meant.

But as it was he had no idea.

"Not that I care," said the girl. "All I want now is to escape from these dreadful Chinese. Oh, tell me, is Charley Staveley still alive? Did he really send you to me?"

"He did."

"And when did you get to China?"

"China! Why, this isn't China. We are in San Francisco."

"Is it possible! I didn't know."

"That is what it is."

"You don't surprise me. I don't know anything. My Chinese husband keeps me hypnotized most of the time. I never go out unless I am in that condition. It has been so for years."

"You are married to Dr. Ding?"

"Yes, that is what he claims. I have no recollection of being married to him, but I suppose it must be so. Oh, sir, my story is a pitiful one. Until now I thought myself abandoned by all my friends."

"Then let me tell you that you are not. Mr. Staveley has done everything in his power to find you since you were abducted in Tientsin."

"That dreadful day when they murdered my poor father! It makes me shudder to think of it. If you only knew what I have suffered."

"I can imagine! They carried you up into the interior?"

"Yes. It was the doings of Dr. Ding, the man who calls himself my husband. He used to come to my father's house and—and—oh, don't ask me. I have wandered about with him and a dreadful old Chinaman known as Hip Hop. They run a show, and I am one of the performers, I suppose. Once or twice I have had a glimmering of it all, but, as I told you, they keep me either drugged or hypnotized most of the time. I am just coming out of the influence of drugs now."

"Opium?"

"I think so."

"But why are you here?"

"I'm sure I don't know. This morning I was in a comfortable room. I was hypnotized, and when I came to myself I was here."

"Come!" cried Harry. "I won't bother you any more. You are willing to go to Mr. Staveley?"

"Indeed I am, if he will take me after all that has happened."

"You needn't have any doubts on that score. But let us see what can be done."

Harry now flashed his lantern about this second chamber.

It was much like his own.

The only opening appeared to be a trap-door in the floor.

This was fastened, but there was some play to it, and Harry felt that he would probably be able to raise it.

He explained to Edith where they were, and how he came to be there, as far as he was able to explain.

As they continued to talk the girl brightened up considerably.

"You have given me hope, Mr. Brady," she said. "I begin to feel that there is really a chance for me. If we can only raise that trap door now."

"I think it can be done," replied Harry, "but let us see."

He broke a piece off the loose board by stamping on it.

With his knife he managed to whittle out a respectable stick, sharpened at one end.

This end he thrust into the crack between the trap-door and the adjoining board, for there was no pulling ring attached to the trap.

The stick did the business.

Harry was able to pry up the trap.

He now discovered that a short chain held it down.

Getting a grip on it at last, he readily pulled out the rusted staple to which the chain was secured, and was thus able to turn the trap back upon the floor, revealing a ladder beneath.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed. "The way is open! Shall we go?"

"Anywhere you say!" replied Edith. "I feel that heaven has sent you to my relief. I will follow you as freely as though you were Charley Staveley himself."

"We will get that gold first."

"Oh, don't stop for it! Let us go."

"Not I! These Chinks have made us trouble enough. I'll not leave it behind me. Wait! Hold the lantern while I work."

Harry then lay down on the floor, and began filling his pockets.

The gold was all in twenty-dollar pieces, and there were many hundreds of them.

Harry loaded himself down as heavily as he dared to, and persuaded Edith to take the rest.

Between them they managed to get away with all.

There were about five hundred of the coins altogether, Young King Brady thought.

This done, he descended the ladder, Edith following him.

They came into a little box of a room, from which another ladder came down out of Harry's cell.

Here there was a door securely locked.

But Young King Brady's skeleton keys did the business, and they passed out into the lobby in front of the three doors.

They had come out of the one on the right hand—the one whose secrets Old King Brady had not explored.

In front of them was the door leading to the underground passage which communicated with the Stockton street house.

Peering through Harry recognized his situation as the point to which he and Old King Brady had penetrated.

"Our way lies through here!" he exclaimed, drawing his spare revolver. "Now, follow me!"

They started along the underground way then, Young King Brady flashing his lantern before him as they went.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Old King Brady had captured Dr. Ding in every sense of the word.

But the shrewd old detective did not allow himself to be in the least elated by his success.

Among the Chinese race, as with every other race on earth, there are good and bad.

To judge the entire race by the wretched specimens one sees in the American Chinese colonies would be as unjust as for a European gentleman to judge the American people by the roustabouts and tramps he might meet along our docks.

Of course, Old King Brady knew this, but when it comes to a half-breed then is the time to look to see the worst characteristic of both races displayed.

Therefore Old King Brady put no confidence whatever in Dr. Ding.

"What information I am to get out of this man must be obtained right now," he said to himself, and he turned upon the doctor again.

"If you are actually married to this white girl prove it," he said.

"Oh, I can, and I had just as soon do it as not," was the reply. "Wait till we get to my house, and I will give you proof that we were married in Hong-Kong."

"Why did you put her away to die. Tell me! I must know all?"

"Oh, you wouldn't understand."

"Yes, I would. Had it to do with Jim Ching's hidden treasure?"

"Yes, then. This Ching was a relation of Hip Hop's. Hip heard about the treasure, and we started to find it. He was so sure of its existence that he undertook to put me out of the way, after persuading me to marry his

daughter and put my white wife in the House of Tranquility. There, now I have told you everything, so don't ask me any more."

"Come on, or rather go on," said Old King Brady. "We will talk more of this later on."

Dr. Ding then started down the ladder, the detective following.

"I came up here at the pistol's point," remarked the doctor. "Pleasant—wasn't it? And the man who betrayed me I have done everything for. That's what you might call a good friend!"

"Hark!" breathed Old King Brady. "What's that?"

"Revolver shots!"

"That's it. Up overhead!"

"There's a fan-tan joint on the top floor of that house. It may be a police raid."

"That's it, sure!"

"Heavens! The gamblers will be coming down here in a minute. Hurry up, old man! They will take us both for detectives, and we will be caught."

"Mind how you go!" cried Old King Brady, for the doctor was scrambling down the ladder wildly.

At the same instant another round of shots was heard. Loud shouts and wild cries added to the confusion.

Old King Brady looked up.

He could see Chinamen on the ladder far above him, and light streamed through some opening above.

"Gee! They are swarming down here like rats!" gasped Dr. Ding.

He had scarcely spoken when Old King Brady heard one of the rounds of the ladder snap.

A wild cry from the doctor rang out now.

Looking down, Old King Brady saw the half-breed swirling into the depths of the shaft.

"Heavens! He has lost his hold! His neck will be broken!" thought the old detective.

He kept on, feeling with his feet for the broken round. In a moment he found it, and lowered himself down.

Meanwhile the confusion overhead continued.

Chinamen by the dozen were swarming down the ladder.

Old King Brady lost not an instant.

Gaining the ground, he found Dr. Ding lying all in a heap.

He tried to raise the fellow, but the head of the Chinese magician wobbled and fell forward.

"His neck is broken," thought Old King Brady. "I must save myself."

And, indeed, he had not an instant to lose.

"There will be more dead than one through that break!" thought the old detective.

He was right.

At the same instant the first of the Chinamen above him, missing his footing, came whirling down.

A second instantly followed.

Those above halted, squeaking like rats caught in a

trap, while the others further up the ladder pressed down upon them.

It was clearly a time for disappearing.

To have remained there would have been the merest folly.

But it was with the greatest reluctance that Old King Brady abandoned his plan of penetrating the House of Tranquility.

"I can do nothing here," he said to himself.

It was so!

One Chinaman had already safely passed the break and was coming down.

Others would follow.

Doubtless all were heavily armed, as most Chinese gamblers are.

Old King Brady opened the door, and passed out into the lobby.

He tried the middle door, thinking to pass by way of the undertaker's to China alley.

It was locked, but the door communicating with the underground passage leading to the Stockton street house was open.

Old King Brady darted through, pushed the door back into place, and stole on.

* * * * *

Harry and Edith Long found no difficulty in reaching the cellar.

Here the secret door was closed, but Harry pushed it open, and they passed in.

"Where are we now?" Edith inquired.

"Under the house where you have been staying since you came to San Francisco," replied Young King Brady, "and here is where our danger comes in."

"If Hip Hop or my husband should be here you may expect the worst; they are desperate men, both of them."

"They had better be careful how they attempt to fool with me then. I am just as desperate as they are, and I mean to put this business through to a finish. Come on."

Harry advanced up the cellar stairs.

"I hate to appear on the street dressed this way," said Edith.

"Have you any other clothes—any woman's clothes, I mean?"

"Oh, yes. I have them, but I don't suppose we could find them."

"We can try if the house is deserted, as it was when I left it."

"We had better not. Let us get out as quick as we can."

"Just as you say."

They had reached the hall now.

All was darkness and silence.

"The coast is clear, and I don't believe we are going to have a bit of trouble," Harry thought.

But the trouble came right then.

Trying the front door, Harry found it locked.

The key had been removed.

The lock, unfortunately, was a modern affair, upon which his skeleton keys had no effect.

"Nothing doing here," muttered Young King Brady. "Let's try the windows."

But here further obstruction awaited them.

The windows were nailed fast.

"Follow me upstairs. There is a way of getting into the next house. We can escape to the street so."

Harry started up then, Edith following.

They entered the rear room.

Here the gas was burning.

"What does this mean?" thought Young King Brady.

"The Governor and I left it dark here."

The explanation came on the instant.

The curtain which concealed the dividing door was flung violently aside, and old Hip Hop darted in upon them.

Such another roar of rage Harry had never heard.

He flung himself in front of Edith, and covered the magician with his revolver.

But Hip Hop was too many for him.

Despite of the weapon, he threw himself upon Harry.

Young King Brady fired on the instant.

The shot flew wild, and before Harry knew where he was at the revolver was wrenched from his hands, and the Chinaman's own hands were about his throat.

Edith screamed and turning ran down stairs.

The magician, unlike many fat men, was a person of powerful strength.

With one quick twist he flung Harry down on his back upon the bed.

As he did so Young King Brady's right trouser's pocket burst, and the gold pieces came pouring out upon the floor.

Hip Hop gave another cry.

Instantly he recovered himself, and pulling back, fixed his eyes upon Harry, and extended his hands.

He must have been a powerful hypnotist.

But it is generally conceded that once a person is hypnotized by another it is easy for the hypnotizer to accomplish the same thing again.

Be all this as it may, Harry quickly succumbed.

He was just sinking away into oblivion in spite of a most strenuous effort to fight the influence off when quick steps upon the stairs recalled him to himself.

The sound attracted Hip Hop's attention, too, and weakened his power.

He turned away, and faced the door.

Harry, with a mighty effort, pulled himself together, and sprang to his feet, to see Old King Brady come dashing into the room.

"Surrender, you yellow rascal!" shouted the old detective, thrusting his revolver into the magician's face.

And Harry was able to help.

He got Hip Hop by the throat, and pulled him over backwards upon the floor.

"I've got him, Governor!" he shouted. "Put the bracelets on."

Old King Brady did it on the instant.

Edith came hurrying in behind the old detective, whom she had met at the foot of the stairs.

Hurried explanations followed.

Hip Hop, after the manner of his race, finding himself cornered, never spoke a word.

"We'll get him into the other house, and you go for the patrol wagon," said Old King Brady.

They dragged him through and locked the door.

The patrol wagon came, and Hip Hop was taken to the Washington street police headquarters and jailed.

Old King Brady soon explained matters.

A raid on the undertaker's followed.

Dr. Ding was found dead where Old King Brady had left him.

With him was another Chinaman, also dead.

At headquarters Harry turned the Chinese gold over to the official in charge.

Whatever became of it the Bradys never learned.

Edith was then taken to the Lick House.

Old King Brady drew the whole sad story from the girl.

The details need not be gone into here.

Next morning, clothed in the garments proper to her sex, this much-afflicted girl found herself locked in the arms of her lover.

Charles Staveley turned up late the night before.

Needless to dwell upon his joy.

That Staveley was ready to overlook everything is witnessed by the fact that he married Edith that very day.

His gratitude to the detectives he scarcely seemed able to express.

And all this the Bradys had done for nothing, for Staveley had not a cent to his name.

By Old King Brady's advice no complaint was preferred against Hip Hop, so the affair never got into the papers, and the magician was allowed to go.

The detectives finished up their other business in San Francisco quite successfully, and returned to New York.

Within the year Charles Staveley sent them \$500, which a little more than covered expenses.

After that the detectives never heard from him again.

And such was the satisfactory ending of the case of The Bradys and Dr. Ding.

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