

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. 419.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 1, 1907.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE CANTON PRINCE; OR, WORKING FOR THE CHINESE MINISTER. *By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.*



Certainly the Bradys had got themselves into a tight place. The masked Chinaman held the pot under Harry's nose, the two who gripped him pressing his head forward into the poisonous fumes. Old King Brady looked on in despair.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WORK FOR THE CHINESE MINISTER BEGINS.

Business had been very lively with the Brady Detective Bureau for some months when they took up the case of the Canton Prince.

Since Old King Brady, the world-famous detective, gave up the shabby little office over the Park Row lager beer saloon in which he had carried on business for so many years, and opened up his spacious suite of offices near Union Square, the business of the detectives had undergone a great change.

Now the Bureau took many cases which formerly the Bradys would have turned down.

These were, as a rule, handled by skillful assistants.

The Bradys themselves confined themselves pretty closely to the cases coming through the Secret Service Bureau.

It is to be doubted if Old King Brady relished all these changes, but they brought in more money, so he had nothing to say.

Upon a certain morning in January, 190—, when Old King Brady arrived late at his office, he found his two partners, Young King Brady and Alice Montgomery, engaged in conversation in the latter's private office.

"Oh, here is Mr. Brady now," exclaimed Alice. "He will tell us what to do."

"What is the trouble?" inquired the old detective.

"You know that case we took up for the Chinese Minister at Washington?"

"Something about a Chinaman who got lost in Arizona—yes. Well, what about that?"

"We put Joe Randall on it. He has worked a couple of weeks and nothing doing. Now read this letter which has just come."

Old King Brady took the letter, and ran it over.

It was a somewhat peremptory order from the chief of the Secret Service Bureau for the Bradys to call upon him at his Washington office at once.

At the bottom of the paper was written:

"In the matter of the Canton Prince."

"Well, Harry, we shall have to get to Washington, that is all," remarked Old King Brady, as he handed the letter back.

"But you notice what is written there."

"In the matter of the Canton Prince?"

"Yes."

"Don't you suppose it's the same business we are handling for the minister?"

"Like enough. We didn't know that the missing Chinaman was a prince, however."

"No. I think we are going to be called to account on that case."

"I remember none of the details. Who sent it in?"

"Senator D—, acting for Moy Suen Chen, the Chinese minister."

"Well, get the correspondence, and such papers as you have relating to the case together."

"I have already done so."

"Was there anything said about this missing Chink being a prince?"

"Not a word."

"That lets us out. We can't be expected to handle every case personally with the business we are doing now, but if the Secret Service Bureau chooses to take the matter up, why, that is another thing."

"Then we go to Washington?"

"Certainly; by the next train."

Thus promptly do the Bradys act in all matters of importance.

It was decided that Alice Montgomery should accompany them.

They arrived at Washington that night too late for business.

Putting up at the Ebbitt House they passed a quiet night, and called at the Secret Service Bureau in the morning.

They were neither surprised nor disappointed when they learned that the chief was out of town, in spite of the fact that they had wired him they were coming.

He had left a letter, however, in which he requested that Old King Brady wait upon the Chinese minister at his residence at eleven o'clock.

As nothing was said about Harry accompanying him, Old King Brady concluded to make the call alone.

The old detective was attired in his usual quaint style when he started for the minister's house.

When not in disguise Old King Brady always wears a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white felt hat with an unusually broad brim.

Old King Brady was received by a Mr. King, American secretary to the minister.

"His Highness will see you," he said, "but you will have to transact business with me. He speaks very poor English, and I talk to him through an interpreter. I will let him know that you are here."

"One minute," said Old King Brady. "Just what is it he wishes to say to me?"

"Your bureau took up the case of the missing Chinaman, Fen Lee, who disappeared some weeks ago from the neighborhood of Tombstone, Arizona."

"Yes."

"No progress has been reported; the minister is growing anxious. He spoke to the President, who ordered the Secret Service Bureau to communicate with you in the matter."

"The communication which we received from the bureau speaks of this as the matter of the Canton Prince. We had been given to understand that he was just an ordinary Chinese miner."

"The minister desired that he be so considered at the start; but in reality he is a cousin of his own, and the hereditary prince of the Province of Quang-Tung, or Canton, as we call it. Not that the title carries with it any governing privileges, at present; but the young man ranks as one of the highest of the Chinese nobility. But excuse me, Mr. Brady. I will inform his Highness that you are here."

Mr. King was gone so long that Old King Brady began to despair of ever seeing him again.

At last he returned, preceded by an elderly Chinaman, who was dressed in the most elaborate silk robes.

The only thing American about him was a pair of rimless eye-glasses, through which he surveyed Old King Brady with much the same air as one would survey a dime-museum freak on a platform.

"His Highness, Moy Suen Chen," said Mr. King, introducing.

Old King Brady bowed.

"Detective," said the minister, still staring.

"Yes, I am the detective," Old King Brady replied.

"Old Blady King you cousin?" said the minister, turning his attention to his secretary.

"No, no," replied Mr. King. "He is no relation of mine."

"So. Same namee."

The minister remained standing.

Mr. King and Old King Brady did the same.

An awkward pause ensued.

"He is waiting for his interpreter," explained Mr. King. There was evidently some hitch somewhere.

Suddenly the minister went to the door.

Flinging it open, he let out a roar in Chinese which might have been heard at the other end of the block.

It had its effect.

The sound of hurried footsteps was heard in the passage.

The next Old King Brady knew His Highness had seized a little under-sized Chink by his dangling pig-tail.

With an unmerciful yank he slung the unfortunate Celestial into the room.

The luckless interpreter fell on his face.

He had better have kept his feet.

His fall gave the enraged minister another chance.

He caught him by the pig-tail again, and brought him up with a round turn.

Mr. King looked upon it all in grim silence.

Evidently his position as the minister's man of business was no sinecure.

The little interpreter now took his place beside the minister, who addressed him in Chinese.

The mouthpiece translated to Mr. King in very broken English.

The secretary repeated to Old King Brady.

In this form the minister held up his end of the conversation, which ran thus:

"I am dissatisfied with the delay in the case of Fen Lee."

"I regret that we have not pleased your Highness," Old King Brady replied.

"I supposed you would take the matter up yourself. Instead of that you have placed it in the hands of an incompetent man."

"The man is not incompetent. It is difficult to find missing people sometimes."

"Fen Lee is the Prince of Canton. He is one of my suite. He went to Arizona to study into the condition of the Chinese miners in that territory. I fear he has been murdered by the white barbarian miners who infest that country."

"If he is dead we cannot bring him to life again; but I will recall my assistant, and at once proceed to Tombstone with my partners."

"Very well. If you wish money, say so."

"I desire no money until the case is completed."

"Very well. Your pay is sure."

"Can you give me any particulars about the disappearance of Fen Lee?"

"No; I know nothing about it. He was staying with Chinese friends in Tombstone. He wrote me several letters. All at once they ceased to come, and I have not heard from him since."

"What were the name of these Chinese with whom the prince was staying?"

"I do not know. I can tell you nothing at all."

"Very well; then I will withdraw and get right to work."

"You had better. If you fail me I shall report you to the President and have you severely punished."

The minister and his mouthpiece then withdrew.

"You must pardon his last remark, Mr. Brady," said Mr. King. "He has only been here a few months, and he finds it very difficult to understand our ways."

"It counts for nothing," said Old King Brady. "The case is now in the hands of the Secret Service Bureau, and I am working for them. Of course, I shall do my best."

"Certainly. Your skill is well known. There is one pointer which I can give you in this business which may possibly be of service to you."

"I shall be very thankful for any hint, Mr. King."

"It is this. Fen Lee is considered a peculiar person. He came to this country filled with the idea of writing a

book on the condition of the Chinese in America. Now, there are many Chinese here, as I happen to know, who are as violently opposed to having their countrymen freely admitted as the average Californian is. They who are here have got the plums, and they don't care to have any more come under the tree."

"I see. They may have made way with this man on that account. I mean to prevent him from publishing his book."

"Exactly. There is still another point. Fen Lee is supposed to possess the gift of second sight. He is a young man, and very highly educated. Perhaps you don't believe in such business, but all Chinamen do. It seems to me not at all impossible that Fen Lee may have been carried off for the purpose of using his powers to locate gold veins and such business."

"Which will argue that he is still alive. A valuable suggestion, for which I am duly obliged."

Old King Brady then left.

His first act was to wire his assistant Randall to at once wire information as to how the case stood.

The answer did not reach the Bradys until the following day.

It was to the effect that Randall had been entirely unable to learn anything of the missing Chinaman.

"What can he have been about?" questioned Harry.

"Oh, the man is all right," replied the old detective.

"The trouble is he is not adapted to the job. I will call him home and we will start for Arizona at once. With Alice and her knowledge of Chinese to aid us it will go hard if we fail to gain some intelligence of this missing man."

Alice Montgomery, be it understood, was born in China, being the daughter of an English missionary.

Her education as a detective was had in Australia, and on account of her very extensive acquaintance with the Chinese language she had proved herself invaluable to the Bradys since she entered the firm.

And so the Bradys went to Tombstone.

They arrived there on a Saturday night, and went directly to the Banner Hotel.

Here Old King Brady found a letter from Randall detailing the different lines he had been working on.

It was valuable only as a pointer as to what not to do, since everything he had tried had failed.

Old King Brady engaged a suite of rooms, and a private supper was served to the detectives.

"I don't suppose we can do anything to-night," remarked Harry.

"I think we can," said Alice, "if I may be allowed to suggest."

"What's troubling you now?" demanded Old King Brady. "I see that something is hanging heavy on your mind."

"I want to disguise as a Chinaman, and have Harry do the same. We will make the rounds of the Chinese quarter, late as it is."

"No," replied Old King Brady, decidedly.

"Come, Mr. Brady, you curtail my usefulness," said Alice. "I insist."

"If I'm with her I don't see where the great risk comes in," Harry added.

Both now went at the old detective, and at last he yielded.

It was Saturday night.

This was the time when there was most doing in the shabby little Chinese quarter of Tombstone.

Harry makes up splendidly as a Chinaman, and has often taken that part.

Trouble is his inability to speak Chinese.

But with Alice at his side that difficulty was overcome. And so the disguise was made.

Both Harry and Alice had brought the wherewithal along, although Old King Brady did not know that the latter had done so.

It was just midnight when the pair sneaked out of the Banner Hotel disguised as Chinamen.

The Bradys' work for the Chinese minister had begun.

CHAPTER II.

A MIDNIGHT RAID.

Once clear of the Banner Hotel, and it required some little ingenuity to get out without attracting attention, Harry and Alice made a bee-line for a fan-tan joint in the Chinese quarter. This joint, as it was afterward learned, was populated principally by Chinese miners from a mine called the Full Moon, which was situated somewhere back in the hills.

They were challenged at the door, but Alice's answer seemed to satisfy the Chinaman and they were allowed to pass. They entered a room where a game was going on, and looked on.

They had been watching the game about fifteen minutes when everybody in the place was startled by loud shouts and shots outside.

The money was swept from the fan-tan board on the instant.

The Chinamen drew revolvers and knives.

Some fled by the back way, others crowded into the street.

Harry and Alice were among the latter.

The cause of the disturbance was instantly apparent.

A big gang of hoodlums had descended upon Chinatown, intent upon cleaning out the Chinese miners.

They had opened fire upon the crowd.

Some carried lighted pinon torches.

This resinous wood makes the best torch in the world, and with theirs the hoodlums were setting fire to the frame shacks right and left.

It was a typical raid of its kind.

The Chinese at first put up some faint show of resistance.

But it was only a few moments before the hoodlums had them on the run.

Harry and Alice got on the outskirts of the crowd as soon as possible.

It was well that they did so, for in a few minutes the wretched shacks were mostly all in flames.

"We had better get back to the hotel," declared Harry. "This is too much of a muchness. First thing we know we are going to pick up a bullet."

"I guess you are right," replied Alice. "We had better go."

They started then.

Before they had gone a dozen steps they ran into a Chinaman who looked like a man just recovering from a severe illness.

He carried on his shoulders a heavy bag, and was staggering beneath its weight.

Alice said something to him, and he replied.

His face was deathly pale, and he was trembling all over.

Alice seized the bag, and Harry instantly took it from her.

More words passed.

Alice started across the flat stretch of land which extended from Chinatown to the foothills.

The sick Chinaman tottered after her, and Harry followed with the bag.

He was wondering what it was all about.

But there was no way of communicating with him then, of course.

Looking back, he could see that the Chinese quarter was all ablaze.

Its unfortunate inhabitants were making off in every direction, carrying such of their belongings as they could save.

Then came the clang of the fire engines, and the shouts of the police, who now made a show of trying to put a stop to the outrage.

The hoodlums scattered.

They had accomplished their purpose, and did not care what happened now.

Harry learned later that every man connected with the Chinese mine where the shooting had occurred was killed in this midnight raid with the sole exception of a couple of watchmen who had remained at the mine.

It soon became apparent to Young King Brady that their destination was an old round-house about a quarter of a mile distant, close to the railroad track.

This building had not been in use since the railroad company moved their train-yard some years before.

Here, evidently, the sick Chink hoped to find shelter.

And apparently his destination had been well chosen, for no one but themselves appeared to be going in that direction.

At last they reached it, and Harry dropped the bundle in one of the deserted stalls.

The Chinaman appeared profuse in his thanks.

He was evidently very weak, for he sank down beside his bundle.

It was only a minute before he went off in a faint or something like it.

"Is he dying?" breathed Harry.

"No, no! It's opium," replied Alice. "Let him sleep."

"Has he been hitting the hop-pipe?"

"Yes, heavily. He was disturbed in his sleep by the house taking fire. He told me that when he is disturbed like that opium always affects him so. It is a most fortunate thing we came upon him. What do you suppose he told me?"

"Something about Fen Lee?"

"Oh, yes."

"Good enough. What was it?"

"He said that part of the things in the bag were his own, and others he was taking to the Prince of Canton."

"Well, well! We are certainly in luck. He didn't tell you where the prince was, I suppose?"

"No. I asked him, but he said that was a secret, and he couldn't tell anyone without the consent of Lum Ling."

"And who may Lum Ling be?"

"Give it up."

"Let's look in his bag, Alice."

"If I was sure he wouldn't wake."

"He seems to be sleeping quietly. I see now that it is sleep and not a faint, as I at first supposed."

"Let's take the bag outside."

"Good suggestion."

Harry dragged the bag into the open, and then they opened it.

There were various articles of clothing inside it.

There were also several letters, a box of opium, bottles of samchu, or rice brandy, and various other things.

Harry examined the letters by the aid of his electric flashlight.

They were all addressed in English to "Lum Ling, Tombstone, Arizona."

Besides the English address there was Chinese writing on the side.

This Alice tackled and read it in each case as "Lum Ling, at the Mine of the Full Moon."

There seemed to be nothing else which could help the Bradys in any way.

The man continued to sleep, so Harry restored the things to the bag, and placing it near him, he and Alice again went into conference on the outside of the round-house.

"This man ought to be followed," said Harry. "He will wake up by and by, and go straight to the place we want to find."

"I'll stay by him. Perhaps he will let me go with him when he wakes," Alice replied.

"It will never do. The job is mine."

"But you can't speak Chinese."

"I shan't try it as a Chinaman. I'll shed my disguise. You get back to the hotel and tell the Governor what we have learned, and what I propose to do. Let him inquire the location of this Full Moon mine. He will find me somewhere up around there."

Alice demurred, but Young King Brady insisted, and at last she started for the hotel.

Harry now did away with his Chinese disguise.

The Bradys both wear garments which are reversible, and which contain many secret pockets.

Harry was able to completely transform himself, and to carry his Chinese disguise upon his person.

Thus prepared, he took up his watch and waited.

Two weary hours were thus spent, and during all that time nobody came near the old round-house.

At last he heard a stir inside.

In a few minutes the Chinaman came out with the bag hung over his shoulder.

He looked altogether different now, and appeared to have quite recovered.

For a few minutes he stood looking around him.

But he did not appear to see Young King Brady, who was safely concealed in the shadows of the round-house wall.

At last he started off in the direction of the foothills.

Harry gave him a little time, and then started on his trail.

CHAPTER III.

OFF FOR THE FULL MOON.

Alice had some difficulty in making her way to the hotel.

A little later Old King Brady came in, finding her in her regular costume.

"What! You here, and safe!" he exclaimed. "I am thankful. I have been looking everywhere for you. What a terrible thing! They say fifteen Chinamen have been shot by those scoundrels. Where were you when it all happened, and where is Harry now?"

"We had our share of danger, all right," replied Alice, "but we managed to slip through it. Harry has gone on the shadow. By a fortunate accident which grew out of the raid we struck Fen Lee's trail."

"Good enough! And have you reason to believe that he is alive?"

"Oh, yes."

"Better still. Splendid work for the first night."

"We just hit it right, Mr. Brady," added Alice, and she went on to tell what had occurred.

"Harry did just right," said Old King Brady. "Indeed, there was nothing else for him to do. We must get after him just as quick as we can learn the location of this Full Moon mine."

"I am inclined to believe that will be difficult."

"Remember the name was only in Chinese. I am of the opinion that it is the name given by these Chinamen to some abandoned claim they have taken up."

"You are probably right. At all events, we can do nothing until morning. As soon as I heard what was going on I went out to see if I could find you, for I was afraid that you and Harry had got into trouble down there."

"It is as I tell you. Nothing can be done until morning, as you say, so I think I will go to bed."

Alice retired then, but Old King Brady went downstairs.

There were many men in the hotel cafe drinking behind closed doors.

The one subject of conversation was the raid.

Old King Brady was rather surprised to find that the prevailing sentiment was that the hoodlums ought to be arrested and severely punished.

Times are rapidly changing in the Far West.

Old King Brady met a man in the hotel reading-room who introduced himself as a Mr. Brown. In conversation with this man, the old detective asked him if he knew where the Full Moon Mine was situated. Brown did not, but stated he had a number of Chinamen locked in a store which he kept, so as to protect them from the mob, and he thought he could find out from them. So he told the old detective to call on him in the morning at the store and he would probably be able to tell him where the mine was.

He arose early and went down to Brown's store again.

The clerks were already on hand, opening up, and in a few minutes Brown came.

"Did you learn anything about the location of the mine we were talking about last night?" the old detective asked.

"Yes; I think I have got it straight. Here is a rough map of the road to this Full Moon mine. It is the old Firefly. The Chinks took up with it about six or eight months ago."

Mr. Brown entered into some further explanation.

It seemed to Old King Brady that there was no doubt the information was reliable, and he handed the store-keeper some money for his services.

The old detective now went right to work to perfect his arrangements.

Brown agreed to have such supplies as were likely to be needed ready by nine o'clock.

Old King Brady then went to a livery stable, and purchased three good bronchos, with the understanding that they were to be taken off his hands at a reduced rate as soon as he was through with them.

He then returned to the hotel, and joined Alice at breakfast.

"You are sure this map is correct?" asked Alice.

"As sure as I can be," was the reply. "Of course, there is always the chance that Brown may be deceiving me, and that he may have been deceived himself, but I don't think either is the case. Anyhow, I shall act on the information given on the map."

"You have been up in this range before?"

"Oh, yes; many times."

"Perhaps we shall meet Harry."

"I am taking an extra horse for his use with that expectation. We can only go ahead and hope for success."

It was Alice's first experience in one of the Bradys' Wild West cases.

She looked forward to the trip into the mountains with a good deal of pleasurable anticipation.

It was a typical Arizona winter's day.

The air was just cold enough to be bracing, the atmosphere as clear as a bell.

Old King Brady and Alice started for the foothills about ten o'clock, and rode fifteen miles without stopping until they sighted a ranch.

"Why, there's a balloon!" cried Alice. "What on earth is it doing there?"

Sure enough, close to one of the low white ranch buildings was a good-sized balloon.

To all appearance the place was deserted, and so it proved when they dismounted and looked through the buildings, which were in a very bad state.

The balloon thus became still more of a mystery.

It was not a particularly large one.

It was new, however, and there were several steel tanks presumably containing hydrogen gas standing around.

In the basket car was a good stock of provisions and several boxes, also a few tools, such as a geologist's hammer, a light pick-axe, and a small crowbar.

They concluded it was the property of some mining prospector and thought that he would probably put in an appearance before they left. But after waiting some time no one came, and they decided to push on.

They pushed on as rapidly as possible, and soon began the ascent of the range, leaving the ranch behind.

Thus far they had been following a distinct trail, left by ore wagons which in some past time must have come this way.

The visible trail ended at the foot of the range.

Old King Brady and Alice now entered a dark gorge which could scarcely be called a canyon.

The ascent was abrupt, and over a black rock as hard as flint.

Up this they toiled for an hour, covering a rise of perhaps two thousand feet.

They then came out upon a comparatively level stretch, which extended for a long distance with the second rise of the range behind it.

And here they struck the snow.

It began with a few big, stragglng flakes, but soon a full-fledged storm set in.

It was now nearly dark.

They had not covered anything like the distance Old King Brady had hoped for, owing to the steepness of the ascent.

"This ends it for to-night," he said. "We can't go much further. There should be a hut here somewhere. Let me see."

He got out his field-glass and looked ahead.

"Is it marked on the map?" asked Alice.

"Yes; it is close to the entrance to another gorge, which will take us up the second rise of the range. Ah, there it is."

They rode on about half a mile, and came upon a small log hut with a rude barn attached.

"This is where we tie up," declared the old detective. "We can go no further to-night."

They dismounted, and Old King Brady put the horses in the barn.

They had brought a bag of oats along, so he was able to give the animals a feed.

The hut was evidently used as a sort of relay house by somebody.

There was a good store of dry wood, a few pots and pans and odds and ends of crockery.

Old King Brady soon had a good fire burning, and Alice began to prepare the evening meal.

It was now quite dark, and they were just about ready to sit down at the rough table which they found in the main room when all at once shots were heard outside.

These were followed by a loud shouting.

Catching up his lantern, Old King Brady ran out into the storm.

Alice followed.

Running toward them through the snow was a man on foot.

Following at a little distance came a party of five on horses.

They appeared to be heavily armed.

Even as Old King Brady and Alice took all this in another volley was fired at the flying man.

"Five against one! By gracious, that's a little too much!" cried Old King Brady. "I wish I had brought a rifle now."

"Oh, it's Harry!" screamed Alice. "They'll kill him!"

Just then another volley was fired.

The runner measured his length in the snow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRADYS TIE UP AT THE ABANDONED MINE.

The runner actually was Harry, and he was on his feet in an instant.

He had not picked up a shot, but had merely stumbled. On he flew, cheered by Old King Brady's shout.

"Inside, Alice! You must not be seen!" cried Old King Brady, and he ran forward to meet Harry.

"Shot?" he cried.

"No, no!"

"Who are they?"

"Don't know. A bad bunch sure!"

"In with you! We have probably lost our horses, but we may save our lives."

Panting like a tired dog, Harry darted into the hut. Old King Brady followed him, and slammed the door.

"Where did you strike them?" he demanded.

"Just up the gorge. They asked me where I had been, and where I was going. Then they went through my pockets at the point of the revolver, and tied me up while they sat down to supper. I couldn't get a thing out of them. I don't know who they are. While they were eating I managed to slip the cords and then ran for it. They got after me. It was your light which brought me this way."

"You have no revolver, then?"

"They got the revolver in my hip-pocket. I have the spare one in my secret pocket."

"Out with it! We have to defend this place."

Old King Brady threw open the door.

The five men were close upon the hut.

"The first man who tries to break in here dies!" shouted the old detective.

The wind was toward the men, and they must have heard.

Old King Brady slammed the door.

"They are coming right on," said Alice, who had taken her place at the window.

"Get away from that window!" said Old King Brady.

"Keep out of sight. Now, mind!"

The riders came to the door of the hut and halted.

"Hello, inside there!" one shouted. "You will give up that young fellow, or we'll smoke you out."

It was useless to answer, Old King Brady thought, so he held his tongue.

And then just the reverse of what they expected happened.

Suddenly there was a general shout.

"Look! Look!" were the words the detective caught.

A strange light flashed at the window.

Fierce imprecations were heard outside, and then all in an instant they heard the five men go dashing away.

"What on earth has struck them?" gasped Harry.

Old King Brady flung open the door.

Above among the thickly falling snow a bright, penetrating light was seen.

It shot swiftly around in a circle, like a searchlight.

For a few seconds it rested upon the retreating horsemen, and then all in an instant it disappeared.

Harry and Alice were at the door behind the old detective.

"What can be the cause of it?" the former asked.

"I think Alice knows, and I think I can guess," replied the old detective.

"Do you imagine it is the balloon?" questioned Alice.

"I do."

"Balloon! What balloon? How can there be a balloon here in the mountains?" cried Harry.

"I don't see anything of it," said Alice.

"It is too thick. You couldn't see it," said Old King Brady, and he went on to explain to Harry about the balloon.

Meanwhile the marauders, alarmed by the light, were making off with all speed, and soon vanished in the distance.

"If it really is the balloon, whoever is running the thing has done us a mighty good turn," Harry remarked.

"I should say so," replied Old King Brady. "I doubt if any party of beleaguered travelers were ever rescued from a gang of toughs in just such a manner before. But out with your report, Harry. What became of the Chink?"

They had returned to the hut now, and were just sitting down to supper.

"Well, I followed him away up here," said Harry.

"On foot? I don't see how you ever got here."

"But it wasn't on foot. I could not have done it, of course. He walked to the foothills, and was there met by another Chinaman mounted on a pretty good broncho. He got up behind, and for the time being I thought I was in the soup."

"But you got a horse?"

"Oh, yes."

"How did you manage?"

"Came down on this side of the foothills, struck a ranch, bought a broncho and an old saddle."

"Good! But in the meantime you had lost your man."

"Yes, but I found him again. The rancher told me the way he had seen the Chinese miners coming and going, so, following his directions, I was able to come in sight of my man."

"Did you not strike past the ruined ranch where we saw the balloon?"

"No; I saw no ruined ranch. I must have hit the gorge from a different direction from what you did."

"We followed a trail."

"I didn't. My Chink struck over ground where there were no signs of a trail."

"Did you track him to this Full Moon mine?"

"No. I lost them up the second gorge. Where they went I am sure I don't know. They turned a point of rocks, and when I got there it was a case of nothing doing. Broncho and Chinks had alike disappeared."

"And what did you do?"

"Hung around awhile; found I had to give it up. I saw this hut on the way up, and I made up my mind that you would be likely to tie up here in case you followed me, so I turned back and in a minute ran into the bunch who went through my pockets, and stole my horse. That's all my story, Governor. I might better have gone back with Alice to the hotel."

"Not at all," replied Old King Brady. "You have done good work, for you have proved that there is some secret way of getting to this Full Moon mine. How far up the gorge was it that the Chinamen disappeared?"

"Oh, not over a couple of miles."

"This map, which cost me a hundred dollars, locates the mine a good fifteen miles up in the range beyond that point."

"I can't tell you anything about it. My Chinks certainly did not go up the gorge that far."

The conversation turned to other channels now.

The evening passed, and there was no further alarm.

A careful watch was kept through the night, Old King Brady and Harry alternating.

They might as well have both slept, for nothing occurred.

The storm passed over shortly after midnight.

The last three hours it rained, so when morning dawned there were only traces of the snow to be seen.

The Bradys were stirring early, and shortly after breakfast the march was renewed.

They soon reached the place where Harry had lost sight of his Chinamen.

This vanishing was certainly a mystery.

On one side the wall of the gorge rose about forty feet, an apparently unbroken line of rock.

On the other side was a deep ravine, the descent of which was almost perpendicular.

No horse could possibly have gone down there without going to its death.

The Bradys spent a good hour in carefully studying the situation, but they found themselves unable to explain the mystery in the end.

A council of war was now held, and it was determined to push on, following the trail laid down upon the map.

This was accordingly done.

Old King Brady soon discovered that the gorge was leading them around in a circle.

"There is very little doubt that there is a big sink on the other side of these rocks," he declared. "I doubt if we are now more than two miles distant from the point where your Chinamen disappeared, Harry, taking it as the crow flies."

"And we come to no mine," said Alice. "I am afraid you have wasted your money, Mr. B."

"It begins to look so," replied Old King Brady. "But we will push on to the end of the gorge."

They did this, coming out into the open about noon.

And now Old King Brady's prediction was fully verified.

They found themselves on the edge of an immense depression, which all this time had been concealed by the wall of the gorge.

It was evidently the crater of some extinct volcano.

There was a lake at the bottom.

They could go no further, for a winding canyon, which seemed to form the outlet to the sink, was in front of them.

To the level of the lake and the bottom of this canyon was fully a thousand feet.

But the Bradys had come to their deserted mine.

Within a hundred feet of the edge of the precipice which marked the wall of the canyon was a shaft-house, a rough log bunk-house, a dilapidated ore-shed, and a few smaller buildings.

A fairly good vein outcropped here, and the shaft had been sunk on it to a depth of about two hundred feet, as nearly as the detectives could determine, showing that a good deal of money must have been spent here at some time or another.

But there was no trace of recent work.

To all appearance the mine had been long since abandoned.

"Well, this is the end of chapter first," said Old King Brady. "We will tie up here for a while, anyhow."

So the horses were unsaddled and put in the barn, and the Bradys began to look about.

Old King Brady got out his glass, and selecting a favorable point of observation, surveyed the sink with the utmost care.

He could not discover any living thing around the lake anywhere within the range of his vision.

"I presume we have been deceived," he said. "Either by Brown, or by some Chinaman who deceived him."

"These Chinks must have a pretty good thing in their mine to make them keep it so secret," said Harry. "There is one thing sure, Governor, the mine must be somewhere around here."

"That goes without saying."

"This mine even may be the old Firefly Brown spoke of. The fact of our finding an abandoned mine here looks as though he had at least intended to give it to you straight. I propose that we be in no hurry to pull out of this, but wait a bit, and see what turns up."

So the detectives made themselves at home in the old bunk-house and waited.

They would have gone down the shaft, but there was no tub or fall, and the ladders, if there had ever been any, had disappeared.

Night settled down upon them, and there had been no adventure worth noting.

But one discovery which might prove of future importance was made.

Just before nightfall a column of smoke ascended from the sink at a point almost in front of the abandoned mine.

Just where it came from the Bradys were unable to determine, for the cliff took an inward trend here, and there was no point where they could get a look at what was going on at the base.

The smoke continued to ascend for about half an hour, and then slowly died away.

On the whole, the Bradys were inclined to consider this as an indication that there were people below them, perhaps occupying some cave.

It was a case of keeping a close watch that night, of course.

Alice made herself comfortable upon an old mattress in the loft, and retired about ten o'clock.

Old King Brady lay down in one of the bunks at the same time, and Harry took first watch.

For a long time Young King Brady walked up and down the edge of the cliff smoking.

It was bright moonlight, and decidedly warm.

There is not much cold weather in Arizona, although up in the ranges it sometimes snows.

At about eleven o'clock something occurred which made Harry "sit up and pay attention."

It began with the appearance of a bright light reflected upon the surface of the lake.

This continued for some little time.

The light appeared to come from beneath the cliffs upon which Harry stood.

This was the place where the smoke came from.

It confirmed the belief of the Bradys that here was a cave.

Harry watched the light continuously from the moment of its appearance until he suddenly saw a lesser light appear upon the surface of the lake.

It was moving.

He watched it for an instant longer, and then turned the glass upon it.

Now he saw that the light came from a lantern placed upon a large raft.

Stretched upon the raft in a reclining position were three Chinamen, while two others stood at the stern sculling with long-handled oars.

In a moment the whole outfit shot from the shadows of the cliffs, and came into the full moonlight.

There had been no deception.

A raft load of Chinamen was being sculled along the lake.

CHAPTER V.

TO THE GOD OF THE MOON.

Harry felt that he had made a discovery of sufficient importance to justify him in awakening his chief, and he did so.

"Chinks, eh?" said Old King Brady, fully alert on the instant. "Well, well! Brother Brown perhaps was not so far out of the way, after all. But we shall see."

They went out on the cliffs.

"Why, there are two rafts, Harry!" the old detective exclaimed.

"So there are! There was only one when I went in."

"Give me that glass!"

Old King Brady examined the rafts long and earnestly.

"Look at the second," he said. "Don't it seem to you that the fellow lying in the middle might be dead?"

Harry took the glass.

"He has got something drawn over him," he said.

"Yes."

"It conceals everything but his face."

"Exactly, and he is lying on his back with his eyes closed, I think."

"I wouldn't swear to the eyes."

They continued to watch.

The rafts passed along the lake for a considerable distance, keeping well in toward the shore.

After a little they passed around a point of rocks and disappeared.

The light in the supposed cave had now died down.

"This looks as if the show was ended, Harry," said the old detective. "You had better turn in."

"I think I'll put in the night with you, Governor. I don't feel in the least bit sleepy."

"But you will be all used up to-morrow."

"No, no! At least not yet. I've got an idea that those Chinks may be coming up here."

"To tell you the truth, I have much the same notion, Harry, and it comes to me very forcibly that the man with the cloth thrown over him is our Canton Prince."

"We will watch together for a while, anyway," said Harry. "What about waking Alice?"

"I see no use in disturbing her until matters take some unexpected turn."

They continued to pace the cliffs and talk.

At length Harry suggested that they walk to a point where they could take a look down the gorge.

This struck Old King Brady as being a good idea, and they strolled in that direction.

They had not gone far when they were suddenly brought up with a round turn by seeing a light approaching on ahead.

"By jove, it's a lantern!" exclaimed Harry. "It's the Chinks, surest thing you know."

They watched for a few minutes.

Presently they caught sight of a second lantern behind the first at some considerable distance.

"I think there can be no doubt that they are coming to our mine, whatever their purpose may be," said Old King Brady. "We will get back and arouse Alice."

"Governor, our situation is becoming very serious."

"It certainly is, Harry. We are completely cut off."

"That's what. There is only one direction in which we can go from this place, and that is the way these Chinamen are coming."

They walked back to the hut in silence.

Harry called to Alice from the foot of the ladder, and told her how the case stood.

"I'll be right down," said the brave girl in as even a tone as though she had been answering a call to dinner.

The Bradys now closed the door of the hut, and put up a wooden bar which was in place to secure it.

Lights were extinguished, and they took their places at one of the windows, watching for what was to come.

And it was not for long that they were kept in suspense.

Soon the Chinamen appeared.

One carried a huge ore-tub on his head.

Another held the lantern, a third had a coil of rope.

Two others staggered under the weight of a heavy basket.

Then the second bunch appeared.

Two of these had another basket.

Behind them walked two more, leading between them a young Chinaman.

As they drew nearer Harry and Alice, who was looking over his shoulder, saw that one of these was the Chinaman they had helped out during the Tombstone raid.

The Chinaman whom they were leading looked different from the others, and was manifestly a person of higher caste.

"The Canton Prince sure, Governor!" said Harry. "He is hypnotized or in a trance, or something."

The Chinamen now proceeded to relieve themselves of their burdens. They then took disguises out of the baskets and put them on, with masks of hideous form on their faces. All but three so disguised themselves. These three took from one of the baskets certain musical instruments used by the Chinese. The masked ones formed a circle about the Canton Prince, joining hands. Then the musicians seated themselves at one side, and the music commenced with a crash. In a short while the music ceased.

Then the watchers saw the Canton Prince raise his hand and begin to talk.

They could hear distinctly, for there were dozens of cracks between the logs.

"What is he saying, Alice?" whispered Harry.

"It is an address to the moon god!" replied Alice. "He is asking the god to bring good luck to the mine."

Suddenly the prince folded his arms, threw back his head, and began talking in an entirely different voice.

"What now?" demanded Old King Brady, after a minute.

"As near as I can make out," replied Alice, "it is supposed to be the moon god himself that is speaking. Good gracious! This is serious!"

"What's the matter?"

"He says that these men have enemies lurking near, and that they must look out for them. He says they have come to steal away the prince."

"Well, well! The moon god must be a mind-reader, then."

"He is on another tack now. I can't understand what he is saying."

"Talking in a different dialect?"

"Altogether different. I only understand Cantonese."

The talk continued for some minutes.

Then the music began again.

But there was an addition.

Suddenly the masked Chinamen began to dance in wild, fantastic style.

And as they danced each man set up a howl on his own account.

It appeared to be a question of which could howl the loudest.

Such another performance the detectives had never seen.

"If the moon god told them they have enemies here hadn't we better decide on what to do in case they make a search?" questioned Harry.

"What can we do?"

"We might rush them. I actually believe that if we were to jump out on them with our revolvers they would all take to their heels."

"Entirely too risky. What would become of Alice should we get shot?"

"That's to be thought of."

"Don't consider me in the matter," said Alice. "If you think it is best to do that why go ahead."

"Indeed, and I shall consider you in the matter," said

Old King Brady. "The risk is entirely too great all around. It is not to be thought of for an instant. No attack will be made. We shall have enough to do to act in self-defence."

For fully twenty minutes the weird dance continued.

Then the Chinamen removed their masks and the musicians put up their instruments.

The Canton Prince was led over to a big rock, where he sat down, folding his arms.

The Chinamen then got down to business.

A tub and rope were carried into the shaft house.

As the Bradys stood they were unable to see what was going on there, but there could be no doubt that the Chinamen were putting the tub in place in the shaft.

It was done at last, and two coming out they led the prince into the shaft-house.

After a few minutes they came out again, and gathered up the baskets and carried them in.

The Bradys waited for a considerable time.

They could see the light in the shaft-house, but what was going on in there they could not tell.

At last one Chinaman came out with a lantern.

The shaft-house was now in darkness.

The man walked quietly off, and started down the gorge at a rapid pace.

"By jove, what's become of them all?" cried Harry.

"It's easy told," replied the old detective. "They have gone down the shaft, and from the bottom there is communication with the sink from which they came. This man let them down, and as he could not wind himself down with the windlass he is returning by the way he came."

"That's evidently it," said Alice. "We have made a great discovery."

"Most important," replied Old King Brady, "and we are in great luck to get out of this snap as easily as we have."

"Let's get out and have a look," said Harry.

They passed out of the bunk-house then, and went over to the other building.

It was as they suspected.

A stout new rope now hung from the windlass.

They could not see the tub, but they knew that it must be at the bottom of the shaft.

"Good!" cried Old King Brady. "Could not be better. We have located our missing man, and now all that remains is to get hold of him. We have been in the biggest kind of a run of luck from the start."

"What about going down there?" questioned Harry.

"I am thinking."

"Whether we had not better wait?"

"Yes."

"I say no. The Chinks haven't rigged up that windlass for fun. They intend to come up here to-morrow and go to work, you may depend."

"It looks that way."

"Then to-night is surely our time. We must take the bull by the horns."

"Do you think you could wind Harry up, Alice?" asked the old detective.

"I can try."

"We must go together, and you must remain here. Are you afraid?"

"Don't ask me that question, Mr. Brady. What sort of a detective would I be if I was afraid?"

"Well, we will wait a bit. We want to give them a chance to get asleep, at all events.

They passed out of the shaft-house.

"Oh, look! Look!" cried Alice.

She pointed skyward.

There, sailing above them, was the balloon!

"Great!" cried Harry. "Your balloon, all right."

Old King Brady hastened to turn his glass upon it.

"I'd like to know now just for fun who can be sailing that thing about the mule range."

"Is that the name of these mountains?" asked Alice.

"Yes; didn't I tell you."

"No; you didn't mention it."

"Can't you make out who is in the car?" asked Harry.

"No," replied Old King Brady. "I can't see anybody, but then my sight is poor, anyhow. It is not what it used to be."

"Let me have the glass."

But before Old King Brady had time to hand it over a powerful searchlight was thrown from the balloon.

It rested for a moment upon the mine, and then was thrown down into the big sink.

Here it rested while the balloon floated over the lake.

In a few minutes the loud beating of a drum and the clash of cymbals was heard upon the still night air.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESCUE OF THE CANTON PRINCE.

"The Chinese are coming again!" cried Harry.

Old King Brady pointed to the sink.

"It's down there," he said. "The air is so still that we hear it plainly; but that is where the sound comes from, all right."

"They see the light, and think it is a spirit," said Alice.

"They are trying to drive it away with the drum and cymbals. I have seen them do the same thing in China many a time."

Harry in the meanwhile had turned the glass upon the balloon.

"I can only see one person in the car," he said. "A tall man with a fur cap."

"Old or young?" asked Old King Brady.

"I can't make out his face."

"It is probably some prospector," said Alice. "Remember the mining tools we saw in the car, Mr. B."

"Everybody in Arizona is more or less of a prospector," replied Old King Brady. "Whoever he is he seems to be determined to keep out of our way."

The light was shut off even as he spoke.

In a few moments the balloon had passed over the sink, and it began to descend.

There must have been a valley on the other side of the cliffs, for in a few moments the balloon disappeared.

"That's the last of it for the present," said Old King Brady, "and the last of our plan of going down the shaft, too. The Chinamen have been so stirred up by that searchlight that it will be some time before they get to sleep."

"We might try it about one or two o'clock," suggested Harry.

"It is nearly one now."

"Is it so late? Well, say in an hour. I don't imagine they keep a guard down there."

"You can't tell what they may do on a night like this."

"That's a fact."

"And if we wait till to-morrow they will surely be here ready to begin work on the shaft."

They were all silent for a few moments, and then Old King Brady said:

"Whatever attempt we propose to make should be made to-night. The Chinese are bound to come here to-morrow, and before dawn we must be on the move."

"I fully agree with you," replied Harry.

"We will say about half-past two," added Old King Brady. "We will begin our operations then."

They returned to the hut, and sat talking until the appointed time.

Nothing occurred meanwhile.

At half-past two all went out and looked over the edge of the cliff.

There was no light shining on the lake, nor anything else to indicate that the Chinese were on the alert.

"It is now or never," said Old King Brady. "Let us get busy."

They went to the shaft and wound up the tub.

Harry lowered his partner down, and followed himself, Alice lowering him down.

He found Old King Brady standing at the entrance to a tunnel with a lantern he had found in the shaft house and taken down with him.

"I don't think this leads to where the Chinamen are," the old detective said. "I feel quite encouraged. I believe we are going to be able to put it through."

"If we could only rescue the prince it would be great."

"It certainly would. Come on. We haven't a moment to lose."

They pushed on into the tunnel, Old King Brady in the lead.

It was evidently artificial.

Equally plain was it that here the Chinamen were doing their work.

At the end of the tunnel they came upon their mining tools, and a heap of ore which had recently been stoped out.

"Dowse the glim," said Old King Brady. "Now comes the ticklish part of it."

They pushed out into the open, and peered around.

The lake lay at their feet.

A little further on they could see the entrance to a cave which appeared to run back in under the cliffs.

"Now then, cautious, cautious," breathed Old King Brady.

They stole on to the entrance to the cave, and peered in.

The Chinamen lay about wrapped in their blankets.

The remains of a fire smoldered at one side, just within the entrance to the cave.

Everyone seemed to be sound asleep.

Several opium pipes were in evidence, lying up on flat stones close to the sleepers.

The cave was littered with boxes, bags and other things.

Further in the detectives could see two horses tied up.

The moon struck in through the entrance, making everything plain.

Old King Brady pressed his finger to his lips.

Then he pointed to one corner of the cave.

There lay the Chinaman whom they had called the Canton Prince.

They could tell him by his yellow silk blouse.

Old King Brady drew Harry away.

"It seems to be the psychological moment to rescue the young man if only he would not raise an alarm," he said.

"There's the danger," replied Harry. "I shouldn't be a bit afraid to tackle the problem if it wasn't for that."

"What do you think?"

"If Alice was only here to speak to him."

"He might have been drugged when we saw him up above. He may be so still."

"True enough."

"Shall I try it?"

"Suppose we both go on the job. If he is drugged we can carry him out between us."

It was so determined.

The Bradys waited a few minutes at the entrance to the cave, watching.

Old King Brady turned his glass upon the prince.

He could not see that he was tied up.

It seemed altogether probable that he had been drugged.

At last they ventured into the cave among the sleepers.

They got next to the prince, without disturbing anyone.

While Harry knelt beside him, Old King Brady stood guard with his revolver.

Harry shook the sleeper gently.

Drugged he may have been when they first saw him, but he was not so now.

He immediately opened his eyes, and stared at Young King Brady in a frightened way.

Harry had his finger against his lips for silence.

"From the Chinese minister at Washington," he whispered. "From Moy Suen Chen. Here to help you."

The Chinaman sat up and nodded.

"You are Fen Lee?" whispered Harry.

"Yair."

"You are a prisoner here?"

"Yair! Plisner."

"Get up! Come with us. We will set you free."

The prince waved his hand toward the sleepers.

A hopeless look came over his face.

"Too muchee man," he breathed.

"Come!"

Harry got up and gave the prince a hand.

The Chinaman seemed to understand just what was wanted.

He followed the Bradys out of the cave and into the tunnel.

Not a man had moved when Harry looked back at the sleepers for the last time.

Their success had been so complete thus far that it seemed almost too good to be true.

It was not until they had reached the tub that the detective spoke.

"You are the Canton Prince?" demanded Old King Brady, determined to make sure.

"Yair. Me Fen Lee. Me Canton Plince. Dlat allee light."

"You want to get away from those men?"

"Oh, yair. Oh, yair. Muchee want. Moy Suen Chen sendee you gettee me?"

"Yes."

"Dlat allee light. How me go?"

Old King Brady pointed to the tub and told him he must get in.

"I suppose we had better send him up first and make sure of him?" questioned Harry.

"Yes, if he will help Alice. I'll see if I can make him understand."

It was easy.

The prince appeared to be very intelligent.

He seemed to comprehend perfectly what was required of him and promised to help hoist Harry up.

He then got into the tub and Harry shook the rope.

Alice got busy on the instant and the tub began to rise.

Old King Brady flashed the light along the tunnel.

He could neither see anyone nor hear a sound.

"It has worked splendidly," he said. "Just a few minutes now and we ought all to be on our way to Tombstone."

Alice ground away, having less trouble than she expected.

The prince was even a lighter weight than Harry.

But Alice did not suspect the change till she saw his Chinese hat as the tub came into view.

"Goodness, they have got the prince!" she exclaimed.

She brought the tub up to the level of the deck and fastened it.

The prince stepped out, took off his hat and made a low bow.

"Two more dlown dere," he said. "Hully, quick!"

He took charge of the windlass, waving Alice to one side. He seemed to know just what to do and the tub went flying down.

It had not yet reached the ground when they were

startled by hearing three shots at the bottom of the shaft in quick succession.

Then followed horrible yells.

More shots rang out.

The rope was shaken violently.

The prince sprang to the windlass and began to wind. But there was nothing on the end of the rope.

"Alice, Alice! Fly and save yourselves! Make for Tombstone! Don't wait for us!" Old King Brady's voice thundered at the bottom of the shaft.

CHAPTER VII.

A RESCUE BY BALLOON.

Something had happened, of course, and Alice knew that it must be something pretty serious to make Old King Brady call out in the way he did.

"The Chinamen have captured them!" she exclaimed. "What shall we do?"

"Yair, dlat so, mees lady," replied the prince. "Belly muchee bad' bunch. Oh, yair. What old man say?"

"He said to get you out of here," replied Alice. "Are you Fen Lee?"

"Yair. Me Fen Lee. Who dose men? Who you, lady?"

"They are detectives sent by the Chinese Minister to rescue you. I am one of them."

"You lady tlective?"

"Yes."

"So! Dey killee us!"

"But the rope is cut. There is another way to get up here? Do you know that way?"

"No. You have horses. We go?"

"Yes, I have horses, but I don't like to go away and leave my friends."

"Me stay. Me fightee, so you say yes."

Then Alice surprised the prince by addressing him in Chinese.

After that their conversation was held in that language.

We, however, propose to give it in English—we could not do the other thing if we tried.

"We had better go," said Alice. "Mr. Brady always wants to be implicitly obeyed. I don't know whether to take all the horses or not."

The prince thought that all ought to go.

He was sure that the Chinamen would capture the third horse if they left it behind.

Alice determined to ride as far as the hut and there wait for the Bradys.

She and the prince hastily got the detectives' belongings together and the start was made.

As they worked Alice talked.

She asked the prince if he remembered being at the deserted mine before with the masked moon worshippers.

Fen Lee declared that he remembered nothing of what had taken place on that occasion.

He told Alice that the Chinamen had captured him at

the mine to which he had come, supposing that the miners regarded him as a friend.

He added that they had kept him drugged part of the time and always under guard.

The reason of this, he explained, was because that when he was under the influence of the drug he was possessed of the gift of second sight.

"The Chinamen," he declared, "had been using him to find where the richest gold veins were."

Altogether this Chinaman proved himself a very intelligent proposition.

He expressed the greatest thankfulness for his rescue, and he showed every concern for the Bradys.

His opinion upon this subject was not at all encouraging. He told Alice bluntly that he had no doubt the Chinamen would kill the detectives.

This made Alice change her plans, and she now determined to push on to Tombstone as rapidly as possible and try to get help.

So they mounted and rode away from the mine.

There had been more delay than was safe.

They had not gone far down the gorge when lights were seen ahead of them, rapidly approaching as though they were being carried by men running.

"They are coming!" cried the prince. "They have a way of getting up out of that place. There are two ways. It is as I was afraid it would be. They will kill us, Lady mees."

And in this fashion he continued to address Alice while they remained together.

"We must fight!" cried Alice. "Have you a revolver?"

"No."

"Could you use one if you had it?"

"Oh, yes."

"Here, take my spare one. Here they come!"

They now caught sight of the Chinamen coming around a bend of the cliffs.

There were five of them and all were armed with rifles.

To Alice the situation looked pretty black.

She reined in, entirely uncertain what to do.

At the same instant the prince gave a terrified exclamation and pointed skyward.

In her excitement Alice had not seen what he saw.

It was the balloon again.

The aeronaut, whoever he might be, was evidently intending to descend directly in front of them.

Suddenly he threw his searchlight upon them for an instant.

Then he turned it upon the approaching Chinese.

The Canton Prince did not seem in the least frightened by the sudden appearance of the balloon.

Not so the approaching Chinamen.

They stopped short and sent up a chorus of dismal howls.

"Balloon!" cried the prince. "Those ignorant dogs are afraid. Your friends?"

"No, no! I don't know whose balloon it is."

Down came the balloon.

It was startlingly plain in the moonlight.

Alice saw an elderly man in the car.

He wore a fur cap and a bearskin coat.

He was quite alone.

The prince watched the descending balloon in silence.

The Chinamen down the gorge turned and ran a little way.

Then they stopped and stared.

"Hello, there!" cried the man in the car. "Want any help?"

"I am afraid we do," called Alice.

"Are those Chinamen after your scalps?"

"That is what they are."

"They look a bad lot. Five to two, and one of the two a woman, is pretty heavy odds. Want to get in with me, young lady? I'm harmless. I'll help you out if I can."

"But our horses?"

"You can't save them. Those Chinks will kill you sure. Better get in!"

On the spur of the moment Alice determined to accept the invitation.

"What do you say, prince?" she asked.

"Let us go," said the prince. "I was never in a balloon. I should like it very much."

"We accept!" cried Alice. "But won't the Chinamen shoot the balloon?"

"Too much afraid as the case stands now; but they might change their minds, so be quick."

The man in the balloon pulled at a rope and the big gas bag sank lower.

"Want any of our provisions?" called Alice.

"I've got all I can handle," was the reply. "You will have to abandon the whole outfit. Be quick now!"

Alice and the prince hastily dismounted.

At the car touched the ground Alice climbed in, assisted by the aeronaut pulling and the Canton Prince pushing.

The prince got in unaided, but the balloon shot up so suddenly when the man threw overboard some ballast that he dropped on the floor of the car.

The balloon shot skyward.

As it flew up the aeronaut threw his searchlight upon the Chinamen again.

This they seemed to regard as something deadly.

With a chorus of dismal yells they turned and fled.

The balloon ran up about two hundred feet, caught a breeze and was whirled eastward.

Alice had been trying to tell about the Bradys.

"Can't listen now," cried the man. "I've got to give my whole attention to business until we get out of this wind current."

Alice now almost regretted her somewhat rash act.

The prince held on to the side of the car desperately.

It was easy to see that he was pretty well scared.

They passed over the lake, got out of the wind current

and then the aeronaut opening a valve, the balloon began to descend into a deep valley.

"I need more gas," he explained. "I have got a couple of tanks here. Once I charge her up, I may be able to help your friends."

They descended with fearful rapidity.

Evidently things were not going as they should.

The man tugged at one rope and another, swearing beneath his breath.

Suddenly the balloon began to collapse and got over on its side.

The car was now tilted to an angle positively dangerous.

The prince's yellow face grew deathly white, but he never said a word.

"Hold on tight!" cried the man. "We are in a little trouble, but we shall work out of it. Don't be scared."

He had good reason to be scared himself before many minutes.

The car struck a treetop, and only by the merest good luck were its occupants saved from being thrown out.

It dragged itself free only to have the big gas bag itself become entangled in another tree.

This gave it a bad tear, and the gas rushing out they soon landed with a thump at the bottom of the valley beside a small stream.

The aeronaut threw out his anchor and at last was able to get out himself.

He was dragged for a considerable distance, but in the end succeeded in securing the balloon to a tree.

Alice and the prince scrambled out.

Poor Alice was in despair over her adventure.

Still it was better than being murdered by Chinamen.

"There!" cried the man. "At last we are safe! Don't be discouraged. We have landed about where I wanted to. It is only a short walk to the place where I left my gas tanks. Now, then, it is time we were introduced. My name is Von Dilzer. I am generally known as Professor Von Dilzer. I have long been a professional aeronaut. Just now I am doing a little mining prospecting in these inaccessible valleys by balloon for a syndicate which wants to know more about them."

"My name is Alice Montgomery," replied Alice. "I belong to the Brady Detective Bureau of New York, of which you may possibly have heard."

"I know it very well by reputation. And your Chinese friend?"

"Is Fen Lee, hereditary Prince of Canton, and an attache of the Chinese Minister's staff at Washington."

"So? And these friends of yours whom you tried to tell me about when our trouble struck us?"

"Are Old and Young King Brady."

"Indeed! And they have fallen into the hands of that gang of Chinese miners in the big sink?"

"Yes. Shall I tell you all about it?"

"I wish you would. We can do nothing with the bal-

loon until daybreak, so we may as well do our talking now."

Alice went into details then and told all.

"Rather a serious piece of business," said Professor Von Dilzer, shaking his head. "I wondered who you people were and what you were about. I have been trying for some days to find out how these Chinamen got in and out of that sink. I saw they were on the move to-night, so I hovered around. I have a contrivance by which I am able to steer my balloon after a fashion unless the current is too strong, but somehow or another it got out of gear just before I saw you in the gorge, so I detached it. I shall be able to put everything in working order in a very short time after I get the light."

"Can we descend and rescue the Bradys if they are still to be rescued?" Alice asked.

"Easily," was the reply. "You must not be discouraged by the way things have gone to-night. This is really more of an airship than a balloon. An invention of my own. I'll put everything together and explain the whole business to you in the morning."

"Did you succeed in finding how the Chinamen get in and out?" asked Alice.

"I have noted two places where they do it, but just how they manage it I can't say. I have been hanging about here for several days. I wanted to scare the Chinks so that when I finally descend into the sink they will keep away from me; for that reason I have exploded a few bombs when I threw out my searchlight. That is what made them so much afraid of me."

Professor Von Dilzer went into some further details as to the business in which he was engaged.

They then left the balloon and followed the stream to a place where there was a rude hut of pinon boughs, which the professor informed them he had built himself.

Here he had a little store of provisions and a couple of portable gas tanks.

In reply to Alice's questions he informed her that he had used the ruined ranch as another supply station.

He now built a fire and they sat around it until morning. The prince proved to be quite a sociable fellow.

He talked entirely through Alice and told about the book he had intended writing.

"I expected trouble from white barbarians when I came to Arizona," he said among other things; "but I never looked for it from my own people."

But it is always the unexpected which happens.

This seemed to be as true as ever in the case of this educated Chinaman.

Professor Von Dilzer looked upon Alice with the greatest respect. He informed her that he had not supposed there was a woman in America who could talk the Chinese language with the facility which she displayed.

At last daylight came and the professor prepared an excellent breakfast from provisions which he had stowed away in the hut.

After this was eaten they all returned to the balloon.

The professor asserted that he knew of no outlet to the valley and that unless he was able to repair his airship they stood a fair chance of remaining there the balance of their lives.

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGE RESCUE FROM A FEARFUL FATE.

And how fared it with the Bradys while Alice was passing through these decidedly unusual adventures of the wilds of Arizona?

This is something which must now be told.

As everyone knows who has ever had anything to do with this strange people, the Chinese are great ones to spring surprises.

Their tread in their felt shoes is noiseless; they seem possessed of unexplicable powers for concealing themselves where an ordinary person would see no chance of concealment.

These miners of the Full Moon gave the Bradys a complete surprise.

The alarm must have been sounded among the sleepers in the cave within a very few minutes after the detectives left with their charge.

How they ever managed to come through the tunnel undiscovered the Bradys never could explain.

But in some way they did it, and all in an instant they jumped upon the detectives six strong.

It was a complete surprise.

Harry fired two shots on the instant and Old King Brady one.

But the Chinamen had revolvers, too, and quickly retaliated.

One Chinaman fell wounded.

Seeing that they were bound to be overcome in the hand-to-hand conflict which followed, Harry, thinking only of the safety of Alice, slashed the rope, while Old King Brady called up the shaft as has been said.

A Chinese bullet had fixed poor Harry.

He got it in the arm just as he cut the rope.

The struggle need not be detailed.

Enough to say that the Bradys were speedily overpowered by numbers.

They were dragged into the recesses of the cave.

Here, while covered with revolvers, they were bound hand and foot.

Not then did their captors deign to speak a word of English, although there was considerable said in Chinese.

The Chinamen, placing a man on guard with a rifle at the entrance to the cave, now hurried away, leaving the Bradys to their own reflections.

These, as may well be imagined, were of but anything of a pleasant description.

"What about your wound, Harry?" was Old King Brady's first anxious question.

"It is just a nip in the fleshy part of the left arm," replied Harry. "It is painful enough, but I can't believe it is serious."

"Do you think the bullet lodged?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"It ought to be examined at once."

"Can't be done, Governor. I can only grin and bear it."

Old King Brady stifled a groan.

"If we had only had five minutes more," he said.

"Yes, yes. But we didn't get the five."

"If you had only gone up first! What will Alice do with that Chinaman on her hands?"

"I'm afraid she is likely to have more than one Chinaman on her hands, poor girl."

"I'm afraid so. The gang have gone up there, of course. If she only took my advice, however, she may have escaped."

"Your advice, as you call it, was a positive order, and I have no doubt that Alice obeyed it; still there may not have been time for them to get away."

"We have made a bad botch of it, Harry."

"I decline to admit that. On the contrary, I think we worked it the slickest ever, only thing is we just fell down with success in full sight."

"So it sometimes goes."

They talked and talked. It seemed an interminable time before the Chinamen returned.

When they came they brought the detectives' bronchos with them.

The Bradys looked on while they were stalling the horses with feelings of deep despair.

"They have captured the poor girl," said Old King Brady. "But where is she, then?"

"It don't follow because they captured the horses," replied Harry, trying to keep his partner's spirits up.

But he himself believed it.

Still there was always the possibility the other way.

After a while a young Chinaman, with rather a pleasant face, came to them and squatted on the floor of the cave beside the detectives.

This man, it proved, could speak perfect English, wherever he picked it up.

"Who are you and why did you take that man away from us?" he asked.

"We are his friends," replied Old King Brady. "Why did you hold him a prisoner here?"

"That is our business."

"And the other is my business."

"Do you know who that man is?"

"Very well."

"Who?"

"The Prince of Canton."

"So you do know. You are detectives?"

"You say so."

"You came from Washington. You were sent here by Minister Moy?"

"So you say."

"Better tell the truth. Is it not so?"

There seemed to be no use in concealing the fact, and Old King Brady made the admission.

"You have made a great mistake," said the Chinaman. "What you have done may cost you your lives."

"We can only die once."

"There are many ways of dying—yours may not be pleasant."

"You would torture us?"

"We shall see. Who is this man who flies about in that basket?"

"I do not know."

"Don't lie."

"I am not lying. I am telling you the truth."

"If you will tell us who he is and where we can find him we may spare your lives."

"Did he get the prince?" demanded Old King Brady, suddenly catching the fellow's drift.

"Yes."

"Ah, ha? And the girl who was with him?"

"Yes. You see, I tell you all; you tell me all."

"Did he take them up in the air?"

"Yes."

"Well then, I can tell you nothing, for I do not know. I did not see them go up in the air. I do not know the man."

There was a long pause.

The Chinaman did not move.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" demanded Old King Brady. "We have nothing to do with you. We don't want to interfere with your work. Why should you interfere with us?"

"You lie!"

"Don't talk that way."

"I talk true talk. You say you don't interfere with us. That's a lie. You have spoiled all our plans."

"You spoiled your own plans by holding this young man a prisoner."

"Very well. We have to do the best for ourselves. We shall not let you go unless you will tell where that flying man took the prince."

Old King Brady was in despair.

He would not get away from that point. It would be simply useless to lie to him. He did not know what to do.

The Chinaman got up, and shaking his fist in Old King Brady's face, said:

"You will pay for this!"

Then turning, he walked away.

"We are up against trouble, Governor," sighed Harry.

"Evidently," was the reply; "and what to do I don't know."

"We might pretend to know where the balloonist has taken the prince."

"It would not be the least use, Harry. Chances are these Chinks would kill us as soon as they found they had been deceived."

"They will do that anyway, I am afraid. I'd try it on. It might serve to get us out of here, at all events."

"Well, just as you say. If he comes again, I'll see what I can do," replied the old detective.

And there the matter rested.

But the Bradys never got the chance.

Nobody came near them until away along in the morning.

Harry called to the Chinamen more than once, but they paid no heed.

At last matters came to a head and began to look pretty serious.

Somewhere around ten o'clock the Bradys, who lay in such a position that they were able to look into the outer cave, saw that a fire was being built upon a pile of stones.

Over this a pot was suspended between two stakes.

At first they thought it was simply cooking.

But they were soon undeceived in this.

One of the Chinamen brought two bottles and poured from them into the pot.

There was a high wind blowing at the time and it struck into the cave.

The odors which it swept from the bubbling pot to the Bradys were abominable.

What kind of an infernal broth are they cooking up there?" exclaimed Harry.

"I can't imagine," replied the old detective. "It may be something which they treat the gold ore with."

He was entirely mistaken, as he was soon to learn.

The Chinaman now tied a cloth over his nose and mouth and stirred up the contents of the pot.

Then he poured in some stuff from another bottle.

After a few minutes he ladled out the mixture into another pot.

It threw up a greenish vapor.

He covered it, and placing the pot on the ground went out of the cave.

In a minute four Chinamen filed in and came through to where the Bradys were.

One was the man who had talked to them in the night.

"Now, look here," he said, "we don't want to kill you two, and at the same time we don't intend that you shall go back to Tombstone and tell that we are working a mine down here in this hole. Do you understand?"

"I hear what you say," replied the old detective. "Go on. Say more. Tell us exactly what you propose to do."

"What we propose to do is to give you a dose which will take away your reason. In other words, we are going to make idiots of you. Then we shall take you up out of this and you can go where you will. Do you understand?"

Old King Brady understood only too well.

He knew that the Chinese possess a knowledge of drugs which the rest of the world knows nothing about.

He tried to argue with the man, and even offered a heavy sum if they would set himself and Harry free.

It was all to no purpose, however.

Not a word would the Chinaman say in answer.

Two took Harry between them, and with his arms still tied behind him, he was led to the outer cave.

The other two led Old King Brady forward.

Now the Chinaman who had concocted the mixture came in still masked as to the lower part of his face.

Outside a sixth man was seen pacing up and down with a rifle.

Harry was forced to kneel, two holding him down.

The masked Chinaman uncovered the pot from which the same greenish vapor began to ascend and held it towards him.

The Chinaman turned their heads away to avoid inhaling the fumes.

Certainly the Bradys had got themselves into a tight place.

The masked Chinaman held the pot under Harry's nose, the two who gripped him pressing his head forward into the poisonous fumes.

Old King Brady looked on in despair.

"Stop, stop!" cried Old King Brady. "I will pay any price!"

At the same instant the guard outside gave a wild shout in Chinese.

Probably what he said startled the masked man.

At all events he dropped the pot, which broke and the contents ran off over the floor of the cave.

A general shout went up.

Abandoning their prisoners, the men, with their hands pressed against nose and mouth, all went out of the cave.

"Down flat, Harry. Keep your face close to the ground and crawl out!" shouted Old King Brady.

He assumed the same position himself and they crawled to the entrance.

Harry's head was buzzing. He felt that consciousness was slipping away from him.

They had not yet got out of the cave when a loud explosion was heard outside.

This was followed by yells of terror from the Chinamen.

Old King Brady came up with Harry.

He had been able to avoid coming in contact with the vile mixture.

His head buzzed a little, but that was the worst.

"On, on!" he cried. "All depends upon our getting into the fresh air!"

This was just accomplished when Harry fell down and lay motionless.

"It's all up with the boy, I am afraid," thought Old King Brady. "He certainly must have inhaled some of that stuff."

With a tremendous effort he got upon his feet, for it had been easier to get down than it was to get up with his hands tied behind him.

And now as he looked up he saw the cause of all the excitement.

The Chinamen had vanished.

Settling down into the sink was the balloon.

A man wearing a fur cap was bossing the job.

Alice stood in the car holding a rifle.

The Canton Prince was beside her, and he held what looked like a fat glass bottle with a short neck.

"Have courage, Mr. Brady!" shouted Alice. "We are here to save you and we shall do it, too."

But the worst was the wind. It was now blowing a perfect hurricane.

It had all clouded over and there was every evidence that a heavy storm was close at hand.

The balloon continued to come down.

Professor Von Dilzer threw out an anchor.

It caught between two rocks and held fast.

"You get out!" he shouted.

Evidently he addressed the prince.

The Chinaman said something to Alice, and, pushing her gently back, climbed out of the car.

Producing a pocket knife, he ran to Old King Brady and cut him free.

"You must come into the balloon!" cried Alice. "What's the matter with Harry?"

"He has been poisoned!" shouted the old detective.

Fen Lee had already attacked Young King Brady's bonds.

With the old detective's help, they lifted him into the car.

"Can you climb in after loosening the anchor, Mr. Brady?" the aeronaut called.

"Must," was the reply.

The prince climbed into the car.

Old King Brady pulled the anchor from between the stones.

He made a leap for the edge of the basket and got it.

The professor pulled a rope which in some way controlled the working of the airship.

Immediately the balloon darted up, with Old King Brady still clinging to the car, dangling between heaven and earth.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLIZZARD IN THE CLOUDS.

Old King Brady was pulled into the car by Professor Von Dilzer and the Canton Prince.

For the next few moments Alice plied the old detective with questions.

Professor Von Dilzer was introduced.

The balloon had been put in commission and the descent into the sink was attended with greater success than Alice had dared to hope for.

Poor Harry's condition was the worst.

Alice tackled the prince in Chinese.

"I know all about that stuff," was the reply, and he gave it a Chinese name. "It is very serious. Perhaps he did not get enough of it, though. You have to get a good deal to receive the full effect."

"And he will be crazy if he got enough?" inquired Alice.

"He certainly will. If not, he will be all right when he wakes up. He might sleep as much as two days."

This was anything but encouraging.

Meanwhile the Chinamen could be seen beneath them going back to the cave.

Where they had hidden themselves Old King Brady could only guess.

The prince explained that it was he who had exploded the bomb.

The explosive was contained in one of the queer glass bottles which Old King Brady had seen him holding.

He went on to explain that, while one or two of the Chinamen understood the true nature of the balloon, the rest were an ignorant lot and believed it to be an evil spirit.

But it was very little information the prince could give about the Chinamen of the Full Moon Mine, for, as he explained, he had been in a drugged condition almost the entire time of his stay with them.

Old King Brady, after making Harry as comfortable as he could, turned his attention to Professor Von Dilzer.

"I certainly am under the deepest obligation to you, my dear sir," he said. "Beyond all doubt, we should be in serious trouble now but for your help."

"Don't mention it. Only too glad to have been of service to you," replied the professor. "The question is now what to do?"

"Where will it be convenient for you to land us?"

"Where would you like to be landed? My balloon is practically an airship and is dirigible to a certain extent."

"What we would like, of course, is to be landed at Tombstone."

"I don't want to go there, Mr. Brady. I should attract attention which I don't care to draw to myself. I am sorry, but such is the case."

"What about the ruined ranch where we just saw your balloon?"

"I can take you there."

"That will do very well."

"I am sorry I was not on hand when you called. I happened to be off after jack-rabbits at the time."

"Then let us settle it that way."

"I am agreeable if we can get there?"

"Where does the if come in? We seem to be going ahead at race horse speed just now."

"Too fast. A storm threatens. There is no telling."

They had risen high above the Mule range, and to a certain extent were out of the wind current.

But, although they were not getting the full force of it, still it was a pretty heavy blow.

Old King Brady bent down and carefully examined Harry's condition.

"It is dreadful," said Alice. "What if poor Harry should become insane?"

"Hope for no, lady mees," said the prince. "I t'ink for no—yes."

"Ask him if he ever saw anybody like this in China?" said Old King Brady.

Alice did so, and it did not encourage them any when the prince admitted that he never had.

While this was going on Professor Von Dilzer suddenly gave a sharp exclamation.

"What's the matter?" cried Old King Brady.

"A blizzard! Look!"

In the distance they could see snow falling.

Next moment they were right in the thick of it.

It was a terrible whirl.

The flakes were so big and thick that they could scarcely see a foot away from the car.

"Will it swamp us, professor?" cried Alice, beginning to be alarmed.

"Hope not!" was the reply. "We will rise above it if we can."

The professor manipulated his valves.

The balloon might be rising or falling.

It was impossible to tell with no object for comparison.

But they did not pass out of the blizzard.

"This is more serious than I supposed," growled the professor.

"Have you any idea which way you are going?" demanded Old King Brady, for the professor had quit steering.

To tell the truth, I haven't. I can't steer in this mix-up," was the reply.

Then the only thing is to wait till it blows over and then get our bearing."

"It is all we can do."

The snow was now beginning to accumulate in the car.

Old King Brady and the Canton Prince got busy and tumbled it over the edge, while Alice did her best to keep poor Harry free from it.

The moments passed and the storm did not abate.

"Have we been going up all the time?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Steadily," was the reply.

"We don't seem to come out of it?"

"No; I was sure we would before this."

"What can we do?"

"I don't consider it safe to ascend much higher. This balloon is not adapted for great heights, and what is more we shall get into trouble about breathing."

"Suppose we try to cut under the snow?"

"We can't do that, Mr. Brady."

"I don't mean exactly that. What I intended was to get down to a level where it is rain. Then we can see where we are at."

"It's not a bad idea. We might strike less wind."

"Perhaps we could make a landing," suggested Alice.

"We will descend, anyway," replied Professor Von Dilzer, and he began to send the balloon down.

But the wind seemed to increase as they descended.

The car commenced to rock in the most terrifying manner.

The whirl of the snow was most confusing and the noise

of the wind was so great that they could scarcely hear each other speak.

There is no denying that all hands were now pretty well frightened, but the calmest of all was the Canton Prince.

He sat clutching the edge of the car and never uttered a word.

"We shall have to rise again!" bawled the professor.

"No use talking, we can't stand that!"

He began fussing with his valve ropes.

Suddenly there was a violent explosion, and they began to drop with fearful rapidity.

"Good heavens, the balloon has burst!" cried Alice, looking up.

Old King Brady had already seen it, and of course the professor knew.

But whether the force of the wind had just blown in the side of the balloon or whether something else had happened, even he could not tell.

The collapsed bag came tumbling about the car.

"We are done for, I'm afraid, professor!" shouted Old King Brady.

"Hold on for your lives! It's all we can do!" the professor roared.

But there was another job on Old King Brady's hands just then.

He knelt down, and seizing a spare coil of rope proceeded to tie Harry to the car, which showed every sign of tipping over.

Meanwhile Alice and the professor were throwing the ballast overboard.

The Canton Prince was the only one who did any holding on.

Never, probably, had Old King Brady been in a position of greater peril.

All at once they ran out of the snow and had to deal with rain.

They could see where they were now.

Apparently they were dropping into one of the deep valleys so common in the Mule range.

Fearful cliffs were on both sides of them.

The wind caught them and sent them dashing against the face of the one on their right.

Not a word was spoken.

Old King Brady looked for nothing short of death.

The big basket partly crushed in, rebounded and dropped down upon a narrow projecting platform below.

Here in some way it became entangled in a stunted pinon tree which had found root upon this inaccessible cliff.

"It holds! We must abandon ship!" bawled the professor.

He scrambled out upon the cliff, caught at a rope and made it fast around the tree.

"Now, Miss Montgomery!" he shouted.

"You go, Mr. Brady," cried Alice, holding back.

"Obey!" thundered the old detective.

Alice was helped out, the prince scrambled out and helped Old King Brady lower Harry down.

The old detective was the last to leave and he stepped upon the cliff not one instant too soon.

For scarce had he done so when the tree snapped and the wreckage went whirling down the perpendicular face of the cliff, leaving the old detective and his companions standing in the pelting rain.

"Well, well, well!" cried Professor Von Dilzer. "That puts the kybosh on my business and upon us, too, I'm afraid. Chances are we shall never be able to get down from this place."

"It is a desperate situation," replied Old King Brady, calmly, "but, while there is life, there is hope. First thing is to find out where we are."

With Professor Von Dilzer, he bent down over the edge of the cliff.

"We are a couple of thousand feet up from the bottom of the valley, that's all," said the aeronaut, coolly. "If you know Arizona as I know it, Mr. Brady, you must admit that our chances of ever getting off this ledge are almighty slim."

"I'm afraid they are, but we won't worry over it," replied the old detective. "Alice, you stay here with Harry and I'll explore along the ledge a little."

"Suppose I go one way and you the other," said Von Dilzer.

"What I do?" cried the prince. "I vanter hellup. Shall I stay with lady mees?"

"Yes, stay where you are," said Old King Brady. "We shall not either of us go very far."

He hurried along the ledge, which here was not over ten feet wide.

The cliff which rose above it was almost perpendicular. Its height the old detective roughly estimated at five hundred feet.

As he advanced the ledge grew wider.

Presently it widened out to about forty feet.

The old detective took one look around and then immediately started to return.

He found Professor Von Dilzer already there.

"Nothing doing," said the aeronaut; "the ledge goes out of business altogether a little further on here."

"It does, eh? Well, I've made a most important discovery."

"Which is what?"

"Cliff houses."

"Good enough! Where?"

"Oh, just a short distance."

"We must carry Harry inside at once," declared Alice. "He is just about drenched."

"And what about yourself, poor soul?" said the professor. "It will do none of us any harm to get in out of the rain."

"My discovery carries hope with it," said Old King Brady. "If there are cliff houses here, then there is a way off the ledge."

"I have seen lots of them where there was no way of getting up," said the professor. "Ladders must have been used."

"Ladders were never used to come up from the bottom of this valley," retorted Old King Brady.

"And I have seen cliff houses where there were secret ways down through the rock," he added. "We may strike something of that sort here."

Old King Brady and the prince picked up Harry between them and they started ahead.

In a few minutes they were sheltered in one of the former homes of a forgotten race.

There was a long row of these ancient dwellings.

Like some recently discovered in the Grand Canyon, they were literally hewn out of the cliff itself.

And this would not have been so difficult.

These cliffs were, properly speaking, not stone, but made up of a mass of loose sand and pebbles, the coarse conglomerate rock, so called, of the Far West.

But our travelers did not stop to reckon up the number of the cliff houses.

They took the first one they came to.

And lucky were they in their selection.

Passing beneath the low doorway, they saw first what everybody sees in nearly every one of these remarkable dwellings.

This was the red imprint of a human hand upon the wall.

What the meaning of this peculiar symbol is nobody knows.

A more serviceable discovery was a large pile of pinon boughs in an adjoining room.

Doubtless this wood pile was a thousand years old. The dry climate of Arizona was responsible for its preservation. Unnecessary to say it was as dry as tinder.

Besides the wood, there were a number of sealed earthen jars.

Such jars are of very common occurrence in unexplored cliff dwellings.

Sometimes they contain human bones, but oftener corn is found in them.

It may be noted here that corn thus found has been planted and has grown and flourished after lying in the jars nobody knows how many hundred years.

But Old King Brady was not gunning for archaeological information just then.

He got busy at once with fire-making, and the prince and Alice lent a hand.

A room in the next house was warmed up for Alice, and she was left to herself.

Harry was stripped and rubbed with whisky.

The prince and the professor took off their clothes and dried them as best they could.

Old King Brady followed this example later, but not until he had Harry comfortably dry.

Young King Brady's condition was unchanged.

He appeared no otherwise than as a boy in a deep sleep.

What was to be the end of it?

Old King Brady asked himself that question more than once, but he had done all that it was in his power to do.

By the time Alice appeared it was beginning to grow dark.

The storm had now abated, but the day was almost done.

What was to be the end Old King Brady could not help wondering.

Here they were without provisions or water perched two thousand feet in the air, with night upon them.

The situation was most serious, to say the least.

CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF ALICE AND THE PRINCE.

"How is Harry?" was Alice's first question when she came out of her house.

"Still the same," said Old King Brady.

"Did you try to arouse him?"

"Well, no. Where was the use? I stripped him, undressed him and dressed him again, besides giving him a thorough rubdown with whisky. If he wouldn't wake up with all that tumbling about, I really don't know what one can do."

"That's right. Perhaps, after all, it was best to let him sleep it out."

"I think so. He seems in no danger. His heart is strong and he breathes as naturally as possible."

"Didn't you get any of it yourself, Mr. Brady?" Professor Von Dilzer asked.

"Just about enough to make me very dizzy. There was nothing worse, and it soon passed."

"Never mind. Those blame Chinks shall pay dearly for this."

"I rather fancied you had a big stick in store for them. Are you gunning for the Full Moon Mine?"

"It is down on my list. There are others. From what you tell me I shall feel justified in recommending my people to oust those Chinks at short notice. But first we have got to get out of this snap."

While this conversation was going on the prince got to talking to Alice in Chinese.

"Confound them! What are they saying?" muttered Von Dilzer. "I do hate to have anyone talk a foreign language in my presence. No, no. Don't stop them, Mr. Brady. I didn't mean that. It is really wonderful that Miss Montgomery can speak the most difficult language on earth so well."

"I don't know how well she speaks it," replied Old King Brady, "but she always seems to get along."

"Learned it as a child in China, she tells me."

"Yes. If there was anything coming from the prince worth me hearing, you may rely upon it she would tell us."

"What in thunder are we going to do?"

"It's a problem. My suggestion is that as a starter we look a little more deeply into our present situation.

"Good idea; but it will be dark in a few minutes. I've lost everything. We haven't even a lantern."

"I can supply that. I have an electric flash lantern."

"We'd use up the battery before we had half examined this row of cliff houses."

"Oh, mine is a special battery. We could use it all night."

"That's better. Hadn't we better examine those jars? If they contain corn we may find ourselves reduced to eating it, old and tough as it is."

"I think we had, perhaps. As there is no show for any supper, we may as well get busy on our explorations right now."

Old King Brady told Alice what they proposed.

"You and the prince remain here with Harry," he said. Alice agreed.

The professor and Old King Brady then started, after opening the jars, which contained corn.

They first walked to the end of the row of cliff dwellings. There were sixty-eight of them.

Just beyond the last the ledge ended abruptly, the overhanging cliffs projecting out to its line.

"It will take all night to make a thorough examination here," grunted Von Dilzer.

"We must do what we can," replied Old King Brady, and he turned in at the doorway of the last house.

"Cave! Rather gruesome!" he cried.

The floor was strewn with human bones.

"This is where they buried their dead, if it can be called burying," said Von Dilzer. "I've found these bone holes before, but they are usually in cellars or vaults of some sort."

They went through the rooms.

There were four of them.

Everywhere it was bones.

All the cliff houses were two stories high.

There were the usual trap doors leading up to the rooms above, but as yet they had discovered no ladder.

The next house was entirely empty on the lower floor and so were the five following.

As there was no ladder yet the upper rooms, of course, were not examined.

"This town must have been deliberately abandoned," said Professor Von Dilzer. "If it was not so we should find ladders and more corn jars like those we opened in our house."

They pushed on, coming at last to the house where there was the remains of a ladder.

It was in a crumbling condition, however, and went to pieces under the old detective's hands.

In another house they found the skeleton of an adult and a child.

In another still there were a couple of corn jars.

It was now entirely dark and Old King Brady sug-

gested that they return and see how Harry was and then work back in their explorations from the other end.

They walked along slowly, the old detective flashing his lantern before them, while Von Dilzer talked about the cliff dwellers and gave his theory of the age of the houses.

"They seem to be sitting in the dark," said the old detective as they neared the first house. "I told Alice to use her light freely. I've got a spare battery and there is another in one of my partner's pockets."

They turned in at the doorway of the first house, Old King Brady flashing his light inside.

"Not here!" he exclaimed.

The fire still smoldered, but there was nothing to be seen of Alice and the Canton Prince.

They passed into the room where Harry lay.

He was there wrapped in the blanket Old King Brady had put around him in the car.

His condition was just the same.

"Probably they are in the next house," said Von Dilzer, "but I don't see why they did not make their presence known when we passed."

"Alice, Alice!" called Old King Brady, stepping to the door.

But there was no response, nor was there any Alice nor any Chinese prince.

The old detective and Professor Von Dilzer searched for them everywhere.

Strangely, mysteriously they had disappeared.

Here was a serious turn of affairs.

Old King Brady was terribly troubled about it, and naturally.

They shouted and whistled.

They flashed the light this way and that.

Of course there was a search for a secret way out, but it came to nothing.

By getting on Von Dilzer's shoulders, through the aid of the corn jar to step on, Old King Brady was able to climb through the top door and explore the rooms in both the first and second house.

But it was all useless.

The mysterious disappearance of Alice and the Canton Prince remained unexplained.

We have passed over this strange situation thus briefly because there are really no details to give.

"We have got to do something definite," said Von Dilzer at last. "We ought to search every house."

They had already looked into the lower rooms of ten when this remark was made.

Each time Old King Brady hurried back to the first house to see if Harry was all right.

"I shall not leave the boy again," he now declared. "It is too risky. You can make the search alone if you wish, using his lantern."

But the aeronaut declined.

"I don't like this turn of affairs, not for a little bit,"

he said. "Let's stick together. Next thing we know it will be either you or I who'll do the disappearance act."

"Perhaps it will be better until morning at least."

"You take it very coolly, it seems to me, Mr. Brady. Not that I want to criticize, but I am a man who always speaks his mind."

"What more can I do than I have done, and what is the use in getting excited over what can't be helped."

"Do you know, Mr. Brady, a horrible thought has seized me."

"Well? I fancy I've got it as well as you."

"What is it?"

"You started the talk. Let's have your theory."

"That in some unexplained way those two managed to tumble over the cliffs."

"You have voiced what is in my mind, I am free to admit."

"But how would you account for it?"

"That's easy. I think I could, if I tried, name a dozen ways in which such a thing could have happened."

"Blame it all, Brady, that Chink is at the bottom of it. Prince or peasant, they are all alike."

"I disagree with you. I don't believe Fen Lee would hurt a hair of Alice's head."

And so the talk ran.

The hours slipped by, and still no light came upon the mystery.

Nor did any change come to Young King Brady.

He still lay in that deep, mysterious sleep.

Professor Von Dilzer had talked himself out long since and had now dropped asleep.

But there was no sleep for Old King Brady.

Words fail when we would describe his feelings.

Both he and Harry had become much attached to Alice.

That some day this attachment of his partner might assume definite form was Old King Brady's secret wish.

And now to have Alice suddenly snatched away in this mysterious fashion did seem too much.

Old King Brady was pacing up and down in the front room about half-past twelve, when suddenly he heard footsteps in the room behind where Harry lay.

Instantly he drew his revolver and started for the door.

It was only Harry.

He was walking about, trying to unwind the blanket which Old King Brady had twisted about him.

"My dear boy! Are you awake at last?" exclaimed the old detective. "How do you feel?"

There was no answer.

"Harry, do you hear me?"

Still no answer.

Old King Brady flashed the lantern in his face.

Harry's eyes were closed.

He was evidently walking in his sleep.

And now he began muttering.

Giving up trying to make him talk, Old King Brady listened.

"I'll find her. Yes, of course I'll find her!" he caught.

There was more said, but it was unintelligible.

By this time Harry had freed himself from the blanket. He threw it down and started for the door.

Old King Brady backed away.

"Perhaps he may find her," he said to himself. "Stranger things have come about."

He allowed Harry to pass him.

Keeping close behind ready to grab him if he turned towards the cliffs, Old King Brady followed on.

Harry passed door after door.

Coming at last to the fifteenth house, he paused and stood motionless for some minutes.

Again he was muttering, but the old detective could not make out what he was saying.

That his dream was about Alice was made plain by here and there a half-audible word.

Suddenly he went into the fifteenth house.

Before Old King Brady could follow him he turned and came out again.

"Wrong!" he muttered. "That's wrong! It must be the next."

He then went into the sixteenth house.

Then Old King Brady saw him glide into the rear room on the right.

The ground floor construction of these cliff houses was the same in each instance.

There was a big room in front and two small rooms behind.

On the two upper floors which the old detective had examined there were four small rooms.

Harry went directly to the extreme righthand corner and kneeling down began fumbling about the floor.

"I can't find it," he muttered. "I can't find it. Yet it must be here. I wish Old King Brady would come. He is better than I am in finding such things."

A horrible fear crossed Old King Brady's mind when Harry suddenly got up, and turning faced him with open eyes. Was he crazy? Was this really sleepwalking?

Was it not that the fumes from the jar had done their fatal work and Harry was actually insane?

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE TRAIL OF ALICE AND THE PRINCE.

Old King Brady might have spared himself these fears. They were absolutely groundless.

"Why, Governor, where am I? What are we doing here in this singular place?" Harry suddenly exclaimed in his natural voice.

"At last!" cried the old detective.

"At last what?"

"At last you are back to life, Harry!"

"Back to life! Have I been dead, then? I feel as if I had. I never felt quite so queer."

"You have been through a terrible experience, my boy."

"Have I, then? Let me think. Oh, I remember! The poisoned jar! Where are the Chinks? Is this part of the cave?"

"We have done away with all that business, Harry. The Chinks and their cave are many miles from here."

"So? How did we get away?"

"By that balloon Alice and the prince came in just as you went unconscious. With them was one Professor Von Dilzer, who owned the balloon. We got you into it and sailed away. The Chinese had taken to their heels through fear of the balloon. There was no trouble at all until afterwards. Then we had enough."

"Trouble?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"So many kinds that it will take time to name them all."

"I want to know all just the same."

"And so you shall. First, the balloon ran into a blizzard. We got it in the neck then. Do you remember nothing of that fearful storm?"

"I dreamed I was in the Klondike being buried in snow."

"And indeed it came pretty close to that, but we blew out of it and landed on this cliff."

"Then you don't know where we are?"

"I don't know our exact location, no. We are on a cliff overhanging a valley some two thousand feet deep with a rise of five hundred or so above us. There is a long row of cliff houses here, and we are now in No. 16 from the end, where we landed."

"Is it possible? And no way of getting off our lofty perch?"

"We might roll off. I know of no other way."

Harry passed his hand over his forehead.

He had said nothing of Alice as yet, and Old King Brady was content to wait.

"It is very strange," Harry said.

"You have had a narrow escape. If you had got the full force of those fumes you would now be an insane boy, according to the prince. As it is, how do you feel?"

"Light headed. Not otherwise different from usual. But why are we standing here in the dark?"

Old King Brady, to spare the battery, had shut off his light.

"You brought me here, Harry," he replied.

"I?"

"Yes."

"How do you mean?"

"You took to walking in your sleep. I followed you."

"So?"

"Do you remember nothing of what happened?"

"I remember nothing but a couple of dreams I had. One was about the snow, as I told you."

"And the other?"

"I dreamed that Alice was lost in a forest and I was looking for her."

"You remember nothing else?"

"No."

"Well, in a way that dream is true. Alice is lost, but not in a forest. Listen and I will explain."

Old King Brady now detailed in a general way all that had occurred. Harry grew much excited over the situation. He had several explanations of the mystery to suggest.

Old King Brady let him talk himself out and then started on a different tack.

"Look here, Harry," he said; "that these Chinese drugs have a varied and peculiar influence on the mind we both know. When you came in here you were muttering 'I'll find her' and similar things."

"I was?"

"Yes. What is more, you were kneeling in that corner and seemed to be looking for a secret trap door. You remarked that if I was here I could find it, and then you woke up. There may be something in all this."

"I shouldn't wonder. Where is this man Von Dilzer?"

"I left him asleep in No. 1."

"Suppose we go back and see if he has disappeared and then return and see what we can do? I should like to have a look at things outside."

They went out of the cliff house.

The moon was out now, and being at the full made the scene light enough to enable Harry to take in everything.

"A most remarkable place," he said, after a little. "Poor Alice! If she ever went over the cliff that's the last we shall ever see of her."

"It is indeed so," replied Old King Brady; "but I do not allow myself to think of that yet."

They walked on and entered No. 1.

Von Dilzer was throwing wood on the fire.

"Heavens, I am glad you have come!" he exclaimed. "I have been asleep, I suppose. I just woke up, and not finding you could only suppose that you had been doing the disappearance act. How is the boy?"

"All right, I am happy to say," replied Old King Brady.

"Harry," he added, "allow me to introduce Professor Von Dilzer, to whom we certainly owe our lives."

Explanations concerning Harry followed.

"There might be something in what you say," said the balloonist. "I have read of sleep walkers finding lost things and all that sort of business. Suppose we have a look in No. 16?"

"Just what we propose," replied the old detective. "Sleep is not for me to-night. We had better get right to work."

"I am quite ashamed of myself for dropping off, really, but I didn't know I was doing it."

"No apology. Let us get to work."

They now returned to No. 16.

Using both Harry's light and his own, Old King Brady went to work in the corner of that inner room.

He sounded the stones, both walls and floor, and peered about everywhere.

There certainly is an open space behind here," he de-

clared at last, striking a certain stone in the floor with his heel. "You see it rings hollow, and—well, well!"

"You have done the business, Brady!" Professor Van Dilzer exclaimed.

Whatever Old King Brady did with his heel, the stone was slowly sinking.

It went down for about a foot and then with equal deliberation glided noiselessly to one side.

Thus an open space big enough to admit the passage of a good-sized man remained.

Below the opening was an old ladder, the rounds secured with raw hide, after the style of the cliff dwellers' ladders.

This ladder was fastened perpendicularly against the wall.

"Harry, you are a somnambulistic wonder!" Old King Brady exclaimed.

"I don't know anything about it," replied Harry. "I have to take your word for everything which happened to me during that remarkable sleep."

"Here's a secret opening all right," added Von Dilzer, "but whether Miss Montgomery and the prince went through here or not remains to be proved."

"This discovery has given us plenty of work to do, at all events," said Old King Brady.

"I'm game to lead the exploration," added Von Dilzer.

"Take it easy," replied the old detective. "We don't want the stone to close on us. I don't know what I did to open it. I merely stamped my foot and down it went. I'll go down. I am a little more accustomed to this sort of thing than the rest of you, perhaps. Hold the stone, Harry. You see here is the edge of it projecting. Just keep your hands on it and sing out if it begins to move."

Old King Brady then lowered himself upon the ladder and flashed the lantern about.

He found that the movement of the stone was controlled by a peculiar folding mechanism made of copper bands.

There was a handle which when pulled forced the stone back.

What had brought it down was a copper weight.

Old King Brady could not see the secret spring.

"There is no sense in disturbing this," he said. "We had much better leave it as it is. There is one thing I want to call your attention to. This whole business has recently been cleaned up and oiled."

"The deuce it has!" cried Professor Von Dilzer. "Then that looks as if we were on the right track."

"What lies below, Governor?" demanded Harry.

"It is a shaft. It's oblong; about eight feet by ten. I can't see the depth."

"Do we tackle it?"

"Yes. Never mind holding onto the stone. It won't move unless you pull the handle."

"Go on, I'll follow," said Von Dilzer. "Harry will come last with the other light."

And in this order they descended the ladder.

It was not as long as Old King Brady anticipated.

Fifty feet was about its length, and it landed them at a large opening in the rocky wall.

"Big cave," said Old King Brady, flashing his lantern in. The others joined him and all passed into the cave.

Its dimensions seemed vast.

They could see neither roof nor walls whichever way they flashed the light.

"Do we go ahead?" demanded Harry as Old King Brady stood looking about.

"It's a problem. If we were only certain that Alice and the prince went this way!"

"We have got to get off that cliff somehow," added Von Dilzer.

"Exactly; but we have not examined all the houses yet. Alice and the prince may be tied up in one of them, for all we know."

"That can be proved."

"Trail!" cried Harry, breaking in on their talk.

He had been flashing his light about the floor of the cave, which was strewn with a fine reddish sand.

"What do you see?" demanded the old detective.

"Footprints on the sand."

Old King Brady got down on his knees and examined them.

"Four men and one woman," he said.

"How can you be so sure?" inquired Von Dilzer.

"Long practice. I am certain that I am right."

"It looks like Alice," said Harry.

"Suppose we push ahead a little way. We may find something to make the situation certain," suggested Von Dilzer.

Old King Brady assented and they started on into the cave.

They had not gone a dozen yards before the old detective picked up a piece of ribbon.

"Settled!" he exclaimed. "Alice dropped this, and on purpose to give us a clew, no doubt."

"It is hers," said Harry.

"And now I am ready to push right ahead," declared the old detective. "No more holding back."

They walked rapidly on.

Every now and again Old King Brady would flash his light down upon the trail.

Harry soon discovered that there was another trail close on their right.

This was much confused.

It looked like a trail traveled many times.

Indeed there was quite a path worn in the sand.

"Can this trail be prehistoric, professor?" he asked.

"I am decidedly inclined to believe it," was the reply.

"And the object of all this?"

"It is the way out. Perhaps the way to water."

In a moment more another discovery was made.

They came upon a large circle made of rough blocks of stone embedded in the ground.

In the centre of the circle was a single stone which towered above all the rest.

It looked like a hinge finger.

Upon its top rested a peculiar light.

Leading up to this stone circle there were many trails coming in right and left.

They were in fact well worn paths and must have been trodden by many feet during many years.

"Come. This is prehistoric all right," said Old King Brady.

"A sun circle," replied Professor Von Dilzer. "They are found in all parts of the world and all date back before the memory of man."

"A sun circle where there is no sun!" cried Harry.

"There's the moonlight resting upon it now," said Von Dilzer, "and where that comes the sun can come, too. There must be some opening in the roof overhead."

It probably was so.

In a moment the light vanished.

The moon had passed beyond the point at which it entered.

Leading away from the sun circle was one broad, well-beaten path.

At the entrance to this path Harry's lantern caught a glittering something on the ground.

He stooped and picked it up.

It was a button from Alice's sacque.

"Still on the trail!" he exclaimed, holding it up.

"Right," said Old King Brady. "Alice knows her business. At each important point we are going to find something to tell us how to go."

They hurried on.

At the distance of about half a mile from the sun circle they saw moonlight ahead.

Old King Brady had not failed to observe that the land steadily descended.

He knew that they must be a good thousand feet lower than the cliff houses now.

Presently they came to what appeared to be the dry bed of an ancient lake.

From this ran a deep cut through which the water had run off.

The trail led around the lake bed and followed the cut.

A few moments more and they came out from under low overhanging rocks.

They were standing upon a broad ledge cut through by the force of the ancient torrent.

Dark cliffs towered all about them.

The Bradys and Professor Von Dilzer walked to the edge of the ledge and looked down into a broad valley.

There were lights below and the music of a banjo and an accordeon reached their ears.

"Camp!" said Harry.

"A mine perhaps," said Old King Brady.

"Gentlemen," said Professor Von Dilzer, "I don't want to alarm you, but I happen to know this place. As a matter of fact, I am myself a detective. I have been em-

ployed by the Governor of Arizona to locate the holdout of the notorious Baldy Brown gang of outlaws, who have been raising old hob around this region of late. Having once been interested in balloons, I chose that method of working. This is the holdout of the gang. I located it day before yesterday. I was also employed to look into what those Chinamen were doing at the Full Moon, which threw me your way. Now you know who and what I am."

"You are certain of your location, professor?" asked the old detective, after a few moments' silence.

"Absolutely," was the reply.

"Poor Alice!"

"It is terrible," echoed Harry. "I have no doubt those were the men who robbed me of my horse."

"You can tell me about that later," said Von Dilzer. "Now let us go back and see if Miss Montgomery has left us a clew."

They returned in silence to the dry run, which extended on an easy slope down into the valley as nearly as they could make out.

Starting down the bed of this ancient torrent, they had not gone twenty feet before Harry's light fell upon another glittering object.

Old King Brady picked it up.

It was another button from Alice's sacque.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Just what brought her captors to the cliff house where she was captured Alice never knew.

What happened will now be described.

After Old King Brady and Professor Von Dilzer left on their exploring tour Alice and the prince continued to talk for some little time.

The prince wanted to know all that was known about the cliff houses and Alice was trying to explain something of their history when Fen Lee suggested that they do a little exploring on their own account.

Alice assented.

They went into five of the houses.

Doubtless many of them had secret passages leading to the sun circle; perhaps all had.

House No. 7 had, at all events.

Alice and the prince examined four, went back and saw that Harry was all right, and then returned to No. 5.

This was also examined.

So was No. 6, and they entered another to meet their fate.

They were in the lefthand back room examining some sealed jars which they found there.

The jars contained corn, and the prince having taken out a handful was talking about it.

Both stood with their backs to the door, when all at once a deep voice exclaimed:

"To the right-about face, young woman, and let's see if you are as good-looking as I hope."

Alice clutched the prince's arm and turned with a startled cry.

There in the doorway stood two men.

Each held a cocked revolver.

They were fierce-looking fellows.

Typical Western toughs of the "Alkali Ike" brand.

"Gee whiz! A Chink!" bawled one. "Who'd a-thunk it!"

"Blame pretty gal," chuckled the other.

"Say, sis," he added. "What's yer name and what in thunderation brung you here alone with this Chink?"

Two more heads appeared at the door then.

The prince was dreadfully frightened.

Alice, however, was as cool as possible.

"You don't talk English—see?" she said hastily to the prince in Chinese.

Then facing the spokesman, she said:

"When a gentleman addresses a lady to whom he has never been introduced he usually takes off his hat and tells his name. I am waiting for you to do that to me."

There was a guffaw of coarse laughter from the others.

"So," drawled the tough. "Waal, I dunno but what you are right."

He removed his big, flapping white hat and disclosed a head as bald as a billiard ball.

"My name's Baldy Brown, young woman," he said. "I'm the boss of a little band of rustlers what hang out in these yere hills. Now will you be good and tell me who yer be?"

"Certainly," replied Alice. "I will answer any questions you choose to ask me."

"The main thing is to keep them away from poor Harry," she said to herself. "Even if it costs me my life, I must do that. They might shoot him offhand."

"My name is Alice Jones," she said aloud. "This is my Chinese servant, Moy Lee."

"And how did Alice Jones and her Chinese servant Moy Lee come to be on this yere ledge, where no white pusson but me an' my friends ever was before?" demanded Baldy Brown.

Alice saw that she had got to give an explanation, and it seemed to her that the true one a little tinged with romance would be the best.

"We came by balloon with my father," she replied.

She hit it right.

"What, in the balloon what's been a-flying about here for the last few weeks?" Brown exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Where is your balloon? Where is your father?"

"That's the sad part of it, sir. The balloon was dashed to pieces against the rocks in the storm. My poor father went down with it into the valley here."

"He did, eh? Then he's as dead as paddy's pig."

"I'm afraid so, sir. Moy Lee and I had just time to make a landing, but my poor father could not follow us."

At this point Alice produced a pocket handkerchief and pretended to wipe away her tears.

"I heard you talking Chinese to this here Chink," came next.

"Yes, sir."

"Where did you learn?"

"Why, in China, sir. Is it likely that I learned anywhere else?"

There was another laugh.

"Baldy," said one of the others, "I believe the gal tells the truth."

"It must be true," assented Baldy. "They couldn't have got hyar in no other way."

"What was your father doing around hyar?" Baldy asked.

"Just exploring the country."

"Can the Chink speak United States?"

"Not a word, sir."

"What are you going to do? You can't stop hyar?"

"I know it, sir. I'm sure I don't know what we shall do."

"I'll tell you."

"Well?"

"You will go along with us."

"You will help us get to Tombstone?"

"Perhaps. There is no hurry. You'll get to Tombstone some of these days, no doubt."

"You are too much of a gentleman, I am sure, to harm a woman, Mr. Brown. That's the way I read your face at least, and the faces of your friends behind you."

"You do, eh?" retorted the outlaw with a sneering smile. "Well, I daresay you size us up just about right, Miss Jones; but whether that's so or not you and the Chink will have to go along with us."

Alice expected it. She knew that any thought of resistance or even of protest was useless.

"Are you armed?" demanded Baldy Brown.

"Why, yes, sir, I have my revolver," was the reply.

"Hand it over."

Alice did so promptly. They did not search her. Had they done so a second revolver would probably have been found. The Canton Prince did not fare so well. He was searched from head to foot. But poor Fen Lee had been cleaned out by his own friends before this.

Alice and the prince were then taken into the rear room on the right. Here there was just such an opening as Old King Brady had discovered in the sixteenth house.

Two of the men went down the ladder first. They carried lanterns and threw the light up, while Alice climbed down. The prince followed. Baldy Brown was the last down, and he closed the trap. They came into the cave and walked across lots to the trail the Bradys subsequently followed. In the seventh house Alice dropped one of her ribbons. But this the detectives did not discover. From time to time the plucky girl threw down such trifles as have been described. How well they served as clues for the detectives has already been shown.

They passed the sun circle and went out of the cave.

Then it was down by the bed of the old torrent to the

bottom of the valley. Here there were a few log huts and several men came out to meet them.

"Did you get it, Baldy?" called one.

"Sure! Got it and got a woman and a Chink, too. Don't you see?"

"Well, well! If the Chink can cook that's just what we need, and I'm willing to give up my job to him any time. Ez for the woman——"

"Ez fer the woman," broke in Baldy, "she don't concern you. I've took a fancy to her and I've made up my mind to marry her. It's high time I had a wife."

Poor Alice! She listened with a sinking heart.

"No matter," she thought; "I can bluff him for a week if it comes to that, and Mr. Brady will surely find me. Anyhow, it is better than exposing him and having poor Harry killed."

* * * * *

Alice was right. The Bradys were already on her trail, and but a few hours had elapsed since she was taken down the bed of that ancient stream. The finding of the second button settled it. Where the lights shone there Alice was. The problem was how to get her away from this rascally gang.

"Come, Brother Von Dilzer, if that is really your name," said Old King Brady. "Perhaps, seeing that you are in the business, you may have some suggestion to offer."

"There is only one way out that I know of," replied Von Dilzer. "You see that low saddle-back between the ridges where I am pointing now?"

"Yes."

"Under that runs the bed of a creek; it passes through some sort of a natural tunnel. Its width is not over three hundred feet. They go out that way and come in the same way. Beyond lies the main valley between the Mule range and the foothills."

"I see."

"Now another point. These men use that cave, or tunnel, to stable their horses in. We might get the horses if we are slick. If so, we win the game hands down—see?"

"Very good. Any idea where they would be likely to put their prisoners?"

"None. I've only had a bird's-eye view of their camp."

"How strong are they?"

"Twenty-five or thirty, but I have every reason to believe that the biggest part of them are off on a raid. Baldy Brown himself stayed behind."

"The men I saw," said Harry.

"Tell me about them," replied Von Dilzer.

Harry then told of the attack in the gorge.

"It's the same bunch I saw from my balloon," declared Von Dilzer. "They are a particularly mean lot and would rob anybody from a blind man up."

"And what can we do? Any more suggestions?" questioned the old detective.

But Von Dilzer had come to the end of his rope.

"Right," said Old King Brady. "We will go on and see what we can do."

They advanced cautiously down the run. The way was steep and strewn with loose stones, but it was nowhere impassable. At length they came to a place where they could overlook the camp. There were lights in only three log houses. A small stream flowed in front of them, swollen by the recent rain. Perhaps a thousand yards away was the saddle-back, or cross ridge, which cut off the valley.

"Now, friends, stay here while I go ahead and reconnoiter," the old detective said.

Harry protested and wanted to go, but Old King Brady would not hear to it, and he started off alone. He was gone nearly three-quarters of an hour, but at last he suddenly appeared before them when they least expected it.

"Well," cried Harry. "What luck?"

"The best. I have seen Alice, but not the prince."

"And Alice?"

"Is locked in that last hut where you see the light."

"Were you talking with her?"

"No; I did not dare to make my presence known. There is one man on guard. The bunch are playing poker in the house where the second light is. I saw them through the back window. There is one among them who has not a hair on his head.

"Baldy Brown," said Von Dilzer. "The meanest white man in Arizona. What about the light in the other hut?"

"I didn't get that far, but I did get to the tunnel. I saw the horses. There are nine of them. I have no doubt the tunnel goes clear through."

"Oh, it does," said Von Dilzer. "I assure you it does."

"Very good. Now for my plan. See that projecting rock there on the hillside about a hundred feet above us?"

"Yes."

"Well, there I propose that Harry shall go and post himself. I have been there. I have left a little pile of dry wood there. From that rock one can easily run down, and with the mesquite bushes he can do it without being seen."

"And what am I to do?" asked Harry.

"Go there. Light a fire, and when it is well blazing fire your revolver three or four times. This, as I believe, will draw all these men in your direction. Meanwhile Von Dilzer and I will be on hand below ready to get in our fine work. If the guard remains we shall have to put him out of business. For yourself, as soon as you see them coming up the run fire one shot and skiddoo! Follow the path if you can, but anyway gain the saddle-back as promptly as possible. If all goes well you will find us there with Alice and the Canton Prince."

Harry went up the hill and they went down the run.

Old King Brady led Von Dilzer in behind the hut where he knew Alice to be concealed. They peered through the back window and could see her sitting in a chair with her hands tied behind her. For ten minutes they waited.

"The fire!" breathed Old King Brady at last.

It was blazing on the rock. Just then Harry began popping with his revolver. The result was precisely what the wily old detective anticipated. In a minute the Baldy Brown bunch were on the chase up the run with rifles ready for business.

"Now!" said Old King Brady.

They rounded the hut. The sentinel was gone.

Old King Brady kicked in the door.

"Mr. Brady!" cried Alice. "I knew it! I was sure you would not leave me long here. Harry?"

"Is all right," returned the old detective, cutting Alice free. "Where is the prince?"

"They put him in the next hut. I imagine he is there yet."

And it proved so. Fen Lee was promptly rescued.

Down the valley on the run they went, with nobody in pursuit. They heard Harry's single shot before they were half way to the saddle-back. Into the tunnel they dashed.

Four horses were promptly unhitched and sent on the run through the tunnel. Alice, the prince and Von Dilzer mounted three.

Harry turned up in a moment.

They mounted and rode on in the darkness, leaving the horses to find their own way. And this they did.

In ten minutes the Bradys and their friends came to the open, and, stopping only to stampede the spare horses which had halted there, they dashed down the slope toward the foothills.

* * * * *

They reached Tombstone without adventure and just in time to catch a train East. In due time they delivered the Canton Prince to the Chinese Minister.

The Bradys were liberally rewarded for their work. An equally liberal portion of the reward was sent to Professor Von Dilzer.

In the letter of acknowledgment received later the Arizona detective informed them that troops led by himself had captured the entire Baldy Brown outfit and had also driven the Chinamen away from the Full Moon.

They entered by a secret way through the cliffs, which Von Dilzer now admitted that he had discovered by the aid of his balloon.

And in this satisfactory manner came the end of the case of "The Bradys and the Canton Prince."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND DIAMOND DON; OR, THE GEM SMUGGLERS OF THE ARCTIC," which will be the next number (420) of "Secret Service."

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