

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. 430.

NEW YORK, APRIL 19, 1907.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND GUMP HIGH; OR, THE MYSTERY OF THE RUINED JOSS HOUSE.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE



Suddenly the spade dropped from Harry's hand and he lurched towards the Chinaman. His hat flew off. He seemed to stumble. "Dley catchee him leg!" yelled How Lee. Old King Brady and Alice pressed forward to help.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF DIANA.

No. 5699 Melbourne street, Oakland, California, is not by any means located in the swell section of San Francisco's largest suburb.

On the contrary, the neighborhood is decidedly "off."

But in these post-fire days hundreds of the wealthy residents of "Nob Hill" have been glad to find shelter in any neighborhood, either "off" or "on."

It was so with John Wiseman, the multi-millionaire and ex-United States Senator, bank director, insurance director, land owner, and general all-around "big-wig."

Shortly after the fire Mr. Wiseman purchased the old Graveley residence at the number mentioned.

It was a once fine mansion, most terribly run down, and cut up into little rooms for a lodging-house.

Senator Wiseman threw a force of mechanics into this house sufficiently large to restore it to something like its former grandeur in a few weeks' time.

He then moved in with his wife and married son, John Wiseman, Jr., a clever young man in his way, but not by any means calculated for the brilliant career his father had carved out for himself.

Such were the occupants of No. 5699 Melbourne street on the 9th of July, 1906.

On that day, at about four in the afternoon, Senator Wiseman arrived at his residence in a handsome automobile.

The old gentleman got down from the machine with that heaviness of motion which is such a certain mark of increasing years, and entered the house by aid of his latch-key, leaving the chauffeur to take the auto to his private garage in another street.

Like many old-time Californians, Senator Wiseman employed only Chinese servants, even to his butler.

As he paid all hands extra wages, and treated all kindly and courteously, it is needless to say that he was well served, and his establishment moved like clockwork.

The butler, an elderly Chink who had been thirty years in the Senator's service, came through the hall as the big man entered.

"How Lee," said the senator, "I am expecting a large packing-case to arrive here at any moment."

"Yes, Mlister Wiseman," replied How Lee, in a low, respectful tone.

"Have it placed in the library, and inform Mr. Jack, who will see to opening it."

"Yes, Mlister Wiseman."

"And when I tell you, How Lee, that the box contains the statue of Diana, which used to be in the long parlor on California street, you will see how careful you must be."

"Dliana? Me no sabee Dliana, Mlister Wiseman."

"Don't you remember the marble woman with the bow and arrow, and the dog alongside of her?"

"Oh, yes, Mlister Wiseman. Me sabee now."

"Very well. We thought it was burned but it appears it was stolen. To-day I bought it back."

"Belly well, Mlister Wiseman. Me tend to it allee light."

Mr. Wiseman passed upstairs.

At the head of the flight he encountered his son, who had just emerged from his own suite of apartments.

"Jack," said the senator, "I had a streak of luck to-day."

Young Wiseman looked mildly interested.

He was a tall, slim man of thirty, or thereabouts, with watery, blue eyes, and thin, yellow hair parted in the middle and sleeked down over his temples.

His face wore an unhappy, troubled expression, which in so weak a character was painful to see.

"What was that, father?" he asked.

"Remember our Diana, which cost me so much in Paris ten years ago?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I got it."

"You don't mean it! I told you all along it was stolen, and not burned."

"You were right. I happened to look in at Bendal's new art auction rooms on Kearney street this forenoon to see if I could pick up some trifle for your mother's birthday, and there, if you please, was our Diana up for sale, Lot 89."

"And you bought it in?"

"Bought it in nothing. I saw Bendal, and told him it was mine. He claimed to have paid \$500 for it. I told him I'd write a check for \$250, and he could box and deliver the statue, and if that didn't suit I would go to the police."

"Of course, he took the check?"

"Sure he did. Bendal knows me. I expect it here any minute. Look carefully to the unpacking, please."

"Yes, father."

"How is Ethel to-day?" asked the senator, lowering his voice.

Jack shrugged his shoulders.

"Same old gag," he whispered, and passed downstairs. Senator Wiseman then went to his own rooms, and reported his find to his wife.

While they sat talking about it the loud, angry voice of a woman was heard in the room adjoining.

A man's voice retorted.

It grew louder and louder.

Crimination and recrimination.

A troubled look came over the face of the senator's white-haired wife.

The senator, with a black scowl, arose and angrily drew a heavy portiere so as to cover the dividing door.

"Deuce take the woman! She's at it again!" he growled.

"Poor Jack!" groaned Mrs. Wiseman.

"Poor fool, you had better say," snapped the senator. "I told Jack that I would settle a million dollars on the shrew if he would pull up stakes and go to Europe and forget to leave her his address."

"He will never do it, John. Jack loves his wife still."

The senator puckered up his mouth as though he was going to whistle, but no sound came. •

"I'm going to have a cast-iron partition put between our rooms," he said presently. "I tell you, the very sound of her voice makes me sick."

The sounds, though dulled, still continued audible.

It was simply a case of a rich young high-roller marrying a handsome woman of whose past he knew nothing.

Details will develop as our story proceeds.

Two years had passed since that remarkable wedding stirred Nob Hill society to its veriest foundations.

For Jack Wiseman they had been two years of misery.

Yet, as his mother truly remarked, he loved his wife still.

A little later a wagon drove up to the Wiseman house, and How Lee announced that the box had arrived.

"Mr. Jack will attend to it," said the senator, who was dressing for dinner then.

He heard How Lee knock on his son's door.

A minute later Jack Wiseman went downstairs.

The senator did not hear his wife follow him, but she must have done so.

A moment later and her shrill voice was heard in the hall below giving directions to the men who were bringing in the heavy packing-case.

The sound of hammering in the library was the next which reached the senator's ears.

At that moment he was shaving, a task which he always performed for himself.

He had just finished dressing when he heard his son calling in an awful voice:

"Father! Father! Come, father! Oh, great heavens, come!"

The senator's idea when he heard the cry was that his daughter-in-law had taken her own life, something which she had long threatened to do.

If his son could survive the shock the old senator would have shed no tears.

But the horror thrown into that cry of Jack Wiseman's was beyond all telling.

The senator went downstairs faster than he had done in many a year.

What he saw on the way down made his heart almost stand still.

He now feared a double tragedy.

Jack lay stretched upon the floor face downward.

How Lee was just coming through the hall.

Senator Wiseman was one of the cool kind by nature, and long training had made him all the more so.

"Something has happened, How Lee," he said, with a calmness which he was far from feeling. "Lock all the doors. Let none of the other servants come near us."

The Chinaman sped noiselessly away to obey.

Fortunately at this time Mrs. Wiseman, Sr., happened to be in another part of the house.

She had not heard anything, for which her husband felt devoutly thankful.

He bent down and turned his son over on the floor.

Jack was breathing naturally enough.

There was no blood to be seen; no wound of any sort could the senator find.

"Mental shock," he said to himself. "He'll come out of it, but whether he will come out of it with his senses or not Heaven alone can tell."

How Lee was now returning.

"Whatee matter Mlister Jack?" he asked.

"Don't know. Where's Mrs. Jack?"

"Me no know. Me hear Mlister Jack holler; me lun upstairs."

"Come, How Lee," said the old gentleman, "we must look into this, and then get a doctor. Follow me."

The old gentleman entered the parlor.

Off from this opened the library.

He could not bring himself to enter the room through the hall.

He expected to see his daughter-in-law dead upon the floor.

But as he looked in between the portieres he could see nobody.

The big packing-case lay with the lid torn off in the middle of the floor.

To the senator's mind there was a suggestion of a coffin-box about it.

The hammer and a cold chisel lay on the floor beside it.

Looking carefully about, and seeing no one, a new idea came into the senator's head.

"My lady has skipped," he said to himself. "Well, that is all right if poor Jack can only pull up out of it. If she has gone let her go, and it leaves me a million to the good."

Not then did he enter the library.

Nor did How Lee.

Like a faithful dog he hung to the heels of his master.

"Help me to get Mr. Jack upstairs, and then go for Dr. What's-his-name—that man at the end of the block!" the senator said.

Head and heels they carried Jack to his own room, and laid him on the bed.

Still thanking his stars that his wife was otherwise occupied, Senator Wiseman brought whisky and forced his son to drink, removed collar and tie, loosened up the shirt around his neck, and did such other things as suggested themselves to him.

The moments passed, and still the doctor did not come.

"I suppose I had better call her," grumbled the senator. "It is getting too long. She will never forgive me if I don't."

He hunted up his wife, and cautiously broke the news.

Mrs. Wiseman rushed to her son's beside.

"Oh, that wicked woman! Oh, that Jack had never met her?" she moaned.

"Amen to that," growled the senator, "but if she has really gone for good let her go, I say."

"Oh, what shall we do? What shall we do? Will the doctor never come?" moaned the old lady, who was one of the helpless kind.

"Get him to bed, mother, and I'll go downstairs and watch for the doctor," said the senator. "You know best how to handle the boy."

It gave the good woman something to do, and she was in a manner relieved.

The senator descended the stairs, opened the door, and looked up the street.

How Lee could be seen returning alone.

"Confound the luck," growled the senator. "I suppose the old saw-bones is out. I shall have to telephone for someone else."

It was a time of confusion.

The regular physician of the Wiseman family was in San Francisco, miles away.

And then it occurred to the senator that he had not actually been in the library.

His glance into the room had been a hasty one.

Perhaps, after all, Jack's wife lay dead in some corner. He passed through the hall, and entering the room, walked up to the box.

And that was the time the old man got his shock.

No marble statue of the traditionary huntress met his gaze.

Instead, he beheld lying in the box the body of a Chinaman, evidently long dead.

CHAPTER II.

THE BRADYS TAKE UP THE CASE.

One week subsequent to the above events there turned up at the new Palace Hotel three persons very famous in their way.

They were the three partners in the Brady Detective Bureau of New York city.

Old King Brady, Young King Brady, and Alice Montgomery, the very efficient female member of the firm.

They attracted considerable attention, for many know the shrewd old detective in San Francisco.

On this occasion, as always when not in disguise, Old King Brady wore a peculiar style of dress, which made him easily recognizable.

These peculiarities consist of a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white hat with an unusually broad brim.

The detectives were assigned to a suite of rooms.

"You go up with Alice, Harry," said Old King Brady. "I will telephone the senator."

A little later Old King Brady joined them in the parlor of the suite.

"Did you get him?" asked Miss Montgomery.

"Yes, Alice, I did," was the reply. "His answer was that his son was in such a nervous condition that he considers it unwise for us to go to his house in Oakland, and that he will wait upon us here this evening at nine o'clock."

"Did he give you any idea of the nature of our call to the coast?" inquired Young King Brady.

"No, Harry, he did not. It still remains a mystery."

The Bradys, it may be mentioned, had been ordered by the Secret Service Bureau of Washington to report to Senator Wiseman at San Francisco as soon as possible.

The senator's former Washington connections held sufficiently good to secure him this favor.

Hence the coming of the Bradys to the coast.

At nine-fifteen Senator Wiseman arrived in an automobile.

He sent up his card, and was at once received by the world-famous detectives.

Then the Bradys listened to the story of the mystery of Diana.

The details up to the point reached in the last chapter we propose to omit.

Old King Brady always prefers to get at facts by asking questions when such a thing is possible.

We take up his questioning at this point.

"And when your son recovered consciousness what did he say?" the old detective asked the senator.

He said that he and his wife had made up their quarrel, and that she stood by while he opened the box. When she saw the body of the Chinaman she gave a low cry, and exclaimed: "My husband! Oh!"

"Did she refer to the Chinaman? May she not have been addressing your son?"

"No, she referred to the Chinaman. She said so in so many words."

"And what passed between them then?"

"Concerning that Jack has no distinct recollection. His whole nervous system is shattered. Upon the corpse lay one of those red Chinese papers with writing on it. Ethel

seized it, read it, and then, turning to Jack, said: 'Now I leave you forever!' and ran out of the house bareheaded as Jack fell in a swoon. Recovering from this perhaps ten minutes later, as nearly as I can calculate, he called me, as I have told you, and then went off into another, which lasted until morning. That is the whole story, Mr. Brady. My son is a wreck. If you can help us I shall be everlastingly grateful. The expense cuts no figure at all."

"Now let me get at a few points," said the old detective.

Alice was listening carefully to all that was being said, and Harry was taking notes.

"Ask what questions you will," replied the senator. "Even if this session lasts all night, I am here at your service."

"Very well. First, is there any likelihood that I shall be able to question your son?"

"No; the doctor positively forbids it. Jack is on the verge of insanity."

"He wants his wife back?"

"He calls for her continually. For my part, I could wish she might never return were it not for him."

"You consider her a bad woman?"

"Thoroughly bad."

"What was her name before she married?"

"She gave the name of Ethel Bagster."

"And you say you know nothing of her past?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Do you suppose your son secretly knows?"

"I don't think he does. It was agreed between them that her past was to be a sealed book. I believe it to have remained so."

"But you cannot swear to this?"

"I cannot."

"Where did your son first meet her?"

"At the Poodle Dog restaurant."

"Who introduced them?"

"A friend of his named Tom Barnesly."

"Is it not possible that he knows the woman's past?"

"He is dead."

"That settles him, then. You say your son and this woman continually quarreled?"

"All the time at it. She was jealous and exacting. She refused to make friends with my wife and myself. She would not go into society, but hung to her room, moaning and groaning, and playing the invalid. At the same time she must have had some affection for Jack, for she would never let him out of her sight."

"Now to change the subject. Did the statue of Diana finally come?"

"It arrived an hour later."

"And the remains of the Chinaman were disposed of how?"

"I had them removed to the Oakland morgue, where they still remain."

"Has any other detective been working on the case?"

"No. I wired our senator at Washington to send me secret service men, and he sent you."

"That, I believe, is all, senator," said Old King Brady. "We will take right hold and see what we can do."

"Of course, Mr. Brady, you have had much experience with cases of this sort—what do you think of this one on the face of it, may I ask?"

"It is very hard to form any conclusion, senator. It seems that this woman must have been actuated by some very powerful motive. She deliberately abandoned millions and a position in society, for which most women would sacrifice anything."

"That is the way I look at it. It seems very plain to me that her motive must have been fear."

"I don't think there is any doubt about it."

"I am glad you agree with me. Admitting that this Chinaman was actually once her husband, what possible object could his friends have had in shipping his corpse to my house?"

"As a threat and a warning."

"But if they intended to threaten her with death, which would seem to be the case, why should they give her warning?"

"The Chinese are queer people, Mr. Wiseman."

"Well, I know that. I have had them around me for the past forty years."

"Even so you do not know them. Here is a young lady who was born and brought up among them. Ask her opinion."

"Miss Montgomery!"

"Yes, senator," replied Alice. "I was born in China. If you want my opinion I should say that Mrs. Wiseman must have been in some way mixed up with one of the many Chinese religious societies, and that she broke her vows and left them. That their religion compelled the masters of this society to give her warning, and they took this fearful means of doing it. That would be my idea."

"It appeals to me," said the senator. "I know there are such secret societies among the Chinese. What you say is quite true."

"There certainly are. To solve this mystery we must get among the Chinese."

"To do that you will require an interpreter. If How Lee had remained with us he would have been just the man."

"And who is How Lee?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Our Chinese butler, who I mentioned in connection with my story."

"He has left you, then? This is important."

"Yes. He walked out of the house that night, and I have neither seen nor heard of him since."

"How long had he been with you?"

"Thirty years."

"Honest and reliable?"

"To the last degree."

"It is of the highest importance! We must find How Lee!"

You think his going had some connection with the case?"

"Unquestionably."

"It had not occurred to me, but I wonder now that it did not. What could have been his motive?"

"Fear, probably."

"You will have to get an interpreter."

"We do not need one," said Alice. "I speak Chinese."

"Do you, indeed?"

"Yes, sir. Tell me, did you ever have any reason to suspect that Mrs. Wiseman had the same gift?"

"Never."

"Yet she evidently was able to read that Chinese paper."

"It would seem so."

"We have advanced as far as we can to-night," said Old King Brady. "To-morrow we will take right hold."

The senator left soon after.

And such were the beginnings of a singular Chinese case which came the Bradys' way.

The following morning the detective bureau held a counsel of war.

"I will go to the morgue," said Old King Brady. "You, Harry, will get out among the Chinese who have settled around Fort Mason, and look up Charley Ching, if possible. As for you, Alice, I really don't see what you can do at the present stage of the game."

"But I don't like being laid on the shelf," protested Alice. "Let me disguise and go with Harry to this new Chinatown and see if I can't unearth How Lee."

"That will be Charley Ching's job."

Charley Ching was a young San Francisco half-breed who had long done detective work among his father's people, both for private bureaus and for the San Francisco police.

So the Bradys divided.

Alice and Harry looked up an old costumer who used to have a place on Kearney street near Port, and was often patronized by the Bradys.

They found him located on Lower Market street.

Here Alice went into Chinese male disguise.

In this role she is simply perfect, having enacted the part many times.

Harry debated whether to turn Chinaman or not.

He finally decided against it, and they started for Chinatown.

"Now you can make love to me if you want to, Harry," said Alice, archly, as they walked down Montgomery street.

"Put your arm around my waist. You can even kiss me if you want to. I promised to let you know when a favorable time for spooning arrived. Go ahead."

"Shut up!" retorted Harry. "If you give me the dare again I'll do it—that's all!"

Harry, be it known, has long been smitten with Alice's charms.

Probably his affection is returned, but Alice will never admit it.

Being devoted to her profession, she has long held Harry at arm's length.

"Let us go up to Dupont street and have a look at old Chinatown," said Alice. "We have plenty of time."

Young King Brady raised no objection.

They went up Jackson street.

Everywhere lay the ruins of that once famous bit of Oriental life dropped on the Pacific coast.

Harry pointed out to Alice the site of the Chinese theater, and of several of the more noted buildings.

Crossing Dupont street, they stood before the ruins of the once famous Jackson street joss-house.

There was little left of it.

"I have often wondered if all the secret chambers which were hidden underground here are choked up," Harry remarked.

"That's what you won't find out in a hurry, Brady," said a voice behind them.

Harry turned and beheld Charley Ching.

"Good enough!" he exclaimed, shaking hands vigorously. "The very man I want to see!"

Alice stood silent.

Charley said something to her in Chinese, and she replied.

The look of surprise which lit up Charley's face was amusing.

"You don't mean it!" he exclaimed in English.

He had met Alice before in New York.

"Yes, it's Alice," said Harry. "She is with us all the time now."

"And what do you think of my disguise, Charley?" Alice asked.

"A 1!" replied Charley. "Couldn't be better. But what are you two driving at up here on the hill?"

"We are looking for How Lee, who for thirty years has been employed by Senator Wiseman," said Harry.

"Ah, ha! You are on that case, are you?"

"Yes, we are, Charley."

"Queer business."

"It seems so to us, and I should like to hear your theory of it after you have told us about How Lee."

"Nothing to tell. I know the man, but only slightly. He is old enough to be my father, and has no use for kids like me. What about him, anyhow?"

"He has disappeared."

"Has he? When was that?"

"The night the dead Chink was landed in Senator Wiseman's library."

Charley whistled.

"By gracious, Harry, there's your clew!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER III.

TRACING THE MYSTERY TO THE RUINED JOSS-HOUSE.

Old King Brady went directly to the Oakland morgue. The keeper received him civilly at the first, and with

immense respect when he learned who he was talking to. "Yes, the body is here," he said, "and I am mighty glad you have come, Mr. Brady. I want to get rid of it the worst kind of way. You'll be wanting to see it, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Step this way."

The keeper exhibited the corpse.

It was that of a rather stout Chinaman, possibly forty years of age.

The face was round and full.

Evidently the deceased had not been accustomed to use opium to any extent.

"Any Chinks been here to look at him?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Hundreds," was the reply. "They have the life worn out of me."

"He has not been identified?"

"No."

"Any white men?"

"Reporters by the dozen."

"Besides them?"

"One or two."

"Now, my friend, I am anxious to get at the root of this mystery. Tell me, did you hear any word dropped by white or Chinese which might serve me as a clew?"

"I was just thinking. There came here a young fellow——"

"White?"

"Yes."

"Well, go on."

"It was the evening after the corpse had been brought in. He asked to look at it, and said he thought it might be a Chink he used to know. When I showed it to him I heard him mutter: 'Gee! If I had only knowed!'"

"Ha! Well? And what did you say?"

"'Only knowed what?' says I, and he says: 'That he was so young. I wouldn't have come if I had,' and then he turned on his heel and dug out."

"If you had asked his name it wouldn't have been such a bad job."

"Hold on; I'm coming to that. It slipped my mind when you first asked me. I seen the same feller driving a truck in San Francisco a couple of days afterward."

"You did, eh? That's business. What was the name on the truck?"

"Sanders & Co., Importers."

"Good! My friend, that piece of information is worth just five dollars to me, and here you are."

"Thank you, boss. I always try to keep my eyes and ears open. Do you want to see the Chink's clothes?"

"Yes, particularly."

"I thought you would. I was told that a detective would come from New York at the end of the week. Nobody has handled them but myself."

"That's good. Was there anything on the body?"

"Not a solitary thing."

"Let me see what I can find. Trot out the clothes."

The morgue keeper produced them.

Old King Brady put on a pair of gloves, and proceeded to examine them as no morgue keeper would ever have thought of doing.

Every seam was ripped open.

Not the fraction of an inch of the cloth was left unexamined.

And the result was favorable to the old detective's plans.

Hidden away in the shoulder seam of the blouse was a little ebony stick, about two inches long.

It was exquisitely lacquered, and all four sides, which were perfectly even, were covered with Chinese characters done in gilt.

"What's that?" demanded the morgue keeper.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied the old detective; "but I will take it along. It may prove a clew."

The morgue keeper made no objection.

And this was all Old King Brady found.

Soon after he withdrew.

He walked in the direction of the Wiseman house, and looked it over.

The senator saw him from the window, and coming to the door made a sign for Old King Brady to cross the street.

"Come in, Mr. Brady," he said. "I am glad you came around. My wife has made a discovery, and is very anxious to talk it over with you."

"I have been to the morgue," said the old detective. "Passing this way, I thought I would take a look at the surroundings of your house. How is your son this morning?"

"Worse if anything. Come right in. Although I cannot, owing to the doctor's orders, take you to Jack, you can see how we are located here, and it may help you to understand the case a little better."

He conducted Old King Brady to the library, where the famous Diana stood.

"There she is," said the senator. "Strange coincidence that, Mr. Brady."

"That you should happen to buy the statue back on the very day that box was sent to your house?"

"Yes."

"It was indeed remarkable."

"I will call Mrs. Wiseman."

"Wait. Does your son know that we are working on the case?"

"Oh, yes. Upon that thought he lives. But for that I think he would go raving mad."

"He loves this woman so?"

"Strange, is it not? I fear that is insanity, too."

"Were we to look at it in that light we should find many mad people in the world. But tell me, would it be possible for me to examine Mrs. Wiseman's effects without disturbing your son?"

"Not all of them. His room is filled with her belongings, but my wife since last night has gone over them

very thoroughly, Mr. Brady, and for the express purpose of ascertaining if there was anything Chinese to be found."

"And the result?"

"Ah! Here is Mrs. Wiseman; she will speak for herself."

The senator's wife entered the room at this instant.

She was introduced to Old King Brady, and the conversation at once turned to her search.

"I found this hidden away in one of Ethel's dresses," she said, producing a queer little box, upon which were Chinese characters done in black.

"It opens so, and there is a Chinese stick inside of it. See!" she added.

Old King Brady took the box and removed the stick.

As far as one could see it was the duplicate of the one he had taken from the Chinaman's blouse.

"Have you shown this to any of your Chinese servants?" he asked.

"No," replied the senator. "Mrs. Wiseman was about to do so, but I advised against it, thinking that you would so desire."

"Right. I will take charge of it, please."

And such was the outcome of Old King Brady's call at the senator's.

Of course, it was highly satisfactory.

After some general talk the old detective left without making any allusion to his own find.

He now crossed over to San Francisco and started to look up the firm of Sanders & Co., Importers.

This, owing to the confused condition of everything after the fire, took time, but at last he located them in a building on Drumm street.

He had previously looked them up in the Commercial Agency book, and found that they were a highly rated firm.

Old King Brady readily obtained an interview with Mr. Sanders.

"I am a secret service detective," he said. "I presume you have heard of the singular occurrence at ex-Senator Wiseman's house a week ago?"

"The matter of the Chinese corpse being left in his parlor? Yes, I have read about it," was the reply.

"I am working on that case, trying to solve the mystery. In the course of my investigations I made a discovery which has brought me to you."

Mr. Sanders looked annoyed.

"What possible connection can I have with the case?" he asked.

Old King Brady told of the visit of the young man at the morgue.

"Seen on my truck, eh?" exclaimed Sanders. "We have only one truck. It must be Jim Farrell—our driver."

"Can he be seen?"

"I expect him back every minute. Indeed, he may be here now."

Mr. Sanders touched a bell, which brought a boy in from the outer office.

"Is Farrell here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy. "He just came in."

"Send him to me."

The boy departed.

"You question him, Mr. Brady," said Mr. Sanders.

"Has he been with you long?"

"Only since the fire. I know very little about him."

Enter Jim Farrell.

He was about such a looking young man as Old King Brady expected to see.

"Farrell," said Mr. Sanders, "this gentleman is Old King Brady, the detective. He wants to talk to you, and if you are wise you will answer him fully and tell the truth."

One look at the fellow's face was enough to tell Old King Brady that he anticipated what was coming.

Old King Brady started to play on that string.

"Come, Farrell," he said, "make a clean breast of it unless you want to get into a whole lot of trouble."

"Aw, say, I d'n' know what yer talkin' about," growled the teamster.

"Oh, yes, you do," continued the old detective. "You have been reading the papers this past week. You know what you did, my man."

"You mean that there box, I suppose?"

"Which you left at Senator Wiseman's house over in Oakland. Yes, that's it."

"Waal, I d'n' know nothin' about it."

"You know where you got the box, and how much you were paid for carting it there, which facts you will now give me."

Farrell saw that he was fairly cornered.

Still he hesitated.

"Do I get arrested?" he asked.

"Not if you give me your help," replied Old King Brady. "Otherwise you certainly do. Come, speak up. You are the man who delivered the box containing the dead Chinaman at Senator Wiseman's?"

"Yair. I done it. I——"

"Wait. Just answer my questions. Where did you get the box?"

"Off a Chink on Dupont street, corner of Jackson."

"Wait a minute," interrupted Mr. Sanders. "What day was this?"

"Tuesday of last week," replied Old King Brady.

Mr. Sanders produced a book, and glanced at a certain page.

"That is the afternoon you laid off sick, Farrell," he said.

The fellow sulkily admitted the fact.

"Go on, Mr. Brady," said Sanders.

"Tell us how you got the box, Jim," continued the old detective.

And the story which Old King Brady drew from Farrell by careful questioning was this:

Making his morning rounds, the teamster had been hailed by a Chinaman at the corner of Jackson and Dupont streets.

The man told him that he had a heavy packing-case containing a Chinese image which he had sold to Senator Wiseman, and that he was afraid to trust it to an expressman for fear it would get broken. He offered Farrell five dollars to take it to Oakland and deliver it at the senator's house.

Old King Brady was satisfied that it was a great deal more, sufficient, indeed, to make Farrell fully understand that there was something crooked about the transaction.

The upshot of the business was that Farrell played sick, borrowed an old truck of a friend, who accompanied him.

They met the Chinaman by appointment at the ruins of the Jackson street joss-house.

From a small section of the ruins which still remained standing the box was brought out by four Chinamen, and loaded on the truck.

Farrell and his friend delivered it, and that was all he knew except that curiosity had impelled him to go to the morgue when he saw an account of the finding of the body in the papers.

The man was then dismissed.

"You will be conferring a favor on Senator Wiseman if you will keep that fellow in your employ until the case is complete," Old King Brady said.

Mr. Sanders promised to do so.

Well satisfied with his morning's work, the old detective now returned to the Palace Hotel.

Harry and Alice came in about twelve o'clock.

They had accomplished nothing beyond finding Charley Ching.

Charley had gone with them to various places where the Chinese had located, and lent them every assistance, but they were unable to find the slightest trace of How Lee.

Old King Brady then told his story, and produced the two lacquered sticks.

"Now, then, Alice, I expect you to read these, and give us a good start on the case," he said.

Alice examined the sticks in silence for some time.

"I cannot do the first thing to help you, Mr. Brady," she said at last. "These characters are entirely unknown to me."

"I was afraid it would prove so," replied the old detective. "Do they convey no meaning to your mind?"

"None whatever. I think they must be very ancient. They certainly are not in use now."

"We must find someone to read them, then," said the old detective, "and that, Alice, will be your job for this afternoon."

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO LACQUERED STICKS.

Charley Ching had promised to continue his search for How Lee, and he assured Harry that if the man was in

San Francisco, and not locked in somewhere, he was sure to find him.

"Go and look up Wing Gong," were Old King Brady's orders to Harry and Alice.

Wing Gong was a rich old Chinese importer; one of the nabobs of Sacramento street whom Old King Brady had known for many years.

Wing Gong was also a person of sufficient importance to have his name in the new directory which was hastily prepared after the fire.

As he had been the owner not only of his own store, but several others, it turned out that the man had returned to his old location, and was living in a shack built on the site of his former house.

Thus Harry and Alice readily found him.

As he knew Harry, the old fellow went through with the usual ceremony upon which all Chinamen of any social standing among their own people insist upon before business is done.

A table was placed, and tea and sweetmeats served, followed by samschu, which Harry declined, and excellent cigars.

Wing Gong was charmed with Alice, and they talked together in Chinese until Harry's patience was nearly worn out.

He thought that Alice must have broached the business, but she had not, as she speedily informed him when at last he put the question.

Wing Gong now turned to Young King Brady, and asked him in English, of which he was a perfect master, what it was he wished.

Harry then produced the two lacquered sticks, and asked Wing Gong if he could read what was printed upon them.

The old fellow examined them with a great display of interest.

"No; I cannot read those letters," he said. "They are very old Chinese. Nothing like them is in use in the part of China from where I came."

"You see, I was right, Harry," said Alice, triumphantly.

"But there must be somebody in San Francisco who can read them," replied Young King Brady.

"No doubt," said Wing Gong, "but it would require a very learned man."

"Do you know any such person?"

"No; but I have heard of a man who I should think might be able to help you. He is a very wise man. He reads every kind of Chinese."

"And his name?"

"Gump High."

"And he lives?"

"He has gone to Oakland since the fire. You will have to inquire ther."

"What is his business?"

"He was one of the priests in a joss-house at Hankow, in China. He is a very old man. Since he came here he has made a living by what you would call fortune-telling."

Harry tried to draw further details from Wing Gong, but did not meet with much success.

He accordingly turned the job over to Alice, who tried it in Chinese.

The best she could make out of Gump High's scheme for telling fortunes was that he employed people as professional dreamers, and that it was from their dreams that he made up what Wing Gong called "Fortune Papers," charts of the future, or something of that sort.

Harry and Alice then left the old fellow, and started for Oakland.

Chinatown "over the bay" is but a shadow of the lost Chinatown of San Francisco.

Wing Gong gave them the address of a party whom he thought might be able to help them, and so it proved.

This man directed them to Gump High's residence.

The place was a Chinese restaurant on the ground floor; above was some sort of a mysterious joint.

The red paper on the door Alice translated as "Temple of Riches."

Harry concluded that it was a fan-tan joint.

The floor above, which was at the top of the house, was let out as lodging-rooms, and here they found Gump High.

Upon the door was a red paper which Alice interpreted as "Gump High, the Sleep Revealer."

They knocked three times before there was anything doing.

Then an old Chink opened the door and demanded their business.

He was a small man with a snow-white pig-tail and a long drooping white mustache.

His face was horribly wrinkled, and his whole frame shriveled up to the last degree.

He looked like a man who had died and whose friends had forgotten to bury him.

Such was Gump High.

He almost fell over himself when Alice addressed him in Chinese.

Opening the door, he took them into a plainly furnished room, which seemed to be all there was to his dreaming establishment, if, indeed, he did business on the premises.

Placing chairs for his visitors, Gump High seated himself upon a bamboo couch.

As Alice began to talk his little beady eyes glittered.

His answers came like the croaking of a raven.

They kept at it for about five minutes, and then Alice turned to Harry and said:

"He seems to speak no English.

"Don't trust him," replied Harry in Spanish, which he and Alice speak perfectly.

"All right. Shall I show him the sticks?"

"What did you tell him we came for?"

"I told him that I was a collector of Chinese curiosities, and that I wanted him to read some of the old Chinese."

"Did it take all those words to say that?"

"No. We were talking about the difference in Chinese

written languages. He claims to be able to read them all."

"Well, all right; show him the sticks. It is at the risk of spoiling our case, just the same."

Harry produced the sticks, then.

He could not observe any alteration in the old mummy's face.

Alice passed them over to him, and they went at it again in Chinese.

Harry could not tell whether Gump High was reading the characters or not.

At last he handed them back, and Alice passed them to Harry, after making a mark on one of them.

They continued to talk for a while longer, and then Alice began in Spanish again:

"He has read the sticks."

"Well, what do they say?"

"I'll tell you later."

"All right. Do we get out now?"

"I think we had better. Give him five dollars."

Harry did so.

Gump High bowed low as he accepted the money.

They then took leave of him, and descended to the street.

"Well, what is it all about?" demanded Young King Brady.

"It is just as I thought," replied Alice. "There is a Chinese secret society mixed up in the case."

"What kind of society?"

"A society of dreamers. It is a very old form of religion which prevails in the far west of China. Gump high says that there are very few of them in San Francisco, and that he is one."

"What do the sticks say?"

"It would be very hard for me to translate literally. They are simply members badges, a sort of ticket of admission to the secret temple of this sect, or to any meeting held outside of their temple. One is a woman's badge, the other a man's."

"The one you marked was the one Mrs. Wiseman found in her daughter-in-law's dress."

"Yes; that is the woman's badge."

"Did he ask you where you got the sticks?"

"No; nor did he express any surprise nor make any allusion to the dead Chink."

"Then what on earth were you talking about all the time?"

"He was telling me that these people used to meet in a secret room under the Jackson street joss-house. He said that they would buy the sticks of me for a good price, as they did not want any but members to have them in their possession."

"Did he tell you who would buy them?"

"No; but he said that if I would call to-morrow he would be prepared to make me an offer for them himself."

"What is the name of this society?"

"It is called the Sze Fung, or the Brothers, or Brotherhood of Sleep."

"And that's all?"

"Yes, that is all."

"Well, we seem to have made some headway," said Harry. "That is if you can believe what the old fellow says."

"I think he gave it to me straight all right," Alice replied.

They turned a corner.

Alice stopped to look into the window of a Chinese curio store.

Harry stood at her side a little behind.

They were talking about the curios when suddenly Harry was felled by a stunning blow on the back of the head.

So noiselessly had two Chinamen stolen upon them that neither had heard a sound.

One caught Alice and pulled her back.

The other sprang upon Harry, who was struggling to regain his feet.

There were only Chinamen on the block.

All stopped to look, but nobody offered to interfere.

Right on the instant Alice struck the Chinaman in the face with her left hand.

The fellow fell back, and let go of her right.

Seizing this advantage, Alice whipped out her revolver, and the man fled.

So did the one who had knocked Harry down.

It was not all Alice's revolver which did it.

A policeman had turned the corner.

It was all the work of an instant.

Where the men went Alice could not tell.

They seemed to instantly vanish.

Harry got on his feet.

"Are you hurt?" Alice demanded anxiously.

"No, no! A little stunned, that's all. They did not get them, thank goodness."

"They were after the sticks, Harry."

"That's what they were. That fellow got his hand into my inside pocket, but I managed to pull it away in time."

The policeman came hurrying up, wanting to know what it was all about.

Harry introduced himself and Alice.

"We were working here on a Chinese case, and those two Chinks jumped on me," he said.

The policeman offered to help him look them up and to arrest them.

Young King Brady declined, and got Alice out of Chinatown as quickly as possible.

It was not until they were on the ferryboat that he ventured to talk of the case, and then he spoke in Spanish.

"It only goes to show how careful we have got to be," he said.

"I think it was a mistake to show the sticks," added Alice.

"There is no doubt that is what those fellows were after."

"You were right, Harry, when you said not to trust Gump High."

"We have shown our hand. I don't believe Old King Brady will like this."

"He will have to lump it, then. It's done now."

Just as the boat was coming into the slip Harry broke out again.

"Let us get back to the ruined joss-house," he said. "I would like to look the outfit over before Gump High has a chance to communicate with anyone."

"It can't be still inhabited, Harry."

"I don't know. There is considerable of it left. Somebody may be lurking there."

"But why?"

"Hard to say."

"I doubt it."

"How much do you know about the different Chinese religions, Alice?"

"Very little, I must admit."

"We have struck a new one to-day. Did you ever hear of this Brotherhood of Sleep before?"

"Never."

"Well, then, there you are. The old joss-house was mentioned by Gump High. Let's have a look at it, that is all I say."

"Oh, I have not the least objection," said Alice; "the only thing is I don't know what we are going there for."

"Nor I. It is just that the notion has seized me."

And when they landed it was to the ruined joss-house that they bent their steps.

The entire front of the building had been burned, and had fallen, except one wall, which cut off a small interior court.

On the other side of this stood the wreck of one of the wings of the building, which extended through to China Alley.

There was a door here which had been either broken down or thrown off its fastenings by the earthquake, for it hung by one hinge.

Beyond this were the remains of a flight of steps leading to the floor above.

The whole courtyard was packed with rubbish.

Harry and Alice managed to get into it only with difficulty, and at the risk of breaking their necks.

"I'm sure I see nothing likely to help us any here," Alice remarked.

She had scarcely spoken when the door was pulled aside, and out stepped Old King Brady, followed by Charley Ching and a bedraggled looking Chinaman.

"Great Scott, Governor! You here?" cried Harry.

CHAPTER V.

EXPLORATIONS IN THE RUINED JOSS-HOUSE.

To explain the sudden appearance of the old detective and his Celestial companions in the ruined joss-house we must turn back.

Harry and Alice had been gone some little time when Charley Ching sent up his name to the old detective at the Palace Hotel.

He was at once shown up and cordially greeted by Old King Brady, who has often found occasion to employ the services of this young man.

"Well, Charley, what do you know?" he demanded. "Have you run How Lee to earth?"

"No, I have not," replied Charley; "but I have found out something which I thought might interest you, so I came around to let you know about it."

"And what's that?"

"Well, Miss Montgomery was telling me her theory about this Wiseman business, and after I had hunted for How Lee a good while, it came to me that I would like to know if anyone was hanging around the old joss-house, so I started in to find out."

"And you discovered that it was not entirely abandoned, as everybody supposed."

"That's right, Mr. Brady. Chinks have been seen about there at night. It would take too long to tell all I picked up, but there is sure something going on about the place."

"And what do you suppose it is, Charley?"

The half-breed shrugged his shoulders.

"Mebbe you don't know that the head priest was burned to death the night the fire struck the joss-house?" he said.

"No, I didn't know."

"Well, he was. All the Chinks believe he had money hidden. There have been a lot after it, but I thought they had given it all up long ago."

"That all?"

"That's as far as I went, Mr. Brady."

"Very well. Let us get down there and see what we can find."

So they went to Jackson street, and poked about the ruins for a while.

The door out of which Harry and Alice saw them come later was so wedged that three attempts on the old detective's part failed to budge it.

Thus for the time being they gave up trying to open it.

At last, after unsuccessfully searching the ruins for half an hour or so, Old King Brady came back to it again.

This time he gave it such a kick that it swung in on its one hinge.

Behind was a flight of stairs.

"What lies up here, Charley?" Old King Brady inquired.

But Charley did not know.

He had never been in this part of the joss-house.

Only the priests and attendants ever passed the court.

They climbed the stairs, and found the place cut up into many small rooms.

It was practically intact.

The rooms were all open but one, and the door of that was locked.

Old King Brady hammered upon it.

Immediately a voice called out something in Chinese.

"Hello! Who have we here?" exclaimed the old detective. "What does he say, Charley?"

"Says he is a prisoner in there," replied Charley. "He wants to get out."

"Naturally, if he is locked in against his will. Ask him his name? I'll get on the job with my skeleton keys."

"Good enough!" cried Charley, when the answer came. "It's How Lee!"

That was the time Old King Brady got busy.

He managed to get the door open after a few minutes.

In the corner, chained to a big iron staple fixed in the wall, lay a sorry looking Chink.

His clothes were all dirty and torn, and his face covered with bruises.

He bore every evidence of having been in a fight.

"Are you How Lee, Mr. Wiseman's butler?" Old King Brady demanded.

The Chink acknowledged his identity.

"Tackle him, Charley," Old King Brady said.

"Shan't we try and get him free first?" asked Charley.

"No. Do as I say."

Charley went at it.

How Lee was noticeably brief in his answers.

"He don't want to talk," said Charley, at last.

"He won't tell how he came here?"

"He won't tell me."

"Look here, How Lee, if you want to get out of this you will have to tell me how you got into this fix," the old detective said sternly.

"Who you?" demanded the butler.

"I am a detective hired by Senator Wiseman to find you."

"Yair?"

"Well, what made you leave the house the way you did?"

"Me flaid."

"Afraid of what?"

"Dlat dead man."

"What harm could the dead man do you?"

"Bad luck."

"Oh, now! You were in no such hurry to get out as all that. Tell the truth."

"Me telle tluth, boss."

"How came you here?"

"Me hittee hop. Me get dlunk. Me comee old joss-house, Chinamans dley catchee me, and tly me up so."

"Have you been here all the week?"

"No; couple days."

"Is anyone hanging around the old joss-house?"

"Me no know."

"But what did they chain you for? Have they given you anything to eat since you were here?"

"Oh, yair. Dley comee give me slometling to eat."

"Didn't they tell you then why they chained you?"

"No."

"Will you go home if I get you free?"

"Yair. How Mlister Jack?"

"Almost crazy."

"Miss Ethel comee home?"

"Not yet. What do you know about all that business?"

"Nloting."

"What do you think?"

"Me tlink nloting."

"Look here, you rascal, I believe you saw that corpse in the box before Mr. Wiseman ever came downstairs."

But How Lee's stolid face betrayed nothing.

"You won't get anything out of him, Mr. Brady," said Charley. "He told me up and down that he would not tell me how he came here."

"Very well," said Old King Brady. "Then we will go away and leave him as he is."

"Hole on, boss," said How Lee. "Me tellee Mlister Wiseman ebyting. You takee me to him—see?"

Old King Brady concluded to humor the fellow.

He could not force him to talk, and there seemed to be no sense in leaving him where he was.

The chain was but a small affair.

One end appeared to have been welded to How Lee's left leg, while the other was secured to the staple by means of the padlock.

With a sharp file, which is ever a part of the old detective's outfit, he easily managed to set the fellow free, although it took a little time.

Then they went downstairs to run into Harry and Alice, as has been told.

How Lee stood stolidly by while the detectives talked. Naturally they discussed him and little else.

Again Old King Brady pressed him for an explanation. There was none forthcoming.

"Me tellee my boss," was all How Lee would say.

"Look here, Governor, there is some kind of an opening under these steps," interrupted Harry, suddenly.

"It looks as if it had been recently closed up, too," he added.

"That's what it does," replied the old detective. "Know anything about that, How Lee?"

"No; me no know nloting," was the stolid reply.

There was an old spade lying among the rubbish which choked the courtyard.

Harry picked it up and began shoveling some of the stuff away.

How Lee, who had lost his hat, stood watching him, as did Charley and Alice at some little distance away.

"Seems to me I hear somebody outside," said Old King Brady.

He stepped through an opening at the end of the court.

But a cry from his partner brought him back on the instant.

Suddenly the spade dropped from Harry's hand, and he lurched toward the Chinaman.

His hat flew off. He seemed to stumble.

"Dley catchee him leg!" yelled How Lee.

Old King Brady and Alice pressed forward to help.

But How Lee had seen what they did not.

Under the steps in the opening which Harry had made the head of a Chinaman suddenly appeared.

It was he who had caught Young King Brady's leg.

Harry fell flat on the rubbish.

The Chink tried to drag him through the opening.

How Lee grabbed the spade.

He dealt the Chink beneath the steps such a blow over the hand that he was glad to let go.

His head instantly vanished.

"Hurt?" cried Old King Brady, helping Harry to rise.

"No, no," replied Harry. "It is nothing. Somebody grabbed me by the leg."

"Who was it, How Lee?" demanded Alice in Chinese, and in the same breath Old King Brady put the question in English.

How Lee stared at Alice in amazement.

But he did not respond to her Chinese talk.

"Him Chinaman," he said. "I give him one big crack."

"Know him?" demanded Harry.

"No; me no know."

Old King Brady drew his revolver, and bent over the hole.

It ran down about five feet.

It seemed to have been a sort of areaway under the steps.

Still he could see no door.

The opening was bricked up on three sides.

A choked-up flight of steps led down to it.

"Singular what became of the man," said Alice, looking down over his shoulder.

"I'm inclined to think we have struck the secret door of the joss-house vaults," said Harry; "but I can't imagine what he expected to gain by tripping me up."

"I fancy he did not see the rest of us," replied the old detective.

The question now was what to do.

It seemed to Old King Brady that they had all been a little too much in evidence around the ruined joss-house.

"We pull out now," he said.

They passed out on to Jackson street.

"How Lee, you need a hat," said Old King Brady. "Have you got any money?"

"No gottee one cent," replied How Lee.

"You have been playing fan-tan, you rascal. Here, I'll give you five dollars. Now get yourself a hat and go home."

The Chink mumbled his thanks.

That he was lost in astonishment over this gift and sudden dismissal was quite evident.

But he shuffled away, and turned up Dupont street, where a few stores had been started up by Chinamen since the fire.

"Shadow him, Charley," said Old King Brady.

Charley was off like a shot, and the Bradys moved on toward Kearney street, Harry telling of the Oakland adventure.

"You must not think of going to that house again,"

said the old detective. "Still, your discovery is of the highest importance. Everything seems to point to the ruined joss-house as the center of all this mystery."

"What made you let How Lee go, Governor?" Harry asked.

"What would you have done with him?"

"Gone to Wiseman's with him, at all events."

Old King Brady shook his head.

"No use," he said. "Who can make a Chinaman talk if he does not want to talk?"

"It's a big contract," laughed Alice

"Indeed it is," replied Old King Brady, "and one which I don't care to undertake. I treated the fellow liberally, so that he can find no fault with me. If he really means to tell Mr. Wiseman all he will go home and tell it; if not, all that I could do would amount to nothing."

"That he is mixed up in this business is certain."

"There would seem to be no doubt about it."

They walked on, and Harry put the question as to what was to be done.

"If things were only different and we could go floating about Chinatown as we used to do, we should be pretty sure to unearth something," said the old detective; "but as that cannot be, I hardly know what to say."

He looked at Alice.

"Oh, I know what you are thinking about!" exclaimed Alice. "If you were only rid of me you would both go on the watch at the ruined joss-house to-night."

"It is certainly no place for you, Alice," said Harry gravely.

"Very well. Leave me at the hotel. You can lock me in if you wish."

"I was not thinking anything of the sort, and I don't mean anything of the sort," said Old King Brady.

"Well?"

Alice looked at the old detective inquiringly.

"This case has assumed a very interesting shape," continued Old King Brady. "To me our course seems plain enough."

"And what is that?" demanded Alice.

"We are out for business. We must make use of the information that has come our way."

"Very good," said Alice. "I understand you. It is up to me. I must disguise as a Chink and by the aid of the stick try to penetrate the secret counsels of this mysterious Brotherhood of Sleep!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRADYS MOVE ON THE RUINED JOSS-HOUSE.

Alice had correctly divined Old King Brady's thoughts. Harry, in his love for the beautiful girl who had proved such a valuable addition to the working force of the Brady

Detective Bureau, would have held Alice back if it had been in his power.

As it was, he raised no objection, for he well knew that when he is hot on a case Old King Brady never takes the question of personal risk into consideration, nor does he expect any one around him to do so.

"If Alice goes, then I go, too," he quietly said.

"Of course," assented the old detective. "I should not think of letting Alice go alone; but you must be very, very careful. If buried treasure is really at the bottom of this singular business, the Chinks will be more than ever on the alert against intruders. It may take several nights' work to get next to their operation. Tell me, Alice, according to Gump High, is there anything about those sticks to identify them as the property of any particular person?"

"I put that very question to Gump High," replied Alice, "and he assured me that there was not."

"Of course, we can place no real dependence upon what he said. Still, he may have told the truth."

"I think he did. It seemed so to me when I was talking with him."

"Yet he betrayed you instantly your back was turned."

"That is not certain."

"So nearly so that the question is not worth discussing."

"No, no, Mr. Brady, you are certainly wrong. We may have been spied upon."

Old King Brady shrugged his shoulders.

"You better go to the costumer's and arrange to get into his place to-night," he said, "for, remember, you can neither enter nor leave the Palace Hotel in your Chinese disguise. It is not as it used to be at the old Lick House, where we were so well known."

Taking the hint, Alice and Harry went to the costumer's.

As the old man did not live in his store, he provided them with a key to his door.

Alice and Harry turned up there at eight o'clock, and soon after emerged from the place in their Chinese disguise.

Old King Brady was on the lookout for them, and he trailed behind.

No new developments had taken place since the afternoon except that Old King Brady had telephoned Senator Wiseman, only to be informed that How Lee had not put in an appearance.

Harry and Alice made several turns, and doubled on their tracks so as to throw anybody off the scent who might happen to be trailing them.

But Old King Brady could discover no one.

The old detective was himself in disguise.

His get-up was that of a seedy old man.

There are hundreds of such characters floating about San Francisco by night, of course.

Consequently he attracted no attention.

At last Harry and Alice brought up at the ruined joss-house.

Here they stood near the corner of Stockton street for a long time.

Old King Brady got behind a billboard which had been erected in front of the cellar of a burned house, and watched. It was yet early in the evening, and many persons passed up and down the hill.

Among them the usual proportion of Chinamen appeared. It did not seem to the old detective that any of these paid special attention to the ruined joss-house.

At last Harry and Alice turned the corner and disappeared.

Old King Brady did not follow them.

He knew that they simply intended to take a turn around the block, feeling that they had remained in one place long enough.

Scarcely had they vanished when a Chinaman appeared on the other side of the way.

Where he had suddenly sprung from Old King Brady could not make out, but where he went was into the ruined joss-house.

The old detective saw him scramble over the ruins and disappear within the court.

"The curtain rises," he chuckled. "That fellow had his eye on Harry and Alice, surest thing."

He was more than ever on the alert now.

The moments passed, and after a little another Chinaman appeared, coming up the hill on the other side of the way.

He walked very slowly, with his hand hidden in the sleeves of his blouse, despite of the fact that it was an unusually hot night.

As he drew nearer Old King Brady saw that he was a man far advanced in years.

His face was a mass of wrinkles, he wore a long, drooping mustache.

"Gump High, by all that's great," he said to himself.

The old fellow came abreast the ruined joss-house and paused.

It was no easy matter to climb over the ruins of the front portion of the building, as Old King Brady knew from experience.

He wondered if Gump High would be good for the task.

Perhaps the old Chink was wondering the same thing himself, for he stood for some minutes looking at the pile of rubbish.

The question was settled at last by the appearance of another and younger man.

He spoke with Gump High for a few minutes, and then, taking his arm, helped him over the rubbish, and they both disappeared within the court.

Old King Brady now left his concealment and hurried down to Dupont street.

Here a few Chinamen had started up business in wooden shacks, so the place was by no means deserted.

Keeping along on the upper side of the street, the old detective soon met Harry and Alice.

He stepped into the shadows alongside one of the shacks, and hailed them by a secret sign.

They came in where he was.

"We ought not to be seen here, Governor," whispered Harry.

"I know, I know," replied the old detective; "but I must tell you what I have seen. Right away after you left a Chink went into the ruined joss-house."

"He did, eh? Then he must have been watching us."

"It looks so. He was at once followed by another, who led in your friend Gump High."

"The deuce! Alice, that spoils your scheme."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Alice.

"I was thinking the same thing myself," said Old King Brady, "and that is why I came to warn you. You know you put a mark on the female stick, Alice. Won't Gump High detect it?"

"I doubt it," replied Alice. "The mark I put on the stick could hardly be detected with a magnifying glass."

"He was looking right at it when you did it, just the same," said Harry.

"Well, I don't care. I won't let it hold me back," declared Alice. "If Chinks are going into that place, I say let us go, too."

"Very good," replied the old detective. "Nothing venture nothing win; at all events, you are forewarned."

"That's what I say," added Alice. "I am for going right along."

"Have you formed any plan what to say?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Yes," answered Alice. "I propose to pretend that we are two new arrivals by way of Canada, and that we are looking for the meeting-place of these Brothers of Sleep. Harry plays the dummy as usual, of course."

"Suppose their ceremonies are conducted in this ancient dialect? There may be passwords, too."

"The sticks are the passwords. Gump High distinctly said so."

"You are a brave girl, Alice, and may success attend you both. Remember, whatever happens, you will find me as close at hand as I can get, which may not be inside the door, unfortunately, but I shall not hesitate to enter if I get the chance."

Alice and Harry then left, and the old detective trailed after them.

He saw them pause in front of the ruined joss-house.

A Chinaman was coming down Jackson street hill, and he halted, too.

Alice immediately entered into conversation with him.

"Wonderful woman," chuckled Old King Brady. "Show me another in America who can do that."

Evidently Alice had scored a point.

All three turned in at the ruins.

Climbing over the rubbish, they disappeared within the court. Old King Brady crossed the street, for there was

another Chink coming down the hill. Instantly this man crossed, too. It was Charley Ching, in full Chinese rig.

"You here!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Step in behind this bill-board, where we can talk unobserved."

Charley followed him behind the board.

"Well?" demanded the old detective, "what's doing?"

"I'm afraid you didn't help your case much by giving that Chink the five-spot, Mr. Brady," said Charley.

"How is that?"

"He steered straight for a hop-joint."

"He did, eh?"

"That's what. By this time he is deep in the dope."

"You are sure it was not a blind?"

"Oh, no. I went in myself and saw him hitting 'the pipe."

"Did he see you?"

"Oh, yes, and I had quite a talk with him."

"Get anything out of him? Speak quick, Charley. I must be on the move."

"No, I didn't get much out of him. He said he could not go home, and it was no use to ask him. He said that he had some money in the savings bank, and that as soon as he could get it out he was going to New York."

"Strange! After thirty years' faithful service this man suddenly goes all to pieces. What can it mean?"

"Oh, you'll never find out," said Charley. "Nothing in this world like a Chink for keeping a secret. I advised him to do as he promised, and tell Mr. Wiseman all."

"And what did he say to that?"

"He said that if he did his life would not be worth two cents."

"Did you ask him if he believed Mrs. Wiseman, Jr., to be alive?"

"I did, and he assured me most positively that he knew nothing at all about her."

"Can you imagine any motive for his conduct, Charley?"

"No, I can't. You must understand, Mr. Brady, that there is a whole lot about the Chinks I don't know. My white blood keeps me out of all their secret societies, and there are very many of them. The only thing I can think of is that How Lee did look at the body in the box before he called Mr. Wiseman, just as you said, and that he either recognized him or found some paper in with the corpse which started him off. Of course, I may be wrong, but that is my idea."

"And it is a very shrewd one, Charley. But what brings you here?"

"Why, I made up my mind to solve the mystery of the ruined joss-house on my own account."

"You did, eh? Well, then, we are all at it to-night. Harry and Alice have just gone in there is Chinese disguise."

"How will they ever get in?"

"Oh, leave them alone for that."

Old King Brady had not mentioned the lacquered sticks to Charley Ching, nor did he intend to. The old detective

never discloses the methods by which he and his associates work unless necessity compels.

"And I propose to go in, too, if I can get in," he added.

"I'll go with you, Mr. Brady, unless you object."

"No; glad to have you with me; but it is somewhat doubtful if we can get in."

"If they went in why can't we?"

"Alice got next to a Chink, and they went in with him."

"Just the game I was going to try. There is some society meeting in the secret chambers under the joss-house, surest thing, but they won't let you in, of course, Mr. Brady."

"Oh, I understand that. I shall have to sneak in if I am to get in at all. There goes another now."

"That's what. We had better wait a few minutes, think?"

"No; we will follow him right in, Charley, and hang about and see if we can catch on to the entrance."

"I tell you, Mr. Brady, you must be prepared for dangerous work."

"Oh, I know. I have been in the secret chambers under the joss-house before."

"So you once told me. Still, just the same I don't believe you saw half. I understand they run away down under Dupont street. Of course, they may be all choked up now."

"Come, Charley, we had better be going."

They crossed to the joss-house.

Without losing an instant, Old King Brady scrambled over the ruins and gained the court. Charley kept close at his heels.

"Get down here behind this pile of rubbish," whispered Old King Brady. "There will be somebody coming along here in a few minutes, and we will see what's doing."

They got under cover.

Peering out, Old King Brady saw that the steps leading down to the areaway had been cleared of all obstructions.

"Ha! I see their game, and that is why the shovel was here," he thought. "They clear away at night, and fill up again in the morning."

"Someone coming," whispered Charley just then.

They could hear some person climbing over the rubbish.

In a minute a Chinaman entered the court.

He stood motionless.

For the moment Old King Brady thought that they had been discovered. Then sounds were heard outside again. A second Chink put in an appearance. The two began a conversation in low, rapid tones. This continued for a minute, and then, one of them pushing open the door which led up to the rooms where How Lee had been discovered, he passed inside, followed by his companion.

"What did they say, Charley?" whispered Old King Brady.

"Now I know what's the matter with How Lee!" breathed Charley, triumphantly. "Even if I am only a half-breed I know some of the secrets of the Chinks!"

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE "HOUSE OF DREAMS."

Harry and Alice having resolved to take the bull by the horns and solve the mystery of the ruined joss-house, never once thought of turning back, dangerous as they knew the undertaking was likely to prove. Just as they reached the spot the Chinaman came along, and Alice accosted him. What she said, as she explained to Harry afterwards, was:

"We are just from China. I am looking for the Brothers of Sleep. I was told that they meet in here."

"They do, since the fire," was the reply, "but you cannot get in without your stick."

"I have my stick," replied Alice, "and my brother, who is dumb, has his."

The Chinaman looked at Harry curiously.

"Can he hear?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, he can hear, but he cannot speak," replied Alice. "His tongue is paralyzed."

"I should think the dream spirits could cure him," said the Chinaman. "Has he been that way long?"

"Two years," replied Alice. "We have been traveling about. We have not had the chance to consult the dream spirits. That is what we want to do to-night."

"Very well," said the Chinaman. "You come with me, and I'll show you how to get into the house of dreams."

He led the way over the rubbish, and Harry made the same discovery which Old King Brady made later. The rubbish about the area where he had been caught by the leg was now cleared away. The Chinaman descended the steps and struck three times on the apparently solid brick wall. In a minute the whole business opened. The bricks were evidently enclosed in a box. The supposed solid wall was nothing but a door. A Chinaman stood there peering out. The place was dimly lighted by a colored glass hanging lamp. Their conductor spoke in Chinese. The man replied. Alice chimed in, and spoke her little piece. Young King Brady, watching every move, was right on hand when she took out the lacquered stick and produced his, too. The doorkeeper merely glanced at them. And this to Alice's immense relief.

Secretly she had feared that it might become necessary to show the sticks to Gump High.

But no, it all seemed easy beyond anything she could have hoped for.

The doorkeeper closed the door behind them, and took his seat on a little stool. He seemed perfectly indifferent to them.

"Follow me," said Alice's conductor, and he shuffled off down a dimly lighted corridor. They passed several doors and came at length to one which stood open. The room behind was large, and dimly lighted by a single shaded hanging lamp. There was no challenge here. All three passed in and found themselves in the presence of a number of Chinamen. The room was without windows, and almost without furniture. At one end was an elevation covered with cheap red cloth. Upon this stood an ugly

little idol. It was as black as the stove, and looked to be very old. As near as Harry could make it out it represented a man with an animal of some sort crawling over his head. One arm was gone, and one eye was plugged with a white, shiny substance which certainly was not a diamond. The other eye socket was empty. Around the idol were many offerings in the Chinese style. Dry tea in cups, sweetmeats, bowls of rice, and similar things. Over at one side of the room was a sort of counter with such things spread out upon it, for sale, and a man behind attending to it. Seeing how the cat jumped, Alice went over to this individual, and bought two little plates, some dried ginger, and some chop-suey. Harry took the latter, and they laid their offerings on the altar. All this time not the slightest attention was paid to them. The Chinamen stood about discussing their own affairs, as they always do in the joss-house. Alice and Harry drew to one side, and stood watching and waiting. Just then it did not look as if anything was likely to come out of their visit. The place appeared to be simply a joss-house, but the absence of the use of joss-sticks, which the Chinese shake in a box and throw like dice, struck Alice as peculiar. At one end of the room was an open doorway, cut off by a red curtain. After a little this was pulled aside, and who should appear in the doorway but Gump High.

"Next!" he called in Chinese. At the same time a man passed out and left the room by still a third door. Harry and Alice soon became aware that nobody went out by the way they came in. Two Chinamen moved forward.

"Do you want to go in together?" Alice heard Gump High ask. One of the Chinamen replied that they did and the curtain dropped and all three disappeared. Others came in from the outside. Some bought offerings and laid them on the altar. Others had brought their offerings along with them, and they did the same. Again Gump High appeared, and called "Next!" The two men slipped out and left the place.

"Are you going in if you get the chance?" Harry breathed in Alice's ear. Alice nodded, but by a secret sign told him not on any account to speak again. At last, after a long wait, the company had completely changed. Ten had followed Gump High behind the curtain, and passed out again. As many more had taken their places in the outer room. At last, when Gump High called "Next!" no one responded. The Chinamen who had guided them into the place stepped forward.

"It is your turn," he said.

"No," replied Alice, "you go first."

The man went in and was gone some time.

"It is up to us now," thought Harry. "I wonder what in the world we are going to strike?"

His curiosity was to be soon gratified. The man who preceded them came out at last.

"Next!" called Gump High.

Alice advanced to the door with Harry close behind her.

"You go in together?" asked Gump High.

"Yes," replied Alice. He looked at her sharply, but

did not speak. Dropping the curtain, he led the way along a corridor dimly lighted. Several very small rooms opened off it. Each was cut off by a curtain made of strings of glass beads. Gump High pushed one aside and passed in. As he did not invite Alice to enter, she held back.

Probably this was the proper thing to do, for Gump High did not call them in. Through the curtain they could dimly see a woman dressed in white lying upon a bamboo couch. She was apparently asleep. It seemed to both Harry and Alice that she was a white woman, but they could not be sure. Gump High took her hand and held it.

"Make your request," he called.

Then Alice understood that this was his style of fortune-telling. The woman was expected to see the answer to questions in her dreams.

"Shall we succeed in our present undertaking?" asked Alice.

Gump High repeated the question. There was a long silence. At last the sleeping woman spoke in Chinese. What she said Alice afterwards translated to Harry thus:

"You seek the lost, the lost is found; be wise and leave this place at once, for here danger lurks for thee. In good time the lost shall be delivered into your hands."

Gump High dropped the hand and came out.

"Does the answer satisfy you?" he demanded.

"It does," replied Alice. "What is to pay?"

"One dollar."

Alice paid the dollar and started to go.

"Wait," said Gump High. "Though I do not seek to pry into your business, I am curious to know why danger should lurk in the house of dreams for you who never entered it before?"

"You know as much as I do," replied Alice. "That is what I cannot understand."

"You are strangers in San Francisco?"

"We are."

"From whence do you come?"

"From British Columbia last."

"You were smuggled into Washington?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"At Tumas."

Luckily for Alice, she was ready with her answers. Gump High now inquired from what part of China they came. Alice fenced with the old fellow as deftly as possible. Of course, Harry could not help her. He did not even guess that there was trouble in the wind. What the dreamer had said Young King Brady had yet to learn.

But as Gump High grew more and more persistent, Harry's fears were aroused. He held his hand within instant reach of his revolver. But the occasion to use it was not yet.

"Depart," said Gump High at last. Alice started for the curtain, but the old man jumped before her.

"Would you depart before the master of the dream

spirits has given the sacred call?" he hissed. "Little you know of the ways of the House of Dreams!"

Realizing that she had made a blunder which might prove fatal, Alice humbly begged Gump High's pardon, and hung back. The old fellow waddled to the door.

Drawing aside the curtain he shouted "Next!" Then, in a still louder voice, he called out several words which Alice did not understand. There was surely trouble in the wind. Was it old Chinese the man was talking? Even this Alice did not know. But what she did know was that on no previous occasion had Gump High added anything to his monotonous call of "Next!"

She swept past him, however, Harry keeping close behind her. They passed out of the door which had served as the exit for the others. Here they found themselves in a narrow passage, in which a light shone far ahead. A low murmur arose behind them. Harry looked back. To his horror he saw that the doorway was crowded with Chinks. All were staring at them as though they expected something to happen.

"Alice has made a bad break somehow, surest thing," thought Harry. "What on earth can I do?"

There was nothing for him to do but to play "follow my leader."

And this Young King Brady did, his mind filled with a thousand fears.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPLORATIONS IN THE RUINED JOSS-HOUSE.

"What do you mean, Charley?" whispered Old King Brady. "You say you know what's the matter with How Lee?"

"That's what I said," replied Charley Ching.

"Caught on from the talk of those fellows?"

"Yes."

"Out with it."

"He is sold."

"Sold? What on earth do you mean?"

"Sold to a spirit. Oh, how can I make you understand?"

"Hold on, Charley. I'm not such a fool. Hit it again, boy; perhaps I may be able to catch on."

"Well, it's like this; there are some people in China who believe in one religion, and some who believe in another. Well, there is one bunch who believe that no man can get into heaven alone, that there must be two go together before the spirits will open the gate. You see?"

"Yes, yes; go on."

"If one dies and tries to go alone he must either meet somebody else who has started alone within one month, who is willing to take him as a partner to enter the gate, or he must wander about in darkness for a thousand years."

"Well?"

"Well, Mr. Brady, so as to make sure, rich men who believe this sometimes buy a poor man's spirit while he is yet living."

"Oh, I see. They pay the poor man money, and he swears to kill himself when the rich man dies."

"That's it."

"And what about How Lee?"

"I don't know any more than I have told you. I heard one of those fellows say, 'Now we will go for How Lee, the man who sold himself, for to-night he must die.'"

Old King Brady reflected. This would hardly account for the sending of the body to Senator Wiseman's house, he thought. If the dead Chinaman was rich enough to buy a soul to accompany him to the world beyond, then unless he had since lost all his money he would be looking out for a big funeral, like others of his race, whereas now he stood a fair chance of being buried in the Potter's Field. But still it was possible that the body had been intended for How Lee. Although we neglected to mention it, there was no address on the box which contained the body. The truckman had positively stated that there was no address on the box when it was delivered to him at the ruined joss-house.

"You understand now, Mr. Brady?" asked Charley.

"I understand now."

"What shall we do?"

"Wait! Hush! Somebody else is coming."

It proved to be two Chinamen. They went down into the area and disappeared. Still they waited. Old King Brady thought that the first pair would come out of the ruined joss-house when they found that How Lee had vanished. But they did not. Others came in, and sought the area door. Old King Brady saw that the secret chambers under the joss-house must be the scene of action. He began to feel worried about Alice and Harry.

"I've got a great mind to tackle it, Charley," he said.

"If you do they will kill you, Mr. Brady, that's sure. I wouldn't dare take the risk. I don't see how Harry and Alice ever got in, and I don't believe——"

Charley stopped short.

"And you don't believe they will ever come out again," said Old King Brady, finishing his sentence for him.

"It was an awful risk."

Two more Chinks passed down the area steps.

"Come," said Old King Brady, "we must get on the move. We'll tackle it upstairs again."

"That's my idea," said Charley. "There is probably some other way of getting down there. My idea was to look for it—see?"

"There is some other way out, no doubt," said the old detective, "for nobody has come out, and it is not likely that all of them intend to stop in there right along."

They slipped across the court, and pushed open the broken door.

"Hark!" breathed the old detective.

At the end of the passage he could hear the tramp of feet. The sound died away in a minute.

"Chinks going out," said Charley.

"That's what. We will look it up in a minute. Let us go upstairs first."

They groped their way to the floor above. Hearing nothing, Old King Brady ventured to get out his flash-

light. The door of How Lee's prison stood open, and the room was vacant.

"Nothing doing here," said Old King Brady. "We will try our luck in the corridor below."

Still using the flash-light, they investigated that, and readily found a flight of stairs concealed within a room, the door of which stood ajar. And here they were nearly caught. Just as Old King Brady started to descend the stairs he heard somebody moving about below.

They had barely time to jump into a closet when two Chinamen came up. One had just such a flash-light as Old King Brady himself was using.

They passed out into the hall, and the detectives heard them enter the next room, after which all was still.

"We will look in there first," said Old King Brady.

They did so, and found an open window overlooking the ruins on China Alley.

"We have found out how they go in and now we know how they go out," said Old King Brady, adding:

"Come, we are getting on. Are you good to tackle those stairs, Charley?"

"Oh, sure! I'll do anything on the side. Only thing I am afraid of is to go to the door outside there and try to get into their lodge."

They returned and crept down the stairs. At the foot were two doors, both locked.

"We must act quick, or we shall be caught sure," said the old detective. He whipped out his skeleton keys, and went for the locks. The right-hand door he was able to open, but he could do nothing with the one on the left.

They had just reached this stage of the game when they heard a movement behind the left-hand door. Throwing open the other, Old King Brady darted through into the darkness, pulling Charley after him. They heard Chinamen come out of the other door and go upstairs. As soon as they were well out of the way Old King Brady came out himself and tried the door again. It was locked as before, so he returned and got out his flash-light. They were in a narrow corridor. Following this for about twenty feet, they passed into a large room littered with odds and ends of furniture, which had evidently been tumbled in here at the time of the fire. Among other things were half a dozen ugly wooden idols. These Old King Brady remembered to have seen in one of these underground rooms some years before, when they stood upon an altar. Some of the stuff was boxed up, and there were empty packing cases lying about.

"They don't seem to have got all their stuff away yet," said Charley. He opened a door, and instantly closed it again.

"They are coming," he whispered. "We must either get out or hide."

"Hide," said Old King Brady. "I don't leave this place till I have found out something of what is going on here."

There was a large empty packing-case standing close to the wall. Old King Brady turned it around so as to shield them, and they stepped in behind it. They were not a mo-

ment too soon. Through the cracks of the packing-box they saw two Chinks come in. One was Gump High, the other a much younger man. The old priest of the dream house carried a lantern, which he placed on a table, and then dropped wearily into an old armchair. The other stood beside him, and they began to talk. As Charley Ching heard their conversation and repeated it to Old King Brady afterward, we give it here.

"It is as I told you," began Gump High. "They are detectives."

"Who could have put them on us?" asked the younger man.

"It is about the dream woman."

"Her husband wants her back."

"They say he is crazy and will die."

"It would be better. She must never go back."

"I do not know that she cares to. She seems to be satisfied as long as she gets the hop."

There was a long silence. Then the young man broke out again.

"What shall we do with these detectives?"

"Kill the man and take the woman to Vallejo."

"It will be hard getting her there?"

"I can manage it."

"Shall we kill the man to-night?"

"Yes, before we leave."

"Do you give up hope?"

"No. I shall take Ethel to Vallejo and try there."

"You think there is no doubt that the treasure was taken to Vallejo?"

"I think nothing, for I know nothing. One thing is certain, it is not here."

Another silence. The Chinese seldom talk straight ahead. Pretty soon Gump High said:

"They came to my house this morning. The young woman is a wonder. She speaks Chinese as well as you or me."

"Where could she have learned it?" the other asked.

"In China."

"Do you believe it?"

"She could not have learned it anywhere else."

"You will have trouble in keeping her. I am sure the young man is one of the Bradys."

"What makes you so sure?"

"I know Old King Brady by sight. One night, before the fire, I saw this young man with Old King Brady on Dupont street."

"You did?"

"Yes, I did."

"That makes it worse."

"He must die sure."

"Oh, yes."

"Shall you kill him here?"

"Yes, and I think we will do it to-night before we go home."

"Do you want me to do it?"

"I had rather do it myself; then I shall be sure he is dead."

"And what will you do with the body?"

"Bury it under the rubbish. When they find it they will think he was somebody killed the night of the fire."

"Suppose we kill him now?"

"As well now as any time. Has everybody gone?"

"Yes."

"Very well. You go and bring him here."

The young Chinaman then hurried away.

Charley was terribly worked up. Hardly daring to trust himself to speak even in that fashion, he put his mouth close to Old King Brady's ear, and whispered:

"They have caught Alice and Harry. They are going to carry Alice off to Vallejo; they are going to kill Harry now, here in this room."

Old King Brady nodded. He drew his revolver, and motioned to Charley to do the same. They waited and waited, but no one came. Gump High soon dropped off asleep.

"Why don't they come?" whispered Old King Brady.

"Don't know," replied Charley. "He is asleep."

"I see."

"Can't we do something?"

"Let us sneak out and see if we can't."

They crept from their concealment. As they passed Gump High he made no move. In a second they were beyond the door. Here they struck a corridor which led them to the room where the idol was. The outer door stood open. They followed along the corridor, and found another open door. This opened into the area-way. Back they hurried, and pushing aside the curtains, entered the dream-house. These rooms were likewise unoccupied. All this time Charley was telling Old King Brady in whispers what he had heard.

"Upon my word, I believe that rascal has gone off with them all!" Old King Brady now said.

"He may have gone back on Gump High, and be looking for the treasure himself," said Charley.

"We will get back," replied Old King Brady. They hurried back to the big room. The wicked old Chink was still snoozing in the chair.

"There is more to this corridor," said Old King Brady.

"This way, Charley, we are not through yet."

They pushed on down the corridor. There were little cell-like rooms opening off from it on both sides. Into each one Old King Brady flashed his lantern, and in the very last one on the left they came upon Harry. He was stretched upon the floor, bound hand and foot, with a piece of red cloth thrust into his mouth as a gag. Old King Brady jumped in and had him free in an instant.

"Alice! Have you seen her?" gasped Harry.

"No."

"Merciful heaven! I'm afraid the Chinks have carried her off!"

"We can soon settle it," replied the old detective. "This way, please."

"Where are we going?"

"Going to arrest Gump High!"

They started back through the corridor. Then on the instant they saw the old dream priest come out of the room with his lantern. He gave one dismal croak as he caught sight of them. Whipping out a huge revolver—the Chinese always buy the biggest kind—he fired two shots at them. Then, blowing out his lantern, he ran off up the corridor, whipped around into the room where the idol was, and disappeared.

CHAPTER IX.

ALICE IN TROUBLE.

Harry and Alice walked along the narrow passage towards the light. This burned in the room where Old King Brady and Charley hid in the box.

"I am afraid we are in trouble, Harry!" Alice ventured to whisper.

"I know it," was the answer. "We can only bust ahead."

They turned into the room. Instantly half a dozen Chinks were in evidence. They came out from behind the boxes, and closed around Harry and Alice. They were all armed with revolvers, which were instantly cocked and aimed at the detectives. Resistance would have been madness.

"What is it? We only want to go out," Alice said in Chinese.

"You are frauds," said one. "Stand as you are, or we will kill you."

Five minutes of horrible suspense followed. The Chinks neither moved nor spoke. At last Gump High came waddling in. He ordered a search for revolvers. It was made, and one was taken from each detective. Gump High then did the unmasking with his own hands.

"A man and a woman!" he cried. "You are the two who came to my house this morning."

Alice did not attempt to deny it. She knew in a moment that it would have been useless.

"I knew you from the first," continued Gump High. "That is, as soon as I saw you in the dream room. I made a mark upon your hand, woman, when I gave you back the sticks, and it is there now."

He then began feeling in their pockets himself. This time he got the lacquered sticks away.

"You are detectives," he said. "You are frauds. You shall pay dear for this."

"Tie them up, and take them away," he added.

The Chinks were right on the job. Harry was dragged off in one direction, and Alice in another. This was all Young King Brady had to tell. He had neither seen nor heard of Alice since. Nor had anyone been near him. He was wild over it all, but it was no time for explanations then. Gump High's shots had done no damage. The Bradys dashed after the old wretch. They caught him without trouble, for in attempting to ascend the area steps he slipped and fell. There he lay at the foot of the steps,

groaning, and a thoroughly frightened Chink he was when they dragged him back into the room.

"Me no sabee! Me no sabee! Me no talkee Eenglees!" he growled.

"He lies," said Harry. "He talks it as well as you or I. Shoot him if he won't tell what has become of the girl who was with me."

"Wait," said Old King Brady. "You don't quite understand the situation, Harry. Charley, tackle him. Ask him where everybody is."

Charley went at it, but made no headway. When Gump High realized that his murderous talk had been overheard by someone understanding Chinese, he seemed to become paralyzed with fear. Old King Brady produced a pair of handcuffs.

"You go to the station with us right now, old man," he said. "I'll find a way to make you talk!"

He snapped on the handcuffs, and dragged Gump High toward the big room.

"I talkee, I talkee so you let me go!" mumbled the old fortune-teller.

"Let you go nothing. You answer my questions if you want to get out of this snap. Who was that man with you?"

"Him Sing Yup."

"Where is he?"

"Me no know. Him lun away with gals."

"The woman who we saw asleep was Mrs. Wiseman?" demanded Harry.

He would have done better not to have interfered. At the mention of the name of Wiseman Gump High shut up like a clam. Neither coaxing nor threats were of any avail after that. Old King Brady and Harry searched everywhere, but they could find no one. At last they were forced to give it up, and Gump High was taken to police headquarters. As soon as the inspector in charge learned that the Bradys had made an arrest in the famous Wiseman case, he was ready to sit up and pay attention.

"I'll see that the old fellow is taken care of all right," he said. "We have Chinks working for us who will make him talk."

"Let none of them come near him but Charley Ching," said the old detective. "He will take care of all that."

Instructing Charley to take up Gump High's case in the morning after he had put in a night in a cell, the Bradys hurried back to the ruined joss-house. Harry was wild with anxiety on Alice's account.

"You want to keep cool," said Old King Brady. "Alice is able to take care of herself every time. This is a case of one Chinese rascal betraying another. I shall know that fellow again when I see him. My theory is that he will return here to-night."

"And how do you figure that out?"

"Easily. Gump High I believe to have been doped. I think his apparent stupidity is largely due to that. He is an important personage and this fellow will surely want

to know what becomes of him. He will either come back or send someone in his place. You will see."

"And you propose?"

"To watch here the balance of the night."

In the meantime think of what Alice may be up against."

"The quickest way we or anyone else can get Alice out of her trouble is to find out where she is, and I think I am taking the best way to do that."

Harry ceased to argue or even to talk. Since Young King Brady has become so deeply enamoured with Alice these constant exposures to danger on her part have grown very trying. But this was a case which would have alarmed anybody.

Alice Montgomery is a very beautiful girl. It was horrible to think of her in the hands of the Chinese.

The Bradys now returned to the big room, and there waited until nearly three o'clock in the morning without hearing a sound or seeing a soul. The mystery of the ruined joss-house had been solved in part, but the outcome was anything but pleasant. It was beginning to look as if Old King Brady's plan was to fall flat when at last they heard footsteps in the corridor outside. The detectives had been using Gump High's lantern, which they kept shaded. Instantly Harry extinguished it. A second later somebody entered the room. There was a pause. The detectives could see nothing, but they could hear the steady breathing of the newcomer. Suddenly he pulled out an old-fashioned dark-lantern from under his blouse and flashed it about. It was a Chinese boy who could hardly have been more than eighteen years old. His face wore a frightened look as he glanced about the room. The Bradys were behind their packing-case, and he could not see them. He turned away immediately, and made a bee-line for the area steps. As it was no part of Old King Brady's plan to detain the fellow, but rather to shadow him, they simply trailed behind. They got clear of the ruins of the front part of the joss-house just in time to see the boy sneaking around the corner of Dupont street.

Hurrying on, they came as near to him as they dared, and started on the shadow.

The boy kept straight ahead until he reached Vallejo street, and then turned in the direction of the water front.

He wound up at a wharf, and here he started on the run.

He had looked back for the first time, and discovered his shadowers.

A ship lay at one side of the wharf, and an English tramp steamer was tied up against the other.

The boy passed them both, running at full speed.

"After him, Harry!" cried the old detective, as soon as the Chink took to his heels.

But the fellow had too good a start.

Harry could not come up with him before he reached the end of the wharf.

The boy dropped over the stringpiece and disappeared.

Harry ran on at full speed, Old King Brady coming up as fast as he could.

"Where did he go to?" demanded the old detective, all out of breath.

"Why, Governor, I'll be blest if I know, unless he drowned himself," replied Harry.

"I expected to see a boat here."

"So did I."

"They may have slipped under the pier."

"Shall we wait?"

"Have to, I suppose. I see no chance to get a boat."

"We might get one from that steamer."

"Before we can do anything these people will be off. I'll tackle the job, though. You wait here."

Old King Brady boarded the tramp.

A man came hurrying forward.

"Who are you? What are you prowling about for?" he gruffly demanded.

Old King Brady flashed his shield and explained.

"I have no authority to let you have one of our boats. I'm only the watchman," was the reply.

"But, my friend, there are two helpless women involved. They have been carried away by Chinese."

"Can't help it. If I was to wake up the mate he would kill me, and then wouldn't let you have the boat." cried

Just then Harry threw up his hands and came down the pier.

"Too late!" said the old detective. "Much obliged if nothing, friend."

"Don't blame me," growled the man. "You don't know our mate."

"He has gone off in a launch," said Harry. "They have just come out from under the next pier. Two Chinks, a white man, and the boy."

"But, Great Scott, Harry. We must keep tabs on them. What made you come away?"

"They went aboard that tug we saw standing in toward the next pier. Plenty of time to see which way the tug is heading. It is all we can do."

Old King Brady turned to the watchman.

"Did you see any Chinese come down this wharf?" he demanded.

"Only that boy," was the reply.

"How long have you been on the watch?"

"Since midnight.

Old King Brady descended to the wharf.

He and Harry hurried back to the string-piece.

The tug was standing up the bay.

The old detective got out his night glass.

"No good of that, Governor," replied Harry, gloomily. "I looked for her name."

"Well?"

"She has an old sail hung over the stern, and they have taken the sign off the pilot-house."

Old King Brady lit a cigar, and gave Harry another.

This was a sign that he gave it up.

"All over for to-night!" he said.

"And Alice on that tug!" groaned Harry.

"Can't be helped. They are taking her to Vallejo, and there we go first train."

"Have you any idea when we can get a train?"

"Not the faintest, but what we want to do is to hike ourselves to the station as fast as possible."

"We might even get there ahead of the tug."

"It is certainly so."

They hurried up the wharf, and struck for the Oakland ferry.

"This was a put-up job against Gump High," said Harry at last.

"Not a doubt of it, and the treasure we heard alluded to is at the bottom of it."

"That's probably so. I wish we had never gone into the ruined joss house."

Old King Brady was silent.

He could think of nothing to say which was likely to reassure Harry.

"Do you think you would know that tug again?" he suddenly asked.

"Sure!" replied Harry.

"How."

"There was a rooster on the pilot-house."

"Good! Harry, don't let us go by train. Let's try a tug."

"It seems to me it would be better."

"Another thing, if you can only make up your mind to be patient. I'm for taking Gump High and Charley with

will you go for Gump High?"

because when he comes fully to his senses, which he may not when we talked to him, he will be thirst-revenge."

"That's a whole lot in that."

"Everything in it. What do we care whether theascal goes to jail or not? If we give him his

information we may be willing to give us just the very information. What do you say?"

"Right! Let her go."

"Then you go for the tug and telephone headquarters where I am to bring Gump High."

And the Bradys separated, each going his own way.

CHAPTER X.

ALICE PERSUADES MRS. WISEMAN TO TELL ALL.

Alice, fortunately for herself, is one of the cool kind. When discovery overtook her in the ruined joss-house she made no fuss.

Her hope was that she would not be separated from Harry.

This was not realized, as we know.

The unfortunate girl was hurried to the room where the dream woman lay.

Here her hands were tied behind her and she was further tied in a sitting position in a chair.

The room was dimly lighted, and Alice could see the woman on the couch plainly.

She was white, and had once been very beautiful, no doubt.

But her face bore the unmistakable traces of the use of opium.

She appeared to be in a profound slumber.

Alice spoke several times to her, but could get no reply.

For some time she sat thus, expecting fully to receive a call from Gump High.

He did not come, however.

At last a younger Chinaman came hurrying into the room.

He leered at Alice and bent down and kissed her.

"You my girl now," he said. "Dlat's allee light. Me mally you."

Alice remained motionless and silent.

The wretch was evidently in a big hurry.

She felt that she had plenty of time to begin a quarrel with him.

He fumbled about on some shelves, found a tiny vial, and poured some of a colorless liquid into a spoon.

This he forced the sleeper on the bed to swallow.

Hurrying away, he soon returned with a hat and an old cloak.

"Gal wakee up?" he demanded in English.

"Not yet," replied Alice in Chinese.

"Where did you learn to speak Chinese?" demanded the Chink.

"In China."

"You lived there?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Canton."

"You talk good. What's your name?"

"Alice Montgomery."

"Aleece! Nice name. My name is Sing Yup. How you like to be Mrs. Sing Yup?"

"Oh, that might suit me all right, providing Mr. Sing Yup had money enough," Alice carelessly replied.

"I get lots of money. You see."

"Why don't you marry the other one?"

"Huh! She's no good. She hits hop."

"So do you."

"Not much."

"Every year you will hit it more and more, until finally it will kill you."

"No. I swear off. I— Hello! She gettee awake!"

This last was in English.

The woman on the couch had raised herself.

She sat upright and stared around.

"Give me a pipe," she said in Chinese.

"No," said Sing Yup. "You are going with me and this lady."

"Where's Gump High?"

"He's gone home."

"Where are you taking me?"

"To a place where you are more comfortable than you are here."

"Do I get a pipe if I go?"

"Right away."

"Then for heaven sake let's go, for I've got the yen-yen on me worst kind."

This remark referred to the horrible longing which opium fiends have for the deadly drug.

Sing Yup bundled the cloak about her, and gave her the hat to put on.

"Who is this man?" she asked, turning to Alice.

"No matter. You wait," said Sing Yup.

He drew his revolver.

"Do you want me to kill you?" he demanded, pointing the weapon at Alice.

"Certainly not," replied Alice coolly.

"Then let me tell you that unless you go quietly with me that is what I am going to do."

"Does my partner go, too?"

"No, he don't."

"Then leave me here."

"You do what I tell you, or I'll kill you, woman."

"Is this a woman?" mumbled the other. "She is made up well."

Alice, who was certain that she had come up with Mrs. Wiseman, determined to make no resistance.

"We will get along very well together, I daresay," she said, "but don't you keep pointing that revolver at me. If you do I shall jump on you; then we shall see who is the best man."

Sing Yup laughed, and pushing Alice before him, directed her which way to turn.

They went out by the window which Old King Brady and Charley Ching discovered.

On China Alley a closed cab was waiting for them.

It was driven by a white man.

But one glance at the fellow's face was sufficient to show Alice that any appeal in that quarter would be useless.

The revolver was still in evidence when they entered the cab, which was driven rapidly away.

The woman now grew restless.

"Are you taking me to Gump High's house?" she demanded.

"No," said Sing Yup.

"Does Gump High know that you are taking me away?"

"Yes; he ordered it."

"Am I not going back to the dream house?"

"You are going to another dream house."

"Who is this woman, disguised as a man?"

"Never you mind who she is."

Alice did not attempt to speak, for Sing Yup had the revolver on his knee.

At last they ran down to the end of a wharf, and the cab stopped.

The driver jumped off, and another Chinaman stepped up.

A tug lay at the end of the wharf.

Alice observed that there was no sign on the pilot-house, just as Harry did later.

They were hurried down the gang-plank, and Alice and the woman were locked in the little cabin. The tug stood out on the bay, but soon stopped. It was hours before it moved again, and during all that time Alice saw nothing more of Sing Yup. Soon the door was opened, and the other Chink came in with an opium lay-out.

"Do you want to smoke, too?" he asked Alice in Chinese. Alice shook her head, and the man withdrew, locking the door behind him.

"At last!" muttered the unfortunate. She immediately set to work to cook her pill. It was not until she had smoked the poisonous drug to a finish that she even looked at Alice.

Then, stretching out on the cushioned seat, she laid down the pipe.

"Are you sure you don't want to smoke?" she asked.

"I can cook you a pill if you do."

"I do not," replied Alice quietly, "and I wish you did not. Sooner or later that stuff will be your finish."

"Oh, you needn't read me any moral lecture," sneered the woman. "Who are you, anyhow?"

"I am a detective."

"Are you really a woman?"

"Certainly."

"What made you disguise as a Chinaman?"

"I think you can guess."

"You were sent to look for me."

"If you are Mrs. Jack Wiseman, yes."

The woman was silent for some time.

"If you want to go to sleep," said Alice, "do so. I won't bother you."

"Sleep nothing. It would take three pipes like that to put me to sleep the way I am now. What's your name?"

"Alice Montgomery."

"Has my disappearance made a big excitement?"

"All San Francisco talked about it as long as they ever do of anything."

"How long is it?"

"A little over a week."

"Is that all? I thought it was longer; but then I have lost all run of time. Have you seen my—Jack Wiseman, I mean?"

"No."

"How is he?"

"Almost insane over your loss."

The woman shed a few maudlin tears.

"Tell me all about it," she said. "I want to know how you come to be here—everything."

Alice told her as much as she chose.

"You have been wasting your time," the woman then said. "I shall never go back."

"Better think twice about that."

"No; my mind is made up. I'm sorry for you, though. It seems a shame that you should be dragged in among these horrible Chinese on my account."

"It is all in the line of my business, Mrs. Wiseman. I am not afraid."

"Oh, but you would be if you knew all I know. It is a fearful life."

"You speak as if you did not expect me to escape. I think the reverse of that."

"How can you escape? I tell you again that you don't know the Chinese."

"While we are alone tell me what brought you among them," said Alice, in her most persuasive tone.

"No."

"It will be better for you to do it. I may escape. Of course, I cannot force you to go with me if the opportunity comes, and I shall not try to, but you surely will want to send some message to your husband."

"He is not my husband. I was married to a Chinaman long before I ever saw him—when I was a mere girl, in fact."

"The dead man in the box?"

"Yes, but I want you to understand that I firmly believed him to be dead when I married Jack Wiseman."

As is generally known, people who use opium extensively are always prone to talk when in the first stages of their debauch.

Alice saw that Mrs. Wiseman was just entering the talky stage. She felt certain that if she let the unfortunate woman alone everything would come out. And so, sure enough, it did.

"I was born in China," continued Mrs. Wiseman. "My father was clerk in a big tea-house in Shanghai. He got so interested in the Chinese that he lived among them and married a half-breed Chinese woman. So you see I am part Chinese, although as I don't resemble my mother the least bit nobody would ever guess it."

"I was born in China, too," replied Alice. And to lead the woman on she ran over some of the incidents of her own early life. It worked. Mrs. Wiseman went right on talking.

"My father belonged to the peculiar religious sect of Chinese called the Brotherhood of Sleep," she continued. "There people believe in dreams, and they have people who are professional dreamers. I am one of that kind. My father made me do that sort of thing when I was a child."

"I know," replied Alice. "They have drugs which we know little about, which cause people to talk while dreaming."

"Yes, but opium is the bottom of it all. I became a regular fiend. They married me to a rich priest of the dream house. Wee Wow was his name. He deserted me, and everybody said he was dead. Then I fell in with an Englishman, an adventurer—Captain Bagster. I married him, and he reformed me as much as any opium fiend can be reformed. I'd go months without the stuff. We traveled everywhere. At last Captain Babster died, and I came to San Francisco. The captain was so good to me, Miss Montgomery! When I felt the fit coming on he would let me smoke, and would watch over me and get

me out of it as soon as possible. Here I met Jack Wiseman. I was dreadfully hard up, and as his people were rich I married him. He was desperately in love with me, and I really do care a lot for him; but I never dared to tell him my past."

"I can understand your position, you poor thing," said Alice. "When you felt the fits coming on you did not know how to control yourself."

"It is so. I suffered horribly; but I did control myself. I never touched the stuff after I married Jack until this time. He does not know now that I ever hit the pipe."

"He is past knowing much of anything, poor man."

"It is too bad. I am very sorry for him. It has been an awful experience for us both."

"You have told me so much now that you may as well tell me all."

"Well, I think I will. It can do no harm, anyway. The Wisemans may as well know the truth."

"It will be a great deal better that they should. This mystery weighs very heavily on them."

"Well, all right. Now, listen, Miss Montgomery, and I will tell you all I know about the coming of the corpse of my Chinese husband to our house."

"Good!" thought Alice. "I get there at last. If I ever do escape, and I surely will, I shall carry with me the explanation to the mystery of the ruined joss-house."

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRADYS GET GUMP HIGH ON THEIR SIDE, AND ALICE JOLLIES SING YUP.

Old King Brady had even less trouble with Gump High than he expected. He found the old fellow in a cell, looking the picture of woe. Charley Ching had tried every means to make him talk, and had given it up and gone away. When he saw the old detective let in by the keeper Gump High made a gesture of despair.

"Lookee here, you go way. Leave me alone. No talkee, no talkee!" he cried.

Old King Brady told the keeper to lock the door and go away. He stood before Gump High with folded arms.

"Listen to me," he said. "I am going to tell you some things that you don't know."

"Me old man. Me know muchee tings you nebber know."

"Very likely, but you don't know that Sing Yup duped you."

"No!"

"Yes. That he has gone off in a tug to Vallejo with Mrs. Wiseman and the young woman detective."

"Oh! Oh!"

"That he means to get this hidden treasure all for himself, and give you none of it. That's what's the matter with Sing Yup!"

Gump High's face was a study. Such another mingled expression of rage and hate Old King Brady had never seen.

"And now, Gump High, don't you be a fool," he con-

tinued. "You want to down Sing Yup. You want to send him to San Quentin, you want to get free yourself, for you sent that corpse to Senator Wiseman's, and you have been holding that woman a prisoner. You are going to San Quentin for twenty years just as sure as you are sitting on that bench, unless I help you to get free."

Gump High twisted and squirmed.

"You helpee me, I helpee you," he said at last. "But me no talkee."

"It's a bargain. I want to get those women away from Sing Yup. Will you help me to do that by going with me to the place where Sing Yup has carried them?"

"If you no askee me to tellee 'bout dlead man in box, yes."

"That goes."

"Allee light. Den I go with you. What become of young man detlective?"

"He's my partner, and he is all right. You know that."

"I mean he go too with us?"

"Yes."

"Allee light. Sing Yup he putee up big fight. Dere will be more mebbe. We need tree, four, five men."

"I'll attend to that. "Where have they gone?"

"Up by Vallejo, China Bay."

"What is this treasure you are all after?"

"Me mlust tellee dlat?"

"Sure."

"Dlat money belong to pliest by joss-house. He burn up night of fire. Day before fire gettee by Jackson street he takee money up to China Cove and hide it. Den he come back and burn up—see?"

"He better have stopped at China Cove."

"Yair."

"What was his name?"

"Wing Ling."

"Were you a priest in the Jackson street joss-house?"

"Yair. Nodder kind."

"Enough," said Old King Brady. "You stick to your bargain, Gump High, and I'll get you out of this scrape. We will go right now."

"Allee light; but lunderstand, me no talkee 'bout dead man in box."

"That is understood," replied Old King Brady. He whistled, and the turnkey came and let him out of the cell. Old King Brady had no trouble in arranging for Gump High's release, for he had entered no formal complaint against the old priest. While he was settling the matter Harry telephoned that he had secured a tug, and that it would be found ready at the foot of Clay street any time.

Just then Charley Ching came in, much to Old King Brady's relief. The old detective explained the situation, and Charley was ready to go with him and see the case through. So a cab was called, and Gump High was bundled into it. They made a quick run to the Clay street wharf. Here they found Harry, and all went aboard the tug Titan, Captain Cornwall. Old King Brady found the

captain quite enthusiastic over his job. Two beautiful young women in the clutches of a dirty Chink. That was enough for the captain. He declared that he would stand by the Bradys through thick and thin. They started at once. The captain declared that he knew China Bay. This was a deep cove some five miles below Vallejo, where a colony of Chinese fishermen and market gardeners had settled. Thus it will be seen that while Alice was talking with Mrs. Wiseman in the cabin of the tug, the Bradys kept busy. Not an instant had been lost in doing the work by means of which they hoped to bring about her release.

* * * * *

"You want to know why the dead body of my Chinese husband was sent to me, and I am now going to tell you," began Mrs. Wiseman.

"First let me inform you that I was what would be called in English a dream woman. I was supposed to devote my life to the business of dreaming for the Brotherhood of Sleep. But after my husband left me and I met Captain Bagster I abandoned my business, and saw nothing more of the Chinese. They would have killed me if they could have caught me. Gump High was the priest of that temple. He has known me from my childhood. Circumstances sent the old priest to California. He was smuggled in by way of Mexico three years ago. He saw me on the street, and put Chinese detectives on my track. My Chinese husband turned up here a few weeks ago. He was a penniless wreck from drink and opium, and yet he did not show it in his face, strange to say. He sought Gump High, and died in one of the secret chambers under the joss-house. Gump High and the others were wild to get me back, for they consider me the best of dreamers. There was money taken from the joss-house at the time of the fire, and secretly buried. They wanted to get it. They wanted me to reveal its hiding place in my dreams."

"And did you do this?" demanded Alice.

"I don't know whether I did or not," was the reply. "They would not tell me, and I can remember nothing of what I dream. So in order to get me, Miss Montgomery, they sent the dead body of my husband to my house, thinking that it would bring about a quarrel between myself and the Wisemans. Upon the breast they laid a paper written in Chinese which stated that if I would come to Gump High's house I would be kindly received and everything forgiven, but if I refused I would surely be killed. I knew their power. Moreover, I had one of my opium longings upon me, and the shock of seeing my dead Chinese husband in the box was so great that in the first moment of excitement I let out who he was. Of course, I could not remain with Jack Wiseman after that. I walked right out of the house without even waiting to get my hat. I went to Gump High's. He took me to the secret rooms beneath the joss-house. Of course I hit the pipe. That settled it. I have been there ever since so far as I know, but I cannot remember much of what has happened to me after I took my first smoke. And that, Miss Mont-

gomery, is all of my sad story. I am a lost woman now, and one without hope."

"Don't say so," replied Alice. "The Bradys will surely follow us up and rescue me. If you are sensible you will go with me and return to the Wisemans, and so save the life and reason of a man who certainly loves you devotedly, and who, I am sure, will not question you, although I should advise a frank confession and another wedding, with Europe for some years afterward. Think it over, my dear, and decide to try it. If it does not all come out as I say you can run away again and go back to your Chinese."

Alice got her crying again, for she said a great deal more. It seemed almost a hopeless case. Still Alice did not despair of saving the unfortunate creature from herself in the end. At last there was some confusion outside, and the tug started. Mrs. Wiseman was asleep by this time, and Alice, worn out by all she had been through with, dropped off, too. When she awoke the tug was far up the bay. Mrs. Wiseman was still sleeping. Alice peered out of the window at the green, bare hills, and wondered where they were bound.

But right here her thoughts were interrupted by the opening of the door. It was Sing Yup who came in. Behind the Chink was a colored man who carried a tray covered with dishes.

"I am going to have breakfast," said Sing Yup, "and I thought I might as well eat with you ladies. No, don't wake her. Let it be just you and me alone, since she is asleep."

Alice determined to humor him. Her extensive experience as a detective has shown her that this is always the best way in such cases. So she smiled upon her captor, and said that she would be very glad to eat breakfast with him. The colored man put down the tray, and was dismissed. Sing Yup proceeded to spread the table, and soon Alice and he were breakfasting *tete-a-tete*. The sight would have driven Harry wild, especially if he had been able to understand the compliments which were paid to Alice in Chinese. It is not necessary to repeat all that passed. After the meal was over Sing Yup lit a cigarette and leaning back said:

"Now, Alice, let us talk business. I'm going to tell you something."

He went ahead and told the story of the dead priest of the Jackson street joss-house, and his buried treasure.

This need not be repeated. Enough to add that Sing Yup went on to say that Gump High had obtained through Mrs. Wiseman's dreams a knowledge of the location of the buried treasure which he declared amounted to more than a hundred thousand dollars. He openly admitted that he had been Gump High's only confidant in the business, and that he proposed to betray him. If he succeeded in getting the money, and he assured Alice that there was no doubt of his success, his munificent offer was that he would marry Alice at once, and that they would make tracks for New York.

"Who does the money really belong to?" asked Alice.

Sing Yup explained that the money was the property of the Chinese Six Companies, who controlled and owned the Jackson street joss-house, and that the dead priest was a miser, and had stolen it little by little out of the fees paid into the joss-house. Just at this stage of the game the colored man appeared with word that the captain wanted to see Sing Yup. Shortly after the man had gone Mrs. Wiseman awoke. Alice persuaded her to drink a cup of coffee and eat a bit of bread. After a while the tug stopped. Alice looked out of the window—the door was still locked against her—and saw that they had run into a land-locked cove. Sing Yup came in then.

"We have got there," he said, "and now we are going ashore."

They went in a rowboat pulled by the China boy whom the Bradys had shadowed. Mrs. Wiseman was all but unconscious, but she was able to walk. The spot was a retired one. Over on the other side of the cove a few small houses could be seen, which Sing Yup informed Alice were occupied by Chinese. There were no houses on their side of the cove. They landed and the boy drew the boat up on the shelving beach. Sing Yup led off between two low hills. He walked so fast that Mrs. Wiseman was almost exhausted. At last they came into a hollow where there was a small house.

Sing Yup knocked loudly on the door. At the same time he and the China boy drew revolvers. After a little an aged Chink with a hideously scarred face opened the door. The revolvers were thrust into his face, and the Chinese words spoken were to the effect that he was to give them such help as they wanted, or he would be shot. The old fellow, who was entirely alone in the hut, seemed terribly frightened. He begged for his life, and promised to be good. Sing Yup bombarded him with questions. Had the old priest of the joss-house been there on the first day of the big fire? The Chink admitted it. Had he buried a box? The Chink knew nothing of that. Sing Yup got him on his knees with the revolvers at his forehead. Then he remembered that the old priest had a bag with him, and that he borrowed a spade and went back among the hills. Beyond this he professed absolute ignorance, and at last Sing Yup gave it up. But he also borrowed a spade, and the old Chink having pointed out the direction taken by the priest, they started back among the hills.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

The Bradys made as quick a run up the bay as steam and tide would permit. During the sail Old King Brady did not bother Gump High. The old priest of the dream house huddled up in one corner of the cabin in a state of deep dejection. Perhaps he slept; certainly he never spoke. When morning came Old King Brady had him served with a good breakfast, of which he ate but little. Afterwards he shuffled out on the deck.

"Mlister Blady," he said, me tellee you slometing."

"Out with it," replied the old detective.

"You wantee take dlat woman back to her home?"

"I certainly do."

"What you do with me blimeby?"

"Land you in San Francisco and let you go where you want to."

"You give me money?"

"What should I do that for?"

"You gettee allee dlat bellied money. You good man. You gib it back to Chinee Slix Companies—yes?"

"Does it belong to them?"

"Yair. Me belly poor man. So me have no money, what me do? Highbinders will be sure hired to killlee me. Me want to go to New York. You pay my way?"

"Then I'll promise to pay your way if everything comes out right."

"Alle light. Dlen I tell you true. Claptain he know noting. He go past China Cove."

"Hello, you old rascal! And you stop to bargain about it? Come with me."

They looked up the captain who listened to Gump High and turned back. Sure enough, they had passed China Cove by about four miles. It was so completely landlocked that the captain had missed it. As they turned in they saw a tug with a rooster on the pilot-house hiding inside the headland.

They hurried to the pilot-house.

"There's your tug, captain," said the old detective.

"Yes. It's the Game Cock. Captain Jack Rich, as big a scoundrel as ever went unhung. There he is now!"

There was much excitement on board the Game Cock. And the Bradys soon found that they might as well attempt to catch the bird for which it was named as this tug. Steam was up, and Captain Rich immediately started.

"What shall I do?" demanded Captain Cornwall. "I don't believe the ladies are on that tug. See, the cabin door is open, and there is no one inside. They have all gone ashore."

"I agree with you," replied Old King Brady, turning his glass on the tug. "We can pick Captain Rich up in San Francisco later. Let him go."

The Bradys and their Chinese companions landed on the beach at the point where they saw the boat. They hurried on, and soon came to the hut. The old Chink was sitting on a bench outside the door.

"Dlat he!" said Gump High. "Dlat de man she see in her dleam."

"It is, eh," said Old King Brady. "Charlie, question him."

"Don't go too close to him," said Charlie. "He's a leper, all right."

And this Old King Brady had already noticed. But as it has been decided by advanced medical science that leprosy is not contagious except by personal contact, he was not in the least afraid. The secret of the old Chink's

dwelling in solitude was now explained. Charley questioned him. He answered readily. A Chinaman, a boy, and two women had been there. They had borrowed his spade and had gone back among the hills about an hour before. Gump High began questioning then. Charley explained that he asked if Wing Ling had been there the first day of the fire, and the leper admitted that he had. He pointed out the way, and they hurried on. At last they came into the hollow.

"I see a woman lying on the ground!" cried Harry. "Merciful heaven! Can it be Alice, dead?"

"Dlat Mrs. Wiseman," said Gump High. They pushed on. In a moment they came to a hole which had been recently dug. A spade lay beside it, also a japanned cash-box which was empty. Stretched upon the ground near the hole was Mrs. Wiseman in a deep sleep.

"Him gettee money!" piped Gump High. "We too late. Allee gone!"

And indeed it looked like it just then.

With trembling hand he fumbled beneath his blouse, and produced a little bottle. From this he forced some drops of a colorless liquid between the woman's lips.

"Wait!" he mumbled. "Wait! Lots of patience, Mlister Blady. Wait!"

It was ten minutes before there was anything doing. Then the drug appeared to take hold. Mrs. Wiseman began to stir. Gump High caught her hand. Rapidly he put questions to her in Chinese. The answers came in a voice so low that the Bradys could scarcely hear it. Even Charley Ching could make out but little of what was said. At last Gump High, who had been kneeling beside the woman, got on his feet.

"She say dley gettee money!" he exclaimed. "She say dley go to Vallejo, dlat way, round de head of de bay."

"We must follow, Harry," said Old King Brady. "Charley, you run back to the tug and get help to carry this woman aboard. Gump High, if you don't stay quietly here and watch her you are a fool."

They pushed on for about a mile, when they struck in upon a road. A light wagon driven by a man was coming toward them.

"Hold on," said Old King Brady. "We will inquire of this man."

The driver proved to be a sewing-machine peddler, and he had a machine in the back of his wagon. Old King Brady held up his hand.

"We are detectives," he said, "and strangers here. Which way lies Vallejo, please?"

"I am going to Vallejo," replied the peddler.

"The case is this," said Old King Brady. "Our partner, a lady, has been carried off by a Chinaman. He may have drugged her. We have every reason to believe that he is heading for Vallejo. If you can give us a lift I'll pay you well."

"You bet I will," replied the man. "Jump right in, and in such a case don't you talk to me of the pay."

The Bradys scrambled into the wagon and the sewing-

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