

# SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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No. 448.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 23, 1907.

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## THE BRADYS AND THE FAN TAN PLAYERS; OR, IN THE SECRET DENS OF CHINATOWN. *By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.*



The fantan player seized Harry by the pigtail and gave it a yank. At the same instant another Chink caught Alice in his arms. Immediately the joint was in an uproar. Then Old King Brady burst in the door.



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### CHAPTER I.

#### CALLED IN A CHINESE CASE.

"Why, look here, Governor; Pye Joe is dead!"

The speaker was a stylish young chap in his twenties, who sat at the breakfast table looking over the morning paper.

The person addressed was an elderly man who wore a long, blue coat with brass buttons and an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar.

If he had been on the street and we could add to this a large white felt hat with an unusually broad brim, Old King Brady, the world-famous detective, would be recognized at a glance.

Of course, his companion was his pupil and partner, Young King Brady, and the scene of their conversation was the old house on Washington Square, where the Bradys have kept bachelors' hall for several years.

But all this is introductory and has little to do with the death of Pye Joe.

The real question is, who was Pye Joe and how came he to be dead?

This was the question which Old King Brady flung across the table.

"Why, don't you remember that Chinese Secret Service man who came on from San Francisco a year ago?" his partner replied.

"Oh—oh—yes! What made him die, Harry?" the old detective asked abstractedly.

"Because he hadn't breath enough to live, I suppose."

"But let me read the account through," added Harry, "and you finish your letter. I didn't mean to bother you at all."

The fact was Old King Brady was reading a letter which had just been handed in by Julius, his colored man of all work, and when thus engaged he does not like to be disturbed.

The letter proved to be of some importance.

The old detective, having finished reading, proceeded to make its contents known to his partner.

Thus the untimely demise of the Chinese Secret Service man was forgotten and it was not until the next day that the subject came up again.

This happened at the office of the Brady Detective Bureau, on Union Square.

Old King Brady and Harry, who had been up town on business, were met by Miss Alice Montgomery upon their return with more about Pye Joe.

This accomplished young lady is the female partner of the Brady Detective Bureau.

And so skillful a sleuth has she proved that her name

has become almost as widely known as that of the Bradys themselves.

"The chief called up from Washington," said Alice, as the detectives entered the office. "He wants you to investigate the death of a Chinese Secret Service man. I couldn't quite catch the name, and before I had time to ask him to repeat it he rang off."

"And that's the way people blunder in their haste," remarked Old King Brady, adding:

"I presume, Harry, that it's your Pye Joe?"

"Not my Pye Joe, but your Pye Joe," replied Harry. "It was you who introduced me to him, if you will be good enough to remember."

"It is immaterial. So we are to investigate his death, it seems."

"That is what the chief said," replied Alice.

"Did he intimate that the man may have been murdered?"

"Yes, he suggested foul play. He said that he was in New York looking into some opium smuggling cases and that the next the Bureau knew his death was reported; that is about all."

"Well, you speak Chinese. Get down to Chinatown and look it up. I am too busy to attend to it," said Old King Brady as he passed into his own office.

Now, strange as it may seem, this was a fact.

Old King Brady's female partner not only speaks but reads the complicated language which in America passes as Chinese, but which actually is the Cantonese dialect of that ancient tongue.

This is a rare accomplishment for a white man and rarer still for a woman.

But as it happens Alice, who is the daughter of a missionary, was born in China and was taught to speak the language in infancy.

Hence it was but natural that Old King Brady should select her to look up the matter of the death of Pye Joe.

"When are you going?" demanded Harry.

"Oh, I don't know just when," was the reply. "You have your hands full to-day, so don't come trailing after me."

"You will disguise as a man, of course?"

"I have not determined."

"I wish you would, Alice. I don't like to have you go into Chinatown without doing so."

"Suppose I disguise as a Salvation Army girl?"

"That might do."

"I'll think about it. Now, don't go to bothering your head about me, Harry."

And Alice passed into her own office.

Like most persons of an independent nature she disliked to have her freedom interfered with.

That Young King Brady is rather given to this must be admitted.

The fact is Harry was deeply in love with his fair partner, and even has an eye out for her welfare.

But before either of them could give the matter much thought the door connecting the three private rooms of the partners in the Brady Detective Bureau with the public office outside opened and a clerk announced a visitor.

"There is a Chinaman here wanting to see one of the firm," he said.

"Show him in to me," Harry called.

Whoever saw a really good-looking Chinaman? That is, good-looking to our Western eyes, we mean?

Such specimens of the Celestial race are scarce, but the young Chink who came into Harry's office now was certainly one of them.

He was a person of scarcely twenty years, tall and perfectly formed, and with a particularly frank and intelligent face.

His dress was strictly correct in the American style.

His collar and tie were the very latest; the cut of his coat the correct thing; patent leather shoes and trousers with the seam neatly pressed made all complete; nor must we forget his Panama hat—the real goods; a hat which must have cost a large sum.

"Is this Mr. Brady?" he asked in perfect English, removing his hat as he entered the office.

"I am one of the Bradys," replied Harry. "Did you wish to see me?"

"I wished to consult you professionally," replied the Chinaman, handing out a neatly engraved card.

It bore the name:

"Mr. Sing Bird,  
"Leland Sanford University."

Here was a California Chinese student, it seemed.

"Be seated," said Young King Brady. "What can I do for you?"

The young man sat down by the desk.

"I am just in from Washington," he said. "I wish to consult you about my cousin. He is like you, a United States Secret Service man. His name is Pye Joe."

"He is dead."

"So they say. I doubt it."

"Ah! Explain."

"It is like this: I am in the university, as you see by my card. My cousin is to me more than a brother. He has been two years in government employ. We came East together, he to carry out some orders for the Secret Service people, the nature of which he was not at liberty to tell me. I left him in New York while I went on to Washington to see the Chinese Minister on business, and while there I heard of his death. I wired a person I know in Chinatown, but could get no satisfaction. I could not leave at the moment and soon there came an anonymous despatch, which I will show you."

Sing Bird produced a leather wallet and took out the despatch, which read as follows:

"New York, Sept. 19.

"Sing Bird, Ebbet House, Washington, D. C.:

"Beware of fraud. I think Pye Joe is not dead. Look it up.  
"Quing Wing."

"I thought you said the despatch was anonymous," said Young King Brady.

"So it is. Those words in the Chinese dialect, which is spoken in the part of China from which I came, mean simply 'your good friend.'"

"Oh! You were born in China?"

"Yes."

"You speak very good English considering."

"I was educated in a Catholic mission as a child. I am in college in California."

"I see. And what have you done about this?"

"I went to the Secret Service Bureau at Washington. They told me to come to you and said that they would direct you to look the matter up."

"They have done so. We shall take it in hand. Can you give me any points?"

"Unfortunately not."

"You don't know where your cousin was staying?"

"No; I have very little knowledge about Chinatown in New York."

"Do you know the people he was dealing with?"

"No; I know nothing about it."

"You speak Chinese as well as you do English?"

"Yes; just as well."

"Wait a minute."

Harry left the room and went into Alice's office.

But Alice was not there.

Harry passed out into the hall and knocked on a door on the opposite side, which led into the costume room.

"Are you here, Alice?" he called.

"Yes," came the reply. "I will be out in a minute."

"She is going to do the Chinese act," thought Young King Brady.

And sure enough, when Alice came into the office a few minutes later she was most skillfully disguised as a Chinese.

So perfect, indeed, was her make-up that Sing Bird took her for granted.

He looked at Harry questioningly.

"Talk to this gentleman," said Young King Brady. "He is here about the matter of Pye Joe."

Alice and the student began to chatter in Chinese.

Harry sat back in his chair and watched the accomplished girl admiringly.

"It is all right," said Alice at last. "I will go with this gentleman now."

"Take good care of her," said Harry.

"Her?"

Sing Bird spoke questioningly. "I am not a woman," he said in an offended tone.

"No, but she is."

"Impossible!"

"It is a fact," said Alice in English; "but he need not have told you."

"Wonderful!" said Sing Bird. "I never doubted that you were Chinese."

"Come," said Alice, "let us go on to Chinatown."

And thus is the Brady Detective Bureau finely equipped for work in the Chinese cases which come their way.

There is no denying that Alice Montgomery has proved a great addition to the firm.

Once they were out of the office Sing Bird plied the girl with questions about herself.

None so curious as a Chinaman.

Get next to one so that he will really talk freely and he will ask you the most personal questions.

Alice knew all this and was perfectly well able to handle the fellow.

Sing Bird appeared to have plenty of money, and when they got out on Union Square he insisted upon calling a cab.

And thus the curious and observing were treated to the unusual sight of two stylishly dressed Chinamen riding down town in a hansom cab.

And such was the beginning of the work of the Bradys in the mystery of Pye Joe.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MYSTERY OF PYE JOE.

Chinatown in New York, famous, or rather notorious, as it has become of late years, actually covers a comparatively small space.

One long block on Mott street, another on Pell and a short block on crooked Doyers street is about all there is to Chinatown proper, but there is an overflow on the Bowery and on Park street, with a sprinkling of Celestials on Chatham Square.

Alice and Sing Bird dismissed their cab at the Square and turned into Doyers street.

Passing the Chinese theatre they came to a brick wall at the corner of Pell street, which was covered with red slips of paper bearing written Chinese characters.

This is Chinatown's famous bulletin board—the Chinese newspaper, some call it.

Here daily intelligence of the doings in Chinkville can be had by any one who is able to read the fly-tracks on the brick wall.

As both Alice and Sing Bird could do this, they stopped to have a look.

And here sure enough was news of the death of Pye Joe.

The account stated that the man had been taken suddenly ill in the famous Port Arthur restaurant on Pell street while eating supper three days before.

He was removed to a Chinese lodging house on Mott street, where a white doctor was summoned, who pronounced the case appendicitis.

Pye Joe refused to go to a hospital or to be operated on and died toward morning in great agony.

This was one announcement.

Another stated that the funeral of Pye Joe would take place that afternoon at three o'clock.

"You can read all that?" demanded Sing Bird.

"Yes," said Alice.

"Suppose we go to the house?"

"Very well; I am ready."

"Shall we talk in English? I think it would be best."

"Talk in any language you like."

"What? Do you speak others than English and Chinese?"

"Several others—French, German, Italian and Spanish, for instance."

"You are a very learned woman. I would like to know you better."

"I have no time. I am entirely taken up with business."

"Ah, wonderful! I never met such a woman as you. Really, you deserve a good husband."

"Confine your talk to the case, please, Mr. Bird."

"Ah! I offend?"

"You do when you talk about my private affairs."

"I will try not to offend you again. Shall we go to the house?"

"Yes."

"Which is Mott street?"

"What? Don't you even know Mott street?"

"No; I was only here a few moments and it was at night."

"This way, please."

They walked along Pell street.

The great sign of the Port Arthur restaurant attracted the attention of Sing Bird.

"Shall we not go in there and inquire?" he asked.

"No," replied Alice. "It would be no use whatever."

"And why?"

"Because you would simply get just what we got from the bulletin board."

"Ah! Possibly that is so."

"We will go directly to the house."

They walked to the end of Pell street and came back on Mott.

The house in question proved to be one of those old-fashioned brick dwellings, of which the Chinese have made tenements.

There was a fish store in the basement and a Chinese bank on the parlor floor.

Alice, followed by Sing Bird, went directly up stairs.

At the head of the stairs they found a Chink stationed.

He was leaning against the wall with his hands thrust in the sleeves of his blouse.

"We want to see the body of the man who has gone to his ancestors," said Alice in Chinese.

"Next floor," said the Chinaman.

They went up another flight.

Here a second guard was stationed.

Alice again put the question.

"Who are you?" the Chinaman asked, in his own tongue, of course.

"Pye Joe was my cousin," replied Sing Bird.

"You cannot see the body," was the surly reply.

"But why?"

"The undertaker has shut him up."

"So soon?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"It is warm weather. It had to be."

"We can go in, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Which room?"

The guard pointed to a door.

Alice opened it and they passed in.

There were eight Chinamen standing around.

Two others sat on stools and one was smoking a pipe with a long bamboo stem.

Over in a corner near the window was a cheap coffin with the lid screwed down.

Both Alice and Sing Bird began to question the men.

They could get little satisfaction.

The men claimed to be members of a certain Chinese secret society to which they said the deceased had belonged.

Their account of his death was the same as that given in the bulletin.

They informed the visitors that the society had undertaken to bury Pye Joe and that the funeral was to start at three o'clock.

Sing Bird began to get excited and insisted that the coffin should be opened.

This one of the Chinamen, who appeared to be the leader of the bunch, absolutely refused to allow.

Seeing that the excitement of her companion was increasing, Alice pulled him out of the place.

"This won't do," she whispered in English once they were in the passage. "We must go."

Sing Bird demurred.

"You must come with me," said Alice. "Unless you do, I wash my hands of the whole business. You are spoiling all."

They went down to the street.

Sing Bird had now calmed down a bit.

"What do you think?" he demanded.

"We must see Old King Brady," said Alice. "There is something wrong, I am sure. He is the man to handle a case like this."

"Shall we not see the undertaker?"

"I am willing to do that, but I have no idea that it will do any good."

They had inquired the name of the undertaker.

It was Domingo Santelli, an Italian on Elizabeth street, near Hester.

Thither they went and found the man in his shop.

He looked them over with ill-concealed contempt.

"We are cousins of Pye Joe, who died on Mott street," said Alice. "We have just come from Boston, where we heard of his death. We want to see the remains."

"No can," replied Santelli, shrugging his shoulders.

"No can."

"But why?"

"Board of Health no let."

Alice tried bribery and talked about ten dollars.

Santelli's shoulders went up even higher.

He positively refused to entertain the request.

There was then nothing for Alice and Sing Bird to do but to pull out.

"You see, I am right," the former said.

"Yes, you were right."

"We must see Mr. Brady. But tell me about this secret society business. I could not understand what the

name meant as that fellow gave it to us down there on Mott street."

"He said the Brotherhood of the Five Palms."

"But did he mean five trees—palm trees?"

"No, no! Palms of the hand."

"Oh, I see. And did your cousin belong to that society?"

"I don't know whether he did or not."

"You have heard of such a society?"

"Never; but I have been more among English speaking people than among Chinese all my life."

"We must put this up to Mr. Brady, and if the funeral is to be at three o'clock there is no time to lose."

They had dismissed their cab, so, passing over to the Canal street station of the subway, they went up to Union Square.

Harry was out, but fortunately Old King Brady was in. He listened to Alice's story with close attention.

"I should say that there was not a doubt that something was wrong," he said emphatically.

"And what ought we to do?" demanded Sing Bird.

"You and Miss Montgomery must get a carriage and attend that funeral. I will attend to the rest."

Sing Bird pressed for further information, but Old King Brady cut him short.

"It is no use to talk to him," said Alice in Chinese. "He always likes to do everything in his own way. You can trust him to do everything for the best."

Thus Sing Bird was obliged to rest satisfied.

At a little after two he and Alice turned up at Mott street in a carriage.

They were the first on the ground.

For awhile they simply sat in the carriage and waited.

They had come early in case the funeral should be pulled off ahead of time.

Soon came a carriage which drew up at the door, they having taken their place on the other side of the street.

Into this carriage Chinamen put roast pig with boxes and baskets containing other articles of food to put on the grave.

This is an important feature at every Chinese funeral. Few white people understand its object.

The idea is that the spirit of the dead man may not be able to at once get away from the body.

This being the case, the spirit feels hunger and thirst, which he can satisfy with the spiritual emanations of the food and drink placed upon the grave.

This custom is as old as time itself, and is practiced by other nations than the Chinese.

Many North American Indian tribes did the same thing before their customs were broken up by the whites.

At last the hearse came and a few carriages gathered. Alice could not learn from Sing Bird that Pye Joe had many friends in New York's Chinatown.

The student thought that nearly all of those who were attending his funeral must belong to the Society of the Five Palms.

They now got out and went up stairs.

There was no ceremony held in the room.

The Chinks just stood around and talked.

At last Undertaker Santelli and his assistants picked

up the coffin and carried it down stairs, putting it in the hearse.

All hands followed and got into the carriages.

The Chink who had done the talking on the occasion of their previous call at the house mounted the hearse, and when the start was made he began scattering the prayer slips, which he threw right and left.

These are simply bits of paper with Chinese characters written upon them.

They indicate certain prayers addressed to the spirits of the ancestors of the deceased, requesting them to look out for the spirit when it enters the unseen world.

Alice had directed her driver to fall in last in the procession and he did so.

They went up the Bowery and crossed the river by the Williamsburg Bridge.

Then the long ride to the Cemetery of the Evergreens began.

Here is located the Chinese burial plot.

All Chinamen dying in or around New York are interred here.

The place reached, they found quite a little crowd gathered.

Among those present Alice spied the Bradys and a policeman stood with them.

"There they are," said Sing Bird, catching sight of them. "I wonder what they mean to do."

"To open the coffin, probably," replied Alice. "I have no doubt that is it."

Old King Brady waited until the coffin had been removed from the hearse, and then he and Harry, with the policeman, who had simply been brought along to prevent discussion, moved on to the undertaker.

"You will have to open that coffin," Old King Brady said to Santelli.

"But no can! Board of Health no let me open!" the undertaker said.

"You must open that coffin! Do you hear?"

"Old King Brady displayed his shield.

The instant he did this the Chinks began to fade away.

"That man should be held," said Alice, pointing to the one who had thrown the prayer slips from the hearse.

Harry jumped in and promptly collared the fellow, turning him over to the policeman.

Santelli grew fearfully excited and made loud protests.

"Open it or I'll open it for you!" said Old King Brady in a tone of stern command.

The undertaker, forced to yield, removed the lid of the coffin.

"Why! Why! Why! Whata dis?" he shouted and jumped back.

The coffin contained no corpse.

It was simply filled with bricks.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CASE TAKES A NEW TURN.

"You two are under arrest," said Old King Brady.

"Me notta know noting!" protested Santelli.

The Chinaman, however, never said a word.

"You were right," whispered Sing Bird to Alice. "But what have they done with Pye Joe?"

"That is for the Bradys to find out," replied Alice; "and they will do it, too."

Now that the case had taken this peculiar turn, Alice regarded herself as out of it.

In dealing with the Chinese one can never tell what to believe and what to reject, for the Celestials ever move on erratic lines.

Alice therefore stood aside watching Sing Bird.

But she was not able to read anything in the man's face but distressed perplexity.

He stuck close to the Bradys, who were questioning the undertaker, but he did not attempt to "butt in."

Little Santelli jumped about as though he was dancing barefooted on live coals.

He protested that he had himself put the corpse in the coffin; that he had the doctor's certificate and all official papers correct.

The Chinaman refused to open his mouth further than to keep saying:

"Me know nloting! Me know nloting."

It was confusion worse confounded.

In the midst of it all the superintendent of the cemetery came dashing up in a runabout, having been telephoned for by one of the grave diggers from a nearby tool house.

"What's all this?" he demanded.

Old King Brady introduced himself and explained.

"Have you the papers in this interment?" he asked.

The superintendent had brought them with him.

Old King Brady looked them over.

The death certificate had been signed by an Italian doctor on Elizabeth street, near the undertaker's.

The cause of death was put down as consumption following an excessive use of opium.

Old King Brady examined the handwriting and signatures through a glass.

He then drew Harry aside and having whispered something to him Young King Brady also examined them.

Alice joined them then.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It is forgery, if I know anything," replied the old detective.

The big bell of the cemetery now began to toll.

"Another dead one," said Harry.

"Somebody dies every minute," replied Old King Brady. "Where is the superintendent?"

"He went over to that little house," said Alice.

"Ha! To telephone about this funeral, probably; we will wait."

Meanwhile the policeman stood guarding the two prisoners.

"What do you think of all this, Sing Bird?" demanded the old detective suddenly.

"I don't know," replied the Chinese student. "It is all very strange."

"Isn't it possible that Pye Joe himself put up this job?"

"Perhaps. He is a Secret Service detective. Detectives do strange things."

"That's what they do. You know of no reason why Pye Joe should do such a thing, however?"

"No, Mr. Brady. If he did it I am sure he would have let me know."

Just then the superintendent came hurrying up.

"Another Chinese funeral is coming," he said. "The death certificate is signed by the same man as in this case, and the undertaker is this man Santelli."

"Ha!" cried the old detective. "Now we begin to get down to business. Harry, bring Santelli here."

Santelli was as white as a sheet when Harry led him over.

"Search him!" cried Old King Brady. "Take his knife away!"

Thoroughly cowed now Santelli made no resistance.

Harry got the knife but nothing else of interest turned up.

Old King Brady then deftly handcuffed the man.

"It's the Tombs for you, Santelli," he said. "We know all now."

"Me knowa noting! Me knowa noting!" the undertaker protested, shedding tears.

"He'll be easy," Old King Brady whispered to the superintendent. "Open this coffin that is coming. Leave the rest to me."

The funeral was a big one, there being many carriages and a crowd of Chinamen.

Santelli's assistant jumped out of the first carriage and came hurrying up.

He seemed horrified at the plight his employer was in and the two commenced to sputter in Italian.

"Talk English, if you must talk at all," Old King Brady sternly ordered.

Both shut up tight then.

Meanwhile the superintendent got busy.

The coffin was taken out and opened without ceremony.

It contained the body of an elderly Chinaman terribly wasted.

That the man had been both an opium smoker and a consumptive anybody could see.

The name written in the certificate was Gee Hen.

To Old King Brady all was plain.

"Bury that man," he said to the superintendent. "I will return to New York with my prisoners and attend to the rest."

"And this box of bricks?" demanded the superintendent.

"I don't care what you do with it."

Old King Brady then bundled his two prisoners into one carriage and he and Harry got in with them.

Alice and Sing Bird went into their own carriage and a start for New York was made.

As for the Chinaman—Old King Brady felt no interest in him.

To get anything out of a Chinaman if he don't want to tell it is next to impossible.

But with the Italian it was different.

As soon as they were well started the old detective produced the two burial certificates, which the superintendent of the Evergreens had allowed him to take under promise of prompt return, and flourished them in the undertaker's face.

"Forgery!" he cried. "You did it! You copied the certificate of Gee Hen and forged the doctor's name to it, so as to be able to bury that coffin full of bricks. Confess! Tell the truth! Tell me who paid you to do this thing and it may be that I will hush it up altogether. If not it is the Tombs for yours and the Island in the end surest thing!"

No need to go through all the details of what followed.

Enough to say that Old King Brady won out as usual. Before they reached the ferry Santelli owned up.

His story was that a Chinaman whom he did not know paid him a hundred dollars to pack the coffin with bricks and give him a blank death certificate.

He utterly denied having forged the certificate himself.

As for the Chinaman who had managed the funeral, he declared that he did not even know his name.

How much of this was true and how much false the Bradys failed to learn.

When they got to New York, Old King Brady let Santelli go, after exacting a promise from him that he would use every exertion to locate the Chinaman who had hired him.

The Chinaman whom he had arrested Old King Brady locked up in the Tombs and for two days a Chinese court interpreter worked over him, but with no success.

The man claimed to be the head of the order of the "Five Palms."

He stated that the coffin had been delivered to his society by Santelli and a man named Ping Wing, who had since started for San Francisco. He was told to attend to the funeral and that was all he knew.

This Chink was finally set free and the whole case fell flat.

Sing Bird started for the Pacific Coast promising to notify the Bradys if he saw or heard anything of his cousin in California.

On top of this came orders from the Secret Service Bureau to drop the matter and go to work on another case.

And so the incident was forgotten and for some months it was not revived.

But it finally came up again in the way we are about to describe.

The following spring the Bradys were sent to San Francisco on Secret Service business.

This was the year before the earthquake and fire.

Old San Francisco was still in its glory.

During all this time nothing had been heard of Pye Joe and his place on the Secret Service force had been filled by another Chinese detective.

The case upon which the detectives had been working—it was a matter of silk smuggling—having been brought to a successful termination, the Bradys were just about to return to New York when an order came from the Chief of the Secret Service at Washington, which ran as follows, after some preliminaries in regard to the case just closed:

"It has been reported from a reliable source that Pye Joe, the Chinese detective, who was supposed to have died in New York six months ago, has several times been seen on Dupont street, San Francisco, but always at night.



"As this man was most useful to us and always faithful to Secret Service interests, you are hereby ordered to remain over a week or so and see if you cannot find him.

"If he is alive and well and has gone into other business, you need not disturb him, but if he is in trouble or held a prisoner, or can be brought back into the service, you may use your own judgment as to what to do. In any event find him if you can and report."

This order bore the personal signature of the Chief of the United States Secret Service.

Old King Brady threw the paper over to Harry with an exclamation of disgust.

"So we are to be tied here for another week or more, it seems," he said. "I don't like this very well."

"It seems almost trivial," remarked Harry; "especially the last part of it. I wonder if there can be any mistake?"

"Hardly. You see the signature."

"Yes."

"I suppose those Washington fellows have reasons of their own for wanting this fellow, but what bothers me is why they can't come out flatfooted and say so."

"Exactly! What shall we do?"

"The first thing to do is to call up the Leland Stanford University and ask Sing Bird if he has heard anything of his missing cousin."

Alice, who was with the Bradys when this conversation took place, looked up with more attention than she had been showing.

Old King Brady caught the expression of her face.

He said nothing, but it started him thinking.

"I'll go and telephone," said Harry.

He left the room and instantly Old King Brady turned on Alice.

"Well, and what do you know?" he demanded.

"What do I know about what?"

"You know something about this Pye Joe case which you are keeping back, Alice."

Alice laughed.

"Why, you annoy me, Mr. Brady," she said. "Do you suppose for a moment that I would hold anything back which was of real importance?"

"Then what is it?"

"Just that Sing Bird tried to persuade me to run away with him on that afternoon when we rode back from the cemetery. He showed me a great wad of money and began making love to me fast and furious. Of course, I was good for him."

"You should have told me this, Alice."

"Well, probably I ought to have done so, but I could see no use in stirring Harry up. The case was a dead one, anyway; but if you want my opinion, Harry won't get Sing Bird on the 'phone."

"You don't think that Sing Bird is a student at the Leland Stanford University, then?"

"I do not."

For the first time Old King Brady found himself really vexed with his female partner.

Still, after a moment's reflection, he was able to appreciate Alice's position.

Lighting a cigar he sat smoking in silence.

"You are angry with me, Mr. Brady?" demanded Alice.

"Oh, no. Still it could have done no harm to have told me this."

"I see now that I was wrong. I hope you will forgive me."

"Oh, don't mention it again. It is all right."

The entrance of Young King Brady cut the discussion short.

"Well, did you get him?" demanded the old detective.

"Get nothing!" cried Harry. "There is no such person as Sing Bird at the Stanford University and never was."

## CHAPTER IV.

### WAS IT SING BIRD?

"I am not surprised," said Old King Brady. "I took but little stock in the fellow. So he proves to be a fake?"

"A fake student, yes. I got the secretary on the wire. He declared that he never heard of Sing Bird. He was very polite about it and called one of their Chinese students to the telephone. I talked with this man and he positively assured me that no Chinaman in any way answering to the description of Sing Bird was at the university nor had been since his coming there, which was three years ago."

"Settled," said Old King Brady. "Now then you two better put in this evening in Chinatown in disguise. I'm feeling too tired to go out to-night, so instead I shall go to bed."

Old King Brady then went into his own room and left the lovers—if they may be so termed—to themselves.

It was eight o'clock when Alice and Harry left the old Lick House, on Montgomery street, where they were staying at the time.

They went up on Kearney street to a German costumer's, a man often employed by the Bradys.

Here Alice adopted a carefully chosen Chinese male disguise.

Harry decided on the spur of the moment to go as he was, although when they first entered the place it had been his intention to disguise.

"And now where?" demanded Alice, as they turned into Sacramento street and climbed the hill through the wonderful Chinese market.

"Anywhere the spirit moves," replied Harry. "Really I have no choice. No doubt Sing Bird was an assumed name. It is like looking for a needle in a haystack to expect to find the fellow anyway."

Chinatown in San Francisco as it was before the great calamity which befell that city in April, 1906, bore little resemblance to the three dirty blocks which constitute the Chinese quarters in New York.

Mott, Doyers and Pell streets could have been dropped down in San Francisco's Chinatown and lost.

Here it was, a bit of old China grown up in the Golden City, and the place bore every resemblance to the real

thing in Shanghai or Canton, except as to the style of buildings, which were largely of the gray stone used by Californians in early days. Such as were not thus constructed were of wood.

Sacramento street, between Kearney and Dupont, was in all respects the most peculiar block in Chinatown.

One side and part of the other was devoted to the sale of fresh and cooked provisions; meat, vegetables, poultry and fish were vended from little open booths and from the sidewalk itself.

The street was always densely packed with Chinamen and Chinese women, and on this occasion the crowd was so great that Harry and Alice could scarcely force their way through.

It was indeed like looking for a needle in a haystack for Sing Bird had only to shed his stylish clothes to make himself look like any other Chink to be practically invisible.

At the corner of Dupont street Harry paused, uncertain what to do.

"Come, Alice, give us a steer," he whispered. "Really, I feel like a man lost in the shuffle."

"Hush," said Alice. "These men on my left are talking about something interesting. For the moment we stop here."

The group in question were huddled together in front of one of those nondescript shops which used to be so plentiful in Dupont street.

In these places one would see a few queer boxes and bottles displayed on shelves with little or nothing in the window; perhaps a Chinese sword made of coins, or a few bits of silk, a sampan or counting board, and the like.

Many of these places were actually drug stores, where queer decoctions were sold.

But by far the larger part of them were mere blinds intended to conceal a fantan joint in the cellar or a lottery office up stairs.

Let a white man try to buy anything in one of them, and failure was the inevitable result.

And right here Alice's knowledge of Chinese came in. She could understand every word the men were saying and she listened with close attention.

At last she touched Harry's arm and they walked on.

"What is it?" demanded Young King Brady, when they had passed out of hearing of the group.

"There seems to be some queer heathen ceremony in the wind," replied Alice. "These men are to meet at midnight at the shrine of the fantan god."

"The god of gamblers?"

"Something of that sort."

"And what is the old gentleman's name?"

"I couldn't quite make out. You know there is nothing in the world so difficult as to understand the spoken names of these Chinese idols. This is no joss house idol, no regular prayer stick god whom any one can consult who has the price. He seems to be the special patron of fantan players."

"All right; but he must have some name. Let us call him St. Fantan. That will do as well as anything else."

"Hold on, Harry. You are shooting ahead a little too fast. If I know Chinese, then you know San Francisco

better than I do. Now pay attention: this god literally described is the great spirit of the webbed-footed one."

"Then when on earth he must have been a duck or a goose."

"Quit your nonsense and see if you can't help me out in this."

"But what has the great spirit of the webbed-footed one to do with Sing Bird?"

"All webbed-footed ones are birds."

"Ha! You have me there."

"I have an idea that Sing Bird may have been a gambler. He showed me a big roll of bills when we came back from that memorable funeral, when they tried to bury the bricks."

"He did, eh? How came he to do that?"

"Oh, he was boasting about his wonderful luck and how he made money at the races."

"A sporty Chink."

"I heard those men mention an address. I have been trying to get it in if you would only give me a chance."

"Pardon. And the address? Is it of the god of the webbed feet?"

"It is the place where their meeting is to be pulled off to-night."

"Yes? Well?"

"No. — Jackson street."

"That will be near Stockton street."

"Yes."

"And the hour?"

"They are to assemble at eleven o'clock. The meeting is to be pulled off at midnight."

"We better take a look around there, then. It might as well be that as anything else. It will only be by a streak of wonderful luck that we catch our bird."

This point being settled, they moved on to Jackson street and walked up the hill toward Stockton.

They soon spotted the house in question.

It was an old-fashioned frame affair.

A to let bill flapped at the open doorway and another was displayed in the store window.

The windows had been broken in the store front and both the broken glass and woodwork were plastered with daubs of mud and roofing tar.

"Deserted," said Harry.

"I think it is the same number," replied Alice. "Indeed, I am sure, and yet——"

"And yet you are not sure?"

"Well, not quite."

"We must investigate. Come on in."

They passed through to the rear and entered the back room, for the door was not fastened.

From here they went into the rear.

It was all deserted. Everything was dust and dirt.

Harry opened the back door and found a small yard behind.

This was full of all sorts of rubbish which had evidently been thrown from the windows of adjoining buildings.

This place has been deserted a long time," he remarked.

"Looks so," replied Alice. "We will go up stairs."

There were two stories above.

On both floors the same condition of things prevailed.

Not only must the house have been deserted for a long time, but it had evidently been the harboring place of tramps and other desperate characters.

"I must surely have made a mistake in the number," said Alice.

"Perhaps not. This looks like a place where a secret meeting could be pulled off. Suppose we go on the roof?"

"What for?"

"Oh, just to get a look about; we might strike something. I see there is a scuttle in the hall."

"Hark!"

"Well?"

"I thought I heard a noise outside."

"Hush! I hear it, too. Some one has just pulled up the scuttle."

Harry tiptoed to the door and peeped out, Alice looking over his shoulder.

At the end of the hall was a short ladder leading up to the scuttle which, although shut before, had now been raised.

Harry pressed his finger to his lips and they waited.

Suddenly a pair of Chinese legs came through the scuttle hole.

The feet were enclosed in richly embroidered slippers. The trousers were of green silk embroidered with red and yellow threads.

Thus far came the intruder and there he remained.

"What's the matter? Why don't he come on?" whispered Alice.

"Hush!" replied Harry. "Not a sound!"

For several minutes the feet and legs remained as described.

Then all at once the Chink got a move on.

He came down two steps and a hand appeared with an electric flash light.

Suddenly the Chink ducked his head and flashed the lantern into the hall.

He gave a sharp exclamation and darted up the ladder.

"He saw us! He was scared!" exclaimed Harry.

"If you had only known what he said!" cried Alice. "After him—quick! Didn't you see his face?"

Harry did not stop to reply. Indeed, he did not consider the question of any importance.

He clambered up the ladder, Alice closely following.

But when they got on the roof there was no one to be seen.

"He has slipped us," said Young King Brady. "Gone down in some other house, probably."

"Didn't you see his face?" demanded Alice again.

"Why, yes and no. I didn't get a very clear look at it."

"Which is a pity, for it was the face of Sing Bird."

"Sure?"

"Positive."

"But these young Chinks all look alike."

"Not to one who has been accustomed to seeing them about me ever since I was a child. It was surely Sing Bird."

"But he was very differently dressed."

"Did you expect to see him as we saw him before?"

"I suppose I had no right to expect it, and just the same I suppose I did. But seriously, Alice, don't you

think your imagination may have run away with you just this once?"

"I do not, Harry, and if you had heard what he said you would have known why I am so sure."

"Well, what did he say?"

"It is hard to translate; literally it meant: 'Why, it's that dog-faced little detective.'"

"Dog-faced, eh! Well, that don't prove it, Alice. He may have been some Chink I have run up against in the past."

"Harry," said Alice emphatically, "you are deceiving yourself. It was Sing Bird. I know his voice."

"All right," said Young King Brady; "if he is Sing Bird, then the chances are he must have a nest somewhere around here. Let us see if we can find our bird."

## CHAPTER V.

### UP AGAINST A CHINESE MYSTERY.

Whether the Chink with the embroidered trousers was Sing Bird or not Young King Brady and Alice could not find him nor discover where he went to.

They climbed up to the next roof above and down upon the next below.

In both cases they found the scuttles tightly fastened.

They looked behind chimneys and peered up and down along the block, but nowhere could they see Sing Bird or any other Chink.

At last they gave it up and went down onto Jackson street.

Harry now kicked out of the traces altogether.

"I don't believe it was Sing Bird," he declared.

"Very well," replied Alice. "Have it your own way, then, but I tell you that was Sing Bird."

"What is more important, are you sure of your number?" said Harry.

"As sure as I can be of anything."

"Very well, then; we will act on that. At eleven o'clock we will be on the watch in this choice tenement and see if there is to be any gathering of the devotees of the web-footed god."

"And in the meantime?"

"Suppose we take in the Jackson street theatre."

Alice assented and they started down the street.

They had not advanced a dozen steps when a Chinaman who was passing said something to Alice in his own language.

She stopped and exchanged a few words with him.

Then the fellow, with as near a laugh as your average Chink ever comes to, moved on.

"What was all that?" demanded Harry.

"He asked me," replied Alice, "if I saw the ghost in there."

"Hello! The place is supposed to be haunted, then!"

"That's it!"

"Did you ask him who by?"

"The place was a sort of boarding house for Chinese sailors, it seems. Five died in there of the bubonic plague three years ago."

"Ha! And everybody has been afraid of the house ever since!"

"That is it."

"Three years should be enough to disinfect the place. I fancy there is no real danger."

They went on to the theatre.

This Jackson street theatre was the largest of several Chinese theatres which ran in San Francisco.

When Alice and Harry entered one of the interminable historic plays was in full blast.

A gorgeously robed individual occupied the stage.

He wore a horned mask and was reciting something.

Every now and then he would whirl about on one heel and then continue his talk.

Behind him sat the orchestra with their odd instruments.

Every time the actor whirled there came a crash of cymbals and a furious beating of drums.

"What is it all about?" Harry whispered.

"He is telling about a battle in the days of the Ming dynasty," replied Alice, after listening for a moment.

"What makes him whirl around?"

"Oh, Harry, it is impossible to explain exactly. It is like sentences in English. He finishes with one particular point which he is trying to make and then whirls around—see?"

"I think so. Can you understand everything he is saying?"

"Most of it; not all."

"Ask that fellow next to you how long this play has been running?"

Alice did it and the answer was over three months.

But this was nothing. Chinese plays sometimes continue for a year.

Not that the same things are done and said each night, but the play continues like a serial story in a paper.

Such a thing as completing a play in one evening is unknown to the Chinese.

Harry had taken in the Chinese theatre so many times that he had now reached the point where he found it intolerably dull.

Even Alice got tired of it after a little, and the bang and clatter of the orchestra began to get on her nerves.

So they left the theatre and wandered up and down Dupont street looking in at a fantan game, inspecting an opium joint and getting a bite at the "Three Kings" restaurant about ten o'clock.

From the restaurant they went back on Jackson street again and took their stand opposite the plague house, as they were now calling the place in their talk.

It was now almost eleven o'clock.

It soon became evident that some attraction existed in the deserted house.

Every now and then a Chink would slide in at the side door.

No two ever entered together.

This was a sure sign that there was some secret about their business in the place.

"You were right, Alice," said Harry. "Either your web-footed god hangs out in some room we didn't see or those fellows are using that ladder to get into one of the next houses."

The houses on either side were old-fashioned frame-tenements and seemed to be swarming with people when they looked at them before.

But it was now getting late, and few were going in and out, although most of the windows were lighted.

Alice carefully scanned each face as the different Chinks slipped into the plague house, but she could see nothing of Sing Bird.

Finally there came a lull.

It was now half past eleven and for twenty minutes no one had gone in.

"Suppose we tackle it again, Alice?" Harry suggested.

"I am ready any time," was the reply.

They slipped across the street and entered the house.

"We may as well go right up stairs," said Harry. "I have no idea that there is anything doing on the ground floor."

They crept softly up to the floor above.

Not a sound could they hear, either there or below them.

"It's the ladder," said Harry. "These people are simply using this as a road to take them into some other house."

"Let's go to the top floor," replied Alice. "There may come another. We can watch and see where he goes."

On the top floor everything was found as dark and deserted as below.

"We will go on the roof," said Young King Brady. "There we will hide behind the chimney and watch for a bit."

There was a good chance to do this, for the chimneys were both broader and taller than usual.

They picked out the one in the rear and stood close together behind it.

"If they pass up the street they will see us sure," said Alice.

"We can double around the chimney," replied Harry.

"Better have your revolver ready."

"It is ready. I'd like to see any Chink who can draw quicker than I can."

"Wait! It seems to me that I heard some one on the ladder."

"I hear no one."

"Probably I was mistaken."

They waited some minutes and there was no sound.

Then suddenly when least expected a Chinaman's head appeared at the scuttle opening.

He peered about suspiciously and then came up on the roof.

To the relief of both watchers he turned his back to the chimney and climbed down to the roof below.

Watching they saw him go to the third house, where he raised the scuttle and disappeared.

"Good enough!" said Harry. "Now we have located them."

"That's what!" added Alice. "Next move!"

"We may as well slip down there and see what's going on. We will be very careful and run no risks."

"I am willing."

"It's a go, then; but we will wait a minute and see if anybody follows that fellow. You know how the Chinks go trailing after each other."

They waited ten minutes, but no one came.

They then climbed down from house to house and came to the scuttle in question.

It was not fastened.

Harry peered down through the opening and listened.

There was a small lamp burning in a niche in the wall below, so if any one had been lurking there Harry would surely have seen them.

"We go, now," he whispered, and he let himself down through the scuttle.

Alice quickly followed.

They listened at the different doors, but could not hear a sound.

Stealing down to the floor below they repeated the process with the same result.

The next flight brought them to the ground floor, where the street door stood open.

There was also another open door which was slightly ajar.

Harry ventured to push it further back and peer in.

The room was empty and from the odds and ends of rubbish strewn about it looked as if it had just been vacated.

Before Harry could come out Alice suddenly jumped in after him and pushed the door to.

"Some one coming up the cellar stairs," she breathed.

"Listen at the crack," Harry whispered.

Footsteps were heard and these sounds suddenly ceasing, they could hear some one talking in Chinese.

Alice kept her ear to the crack.

It was a trying moment.

This was one of the times when Harry would have given almost anything he possessed to have understood Chinese, and he inwardly congratulated himself that he had associated with him one who could.

The talk continued for some moments, and then footsteps were heard both going forward and back.

"What is it?" whispered Harry.

"As near as I can make out," replied Alice, "they have either killed somebody or are going to kill some one. At all events, one man has gone out to get a wagon to carry off the body in a bag while the other has gone back to some secret den below stairs."

"By Jove, Alice! We seem to be connecting with some mystery or another all right."

"That's what. But what shall we do?"

"Well, we are out for adventure. Suppose we slide down to Portsmouth Square, engage a cab and follow up this outfit?"

"I am willing. But ought we not try to prevent the killing?"

"And risk our lives in the secret den? I draw the line at that. It is probably some Highbinder business and none of ours, but just the same if you really did see Sing Bird it may have some connection with him."

"We will go for the cab."

They slipped out into the street.

Noting the number of the house, which was just a plain Chinese tenement and had nothing to distinguish it from other similar houses on the block, they hurried to Portsmouth Square.

Here there was no difficulty in engaging a nighthawk cab.

Young King Brady displayed his shield to the driver and explained his purpose.

"You drive up to the corner of Dupont street and Jackson," he said, "and wait for us there. We have to watch the doorway."

The driver, interested by the promise of double pay, readily agreed.

Harry and Alice saw him located and then, slipping into a doorway opposite the house, went on the watch.

It was now a little after midnight and Chinatown was beginning to quiet down.

During the moments which passed no one entered the suspected house until twenty minutes past twelve, when a light business wagon, such as the Chinese use to bring fish and vegetables over from Oakland, came up the hill.

There were two Chinamen on the seat, and Alice whispered to Harry that one of them was the man who had gone in search of the wagon.

This one jumped down and went into the house.

Within a very few minutes the Chinaman who had gone in came out again accompanied by another.

Between them they carried a big potato sack which, from its appearance, might well have contained a human body.

"By Jove, Alice! You were right!" whispered Harry.

"Shall we move?"

"Wait until they start."

The start was immediate.

The Chinaman who had come with the body jumped on the seat with the driver, while the other went back into the house.

Immediately the wagon was driven down the hill.

"Now," said Harry, and they hurried down to Dupont street.

The cab driver, instead of being on the alert, appeared half asleep.

"Now then! After that wagon which has just gone down Jackson street!" said Harry.

Alice opened the door and got into the cab, or rather started to do so, for she instantly drew back.

For, seated in one corner of the cab, was a tall, roughly dressed man.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OLD KING BRADY CONSULTS A CHINESE FORTUNE TELLER.

Old King Brady told a great big white lie when he informed his partners that he was tired and was going to bed.

The old detective had no such intention.

He was going to take hold of the case in a peculiar way — to try a little scheme of his own.

Old King Brady has many friends among the Chinese, both in New York and in San Francisco.

In the former city his principal Chinese friend is an old opium joint keeper named Quong Lee, who, considering himself under deep obligations to the old detective, is at all times ready to serve his interests.

Now it happened that just before leaving New York Old King Brady dropped in at Quong Lee's place and in course of conversation happened to mention that he was going to California.

Old Quong then began to talk about a wonderful wise woman who had been mystifying the Chinese of San Francisco.

"You likee see queer peoples, Blady," he said. "Mebbe plaps you likee see her. Me givee you letter to flend of mine an' he takee you dlere. Oh, she belly wise woman; belly wise, indeed."

And Old King Brady took the letter, just as he would have taken anything else there was going which might possibly prove of service to him.

He had not given the matter particular thought until the orders came from the Secret Service Bureau to take up the case of Pye Joe.

Then it suddenly occurred to the old deetctive that it would be a good chance to see what the wisdom of the wise woman amounted to, and he resolved to go it alone.

Hence the white lie, and after Harry and Alice had been given start enough to get them away from the German costumer's, Old King Brady clapped on his big white hat and went around there himself.

He found that he had hit off the time right, for his partners had just left.

Here Old King Brady procured a few articles, which he needed to enable him to make one of his lightning changes.

He then went up on Washington street, where the rich old Chinese merchants lived, and called on Quong Lee's friend, one Wink High.

The old fellow, who was an importer of dried sharks' fins, edible birds' nests and other Chinese delicacies, received him very courteously and read the joint keeper's letter.

"Yair; lat allee light," he said. "Quong Lee him my muchee good flend. Me hear whole lot 'bout Old Kling Blady. Me glad to see you, yair."

Then before he would even allude to the wise woman Wink High had to go through with the usual Chinese social etiquette.

Tea was served in little cups with the saucers on top; the samschu bottle was brought out and cakes, candied ginger and cigars were set forth.

Old King Brady had to pretend to partake of everything or his host would have been mortally offended.

This done, Wink High was ready to talk.

"Yair, me see dlat woman, Mlister Blady," he said. "She stlange woman, belly stlange. She tellee you ebltying you ever do all your life, yair. She go tellee me, I lite Quong Lee 'bout her. He wantee me to bling her New York. He say we makee big bag money, so she can give tips on de laces, but dlat de one ting she no can do."

"If she could give true race tips your big bag of money would be sure," laughed the old detective. "But I would like to see her, High, and if you can take me there I shall be very much obliged."

"Oh, dlat can be right away quick now," responded High, "but dere was one tlouble."

"What is that?"

"Plenty people know you. Me myself, I plenty time

see you, yes. I know you, Ole Kling Blady, detective; what I know others dley know. Pleece say po fortune tellers be in San Flisco, so dey no lettee you in. Belly secler place, belly muchee secler; you lunderstand?"

"I understand perfectly, High," replied the old detective. "I will fix all that."

"You can so? Dlen we go right away now quick."

"Watch me," said Old King Brady, and right before Wing High the old detective made one of his lightning changes.

Thus transformed he appeared as a rough-looking old fellow, a broken down sport of the sort who nightly float about Chinatown by dozens.

Old Wink High clapped his hands admiringly.

"You muchee good lactor!" he cried. "You ought to be in theatre, yair."

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

"Allee light. Come!"

Wink High clapped on a round, blue skull cap and let his pigtail down to its full length.

Then, calling a boy and saying something to him, he led the way to the street.

He took Old King Brady around on Dupont street and they walked across Pacific avenue.

They had now entered the limits of the notorious "Barbary Coast," the "Tenderloin" of San Francisco, on the edge of which Chinese were still to be found.

Wink High entered a little cigar store and saying a few words to its Chinese proprietor he went through into a back room, where several Chinamen were seated smoking.

Some talk followed, unintelligible to Old King Brady, of course, and then the old Chink produced money.

"I pay," said Old King Brady. "How much?"

"You pay nloting," replied Wink High. "You my good flend."

Old King Brady was too wise in the ways of the Chinese to persist.

No man on earth is so hospitable as your rich American Chinaman, when he chooses to be.

Wink High had made up his mind to treat Old King Brady to a "fortune tell," and that was all there was to it.

He gave one of the Chinks two dollars and then a trap door was raised and Wink High, armed with two little red tickets which he had received for his money, led the way down a ladder.

Old King Brady was about to visit one of the secret dens of Chinatown, into which no white man could hope to penetrate unescorted by a Chinese.

At the foot of the ladder they found themselves in a narrow enclosure boarded up on four sides, where sundry boxes were stored.

There was no sign of a door.

An ordinary police detective penetrating the place would have seen nothing suspicious.

The trap door was lowered and they stood in the dark. "Dlat allee light, Blady," said Wink High. "Just a minute now."

A bell rang somewhere.

In a minute light was seen shining through the cracks of the boards on one side.

Presently one of the boards was pulled aside and a Chinaman with a small lantern appeared.

"You gottee tickets?" he asked with a suspicious glance at the old detective.

Wink High handed over the tickets and they passed in, the Chinaman putting the board back into place.

They now followed a secret passage boarded up on both sides.

Old King Brady saw that it was leading them in the direction of Stockton street.

Soon they came to a heavy wooden door upon which the Chinaman rapped three times.

"Belly secler, belly secler," said Wink High with a satisfied chuckle.

The door was now opened by another Chink, who escorted them through to a small room hung with Chinese silk, where four or five Chinamen and as many Chinese women were gathered.

The place was lighted by a bronze lamp suspended from the ceiling.

The light was so dim that it was scarcely possible for the old detective to discern the features of those about him, all of whom were standing, there being no seats in the room.

At one side a red curtain was drawn and near this was a little standing desk with slips of red paper and a Chinese inkstand and brush.

Those present were all talking together, it seemed, and every one appeared to eye him suspiciously.

But Wink High said something to them which appeared to quiet their fears.

"But for Quong Lee's letter I might have looked for this place till the cows came home," Old King Brady thought, and he backed up against the wall waiting for the wise woman to appear.

Some minutes passed and there was nothing doing.

Even Wink High did not speak to the old detective.

At last the curtain was suddenly pulled aside by unseen hands and the shrine of the wise woman stood revealed.

Upon a slightly raised platform stood a sort of throne made of some dark wood.

It was a chair with big arms and an overhanging top, all elaborately carved with human heads, for the most part hideously distorted.

Seated on this throne was a little dried up old Chinese woman with small feet and a hideously wrinkled face.

She seemed like a person who had shrunk into almost nothing from old age.

Her round face looked like a withered apple, her feet were scarcely bigger than those of a wax doll.

She wore a robe of yellow silk upon which silver stars were embroidered.

Her hair had been glued up into a headdress of wonderful proportions.

It rose at least two feet above her head and extended out a foot or more on each side, and the whole queer monstrosity was bedecked with false jewels and paper flowers.

"Dlere she is," whispered Wink High in the old detective's ear. "Belly wise woman! Belly wise!"

The work of the fortune teller then began, if indeed she can be said to have had anything to do with it.

A man dressed in a white Chinese costume suddenly appeared beside her, wherever he came from, and stood there like a statue.

One of the audience, a man, went to the desk and, taking a slip of red paper from a book, wrote something upon it.

This he rolled up into a tight ball and handed it to the attendant in white, who deposited it in a small urn which stood on a table beside the throne.

Another, a woman, wrote something, squeezed it up into a ball and this pellet also went into the urn.

Others followed.

"You see how do?" whispered Wink High. "Bletter you comee last. Chinaman think he himself bletter as Melican man, so no comee first—sabee?"

"I understand," replied the old detective. "It is my turn last. Very well. Are you going in?"

"Yair. Might as better."

"Will others come into this place until the wise woman is through with these?"

"No. No more comee in till we allee gone."

"I see."

And thus matters proceeded.

When it came Old King Brady's turn to write he went to the desk and printed with stylus:

"What shall I do to find Pye Joe?"

He crushed his pellet into the smallest possible compass and gave it to the man in white.

It went into the urn with the rest of the pellets and the top was then screwed tightly upon it.

The Chink in white then rolled the turn back and forth over the table, and tumbled it about in every direction.

Certainly the pellets must have been thoroughly mixed.

He then kneeled before the throne and reverently kissed both of the wise woman's little feet.

The sybil did not even look at him.

During the making of the pellets she had sat there blinking her little eyes. Now she appeared to be half asleep.

The man got up and stood facing her.

The audience stood around expectantly outside the shrine, maintaining perfect silence now.

At last the old woman sat up straight and leaned her head against the back of the throne, but did not open her eyes.

Presently she muttered a few words in a high-pitched squeaking voice.

The white-coated attendant swung around and called out something in Chinese.

Immediately every one began talking.

"What is it?" Old King Brady whispered to Wink High.

"She says that she can only answer six questions," replied High in his broken way.

"That counts me out," thought Old King Brady. "I have merely wasted my time in coming here."

Meanwhile the Chink in white was unscrewing the top of the urn.

## CHAPTER VII.

## DEAD OR ALIVE.

Having unscrewed the top of the urn the Chinaman turned his head away and looked up toward the ceiling.

Then he thrust his hand into the urn and drew out a pellet, which he placed in the hand of the wise woman, who raised it to her forehead.

The attendant placed the table in front of her and placed upon it a pad of red slips, a stylus and some Chinese ink.

The wise woman held the pellet to her forehead for a few seconds and then laid it on the table.

Seizing the stylus she wrote with great rapidity, tore off the slip and flung it to one side.

The attendant at once handed her another pellet and proceeded to open the first.

Having spread it open he called out something in Chinese and the Chink who stood next to Old King Brady stepped forward and received both the pellet and the written slip, which he proceeded to read.

The old detective judged that he had not received the answer he wanted by the black look which came over his face.

Three times more the process was repeated.

The fifth pellet was then drawn from the urn, and having pressed it to her forehead, the old woman took up the stylus and held it motionless for some minutes.

Then she began to write very slowly and in marked contrast with her former rapid execution of the Chinese characters.

At last she finished and threw the slip aside.

The attendant passed her the sixth pellet and then turned all the rest out of the urn and threw them into a basket at his feet.

Picking up the pellet and the paper he called out:

"Dis Melican man!"

Old King Brady stepped forward and received both.

He was the only one who received back his pellet unopened.

Upon the paper was scrawled in good English, but in characters almost unintelligible, the following:

"Pye Joe lives. The worshippers of the web-footed god have him a prisoner. At twelve o'clock go to the corner of Dupont and Jackson streets and enter a cab you will find standing there. Do this and success will come."

By the time the old detective had studied out these words the sixth pellet had been delivered to its owner.

Then the curtain was drawn and the door opened and the audience began to file out of the place.

"We go now," said Wink High. "Me gettee nloting! Ha, ha! One dlollar trow away."

But he did not ask Old King Brady what he had got.

No Chinaman would think of such a thing.

If Old King Brady chose to tell his business, well and good, but to ask for his confidence! Never! That is not Chinese etiquette.

Your educated Chinaman is nothing if not polite.

One by one the Chinks filed out of the cigar store, the others remaining in the back room, each taking their turn.

But Old King Brady and Wink High went out together, and this after all the rest had gone.

Once on Dupont street the old detective looked at his watch.

It was a little after ten.

It would be a long wait until twelve.

He determined to go back with Wink High and have a little talk, and he said as much to the old man, who readily assented.

Once back in Wink High's room the cigars were produced and having lighted up Old King Brady said:

"I suppose, High, you would like to know how I made out there?"

"So you wantee tell, yair," replied the old man; "so you no wantee tell, dlen no."

"I will tell you part."

"Belly well."

"I want to find a certain Chinaman who has been missing for many months. I am told in this paper that he is held a prisoner by the followers of the web-footed god."

"So?"

"Yes. What does that mean?"

"Fantan."

"Do the fantan players have a god with webbed feet?"

"Good luck to have toes stickee togedder, dlat what it means."

"Have you any idea where these people meet?"

"No. I hear 'bout dem in China. Never in San Flisco. Me no know."

"I see. But now see here, Wink High, this paper is written in English. Does your wise woman speak English then?"

"Not one word."

"Nor write it?"

"Not one word."

"Then how could she write this?"

Wink High made good his name, for he closed one eye and cocked up the other.

"Me no know," he said. "Chinamans do tings one way, Melicans do tings noder way. Me no can 'splain."

And this was all Old King Brady was able to get out of the old fellow.

But he himself knew perfectly well that there was not one chance in a million that the withered old Chinese woman could write English.

And yet he had seen her write the slip.

"A case of thought transmission, as the modern psychological school call it," he said to himself.

But whatever it was it certainly was very strange.

Old King Brady remained with Wink High a while longer and then went out on the street and wandered about Chinatown until twelve o'clock.

He then went to the corner of Jackson and Dupont streets, determined to put the writing of the Chinese wise woman to the test.

Sure enough, there stood a cab drawn up at the curb.

Old King Brady passed it and saw that there was no one inside.



Determined to try a bluff, he went up to the driver and showed his shield.

"I am a detective," he said. "A young man, also a detective, my partner, accompanied by a Chinaman, engaged this cab. I was to meet them here."

Upon the cabby's answer the test of the wise woman's writing hung.

It came promptly.

"That's all right, I reckon," replied the cabby. "You have described my fare pretty good."

It cannot be said that Old King Brady was greatly surprised.

He has seen too much of the strange doings of the Chinese.

"The old witch wins," he said to himself. "It is remarkable!"

Aloud he added:

"I assure you it is all right. I'll wait for my partner inside the cab."

And if the cabby had entertained any lingering doubts the five dollar note which Old King Brady slipped him quieted these.

And so it was the old detective who had startled Alice when she saw him sitting in the cab.

In the dim light she had not recognized him, but Harry did when he turned to see what the matter was.

"In with you, Alice! It's only the Governor!" he exclaimed.

They were off in a moment.

"How in the world did you come here?" demanded Harry. "I thought we left you booked for bed."

"Changed my mind," replied Old King Brady.

On the spur of the moment he determined to make a mystery of his presence in the cab, for the time being, at least.

"But how did you know this was our cab?" persisted Harry. "Upon my word, you are well made up!"

"No matter. What are you doing here? Have you located Pye Joe?"

"Not yet, but Alice claims to have seen Sing Bird."

"Good! Explain all. I am not talking yet."

Knowing that this was final, Harry hurriedly explained the situation.

"Important!" exclaimed the old detective. "Lucky thing you overheard that conversation, Alice!"

"Yes, but I don't fully understand what was meant by it," replied Alice. "These Chinese names all mean something, but when they talk about the webbed-footed god I don't know what they mean."

"Oh, that's dead easy. I know Chinese enough to explain that myself!" said the old detective with an air of superior wisdom.

He felt that for once he had run ahead of Alice in a Chinese case.

"Well, what does it mean, then?" demanded Harry.

"The webbed-footed god is the particular patron of the fantan players."

"Oh, we knew that much before."

"You did not say it, then!"

"Question is what has all that to do with Pye Joe?"

"The real question is where the deuce are we going?" said Old King Brady, peering out of the window.

"Where are we now?" demanded Harry.

"Running down Second street."

"There is no doubt they intend to throw that poor wretch into the water."

"And you are not sure whether he is alive or dead?"

"No."

"This must be headed off. Probably the bag is weighted. One of us ought to be on the box. The driver may not keep close enough in."

"I intended to ride there, but seeing you I got inside."

"Pull him in and get up there now."

"By the way, shall we attempt to hold those two Chinks or just to capture the bag?"

"Just to capture the bag. I don't think it would be wise to hold them."

"Nor for Alice to show herself in Chinese dress?"

"Certainly not. Let them think that this is just a police affair."

"Correct!" said Harry.

He stopped the cab and climbed on the box.

"Mr. Brady, how in the world did you pick up your points?" demanded Alice. "Really, I am curious to know."

"I ought not to tell you since you concealed from me the fact that Sing Bird made love to you coming home from the funeral," replied the old detective; "but I cannot refuse you. Here are the facts."

He told of his visit to the wise woman.

"Singular thing," remarked Alice.

"Very. Ever hear of anything like it before?"

"Yes, I have heard my father talk of people with whom he had come in contact in China who could do such things."

"The old woman cannot have known English."

"Next to impossible, I should say."

And while they were discussing the mystery, Harry was watching the wagon.

The cabby had been faithful to his duty.

Starting with the wagon nearly two blocks ahead of them he had reduced it to less than one and kept it so.

They followed far up on the line of the water front.

At length the wagon turned and ran down toward a wharf and out upon it.

The spot was a lonely one, and the wharf appeared to be quite deserted, nor was there any craft tied up on either side.

"Faster! Faster!" cried Harry.

Now at last the Chinks in the wagon appeared to realize that they were being followed.

Suddenly reining in they jumped down and took to their heels, dodging in behind an old warehouse and abandoning the wagon.

"We have lost them!" cried the driver.

"The other way! We have got just what we want," said Harry. "Go on down to the wagon."

The driver reined in right alongside of it.

Old King Brady sprang out and Harry jumped down off the box.

The bag, when it was put into the wagon, had been covered by an old horse blanket.

This Harry pulled aside.

The bag was still beneath.

"Where did the Chinks go?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Around behind that warehouse," Harry replied. "We evidently scared them off."

He climbed into the wagon and felt of the bag.

"Yes, there is some one in here," he said.

"Rip it open!" said Old King Brady.

Harry got out his knife and cut the fastenings of the bag.

A black head was the first thing revealed.

"Dead or alive?" demanded Old King Brady. "If he is dead let him stay where he is. I'm taking it for granted that it's a man."

Harry turned the bag down over the head.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed.

"Well?"

"If I know anything, this is Sing Bird!"

"You are right," said the old detective, shifting his position so that he could get a better view of the face; "but the question is, dead or alive?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOW THE BRADYS SAVED SING BIRD.

Harry put his hand upon the Chinaman's forehead.

"He feels warm," he said.

"Off with the bag, then!" replied Old King Brady. "If there is any chance of saving his life we must act."

Harry cut the bag more and pulled it away.

The Chinaman was laid out at full length on the bottom of the wagon.

Alice, unable to restrain her curiosity, got out of the cab.

"What is that you are saying? Is it really Sing Bird?" she asked.

"Certainly it is," replied Harry. "See his embroidered trousers? This is the man we saw on the ladder, sure."

"Alive or dead?" said Old King Brady. "Alive or dead? That is the question to be decided now. Keep a watch out for the Chinks, cabby. If you see anything of them shout."

"Shall I go around behind the warehouse and see how things stand?" demanded Harry.

"No; stay where you are, but keep a sharp watch."

Old King Brady then began to examine into Sing Bird's condition in really scientific fashion.

Being considerable of a doctor in his way, he was able in a minute to pronounce definitely on the subject.

"He is alive," he said, "but he has been deeply drugged with something, and I don't think it is opium."

"What on earth shall we do with him?" demanded Alice.

"He must be taken to a Chinese physician at once," was the reply. "No ordinary doctor is capable of treating his case. Here, help me put him in the cab, Harry, and we will be off before some policeman comes butting in and causing delay."

As Sing Bird was a light weight, this was easily done.

"Now, just a look behind the warehouse to see if we

are being watched," said the old detective. "Of course, it is best to know."

He drew his revolver and went boldly around the end of the building.

No one was in evidence.

Out on the bay Old King Brady could see a small boat with two men in it.

He turned his glass upon them and perceived that both were Chinamen.

Doubtless they were the ones who had abandoned the bag, but there was no means of proving it, of course.

"Stop at the Lick House on your way back to Chinatown, driver," said the old detective returning. "Then take us to the corner of Dupont and Washington streets as quick as you possibly can."

He drew Harry aside and said:

"You leave us at the Lick House and arrange it so that we can bring Sing Bird in there without excitement, if it comes around so that we can do it. Then watch outside the hotel until we come."

They then started and drove as rapidly as was safe without attracting attention.

Harry rode on the box and jumped off at the Lick House.

At the corner of Dupont and Washington streets the cab stopped.

"Now, Alice," said the old detective, "you get out and go up stairs in this corner building. On the first landing up you will find a door with the sign, Dr. Low Quing Jai, upon it. Make him understand that you are a detective, but allow him to believe that you are a Chinese one. Then tell him that we have a drugged Chinaman in the cab and that he must come down at once."

Alice left the cab and hurried up the stairs.

Once more Old King Brady examined into the condition of Sing Bird.

"This man is very near death," he said to himself. "His heart scarcely beats at all. The doctor will have a corpse on his hands if he don't come quick."

Meanwhile Alice was having troubles of her own.

The door leading up into the tenement was open, but she rang the doctor's bell again and again and got no response.

At last a light was seen through the keyhole and after a little the door was opened in the hall.

An old Chink with a long, drooping mustache wearing big spectacles looked out and demanded what was wanted.

Alice explained in her best Chinese.

Dr. Jai seemed to entertain no suspicion that he was not talking to one of his own race.

"Who is the man?" he asked.

"I do not know," replied Alice. "There is a Secret Service detective with him. We rescued him from two Chinamen. I don't know who they were. But hurry, doctor; the man may be dying. We cannot very well bring him up here."

"No, no! Don't bring him into my place," said Dr. Jai, hurriedly. "I will come right down and examine him in the cab, but what shall we do for light?"

"We have a light."

"Very well. I will follow you quick."

Alice returned to the cab.

In about five minutes the old Chink appeared.

He carried in his hand a little closed basket.

Old King Brady opened the door and the old fellow got into the cab.

"Light," he said. "I must see his face."

Old King Brady flashed his light upon Sing Bird.

The doctor pushed up the eyelids and gave a grunt.

He then listened at the heart and gave another grunt.

"Dying?" demanded the old detective.

"He be dead in two minutes if me no come."

"I thought as much. Can you save him?"

"Me no know."

Dr. Jai opened his basket and took out a square box.

From this box he took a round bottle and out of the bottle came a flat pill which he placed between the lips of the unconscious man.

"You drive about," he said. "Givee him plenty air. Mebbe he die; mebbe he live; me no know. Me no can do more."

"How much?" demanded the old detective.

"Flive dollar."

It was paid and the doctor withdrew.

He stopped for a minute to speak to Alice and then traveled back up stairs.

Alice got into the cab.

"Drive around anywhere down town," Old King Brady called to the cabby, and they started.

"Did you find out anything from the old fellow?" demanded the detective. "He knows me well enough, but as he did not seem to recognize me I did not make myself known."

"Probably it was just as well. What he said was simply that the man had been drugged by a rare herb, which is known only to the Chinese. He said he would either be all right in half an hour or die within that time."

"Then we can only hope for the best."

The cab drove slowly on. "It has been a strange night," said Alice.

"Indeed, yes," was the reply. "We seem to have blundered right into the case. I must say I consider it a great piece of luck. To tell the truth, I had very little hope that we should be able to find Sing Bird."

"If he only lives."

"Yes, if he only lives. Then no doubt he will be full of the desire for revenge, and if his fears are not too great we may be able to do business with him; but it is impossible to tell."

Again Old King Brady listened at the Chinaman's heart.

"It certainly seems to beat stronger," he said.

"That's good," replied Alice. "Let us hope for the best."

Old King Brady looked at his watch.

It was half past one.

"Fifteen minutes more will settle it," he said.

And so it did, and the turn of the case was all to the good.

Shortly before two the unconscious man began to sneeze.

This he did several times and then straightened himself up and began to breathe naturally.

For a while he appeared to sleep, then suddenly he straightened up and opened his eyes and stared at his companions.

Alice said something in Chinese and he murmured a reply.

"English," said Old King Brady. "Sing Bird, how do you find yourself?"

"Alive! I never expected it. Who are you?"

"Old King Brady, the detective, in disguise."

"Ah! Is that so?"

"Naturally you are surprised. But you need not talk now. I am staying at the Lick House. I have arranged to have you received there. Come with me and have a good rest and then we will talk."

"Am I arrested?"

"Not at all."

"I should like to know more now. Where did you get me?"

"At the end of a wharf, away down beyond Brannan street. You were then in a bag and the two Chinamen who had you would have thrown you into the water in a moment. You were badly drugged, my friend."

"I know it. Mr. Brady, you have saved my life."

"Of that there is no doubt."

"But how? For the poison which those wretches made me take there is but one antidote, and that no American knows."

"I took you to Dr. Low Quing Jai. He gave you a pill."

"Then let me tell you that you took me to the only man in San Francisco who could have saved my life—I mean the only one whom you could have reached."

The young man relapsed into silence then, and scarcely spoke until they reached the Lick House.

"I don't want to go in here," he then said; "they don't like my people. Let me go away."

"As you will," replied Old King Brady, secretly determined not to lose sight of the fellow. "But I assure you it will be all right. This man is staying there."

Alice spoke in Chinese at some length, Sing Bird answering.

He seemed to have not the least suspicion that she was not a Chinaman.

"It is all right," said Alice at last by a secret sign.

Then she got out and there was Harry to meet them, and they passed into the hotel by the ladies' entrance.

Harry put Sing Bird to bed in an inner room, from which he could not escape unless he jumped out of the window or passed through the room the Bradys proposed to occupy.

"Get any points out of him, Alice?" asked Old King Brady, when the door was closed.

"Not a thing," replied Alice.

"Then to-morrow tackle him in your own proper person and see what luck you have."

Alice then retired, but Harry watched until morning, for the Bradys were taking no chances with Mr. Sing Bird.

The Chinaman slept late.

Harry went to bed at seven, leaving the old detective on the watch.

Up to noon there was not a sound heard in the China-

man's room, but shortly afterward he was heard moving about, and at last he came out into the Bradys' room.

Old King Brady and Alice awaited him, Harry having gone to bed in another room.

"Oh! It is really you two!" exclaimed the Chinaman with a forced smile. "Do you know, I was beginning to think I had been dreaming."

"We are here," said Alice. "I suppose you have not forgotten me, Sing Bird?"

"No, indeed!"

"Nor have we forgotten you, my friend," said Old King Brady. "We are waiting to understand all this a little better. Meanwhile, let me inform you that you had a very narrow escape last night."

"Oh, I know it," replied the Chinaman. "You need not tell me that."

Old King Brady rang the bell, ordering breakfast, at which Harry joined them.

Sing Bird had very little to say during the meal.

By Old King Brady's orders not a word was said about Pye Joe.

He wanted Sing Bird to speak for himself.

And this at last the Chinaman did.

"Mr. Brady, did you ever find out what became of Pye Joe?" he suddenly asked.

"Never! Did you?" was the reply.

"Wait! Do you want to find out?"

"Surely."

"Is there a reward up for him?"

"No reward, unless you want to pay one for the recovery of your cousin."

Sing Bird grinned.

"He is not my cousin," he said.

"No more your cousin than you were a student at the Leland Stanford University."

Another grin.

"That's the time you pumped us full of lies!" said Alice. "How about giving us the truth now?"

"I propose to do it, but first tell me all that happened last night."

"We have told you all," said the old detective.

"But I was half dazed last night."

"Well, then, we saw a bag put in a wagon, and as we guessed there was a man in it, we followed. We caught you just as two Chinks were about to throw you into the bay. We took you to Dr. Low Quing Jai and he brought you back to life. That is all there is to it, my friend."

"You have surely saved my life," said Sing Bird. "Now tell me what you want to do about Pye Joe and you will not find me ungrateful, for I propose to help you, if I can."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BRADYS HIT THE FANTAN JOINTS.

"There is just one way in which you can help us, Sing Bird," said Old King Brady, "and that is to put us next to Pye Joe."

"I will do it, but I want you to understand that it is as much as my life is worth."

"We shall protect you."

"If you can. Now here is the truth: Pye Joe is in the hands of a Chinese secret society and has been ever since he was captured by Ping Wing in New York."

"Yes?"

"Yes. They have kept him drugged pretty much of the time. While in that condition he talks like what you Americans call a clairvoyant—do you understand?"

"Perfectly. I have long known that you Chinese possess drugs which give powers of second sight."

"It is so; but few of my own people understand their use."

"And Pye Joe, while in this condition, gives tips on fantan aided by the webbed-footed god?" asked Old King Brady, throwing a bluff.

Sing Bird looked at him curiously.

"How did you ever find that out?" he asked.

"Never mind. Is it so?"

"It is so."

"Why can he do it while under the influence of this drug more than another time?"

"So? Then you do not know all."

"Tell me the rest."

"Only a man who is himself webbed-footed, as you call it, can do that."

"And is Pye Joe?"

"Yes."

"Is that why you wanted him?"

"Yes. Frankly, Mr. Brady, I belong to one branch of fantan players and Ping Wing belongs to another. By accident we both found out that Pye Joe had his toes joined together by skin—you have another word for it."

"By a membrane."

"Yes. Then you see we both tried to get him. Ping Wing won out; I got left. They have kept Pye Joe hidden ever since. Last night I went spying around and found the place where they have been keeping him locked in. They caught me. You know the result?"

"You were there to steal Pye Joe?"

"I was there to locate him. My friends would have stolen him."

"And now?"

"Oh, I am going to give him up to you. I must. I shall have to leave San Francisco. If I was to appear openly on Dupont street the Highbinders would kill me within a week."

"Was this place in the house out of which they brought you in the bag?"

"Yes; it is a secret den deep under ground. I cannot take you there myself, but I can tell you how to get there. I can give Miss Montgomery the Chinese password. I suppose, Miss, it was you who was with us in the cab last night?"

"Yes," replied Alice; "that was I."

"You make up so well. Nobody could tell. I did not suspect you then. Would you dare to try it?"

"Certainly. That is my business."

"You are very brave. It will be a terrible risk and I cannot help you."

"Your help will not be needed," said Harry coldly. "I shall attend to that."

"Ah, ha! Jealous!" thought Old King Brady. "I

must cut this short. This man's help is too valuable to be risked by a foolish quarrel."

"I accept your offer, Sing Bird," he said aloud; "but tell me, how are we to get Pye Joe away from this secret den of yours?"

"How, indeed. I'm sure I don't know. I was going to run a gang of Highbinders in on the Hing Fohs, but I should not dare to try it now."

"Is that what they call the worshippers of the webbed-footed god?"

"Yes; the Hing Fohs."

"We must find out some way. We shall have to see the place first. Suppose we were to just take the police and break in?"

"They would surely run Pye Joe out by some secret way. You would not succeed."

"When can we act on this?"

"It is up to you."

"How about going there in the daytime?"

"I would not advise it. The best way would be to go to the fantan joint to-night. They will be playing. If Young King Brady and Miss Montgomery could play, too, and then go away and come another night it would be best. They would then gain their confidence. Perhaps later they would be allowed to see Pye Joe. It will take time."

"Did you see him?"

"No; I did not get that far. You might have better luck."

"I agree to all that," said Old King Brady. "Now go ahead and give us your pointers and passwords."

The long conversation on these matters which followed would scarcely be interesting.

Enough to say that by the time it was finished the Bradys felt that they were pretty well prepared for their dangerous undertaking.

Then suddenly the old detective sprung a proposition upon the gambler.

"This is all very well," he said; "but if you could go with my partners it would be a great deal better. Let me disguise you. I can fix you up so that your own mother would not know you. Before you say no, let me try. You shall be the judge as to whether it is safe for you to make the attempt or not."

"You can try, but I am afraid you won't convince me that it is safe," said Sing Bird.

But he was mistaken.

That afternoon Old King Brady took him to the costumer's on Kearney street and personally superintended his disguise.

When Sing Bird came to look in the glass he was simply amazed.

"Well?" said Old King Brady. "Do you think it safe to try it so?"

Sing Bird concluded that it was after repeated examinations of himself in the glass and some further talk.

And thus the plan was formed.

With much thought and great risk Sing Bird had secured the secret passwords to the Society of the Hing Foh.

It was arranged not to attempt to use these for a night or two, but to show themselves in the fantan joints first

and let the members of the society become a little accustomed to seeing them.

After that it was thought that they could judge better what move to make next.

And so, when evening came, Harry, Alice and Sing Bird, all disguised as Chinamen, started to put in the night in Chinatown.

Old King Brady made up to represent a broken-down old opium fiend, and set out after them to float around on the outside.

All thought of attempting to reach Pye Joe was abandoned until the following night.

Sing Bird was anything but the sporty Chink which he appeared in New York the way Old King Brady made him up.

On the contrary he looked like a new arrival from China just smuggled in.

Harry, as he usually does when he goes sleuthing in Chinese disguise, posed as a deaf and dumb Chinaman.

Alice was rigged out in her usual style, which has proved such a success in these Chinese cases.

She was prepared to do the talking for all three.

Thus equipped, they entered Moon Wee's famous fantan joint in the cellar under No. — Dupont street, near Jackson, now a thing of the past.

The large room was crowded with Chinamen and reeking with strong tobacco smoke.

"Moi Han La!" shouted a barker at the door as they approached the place. "Moi Han La!"

This means the game is now open. Come in and play.

Old King Brady also heard the familiar cry a few minutes later.

He passed the barker and entered.

He fully expected to be stopped, but his make-up was simply perfect.

No one would have even dreamed that he was anything but a broken-down sport tied to his opium pipe.

"Moi Han La!" shouted the barker, and while others go crowding in we propose even at the risk of being tedious to tell something of this ever-popular Chinese gambling game.

The game being ready, the dealer takes a handful of the bean cash from a box and throws them on the table in front of him, placing a cover over them so they cannot be counted.

The bets are then in order.

Each bettor places upon the board the amount of his wager.

The dealer then is ready.

This covered pile of cash is the "pot," and from it he proceeds to separate with a stick four pieces of cash at a time.

The game turns upon the last draw, whether it shall be an odd or an even number of pieces.

Sometimes the bets are whether it shall be two, three or four pieces.

Again, bets are made on one number as against the other, three against one, or two against two, and so on.

But whatever number of pieces remain after the dealer has separated the pot into fours, that number wins.

The banker takes in all money laid on the table.

He pays the winner and the balance goes to the house.

A look-out is constantly watching the board for any carelessness or mistakes in placing bets, or to see that no better picks up another's money.

The usual limit is a nickel for the lowest and \$500 for the highest.

The average bet runs at about a dollar.

As many may play fantan as can crowd around the board and get their money on.

Usually half of the Chinks who crowd into a fantan joint are merely watching the game.

Thus it will be seen that fantan requires no skill, and that the bank can easily put up a job on the players by placing a prearranged number of cash in the pot.

Yet strange to say this is seldom or never done.

Should a fantan banker be even suspected of such a trick death by the hand of a Highbinder would follow swift and sure.

Our party could not get near the board that game, but they did the next.

Alice and Harry did the playing and surprised the Chinks by placing bets of \$25 each, which is unusual.

They placed six of these on six successive games and lost only twice, so they came out ahead.

All eyes were now upon them, and Old King Brady, who with two other white "bums" stood watching the game, gave them the sign to pull out, which they did, Sing Bird tagging after them.

They steered around into China alley, where standing in the shadows they found an opportunity to talk.

"Were any of your Hing Foh people there, Bird?" the old detective inquired.

"Three," was the reply. "Did you notice that man with the pock-marked face standing below Miss Montgomery?"

"Yes. Was he one of them?"

"He was."

"He played five dollar bets and won every time," said Alice.

"There were two others opposite, winning on one dollar bets," added Sing Bird.

"And they got their tips from Pye Joe?" inquired Old King Brady.

"They did, as I believe. Of course, you must remember that as I did not succeed in seeing Pye Joe I do not actually know this to be a fact."

"But you are sure that they were Hing Foh people?"

"Absolutely certain. They play to win every time."

"Are the fantan people on to their curves? If so, I would think they would bar them out of the game."

"Oh, any one can play. I don't know whether they suspect them or not. They play in one place and then in another. Sometimes they purposely lose a little, so as to turn suspicion away."

"And your webbed-footed god gives you tips on the races, perhaps, as well as on fantan?" said Old King Brady suddenly.

Sing Bird with a bland smile admitted that it was so.

"Does it never go wrong?"

"These tips?"

"Yes."

"It may sometimes. Remember, I have not tried it yet, Mr. Brady. I would like to, though."

Some Chinks came crowding past them down the alley and Old King Brady pulled out.

Harry's contingent then went to another fantan joint on Sacramento street.

Here they created further attention by playing more \$25 bets.

This time it was all to the bad with them.

Having dropped \$150 Harry gave the signal to pull out.

"We didn't make much that time," remarked Alice, when they came out on the street, "and yet there was a man next to me who was playing \$2 bets and won every time."

"The fellow with a scar on his left cheek?" demanded Sing Bird.

"Yes."

"Well, he is one of the Hing Foh, and I know it. I wish I could have his tips once. I'd break every fantan bank in San Francisco and then jump to New York and do the same there."

Thus it will be seen that whatever the truth about it all really was, Sing Bird certainly seemed to believe in the webbed-footed god Hing Foh.

## CHAPTER X.

### IS IT PYE JOE?

"Shall we tackle another joint?" asked Alice, as they walked on down to Dupont street.

"One more, I think," replied Harry; "and no \$25 bets this time, if you please. But where is the Governor? He was to have been on the outside, but I don't see him around."

It was a fact that the old detective was nowhere in evidence.

And this must be explained.

Old King Brady is a most erratic man at times.

Seized with an idea he is pretty apt to follow it unless there is some good reason why he should not.

On this occasion the old detective grew decidedly tired of watching the fantan play.

It was an old story with him, and one of his notions coming into his head he determined to let Harry and Alice finish out the night in their own way.

The idea was to visit if possible the shrine of the god of the fantan players, Hing Foh.

Perhaps Old King Brady conceived this idea at the start.

At all events, he pulled out while the second fantan game was in progress and went around on Jackson street.

"I'll go as far as I can with safety," thought the old detective, "but I'll take no chances."

He had learned from Sing Bird that the Hing Foh met only once a week, and that on Thursday night.

This was Friday, the night before having been meeting night, and it was while attempting to penetrate to the secret den in which the meeting was held that Sing Bird had been caught.

But an opium-crazed bum is liable to wander in anywhere, and the Chinese seldom pay much attention to

them further than to fire him out if he happens to get into the wrong pew.

So going around on Jackson street, Old King Brady boldly entered the house out of which Sing Bird had been carried in the bag.

It was early yet, and people were coming and going.

Old King Brady had made a perfect yellow face with red eyelids, and he looked the hop fiend right down to the ground.

Once in the hall he sat down on the stairs, and partly covering his face with one hand leaned his head against the bannisters and pretended to go to sleep.

Chinese men and women crowded past him from time to time, and occasionally one would mutter an imprecation against him for barring the way and give him a kick, but nobody tried to chase him out.

And here Old King Brady remained watching, always watching, as the Celestials came out and in.

And at last his patience was rewarded, for now came a Chinaman carrying a large basket, which appeared to be decidedly heavy.

Instead of passing up stairs or entering at one of the ground floor rooms, this man went directly through the hall and out through the back door.

Old King Brady got up and staggered after him.

He was just in time to see the fellow enter a smaller building which stood on the rear of the lot.

He was one of the lucky fantan players in the Dupont street joint.

Old King Brady had recognized him at a glance.

Now it was in this rear house that the entrance to the secret den lay.

Sing Bird had indicated the room which he had entered as the last on the right on the ground floor.

But once in he had been seized and drugged, so he had learned nothing further of the secrets of the place.

Old King Brady, staggering through the hall, threw himself down in front of this door and rolling over on his right side so as to face the door closed his eyes and pretended to sleep.

He was waiting for the man with the basket to come out and then he hoped to get a view of the interior of the room.

The wait was a long one, but at last the door opened and the next thing the old detective knew Chink and basket came crashing down on top of him.

This was a little more than he had bargained for, but evidently the man failed to see him, and so fell over him before he could close the door.

But in spite of the confusion Old King Brady got his look.

The room was vacant.

Up jumped the Chinaman and muttering in his own strange tongue he gave the old detective a violent kick.

Old King Brady only grunted and rolled over on his back.

The Chink got down and dragged him away from the door, which he then proceeded to lock.

This done, he picked up his basket and went out of the house.

"That's all right. Couldn't be better," thought Old

King Brady. "I have no idea there is any one else inside there, this being an off night. At all events, I am going to take chances and see what I can strike.

But it was necessary to be on the safe side, so he waited fully ten minutes.

No one coming, he then ventured to get on his knees. He had his skeleton keys all ready and as luck would have it he hit it at the third try.

The door came open and the old detective stepped inside.

The room was dark and for a moment he remained on his knees motionless.

His hand was on his revolver and it would have gone hard with any Chinaman who had attempted to jump on him then.

But there was not a man nor a sound.

"Safe, I fancy," thought Old King Brady, and he ventured to work his flashlight.

The room was a barn of a place.

There was only a cheap table and four or five chairs.

Clearly it was used only as a blind to the secret den.

Old King Brady got up and locked the door.

There was a bolt and he shot it into place.

He now felt safe for the moment from attack from without.

Looking about he could see no trap door nor any sign of a secret panel.

Several long scrolls bearing Chinese mottoes hung suspended from the wall.

One of these was unusually long and attracted the old detective's attention at once.

He pulled it aside and flashed his light against the wall behind.

"Humph!" he muttered. "So plain that a child could see it. Shrewd as they are about some things, these Chinks are stupid enough when it comes to others, and whoever rigged up that panel must have been stupid, indeed."

In an instant he had the panel open and found himself looking at a ladder leading down into some underground den.

Carefully listening and hearing nothing, Old King Brady determined to push his investigations still a step further, so he climbed in on the ladder and, pulling the panel shut, descended in the darkness, moving with every caution and listening to every sound.

In a moment he had landed somewhere and he got out his flashlight and took in his surroundings.

He stood in a sort of well, which he estimated from the length of the ladder must be considerably below the cellar level.

The enclosure was round and there were three doors opening from it.

One was boarded up, wooden strips having been nailed across the opening.

The other two were fastened by ordinary locks.

Still listening and still hearing nothing, Old King Brady was just about to get to work with his skeleton keys, when suddenly he heard the panel open above him.

"Thunder! I'm up against it now!" he thought. "My life will probably pay for my rashness."

He drew his revolver and stood motionless.

Luckily, he had shut off the light when he began fumbling for his keys.

But nobody came down the ladder.

Instead, a harsh, grating sound was heard overhead, and suddenly the ladder was drawn up about ten feet.

The person above then fastened it in that position and the panel was heard to close.

"Bless my soul!" thought Old King Brady. "Here's a nice position to be placed in! Easier to get into this hole than to get out of it, so it would seem."

He waited nearly ten minutes, but nothing occurred.

The case seemed plain enough.

The man with the basket had for some mysterious reason returned and pulled up the ladder.

This seemed to indicate that as far as the Hing Foh people were concerned the place was closed for the night.

Satisfied at last that he had the field to himself, Old King Brady proceeded to make the most of the occasion and tackled the doors again.

As usual with old-fashioned locks—and these were very old-fashioned—his keys easily did the business.

The door which he pulled back shut off a large store-room.

This was banked up with boxes and bales.

A brief glance told the old detective that it was the hiding place of some band of smugglers or thieves.

There were bales of silk, bundles of Chinese clothing, boxes nailed up, the contents of which could only be guessed at.

Rumaging about, the old detective soon struck a lot of opium which was worth a great deal of money.

"Smuggled goods," he muttered, "but how on earth did these Chinks manage to get all this heavy stuff down into this hole? It beats everything how slick they are."

And such problems have puzzled the wisest.

John Chinaman, as he goes shuffling about with his hands in his sleeves, seems too stupid a proposition to require serious thought, but just the same he gets in his fine work by ways which the white man can never learn.

Old King Brady now tackled the second door.

It was opened as easily as the first.

Here it was quite different. Old King Brady found himself in a little secret joss house hidden here deep under ground.

Feeling certain that he was secure from intrusion, for the night at least, the old detective proceeded to light a peculiar hanging lamp and to have a better look at his surroundings.

It was much like the regulation joss house.

On one side of the room was a raised platform bearing a small altar.

Upon this stood an ugly little idol, a hideous travesty of a man.

If Sing Bird had told the truth then this must be the god Hing Foh, for the stumpy legs were supported by a pair of duck's feet.

Old King Brady had come up with the webbed-footed one at last.

He saw that it was the god of the fantan players and nothing else.

Placed upon the altar before the idol, instead of the usual offerings and the boxes of joss sticks, were simply little bowls containing Chinese cash.

On one side of the room was a bamboo couch, the use of which Old King Brady could not divine, for nobody ever thinks of sleeping in a joss house, and he had never seen anything in the shape of a bed in one before.

There was but the one door to the place and no other opening visible except a round hole in the ceiling, over in one corner, which appeared to afford ventilation in some way.

Old King Brady was disappointed.

He had expected to find Pye Joe here.

"But after all," he reflected, "I have nothing to go by but Sing Bird's talk, and as the fellow has proved himself a most beautiful liar, it is hard to believe anything coming from him."

He sat down on the edge of the raised platform, for there was no chair in the room, and tried to think.

All at once his eye rested upon a clasp which appeared to secure the platform to the wall.

"What's the use of that thing?" thought the old detective.

He got up and pried the clasp out of the screw eye.

The platform with the altar and the idol moved slightly forward.

Old King Brady caught hold of it and swung the whole business out into the room, altar, idol and all.

Behind was a round door set in the wall about a foot up from the floor.

It was secured by an ordinary latch only.

Pressing this Old King Brady opened the door and peered inside.

It was just a dark dog hole of a place, but over in one corner, stretched upon a mattress, the old detective saw the naked body of a man.

"Jove!" thought the old detective. "At last we get there. Is it Pye Joe?"

## CHAPTER XI.

### IN THE SECRET DENS OF CHINATOWN.

Old King Brady pushed into the foul-smelling place and flashed his light upon the slumbering figure.

As near as he could make out the man was Pye Joe, but as Old King Brady did not remember the Chinese Secret Service man any too well he could not feel sure for the moment.

The sleeper wore nothing but a pair of bathing tights, nor was clothing needed, for the place was fearfully hot and close.

His sleep seemed too deep to be natural. His face was thin and shrunken, and his whole body appeared to have fallen away.

Here seemed to come the proof, for on both feet the toes were joined by a thin membrane.

Here was that rare thing in nature, a webbed-footed man.

Thus was Sing Bird's story borne out.

Old King Brady shook the sleeper again and again.



It was no use.

The drugged Chinaman merely grunted and at last he rolled over on his back, but arouse him the detective was unable to do.

He gave it up and going back into the joss house restored everything to the condition in which he had found it.

He then went out into the well and looked around.

To reach the ladder was simply impossible.

If he was to escape from the place it must be in some other way.

As nothing remained unexplored but the boarded-up door, Old King Brady proceeded to tackle that.

He easily ripped off the boards and after many attempts kicked in the door, which had been also nailed to the casement on his side.

A narrow passage lay beyond, damp and foul-smelling.

Owing to the circular form of the well, Old King Brady had lost his bearings.

He found himself quite unable to decide in which direction the passage led.

Flashing his lantern before him he followed it for nearly two hundred feet, when he came to a brick wall which cut off further advance.

This would have been despairing to anybody else, but Old King Brady is one of the sort who never despair.

He flashed his light up and down the wall and examined it most critically.

It had to all appearance been in place some years, but he saw that it was of very flimsy construction.

The mortar between the bricks had crumbled away and the old detective could feel a draught of air coming through the openings.

"This thing is only one brick thick," he thought, and he raised his foot and gave it a kick.

The result was what he had scarcely dared hope for.

The wall tumbled in and resolved itself into a mass of bricks with a resounding crash.

"That settles you, my friend," thought the old detective. "And now to see what sort of a hornets' nest I have stirred up."

Cold air came rushing through the passage and it was most grateful.

The old detective listened for some moments, but could hear no sound.

As his bridges were gone behind him, nothing remained but for him to follow the adventure through to the end.

So he pushed ahead, and in a minute found himself passing under a grated cover through which the air had struck him.

Beyond this was an iron door, old and rusted, which stood partly open.

Passing through this Old King Brady found himself in a well similar to the one he had left behind him, save for the fact that there was but one other door.

The place was choked with ashes and rubbish.

It seemed to have been a dumping hole for some time, but the other door was free and it opened when Old King Brady pressed the latch.

Here there was a flight of winding stairs.

"Come," thought the old detective, "I am doing the secret dens of Chinatown for fair to-night. I wonder what is coming next?"

He started up the stairs and at the top struck a strong smell of opium coming from behind another door.

He listened long and carefully, but could hear no sound.

The opium smell, however, was suspicious. It seemed almost certain that somebody must be smoking inside.

At last Old King Brady pressed the latch and opened the door.

The sight made him draw back in a hurry.

Sprawled upon mattresses on the floor, their necks resting upon chum tows, or the opium smoker's wooden head rest, were six Chinamen.

All were naked to the waist and all appeared to be sound asleep.

All this Old King Brady saw by the light of a grimy hanging lamp.

But this was surely no public opium den.

That the room was underground Old King Brady saw. A ladder leading up to a trap door marked the way out. After a few moments of silent watching Old King Brady started for it.

The men seemed sound asleep, and as each had his opium lay-out beside him, the cause was apparent.

It was necessary to step over them in order to reach the ladder, and Old King Brady did it most gingerly.

He passed over the last man and laid his hand on the lower round of the ladder, thinking himself safe, when suddenly the Chink with cat-like quickness sprang up and seized him by the neck, at the same time uttering a piercing cry.

Two others roused up and leaped to his aid.

Before he could turn Old King Brady's hands were caught and pinioned behind him.

One of the Chinks landed a big revolver under his nose and the three began chattering like magpies.

Old King Brady now fell back on his disguise.

His face assumed the dull, stupid look of the opium fiend. He pretended to cry and whine.

"Don't kill me, boys; don't kill me. I'm only a poor old man; for heaven's sake give me a pipe of hop and let me go."

The Chink who had caught him pushed him violently against the wall and the other held him cowed.

"How you gettee in by here?" demanded the first man.

Old King Brady pointed to the door.

"You tellee me big lie. No can," said the Chink. "You comee down ladder."

The others chattered in Chinese.

Suddenly one ran up the ladder and called out something.

He then came down again and there was a lot of excited talk.

At last a rope was produced and Old King Brady, having been bound hand and foot, was tumbled over on one of the mattresses.

The other smokers were then shaken up.

One who would not awaken was brought to his senses by having a dipper of water dashed in his face.

All hands took part in the talk that followed, which continued for a long time.

And while talking one and another would peer down the secret stairs.

They seemed to be listening, and it was evident that they expected an attack to come from that direction.

At last they appeared to muster up courage to go on an exploring tour and four started down stairs, one of the others planting himself in front of Old King Brady with a revolver, while the remaining one stood at the head of the stairs.

The old detective's situation was now anything but pleasant.

He was at the mercy of the hop fiends, into whose secret den he had penetrated.

The only thing he had to congratulate himself with was the fact that they had not searched him, and he still had his revolver.

But, tied up as he was, it was of no use.

The Chinaman with the revolver now tackled him again, plying him with questions as to how he got into the passage opening out of the well.

Old King Brady answered him as well as he could, although there were some of the questions that he did not understand.

He told a rambling story of having wandered into a joss house in a doped condition and going to sleep there.

He declared that he did not know where the joss house was nor how he got there, but finding himself in the place and not discovering any other way out, he had broken down a door and kicked over a wall and at last wandered up the stairs and into the room.

"You Hlish?" demanded the Chink at last.

"Sure I am."

"You livee Slan Flancisco long time?"

"No; only a few weeks. I came from New York."

"You old bum! How you comee ffrom New York? Where you gettee money?"

"Ah, never mind. I got it. I was not always like you see me now."

The Chink at the head of the stairs began to jabber at this juncture.

"They are coming," thought Old King Brady, and so it proved.

One came hurrying up the stairs calling out in a loud voice.

He burst into the room, carrying with him the webbed-footed god of the Hing Foh.

The two Chinks with Old King Brady began to dance and shout.

It was evident that they thought they had captured a great prize.

But there was more to come.

More noise on the stairs followed, and the others came up carrying between them Pye Joe.

The unfortunate man was still unconscious.

They threw him down upon a mattress and such another chattering Old King Brady never had heard.

At last one of the Chinks got a hammer and nails and proceeded to nail up the door.

Evidently they had no intention of being surprised by the Hing Foh men.

This done, one who had not yet spoken tackled the old detective in very fair English.

"What you name?" he demanded.

"Mike McCarthy," replied Old King Brady.

"You know whole lot people in San Flancisco?"

"No; very few."

"You say you comee ffrom New York. You wantee go back dere?"

"Indeed I do, if I had the price and could get morphine enough to last me through."

"You smokee hop? You eat mlorphine?"

"Sure."

"Lookee here, ole man, you do big ting for us, you see? Sposin' me buy you tickee, you go New York? Yair? You sure go?"

"You bet I will!" cried the old detective.

"Belly well. You helpee us, we no want you stay San Flisco, see? We payee you flare New York. You stay here, me takee you to tlain."

Here was a most unexpected turn of affairs.

But it did not altogether surprise Old King Brady.

Your average Chinaman has a great sense of obligation and always wants to make return.

Old King Brady hoped that they would untie him, but they did not.

All went to smoking now, and after one pill was smoked one of the Chinamen brought the old detective a pipe and held it for him.

And now to carry out his part and to save his life Old King Brady simply had to smoke the hated hop.

It was not his first experience, but it was an ordeal which he dreaded.

He did it by the "short draw" method, taking quick puffs and inhaling as little as possible of the body and soul destroying drug.

There are those among the "long draw" smokers who will pull at a pipe, drawing the smoke into their lungs until an entire pill is consumed at one draw.

But these are old-stagers, and their finish is in sight.

Old King Brady got through with the job as soon as he could, and turning over pretended to sleep.

After a while every Chink in the room appeared to go to sleep, and the silence was broken only by their snores.

And in the end Old King Brady actually did go to sleep.

No doubt the opium did it.

At all events he slumbered peacefully for hours.

When he awoke there were only two Chinamen in the room.

But Pye Joe and the webbed-footed idol were still there.

One Chink sat on the second round of the ladder.

He was the one who had talked to Old King Brady the night before.

"You wakee up," he said. "Hello."

"I'm awake," grunted the old detective.

"You wantee more hop—yes?"

"No; not now."

"Waitee bit. You soon go."

"Go where?"

"To New York."

"Oh."

"You no wantee do dlat?"

"Yes, yes. I want that. I'm only half awake."

"Allee right!" said the Chinaman blandly. "Him come soon."

Presently the trap door was opened and a Chinaman came down the ladder.

There was some talk and then a strip of cloth was tied tightly over Old King Brady's eyes.

He was then released of his bonds and led to the ladder, which he was told to climb.

At the top there was a passage and then a flight of steps to climb.

Another passage covered, Old King Brady passed into the open.

The next move was to bundle him into a cab, two Chinamen getting in with him.

They then drove rapidly down the hill.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

Harry and Alice with Sing Bird made the rounds of other fantan joints that night, sometimes losing, sometimes winning.

Needless to say they saw nothing more of Old King Brady.

At last they gave it up and went to the Lick House.

Sing Bird accompanied them, and they expected to find the old detective there.

Harry was greatly worried when he awoke next morning to find him still absent.

Sing Bird slept late.

It was eleven o'clock before he put in an appearance.

"Where is Mr. Brady?" was his first question.

"Not back yet," replied Harry.

Sing Bird shook his head.

"In that case I am afraid you will never see him again!" he said.

"Oh, you don't know Old King Brady," replied Harry carelessly. "You can't kill him. He will be sure to turn up all right."

They waited until after lunch.

Suddenly Sing Bird announced his intention of going to Chinatown to look for him.

"I'll be back by six o'clock sure," said Sing Bird.

He had scarcely gone when a despatch was handed in.

"Old King Brady at last!" exclaimed Alice.

"Let us hope so," replied Harry, "but I have my doubts."

But from the old detective the despatch proved to be, sure enough.

To their surprise it was dated at Stockton.

"Am here O. K.," it read. "Shall be back on the afternoon train."

This was a decided relief.

But train time came and brought no Old King Brady.

Harry telephoned the Southern Pacific station and learned that the train was two hours late.

At a quarter before six Sing Bird put in an appearance. "I've got great news!" he exclaimed. "It was the luckiest thing ever that I went out as I did."

"News of Old King Brady?" demanded Harry.

He had arranged with Alice to keep silent about the despatch.

"No," was the reply. "I have heard nothing of him. I am afraid the Chinks have done for the old man."

"I am afraid so," said Harry quietly. "Well, what do you know?"

"I know where Pye Joe is."

"Good enough!"

"I have seen him!"

"Better yet. How is he?"

"Pretty near dead. The Hing Foh people have kept him drugged so long that there isn't much left of the poor man. You shall see him to-night if you wish, if you will promise me one thing."

"And what is that?"

"That you won't attempt to rescue him until to-morrow."

"All right."

"To-morrow I don't care what you do, but to-night I want to have the satisfaction of playing fantan on tips."

"All right," said Harry. "When do we go and where?"

"The where is up Jackson street. The when is just as soon as we can get our supper and start."

So the supper was ordered, and as soon as it was over Harry and Alice got into their disguises and started.

Before leaving Harry wrote a note to Old King Brady stating their intentions and the arrangement he had made with Sing Bird.

This he placed in a position where the old detective would be sure to find it as soon as he came in.

They then went up to Chinatown.

Sing Bird took them up Jackson street and halted in front of the big joss house which in those days was the glory of Chinatown.

"You wait here a few minutes," he said. "I'll be back soon and then we will go right ahead."

He pulled away then.

"Harry, you want to look out for that fellow," said Alice. "I believe he is playing a double game."

She had scarcely spoken when Old King Brady in his usual dress hove in sight.

"Great Scott! There's the Governor!" whispered Harry.

"Good!"

Old King Brady came up to them.

"We mustn't talk but a second," he said. "I take Pye Joe to-night. It is all arranged with the police. Where is Sing Bird?"

"He went into the second house beyond here up the hill on this side of the way."

"Enough! Be on your guard."

And Old King Brady moved away.

Sing Bird, instead of being gone only a few minutes, did not show up for nearly an hour.

He came back looking hot and flushed and they saw him come out of the same doorway by which he went in.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said, "but I can't keep my

promise to take you to Pye Joe until later in the evening. It would not be safe to go there now."

"So?" replied Harry. "And why not?"

"Because the man in charge is suspicious. He won't hear to me bringing in strangers. There will be another on guard about eleven o'clock and then we will go there."

"That will do well enough; and in the meantime?"

"In the meantime come with me to the fantan joint and watch me win."

"On Pye Joe's tips?"

"Put it that way if you will. We don't call it that."

"What then?"

"We call it winning on the tips of the god Hing Foh."

"By the way, Bird, how is it that you dare to go in among the Hing Foh people?"

"I don't. I haven't been near them."

"And yet——"

"Listen. I didn't tell you before, but my friends have captured Pye Joe and the webbed-footed idol of the Hing Foh."

"The deuce! How did they come to do that?"

"I cannot tell. It is their secret."

"Do we go to one of the same places as last night?"

"No, to another. One of the biggest in Chinatown."

"Hello! And why didn't you put us next to that last night?"

"Keeping it back for to-night," said Sing Bird grinning.

Harry did not like it.

More and more he was beginning to distrust the good-looking Chink and certainly jealousy had nothing to do with it this time.

They went around on Sacramento street and descended into a cellar joint.

True to his promise, this time Old King Brady was right behind them.

He saw them enter and then hurried down on Dupont street, where he met a red-faced man standing on the corner.

"In half an hour," he said.

"Very good," replied the plain clothes man, for such he was; "in half an hour it is. Where will you be?"

"Right here."

"All right. We shall be on hand."

Old King Brady's plan was to arrest Sing Bird and with him go to the place where the Chinaman entered, for there he felt satisfied he would find Pye Joe.

After entering the cab Old King Brady was driven about Chinatown, the cab making many turns for the evident purpose of confusing him.

Then suddenly the blind was taken from his face and he was driven to the Southern Pacific station.

Here, true to their promise, the Chink bought a New York ticket for the old detective and saw him off.

It was an express train, and Old King Brady ran up the road as far as Stockton, where he got off, telegraphed Harry and started back.

But for the delay he would have been on hand before they left the Lick House.

In the fantan joint Harry and Alice found the usual order of things prevailing.

The game was in full progress.

Sing Bird gave out no tips, but left Harry and Alice to play for themselves.

On the first game he played a hundred dollar stake, wherever he got the money, and won.

The second game started.

Meanwhile several Chinks came in, to two of whom Sing Bird spoke in whispers.

Harry went in on ten dollars and Alice in a like amount.

The croupier was just beginning to push the cash about when one of the newcomers edged up behind Young King Brady, another closing in on Alice.

Suddenly he pulled off her wig and hat and the room was in confusion, for her sex was instantly revealed.

The fantan player seized Harry by the pigtail and gave it a yank.

At the same instant another Chink caught Alice in his arms.

Immediately the joint was in an uproar.

Then Old King Brady burst in the door.

The police swarmed in behind him.

The Chinks scattered like rats, many escaping by secret ways.

But Sing Bird was jumped on by Harry and held.

The Chinese dude was furious in his rage.

There can be no doubt that he meant to have Harry killed and that Alice would have been carried off to the secret dens of Chinatown.

As it was, the Bradys raided the secret den where the webbed-footed idol had been taken, Sing Bird being carried with them and forced to point out the way.

Here Pye Joe was rescued and carried off in the patrol wagon and later to the hospital.

It was twenty-four hours before he recovered consciousness and two days before he spoke, but in a month he was discharged cured.

The Chinese Secret Service man could never give any clear account of what had happened to him.

He was very grateful to the Bradys, but he declined to resume his work and went back to China shortly afterwards.

Sing Bird was let go, for really there was no charge to bring against him.

Nor were the fantan players held beyond the usual time in such cases.

And thus, although the detectives were able to score a winner, nothing particular came of their success in the case of The Bradys and the Fantan Players.

#### THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE THREE BLACK STARS; OR, THE MILLION LOST IN THE MEADOWS," which will be the next number (449) of "Secret Service."

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## ITEMS WORTH READING.

Many Elk lodges in the West have adopted President Roosevelt's suggestion and decided to abandon the elk's tooth emblem. Many Montana men have been collecting elk's teeth for years, and holding them for a rise. One man at Billings, Mont., has thousands. How the slump will affect his "corner" is not known.

Is tobacco in the form of cigars and cigarettes an effective germ-killer? Smallpox was prevalent in Canton, China, during the recent visit of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and the Princess Patricia, and the visitors say they were compelled to smoke cigarettes incessantly as a preventive of the disease. The Duke never ventured out without a cigar.

The effect of a heavily-beamed ceiling may be obtained by anyone through the ingenuity of certain manufacturers mentioned by Interior Decorating, who furnish artificial beams or rafters, or, to be literal, skeleton beams having all the effect of the hand-hewn beams of primitive times, but so light that they can be fastened to the ceiling by the wall-paper man. Being made of wood, they will take wood stains perfectly.

An English preacher believes in unconventional ways. One must do so, he says, to reach the people in religion. So he appeared on the stage of the Crown Theatre, at Peckham, England, arrayed in the full panoply of a knight-errant of the time of the Crusades, surcoat of chain mail, hauberk, greaves, armored gauntlets, sword and helmet, and preached from Ephesians VI, 2: "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Shot is made in shot-towers about 150 feet tall. The melted lead is poured through sieves at the top of the tower, and falls into a tank of water at the bottom; by the time it reaches the water it has attained a spherical form, and has hardened sufficiently to prevent spattering when coming in contact with the water. The shot are afterward sorted in sizes and placed in large cylinders and revolved until perfectly smooth and round, after which they are weighed and placed in bags.

Complete plans of a remarkable machine for turning out intricate carved moldings are shown in a recent issue of London Engineering. This machine is capable of working on moldings up to eight inches wide and three inches thick. The machine is claimed to be very rapid in action, a bold egg and tongue molding two and one-half inches thick being finished at the rate of twenty feet a minute, while with smaller molding double this phenomenal rate of production is attained. Any description of wood can be worked. This machine, it is claimed, will do the work "of more than 2,000 hand carvers, and the moldings are so perfectly finished by the machine that they do not require to be touched by hand."

In some countries there grows a kind of fruit belonging to the shaddock family, and which is commonly called "forbidden fruit." It is similar to grape fruit, but is larger and the inside is somewhat coarser than the delicious acid delicacy of which we are so fond. The name forbidden fruit was given on account of three dark-brown stains, like finger marks, which invariably show on this variety of the shaddock. The stains are close together on one side, and are believed to be the marks of Eve's fingers left as a brand on the apple whose eating caused so much trouble in the world. Forbidden fruit is much liked by people who are able to get it fresh, but so far it has not been shipped aboard as extensively as its cousins, the grape fruit and shaddock.

Mrs. John Weerts, the only woman who was ever a member of the Missouri State Game and Fish Protective League, has received the first 1907 hunter's license issued in St. Louis county. Mrs. Weerts has been a hunter from childhood. Her mother and her father were good shots. She began to use a gun when she was thirteen years old, and taught herself to shoot. She was reared on a farm near Noblesville, Ind. In company with her husband Mrs. Weerts goes on frequent hunting trips. For these expeditions she dresses in a corduroy suit, with a knee skirt and high hunting boots. She wears a sweater, and if it is cold a jacket. Mrs. Weerts says that she believes in a dress she can get around in. Her firearm is most frequently a .22 calibre rifle. She uses also a 22-gauge shotgun. She has killed all kinds of small game, but has never shot a deer, and it is one of her regrets that she has never killed a wild turkey. "I have never seen anything to scare me yet," said Mrs. Weerts, when asked if she ever was frightened by game. "It seems to me that one becomes accustomed to being in the wilds, and forgets to be afraid."

## WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

The trouble with one-sided people is that they seldom look on the bright side.

Many a philanthropist gives to charity and takes it off his wife's allowance.

The fool at least has the satisfaction of knowing that he has plenty of company.

Any detective will tell you that a person who is freckled can be easily spotted.

Brother—That young man you're engaged to is a bad egg.  
Sister—That's the reason I'm afraid to drop him.

Wife—Aren't you going to smoke those cigars I gave you?  
Husband—No; I'm keeping them till Tommy begins to want to smoke. They'll settle it!

"Your wife needs exercise; she sits still too much."

"I'll get her a silk skirt."

"How will that help?"

"She'll keep moving so as to make it rustle."

Abou Ben Adhem had just asked to be put down as one who loved his fellow men.

"I never throw orange peel on the sidewalk," he explained. Herewith the angel saw that his name led all the rest.

"That Prof. Blink fooled me bad."

"How?"

"He told me ethnology was the science of the races, and when I went to the library and asked for a book on ethnology there wasn't a word from cover to cover on how to pick winners."

## PRETTY AS A PICTURE.

By COL. RALPH FENTON.

One of the greatest cases in which I was ever concerned for a few days fated to be become a very celebrated one indeed. It wants very little recalling, and yet the end of it was confined to a ten or twelve line paragraph in the daily papers.

A great jewelry robbery is always a profound attraction to the British public. One was duly announced one morning in the very largest type, and it had the more interest because the victim was Lady Rachmore—a beautiful, young and deservedly popular peeress. While one of the ornaments of the Court of St. James, she was also known as one of a family of sisters who took a sincere interest in the welfare of the poorer classes.

I and a superior officer were called in to investigate the matter, and both were equally amazed to find that the great robbery was in one sense a very small affair indeed.

Lady Rachmore was noted for her fine pearls and equally fine diamonds, but none of those were missing. The young baroness, however, plainly told Mr. Poynter that her distress would not have been half so great if some of those famous jewels had been stolen. The things abstracted from her jewel cases were old heirlooms of his lordship's family, and as her husband was absent at the time, the disaster was, of course, deemed a greater one on that account.

A list of the things showed why they were deemed of more than intrinsic value. I remember a specimen or two:

One diamond ring, the present of Alexander II, King of Scotland, to Hugh, Thane of Alloway (progenitor of Lord Rachmore).

One quaint ring of onyx, given by Louis XI, to the Earl of Alloway, Ambassador of King Alexander.

One circlet of large size, the gift of Henry III of France to Guy, Earl of Alloway, Lieutenant of the Garde l'Ecosse.

Now, all this was very perplexing to us as officers. Although the pearl and diamond necklaces, tiaras, coronets, pendants, stars, etc., were in the same safe, these were untouched. We had no common thieves to discover—that was perfectly certain. No one outside of the house would run the risk of breaking in and leave behind the things of true value. I quickly concluded that the thieves were servants, or, at all events, people with the privilege of residing upon the premises. Having expressed my opinion to my comrade, he laughed in his quiet way and said:

"Servants would never steal ancient-looking jewels when they could place their hands on modern things of more value in the same case—things more easily disposed of without creating suspicion."

I knew my friend and leader too well to follow the conversation then. We had been standing in one of the windows of the back drawing-room during the brief conversation recorded above, and I had noticed that he had been carefully "taking in" the features of the house.

The latter was in the vicinity of Berkeley Square, and had great old trees growing in the well-displayed grounds. Presently I saw my companion slowly descending the broad flight of steps leading from the ground floor to the lawn at the far end of which a fountain was playing in the sunshine, and beyond which glimpses of bright flowers could be seen.

Keeping well behind the curtain of the window, I determined to watch his movements for a few seconds. He always walked like a man who observed very little, but I knew he was in the habit of looking from the ends of his eyes in a very peculiar and successful manner. He walked slowly toward the right wall, looking from the back of the house, and I noticed that at one point he almost halted, and just as imperceptibly made a movement as if to turn his head aside to the right and upward.

Advancing slowly, I saw him disappear behind some trees—or bushes rather. Craning my neck for an instant only, I saw that the object which had attracted his attention was an iron spiral staircase, leading from the parapet bounding the gravel walk of the garden to one of the long French win-

dows of the first floor. After going up corkscrew fashion to the level of the window-sill a kind of bridge was formed, supported by the spider-like pillars with foundations in the area.

The under-butler answered my bell, and after saying that I desired to see all the servants together, if possible, without causing their suspicion of my object, I continued, very indifferently:

"By the way, where does that spiral staircase lead to?"

"To her ladyship's own private apartments."

"And what is behind those bushes?" indicating those around which my friend had disappeared.

"A covered archway leading beyond the lawn to the flower garden."

"Just so," I returned. "So this spiral case is altogether private, then?"

"Altogether private. I think that Lord and Lady Rachmore only use it, or possess keys of a wicket gate at the extreme end of the garden."

As we were talking we had advanced from the back window toward the first door on the left of the drawing-room: This was additional to the folding doors—then shut—which opened into the conservatory, and I had already noticed that a corridor ran across the mansion, behind the grand staircase, to the great picture gallery, which communicated also with the other extremity of the conservatory.

As we approached this door I heard a slight rustle of silk, which, from watching my companion's face, I saw he was unconscious of; so I suddenly made a dart forward from his side, to find a tall, pale-faced girl, clad in a plain black silk robe, in the very act of listening intently to what had been passing between us. The expression of her face was not horror, but was certainly apprehensiveness, and, as I took mental note of the whole posture, and indeed picture, I said, as if the act was the most natural and commonplace in the world:

"I really beg pardon, miss."

Her first impulse seemed to be to scream, but she quickly recovered herself, assuming an expression of dignity that was somewhat imposing, or shall I say, in my own rough way, rather "taking"?

Saying "I beg yours, sir," she turned upon her heel deliberately and walked away in quite a leisurely manner.

"I have found the thief," I said to myself, while I asked the under-butler, carelessly: "Who is that?"

"That is Miss Challis, her ladyship's companion," he answered, to my great disappointment.

At the same instant a voice was heard below us singing some foreign air, smartly, but not with a good voice. On turning the carved oak balustrade we came face to face with a most elegantly clad young female.

The under-butler, thinking of my first request, said:

"When will it be convenient for you to come downstairs to the servants' hall, or the housekeeper's room, Mlle. Baurette?"

"Why do you ask?" she said, with a French accent.

"Because this gentleman desires to see the whole household."

"I refuse to answer," she returned. "I am no thief, and I decline to meet an abominable Bouchard even if my lady commands it," and she passed on in grand style, turning up her little nose in the air.

"And who may that young lady be?" I asked, not a little amused.

"You heard—Mademoiselle Baurette," he answered.

"But her position?"

"Her ladyship's maid."

"French?"

"No, I fancy not. I think I have heard that her real name is Barrett, but that her people went over to Paris when she was very young, to live with an English family completely settled there."

"And what kind of character does she bear among her fellow-servants?"

"Oh, she's as jolly a little woman as ever lived—a very good soul, and no mistake," replied the under-butler, with evident conviction, a smile illuminating his good-natured, honest face.

Of course, I saw the rest of the servants, but the fact is they were an unusually good and honest-looking lot. When I turned from asking for form's sake a few questions regarding the habits of the tradesmen's assistants, and the custom in regard to the closing of the establishment, I found Mr. Poynter behind me standing beside a grave-looking young man—I was almost saying gentleman. To my intense surprise the inspector shook hands very cordially with this individual at the hall door. He seldom did this with anyone he did not wish to put off his guard, so I looked closer at the man, and then thought there was something not quite satisfactory about his eyes. He was in a high good humor, so I asked him who the young fellow was.

"That," he said, impressively, "is a very superior young man. He is what is called a 'gentleman's gentleman,' and takes after his master no doubt, who is not only a perfect gentleman, but a peer of the realm in the bargain. His lordship, I believe," he added, quietly, "is traveling along the Rocky Mountains at present, and proposes to go to Australia by way of California, and back by way of India and the Suez Canal. His name is Samuel Johnson, and he believes himself to be the lineal descendant of an uncle of another gentleman of the same name. Samuel the second was ill when Lord Rachmore departed, so his lordship was contented with the company of a profane whisky-drinking Highland gillie for the voyage."

We parted that day without expressing an opinion on it one way or the other. So as I was left to do as I pleased in the affair, I resolved to watch the ladies of the establishment—particularly Miss Challis, her ladyship's companion, and the sprightly Mlle. Baurette, the lady's maid.

I soon discovered that both the young ladies had beaux. The one who met Miss Challis, the companion, was rather gentlemanly in dress and appearance, and although they met as if by appointment near Piccadilly, on more than one occasion he boldly called at the house, and remained inside for twenty-five minutes to half an hour each time.

On the second occasion I knocked after he had gone, and asking for my friend, the under-butler, soon learned that the young gentleman who had just called was Mr. Spencer, late secretary to Lord Rachmore.

One night I was going down to watch the front entrance of the house, when I heard a voice that arrested my attention in a moment. It was that of the little French girl.

She was with her beau, who looked like a man who wished to hide his identity. He spoke in a low voice while people were passing, but presently, when the Mews were entered, he grew louder and more demonstrative in his attentions, kissing the little French-looking face very often.

At last, at the end of the Mews, they turned into the lane which lay behind Rachmore House. I suddenly thought of the wicket gate which was supposed to be used only by Lord and Lady Rachmore. Halting for a moment to think matters over, I heard her voice saying:

"And you love me very, very truly?"

"Dearly. You are to me dearer than life," returned the man, in the jolliest manner.

"Ah, you are good," she went on; "very good, even if you are poor. Never mind—you will pay me all back when we are married. To-night I also am poor, but here is a little gem upon which you can raise money. Come; I will kiss it, and then you can kiss it to-night. To-morrow it will prove a little love-token that is of use, and be all the sweeter when it returns to us."

Then the gate was opened and closed, the man returned in the same way he had come, and I, lurking in the shadows, followed him, confident that he carried one of the missing jewels in his pocket.

Walking rapidly, he crossed Piccadilly, and while he was still within easy distance of me, a string of carriages divided us. I saw him dash down by St. James' Church, but when the carriages had passed, he got so far ahead that I could not overtake him until he had disappeared into one of two doors in King street.

He was watched all night, and his house kept under close surveillance till the morning. Then I followed him to a well-known pawnbroker's in the neighborhood. I went in in front, and drew the assistant's attention while he was examining the ring. I was, of course, unseen, and asked if that gentleman had ever "left" anything there before.

"Oh, yes," replied the man, and asking Spencer to excuse him for a moment, he referred to a book, opened a safe, and took from a drawer an onyx ring of ancient workmanship.

Upon the strength of that I lodged the prisoner in Vine street station, and taking the rest of the jewelry to Lady Rachmore, I soon had the satisfaction of having the onyx recognized as Louis XI's present to the Earl of Alloway. Much against the lady's will I took Mlle. Baurette with me, and I must do her the justice to say that she protested her innocence the whole way to the station.

When Spencer came before the magistrate he said he found the onyx in the garden of the Rachmore House, and that the girl was innocent.

When, however, I gave my evidence, the magistrate concluded to commit both.

The grand jury threw out the bill against Miss Baurette, and I was ashamed to meet the poor little thing.

Spencer got two years' imprisonment.

Nearly three years after I was called into a house in Paddington to arrest a girl for stealing a gold chain. My surprise may be imagined when I recognized Mlle. Baurette, now as plain Miss Barrett. I would not arrest her, however, until I had seen Mr. Poynter, who was not at all satisfied by the first affair. Leaving the house, I found the girl's former accomplice in crime lurking about the place.

My scruples vanished. I arrested him and the girl. In due time they were committed for trial, and the trial came on. Spencer was sentenced to penal servitude for five years, and Miss Barrett to twelve months' imprisonment.

Before I had left the court Inspector Poynter arrived, accompanied by Lord Rachmore and the good young man Samuel Johnson, who had that morning been fully committed to the Central Criminal Court, then sitting, for long-continued robberies of his lordship. Long suspected and watched, he had been arrested in flight by the inspector. His confession proved that Spencer actually found the onyx ring in the garden.

The scoundrel, concealed in the bushes, had witnessed the interviews between Mlle. Baurette and Spencer. One moonlit night he saw the former give the latter a handful of silver, which fell to the ground. The girl was afraid of being missed in the house, so Spencer saw her to the end of the walk, saying he would look for the other coins on his return. Quick as thought the eavesdropper, who had the earliest stolen jewels with him, threw the onyx ring and a few shillings where the others had fallen, and Spencer, on his return, picked up all he found, thinking the ring intentionally placed there by the girl who loved him so foolishly.

The mystery of the missing chain was still stranger. It had been left in a room where Miss Baurette was sewing. A thunderstorm frightened her out of the apartment, and a flash of lightning, attracted by the metal, melted it instantaneously, dropping the whole of it, fused from the mantel shelf of marble into a coal scuttle, where the wholly childish grandfather of the family found it. Knowing the mine from which the coal had come, he had written to purchase shares in it, since gold was found plentifully in one scuttleful.

The coal-owner wrote to their agent, who communicated with the old man's son, and he elicited from the younger children that they had seen grandpa carry lumps of coal upstairs on the day of the theft. On examining the old man's room they found his prize, and Miss Baurette was completely and effectually cleared.

Lord and Lady Rachmore took charge of the future of Spencer and the poor girl, and for that they had suffered together, Miss Challis was the first to propose their speedy marriage.

I have often seen Mrs. Spencer since the events so imperfectly related, and I must confess she still looks as Pretty as a Picture.

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