

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year.

No. 455.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 11, 1907.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE TELEGRAPH BOY; OR EXPOSING THE LEAGUE OF THREE. *By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE*



Things were getting hot in the shack. It began to look bad for the Bradys. Then the door was opened and the Telegraph Boy butted in. The men had their backs to him; and never knew what he was about.

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CHAPTER I.

THREE PIPES OF WINE.

One cold, blustery afternoon in early November three passengers alighted from an electric car of one of the South Boston lines, and, turning up Cuyler street, walked between the double row of storage warehouses.

One was a tall, elderly man of marked appearance and peculiar dress, wearing, as he did, a long, blue coat, with brass buttons; an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big, white hat, with an unusually broad brim.

With him was a stylish-looking young fellow in his twenties, and a decidedly handsome young lady.

The three walked on until they came to the "Washington Warehouses," where they turned in at the office.

"Is Mr. Munroe in?" asked the older man of the clerk behind the desk.

"He is expected at any moment," was the reply. "You, I take it, are Old King Brady, the detective?"

"I am."

"Mr. Munroe is expecting you. He told me to ask you to wait. Have seats, please. He won't be long."

As he spoke the clerk looked over the trio with some show of curiosity.

With Old King Brady was his former pupil and partner, Young King Brady.

The young lady was Alice Montgomery, the accomplished female assistant of these world-famous detectives.

The three constituted the Brady Detective Bureau, of New York City, whose reputation is national, and whose success in unraveling mysteries and ferreting out crime has been very great.

The Bradys did not have long to wait before Mr. Munroe, superintendent of the Washington Bonded Warehouses, appeared.

He was a tall, dark man, with strong features, and a decided way of speaking.

"You are the Secret Service people," he said. "I was notified of your coming. Walk in here, please."

He led them into the private office and, having placed chairs, seated himself at his desk, and, turning to Old King Brady, said:

"Well, I suppose you expect me to tell you a long story, but I really can't. We have been robbed, and that is all there is to it. How it happened or who the thieves are, I know no more than yourselves. It is up to you to find out."

"We know nothing of the matter beyond the fact that we were ordered to report here," said Old King Brady.

"By the Secret Service Bureau?"

"Yes."

"Didn't they tell you what was stolen?"

"No."

"I should have thought——"

"We are not always so informed. We look to you for the information, Mr. Munroe."

"It is easily given. On the night of the 20th of October, or possibly during the day preceding, three pipes of sherry, which were put into this warehouse by mistake, mysteriously disappeared. It is not the value of the goods which disturbs us, of course; but the fact that we have been robbed. If we have thieves in our employ, we want to know it."

"Naturally, in a bonded warehouse. Have you ever been robbed before?"

"Never."

"Who is the owner of the wine?"

"Moses Washton, No. —— Federal street, an importer of wines. He has made a great kick-up about the matter. We have been hounded by detectives, whom, of course, we can't allow to go prowling about our place—and won't!"

"You say that the wine was bonded by mistake. How was that?"

"Why, Washton's custom house business has always been attended to by a broker named Jake Goldman. His wines are never put in bond, but are taken right out of the public stores. It appears that Goldman was sick on the day the business should have been attended to, and the matter was neglected. Hence the pipes were brought here on the morning of the twentieth. Next day he was after them, but they had vanished. That is really all I know."

"You are certain that the wine was actually delivered here?"

"Yes; I saw the casks placed myself."

"Could they have been removed during the day without your knowledge?"

"If you mean without the knowledge of some of our employes, certainly not."

"And at night it is up to your watchman, I suppose?"

"We keep no night watchman."

"What—no watchman?"

"There was no appropriation made for one. I am not paying out of my own pocket. I have notified the custom house people several times."

"The warehouse was found closed as usual on the morning of the 21st?"

"Absolutely."

"Who opens up?"

"Our day watchman—Dick Ryan."

"A reliable person?"

"Absolutely."

"When was the loss of the sherry first discovered?"

"At about ten o'clock, when a truckman called to get the wine, bringing the necessary papers to release it."

"And your people went to get it, and found it gone?"

"That is it. Do you want to see where the wine was put?"

"It is not necessary."

"There you differ from other detectives."

"How so?"

"There have been four on the job already. Each one has insisted upon going all over the premises."

"We have our own way of working. The wine came in through the door, I suppose. It went out by either door or window. I fail to see what good it could do to look at the place where it lay while in the warehouse."

"It seems the same to me."

"You have a rear entrance here?"

"Yes—opens on the dock."

"Did the wine come in by the water entrance?"

"Yes; it came in on a lighter, with other goods."

"On what steamer was it imported?"

"The Aurantia from Liverpool."

"Consigned to Moses Washton, or purchased by his agent abroad?"

"I don't know how that is."

"That is all, Mr. Munroe," said the old detective, rising to depart.

"Very well. I am at your service any time, night or day, and this place is always open to you. If you can solve the mystery I shall be very glad."

The Bradys then left the warehouse.

Not until they had boarded the car did they exchange words upon the interview.

"How did that man's manner strike you, Harry?" Old King Brady then asked.

"He seemed sincere and greatly annoyed."

"So it appeared to me. I should say that the Secret Service people were wrong in supposing him to be mixed up in the deal, but you can never tell."

"Where do we go now?" asked Alice.

"To the custom house. To the collector, to whom we are ordered to report."

So the Bradys, upon reaching the Old State House, on Washington street, traveled down State street, where they soon were closeted with the collector.

Old King Brady exhibited his Washington orders.

These read:

"You are to proceed at once to Boston. There you will call at the Washington Bonded Warehouses on Cuyler street, South Boston, and ask for Mr. Munroe, who will inform you of the facts connected with the mysterious disappearance of three pipes of sherry from the warehouse on the night of the 20th ult. This done, you will report to General Ferrars, the collector of the port of Boston, for further instructions."

"That is all right, Mr. Brady," said the collector. "I presume you think this affair a trivial matter to call for the services of a busy man, like yourself, but it is not as it appears on the surface."

"So I imagined," replied Old King Brady. "You have an inside view into this matter, I presume."

"We have this," said the collector, opening a drawer

and taking out a letter; "but before you read it I want to direct your attention to one or two extraordinary points."

"Which are——"

"First, this man Washton is making a fuss about the loss of this wine out of all proportion to its value. Rather than have trouble with him I immediately wrote informing him that the custom house would make good his loss at once, feeling that I had sooner settle so small a matter out of my own pocket than to have any stigma attached to my office. He declined in a very sharp letter. Said that the wine was intended for a special customer, who bought largely of him and whom he would lose if it was not recovered. This I considered strange. Next day I received a second letter in exactly the opposite tone. He then stated that his customer, disappointed at not receiving the wine, had purchased in New York and had taken his trade away from him—that he was now willing to settle and let the matter drop."

"And did you settle?"

"I did not."

"But what he said sounded reasonable."

"Wait. I suspected smuggling of diamonds or something else in the wine, naturally, seeing that the man has employed detectives on his own account to look up the goods. Immediately I conferred with the postmaster and requested that a watch be put on such letters as bore the return card of Moses Washton or were addressed to him."

"Very shrewd."

"Such things have to be done, as you well know. The result was somewhat interesting. Several letters were opened. At last we struck this. Read!"

Old King Brady took the letter, saying as he did so:

"This was never delivered?"

"No. It has been reserved for you."

"Very good."

And Old King Brady ready aloud as follows, Harry taking notes in shorthand:

Boston, October 26, —.

"Mr. Washton:

"Dear Sir—I seen dem wine casks took out of de storehouse over in Sout' Boston. I seen de fellers what done de job and can describe 'em. I can give dis information, only I don't want to get mixed up wit' de detectives and de police. I'll meet you on de street any time, but I won't come to your place. Address T. B., care of Mrs. Burns, 92 Richmond street, Boston.

"P. S.—Say, it won't be none of us to go dere, for you won't get no satisfaction—see? And, say, no hundred dollars goes. I know a t'ing or two, so prepare to cough up, old man, and you may get back de goods."

"Written on the backs of Western Union Telegraph blanks," remarked Old King Brady, as he laid the letter down.

"Yes. You keep that," said the collector. "What do you think now?"

"It confirms your suspicions, of course."

"I should say so!"

"Was anything done about it?"

"Yes. I sent a local Secret Service man to 92 Richmond street."

"The very worst thing you could have done."

"I am satisfied of it now. No such person as Mrs. Burns was known in the house."

"It was one of those big tenements on Richmond street?"

"Yes—a tough hole."

"Anything further done?"

"No, not in that direction; but we captured another letter."

"This grows interesting."

"Here it is."

The collector handed out a letter bearing the return card of the wine importer.

The letter was addressed to Joe McHenry, 822 East Thirty-ninth street, New York City.

It read as follows:

"Boston, November 3d.

"Mr. J. McHenry, New York City:

"Dear Sir—You have been recommended as a detective who is willing to engage in a private matter for liberal compensation by Al Dater, of this city, whom, I presume, you know.

"I have met with a serious loss, and I strongly suspect that I have been sold out by my own partners. This I want to prove, for motives of revenge, and I will pay you \$1,000 for such proof. If the goods can be recovered—particulars only given when we meet—I will pay \$5,000 cash in addition. Of course, you will understand that this is strictly a confidential transaction. Your expenses will be promptly paid if you will come over to Boston and see me.

"Yours truly,

"MOSES WASHTON."

"And what do you think of that?" demanded the collector.

"It confirms your view that this is a case of smugglers falling out," was the reply.

"I should say so! One thing more and I am done. Wash-ton is a racetrack fiend and a heavy gambler. He goes about fairly blazing with diamonds. As for his wine im-porting business, I have had his place watched closely. In five days only six casks and fourteen cases left his store. The man is absent from business a good part of his time. His office force consists of a porter, a boy and a female bookkeeper. "I am satisfied that he don't do busi-ness enough to pay his rent. And now, Mr. Brady, what do you think of my detective work?"

"Excellent," replied Old King Brady. "Do you con-tinue, or do you wish to resign the case into our hands?"

"Oh, I'm done," laughed General Ferrars. "I reported all this to Secret Service Commissioner Tanner and your assignment to the case is the result."

"Very well. We will jump right in where you left off and in a few days I trust we shall have something definite to report."

And with this the Bradys withdrew and returned to their rooms at Young's Hotel.

CHAPTER II.

ALICE STARTS THE CASE.

It was yet early in the day, and the Brady Detective Bureau had no idea of counting it a day wasted.

"We must get right on the job," said the old detec-tive.

"Let us promptly have your views of the case, then, most noble chief," replied Harry. "To me it looks as if we were up against a case of smuggling on a pretty large scale."

"And my view is your view; but let me tell you both something. You know Joe McHenry, of course, Harry?"

"Well, I should say I did! A crook!"

"Oh, of course. Everybody knows that. He has been discharged from four different agencies. Since then it is known that he has been doing detective work for crooks. But that's not the point."

"I fail to catch on."

"It is simply this: Wash-ton's letter would never have been delivered, even if it had not been intercepted, as it was addressed to a dead man."

"You know this?"

"Certainly. I saw McHenry's death in the paper a week ago. Being interested, I cut out the notice and have it here."

Old King Brady produced the cutting, which Harry read.

"If this isn't a fake, then Mac is pushing clouds," he remarked.

"He is wherever bad detectives go after they quit this world. That is certain, for he was one of the worst, but it opens a door to us, the value of which can hardly be over-estimated, for I shall step into his shoes."

"And pose as Mac? Won't work, Governor. Remem-ber you are liable to run up against this man Dater, who-ever he is. Mac was a man half your age."

"Please don't attempt to instruct me, Harry. I flatter myself that I have had some little experience in the de-tective line."

"Quite so. Take it all back."

"That is my job. For you it is to locate the person who wrote that first letter. Get to the post office. See the postman who delivers at 92 Richmond street. Get at it at once."

"And where do I come in?" demanded Alice.

"There seems to be no niche in which to place you," replied the old detective.

"But I insist upon being put to work."

"Well, let me think,"

"No child's work, now, Mr. B."

"I confess that I am at a loss to know just where to place you."

"Suppose I place myself?"

"You have something to suggest?"

"Yes."

"Out with it."

"There is one person in this transaction who must feel

pretty sore, and that is the custom house broker, Goldman."

"Yes, if he is not the thief."

"In which case he will bear watching. I propose to shadow him. He will never suspect me as a detective. I may pick up some points."

"It can do no harm. As you say, men never do suspect women of being detectives, strange as it may seem."

"Then you approve?"

"I see no harm in it. If you see an opportunity to get acquainted with the man, do so."

"I have a plan."

"Well?"

"I will go with such diamonds as I have with me prominently displayed and boldly put up a proposition to him to help me snuggle more."

"That seems rather radical, Alice."

"Trust me, Mr. Brady. I have an idea something will come out of the scheme."

"I think it is a mighty good idea," put in Harry.

"Your opinion in this particular instance is quite valueless, young man," replied the old detective.

And Harry and Alice joined in the laugh.

The truth is Young King Brady has allowed himself to become deeply enamored of his fair associate.

One result is that he almost always sides with her in such discussion.

This was what Old King Brady meant.

But Alice had won her point before Harry put in his oar.

The Bradys now withdrawing to carry out their end of the work, Alice proceeded to dress for her part.

Now Alice is the owner of quite a valuable collection of diamonds.

She put on a pair of earrings worth a small fortune and a lovely sunburst pin of great value.

Then, procuring a direction at the office and securing Broker Goldman's address, she started down State street to see what could be done.

Naturally she attracted considerable attention.

When she entered the tall building which bore the number she had taken from the directory a sharp-featured man followed her into the elevator and stared at her boldly.

Alice returned the stare, though why she did it she could scarcely have told.

But she was well satisfied that she had done it when, upon leaving the elevator on the eighth floor, the sharp-featured man preceded her and entered the office which bore the custom house broker's sign.

Alice followed him in.

The man turned upon her instantly.

"Who did you wish to see, Miss?" he demanded.

"Mr. Goldman."

"I am Mr. Goldman."

"Indeed. Could I see you alone for a few minutes?"

"Certainly. Step this way."

Alice's beauty would have gained assent to her request, even without her display of diamonds.

The broker led the way to his private office, and, dismissing his female stenographer, placed a chair.

"What I wish to say is strictly confidential," murmured Alice.

Goldman took the hint and, rising, closed the door.

Alice handed him a card.

It bore the name of "Mrs. Austruther" and a New York address.

"You are a custom house broker," began Alice. "I—er—I suppose you will wonder at me. I have acted on the spur of the moment. You looked at me in the elevator, sir. I—really, I hardly know how to begin. I saw your sign, and—"

She had begun just right.

Goldman adjusted his necktie and smiled.

Already he was convinced that this diamond lady was smitten with his personal charms.

"Speak right out, Mrs. Austruther," he said. "If you have any confidential business to put my way, I—er—"

"I'm a stranger in Boston, sir. Really, I feel that I have been too bold."

"But what—"

"The fact is," said Alice, dropping her voice, "I want a man's advice—the advice of a man in your line. I am a woman who commands admission to pretty near the top of New York society. Secretly I am a dealer in diamonds and other precious stones. I have been able—no matter how—to work in my gems from abroad free, and—but, really, I am overstepping the mark. To a total stranger! I don't know how I ever came to do it. I must go."

She arose, her face covered with blushes, for Alice has the rare gift of being able to blush at will.

"Stay," broke in Goldman, laying his hand lightly on her arm. "Don't be afraid of me. If there is anything I can do in my line—"

"Oh, it may not be in your line. What I want is a little advice. That is, not just now—in a few days. My broker in New York has decamped. I am at a loss to replace him. I thought I would try Boston. But give me one of your cards, sir. I will call again. Really, I can't say any more just now."

"Don't be in a hurry," replied the broker, handing her a card. "I am not at all busy to-day. Can't I call on you. If—"

"Oh, no! I couldn't think of such a thing! I will see you to-morrow, Mr. Goldman. It is just that I am expecting a shipment of diamonds. All you can possibly do for me is to give me the address of some custom house broker in New York who will see me through in case of trouble."

"Your shipment comes to New York?"

"Yes—no. I don't know. Not necessarily."

"Oh, it has not left the other side yet?"

"No."

"It could be directed to Boston?"

"I suppose so."

Goldman looked Alice full in the eyes.

"This is Saturday. Call again on Monday at about this time. I may have something to say to you which will be interesting," he said.

"I will call. Now, good day."

The broker held out his hand and she took it.

"I feel that we shall be good friends," he remarked.

"If I could feel that way, we could work together and make good money—it would please me better," she said.

"Perhaps we can do that, too. Perhaps to-morrow you will decide to put me wise to your methods of importing. We are none of us too old to learn."

"Perhaps I shall," laughed Alice. "But now I really must go."

Goldman escorted her to the outer door.

"Good day, Mrs. Austruther," he said, bowing profoundly. "I trust that by to-morrow I shall have something to report."

Alice was triumphant when she entered the elevator.

"If that man is not a crook, then I never saw one," she said to herself. "But have I fooled him? We shall see."

Her plan had been thought out as she went along.

"If Goldman, as Washton's broker, was in on the smuggling deal, then he must be laboring under a fear that their game was at least suspected by the custom house people, if, indeed, it was not he who had stolen the sherry casks."

Allowing that this was not so, Alice reasoned, he would, if he was an honest man, promptly inform the authorities of their peculiar interview, and offer his aid to lay a trap to catch her.

If he did not do this, then she was ready to write him down as a crook.

But how to ascertain this?

It was impossible, to be sure, of course, in these days of telephones, but at least she could make the try.

Alice, coming out on State street, made a sign to one of the cabbies always in waiting there.

"I want you to drive me to the opposite side of the street and wait there," she said. "Stand by the window, so that I may speak to you when a certain man comes out of this building. I will point him out to you, and you are to follow him—understand?"

"All right, ma'am," replied the cabby, with a grin. "I've had such jobs before, ma'am. You may trust me."

"Be sharp on the job now, and there will be no haggling over your pay."

Alice expected a long wait and got one of about half an hour.

Goldman then appeared.

The cabby was quick to catch on when Alice pointed him out.

Meanwhile she had prepared herself for business.

The diamonds had disappeared; so did various and sundry other things which had helped to make her look her part.

Having half an hour to work in, Alice was able to make a marked change in her personal appearance.

She felt safe even to meet Broker Goldman face to face.

But it all went differently from what she imagined.

She was prepared to have him go to the custom house, in which case she would certainly have rung off.

But he did not.

She was prepared also to have him go to Moses Washton's place on Federal street, but he did not do that, either.

Instead, he walked rapidly up State street to Wash-

ington, turned south and kept on until he came to the corner of Summer street, where he popped in at a side door.

Alice immediately dismissed her cab.

The upper part of this building appeared to be occupied by the wholesale jewelry trade.

There was a lapidary's sign on the bulletin board, also one of a maker of badges; another of a dealer in pearls.

Another still read:

"Weinsteck & Braun, Importers of Diamonds and Precious Stones."

"This amounts to little," thought Alice. "The man may have legitimate business with any of these people. I only wish I knew where he had gone. If it is to that diamond importing firm it would be significant, to say the least."

She determined to satisfy herself on that point.

Slipping on a veil, she ascended the stairs and took her stand in the hall near Weinsteck & Braun's door.

The building was an old-fashioned one, and the hall was dark.

Alice, feeling secure in her disguise, had little fear of being recognized.

Nor was she.

In about twenty minutes her patience was rewarded by seeing the broker come out of Weinsteck & Braun's.

He merely glanced at her, and hurried downstairs.

"Good!" thought Alice. "Now have I accomplished anything? Really, I would not undertake to say."

CHAPTER III.

HARRY, THROUGH THE TELEGRAPH BOY, SOLVES THE MYSTERY OF THE STOLEN WINE.

Young King Brady, proceeding down on Devonshire street, sought and obtained a personal interview with the postmaster.

This was by no means difficult, and that official, knowing of the case through General Ferrars, they got down to business at once.

"I don't see how I can help you," said the postmaster. "The letter carriers who cover that part of Richmond street are two in number. I have questioned them both, and both declare that they know no such person as Mrs. Burns in that house."

"Unless the letter is a pure fake, one of them is not giving it straight," replied Harry. "And I suspect that to be the case. Here is a decoy letter that I have written to T. B. When should it be delivered at 92 Richmond street if it is posted now?"

"Within an hour."

"What are the names of these two letter carriers?"

"John Markey and Peter Hulse."

"Of the two which one would you sooner suspect of crooked work?"

"Markey—decidedly. Hulse is an old man, and we know him to be thoroughly reliable."

"Do you know anything against Markey?"

"No. But he has only been on the force a year."

"I propose to shadow him from the time he leaves the office. Here is the letter. Would you like to hear it read?"

"Yes, I should."

Harry took the letter from the envelope and read it as follows:

"T. B.—Your letter was duly received. I have at last decided to meet you. If you will be in front of the North Station at eight o'clock this evening I shall be there. I shall have a pink carnation in my buttonhole and in addition shall wipe my forehead with a red silk handkerchief. Now, understand me definitely: I strongly suspect that you are one of the thieves. If so, and you say so frankly, I give you my solemn promise not to attempt to have you arrested, but to come right down to business; but if you conceal the fact, and I find out later on that you have humbugged me, then expect no mercy at my hands.

"Yours truly,"

"MOSES WASHTON."

"That is all right, providing he don't know Washton by sight," said the postmaster. "In that case I hardly think it will work."

"I do not expect to have to rely upon this meeting," replied Harry. "Whoever gets that letter—and I hope to find that out through shadowing the carrier—will hear from me at once."

"Oh, I see your game. Well, I wish you success."

"But I must see this man Markey."

"You shall. He should be in the carriers' room now. I will point him out to you personally, for the fewer we take into our confidence the better."

Harry sealed the letter and they went downstairs and mailed it.

The postmaster then led him through the carriers' room and pointed out Markey.

He was a red-headed proposition, with a face which Young King Brady thought should make any one suspect him of crooked work.

Harry posted himself outside the door where the letter carriers came out.

He expected but little trouble in identifying his letter, for he had enclosed it in a green envelope, which he went to considerable trouble to get.

He also carefully informed himself of the exact route covered by Markey, so if the man went off his beat he would be sure to know it.

Having taken all these precautions, Young King Brady got on the job.

He had not long to wait before the carriers came trooping out.

Harry fell in behind Markey and followed him as far as Hanover street on Washington.

Here he should have kept right on to Causeway street, if he intended to strike his route by the nearest way.

But, instead of that, he turned up Hanover street and, walking very rapidly, got into Cambridge street, where he paused in front of a Western Union Telegraph office

and looked in the window for an instant, then walking slowly on.

Young King Brady's eyes were right on him.

He felt sure that the green letter would turn out to be the cause of this maneuver, and so it proved.

In a moment a telegraph boy shot out of the office and joined the carrier.

Harry had the satisfaction of seeing the green letter passed over to the lad, while the carrier shot down Cambridge street, now the shortest way for him to get to the beginning of his route.

The boy was a slim, dark fellow, with prominent nose and handsome black eyes.

Clearly he was a child of the streets, but he looked like a person of more than ordinary intelligence for all that.

He opened the letter, hastily read it and, thrusting it into his pocket, returned to the telegraph office, where he took his seat with the other boys on the waiting bench.

"Slick bit of work," thought Harry. "He knows that carrier and they put up the job between them. That boy would make a detective if he was trained."

Young King Brady hurried to the headquarters of the Western Union Telegraph Company in Boston.

Here he had no difficulty in obtaining an interview with the manager, for the Bradys have often had business with the company in their own line.

Without going into details, he stated enough of the case to make the manager understand what he wanted, and received his promise of every assistance.

"Have the boy sent to my room at Young's Hotel with a bogus despatch," he said, and the manager promised that it should be done.

Harry returned to the hotel and arranged with the clerk that when the boy came he should be sent up to the room.

He had to wait about an hour, and then came the expected knock at the door.

Harry arose and opened it.

There stood the telegraph boy, despatch in hand.

"Are you Mr. Brady?" he asked.

"I am. Step in."

As the boy entered Harry turned the key in the door and put it into his pocket.

He had learned the lad's name through the manager, who telegraphed to the substation for the information, and he was able to spring it on him now.

"James McNally," he said, displaying his shield, "consider yourself under arrest."

The boy's face turned deathly white.

"Wha—what for?" he gasped.

"Attempted blackmail."

"I—"

"Wait. This is a very serious matter. Hand over that letter in the green envelope, which your friend, the letter carrier, gave you this morning?"

"I hain't got no sich a letter. Youse is dead wrong, boss."

Harry made a jump for him, caught him foul and drew the letter from the inside pocket of his jacket.

"Now, lie some more to me and I'll land you in jail," he said, sternly.

Jim McNally collapsed, and dropped limply into a chair.

"Here's the letter you sent to Mr. Washton," said Harry, holding it up. "Now, boy, you are up against the United States Secret Service people. I am Young King Brady, the detective. Be good, quit your lying and help us out in this case and you get time off enough to do it. Try anything else and you lose your job and this black-mailing letter will surely land you in jail. Are you with us or against us? Come, decide!"

"Chee! I'm wit' yer, boss, of course. I'd be a blame fool to try annything else."

"You show your sense. What do you know about this stolen wine business? Out with every word of it, and, mind you, tell the truth."

"Well, den, dat night I was down by de storehouses a-fishin' off de dock."

"Wait a minute. You live in South Boston?"

"Yes. I board dere along wit' Miss Markey."

"The mother of the letter carrier?"

"His wife."

"I see. What's your address?"

The telegraph boy gave it, and Harry jotted down the street and number.

"Now go on," he said.

"Well, I was afishin' dere about eleven o'clock an' I seen a tug come into de slip alongside de storehouse.

"I t'ought it kinder strange dat it should come so late, and as I was afraid dey might be harbor pirates an' I might get into trouble I took a sneak. Dere was a lot of lumber piled on de dock an' I hid behind dat. Dat's de way I come to see dem snake de wine casks out of de Washington stores."

"Did they come out of the door or by the window?"

"Dey was let down out of de second-story winder—see?"

"Who by?"

The telegraph boy squirmed in his chair.

"I'll get killed if I tell dat, boss," he said.

"You know the man?"

"Yep."

"You will get jailed and lose your job if you don't tell. You'd better help the Bradys and earn a reward."

"It was Dick Ryan, de watchman, and he lives next door to me."

"I see. And these casks were loaded on the tug?"

"Yep."

"Do you know the men who received them?"

"No; but I'd know 'em again if I seen 'em, you bet."

"Do you know where they took the casks?"

"Dat's what I overheard, boss. Ryan he calls down out of de winder when de last cask came down:

"Now, see dem safe at McBride's, and we've got diamonds enough to make us all rich, as sure as ever youse is standing on dat dock!"

"Ah, ha! And where is this McBride's?"

"Boss, dat's what I don't know, honest, and I hain't had time to find out. I tort when I writ dat letter dat old man Washton would stake me and I'd quit me job and look it up."

"Do you think the men were harbor thieves?"

"I'm sure of it. The tug was a little one, and dey had her name on de pilot house covered with cloth and a hcrse blanket hung down behind to hide it astern. Of course,

dey was harbor t'ieves. Dey couldn't have been nothin' else."

"How did you find out who the casks belong to?"

"Oh, I told Jack Markey all about it. 'Dere's money in dis,' he says. 'I'll pump Dick Ryan and find out who dem casks belongs to.' He done it. Dere wasn't no trouble. Ryan he talked about de mysterious robbery to everybody. 'Twas dead easy. Den I made a stab at Washton. I never tort it would get me into a snap like dis."

"It may prove a lucky snap for you, Jim, if you handle yourself right."

"What do you want me to do?"

"To work for the Bradys a day or two. Meanwhile you are to stop right here; if we catch you going home or you say a word to Markey that spells jail—see?"

"Will you see de boss about me?"

"It's all arranged. You will go with me to the office now and your boss will confirm what I say. The first thing we want to get at is where this McBride's is. That will be your job to find out."

"But how can I do it?"

"I'll show you how. Now, come with me."

And Young King Brady took the telegraph boy back to his office, where the manager, acting under instructions from his chief, placed Jim at the service of the Bradys.

Thus easily was Harry's task accomplished.

The mystery of the robbery was a mystery no longer, thanks to the telegraph boy.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD KING BRADY LEARNS OF THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

Moses Washton's wholesale wine store was not an attractive place, by any means.

It was located on Federal street, near the foot of Summer, and occupied the ground floor of one of those low, brick buildings which were hastily erected in Boston after the great fire, in the early seventies.

The place was shabby to the last degree.

In front was a long room, partially filled with casks, with a dingy office in the rear, up three neck-breaking steps.

Here lived Washton's aged bookkeeper, while the only other employe, a stout youth of nineteen, who was at once office boy and porter, hung around among the barrels and cases outside.

At a little after eleven o'clock Old King Brady, dressed in a cheap business suit and wearing a big diamond scarf pin and an equally valuable stone in a ring, entered the store with a business-like air.

"Mr. Washton in?" he demanded of the boy.

"No; he hasn't been here since day before yesterday," was the reply.

"Out of town?"

"Don't know."

"When will he be in?"

"Can't say. He might come any time; he mightn't come at all."

Disgusted with his lack of success with the boy, Old King Brady pushed on into the office and tackled the bookkeeper.

The old man looked him over, curiously.

"What do you want to see Mr. Washton for?" he asked.

"Private business. I am from New York."

"Your name?"

"The name will be Joe McHenry, if you can telephone Washton. I am satisfied that he wants to see me."

"Are you McHenry?"

"I am from McHenry."

"Oh!"

The bookkeeper wrote something in the big ledger over which he was working, and then laid down the pen.

"Why didn't McHenry come himself?" he asked.

"I will explain that to Mr. Washton when I see him."

"He is not an easy man to see. Just now he is particularly busy, but as I happen to know that he wants to see McHenry I suppose I am justified in telling his representative where he might find him. He does not always come here, but I understand he is in town. If you will go to the address which I am about to give you and knock three times on the door it will be opened, and if Mr. Washton wants to see you the person who answers your knock will tell you what to do."

The bookkeeper then wrote on a slip of paper: "Peter Van Vose, No. — Province court, room 1, third floor."

"Thank you," said Old King Brady, taking the slip and starting to depart.

"Just a minute," said the bookkeeper. "If you should see Mr. Washton I'd thank you to tell him that I would like to see him here some time to-day."

Old King Brady promised to do so, and left the store.

"That business is a blind, beyond all doubt," he said to himself. "Lucky the collector got hold of those letters. This would have been a tough case to handle if he had not."

He hurried up on Washington street and, plunging into the maze of blind alleys between Boston's Broadway and Tremont street, finally brought up before a dingy, three-story building which had once been a dwelling house.

This was No. — Province court.

On the ground floor was a cheap restaurant, on the floor above a tailor and a hatter, both of the repairing sort.

On the third floor was a "metal spinner," in the front room, according to the sign. On the door of the back room was a rusty, old sign, reading:

"Peter Van Vose."

What P. Van V.'s business was the sign did not state.

Old King Brady determined to get a look into the room, anyhow, if such a thing was possible, and tried the door.

Finding it locked, he proceeded to do as he had been told in the first place, and he knocked three times upon the door.

Immediately he heard a shuffling of feet inside the room and a little round panel was opened and a man's eye appeared.

"What is it you want?" he asked.

"To see Moses Washton."

"You have made some mistake. There is no such man here."

"Say to him 'Joe McHenry,'" said Old King Brady. "I came here from the Federal street store. There is no mistake."

The panel was instantly closed.

Voices could now be heard inside the room, but the old detective could not distinguish words.

Presently the panel opened again, and once more the eye appeared.

"Go downstairs and stand in the court," said the same voice. "Mr. Washton will join you in a minute."

"Very well," replied Old King Brady, and downstairs he went.

"All this is to keep me in ignorance of what is going on in that room," he thought.

In a few minutes a short, stout man, with a round, bullet head, came downstairs.

He looked at Old King Brady, curiously, and said:

"Are you Mr. McHenry?"

"What about answering my question before you ask another?"

"I am the man who called at the place upstairs."

"Very well. I am Washton; but you, I take it, are not McHenry, or you would not answer as you do."

"I am not Joe McHenry, but I am here in answer to your letter to him."

"Why didn't he come himself?"

"He couldn't."

"But why? I wanted McHenry. I didn't want anybody else."

"Joe McHenry is dead."

"Dead! Why in thunder didn't you say so in the first place? I haven't any business with you."

"Not so fast, Mr. Washton. My name is Daly. I am a detective on McHenry's lines. We have often worked partners together on cases. When poor Mac died I laid him out and took charge of his effects. I opened your letter and concluded to come to Boston and see you. Of course, you don't have to employ me. It is up to you."

"Do you know Al Dater?"

"No; not personally. I have heard of him, of course. I doubt, though, if he has heard of me. Mac was no talker. He knew many people, but he did not introduce them to each other. That would not have been business in his line."

"The business I had for McHenry is a very confidential matter. I don't feel like taking up with a stranger, Mr. Daly. For all I know you may be a detective——"

"I certainly am."

"I mean not to be trusted. As for me, what proof have I that McHenry is actually dead?"

"Here is your proof."

Old King Brady produced his newspaper cutting, which Washton read.

"That seems to settle it," he remarked. "Blest if I know what to do."

"Suppose you see Al Dater," suggested Old King Brady, taking the bull by the horns.

"He is in Chicago."

"For which the saints be praised," thought the old detective.

"Oh, come, and let's have a drink and talk it over," he said, abruptly. "I'm as good a man as Joe McHenry any day in the week. You have nothing at all to fear from me."

They adjourned to a neighboring cafe.

Without going into every detail, it is enough to say that Old King Brady won out, and that within ten minutes' time.

Washton got him into a private room and told the story of the missing wine.

"Now the point is right here, Mr. Daly," he added; "there were diamonds and other things in those casks. There are three of us in partnership in the business. We have a little private company organized, which among ourselves we call the 'League of Three,' of which your humble servant is one. It is my honest belief that my partners have put up a job on me, perhaps only one, perhaps both. If so, I want to know it—must know. Of course, I want to recover the stuff, if it can be done. Incidentally I am gunning for revenge. If I've been robbed by my partners they must be made to disgorge and punishment must follow. It is up to you!"

"And how heavy are you putting it up to me? Do you want them done up? You see, I'm a man who speaks right out, Mr. Washton."

"Can it be arranged?"

"Most certainly. I have men in New York who are doing jobs for me of that sort right along."

"That's what Al Dater told me. Only for that I wouldn't have consented to talk to you, of course."

"It isn't too late to back out now, if you want to. I'm not forcing my services on you, Mr. Washton."

"Oh, it's all right. I've taken a liking to you. I've made up my mind to go ahead."

"You will not regret it. Now, post me, please. You needn't tell me all your business. That isn't necessary at all. I'll put the questions and you can answer such as you please."

More drinks were ordered, and then Old King Brady got right on the job.

"Who are your partners?" was his first question. "Of course, that you will have to tell."

"Jake Goldman, the custom house broker, No. — State street, is one. The other is the diamond importing firm of Weinstech & Braun, on Washington street."

"Two there?"

"No; Weinstech is dead. It is only Braun."

"And which of these men do you suspect?"

"Either or both. They are a pair of crooks."

"I wonder what he thinks of himself?" Old King Brady inwardly chuckled.

"But you have nothing to go by?" he asked aloud.

"No. The fault was Goldman's. He neglected to get the wine off the *Aurantia*, as he should have done."

"Do you imagine he really was sick?"

"I have no possible means of knowing."

"You have had detectives at work, you say?"

"Yes; nothing came of it. I bounced them. They were making a show of themselves, and suspicion was

being directed toward me from all the fuss that was being made over the loss of three pipes of sherry, but that was Braun's wish."

"Did Goldman approve of the detectives?"

"No; he opposed it."

"It would look as if it might be up to Braun, then."

"Well, yes; if you look at it that way."

"Have you said anything to your partners which would lead them to believe that you suspect them?"

"No."

"Perhaps they suspect you?"

"Shouldn't wonder. I only wish I had the goods. They could think as they pleased."

"And you——"

"Well, perhaps they could find me, and perhaps they couldn't."

"I see; and this bring me to the most important point of all."

"I know what you are getting at—the value of the invoice. I sha'n't answer that yet; but I may later on. We will see how you get along first."

"You will have to if we are to come to a settlement."

"Cut that out! I've told all I am going to tell now."

"One thing more: Your League of Three has been in business for some time?"

"About five years."

"You have brought in lots of stuff in wine during that time."

"Well, quite some!" replied Washton, with a grin. "But ring off, now. It's up to you to find out what became of those casks. When that is done I'll tell you what to do next."

"Very good. I accept the commission."

"Well, then, what do you propose to do? How are you going to get to work?"

"That I shall have to think about."

"Whatever you do, don't go near the warehouse. There has been too much of that."

"I can make no promises, Mr. Washton. I must be left free to work the case in my own way; but I certainly shall not go there representing you."

"Bad luck to the whole business!" groaned Washton. "About all the spare cash I could put my hands on is tied up in this."

"Where can I see you? I understand you are seldom at your Federal street store."

"Not very often. That business has all gone to pot and what little there is of it I leave to my manager to make what he can out of. You can see me here any day between eleven and twelve."

"Very good. At eleven on Monday I'll be on hand if I have anything to report."

"Want any money?"

"No. I don't do business that way. We'll settle up after we get through."

And with this they separated.

Old King Brady was certain that the man had no suspicion of the truth.

"Now, I wonder what sort of business he does in that back room?" he asked himself.

Washton went back to Province court, while Old King

Brady, having satisfied himself that he was not being shadowed, strolled back to Young's Hotel.

CHAPTER V.

OLD KING BRADY MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

The Brady Detective Bureau dined in their private apartments at the hotel, and while dining compared notes.

"Complete success all along the line," declared the old detective. "I never should have imagined that we could accomplish so much in one morning upon a case which looked as complicated as this did at first sight, and it is all owing to the shrewdness of General Ferrars in holding up Washton's mail."

"Not Alice's work," put in Harry. "That is entirely her own getting up."

"True; and it may prove to be the most successful stroke of all. But now we must decide upon our course."

"Where is the telegraph boy, Harry?"

"I sent him out to dinner. He is to report here at three. Of course, I didn't want to treat him as a prisoner."

"It would have been very foolish. He will probably tell his friend the carrier everything, but that we must take our chances on. Now to business."

"First, what do I do with the telegraph boy?"

"First to dispose of Alice. Nothing for you to-day, my dear; but on Monday you keep your appointment with Goldman, as arranged."

Alice nodded.

"As for myself," continued Old King Brady, "I must do as little as possible in my assumed character of Detective Daly. Indeed, I think that for to-day I shall do nothing at all, which brings us to the telegraph boy."

"And so?"

"Give me time to think. Admitting his statement to be true—and I believe it is—the actual thief is the watchman. He must be shadowed to-night. The question is, would it be best for the boy to do this alone or with us?"

"It is up to you to decide."

"I will talk with the boy before deciding. On the whole, I think perhaps we had better postpone everything until to-morrow, except one little job that you and I can undertake, Harry, and that is to see what is going on in that upper room in Province court."

"Well, I'm ready."

"It is important that we should know, but, stay, we may as well postpone that, too. Let the telegraph boy work for us the rest of the day. I have faith in him. But here he comes."

There was a knock at the door just then, and Harry's "Come in" brought Master Jim McNally.

He was immediately introduced to Old King Brady, and Alice, and appeared quite overcome at the honor.

Old King Brady complimented him on his shrewdness in the matter of the letter, which seemed to tickle him greatly.

"And now, Jim," said the old detective, "you want to

get on the job. If we win out in this case through your help, you will never have any reason to regret it. I want your advice. My idea would be that you ought to shadow Ryan to-night in disguise."

"It would have to be a good disguise, boss. De gazabo knows me too well to make it safe for me to try it any other way."

"Quite so. I'll fix all that. But that can't be done till night. In the meantime give me a particular description of that tug. Were there only two men aboard?"

"If there was any more, I didn't see dem, boss."

"When they finally pulled out, did one go into the pilot house and the other take to the engine room?"

"Dat's just exactly what dey did."

"Then probably there were only two of them. Now if we could only locate that tug this afternoon it might help a lot."

"It will be a hard job, boss, dere's so many tugs about de harbor."

"That's right. But did you notice anthing peculiar about this one?"

"Only one t'ing."

"And what was that?"

"She had been fresh painted."

"Sure."

"Yep. I could smell de paint."

"That settles it. What was the color?"

"Black."

"All black?"

"Yep."

"Good! Harry, call up the office and order a business directory sent here."

Harry worked the room telephone, and the directory presently came.

Old King Brady looked among the painters, but found nothing to aid him.

He then looked over the list of ship carpenters, and picked out three names, one in East Boston and two in South Boston.

"If the tug was freshly painted, she was probably repaired first," he declared. "The men may have painted her themselves. You are sure she was old, Jim?"

"Yep."

"What makes you so sure?"

"Oh, because she was so small and clumsy. Dey don't build dem small tugs now."

"I fancy you are right. We will go to these repair yards and see if we can find out anything. If you were to see the tug would you know her, do you think?"

"I'm sure I should."

"Well, chase yourself, and report here at six o'clock sharp. Get around on the water front and see what you can find. Here's a couple of dollars to cover your expenses. Hump yourself, now."

The boy was off on the instant.

"A bright lad, and I believe every word he says," remarked Old King Brady. "But, come, we will go over to South Boston and get to work."

At the first of the shipyards at which they called the Bradys were able to learn nothing, but at the second, away

down on the point, they again hit the nail squarely on the head.

"Why, yes; I repaired a tug about six weeks ago," said the superintendent. "She was the Flamingo—an old tub of a thing, and just about such a craft as you describe."

"Who for?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Watchorn was the name. He does a towing business up the Charles River and about the harbor."

"Where is his place?"

The superintendent gave an address in Charlestown and the detectives got over there as quick as they could.

They were just turning down the street which led to the wharf where Mr. Watchorn had his office, when they met Jim McNally.

The telegraph boy was bursting with suppressed excitement.

"Youse had better chase yourselves if you don't want to be seen," he said. "I've found de tug, and dose two fellers are on board of her. She's de Flamingo. Mr. Watchorn down here owns her. She started out just now."

"Good enough!" said Old King Brady, warmly. "You are all right, Jim. But you see we are on the job, too."

"Did youse find out her name?"

"Oh, yes; but who are the men?"

"Oh, I dunno. I jest seen 'em aboard—one was de engineer, all right, but de oder is only a deckhand, I guess—him what run her dat night, I mean."

"I see. And the other was running the engine to-day?"

"Yep."

"How did you happen to come here?"

"Oh, I got onto one bridge and another and watched out. At last I seen a new-painted tug lying by dis wharf, so I chased around here, and spotted her."

"Good! Now this knocks out the necessity of shadowing Ryan to-night. Come with us, and we will put you in disguise, and you hang around here till the tug returns to-night. Perhaps you can pick up some points. Ryan may even come here."

"Well, all right, boss; but fix me disguise so I can turn into a telegraph boy quick—it may come in handy to do dat very t'ing—see."

"Sharp!" said Old King Brady. "It shall be done."

They started back to Boston at once.

On the way Old King Brady was silent, and Harry let him alone, knowing that he was thinking of the case.

They left the car at Scollay Square and turned up Cornhill; putting it through the Tremont Row, the detectives took the telegraph boy to a costumer's whom they sometimes employ.

Here Old King Brady purchased a suit of ragged clothes, which the lad could slip right over his uniform, and showed him how to conceal his cap while he wore an old hat, also provided.

Then, taking him aside, he gave him his instructions.

"Get your supper," he said, "and then return to that wharf. Watch there until midnight; if there is no move made to take the tug out by that time give it up and return to the hotel. If they take the tug out it is up to you to follow it. I can't tell you how to do this. To me it seems that the only way will be for you to get aboard and

hide. This, of course, will be a big risk, and you must take no chances of getting yourself into trouble. If you fail to see any way to follow it will not be laid up against you. Indeed, I will tell you right now that I hardly expect you to succeed."

"I will do me best, boss," replied McNally, simply. "If dere is any way of gettin' dere, trust me to find it out."

And with that Old King Brady let him go.

"That boy is as bright as they make 'em," said he to Harry. "He is going to prove a winner. You will see, but you want to get after him and help him out in case he needs help. So pick out your disguise and jump into it as quick as ever you can."

"You seem to have changed your mind, then, about knocking off work for to-day?"

"Certainly. This is too good a chance to be missed."

"So I think," replied Harry, and, changing to a costume which made him look a cross between a young workingman and a tramp, he started after the telegraph boy.

Old King Brady settled with the costumer and went back to the hotel to supper.

He found that Alice had gone to visit a lady friend whom she had made in Boston while working on a case some time before.

Supper over, the old detective started for Province court.

He was still puzzling his brains over the mystery of room No. 1, third floor.

In spite of the fact that it was after business hours the door of the old house was open.

The restaurant was lighted up, and the detective could see through the windows that there were a few people seated at the tables.

But what interested him most was the roof, for reasons which will soon be shown.

This was flat, which is unusual with Boston's older houses, and went to prove that the third story had been added within recent years.

"There might be something doing there," thought the old detective; "but we shall see."

He concealed himself in a doorway opposite and continued to watch the house for a considerable time.

People passed in and out, but all of them appeared to be connected with the restaurant.

At last he ventured upstairs and listened long at Peter Van Vose's door.

It was all dark up here, and he could not hear a sound inside of either of the rooms.

"Of course, the chances are that no one comes here nights," he said to himself, "and Saturday night, of all others, is the most unlikely. I am afraid there is nothing coming out of this."

But there was, as he was soon to learn.

Satisfied that there was no one in the Van Vose room, Old King Brady got out his electric flashlight and began poking about.

There was a door on the opposite side from the room, and this proved to communicate with a closet, where there was a ladder leading up to the roof.

The old detective was on the point of climbing it, for he had his own ideas as to how the roof could be made to

serve his ends, when suddenly he heard footsteps on the stairs.

He drew back into the closet and listened, expecting to hear the footsteps halt on the floor below, but they did not; instead of that, they started up the last flight.

In a moment two men had halted in front of the door of Peter Van Vose.

"I began to think you were never coming," said one—it was too dark to make out either of them.

"I was delayed," was the reply, and instantly Old King Brady recognized the voice of the man who had looked out of the peephole.

"Well, there's time enough," was the reply.

"Oh, sure. Wait till I get the door open, and we will talk it over."

He fumbled at the door with a key and finally opened it.

"Stand as you are till I strike a match," he said.

The match flared up, and the watching detective caught sight of a workbench, a little stationary engine, and a queer-looking machine, with a flat, circular plate attached to it.

It struck Old King Brady that it might be a lapidary's shop, but he had not time to see much.

The man lighted a gas jet and as his companion started to enter the old detective got a full view of his face.

It was Mr. Munroe, the superintendent of the Washington Bonded Warehouses.

"Ah, ha! Now we strike into a new vein," thought Old King Brady. "What is this fellow doing at Moses Wash-ton's secret hold-out, I'd like to know?"

And as the door was closed upon Mr. Munroe the old detective was determined that he would know, come what might.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW MYSTERY AT THE WASHINGTON WAREHOUSES

There are ways and ways of surrounding difficult situations in the detective business, and that the ways unknown to a man of Old King Brady's experience are hardly worth knowing goes without saying.

But it was no new scheme which Old King Brady was about to try now.

He had come prepared for this very thing—he had worked it many times before.

Quickly he ascended to the roof, closing the scuttle with the least possible noise.

Proceeding to the rear, he lay flat on the gravel and looked down.

The windows below were those of Peter Van Vose's room.

Both were partially open at the top, as the night was a warm one for the time of year.

"Good," thought the old detective. "I shall not have to do it, which suits me better, for it is always a risk for a man of my weight."

He could hear the voices within the room distinctly.

What he had intended to do, if this had not been the case was to make use of an ingeniously constructed lad-

der, made of rope as fine as ordinary twine, but strengthened by a certain process, so that it would bear a weight of at least three hundred pounds.

Securing this to the chimney, the old detective would have lowered it down in front of one of the windows and climbed down upon it.

It was a plan which he had often adopted, but there were many objectionable features to it, and he felt relieved to feel that he did not have to resort to it now.

So he remained as he was, for he could hear perfectly all that was being said in the room below.

They were talking about Washton.

Van Vose—Old King Brady subsequently learned that the man who had looked out at him was this person—was abusing the wine merchant roundly.

"I tell you, he is the meanest man in Boston," the old detective heard him say. "He thinks his partners put up this job on him, and it may be that they started to do it, for all I know; but one thing is certain, he had been laying for his chance to do them this long time—that I positively know."

"I know nothing of him, Van," was the reply. "I don't doubt that he is all you say he is; but let's get down to business. As I wrote you, there are Secret Service men on the case now, and it seems to me that it is about time for us to act."

"Yes. I got your letter of course, and it kind of gave me a jolt. You are sure the casks are safe?"

"Why, certainly. I have them hidden, as I told you."

"But who helped you hide them? There is always a chance of a slip."

"There can't be any in this case. The man is deaf and dumb. He could not tell where he helped me put them if he would. Besides, he was a stupid fellow, and had no suspicion of what it all meant."

"When did you see them last?"

"This noon."

"Oh, that's all right, then. The matter ought to have been attended to before, but you were so determined that nothing should be done until everything had quieted down that I let you have your own way. You still think that your watchman is the fellow who stole the wine?"

"I am sure he is in the deal. It can't be otherwise. The warehouse was found locked and he alone had the key; but how in the world he ever came to suspect that there was anything in those casks besides wine is what gets away with me."

"The explanation can only be as I told you. This precious League of Three have made so much money out of their diamond smuggling business that they are beginning to turn on each other. Either Goldman or Braun is at the back of the job. Perhaps both are in it. I would have liked to have been about when they tapped the casks which they went to so much trouble to steal."

"It made somebody rich—that's sure. But, as I said before, we must get away with the goods to-night. The coming of these Bradys has thoroughly scared me. They have the reputation of succeeding in every case they undertake."

"It is serious. Well, I agree with you. We had best get the goods out to-night."

"And we jump the town together, as arranged?"

"Yes; I am sick and tired of working for this blessed League of Three, for forty dollars per, while they are pulling in all kinds of money. Why, man, I am one of the most skillful lapidaries in the world! I want you to understand I have altered hundreds of stones for them since we started in this business, and I am morally certain that, in addition to the smuggled ones, many have been stolen goods, wherever they got them. They are a bad bunch, and if one is to slave one's life out for crooks one expects to be paid accordingly, which I never have been."

"Oh, that's all right, Van," replied Munroe. "You have sung that song until I am tired of hearing it. The hour of your revenge has come. When you picked those papers out of Washton's pocket and caught on to the fact that they were expecting a hundred thousand dollar shipment of diamonds hidden in sherry casks you repaid yourself for all you have suffered."

"Right, if we get the goods, Tom; but it will be all through your shrewdness if we do."

"Not at all. I'd have been a fool if I had not acted just as I did. Here I had been listening to your tale of woe for a year. You came to me with your stolen papers and explained the case, asking me if there was no way in which these casks could be directed to the Washington Stores."

"And you told me there was none."

"I could see none. Then, fancy my amazement when in they came in the ordinary course of business."

"Which I can't understand, unless Goldman was at the bottom of it."

"He was, of course—either he or Braun."

"And then that is where your shrewdness came in. You put the casks in one place, and then immediately hide them and see me. That night the ones you substituted for them were stolen. Well, somebody got badly left."

"I should say so! But there is no sense in talking all this over. I'm ready to quit Boston for good, and leave my wife behind me. We have been quarreling for twenty years."

"Settled. We will jump to California together. There we can easily dispose of the diamonds, and then, as we have planned, we hike to Burmah and start in buying rubies. There's barrels of money in it, and, with my experience, I flatter myself that I am the boy to get some of it out."

"And in the meantime we want to get our diamonds out of the sherry casks. What time shall I meet you at the stores?"

"Say, midnight. It won't be safe sooner. By that time we ought to be able to dodge in without the police seeing us."

"All right. I'll be on hand, Tom. I suppose some people would consider us fools for letting the matter set so long; but I believe you were right."

"Of course. What we don't have no one can get from us. We have allayed suspicion completely by our course. If we manage right it should be two weeks before we are suspected, thanks to your having applied for a vacation."

There was more talk in the same vein.

The old detective found every reason to congratulate himself upon the steps he had taken.

The mystery was a mystery no longer.

If he played his cards carefully there was even a chance that he might find himself in possession of the smuggled diamonds that night.

He remained where he was until he heard Munroe leave the place.

Still he lingered, taking no chances of being caught.

He could hear Van Vose whistling in the room below. Presently he started the little stationary engine going and then followed sounds which the old detectives instantly recognized.

It was the noise a lapidary makes while grinding diamonds.

The mystery of Peter Van Vose's business was now fully explained.

The noise gave Old King Brady every chance to make his escape without being heard, and he was soon on the street again.

He at once returned to the hotel and, finding that Alice was on hand, communicated his discovery to her.

"It clears the case up beautifully," she said. "It seems hardly worth while for me to follow up Mr. Goldman now."

"Can't tell till we see how things turn," replied Old King Brady. "But all this goes to show one thing—it is never best to stop work on a case except for some special reason. If we had dropped everything until Monday, as I at first intended, where should we be now?"

"Quite so. But am I to go with you to-night, Mr. B.?"

"I'll leave that to you, Alice."

"Then I go. Of course, I'll disguise as a man."

"It would be best."

"What do you propose to do?"

"To get into the warehouse ahead of those two rascals and capture them there; but there is a risk, Alice. Better let me tackle them alone."

"Couldn't think of such a thing. I would not consent to have you go alone, with me abed and asleep here at the hotel."

Such is Alice Montgomery.

She is an ideal female detective.

As for fear, she does not know the meaning of the word.

So Alice made her best male disguise, which is simply perfect, and about half-past ten she and Old King Brady started for Cuyler street.

What the old detective dreaded most was meeting the policeman on the beat, lest the man should be in some way mixed up with the Ryan contingent and should undertake to balk his plans by insisting upon being on hand when the plotters came.

But fortune favored them, and Cuyler street was deserted.

Old King Brady and Alice walked to the bulkhead at the end and, turning there, went down to the wharf, which skirted the basin in the rear of the stores.

He had to count the doors carefully, for the big buildings all looked alike, and it was by no means easy to locate the Washington Warehouses in the dark.

Even when he reached the door which he believed to be the right one he returned and counted again to make sure.

Then, assuring himself that there was no one in evidence, he tackled the door with his skeleton keys.

"If this thing is bolted on the inside we are done for," he said; "but I don't think it is, from the feel of it."

It was not.

After many trials, Old King Brady found a key which fitted and got the door open.

They slipped in, leaving the door closed, but not locked.

"We may want to retreat in a hurry," he said; "and to bar the way behind us certainly won't do."

Old King Brady used his flashlight to guide them to the front of the long building, which was well filled with goods of all sorts.

He soon found a place where they could hide behind some big packing cases, and here they settled themselves down to wait.

The plotters were promptly on time.

At five minutes past twelve precisely a key was heard inserted in the lock of the front door, and two men slipped in.

A lantern was immediately lighted, and Old King Brady saw Superintendent Munroe and a tall, dark man, with a very prominent nose.

"And now, where are your casks?" this person demanded.

The voice was that of the lapidary.

"They are here on this side," replied Munroe, leading the way in the direction of the place where Old King Brady and Alice were hiding.

The detectives crouched low and the pair passed them unsuspectingly.

"The others were upstairs, were they not?" demanded Van Vose.

"Yes," was the reply. "I ran these in among casks of wine which I know won't be taken out of bond for months to come."

"How did you manage to change the marks on the other casks?"

"Oh, that was easy; they were some of this same lot. They have been in bond three years now. The owner won't touch them until they have been bonded for at least five."

Their voices died in the distance.

The detectives could no longer hear what was being said.

Suddenly a cry of rage and disgust rang out.

"Van, they are gone! Heavens! Some one must have taken them away this very night!"

"No!"

"I tell you yes! It is that scoundrel Ryan! He must have poked about until he found them."

"Now, now! So much for postponement!" remarked Van Vose.

"This is a great piece of business," breathed Old King Brady. "And now the pie is spoiled."

"Look! Be sure!" cried Van Vose. "The casks may have become shifted. Don't give up so easy, man."

"No; they are gone. I saw them at noon. They were

wedged in here. You can see where the other wine casks have been shifted to let them out. We are done for, Van."

"Alice, I am going to arrest those men when they pass us," said Old King Brady. "Stand ready!"

They waited, listening to their disappointed talk.

At last they gave it up, and started back through the warehouse.

As they came abreast of where Alice and Old King Brady were hiding the latter stepped out into full view.

"Mr. Munroe, consider yourself under arrest. Resist and we fire!" cried the old detective, sternly, as he and Alice covered the pair with their revolvers.

"Old King Brady!" gasped the superintendent.

Instantly he dashed the lantern to the floor, extinguishing it.

Quick as thought, the old detective drew his flashlight, but, for some reason, the thing refused to work.

"Run, Van, for your life!" they heard Munroe shout.

And the pair dashed away through the darkness.

Old King Brady fired, hoping thus to deter them, but still their footsteps could be heard.

CHAPTER VII.

HARRY WORKS IN WITH THIEVES.

On the opposite side of the way from Mr. Watchorn's little office there was a lumber yard, and the proprietor had piled some of his lumber outside.

This gave Young King Brady, when he reached the spot, just the chance he wanted.

There is no better place to hide than among lumber piles, but Harry was not ready to go into hiding just then.

He walked down to the end of the street and stood for a few minutes at the bulkhead.

The Flamingo had returned from wherever she went to during the afternoon, and was now lying, with steam up, moored to Watchorn's wharf.

Harry looked about for Jim McNally, but could see nothing of him.

Still he did not doubt that the telegraph boy was somewhere on the job.

As nobody appeared to be in evidence in this lonely spot, Young King Brady went back to the nearest lumber pile and sat down.

Was it to be a night wasted?

Harry certainly thought so.

He could imagine no reason for any of the plotters putting in an appearance here.

But he did not know the inside workings of the plot then, as he came to know them later—when he plainly saw that he had got on the job just in the nick of time.

For he had not been ten minutes on the lumber, half sitting, half lying, when a man, wearing an overcoat and a slouched hat pulled down over his eyes, came down the street on a brisk walk.

"The person in charge of the tug, whoever he is," thought Young King Brady.

The man looked at him as he passed.

Harry determined to get a better look at his face, feeling also that he would be making good his own part as a tramp.

"Say, mister," he called out, sitting up as he spoke, "could you spare a fellow the price of a beer?"

"No—chase yourself!" snarled the man.

He was a rough-looking fellow, and his face, as seen in the gloom, was certainly not prepossessing.

Harry made no answer, but sprawled back on the lumber.

Meanwhile the man rapped twice on the door of Watchorn's little office.

It was immediately opened by a man, whose face Harry could not see, and the other passed inside.

"Nothing doing, I'm afraid," thought Young King Brady. "That fellow evidently has business here."

But when no light appeared in the office window he wondered if it was so.

Business men do not, as a rule, transact business in the dark.

Twenty minutes and more passed, and then the door suddenly opened, and the man with the slouch hat looked out.

More than that, he looked directly at Young King Brady, calling as he did so:

"Hey, youse—come over here."

Harry slid off the lumber and slouched over to the office.

"You were wanting the price of a beer off of me just now," growled the man. "Do you want it bad enough to work for it?"

"Sure. I'd be glad to get annything to do, boss; I'm clean broke. I hain't had no work dis long while."

"Oh, this is no steady job. Are you anything at working on a tug?"

"Yes; I've been to sea."

"This is a case where you don't want to see too much, and to forget what you have seen. Myself and another are going out in this tug for a while. A man was to have been here to help us, but he hasn't come. If you want to take his place and earn a five, this is your chance."

The man looked him over critically.

Harry felt that he could almost read his thoughts, and that they ran:

"If I give this fellow five dollars he will go on such a drunk that he won't be able to remember where he got it for a week to come."

Perhaps they did, and perhaps they ran in even worse lines.

The man had a villainous face, and looked as if he might even stand for murder, if it would serve his ends.

"Sure, I'll go yer," said Harry, aloud.

"All right. Let her go," replied the man. "Come in here."

Young King Brady passed into the office.

There was a fire burning in a cylinder stove, which gave some light.

Standing by the stove was a short, red-faced man, who looked him over, and then remarked, with a little grunt: "I should think he might do."

"So do I," replied the other. "Any use waiting any longer?"

"No; I don't think there is. We are better off without him than with him, anyhow."

"Sure."

"Do you think he guessed why he was wanted?"

"No, I'm blame sure he didn't. I didn't intend that he should."

"Well, then, shall we let it go this way?"

"Yes; I think we may as well."

Both were silent for a minute, and then the man by the stove said:

"You are sure we ought to get on the job this early?"

"I am. It isn't safe to leave it another instant. He's liable to pull them out any minute. It will be after midnight for his, sure. I should say let's get a move on right now."

"Any time. Steam is up. We may as well start at once."

The man with the slouch hat turned to Harry.

"What's your name?" he demanded.

"Joe Flynn."

"Belong around here?"

"Naw—I'm from de West."

"Tramped here?"

"Yair. I've only been here a couple of days."

"Know anybody in Boston?"

"Not a blame soul."

"Well, it's a go, then."

"Hold on, boss."

"Well?"

"I sees plain enough dat dis here's a crooked job you want me on. No five-spot goes—see?"

The man glared.

"Say, you're too blamed wise," he replied.

"Oh, I'm wise enough, all right."

"I'll make it ten."

"Make it twenty."

"Make it what I say, or you beat it."

"Split de difference. Make it fifteen."

"Oh, don't let's stand here haggling over five dollars," put in the man by the stove. "Give him what he wants and let's get away."

"It's fifteen, then," said the other.

"Half down, boss."

"Blame you—beat it!" snarled the man with the slouch hat.

"Oh, pshaw! Give it to him," said the other. "Come, come, what's the use haggling over a few dollars when there is so much at stake?"

Slouch Hat then counted out seven dollars and gave it to Harry.

"Now are you ready to get to work?" he growled.

"Now I'm ready."

"Then come."

The other man opened a door which led them out upon Watchorn's wharf.

Locking the door behind him, he led the way to the Flamingo, and they all went aboard.

"Lay ashore there, and cast off," waved Slouch Hat.

Harry jumped to obey.

He was back on the tug in an instant.

Meanwhile Slouch Hat had taken the wheel and the other went into the engine room.

The tug was turning toward the Charlestown Bridge, which was open.

"What next, boss?" Harry called.

"Lay around there. You'll be told when you are wanted," was the reply.

This was a relief.

The tug ran through the draw and stood for the harbor.

"Where on earth is the telegraph boy?" thought Harry. "Has he gone back on us, then?"

He was almost inclined to think so, but he knew better in a minute.

He prowled about the deck.

Passing the little cabin, he looked in through the window.

There, curled up on the cushions, was Jim McNally, apparently asleep.

"Good!" thought Harry.

At the same instant the telegraph boy opened an eye and looked at him.

Then the eye closed, and he appeared to drop asleep.

As the tug was making noise enough to drown his voice, Harry ventured to speak.

"Jim," he whispered through the window. "Oh, Jim!"

"Mr. Brady?"

"Yes. You are all right. Did you know me?"

"Not till you spoke. I didn't expect you here."

"Here I am. Now, don't show yourself. Let them find you."

"O. K."

"Did you see those two men?"

"You bet."

"Who are they?"

"Dick Ryan an' de engineer."

Harry turned away, looking to see if either of the men were observing him, but this did not seem to be the case.

He sat down on the low rail of the tug and remained there.

Ryan ran the Flamingo around to South Boston and into the basin in the rear of the Washington Warehouses, where Harry got the order to make fast, which he jumped to obey.

He was sure of where he was, although he had not been in the rear of the warehouses, and there was no sign on this side.

Ryan immediately came down out of the pilot house, and the pair held a hasty conversation in whispers.

Ryan then told Harry to remain on board, and, upon no account to hold any conversation should any one come. He then hurried up the long bulkhead and went around on Cuyler street.

He was gone about ten minutes.

Meanwhile Young King Brady had time to size up the basin.

There was no craft of any kind within its limits save the tug.

When Ryan came back he called out, in a suppressed voice:

"It's all right. Couldn't be better. I don't see a soul."

"On the job," replied the engineer. "Waste no time in talk."

"Come, you," said Ryan, beckoning to Harry.

He opened the big door of the warehouse by the aid of a key and, picking up a lantern, which stood by the door, just inside, proceeded to light it.

"You are to help me run out three casks of wine," he said. "That's your job. You can beat it then."

"All right," replied Harry. "Go ahead."

He was led to the corner of the big enclosure where Superintendent Munroe made his unpleasant discovery.

Here they examined the wine casks, of which there were many, and, selecting three, ordered Harry to help him end them up.

"We have to clear a passage here," he said. "We will turn up the ones we want, so we won't have to look at them again."

"All right, boss," replied Harry, determined to make no talk.

It was hard work for the next fifteen minutes, rolling the casks about.

At last, the way cleared, the three casks were rolled out on the bulkhead and lowered into the tug by the aid of a stout rope.

Harry had several chances to see the heads, and he observed that they had recently been scraped, and bore no marks except the letter "N."

He was puzzled to understand the situation.

Was Ryan just stealing wine on general principles?

He thought so then.

The price of three pipes of sherry was considerable for a man of his standing.

But then there was the telegraph boy's story of the allusion made to the diamonds.

It did not hitch with the wine-stealing theory.

Harry began to get an inkling of the truth as he thought it over.

"They got the wrong casks the other trip, surest thing," he said to himself.

And on this theory he rested.

As we know, it was the truth.

"Now, beat it!" said Ryan, after he had looked up and handed Harry eight dollars.

The engineer was looking out of his door.

"Here! Hold on!" he protested. "That won't do."

"What won't do?" demanded Ryan.

"Let him beat it when we get back to where we started. Do you want him to be able to identify this place?"

"I guess you are right."

"Of course, I am. Get aboard, Flynn. You go back with us."

Ryan made no objection.

But before they started the engineer called to him, and they held a whispered consultation in the engine room.

When Ryan came out his whole manner had changed.

"Say, Flynn," he said, "you stick to us for the rest of the night. We shall have another job for you, come to think of it, which will pay better than the first."

"All right, boss," replied Young King Brady.
 "These men mean to do me up," he thought. "That's plain enough. The engineer has talked Ryan over. He don't intend to let me live to tell of this night's work."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TALE OF THE TELEGRAPH BOY.

Bang! went a heavy door, and Old King Brady knew that he had been balked.

"Back to the rear!" he cried. "They will be for locking us in here next."

"You are sure they went out?" queried Alice. "They may have slammed the door just as a bluff."

"Oh, they went out, all right. It was but a few steps to the door, and Munroe knew the way. Besides I heard him turn the key in the lock."

They hurried out on the bulkhead, locking the door behind them.

"What now?" demanded Alice. "Do you still propose to make the arrests?"

"Let us think. They did not get the casks. Somebody else evidently cut in ahead of them. No, I think I will let it slide. We could prove nothing definite against these men. It is not worth while. What we want is to recover those diamonds and publicly expose the League of Three. Still, I may change my mind."

"So it seems to me. Shall we return to the hotel?"

"We may as well, I think. Likely as not we shall hear something from Harry or the telegraph boy about this affair."

So they returned to Young's and went to bed, fully expecting to find Harry with them in the morning.

But when Old King Brady went into the other room to look for his partner, next morning, he was not there.

The morning dragged on, and still neither Harry nor the telegraph boy turned up.

It began to look pretty serious.

At noon Old King Brady and Alice went to Watchorn's wharf to see if the tug was still there, and found that such was the case.

There was a man in charge of her, whom Old King Brady ventured to address, asking him a few guarded questions.

But when the fellow explained that he had only been hired on Saturday to watch the place over Sunday, they gave it up and returned to the hotel.

"We will wait until morning," said Old King Brady. "If nothing happens by that time something desperate must be done."

But when they got back to the hotel, there was Jim McNally, in his uniform, awaiting their arrival.

"Come! Where in the world have you been, young man?" demanded Old King Brady. "And where is my partner? What have you done with him?"

The telegraph boy was greatly excited.

"I dunno where he is," he declared. "I expect he's dead, all right, dough, and it's too blame bad; but I done

just what you told me, boss. You can't blame me none, for I done me best. I came pretty blame near getting killed meself, too."

"Harry don't kill off so easily," said Alice. "I can't believe that he is dead."

"Not at all," replied the old detective. "Out with your story, Jim."

And what the telegraph boy told Old King Brady we propose to give, as near as possible, in his own words:

"Well, boss, I went down aboard dat tug all right, and nobody seen me do it. I laid in de cabin all de trip an' not a soul came near me only Mr. Brady."

"Call him Mr. Harry. If we are going to do business together it will be easier so to distinguish him from me," put in Old King Brady.

"Well, den, Mr. Harry. He caught onto me from de foist, an' we talked togedder two or t'ree times. He tole me to stick in de cabin an' I done it. Wisht now I'd gone out sooner dan what I did."

"Get ahead with your story," repeated Old King Brady. "You are wasting time and keeping us in suspense."

"Well, we went around to de Washington Warehouse again, boss."

"We? Who do you mean by we?"

"Ryan an' de engineer."

"What's the engineer's name?"

"Don't know. Didn't catch on."

"Get ahead."

"Well, we went to de stores, and dey pulled out t'ree more casks of wine, and Mr. Harry helped dem. Ryan told him to beat it after dey was put aboard, but the engineer interfered and dey took him wit' 'em on de tug and den dey runs over to a wharf over to Chelsea, where dere was a ole winegar factory what had de name McBride's Winegar Works painted acrost it. Dere dey landed de casks, an' Mr. Harry helped.

"And you stuck to the tug?"

"Stopped right in de cabin, boss, like Mr. Harry told me to."

"Well, go on."

"Dey got de last cask in when I seen t'ree men a-comin' out of a gate up by de head of de wharf. Dey was tough for fair, and dey chased demselves to de door of de winegar woiks and sneaked in.

"Next I heard dey was all a-hollerin' an' shots was being fired inside. I gets ashore in a hurry, but before I could get off de wharf out comes Ryan an' de engineer runnin' for all dey was wort', heading for de tug.

"De t'ree was after dem, an' dey fired twict, but didn't seem to do no damage, for Ryan an' de oder feller got aboard, Ryan jest stopping to cast off.

"Dem guys follyed 'em down on de wharf.

"'Beat it, youse t'ieves!' one of 'em yelled. 'Beat it, now, an' don't ever let us ketch you round here ag'in!'"

"And they did their best to beat it, I suppose?" inquired Old King Brady.

"You bet. Dey had 'em scared to det all right—dem t'ree muts. Dey started an' run de tug away as fast as dey could go."

"Go on."

"Dese here muts stood a-watchin' dem, Mr. Brady. Dey didn't fire again.

"Say, dis is great! Dis is better dan junk!" says one. "T'ree more casks of wine, as sure as ever you live! We'll get rich if dis t'ing keeps up."

"Den dey went back troo de gate an' I, seein' me chanst, came out from behind de big post on de wharf, where I was a-hidin' an' sneaked into de winegar woiks, for I was gittin' kinder worried about Mr. Harry—see?"

"I see. Did you find him?"

"Found nōthin'. He wasn't dere. I looked as long as I could an' called him twict. Den dese here muts comes in again and begins rolling out de casks. Dey loads two of dem onto a big, covered wagon, and de third dey rolled in troo de gate."

"And then?"

"Well, boss, I was bound not to lose sight of dem two casks, for I says to meself, I says, 'Mebbe dere was some mistake an' dat's why Ryan run out dese oder t'ree casks,' I says. 'Mebbe de diamonds is in dese here ones,' I says, 'an' it's up to me to find out where dey are took.'

"Right. That is exactly what you should have done, Jim. There is no doubt about you making a good detective, if you ever care to take the business up."

"I should like to, boss. Dat would suit me right down to de ground."

"Go on. What happened next?"

"Well, I watched dem t'ree muts hide de third cask under a lot of old lumber in a yard behind de winegar woiks, and den I climbs into de back of de wagon an' gets in alongside de casks. Dey had a tarpaulin trown over dem, so dat was easy enough. Den dey started and drove almost to Salem—see?"

"Did you find out by their talk who they were?"

"No; dey never called each oder's names wunst; but one was a junk dealer; I t'ink, de oders was jest common t'ieves, out for anyting dey could swipe."

"And you saw the casks landed?"

"Well, I just did, for I landed wit' 'em. De wagon broke down just outside of Salem, Mr. Brady. De hind wheel come off an' down we went. One of de casks give me a crack on de nut what knocked me silly for de minute. Dat was one time I was ketched."

"Oh, the men caught you?"

"Sure! I couldn't go pinned down by the casks, like I was. I got it in de neck, all right. Dey pulled me out an' kicked and beat me someting fierce. I jollied 'em best I could, an' give 'em a yarn how I was in de yard where dey left de wagon, an' how hearin' one of dem say someting about Salem, an' wantin' to go dere meself, I crawls in an' hides. Dunno whedder dey swallowed it or not; anyhow, dey went troo me pockets an' swiped what money I had an' den told me to beat it. Of course I had to do it. Dey would a-shot me if I hadn't. Den, not havin' de price of a ride, I walked all de way to Boston, an' here I am."

"And you have no idea what became of the two casks?"

"Nope. S'pose you t'ink I had orter stuck to de job and found out."

"You did as well as you could, I daresay. You can take us to this wharf in Chelsea?"

"Oh, yes—sure! I know de streets over dere. I kept me eyes open. I can take you right to de place."

"We will go at once, Alice," said Old King Brady. "I don't like this situation very well. It looks to me very much as if Harry may have been done up by Ryan and the engineer before those fellows took hold."

"It certainly does. We ought to get right over there, I think myself."

And without delay they started.

But it proved a little more difficult to locate the place than they had expected.

Perhaps the telegraph boy may have known the streets, but he got badly mixed up just the same, and it was well along in the afternoon when they finally struck the narrow street which led down to the old vinegar works.

And now they saw a number of persons standing about. But there was no vinegar works!

A mass of burned brick and blackened beams was all that remained.

The yard and the old lumber had also been consumed; even the wharf had been burned.

"Is this McBride's Vinegar Works?" asked Old King Brady of one of those who stood about.

"Yes; all that is left of it," was the reply.

"When did it take fire?"

"Some time in the night—I don't know just when."

"Any lives lost?"

"Not that I have heard. The place has been closed up these five years."

"And how did it get afire?"

"Supposed to have been set by tramps. It has been a great hangout for them this long time."

And this was about all the information Old King Brady could get.

They went into the yard to get a better look, and there, sure enough, lay among the rubbish the blackened remains of a wine cask.

"Dat's just where dey put it," declared Jim.

Old King Brady poked the ashes up a bit, to see if he could discover anything in the diamond line, but nothing turned up.

"This is a bad piece of business," he said to himself. "If Harry was a prisoner in this old factory, all that remains of him may be under the ruins now."

But to Alice he made light of it.

"The boy will turn up all right," he said, reassuringly. "And when he does, he will be able to tell us about the fire, no doubt."

Alice said little in reply.

It was easy to see that she was much concerned.

They walked up the street, and when they got to the corner Old King Brady gave the telegraph boy five dollars in small bills.

"Get to Salem," he said; "find the place where the wagon broke down, and find out what became of the wine. It ought not to be difficult. Chase yourself, now!"

So Jim jumped onto a trolley which would take him to Revere, where he would be able to board the Salem train, leaving Old King Brady and Alice to return to Young's Hotel.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BROKER AND "MR. DOOLEY."

The windup of Young King Brady's adventures that night were anything but what he had expected they would be.

Nothing was said to him during the trip from the Washington Warehouses to the Chelsea wharf until they drew near their destination, when he was sent ashore to make the line fast.

Then Ryan went up to the door of the vinegar works, which opened on the wharf, and rapped hard upon it.

This the telegraph boy failed to see.

Harry, watching, saw the door opened by a dark man, between whom and Ryan a few words passed.

"What! Do you mean to tell me that those three casks of wine are gone?" Harry heard the latter exclaim.

"That's what," was the reply. "They have been stolen by tramps, probably, in spite of the care we took to hide them. But that's nothing, compared with the other business. Sure you have got the right casks this time?"

"As sure as I can be, with the marks scraped off."

"Well, run 'em in, and we will blame soon find out."

The dark man then drew back and disappeared.

Ryan returned to the tug.

"We unload here," he said to Harry, "and you can help."

"All right, boss," replied Young King Brady, in the same cheerful way.

The engineer lent a hand and they finally got the wine casks on the wharf.

It was a difficult matter, requiring the rigging up of a block and tackle, and it took time.

At last they were rolled into the factory, and then, for the first time, Harry got a view of the dark man at close range.

He was at once struck with the idea that he might be Jake Goldman, the custom house broker.

The man in every way filled the bill with Alice's description.

He and Ryan talked about the casks, but the engineer did not speak.

Ryan now drew Goldman aside, and they spoke in whispers, and then passed into another room, which was partitioned off from the main body of the factory.

The engineer, turning to Harry, gruffly ordered him to follow him outside.

He was decidedly the worst looking man of the two, and was plainly a hard drinker.

Young King Brady felt that he was a person who would stick at nothing to gain his ends.

They had scarcely gained the open door when a startled cry rang out within the building.

"What in thunder is that?" exclaimed the engineer. "Come on! Something is twisted. We must see."

He ran through into the other room and Harry followed him.

Ryan met them at the door.

"Gee! This is a bad business!" he exclaimed.

"What now?" cried the engineer. "Where is Mr. Goldman?"

"See that open trap? Some of those blamed tramps what hang about here must have opened it," replied Ryan, seemingly greatly agitated. "Blamed if Goldman didn't back right into it!"

"Heavens! You don't say!"

"Didn't you hear him holler?"

"Sure. That's what brought us in here. Is he dead?"

"Blest if I know! I just started out after the rope. We must get him out."

Was all this for his benefit?

Young King Brady could not tell.

But the open trap was a reality.

Ryan had placed the lantern close beside it.

The engineer went forward, picked up the lantern and flashed it down.

"Mr. Goldman!" he shouted. "Oh, Mr. Goldman! Are you hurt, sir? Speak!"

Harry thought he caught a mumbled answer, but he could not be sure.

"He's there," said the engineer, excitedly; "but I'm a little hard of hearing and can't make out what he says. See if you can, Flynn. Gee, it must have been a terrible fall! An old sewer or something. It seems pretty blamed deep."

Harry came forward and peered down.

"See anything?" demanded the engineer.

"No; nor I can't hear anything neither."

"Here, take the lantern."

He seemed so perfectly in earnest that Young King Brady's suspicions were for the moment lulled.

He reached for the lantern, but instead of giving it to him the engineer suddenly gave him a tremendous shove!

Too late! Harry knew the truth!

Down he went, landing in water, which broke his fall.

He scrambled up in a hurry, not hurt a hit.

His feet sank into mud. He was wet to the skin.

But he was not alone.

A torrent of foul words assailed his ears, not directed against him, but against Ryan.

It was pitch dark, and he could see nothing.

While the talk went on he remained silent, trying to recover his breath.

Suddenly the custom house broker checked himself.

"I've said enough, I guess. Who are you?" he growled.

"Just a sailor man, boss. Are you hurt at all?"

"No; are you?"

"Not a bit."

"Where in thunder are we?"

"Up to our waists in water, I should say."

"Well, I guess I know that. If we only had a light!"

"As it happens, I have an electric flash lantern with me."

"The deuce you have! How comes that? Are you sure you are a sailor man?"

"Why, sure, boss; an' if you want to know how I came to get the flashlight, why I just swiped it—that's all. Here it is."

Harry flashed his lantern about.

The place was a brick sewer.

Just here there was no top to it, but further on it was covered over.

It appeared to run to the water.

They could hear the lapping of tide at the other end.

"Built to carry off the waste of the factory," said Goldman. "I didn't know it existed, and I ought to have known, seeing that I own the place. Those infernal scoundrels! I thought it an accident at first. When I came down I was so dazed that I couldn't speak. Next thing I knew you came tumbling down on top of me. If I ever live to get out of this I'll make some one sick!"

"I don't see what they wanted to put away a poor sailor man, like me, for," said Harry. "Blamed if I can make it out."

"Perhaps not—but it's all plain enough to me, young man. Never mind; let 'em wait. I—what in thunder is that?"

Loud shouts were heard, followed by several shots.

The sounds came to their ears indistinctly, as the trap door had been shut down.

Then there was a trampling of feet and all was still.

"Sounds as if there was a fight," said Goldman.

"Strikes me some one has chased those fellows out," added Harry.

"Wish some one would chase us out, then!" growled Goldman. "It must be twenty feet up to that trap door. What are we ever going to do?"

"How is the tide—in?" asked Harry.

"Blest if I know. What's the tide got to do with us?"

"Everything. The water is gaining on us, that's all."

"Great heavens! You don't say so?"

"It is just that, sir. If it's low water we are going to be drowned, like rats in a trap."

"We want to know. Weren't you on the tug? I should think you'd know about the tide if you are a sailor man."

"But I didn't happen to notice to-night. Hold on; I'll see what I can do."

"What do you propose?"

"To swim through this sewer."

"I can't swim a stroke."

"I can swim. I can lift the trap door and get you out."

"Listen!"

"Some one is rolling out those wine casks."

Goldman groaned.

"Balked again!" he growled. "Was there ever such bad luck?"

"We must think about saving our lives—that is more important than the wine," said Harry.

"Wine nothing! That's all you know about it! I—but never mind."

"Oh, don't tell me nothing about it, sir. I don't want to butt into other people's secrets. Will you hold my clothes, or, let's see, is there some place I can put them? Yes; they will rest all right on the top of this wall."

Harry got out of his clothes as best he could.

He was afraid to risk it with them on.

It took time to remove the wet, clinging garments.

Meanwhile the sounds overhead had ceased.

Stripped at last, Young King Brady ducked under and swam in beneath the bricked up sewer.

He rose and found that there was air space above.

He stood up and bumped his head against the brick. The sewer was about four feet high, and carried about three feet of water.

With lowered head, Harry walked on.

He found that the bottom was on a decline.

Presently the water was over his head.

The sewer was now filled with the incoming tide.

Harry swam on under water.

In a moment his progress was checked by an iron grating.

Beyond lay the harbor, of course.

The grating had been put in position to prevent the washing in of floating rubbish.

Harry took a few seconds to feel about.

He found that the grating was in a wooden frame.

He gave it a pull, hoping to dislodge it, but it wouldn't come away.

Forced to return, he soon found himself facing the custom house broker again.

"Well, what luck?" demanded Goldman.

Harry explained.

"And the tide is on the rise?"

"It certainly is."

"If we don't get out of this, we shall be drowned at high water?"

"I don't say that. It may be that there is room enough for us to keep our heads out."

"If you could only dislodge that grating!"

"I'll try again."

"I wish you would. Look here; what's your name?"

"Joe Flynn, sir."

"Joe, if you get me out of this I'll give you a hundred dollars—see?"

"I'll get you out if I can, sir, but you don't need to offer me money. I'm pretty blamed anxious to get out myself, just the same."

"I suppose you are."

"Of course. All the same, I sha'n't go back on the hundred plunks."

"You go ahead, and you'll get 'em if you set me free," Goldman replied.

"I'll go now."

"Shall I hold the light?"

"No; that won't do any good. Don't waste the light. It may give out on you. We may need it later on."

"All right. Chase yourself and see what you can do."

Harry dove again and once more tackled the grating.

This time he felt that he had loosened it, but he could not force it out of position.

"Anything doing?" Goldman eagerly demanded, upon his return.

"I've loosened the blame thing, boss."

"Good enough! Probably you can get it away altogether next trip."

But it took two more trips to do it, and by the time it was accomplished Harry was so winded that he was forced to swim back, for he did not know what lay beyond.

Goldman was triumphant over his success.

"It's a good job you were able to do it," he said. "If I don't get out of here quick I'm a dead one. This water

is so blamed cold that I am chilled to the bone. I shall come down with pneumonia, sure."

Harry got his wind and made another start.

This time he came out of the sewer, rose to the surface and swam for the wharf.

The tug had vanished.

So had the wagon, which carried off the telegraph boy, which Young King Brady knew nothing about.

Harry hurried to the door of the vinegar factory and, finding it unfastened, pushed in.

He had trouble in finding the trap door, for he had not even so much as a match to aid him, and was obliged to grope his way about in the dark.

But at last he got at the thing, and pulled it up.

"Good enough!" shouted Goldman from below. "So you got there, it seems?"

"I got there at last. Now, the question is, how am I going to get you up, boss?"

"The tug has gone?"

"Yes."

"The scoundrels! Never mind. I'll get square. There was some old rope on the top floor in one of the rooms. I saw it there the other day, but you will break your neck if you go in the dark. The stairs are all tumbling down. Some of the steps are gone altogether."

"Can't you throw the lantern up to me?"

"Can you catch it, think?"

"I can try."

"If you fail, then, we are in the soup, for it will fall in the water."

"Oh, we have to take our chances. Let her come."

Goldman moved about until he got a position which suited him, and then gave the lantern a toss.

Harry caught it by a hair's breadth, and very nearly tumbled into the trap in the effort.

"Wait," he said. "I'll have you all right in a minute now."

He found the stairs, and in a few minutes was back with some rope.

"I'm dropping a small piece down to you," he said. "Tie up my clothes with it and send them up first."

The broker did so.

Then Harry twisted the rope into a noose and dropped it.

"Fasten that under your arms!" he called.

"Can you pull me up, think?"

"I guess so. I have taken a turn around a post here."

It worked perfectly, and a moment later the broker landed upon the floor.

"Much obliged," he said, coolly, and then, throwing his hand behind him, he suddenly whipped out a revolver and planked it at Harry's head.

"I hope you won't think me ungrateful," he added, "but as you are a detective instead of a sailor man, we may as well come to an understanding before you put your clothes on!"

Harry was taken entirely by surprise, but before he could say a word the door of the vinegar factory was suddenly thrown open and a man came staggering in, bawling out the chorus of "Mr. Dooley."

He was a roughly dressed fellow, and reeling drunk.

"Chee! I've got 'em again!" he shouted. "Have you got your clothes on, young feller, or haven't you got no clothes on, or am I drunk? Oh, Mr. Dooley! Mr. Dooley! Whoop! I've been drinking champagne water or something just as good! Whoop! Let her go!"

He began jigging it then, and the result was he lost his balance and measured his length on the floor.

CHAPTER X.

CLEANING UP THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

The telegraph boy did not get back Sunday night, nor was he in evidence on Monday morning by the time Old King Brady got ready for work; nor had Harry relieved their suspense, for not a word came from him.

Alice, who, as we may as well say right here, regards her partner with all the affection of a brother, if not even in a dearer relation, was almost wild.

And, indeed, the situation began to look very serious to Old King Brady.

For Harry has long been deeply in love with Alice, although he has never been able to bring her to the point of an engagement.

As Old King Brady well knew, it must needs be a very strained situation with his partner if he kept Alice in suspense.

Still there seemed to be nothing to do.

Of course, the old detective had secretly asked himself more than once if Harry could be dead under the ruins of the vinegar factory.

But he determined to wait until later in the day before taking steps to prove this point.

"And now, Alice, we must bring this case right to a head," he said, as they sat at breakfast. "You keep your engagement with Goldman, but, as for the others, we must gather them in to-day, and I am going right about it."

So Old King Brady hurried around to police headquarters and had two city detectives assigned to assist him.

They made a bee-line for the Washington Warehouses. Mr. Munroe had not put in an appearance.

The clerk informed the detectives that he had been telephoned by the superintendent on Sunday, who informed him that he was going out of town for a few days.

"One out," thought Old King Brady. "However, I expected this, and Munroe is the least important of all."

Aloud he inquired for Dick Ryan, the watchman.

The clerk informed him that the watchman was out in the warehouse, and he rang a bell and called him in.

"Ryan, you are under arrest," said Old King Brady, abruptly. "You have stolen six pipes of sherry from this warehouse and carried them to McBride's vinegar factory, over in Chelsea. I needn't say any more."

The man was taken entirely by surprise.

He was incoherent for a moment, and then he shut up like a clam.

"It's a lie, and you can't prove it on me!" he growled.

Old King Brady slipped the handcuffs on, and then took him aside.

In vain he labored with the man, and tried to find out what had become of Harry.

But the watchman had been in trouble before, as it subsequently proved.

"You talk to me lawyer," was all he would say.

No urging or coaxing was of the slightest use.

So Old King Brady turned him over to the detectives, and he was rounded up at the nearest police station.

The three then hurried to Moses Washton's place, where one of the plain clothes men went in alone.

He came back, reporting that Washton was not in evidence.

"I think I know where we may find him," said the old detective, with a chuckle. "You come along with me."

He took them around to Province court.

They ascended to the top floor and tried to open Mr. Pete Van Vose's door.

It was locked, but the lapidary's wheel could be heard spinning inside.

The detectives put their shoulders to the door and forced it in.

Then there was a great stir.

Washton was there, looking over some gems at a table. Van Vose was grinding a ruby.

"What does this outrage mean?" demanded the wine dealer. "By what right do you break in here? Get out or I'll call the police!"

"You have them already," laughed one of the detectives, showing his shield.

Washton turned pale.

"I—I——" he gasped, and then was silent.

"You forget that I have an appointment with you, Mr. Washton," said Old King Brady, displaying his own shield. "Detective Daly, you will recollect—otherwise known as Old King Brady."

Washton dropped into his chair, all nerveless.

"Take that man!" said Old King Brady, pointing to Van Vose.

"He is not in it," said Washton.

"So you would try to save him? Noble of you," cried the old detective. "It is more than he would do for you, when. He is at the bottom of this diamond stealing and your sherry cask mystery, my friend. Ask him if you don't believe what I say."

They searched the place and found in the open safe letters and documents which full exposed the crooked doings of the League of Three.

Washton sank into a condition of abject despair.

They had to call a cab to get him to the station, where both he and Van Vose were rounded up.

Here, also, they found John Mullins, the engineer of the Flamingo, who had been arrested by Old King Brady's orders.

He proved quite as stubborn and non-committal as Ryan.

Doubtless the pair had an understanding together as to how they should act in case of arrest.

Nothing could be obtained from him, and this very much to the disgust of Old King Brady.

And while the old detective was working over the fellow the two plain clothes men went out for Braun, the diamond dealer, and got him.

He proved to be a nervous, little Hollander. He was almost ready to faint when he saw Washton also in the clutches of the law.

"I vas innozend; I vas innozend!" he kept saying, half crying all the while.

"Keep a still tongue," Washton said to him. "I am about to send for counsel. We will get out of this if you only won't talk."

Old King Brady left them to the police, and hurried down to the custom house to report to General Ferrars.

The collector listened to him, with close attention.

"Mr. Brady, you certainly have done wonders in the short time you have been at it," he said. "But your work is incomplete in the most important point."

"I know it," replied the old detective. "But you must remember that we are not through yet. My partners are now working on that end of the matter. By night we should have gathered in Jake Goldman and the diamonds, too, I hope. Meanwhile, this League of Three, who have been smuggling rough and cut gems in wine casks for the past five years, stand fully exposed, as these letters and papers will fully prove."

Old King Brady then turned over to the collector all the evidence taken at Van Vose's place.

"You have carefully examined these documents?" demanded the collector.

"On the contrary, I have merely skimmed over them," was the reply. "I leave the careful examination for you, but I have seen enough to tell me that you will have no trouble in holding Messrs. Washton, Braun and Goldman liable in whatever penalties the law imposes in such cases. As for the man Van Vose, if he pleads ignorance of the League of Three and choses to pose only as a lapidary, I don't see what you are going to do in his case."

Leaving the collector then, Old King Brady hurried up State street to the building in which Broker Goldman's office was located.

A plain clothes man, loitering near by, came up and accosted him.

"Well—anything doing?" asked the old detective.

This man had been assigned to follow Alice to Jake Goldman's place, with orders to arrest the man if Alice made a certain sign when she came out of the building with him or in case she came out alone, and so requested.

"Goldman has not turned up," replied the detective. "Miss Montgomery came out about an hour ago."

"So?"

"Yes. There was a telegraph boy with her. She gave me this to hand to you."

It was a leaf torn from Alice's memorandum book, upon which was scrawled in the cipher of the Brady Detective Bureau the following:

"Have gone to Salem with McNally. Harry not lost in the fire. Supposed to be held a prisoner. Am going to Goldman. Better follow. The address is 99 Dolliver street.
A."

Of course, this message sent Old King Brady to Salem in a hurry.

Meanwhile we must explain Alice's part in the affair.

It had been intended by Old King Brady to include Jake Goldman in the clean-up of the morning, but he

was very desirous that Alice should have another interview with the fellow before this was done.

For this reason Alice, promptly on time, turned up at the broker's offices in State street.

Here she found his clerk and stenographer in their usual places, with Jim McNally sitting meekly outside the rail.

He glanced at Alice, making no sign of recognition.

The clerk came hurrying forward and, opening the office gate, placed a chair.

"Mrs. Austruther, I believe?" he said.

"I am Mrs. Austruther," replied Alice, smiling sweetly.

"Mr. Goldman has been prevented from keeping his appointment. He has sent you a letter by this telegraph boy."

The telegraph boy handed out a sealed letter.

It was addressed to Mrs. Austruther, care of J. Goldman, No. — State street.

Alice tore it open and read as follows:

"99 Dolliver Street, Salem, Oct. —.

"Dear Mrs. Austruther:

"I have met with a serious accident and am prevented from keeping my appointment. Would it be too much to ask you to wait on me? I know that this may appear presumptuous, but I will confide a secret to you, and begin by asking a question: Do you believe in love at first sight? I never did until now, when the conception of this great truth comes to me full force. You can guess my secret, and I wish to add that circumstances have occurred which may make it necessary for me to leave Boston. With my knowledge of custom house business and your beauty and society connections, it seems to me we could make a great team, and I can see barrels of money ahead of us. I shall have the capital to work with, understand that. Thus it seems to me that it will pay you to come to my bedside. In spite of our very brief acquaintance, I am going to sign myself,

Devotedly yours,

"J. GOLDMAN."

P. S.—The telegraph boy has promised to act as your escort, providing you do not know Salem, and I presume such is the case.

G."

Alice folded up the letter and dropped it into her hand-bag.

"Does Mr. Goldman say when he will be in town?" asked the clerk.

"He does not," replied Alice.

The clerk looked disgusted.

Alice and the telegraph boy left the office.

"What about Mr. Harry?" she asked, once they were in the hall.

"He is alive. He's tied up down dere in Salem by them thieves, Miss."

"And the diamonds?"

"He says he's got de diamonds, Miss. He's broke his leg and can't move. I tort de safest way would be to let him keep dem till I could see some of youse."

"So? Is he a prisoner, too?"

"No, Miss. He got away."

"Probably you are right. No more now, till we are clear of this building."

The elevator was ready for them, and they descended to the street.

In the hall Alice scribbled the note to Old King Brady and gave it to the plain clothes man, after which they hurried to the North Station and took the train for Salem.

CHAPTER XI.

JAKE GOLDMAN GETS THE DIAMONDS AND HARRY GETS KNOCKED OUT.

We must now return to Harry and seek to sweep away the mystery which had so puzzled Alice and Old King Brady.

Having taken to the floor, "Mr. Dooley" concluded to remain there, and after a few grunts and several attempts to get on his feet he tumbled back and went to sleep.

The broker in the meanwhile kept his revolver aimed at Harry.

"Don't you think you better put down that gun?" he added, aloud.

"No," replied the broker. "Whoever that bum is he's out of our way now. Meanwhile we may as well settle up this business, my friend. You are Young King Brady, the detective—yes? Better own up. We want to come to a quick understanding. You may imagine that I would hesitate to kill you, but I wouldn't. I was brought up in Arizona, where they won't stand on ceremony. As the person I believe you to be you are distinctly in my way unless we can strike a bargain. Every man has his price. If you will name yours perhaps we may come to terms."

This was enough.

Harry now understood the sort of man he was dealing with, and he made haste to get on the job.

"You overhauled my clothes?" he said.

"I did."

"You saw my detective shield?"

"I did."

"I own that I am a detective, but what makes you think I am Young King Brady?"

"As soon as you were stripped of those old duds and the paint or whatever you used came to be washed off your face I recognized you."

Harry saw that he had to deal with a man of much greater force of character than he had imagined.

"I am Young King Brady," he replied. "But before we go any further, suppose you allow me to dress? It is cold standing naked in this draughty place."

"No. Not until we have come to an understanding. Are you with me or are you against me?"

"I don't think I quite understand what you mean."

"Pshaw! What's the use of lying? Of course, after seeing you with Ryan and Mullens, I simply know that you have found out the secret of this whole business. It isn't wine stealing; it's diamond smuggling. You know that, and I'm in it, you know that too. The Bradys always get there. Of course, you have caught on."

"You are right."

"I knew it. Do you know the amount involved?"

"No."

"Then I needn't tell you, but I'll tell you this much: This was to be our last shipment. We—I don't know if

you know who my partners are, so I will mention no names—we, I say, having established our credit abroad, started to run in a big shipment of gems on consignment. We—partners and self—proposed to skip when we got them and divide. Up to this point I saw no reason for disagreeing with my partners, but when I came to think the matter over I could see no reason for dividing, so I concluded to collar the whole invoice, and do the skipping act alone. That's why I managed to have the wine casks conveyed to the Washington Warehouses, hiring Ryan to boss the job. You see my blunder. In some way we got the wrong casks the first time. I can't understand how it happened. Now when we seem to have caught the right ones Ryan tried to do me up, and in the meanwhile, somebody else, it would appear from the firing, has swiped the casks. Was it Old King Brady, think?"

"It certainly was not."

"Perhaps it was a put-up job on Ryan's part. But they have to be found, and I know of no one more competent to solve the mystery than yourself. If I agree to give you one-quarter of the diamonds and other gems, will you stand in with me?"

"I'll go you," replied Harry.

Goldman immediately pocketed the revolver.

"Look out you don't change your mind," he said, coolly. "It may make serious trouble if you do. Now you can dress."

Poor Harry, who was chilled to the marrow, lost no time in getting into his wet clothes, which did not help matters much.

"We shall both get our death if we stay here," he said.

They hurried outside and Harry got to work.

He found the tracks of wheels, and was able to announce that a heavily loaded wagon had been in front of the factory since the tug came.

They went into the yard and found the wheel marks there.

Harry soon located the sherry cask, for it had been rolled out from under the lumber.

Near it stood an old tomato can.

The bung was out, and the ground was wet with the wine. The cask was almost empty.

"The work of the tramp," said Harry. "He tapped the cask and drank all he could. He was too drunk to get the bung back again and this is the result."

They ended up the cask bottom upwards.

"False bottom?" demanded Harry.

"Yes; in one cask out of the three. Whether this is the one or not, I don't know, but we will soon find out. Wait here."

He hurried away and soon returned with a hammer and cold chisel.

He went to work with all the skill of a professional cooper, and soon had the bottom out of the cask.

"This is not the one," he said. "No false bottom here. Now to sample this sherry; it may keep us from taking cold."

He dipped the tomato can into the little wine there was remaining and took a long drink.

Harry sampled the wine, and found it fine stock indeed.

"We must get to work on the hobo," he said. "If he knows anything, now is the time to find it out. Evidently the wine thieves could not carry all three casks, and they left this one behind them."

They returned to the factory and Harry shook up the tramp.

At last they aroused him, and he had sobered up sufficiently to talk.

It was as Young King Brady supposed.

The tramp had been asleep in the yard when the men came in with the wagon, just before the arrival of the tug.

He overheard them plotting to carry off some machinery in the factory. Then they saw the tug and talked about wine.

All that followed the tramp saw—and what was more to the point, he heard one of the men called Pat Burns, and an allusion made to his being in the junk business in Salem, on Barmon street.

Goldman then gave the tramp a couple of dollars and told him to get off the premises, which he did.

"It's Salem for ours, now, Brady," he said. "Walk ahead to the corner. I'll join you in a minute."

He left Harry at the gate and passed back into the yard.

When he joined him Harry could see smoke rising over the fence.

He hurried Harry on to the business part of Chelsea, where, turning into a side street, he walked up to a man who kept a small clothing store, whom he appeared to know perfectly well.

By this time the alarm of fire had been sounded, and the engines passed them on the way to the wharf.

At the clothing store they both got a complete dry outfit, and then Goldman went to a livery stable and hired a horse and buggy.

This was by Harry's suggestion.

He felt that they might even overtake the heavily loaded wagon.

And overtake it they did, on the outskirts of Salem, broken down.

But it was empty, and the question now was what became of the wine?

"We must get rid of this team first," said Harry. "Let us look up a stable and leave it and come back."

It was nearly daylight when they returned.

Young King Brady now got busy.

He soon saw that the casks had been rolled into a yard, for the traces of the work were apparent on the ground.

Over the gate was a sign, reading: "B. Donovan, Second-Hand Building Material of All Kinds. Houses Wrecked."

"Can you open that gate?" questioned Goldman.

Harry went to work on the padlock which secured the gate and soon had it open.

They slipped into the yard and there, sure enough, among a lot of old lumber and other second-hand trash, stood the two sherry casks.

They had brought the hammer and cold chisel along with them, and by their aid Goldman soon had the bottom off one of the casks.

Instead of sherry there was a false bottom revealed.

Between the two bottoms were dozens of those little, flat, blue paper packages, in which diamonds and other gems are packed abroad.

Goldman was wild with triumph.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed. "Now to get these together and get out of here."

There was a sheet of old wrapping paper kicking about the yard and Harry secured it.

In this they wrapped all the papers.

Harry supplied the string, and it was tied up.

Neither observed that one blue package had dropped alongside the sherry cask.

"Hooray! We got the diamonds. Now, let's be off!"

Leaving the hammer and cold chisel behind them, they started for the gate, Harry in advance.

"Keep back a little," he said. "Let me make sure that we have not been watched."

He cautiously opened the gate and peered out.

As he did so a big, hulking fellow sprang upon him.

"Now I've got you, you thief!" he cried. "Come on, boys. Dere's two in here!"

There was a brief struggle and, Young King Brady, felled by a crushing blow between the eyes, dropped to the ground, for the time being dead to the eworld.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

"Oh, my head! My head!"

This was what Young King Brady caught himself saying when he came back to life.

He was lying on the floor of a rough, unplastered room, bound hand and foot, and alone.

Many hours had passed since his fall in the lumber yard.

Later a man suddenly appeared before him.

It was the man who had struck him and the sight seemed to bring Harry to himself.

"Say, so you have come to," growled the fellow. "I tort you was going to die on me hands. You are a detective, dat's what you are."

"Let me out of this," said Harry. "I'm almost dead as it is."

"Not on your life, unless you will answer me question."

"What is your question?"

The man produced one of the blue diamond papers and held it up.

"You see, I'm next to what was in the false bottom of that sherry cask," he said. "Now, what did that other feller do with the rest of them diamonds? Tell me and I'll let you go."

But poor Harry could not tell what he did not know.

The next he knew the man faded away into the land of dreams.

Poor Harry was raving with fever again.

* * * * *

Once they were seated in the car and on their way to Salem, Alice questioned the telegraph boy.

"Well, Miss, I worked hard on Sunday afternoon and away into de evening to find out what became of dose wine casks," he said, "an' at last troo a feller what I got ac-

quainted with I found that they was took to Donovan's second-hand lumber yard on Brown street.

"It was den near eleven o'clock at night an' de yard was locked, of course. I couldn't get over de high fence, so I went around on Phillips street, to see if I could get in by de back, but de buildings was high up on a bank and dere was nothing doing so.

"But I made up my mind to see de casks for meself, so dat yourse couldn't blame me, and jest as I was trying to figure it out how it could be did I seen de windy of a brick barn on top of de bank shoved up and a man came climbing out, feet foist. He hung on by his hands and let go, an' he came tumbling down de bank at me feet, where he landed wit' a broken leg."

So much for the telegraph boy's story in his own vernacular.

Sufficient to add that the man who dropped out of the window was Broker Goldman.

Jim was right on the job.

In his first agony the broker raved about having been a prisoner and made an allusion to having lost a fortune in diamonds.

This was clew enough to the Bradys' sharp little ally.

He succeeded in getting the broker into the house 99 Dolliver street, which was right around the corner, a woman who happened to pass and who lived there, suggesting it.

The woman, who lived alone, agreed to keep the broker until he was able to be moved.

A doctor was called and the leg set.

Jim had an awful night with it all, but by morning, by adroit questions and careful listening to the injured man's mutterings, he was satisfied that Young King Brady was a prisoner in the lumber yard, and the diamonds were there, too.

But he did not see his way clear to act, and so when Goldman desired him to go to Boston and deliver the letter to "Mrs. Austruther," whom McNally knew to be Alice, he determined to do so, and the case took the turn it did.

They went directly to Dolliver street, and Goldman received Alice most joyfully.

Alice agreed to all he proposed and made herself out a pretty thorough crook, ending by agreeing to stand by Goldman and nurse him back to health, after which they were to go to New York under the assumed name which the broker had given at the Dolliver street house.

But the diamonds!

Seeing what happened to Harry, Goldman instantly dropped the package behind some old lumber in the yard.

He was captured a minute later.

The condition of the casks was discovered and the paper of diamonds on the ground was found.

The opening of it settled Goldman's fate.

Refusing to tell where he had hidden the balance of the smuggled gems, the existence of which his three captors at once surmised, he was locked in an old brick barn at the back of the yard, Harry having been taken to a rough shed.

Here he remained tied up all day, being questioned again and again by his captors, but in the evening he man-

aged to sever the cords about his hands by rubbing them against a nail.

Then he cut his feet loose and dropped from the window, with the result already told.

"And now it is up to you two to get those diamonds," he said to Alice. "This boy gets a thousand dollars if you succeed."

He gave an accurate account of the place where he had dropped the package, and Alice and Jim started for Donovan's lumber yard forthwith.

But, of course, Alice went first to the nearest police station, and, making herself known, got two officers to accompany them.

And in this shape they turned up at the lumber yard and, seeing no one about, opened the gate and passed in.

They had scarcely entered when from the shed at the end of the yard they heard loud voices talking.

Alice laid her hand on the telegraph boy's arm.

"Sneak to the door, Jim," she whispered. "It must be Old King Brady they have in there."

The telegraph boy shot through the yard.

She saw Jim lean in through the door, which he opened. Then in a minute he was out again, beckoning.

At the same instant came the noise of a scuffle inside and Jim jumped into the shack.

"Now is the time your help is needed, gentlemen!" cried Alice, and she rushed down the yard.

* * * * *

The next Harry knew there was a great noise in his prison, and he rolled over and saw the three men who had been floating through his dream dragging in Old King Brady.

"By thunder, he's another detective, Pat!" cried one.

Harry's captors had stripped him to his trousers and undershirt.

They dragged Old King Brady to his feet and tied his arms to a post.

Then Harry was raised up and tied to another.

Strange to say, all this seemed to revive Young King Brady.

Pat went outside then and returned with a whip made of several leathern thongs fastened to a short stick.

He now faced Harry with a sudden scowl.

"Is dat old man your father?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Harry, not knowing what to say.

"Very good, den. We propose to beat de life out of him if you don't tell what dat other feller did wit' dem diamonds."

"I don't know, and what I don't know I can't tell," Harry replied.

"Yer lie!" cried Pat, giving poor Harry a stinging cut with the whip. "You were wit' him and youse know. Youse has gotter tell."

Harry made no answer.

His tormentor gave him another cut with the whip.

"Let up on the boy, you low brute!" Old King Brady now said. "Can't you see he's half dead? I will tell you what you want to know."

"All right, then. What about de diamonds, old man?"

"Smuggled goods," replied the old detective.

"Who smuggled dem, den?"

"Three men in Boston."

"What's deir names?"

"Washton, Braun and Goldman."

"Goldman—he's de one we caught, Barney. Bad luck to him! However he managed to get loose, I dunno."

"Come, speak up, old man! Order him to tell!" cried Barney, pointing his finger at Old King Brady.

Then the door was opened and the telegraph boy butted in.

The next instant he had cut Harry free.

Half delirious still, Harry made a rush, struck Pat a stunner on the back of the head and felled him to the floor.

The others jumped on him, but on the instant it was Jim McNally, Alice and the two officers on the job.

Pat Burns, junk dealer; Barney Donovan, house wrecker, and Jim Smith, common junk thief!

This was the outfit and a few minutes later they had the doubtful satisfaction of seeing Alice unearth the smuggled gems from behind the lumber pile.

* * * * *

The police had to attend to the prisoners, who all went to State's Prison in the end.

It was a hospital for Harry. He went in an ambulance, and was in bed a week.

"How did you come to be there, Governor?" was his first question when the doctors let him talk.

"Overheard Donovan and Smith talking secrets on the train and followed them to the lumber yard when we got to Salem," was the réply. "They jumped on me when I tried to sneak in through the gate."

And thus the case ended.

The Bradys felt that they owed their lives to Jim McNally, and most liberal was the boy rewarded for his faithful work.

Later he became a detective through the Bradys. He is in the business now.

Washton and Braun were heavily fined, and the diamonds and other gems confiscated.

Goldman was promptly arrested and got twenty years for arson, the Government deciding to have him tried on that charge.

Ryan and Mullens went up for ten years each, but Van Vose went free.

Superintendent Munroe was never heard of again.

There was nothing coming to the detectives for all their risk and trouble but the Secret Service fees and a letter of thanks from General Ferrars, which was the last act of the case of THE BRADYS AND THE TELEGRAPH BOY.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' SIX BELL CLEW; or, THE MASKED MEN OF MAGIC MOUNTAIN," which will be the next number (456) of "Secret Service."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

A London correspondent wishes to know whether he is right in thinking that his hair and his finger-nails grow faster in hot weather. But this is not his only question about nails. For instance, do they grow continually, or do they come to a certain end, like the hair? Surely the former, says the London Chronicle; the hair falls out some time after it has reached its term (or would have reached it uncut), and the nail does not; and yet everything must be changed and renewed. The human talons then grow perpetually, and but for paring would be much in the owner's way. When we say that a cat is sharpening her claws, we are wrong, for she is wearing them down, and she does so diligently many times a day. But here is another puzzle—how is it that she never wears down her hind claws? For she never does.

It is remarked by a contemporary as curious that no monument has been raised to Dickens. Can it be forgotten that Dickens expressly desired in his will that no such memorial of him should be erected? It is more strange, perhaps, says the London Chronicle, that there should hitherto have been no monument to Columbus or Grant in Washington, and nothing worthy of the name to Lincoln. There is a marble group on the eastern portico of the Capitol, in which Columbus appears, clad in military armor, while a nude Indian girl crouches at his side. It is difficult to get a life-like presentment for the statue which Congress has voted. The most trustworthy description is that by his son, Fernando, who says Columbus was a "well-made man, of a height above the medium, with a long face and cheekbones somewhat prominent, neither too fat nor too lean. He had an aquiline nose, light-colored eyes, and ruddy complexion." It reads like a police description that covers many sinners and leads to no arrest.

In certain rural sections near Philadelphia, dogs, as the natural protectors of property, are fast becoming useless, and, strange as it may seem, their places are taken by geese and guinea hens. A resident thus explains the situation: "Out of ten of my neighbors, I know of six who have disposed of their watch-dogs within the last two months, and now depend on a flock of geese or guinea hens to give an alarm when an intruder makes his appearance in the night. Of the two fowls the guinea hen is probably the more watchful and alert. It is very easily disturbed, hearing the slightest noise, and screeching for all it is worth when it hears anything unusual. Not long ago a flock of guinea hens but half a mile from here prevented their owner's house from being robbed. Two men had gotten into the farm and were making for the rear entrance to the man's house when the guinea hens heard them, and screamed as though they were being killed. The result was that their owner was awakened, and, upon his going to the window, the would-be robbers scampered off."

The imports of American locomotives into Brazil in 1906 were more than threefold the value of the imports in 1905, and more than sixfold the value of those of 1904, but German manufacturers, who had been all but driven out of the market, have recently secured an order for seventeen locomotives, in competition with American machines. The order just received by the Germans represents the new railway enterprises in the State of Rio Grande de Sul and that portion of Brazil and is not only important in the size of the order itself, but in that it is the beginning of the enterprise, and the orders placed now are likely to have a very important bearing upon future business. The situation is further accentuated by the understanding that this German success was due directly and solely to the fact that the German Government has granted to the concern in question an export bounty which practically equals the freight to Brazilian ports. The exact nature of the bounty is not stated.

Among the numerous privileges granted the Germans by the Ottoman Government none exceeds, in general interest, the concession of November, 1899, for the construction under Ottoman mileage guaranty and amplified by mining, colonization, navigation, generation of electricity, and other subsidiary rights of a railway through Asia Minor and Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf. At present the work of construction is at a halt in the Taurus Mountains, as no money is available for the mileage guaranty. On both sides of the railroad line in Mesopotamia are said to be the bituminous and petroleum fields. It is calculated that Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Irak can produce more grain than Russia. To this are added the vast possibilities of the cotton supply in Western Asia. The Germans, in looking forward to the completion of the Bagdad Railway, are not unmindful of their commercial opportunities in Persia and in India. The Bagdad concession admits of the Germans utilizing all waters along the route for electric purposes, and such power will eventually be used for lighting the towns.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

Mrs. Grumpy—I wish you wouldn't be so positive; there are two sides to every question! Old Grumpy—Well, that's no reason why you should be on the wrong side!

A woman came to court claiming as daughter the wealth of the deceased millionaire. "But if you were his daughter, why didn't you mention it when he was alive?" she was asked. "Why, what'd been the use? He'd have known I wasn't, and, besides, I only just thought of the scheme."

Children have many playthings, but six-year-olds do not often play with words as does little Georgia, who said: "Mamma, I know how it was with Cain and Abel. Cain killed Abel with a cane, and Abel wasn't able to help himself."

Her Husband—If a man steals—no matter what it is—he will live to regret it. His Wife—During our courtship you used to steal kisses from me. Her Husband—Well, you heard what I said.

"Wealth won't buy everything," said the philosopher. "That's what I tell mother and the girls," answered Mr. Cumrox. "But it looks as if they were going to keep on trying as long as the check-book holds out."

"I say, Mr. Johnston," said little Tommy, "are you fond of speaking?" "Not very, Tommy," replied Mr. Johnson, with a smile. "You don't speak much?" "Well, not a great deal." "I thought so," said little Tommy, "because I heard sister Agnes say to mamma to-day that she had been waiting all the winter for you to speak."

CLEVERLY CHECKMATED.

By COL. RALPH FENTON.

The world had gone wrong with me lately, so to speak. I, West End clubs, and of expensive if not extravagant tastes, Gerald Mortimer, a young man about town, a member of two had quarreled with my uncle—the only living relative I had, excepting a half-cousin—from whom hitherto I had received a handsome quarterly allowance, and, as the phrase goes, had “great expectations.”

But this was not the worst of it. I was desperately in love with a very pretty girl, and though no actual engagement existed between us, I had fondly believed I was acceptable not only to the young lady in question, but to her parents. Now, however, to add to my chagrin at finding myself comparatively without means, I fancied, rightly or wrongly, that I was receiving the “cold shoulder” from the father and mother of my adorable Mabel.

To live and clothe myself decently, pay the somewhat heavy subscription to my two clubs, and keep up the aforementioned rather expensive tastes, I had just two hundred pounds a year—the rental of a small landed property bequeathed to me by my late father. My debts, to be sure, were neither overwhelming nor particularly pressing. A couple of hundred or so would pay them; but then, again, that couple of hundred was twelve months' income.

This uncle of mine, my dead father's elder brother, from whom my chief source of income had been derived, was a county squire with a big rent roll, jovial and hospitable as a rule, but eccentric to a degree. The mischief between us had come about as unexpectedly as it was sudden. I had been accused of that of which I was as innocent as a babe, and in hotly repudiating the charge had given dire offense. However, although parting in anger, it was not until my monetary allowance was stopped that I realized the bitterness of the quarrel.

John Mortimer, my half-cousin, was a young fellow about a year or two my junior; but somehow, although so near of an age, as well as being relatives, and frequently meeting, we had never taken kindly to each other. And now I shrewdly suspected that whatever mischief had stepped between my uncle and me had been wrought by Master Jack Mortimer, and that it should not be my fault if he were not brought to book.

However, after what I had written, and much more, having been the subjects of my thoughts for some days, I determined to make a last effort to set matters right with my uncle. I had been accused of gambling—of having lost upward of five hundred pounds at card at one sitting—which was utterly false; for whatever my failings, the curse of gambling could not be reckoned among them.

One spring morning, after a night journey of a couple of hundred miles from town, found me at the nearest railway station to my uncle's manor, with no luggage beyond a small traveling bag and a rug. The little market town where I alighted was but five miles from the Hall, and breakfasting at the one decent hotel in the place, I elected to walk the distance, leaving my encumbrances in charge of the landlady, to whom I was well known.

On the way, and especially when I arrived at the park, the unpleasant feeling was strong upon me that my uncle might decline to grant me the interview which I now sought. Like the generality of hot-tempered people, his passion was soon over; and yet, when disposed, he could be as obstinate as most men, as his brother magistrates had proved on many occasions.

But to my agreeable surprise I was told, after my arrival had been announced by one of the old servants—a strange experience to me, then, to have to send in my name—that “the squire” would come to me in the library at once.

Whatever feeling of hope might have been in my heart as to a reconciliation between us suddenly left it as my uncle entered. His handsome and usually kindly old face was dark with displeasure, and there was a cold, contemptuous glance

in his blue eyes as they met mine which I had never seen before.

“Have you no sense of shame left, Gerald Mortimer?” he said in a hard voice, after he had closed the door behind him, “that you have the effrontery to come to this house—you, who have disgraced the name you bear; disgraced the memory of your gallant father, who died for his country—and have committed a vulgar crime against society and me?”

“I fail to understand you, sir,” I rejoined, utterly astounded at his words. “If you are alluding to the accusation you made against me as to gambling, I repudiate it now as I did before. In fact, I am here to-day to try—”

“Pshaw!” he interrupted. “Honest men have gambled; and in time I might have forgiven it, if you had stopped at that, and shown your regret for what had passed. But you—you, a Mortimer—to stoop to forgery!”

“It is false!” I cried, “false as the other charge! And whoever has poisoned your mind against me lies in his teeth!”

“Gerald Mortimer, do not add falsehood to your other misdeeds,” continued the squire; “for, unhappily, I hold the proof that you, my own nephew, have forged my name.”

And, as he spoke, my uncle took from the breast pocket of his shooting jacket a letter, from which, when unfolded, he produced a smaller piece of paper.

“Examine that, sir,” he added, “and let me hear if you have the effrontery to likewise deny your own signature?”

I could scarcely credit my own eyesight when I looked at what was written within. It was a dishonored acceptance for six hundred pounds, drawn a little over three months before upon Richard Mortimer, Esquire, and signed Gerald Mortimer, and apparently duly accepted by my uncle.

“Well, sir,” asked he, impatiently, “what have you to say?”

“That I have never seen this document before to-day,” I answered.

“What!” he thundered. “Do you dare to deny to me your own signature, which I know as well as I do my own?”

“I do deny it!” I added, passionately. “The signature is so good an imitation of mine that under ordinary circumstances it might deceive even myself; but I swear to you, sir, that I never drew or accepted a bill in my life.”

I think that my uncle believed me, for the whole expression of his face changed; but still, as he took the bill from me, he glanced at it again and again with a puzzled look, for, as will presently appear, there was some confirmatory evidence in his mind, in addition to the handwriting. Seeing that he hesitated, and was not just then disposed to speak, I added:

“Will you please tell me, sir, all that has transpired, so far as you are aware, in connection with that forged acceptance?”

“Yes,” he replied; “that is only fair. As I understand it was presented in due course to the London agents of my bankers, who, having received no instructions, declined to pay it. On being communicated with, I repudiated all knowledge of such a draft, until, to my horror, I learned that it bore your signature, when, to save the honor of our family, I gave instructions that it should be taken up. At the same time I desired that inquiries should be instituted; and the person in whose hands it was—a West End money-lender—asserted that he discounted the bill for you, and, further, that you were known to him personally. Here is his name on the back of the bill, and what purports to be your indorsement to him.”

“It is as false as the rest, sir,” I said a few moments later, when I had taken a second glance at the forged bill. “I know the man by name, but I know nothing good of him. I have had no transactions with him—in fact, never spoke to him in my life.”

“You declare this upon your honor, Gerald Mortimer?” asked my uncle, after a pause.

“I do, sir,” I added; “and I am going back to London at once to face this rascally money-lender.”

“You will stay here until to-morrow,” said my uncle, looking at his watch. “I want time to think, and to talk the matter over quietly.”

“If you please, no, sir,” I rejoined, determinedly. “The answering of an infamous charge like this admits of no delay.”

"But you have been traveling all night, I expect," added the squire, "and require some rest, surely?"

The words were kindly meant and expressed, but I was resolved to depart, and after a hasty luncheon I was driven in a dog-cart to the railway station, being just in time to call for my bag and rug and catch an up fast train.

The following morning, shortly before eleven o'clock, found me at the office of the money-lender who had held the forged acceptance, and who had asserted that he had received it from me.

Much to my chagrin, however, I was told that he was not in, and would not be at business until the morrow. There was but one solitary clerk in the office, a sharp-eyed old man, who glanced at me curiously, and, as it occurred to me, as though I was not unknown to him; and, moreover, on declining to give my name, I fancied the ghost of a smile played about his thin lips.

After leaving the money-lender's office I strolled along Piccadilly to the park. Being just then in the height of the season, and a brilliant morning, the Row was pretty full of equestrians, many of whom were known to me. I had been leaning over the railings for some time, but happened to turn round at the moment a carriage was passing along the drive going westward. In it were seated my adorable Mabel and her father, and as I raised my hat, the fair object of my affections gave a little bow and a half-frightened smile; but, to my disgust and anger, the gentleman vouchsafed not the slightest acknowledgment to my salutation.

The following day I was to have another odd experience of life, but of a far different kind. I was to meet with a case of the most unparalleled impudence and audacity that surely man ever encountered. About the same hour as on the previous morning I once more called at the office of the money-lender, bill discounter, or whatever he might style himself, and, as though I were expected, was immediately ushered into his private room unannounced as to name. He was young, well dressed and not bad looking, and received me with a very cool nod.

"When I tell you that I am Mr. Gerald Mortimer," I said, "you will guess the object of my visit."

"There is no occasion to give me your name," was the cool rejoinder, "for I have too much cause to remember it and you. It beats me, Mr. Gerald Mortimer, how you have the assurance to show your face here again after foisting upon me a forged bill."

"You infamous scoundrel!" I exclaimed, almost beside myself with rage, "you know this is the first time that ever you spoke to me in your life, and you have the audacity to sit there and avow that I have had transactions with you!"

The scoundrel laughed defiantly as I walked out of his room—a scoffing, mocking laugh that I could hear until I got into the street. Once clear of his infamous den, my first idea was to go to Scotland Yard and place the matter in the hands of the police authorities; and I actually went some distance towards Charing Cross with that intention in my mind. A little thought, however, induced me to decide upon taking the advice of an old friend of mine before doing anything further. He was a man my senior only a year or two—for we had been school fellows—but one upon whose good offices and knowledge of the world I could thoroughly rely.

On reaching his chambers in the Albany he received me kindly. Then, when he had listened to my story, he said:

"A rascally business, Gerald, my boy, and I question if your first idea of going direct to Scotland Yard would not have been the best thing you could have done. However, there will be nothing lost by waiting until to-morrow. Dine with me to-night, go with me to the opera, and then you shall have my decision before we part."

"Agreed," I answered; and having gone home to dress, I joined my friend later on.

Over dinner he told me that he had already come to the conclusion that I must see the police, and it was arranged that he should accompany me to Scotland Yard on the following morning. It was rather late when we got to Covent Garden Theater, but we were in time for the last two acts of the opera and stayed out the ballet. On getting down into the

lobby there was a bit of a crush, for there had been a very full house, and we had to wait for a minute or two.

At length, as we were making our way out, somebody pushed against me—rudely, as it seemed—and I turned to see who was the aggressor. To my astonishment I discovered that the man standing nearest to me, and who must have been the person who jostled me, was the rascally money-lender with whom I had had the interview that morning. He was evidently only waiting to see the people depart, for he was not in evening dress, and as our eyes met there was an insolent, aggravating sneer on his face.

Possibly the push which the fellow gave me might have been accidental, but the sneer and the insolent look were not, and without a thought of where I was—that ladies were almost touching me on the other side—I struck him. Straight from the shoulder as ever it went in my life, my right fist caught him full in the mouth and he went down with a crash. It was all over in a few seconds. Some people came between us, my friend seized me by the arm and presently we were in a hansom cab, being driven westward.

"Gerald, my boy, what were you thinking about?" said my companion, when he had got me into the cab. "In the names of peace and order, my dear fellow, what had the man done to you that you should knock him down like that?"

"Done to me!" I answered, hotly. "It was the fellow we were speaking of to-day—the rascally money-lender who forged, or, at all events, held that bill."

"Oh, oh!" ejaculated my friend, laughing softly. "I understand it all now. Nevertheless, you would have been a wiser man if you had kept your hands off him."

The cab was pulled up just then to tell the driver to take us to one of the two clubs of which I was a member, little thinking at the moment of the terrible sight of which my friend and I were shortly to be witnesses by going there.

In the smoke-room, on our arrival, we found several men, well known to both of us, and among them a guardsman in uniform, who had been on duty and looked in on his way to his chambers.

We had not been many minutes in the club, when one of the waiters rushed into the smoke-room—a pale and affrighted look on his face—with the startling announcement that one of the members was lying, either dead or dying, on a couch in the card-room.

Springing to our feet, we hurried in a body to the adjoining apartment, and never shall I forget the scene which a moment or two later met my eyes.

Lying on one of the couches, his limbs and features fixed in the last terrible convulsions of death, was my own cousin, Dick Mortimer, and almost as we arrived there all was over. Apoplexy some of the men said it was, but poisoned by his own act it proved to be when the doctors had examined the body and the inquest had been held.

The cause of death, however, I guessed at that night, or, more correctly speaking, in the early hours of the morning, when I returned to my room. Lying on the table I found a letter from my unhappy cousin, which had arrived during my absence. In it he confessed, out of a spirit of pique and revenge, to having forged my name to the bill and our uncle's acceptance of it. His accomplice, the money-lender, he further stated, was to have the proceeds for conniving at this criminal transaction, and, in fact, had been the one to suggest the scheme for ruining me.

I telegraphed at once to the squire, and he arrived in town with the least possible delay. In the interval the police had been at work, but their endeavor to arrest the rogue of a money-lender had been fruitless. His clerk was found at the office, but professed to know nothing, and his master, so far as I have been able to learn, was seen no more. He had drawn a large check upon his bank, leaving but a balance of a few pounds, on the previous afternoon, and the last that was known of him was when I knocked him down at Covent Garden Theater.

That I was restored to my uncle's favor and to my old position as to "expectations," it is scarcely necessary for me to relate; but it may be interesting if I add that I married Mabel, and thereby became one of the most happy of mortals.

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..... " " WILD WEST WEEKLY, Nos.....

..... " " PLUCK AND LUCK, Nos.....

..... " " SECRET SERVICE, Nos.....

..... " " THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76, Nos.....

..... " " Ten-Cent Hand Books, Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....