

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

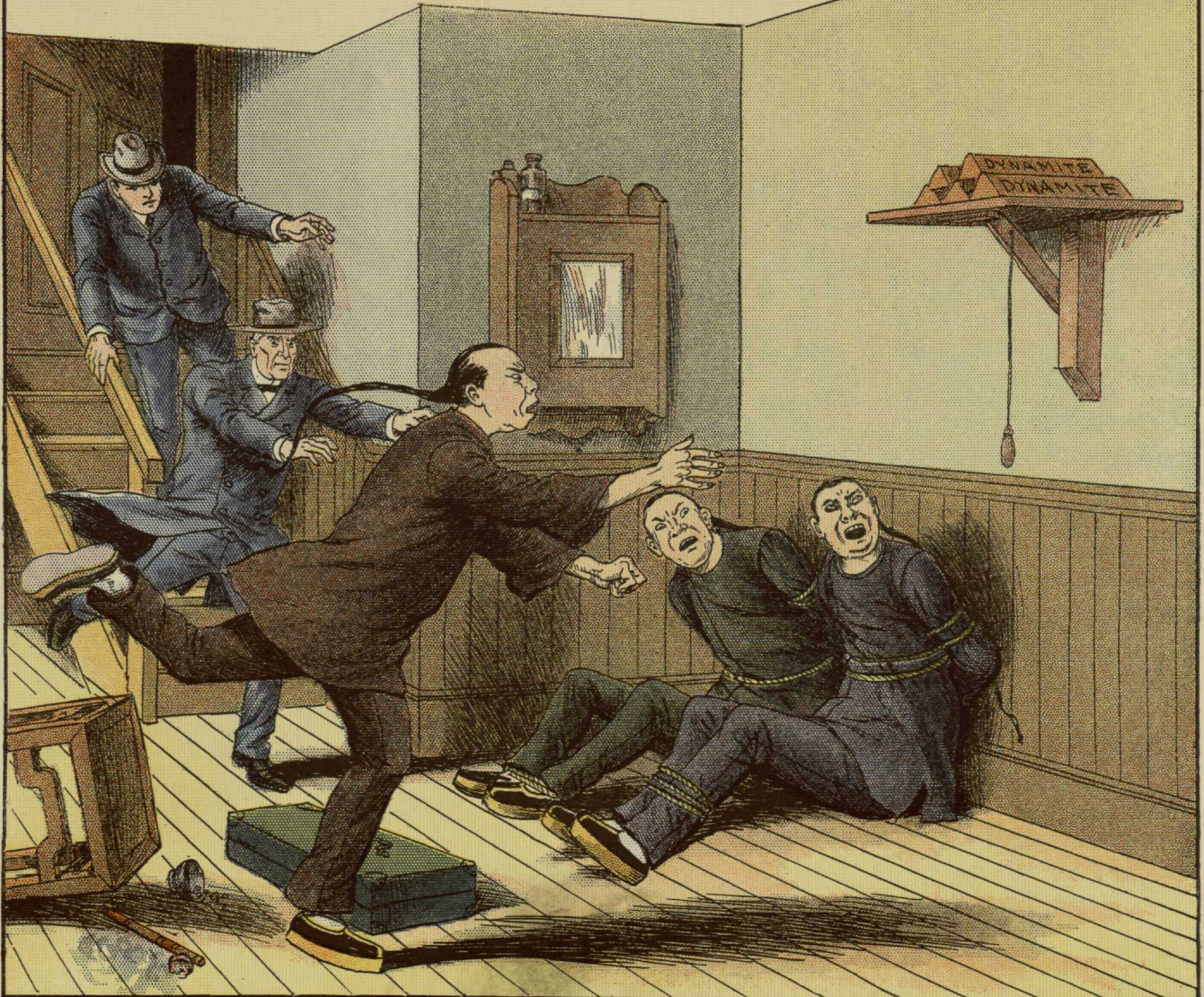
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No. 475.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 28, 1908.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE MAD CHINAMAN; OR, HOT WORK IN FIVE CITIES. *By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.*



As the Bradys saw the Mad Chinaman make a rush for the dynamite on the shelf, they felt that the time for action had come. Old King Brady threw open the door and they dashed down the stairs.

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CHAPTER I.

MR. HIPOLYTE TI.

Called to Boston by telegram on the 10th of March, the world-famous detectives of the Brady Bureau reached that city about 5 p. m., and registered, as usual, at Young's Hotel.

The call came via Washington and from the chief of the United States Secret Service Bureau.

"Go to Boston and await order," was the vague wording of the despatch.

But it was enough to start the Bradys.

These remarkable detectives hold themselves ready for Government service at all times.

Old King Brady expected to report to Mr. J. C. Tanner, Secret Service Commissioner at Boston, the morning following.

But the detectives were given no rest.

Their call came that night.

"Good evening, Mr. Brady!" said the hotel clerk, as the old detective took up the pen to sign the register. "Somebody must be anxious to see you. We have had no less than five telephone calls to know if you are here within an hour."

"Who calling?" demanded the old detective.

"Don't know. Couldn't get the name."

The telephone rang even as the clerk spoke.

"Who is this?" he asked.

"What's that?"

"Yes, this is Young's Hotel. You want to know if the Bradys have arrived? Wait just one moment and I will see."

"Shall I say you are here?" asked the clerk, turning away from the telephone.

"Make him tell his name," replied Old King Brady.

"You will have to give your name, sir!" called the clerk over the telephone.

And then:

"What's that? No use! I can answer no questions unless I know your name.

"What's that? You hold orders from who?"

"Oh, the Secret Service Bureau. I don't know anything about that. Give your name. No? Then ring off."

"Won't give it," said the clerk, turning to the old detective, who, in company with Young King Brady and Miss Alice Montgomery, the accomplished female partner of the Brady Bureau, stood waiting at the desk.

"Let him keep it then," replied the old detective. "Can we have our usual suite?"

"You can, Mr. Brady."

"Serve supper there, at once, please."

"Very good, sir."

"If this person calls insist upon his name and something to show that he has the authority of the Secret Service Bureau, otherwise we are not to be disturbed."

So the Bradys sat down to such a supper as only Young's Hotel can produce, privately served.

They had not the least idea what sort of a case they were up against.

Fatigued with their long ride, their hope was that the work they had come to do might be postponed until the following day.

But it was not to be.

Scarce had they finished supper when the hotel clerk himself knocked at the door.

"There is a queer, little fellow downstairs asking to see you," he said. "He is the same party I talked with over the telephone. I recognize the voice. He still refuses to give his name, and says he must see you at once. He gave me this, if you can make anything out of it. Seems to be Chinese, or Japanese, or something."

The clerk produced a slip of red paper, covered with Chinese characters.

It also bore the private seal of the United States Secret Service Bureau, which Old King Brady at once recognized.

He reserved the paper and found on the back a peremptory order from the chief for the Brady Bureau to take charge of the case of Mr. "Hipolyte Ti."

"This is straight," said Old King Brady. "Let the man come up in ten minutes—not sooner. We want a chance to read this."

"Can you read those fly tracks?" demanded the clerk.

"I cannot; Miss Montgomery can."

"What language is it?"

"Chinese, is it not, Alice?"

Alice took the paper, and, glancing over it, announced that it was.

The clerk retired.

Alice tackled the paper.

"It is a request made to the Chinese Minister for detective service," she said. "He has indorsed it, requesting that the Secret Service Bureau to lend their aid. It has been returned to the sender, with this English indorsement on the back, I take it. That is all I can make out of it."

"It is enough," replied Old King Brady. "We shall have to act."

A moment later there came a knock on the door.

Harry opened it and a queer, little mannikin walked in.

He was a man not over five feet tall, dressed in a cheap business suit, and wearing an absurd plug hat.

His face was a study for an artist.

Old King Brady thought he had never seen such small features.

Manifestly the man had Oriental blood in his veins, but at the same time he looked decidedly like a Frenchman.

"Mr. Ti?" inquired Harry, as the man stood hesitating at the threshold.

"That's me," squeaked the little fellow. "I want to see Old King Brady."

"Come in," said the old detective. "Be seated, Mr. Ti, and tell us all about it."

The little man sat down on the edge of a chair, depositing his hat on the floor.

His legs were so short that his feet hung suspended in the air.

He seemed nervous and scared.

His eyes roamed about the room for a minute before he spoke.

"Come, Mr. Ti, what can we do for you?" demanded Old King Brady, in an encouraging tone.

"I want help," squeaked the little man.

"What kind of help? Help for what?"

"I am being threatened daily."

"In what way?"

"By letters. They are going to rob me and then kill me."

"Oh, you have enemies, then?"

"Yes."

"Who are they?"

"I don't know."

"And you want us to find out who they are?"

"Yes."

Old King Brady began to think that he had a lunatic on his hands.

"Give us particulars," he said. "Explain yourself, my dear sir."

"I can't. I don't know what to say."

"But how can we help you if you don't tell us anything?"

"I am perfectly willing to tell you everything, but there is nothing to tell."

Another man would have shown this singular individual the door.

But Old King Brady's patience is great, and his curiosity had been aroused.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"No. — Harrison avenue."

"That is in the Chinese quarter?"

"Yes."

"Are you a Chinaman?"

"My father was a Chinaman; my mother was a Frenchwoman. I was born in the city of Singapore."

"Lived in Boston long, Mr. Ti?"

"Only a year."

"What is your business?"

"I keep a Chinese general store."

"I see. Did you come directly to Boston from Singapore?"

"No; I stopped six months in San Francisco."

"Were these people—these enemies of yours—after you there?"

"Yes. They tried to kill me—to rob me. I had to run away, so I came here."

"I see. Now what is it they want?"

"Must I tell?"

"I don't see how we can get at the business unless you tell us frankly what it is all about."

"You won't rob me?"

"Certainly not, sir! We are Secret Service people—Government employes. Don't be absurd!"

"I am very nervous. So would you be under the circumstances. If you could only read Chinese I could soon make you understand."

"This lady can read Chinese. Let it come, Mr. Ti."

In a mysterious way, the little man drew out a big pocketbook and from it took half a dozen slips of red paper, covered with Chinese characters.

"Can you really read Chinese?" he asked, eying Alice, curiously.

"I can," was the reply.

"How did you learn?"

"I was born in China. I learned the language as a child."

"Oh!"

"Yes. Am I to look over those papers?"

"Well, yes. You won't betray me?"

"Put your mind at rest, sir," replied Old King Brady.

"Either we take your case or we don't take it. We can do nothing for you unless you give us full particulars. If after you have told us all there is any reason why we do not wish to take up the matter your confidence will be fully respected."

Mr. Ti handed the bunch of papers to Alice.

"I see you have them numbered," said Alice. "I will read them in turn. Were these earlier ones received in Boston?"

"No. The first came to me in Singapore, the next in San Francisco, and the last four reached me in Boston. Read! You will see that I am in terror of my life."

Alice began with the papers.

The Bradys sat in silence.

Mr. Ti wiggled and twisted in his chair, presenting such a comical sight that Young King Brady had to get up and go to the window or he would have laughed in the little man's face.

But Alice's face grew grave as she read.

"It is wonderful," remarked Mr. Ti, presently. "She really seems to be able to read Chinese. I never knew a white person who could read the language, although I have known several who could speak it. It is all I can do to read it myself."

"But you can write it?" inquired Old King Brady.

"No."

"Then who wrote this appeal to the Chinese Minister you sent up?"

"My clerk, Sing Duck."

"Oh! He is in your confidence?"

"Yes. He is a good man, but he is getting to smoke too much opium. Sometimes I wish he was not in my confidence. I am beginning to be afraid of him."

"Your troubles have evidently got on your nerves."

"You would think so if you were in my place."

Just here Alice laid down the last of the papers.

Gathering up all, she returned them to Mr. Ti.
 "This is a very serious matter," she said.
 "Very."
 "What have you done?"
 "Nothing."
 "You don't intend to give the diamond up?"
 "No. It's mine. I mean to keep it."
 "Where is it now?"
 "Must I tell?"
 "It would be better."
 "It is in the hands of a friend who does not live in Boston. That's as far as I will go."
 "Why don't you sell it?"
 "I will never sell it."
 "Or split it up?"
 "No."
 "You believe that there is a spirit attached to that diamond who is able to bring you good luck?"
 "Yes."
 "I thought so. You have had good luck since you stole the stone from the ruined temple?"
 "Yes. I have made a great deal of money. But don't call it stealing. The temple lies buried in the heart of the forest. I was there four days and never saw a soul. I had a right to take the diamond."
 "Evidently the writer of these letters thinks differently."
 "By what right?"
 "He claims to be a direct descendant of the old priests of the ruined temple; that he and his ancestors for five hundred years have been the guardians of the diamond."
 "Well, let him prove it."
 "Have you ever seen him?"
 "No, and I don't want to."
 "How did the letters reach you?"
 "If I told you how, you would not believe it."
 "Tell it; tell it!"
 "Each one was found in my bed when I awoke in the morning."
 "You believe them to have been brought into your room by spirits?"
 "Yes. I don't believe it, as you say—I know it!"
 "Will you leave the letters with me for further study?"
 "Yes, if you wish; but I want them back."
 "You shall have them back. We will call on you tomorrow."
 "I am going out of town to-night. I have business in Salem, it will be very late when I return, and in the morning I have important business to attend to. Can you postpone your visit until one o'clock?"
 "How about that, Mr. Brady?" demanded Alice.
 "Yes, certainly, if the gentleman wants it that way," replied the old detective.
 "Thank you," said Mr. Ti, slipping off the chair. "Now I will go."
 He said something to Alice in Chinese, and she replied in the same language.
 "Good evening, sir!" said Mr. Ti.
 "Good evening to you, young man, and also to you, young woman!"
 With this the little man picked up his hat and passed out.

Thus the Bradys had taken up a case which had yet to be fully explained.

CHAPTER II.

SING DUCK.

"Queer little rat!" remarked Old King Brady, after the departure of Mr. Hipolyte Ti. "What has he been doing, Alice, stealing a big diamond from some heathen temple?"

"Yes," replied Alice. "It was the eye of an idol."

"And the temple?"

"Lies buried in the forests of the Cambodia, three hundred miles north of Panompin, on the banks of the Makong River."

"I have heard of that country before. Although now utterly wild, it appears in ancient times to have been the seat of a very extensive civilization."

"It is so."

"Were you ever there, Alice?" Harry asked. "I don't mean at the temple, of course, but in that part of the country?"

"No nearer than Singapore, where this man comes from," replied Alice.

"Let us hear about the letters," said Old King Brady.

"Why, they are so peculiarly worded that it is scarcely worth while for me to attempt to translate them literally," replied Alice. "They are just threats of death and disaster if he don't restore the diamond."

"Signed?"

"No; there is no name attached."

"What do they want him to do with the diamond?"

"To send it to a certain Chinese banking house in Singapore. They all run about the same. The last one is the strongest. It threatens him with sudden death, and the time named is during this moon."

"No exact date fixed?"

"No. How old is the moon?"

"I shall have to consult an almanac. Let me see, it was about full last night, but whether it is waxing or on the wane I would not undertake to say."

"We have several days before it dies, at all events."

"Anything said about the value of the diamond?"

"No."

"I wish you had asked him."

"The time he spoke to me he said that he was determined not to name its value."

"And what did you say?"

"I told him that he was very foolish not to take us completely into his confidence."

"And his answer?"

"Was that he knew his business, and would not do it."
 "He seems an odd sort," remarked Harry.

"Take a mixture like that man and you can hardly expect to find anything else but an odd sort," replied Old King Brady. "But, really, Alice, I must decline to consider the matter settled about our taking up this case. When he comes to talk about those pieces of red paper being brought into his bed by spirits, it really is too absurd."

"He believes it," said Alice. "We must prove to the contrary, I suppose. Anyhow, I told him you would take the case."

And that was all there was to it that night.

Next morning Old King Brady went to Waltham to see a friend, while Alice and Harry, engaging an automobile, had a long ride through Boston's lovely suburbs, which are second to no city in the world.

They all met at noon at Young's for dinner, and at a quarter to one they started for Boston's little Chinatown.

Old King Brady was not at all enthusiastic about the case, and did an unusual amount of grumbling.

As they turned down Essex street, toward Harrison avenue, they saw that a crowd had gathered.

Men were engaged in shoring up a house with huge beams.

On the lower floor there had evidently been an explosion.

The whole store front had been blown out.

"Great Scott!" cried Harry. "That's our place, Alice! What does that sign between the windows say?"

The sign was in Chinese, and Alice's translation showed that it belonged to a fortune teller.

"But that is upstairs," she said. "That house is Ti's number, all right. The threat in the last letter seems to have been carried out."

"What was it?" demanded Old King Brady.

"That if he did not give up the diamond he would be blown to the four quarters of the earth. That means killed by an explosion."

"Well, I sincerely hope the little man isn't dead," said Old King Brady. "But let us learn what has really happened."

Two policemen were on guard, and Old King Brady tackled one of them.

"What's the trouble here?" he demanded, displaying his shield.

"Oh, sure, it's some blame Chink been blowing up another," was the reply. "I wisht dey'd blow each other all out of the country, so I do."

"When did it happen?"

"About ten o'clock."

"We came here by appointment to meet a man named Ti. Is he the party who was killed?"

"A little man?"

"Yes."

"Dat's him; but he is not dead so."

"Badly hurt?"

"I believe so. I know the man, but I didn't see him since the explosion. Dey tuk him to de hospital. I heard say he was badly hurted."

"Massachusetts General Hospital?"

"Yes."

"You don't know how it happened?"

"I dunno a t'ing about it. I was just detailed here."

The place was a wreck.

The walls had been blown out, front and rear, and the building so badly shaken that the landlord thought it necessary to shore it up.

A mass of Chinese goods, mingled with plaster, beams and bricks, choked the first floor.

Old King Brady wondered how they managed to get

little Mr. Ti out, but the policeman did not seem to be able to tell him much.

"There were two men in the place. What about the other?" he asked.

The officer knew only Mr. Ti.

Just then a Chinaman came out of the crowd and approached the detectives.

"You are Old King Brady?" he asked, in broken English.

It was not surprising that he should recognize the old detective if he had any knowledge of him.

For Old King Brady, when not in disguise, always affects a peculiar dress.

He wears a long, blue coat, with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and big, white felt hat, with an extraordinarily broad brim.

The old detective acknowledging his identity, the Chinaman slipped a letter into his hand and vanished in the crowd before the detectives could detain him.

The envelope bore Chinese writing.

Old King Brady handed it over to Alice.

"What does it say?" he asked.

"To the detective with the big hat," replied Alice.

"That's me. Open the thing."

They drew to one side and Alice opened the letter and looked it over.

"This is very peculiar," she said.

"Well?" demanded Old King Brady. "Let it come."

But it is very difficult to translate Chinese into English literally.

Alice explained the purport of the letter thus:

"To Old King Brady:

"I blew up H. Ti. I shall get the diamond—not you. I play fair. I have to start. Catch me, if you can. I will post bills letting you know where I have gone. Follow me if you will. I will help you by the bills. Every move I make you shall know. Sing Duck."

"Let me see, that was his clerk's name, was it not?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Yes," replied Alice.

"There is something on the other side of that sheet, Alice," remarked Harry.

Alice turned the paper over.

Here some one had drawn with a pen a rude map of that part of Boston where they were, including a part of South Boston.

At different points on the map were tiny crosses, made in red, with a very fine pen.

The nearest point where the cross appeared was the opposite corner of Harrison avenue and Essex street.

Here, on a brick wall, Chinese notices were posted as on the famous bulletin at the corner of Doyers and Pell street, in New York's Chinatown.

"Begin at the bulletin," was written over the map in Chinese.

"Come!" remarked Old King Brady. "This is a funny sort of criminal. So he means to tell us how to go and just what to do, does he? Let us see."

They crossed over to the bulletin.

"Get busy, Alice," said the old detective.

Alice ran her eye over the red slips on the wall, and finally put her finger on one.

"This is it," she said. "Reads: 'Old King Brady—How are you? Ready to start? Next station is Harrison avenue and Dover street. Look for the notice there.'"

"Well, I declare!" cried Old King Brady. "Is that really what it says?"

"That is what it means," replied Alice.

"How does it designate me?"

"'Big hat.'"

"Oh, that hat!" muttered Harry.

"And the location?" continued the old detective.

"See, he has spelled 'Dover' out in English," replied Alice, "only the letters run down in a column instead of across. This character means 'this avenue,' that is Harrison avenue—see?"

"I shall have to take your word for it, Alice, and that I know I can do. Now, then, you and Harry accept this fellow's challenge, and see what comes of it. I must go to the hospital and look up Mr. Ti."

So the Bradys separated.

Alice and Harry hurried to the corner of Harrison avenue and Dover street.

Here, sure enough, they found another red slip pasted against a wall.

It read as follows:

"Old King Brady—How are you? I am going to South Boston. Next call will be B and Anchor streets.

"Sing Duck."

"He seems to mean business," remarked Harry.

"If you want my opinion, we are dealing with a madman," Alice said.

"Why do you think that?"

"Because the Chinese are the most secretive people on earth. The idea of a sane one writing like that is preposterous."

"Oh, you can't tell. Let us get over to South Boston and see if there is another doing at the corner of B and Anchor streets."

The locality was quite distant.

They took an electric car and crossed Dover street bridge.

Arriving at B and Anchor street at last, they found a Chinese laundry on one corner, but they could see no notice posted anywhere.

"Shall we inquire in the laundry?" asked Harry.

"I think so," replied Alice.

They entered and found two Chinamen at work.

When Alice began to talk to them they exhibited no surprise.

And she told Harry afterward the talk ran thus:

"You are the lady who speaks Chinese?"

"I am. I think you have a message for me?"

"I have."

"Who gave it to you?"

"A Chinaman. I do not know him. I never saw him before."

"Then how came he to give you the message?"

"He came into my store about two hours ago and left it here. He said give it to the old man with the big hat or to the lady who can talk Chinese."

And Alice was handed a sealed envelope.

It contained a strip of red paper, bearing Chinese characters, which read thus:

"Old King Brady—This is my bluff. Can you call it? Now I go to New York. You look on the bulletin and I will tell you what to do next. By that time I will have the diamond. You are a big detective and very smart, but you are not as smart as Sing Duck."

CHAPTER III.

BACK TO NEW YORK.

"I will explain this afterward, Harry," said Alice, and then she began talking to one of the laundrymen in Chinese.

Harry watched her admiringly.

But it is not for her talent as a linguist alone that Harry admires Alice.

He is deeply in love with his fair partner, and is looking forward to the time when he shall be able to prevail upon Alice to give up the detective business and become his wife.

But that time, Alice assures him, is far distant.

She is devoted to her calling, and has not the least notion of giving it up, for the present at least, so it looks as if Harry might have to wait for some years to come.

At last Alice got through her conversation, and they went outside.

Alice read the letter.

"He is mad, all right," she said.

"Did that Chink say so, or do you judge by the letter?" asked Harry.

"The laundryman says that there is no doubt that he is a man driven mad by opium or cocaine."

"I don't know that I ever struck a Chinese cocaine fiend."

"Nor I; but that is what he said. We may as well get back, Harry. There is nothing doing here."

They returned to Young's Hotel by way of the South Station, finding Old King Brady there.

"Did you see Ti?" demanded Harry.

"Yes, and I had a talk with him," was the reply.

"Is he very badly injured?" demanded Alice.

"Not so bad. His face and body are considerably burned and his skull fractured. The doctors have operated, and they seem to think he will come out all right."

"Were you talking with him?" demanded Harry.

"For a few minutes only. Now, tell me just what occurred to you."

Alice explained and translated the Chinese letter.

"Do you propose to follow the matter up?" asked Harry.

"Yes. The Secret Service orders must be obeyed."

"Do you imagine that the Chinese Minister has any interest in this diamond?"

"I have no means of knowing. You heard all that passed between me and Ti."

"Except your talk in the hospital."

"That amounted to nothing. He simply said: 'Well, you see they got me.'"

"Did you say anything about Sing Duck?"

"No; the doctor ordered me not to talk much to him. He inquired if they had found Sing Duck. I replied that I did not know, and he said: 'Poor man! He is probably dead.'"

"He did not seem to know that Sing Duck blew up his place?"

"I take it that he did not by the way he spoke. We will go right back to New York, and try to catch Sing Duck. I cannot agree with Alice's theory that he is mad."

They were still discussing the matter when a district messenger boy came to them with a letter from H. Ti.

When Alice opened it she found that it was very brief and in very bad Chinese.

In fact, she had to puzzle over it for some time before she was able to make out what it was intended to convey.

At last she gave it out as follows:

"Get the diamond and put it in your bank for me. Paper in box in chimney, back room, will tell where it is.
H. Ti."

"That is as near as I can make it," said Alice; "and I am not quite sure that what I say is right."

"We will go to Harrison avenue and see," said the old detective, "and we want to be quick about it, too. I believe Sing Duck meant what he said when he wrote that he was going to New York, and we want to get after him first train."

They proceeded to the wrecked house.

Here they found the situation even more serious.

The foundation of the house had been injured in some way, it appeared, and the building was manifestly sinking, in spite of the shoring beams.

The occupants of the upper stories had all been ordered out, and they already removed all their belongings when the Bradys reached the spot.

"I will go in alone," said the old detective, after learning these particulars from a policeman. "There is no sense in us all three taking the risk."

"I must warn you, Mr. Brady, that it is very dangerous," said the policeman. "I wouldn't go inside there for anything myself."

But Old King Brady declared he must go.

The street had been roped off, so great did the police believe the danger to be.

Old King Brady got over the rope and passed into the ruined store.

The policeman stood with Harry and Alice in front of the next house.

"He runs a big risk," he remarked. "It is my opinion that house is going to tumble."

"Will it damage any of the buildings across the way, think?" demanded Alice.

"I hardly think so," was the reply. "There is not enough of it for that. You see, the dynamite must have been in the cellar when it was exploded, and—jump! Quick! She's coming!"

A rumbling, cracking noise was heard.

"Merciful heaven! If he only had not gone!" groaned Harry, as he caught Alice by the arm and dragged her out of harm's way.

There was an instant of suspense, and the front wall fell, partly into the street and partly into the cellar.

It took the roof and partitions down with it, but the rear and side walls stood.

Alice turned her head away, sick with horror.

"Brace up!" said Harry. "The Governor is a wise one! Wait!"

"Sure, he's done for!" gasped the policeman. "Escape was impossible. I told him not to go in."

Of course, Harry and Alice found themselves in the centre of a crowd in just no time.

Chinamen came flocking out of the houses on all sides.

But, beyond a few broken windows from flying bricks, there was no damage done to the opposite buildings.

And now even Harry's hope began to fail.

"We must do something!" he groaned. "He may be alive and buried under the ruins! I—oh, Alice! There he comes! You can't kill Old King Brady with an axe!"

And, sure enough, out from a Chinese restaurant next door the old detective emerged.

He did not appear to be in the least excited, and in his hand he carried a small, japanned cash box.

"You see, I got it!" he said, triumphantly. "Made quite a mess, didn't it? You were right, officer, when you said it was going to fall."

"It is all very well to take it coolly," said Harry. "But think of our feelings! Alice was frightened almost to death."

"Harry said you would come out all right," said Alice. "But you should have seen his face—he was as white as a sheet."

Old King Brady laughed.

"Oh, I'm all right," he said. "I had just got this thing out of the chimney when I heard the cracking begin. Wouldn't take my chances of getting out by the front way, so I jumped out into the back yard. Not a brick fell there. I climbed over the fence and came out next door. But now to get out of this."

They hurried away, making no attempt to open the box until they were in their room in the hotel.

Then, by the aid of a little tool, one of a set which he always carries, Old King Brady easily opened the box.

"Don't believe we are going to find much in it. It is very light," he said.

There was nothing in it but one of the everlasting Chinese red slips.

"More work for you, Alice," said the old detective. "Get busy."

Alice was able to read this one right off.

"Sing Duck again," she said. "It reads, to make a liberal translation:

"Good day, gentlemen! I win again. I got the address and the order for the diamond. Nothing doing!

"Sing Duck."

Old King Brady was furious.

"And I risked my life for that thing!" he exclaimed.

"But let him wait. I am beginning to get interested now. I'll get square with that man!"

Harry smiled, for he knew that if his chief felt that way there was little hope for Mr. Sing Duck.

Old King Brady now wrote a note to Hipolyte Ti, telling him what had occurred, and assuring him that it was their intention to do all they could toward getting the diamond.

This posted, the detectives took the first train for New York.

The case was never mentioned during the long ride.

Old King Brady makes it a rule not to discuss cases perpetually, but to give his mind a rest from business where he can.

It was late when the detectives reached New York, but they determined to visit Chinatown, nevertheless.

So, as soon as they had finished supper, they all went down to the corner of Doyers and Pell street to inspect the Chinese bulletin.

Here there were dozens of red slips pasted, and it took time to go through them all.

Nothing was found to indicate that Sing Duck had come down to business in New York, so the detectives gave it up for the night.

"Alice can drop around there in the morning before coming to the office," said Old King Brady, and Alice did; but still there was nothing on the bulletin.

That Sing Duck had secured the diamond, was Old King Brady's theory.

That morning he got the Massachusetts General Hospital on the telephone and inquired for H. Ti.

The report was discouraging.

Brain fever had set in, and the doctors said that the little man was likely to die.

Old King Brady reported to the Secret Service Bureau.

Here he received orders to drop the matter and to go to work on another case.

Thus a week passed, but Old King Brady did not give up.

Every day Alice went down to the corner of Pell and Doyers street and had a look at the bulletin.

Nothing came of it, and the affair seemed hopeless, when, one morning, Alice came into the office with an air of triumph.

"Our notice is on the bulletin, Mr. B.," she exclaimed.

"Ha!" cried Old King Brady. "At last! Well, and what does it say?"

"It is surprising enough to be the work of a madman," replied Alice.

"Nonsense! The man is no more mad than I am. He is playing some deep game. Well, what does he say?"

Alice took out her memorandum book and read:

"Man with the Big Hat: Are you tired of waiting? I got it. I have it now. What I did in Boston I am going to do to-night in New York. The circus comes off at midnight, and just before I am ready to begin I shall post the address on the bulletin. Come and see the fun.

"Sing Duck."

"Why, that would seem to mean that the wretch con-

templates blowing up another house!" cried Old King Brady.

"It certainly reads that way," said Alice. "I can't make anything else out of it. Note how cautiously he words the message. No one but ourselves could possibly understand what he meant."

"It looks so. Well, we must act. Perhaps he lies when he says he has the diamond."

"What do you think now about his being crazy?"

"He is either a fiend or a madman. That seems sure."

"Good!" cried Alice. "You are coming around to my way of thinking. Listen, Mr. Brady! I know the Chinese character as you don't. No sane Chinaman would ever act this way."

"Well, well, Alice," said Old King Brady, mildly, "perhaps you are right."

He was to find reason to know how right she was before the night was out.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MIDNIGHT TRAIL.

The Bradys had received the call from Mr. Sing Duck just in time.

For that day saw the finish of their other case, and they were ready to take hold of this one again.

When they closed up business that evening all three went down to Chinatown and had supper at the famous "Tuxedo" restaurant on Pell street.

Of course, they stopped to consult the bulletin, but while the notice was still there no other had been posted.

After supper Old King Brady went to consult his friend Quong Lee, the opium joint keeper on Chatham Square, to see if he knew any such person as Sing Duck.

Harry and Alice remained at the restaurant waiting for him, and after a little he returned.

"He knows no such man," Old King Brady announced. "He agrees with you, Alice, and says that no Chinaman would ever act that way unless he was mad."

"That's what I said from the first, and what I say still," replied Alice. "But what is the programme?"

"We will make the rounds of Chinatown now, and see who is stirring to-night. Of course, as we have never seen Sing Duck, we can't hope to accomplish much. Later, if you mean to stick by us——"

"Which I do," broke in Alice.

"I was going to add that you better get up to the office and adopt male disguise. It won't do for you to be around here at midnight dressed as you are."

Alice nodded assent.

They made the rounds of Pell, Mott and Doyers street. They even looked in at the Chinese theatre for half an hour, although the peculiar performance was an old story for them all.

When they came out Alice remarked that she wished they could all understand Chinese.

"Why, what is in the wind now?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Oh, I was interested in the conversation of those two men alongside of us. They were talking about two friends of theirs who have been mysteriously missing for several

days. One of them recognized you, Mr. Brady, and he remarked that it would be a good thing if you could be set to find them, but the other thought it would cost too much."

"How came they to turn up missing? Did he say?"

"He said that it came from mixing up with a crazy man."

"Ha! Our madman, perhaps."

"That's what I was wondering."

"I wish you had spoken before."

"But I did not think of the connection to tell the truth."

"And probably there is none. Well, you and Harry get uptown, and I will meet you at midnight by the bulletin. I am going to consult Hip High."

Now Hip High was a Chinese banker, with whom Old King Brady had several times had business.

He liked the man, and considered him thoroughly reliable. He had decided to tell him all about the case.

Hip High was found in his little office on Mott street, writing up his book, with his sampan, or counting machine, behind him.

He received the old detective cordially and took him in a back room, where Old King Brady told him the whole story.

"It is strange business," said Hip High, who spoke just as good English as Old King Brady himself.

"I suppose you have never heard anything about this diamond?"

"There you are wrong. I am very much inclined to think that I know who has it."

"Ha! I wish I had come to you before, High."

"It would have done no good. Without an order you could not have got the diamond, and the man would have denied it. But perhaps as it is we can induce him to talk."

"Who is he?"

"His name is Moy Ting. He is a banker on Pell street, directly in the rear of this house. All I know about the matter is that one Sunday afternoon, some three weeks ago, I was sitting at my window, and I happened to look across the yard at Moy Ting's window. The sun was very bright, and suddenly I saw him standing by the window, holding what I took to be a piece of glass, which had caught the rays of the sun.

"It was about as big as my thumbnail, and it looked like a diamond, but I never imagined it could be anything but glass."

"And you could see all this from your window?"

"With my opera glass, yes; and that is what I had."

"Remarkable!" said Old King Brady. "Was that all you saw?"

"That is all. He moved away from the window then."

"What sort of man is this Moy Ting?"

"He is one of the most reliable of our bankers. What makes me think it may have been the diamond is the fact that Moy Ting lived for many years in Singapore."

"And probably Ti knew him. This is very interesting. Can you introduce me to Moy Ting?"

"Certainly. I know him well."

"You have seen him since that afternoon?"

"Oh, yes; several times."

"I almost wonder that you did not ask him about it."

"That is because you don't know the Chinese ways. We never butt in on other people's business."

"But you think that Moy Ting would tell you about this matter if he heard my story?"

"I think so. He may know nothing about Ti's troubles. Take my case. I never even heard that a house was blown up in Boston's Chinatown. It is the way we do business, Mr. Brady. I know it must seem very strange to you."

"You Chinese ought to have a newspaper; that's what you need," said Old King Brady. "But, come, High; let us get around there and see what we can do."

Hip High raised no objection, and they went around on Pell street.

And here once again Old King Brady had an illustration of how little the inhabitants of Chinatown know of each other's affairs.

When they entered Moy Ting's place they were met by a young Chinaman, whose face to Old King Brady conveyed no more expression than a block of wood.

This man and Hip High fell to talking, and for five minutes it was all words.

The banker then turned to Old King Brady and said:

"This is very strange business, Mr. Brady."

"What now?" demanded the old detective.

"Moy Ting has disappeared. He has been missing for two days."

"Ha!" exclaimed the old detective. "What about that?"

"They know nothing. He simply went out and failed to come back."

"Have the police been notified?"

"No."

"Can this man talk English?"

"Not a word."

"Ask him if he has heard of any one else missing in Chinatown."

High did so, and reported that the young man knew of no one else.

"Who is he?" inquired Old King Brady.

"Clerk to Moy Ting."

"Tell him all. Let us see what he knows."

The conversation became more vigorous than ever then, and lasted for some time.

When at last he ceased to speak Hip High drew the old detective outside.

"You are right," he said. "Such a man as you describe Sing Duck to be came there on the day after the Boston explosion. That fellow believed him to be mad, and Moy Ting thought so, too. He was in and out a number of times, and the last time he talked so wildly that Moy Ting ordered him out of the place. After that he did not come again."

"And the diamond?"

"He professed to know nothing about it. He declared that he had never heard of Ti, and that there was no such name on their books."

"Well, keep your eyes open," said the old detective, "For the information you have already given me I am a thousand times obliged."

Old King Brady now left Chinatown to attend to other

matters, and at midnight he met Harry and Alice at the bulletin.

Alice was simply perfect in her male disguise.

She was studying the bulletin when Old King Brady came along.

"Well? Anything doing?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Alice. "The second notice is here."

"And how does it read?"

"Big Hat: The address is No. — North Sixth street, Williamsburg."

"So?" That's a bad job. If Sing Duck intends to blow up the house at midnight there is little chance for us to see the fun, as he says. Anything further on it?"

"No. That is all."

"Shall we get over there?" demanded Harry.

"Right away," was the reply. "We will make a strike for it, at all events."

They hurried up the Bowery on foot, and got a car on the Williamsburg Bridge, which took them to the Plaza.

Here they boarded a Lorimer street car and went to North Sixth street.

This neighborhood may be called the slums of Williamsburg.

The whole section north of Grand street is a mass of small, frame houses of the flimsiest construction—houses which date back about forty years, and which never should have been built.

There is a large Italian colony here, and many Greeks have crept in.

During the past few years, owing to the perpetual fights of the Hip Sing Tong, or Highbinders, and the On Lecng, or Merchants' Guild in Chinatown, a good many of the more quietly disposed Chinks have emigrated to North Sixth street, Williamsburg, and there is quite a colony of them there.

It was well on toward one o'clock when the Bradys reached North Sixth street, where scarcely a soul was to be seen.

"And now you see, Alice, how necessary your disguise has proved," remarked Old King Brady. "As a woman you simply could not have come here."

"Oh, I don't know about that," retorted Alice. "It looks to be quiet enough."

"It's a tough neighborhood. But where is our number?"

"A couple of blocks down," said Harry, who knows the section well.

They pushed on, having already walked down from Lorimer street, for North Sixth street ends at Union avenue, which they had just crossed.

The number proved to belong to an old three-story frame tenement.

The ground floor had been altered into a store, which had a Chinese sign, but it was not easy to determine what sort of goods the occupant dealt in, for it was a cold night and the frost was thick on the window panes.

There was an alley gate alongside the house, which indicated a rear house.

The side door stood wide open, as is the usual custom with these Williamsburg tenements.

The Bradys paused, uncertain what to do.

"No signs of an explosion around these diggings," remarked Young King Brady.

"It begins to look as if it might be a trap to catch us," said the old detective. "But here comes somebody. Let us slide into the alley. It won't do to attract attention here."

They pushed open the gate and passed in.

Sure enough, there was a rear house.

It was a little, square box of an affair, two stories high. A light burned in the basement window, and a rickety stoop led up to the second story, where there was also a light.

"Come, let us investigate," said the old detective. "I must say I don't like the look of this place; but we have come too far to turn back now."

He ascended the stoop and tried the front door.

It yielded to his touch.

Instantly they caught the sound of a man's voice somewhere in the rear.

He was talking in a loud, excited manner.

"Chinese," whispered Alice.

"Yes. Come!" said Old King Brady. "It seems to be downstairs in the rear."

Harry flashed his light, and they saw that there were no stairs leading down, but a flight led up.

"Better go in by the basement door, hadn't we?" questioned Harry.

"No. Let's tackle this rear door," replied the old detective.

The loud talking had now ceased.

The rear door proved to be locked.

Old King Brady stepped back and tried the door of the front room, which was unfastened.

He opened it and passed in.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAD CHINAMAN'S CHALLENGE.

The detectives looked into an uncarpeted room, cheaply furnished in Chinese style.

A lamp burned on the table, but there was no one present.

They passed through into the back room.

Here there were two cheap cot beds, with tumbled-up clothes upon them.

The place fairly reeked with the smell of opium, but still they found no one.

Just then wild cries were heard downstairs.

"Some one calling for help in Chinese!" breathed Alice.

Old King Brady caught at a door.

It was unfastened, and he slightly opened it, looking down a short flight of steps.

Below he saw a singular sight.

Two Chinamen, bound hand and foot, were seated on the floor, with their backs against the wall.

Above their heads upon a little shelf were several sticks of dynamite.

A little iron safe lay overturned, and near it, on the floor, was a cash box.

A man in Chinese dress, smoking an opium pipe, was jumping about the room in the most peculiar fashion.

He did not seem to hear the old detective at the door.

Suddenly throwing down the pipe, he began to yell like a wild man.

"Sing Duck, sure thing!" breathed Harry. "He is mad, all right!"

There was a short rope, with a handle, hanging from the shelf.

It occurred to Old King Brady that it had been so arranged that one pull on this handle would explode the dynamite.

And still the fellow kept yelling and jumping about, when suddenly he darted toward the prisoners.

As the Bradys saw the mad Chinaman make a rush for the dynamite on the shelf, they felt that the time for action had come.

Old King Brady threw open the door, and they dashed down the stairs.

And that was the time they just missed it.

With a fierce cry, the madman sprang aside and jumped through an open door.

The Bradys followed into a narrow space between the door and a fence, over which the Chinaman was climbing.

He dropped into a yard behind and ran into a house which fronted on North Seventh street.

"Get back to Alice, Governor!" cried Harry. "I'll follow. She must not be left there alone."

Old King Brady turned back and found Alice in the room talking with the two prisoners in Chinese.

"This man is Moy Ting, the banker," she said, pointing to the Chinaman on the right. "He says that fellow was Sing Duck, and that he is crazy. He was going to blow up the house."

"And the other?"

"Is the tenant here. Sing Duck has been stopping with him. He had no idea that the man was insane until he suddenly attacked him to-night."

"Is it all straight talk think, Alice?"

"I am not sure of it. How can I be?"

Old King Brady immediately set the prisoners free.

They were, as Chinamen ever are for any such service performed, most grateful.

Alice had further talk with them, informing the pair who Old King Brady was.

She found that Sing Duck had been simply a lodger here and had been quiet enough until he suddenly broke out after a prolonged opium debauch, two days before.

The man informed Alice that the mad Chinaman had not left the house since the day before, and that they had been prisoners two days, so it was evident that he must have employed somebody to post the notices on the bulletin.

And now Harry returned to report failure.

Sing Duck had managed to double on him.

Young King Brady declared that he had not the least idea where the fellow went.

The question was what to do with the dynamite. Jim Sup, the tenant, declared that he did not know how

Sing Duck got the stuff, but he thought he intended to blow up the little safe which belonged to him.

He had gone to sleep leaving his lodger talking to Moy Ting two nights before.

When he was attacked Sing Duck tied his arms and dragged him downstairs, where he discovered Moy Ting in a similar position, and there they had been ever since.

The madman had repeatedly declared his intention of blowing up the house.

But, in spite of all this, Old King Brady had his doubts about the truth of the yarn.

During all this talk Moy Ting had but little to say.

By Old King Brady's direction Alice told the banker that they were going to New York, and asked if he did not want to come with them, in reply to which he said that he did.

"I'll take charge of the dynamite, if it is dynamite," said Old King Brady. "We will go by the Grand Street Ferry, and I will throw the stuff into the river."

They left soon afterward and started for Grand street.

Old King Brady carried his dangerous load, wrapped in a newspaper, under his arm.

Moy Ting was so nervous that he persisted in walking on the other side of the street.

At last, when they got out on the river, Old King Brady threw the whole outfit overboard and breathed a sigh of relief.

They then went into the smoking cabin and tackled Moy Ting.

The Chinaman spoke but indifferent English, so Alice did the talking.

By Old King Brady's direction she told the whole story.

Moy Ting listened in absolute silence, but once he got his tongue going it wagged fast enough.

It seemed to the Bradys that he would never get through talking.

At last Alice began with her translation.

"He says 'he has the diamond,'" she said. "He knows about Ti. He says Sing Duck came to him with an order for the diamond, signed by Ti, but he refused to give it up. He says that he came over to that house night before last because Sing Duck sent him word that Ti was to be there. They were talking about the diamond when that madman suddenly turned on him and knocked him down. Before he could do anything his hands were tied. He says that Sing Duck is a man of enormous strength."

"And what about the diamond? Will he give it up to us?" demanded Old King Brady.

"He says he will. He knows you by sight, and he says that if Hip High identifies you he will give up the diamond."

"Good!" replied the old detective. "It is all right, Moy Ting."

"Dlimon' notee mine, mlister. Ti gimme. He flaid; me flaid now; me no want no more," said Moy Ting.

Old King Brady could not bring himself to believe in this man.

It seemed most unlikely that he and the other Chinaman had been for two days tied up in that basement.

The old detective now wished that he had investigated a little deeper into the business.

"He has fooled Alice, sure," he said to himself. "He

has no intention whatever of giving up the diamond. We shall see."

"What about that cash box, Alice?" he said. "Ask him what there was in it. The thing was locked, and I did not think it my place to investigate."

Alice tackled him again.

"He says the cash box belonged to Sup," she replied. "He claims not to know what was in it. He says the mad-man threw it there."

Old King Brady gave it up then, for it seemed of no use to press the matter further.

Indeed, in all Chinese cases there is always much that cannot be understood.

And the true explanation of the situation at North Sixth street was something that the Bradys never learned.

They went to Moy Ting's on Pell street, but as they approached the house they saw that a crowd had gathered in front of it.

Moy Ting turned pale, and exclaimed in Chinese:

"It is Sing Duck! He got here before me. He has blown up my office to get the diamond. He said he would. I wish now I had never seen the diamond!"

He was greatly agitated.

They hurried on and found that the windows were all broken and part of the front wall had been blown out.

Thus, perhaps, had the mad Chinaman made good his threat!

The Bradys had been treated to another explosion that night.

To go into details as to this part of the case will be impossible, for we must hurry on to other things.

Enough to say that about half an hour before the Bradys hit Pell street all Chinatown had been startled by the explosion, and the police immediately rushed to the scene.

What they found was Moy Ting's clerk dead on the floor and the banker's safe blown as artistically as any professional burglar could have done it.

Moy Ting took the matter very hard.

He claimed that he had been robbed of \$60,000 and many valuable gems, including Hipolyte Ti's diamond.

Next day he attempted suicide by shooting himself.

He failed to make a success of it, however.

For weeks he hovered between life and death in Bellevue Hospital, and finally recovered.

Such was Moy Ting's connection with the Bradys' mysterious case.

Leaving the banker and the police to attend to their own affairs, the Bradys, satisfied that there was no chance either of recovering the Ti diamond or of capturing Sing Duck, went home to get what sleep they could.

Old King Brady was disgusted with the case and with his own botchwork, as he chose to call it.

He declared himself ready to spend unlimited money to recover the diamond and capture the mad Chinaman.

Bright and early next morning, he and Harry were at it again, after scarcely an hour's sleep.

They went to North Sixth street determined to have it out with the man Sup.

But again they were too late.

Promptly as the Bradys had acted, the Chink was ahead of them.

He had moved out, bag and baggage, at five in the morning.

No one in the neighborhood that they could find knew anything about him or where he had gone.

All declared that the man was a mystery; no one seemed to even know what his business was.

Of course, the Bradys might have followed him up, but the case did not run that way.

Back again at Peli street, they learned of Moy Ting's attempt at suicide.

The New York police were very anxious that the Bradys should take up the matter of the explosion and robbery, and Old King Brady had half promised to do so, when Alice, who had come down to Chinatown on her own account, entered the Elizabeth street police station, where the conference was being held.

By a secret sign she made Old King Brady understand that she had something of importance to communicate, and he immediately took her aside, when she handed him a letter.

"Just received at the office," she said. "Thinking that I might find you and Harry here, I came right along."

Old King Brady opened the letter and gave an exclamation of disgust.

"More Chink business!"

"Yes; it is from Sing Duck. It is practically a challenge."

"I accept it in advance. I'll get that rascal yet. Read!" And Alice read as follows:

"Mr. Big Hat: You almost had me, but I win. Perhaps you think I blew up Moy Ting's and got the diamond. Wrong. I have been fooled. I know who did. I am after him. I engage the famous Big Hat as my detective. Go at once to No. — Delaware avenue, Philadelphia, and report to Charley Wing. He will tell you what to do. If you can get the diamond I shall be right on hand to relieve you of it, but you will be paid for your work, same as any other man would pay you. I suppose you think I am mad after what you saw in Williamsburg last night? I am, but not all the time. I am not mad now, because I mean business. The agents of the priests of the temple have the diamond. Look out or they will kill you; but they cannot kill me. I am too strong for them. I——"

Here the letter ended abruptly.

It was not even signed.

"Now will you believe the man is insane?" demanded Alice, as she ceased to read.

"It would be hard to doubt it," replied the old detective; "but, mad or sane, I propose to get him, and to understand this case, if I can."

"And you accept the challenge?"

"I do, Alice. You came just in time, for I was about to arrange with the police to look after this Moy Ting business. I am much to blame. I should have stood by that fellow and should have looked more closely into that Williamsburg business, but it is too late to talk about it now, so it must be Philadelphia for ours, hit or miss."

CHAPTER VI.

MR. BUNDER PENGE.

Old King Brady got away from the Elizabeth street station as quickly as possible.

Once in the street Alice told Harry about the letter, and Old King Brady began to discuss plans.

"We will get right over to Philadelphia," he said. "Of course, we can't form the least idea of what the working of this madman's mind may be, but since it suits him to keep notifying us of his change of base, if we accept the challenge and follow him, something may come of it at last."

"I'm ready," said Harry. "If I only knew how he gave me the slip over there in Williamsburg last night it would be some satisfaction, but I don't suppose I shall ever find out."

"I doubt if you ever do," replied Old King Brady. "But we will bust ahead and see what comes."

"If you want my opinion," said Alice, "this is only a trap to catch us. You certainly want to be on your guard."

They returned to the office and prepared for the journey, catching the three o'clock train, Pennsylvania, matters coming up at the office preventing them from making an earlier start.

They engaged Pullman seats and the train had scarcely pulled out of the station when Old King Brady turned to his partners and quietly observed:

"I suppose you observed that we are being shadowed?"

"Upon my word, I didn't observe it!" replied Harry.

"Do you refer to that Japanese gentleman on the opposite side of the car?" asked Alice, dropping her voice.

"That is the party I refer to," replied Old King Brady; "but I don't consider the man a Japanese—at least, not a full-blooded one."

"What then?" inquired Harry.

"I take him to be a Cambodian."

"Never saw a Cambodian, to know him as such."

"Mr. Brady is probably right," said Alice. "I have seen them at Singapore. I do not consider the gentleman a Japanese. He was waiting for some one at the Pennsylvania Station. As soon as he saw us he crowded to the ticket office. I am sure he heard Mr. Brady ask for tickets for Philadelphia and then he asked for one himself. I thought then he might be shadowing us, and was just going to say something about it when Mr. Brady spoke."

"One of the priests, perhaps," remarked the old detective. "That is, if Hipolyte Ti's story is true."

"I was thinking of the same thing myself," said Alice.

"See, he is looking at us," whispered Harry. "We must be careful."

"I've a great mind to go over there and tackle him," said Old King Brady. "Probably he speaks English if he belongs around Singapore."

"I doubt his being a priest," said Alice.

"Hello! Changed your mind?" Old King Brady asked.

"I've been thinking. You see, if Ti's story is true, and it is the hereditary duty of those priests to guard the

ruined temple, their religion would make it impossible for them to desert their post. Is it not more likely that they would hire some man who could speak English and who is accustomed to dealing with foreigners, as they cannot be, to attend to the business for them? I put it to you, Mr. Brady, if that is not the more likely case?"

"I agree with you," said the old detective. "That man's face is shewdness itself, and—but, look! He is coming here! Careful now!"

The Oriental arose and approached the detectives, hat in hand.

Nothing could have been more polite than his whole bearing.

In a soft, well-modulated voice, he said:

"Excuse me, but if I make no mistake I am addressing the famous detective, Old King Brady?"

It was useless to deny his identity, and the old detective bowed assent.

"My name is Bunder Penge," continued the intruder.

"Here is my card. May I ask the favor of a few words with you?"

He produced a handsomely engraved card, which read:

"Mr. Bunder Penge,
"Attorney,
"Singapore."

"Be seated, Mr. Penge," said Old King Brady. "Let me introduce my partners, Young King Brady, Miss Montgomery. Now what is it you wish?"

"To appeal to your sense of right and of justice," replied Mr. Penge. "I have made inquiry about you. I believe that such an appeal will not be in vain."

"If your appeal appeals to me, it certainly will not be in vain," replied Old King Brady. "But, you must remember that we are strangers, and that you yourself have sought this interview."

"I shall not forget; but, first, allow me to present my credentials, so to speak. It is but right that you should know with whom you are talking. Kindly examine these."

He produced a long envelope containing several loose letters.

Old King Brady ran them over.

One purported to be signed by the Governor of Singapore. Another bore five signatures, all English names, purporting to represent as many prominent merchants at Singapore.

Another was signed by the master of the Singapore Freemason's lodge, and bore the lodge seal.

All these letters were of the same tenor.

They vouched for Mr. Bunder Penge and spoke of him as one of the best-known native lawyers at Singapore.

Old King Brady handed them back, saying, as he did so:

"You carry strong credentials, sir. I shall be happy to listen to anything you may have to say."

Mr. Penge leaned back in the seat and began:

"Mr. Brady, it has come my way to follow up your movements lately. You are trying to recover a diamond for a man named Hipolyte Ti, who now lies very ill in the Massachusetts General Hospital. Is it not so?"

"I see you are well posted, however you managed to obtain your information. Yes, it is so."

"Mr. Ti told you how he came to get that diamond, I suppose?"

"He told me a story—yes."

"Would you mind repeating it to me?"

Old King Brady hesitated only for an instant, and then spoke out frankly.

"Ah!" said Mr. Penge. "And that is what he told you; and he had papers to back up his story, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"In English?"

"In Chinese?"

"Have you them with you?"

"No."

"I should like much to see them."

"They can be seen later."

"Let me ask you, did Mr. Ti tell you that story as you told it to me, or did you get it from the papers?"

"We got it from the papers. He refused to tell us anything."

"Ah! And did it never occur to you that the papers might be mere fabrications?"

"Yes."

"You will do well to listen to me, Mr. Brady. I will now tell you the true story of that diamond."

"I shall be happy to hear it," replied the old detective, who was becoming deeply interested in Mr. Penge.

"It was, as Ti's papers assert, originally the eye of an idol which stands in the great temple in the ruined city of Lio Tai," began the lawyer. "Your Ti, however, had nothing to do with stealing it. The man was a jeweler at Singapore for years. The diamond was brought to him by a Chinaman who stole it, and who is now dead. This man was the son of one of priest-guardians of the temple, which lies five hundred miles back in the interior of Cambodia, near the Chinese frontier. Ti could never have reached the place. He would have had to travel at least two hundred miles through an impenetrable forest filled with wild beasts and deadly serpents. He bought the diamond of a dying man for a mere pittance, knowing it to have been stolen from this temple. As soon as he got it, believing that it would bring him good luck, he fled from Singapore, fearing the priests."

"He admits that, and claims that the priests of the temple followed him up," said Old King Brady.

"Not true. I represent the priests of the temple. I corresponded with the man, making him large offers for the diamond, which were refused. He was growing rapidly rich by following a certain line of business—opium smuggling, in fact. He believed that the diamond brought him his luck."

"He said as much to me."

"He is right. The mere possession of that diamond brings good luck. Fearing to lose it, he deposited it with his friend Moy Ting, who immediately began to make money, while Ti's luck began to leave him. He engaged this man Sing Duck, who has been more or less insane for years. He knew him in Singapore, and to him he confided the secret of the diamond. You see the result. It was probably Sing Duck who sent him the threatening letters which he claims to have received, and the man

ended in blowing up his place. I have followed up the whole case, Mr. Brady. What you did in New York is known to me. I know also that you are now on your way to Philadelphia to meet Sing Duck. Is it not so?"

"Well, yes; but how can you possibly know all this?"

"No matter. I am a Cambodian. We Easterners have our ways of doing business, which we never tell to your kind. Now, then, look here. Hipolyte Ti has no claim to that stolen diamond. Sing Duck has less. You are a very shrewd man and one of the best detectives in the world. When you get the diamond, will you do an act of justice and give it to me that it may be returned to the idol from which it was stolen?"

"I shall have to think about that, sir," replied the old detective. "How much do you reckon the diamond worth?"

"A hundred thousand dollars at least."

"It is a very valuable stone, then."

"Valuable to its real owners far in excess of what it possibly can be to anybody else."

"And how can I know that you represent its real owners?"

"Read this!"

Mr. Penge produced a document in Chinese.

"But I cannot read that," said Old King Brady.

"No; but Miss Montgomery can."

"You are well informed, sir."

"I try to be always well informed. I know."

"Read it, Alice," said Old King Brady, and Alice tackled the paper.

"It is an affidavit signed by the Chinese Consul at Singapore," she announced. "It states that Mr. Penge is the authorized representative of the priests of the temple of Lio Tai, and that he is empowered to receive the diamond."

Mr. Penge took back the paper, with an air of triumph.

"Now you see; and what do you say?" he remarked.

"That this case is United States Secret Service business," replied Old King Brady. "If I am fortunate enough to get the diamond it will be turned over to them."

Mr. Bunder Penge made a low bow and, without speaking, immediately arose and resumed his seat on the opposite side of the Pullman car, a little further down than where the Bradys were.

"That's a queer start," whispered Harry. "You answered him well. What do you think of the fellow, Governor?"

"Don't know what to think," replied Old King Brady; "but it makes me nervous to have such a man as he suddenly butt in with a knowledge of my affairs which, to say the least, is simply amazing."

"The Cambodians are an amazingly shrewd race," remarked Alice.

"I suppose they are. But how could he have learned all this?"

"His papers appeared to be all right," said Harry.

"They were all right, and very strong; but then he may have stolen them. Alice, you know more about his kind than the rest of us. What do you think of him now?"

"He made me think of a great python I once saw at Singapore," replied Alice.

"Good!" replied Old King Brady. "We won't trust Mr. Bunder Penge."

And all the way to Philadelphia the Bradys occasionally looked over at their neighbor.

But never once did they catch the man looking at them.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE JOSS HOUSE.

The number on Delaware avenue given in Sing Duck's note was away down on Philadelphia's water front.

It was a region of sailors' boarding houses, cheap shops, saloons, old iron yards, brick and lumber yards, and, necessarily a lonely, as well as a dangerous, neighborhood at night. As both Old King Brady and Harry were bitterly opposed to Alice venturing into such a section, even in male disguise, she gave in for once, which, probably, she might not have done had she not been somewhat under the weather and very much fatigued from her work of the night before.

It began to snow before the Bradys reached the Quaker City, and it was coming down quite hard when they left the Bingham House at about seven o'clock.

They lost sight of Mr. Bunder Penge in the confusion at the station, although they tried to keep him in view.

But the man worried Old King Brady not a little.

He could not understand how he came to know so much.

Certainly neither he nor any member of his firm had supplied the information.

Ti was raving with fever. Sing Duck was supposed to be mad.

The mystery quite got on Old King Brady's nerves.

And yet who could have been a more perfect gentleman than Mr. Bunder Penge?"

"We must keep a sharp eye out for him, Harry," he said. "The man may be all right, but I doubt it."

"If he is straight it's a wonder he wouldn't have given you some address," said Harry.

"Ah! Sure enough!" replied the old detective. "But then that may be only his Eastern way."

They took the car down to Delaware avenue and walked along the water front.

When they reached the designated number they found that it was an old mansion, half in ruins.

The upper floor was to let, but on the ground floor was a Chinese laundry, a cigar store and a saloon.

Over the laundry was the sign, "Charley Wing."

"This seems to be the place," remarked Old King Brady. "Looks harmless enough."

"It certainly does," answered Harry; "but all the same one might easily be made a prisoner in some of the upper rooms here and no one ever be the wiser."

"We are well armed and are taking no chances. Come. Let us go in."

While speaking Old King Brady had been looking about

for Mr. Bunder Penge, but the man was nowhere in evidence.

Harry opened the door and they entered the laundry, where three Chinamen were industriously at work.

They were all comparatively young men, and none of them in any way resembled Sing Duck, who was a person of forty and over.

One laid down his iron and came forward.

"You are Ole Kling Blady?" he said.

Evidently the detectives were expected.

Old King Brady acknowledged his identity.

"Yair," said the Chinaman. "Sing Duck, he say you comee. Me him fend. Me Charley Wing. You takee job for him—yair?"

"Yes; we are going to do as he asks us to do," replied Old King Brady.

"Yair. Belly good! You go with me? Muchee snow."

"Where?"

"Little joss house."

"Oh! You are going to talk to the joss?"

"Yair."

This seemed harmless enough.

"Where is your joss house?" the old detective asked.

"Down dlere," replied Charley Wing, waving his hand indefinitely.

"Very well," said Old King Brady. "Come on!"

The laundryman promptly vanished in the back room behind the inevitable red curtain.

The other Chinamen stuck to their work, paying no attention whatever to the Bradys.

Presently Charley Wing came out dressed for the street, with an umbrella in his hand.

"Come on!" he said. "Me showee you."

He led them back among the narrow streets and alleys so plentiful in this part of Philadelphia.

After making many turns, he finally opened a door in a queer, little, two-story brick house up an alley, which stood flush with the street.

"In here," he said.

The Bradys followed him in unhesitatingly, as is their way.

They were prepared for the worst, and determined to see their adventure through.

Charley Wing led them to the end of the hall and down a flight of steps, where he knocked four times upon a door.

This was opened by a peculiarly stupid-looking Chink, and some conversation was exchanged.

They were then admitted, and, passing through a passage, came to another door, upon which their conductor knocked.

Old King Brady was satisfied that they had passed underground and beneath some other building.

This door being opened, they entered a small joss house, sure enough.

It was a square room, hung about with scrolls bearing Chinese characters.

At the back were three big, empty packing cases, upon which red cloth had been tacked.

This formed the altar.

Upon it stood an ugly, misshapen image, representing a man with wide-open mouth and big, pop eyes.

His hair stood out all about his head, and the locks terminated in the heads of snakes, with protruding tongues.

The whole thing was carved out of a single block of wood, and, to all appearances, was very old.

There were boxes of joss sticks in front of the image, and one man, he who had admitted them, was the only occupant of the place when they came in.

Taken altogether, it was the crudest thing in the shape of a Chinese joss house that the Bradys had ever entered.

Charley Wing bought a box of joss sticks of the man at the altar.

The Chinaman who had conducted them into the place then withdrew.

The Bradys stood under the solitary hanging lamp which gave light to the place, wondering what part they were going to play.

Charley Wing now enlightened them upon that score.

"You touchee joss, boss," he said to Old King Brady.

The old detective silently obeyed, resting his hand for a minute on the idol.

"Now touchee sticks," said Charley Wing.

Old King Brady passed his hand over the joss sticks.

"Allee light," said Charley Wing, cheerfully.

He got down on his knees before the idol and was just about to throw his joss sticks, when suddenly the attendant called out something.

An angry altercation followed, lasting several minutes. Charley Wing grew furious.

The boss of the joss house handled himself like a man determined to stand pat.

This was the time the Bradys missed Alice.

But the old detective was able to size up the situation correctly.

"Look here, Wing! What's the matter? That fellow wants more money for this business?" he asked.

"Sure! Him bigee flaud!" cried the laundryman. "He gettee him pay, now him no makee joss talk. I get square with him."

"Flive dlollar," said the other Chinaman. "Flive dlollar or no gettee—see?"

"Me no gottee flive dlollar!" roared Charley Wing. "Sing Duck, he pay you."

"Mebbe yair; mebbe no," persisted the fellow. "Flive dlollar or no gettee."

"Seeing that the wheels of this joss house needed greasing, Old King Brady ended the controversy by handing out a five-dollar bill, which the man pocketed, with a grunt of triumph.

He then went in behind the altar and disappeared.

"Him muchee big flaud!" growled Charley Wing. "Never mind. Me gettee square. Say, boss, Sing Duck he payee you."

"All right—all right," said Old King Brady. "Five dollars is nothing; get ahead with your work."

Once more Charley Wing got down on his marrow bones and began throwing the joss sticks before the idol in the usual Chinese style.

He rattled his box and threw out the sticks as an American would throw dice.

The stick falling nearest the altar he picked up after each throw and carefully consulted the motto upon it.

He made nine throws altogether, and then, returning the box to the altar, he kneeled again and, bowing his head till it touched the floor, called out something in Chinese.

When it was done words seemed to proceed from the lips of the idol, but the lips did not move.

Charley Wing spoke three times, and each time got his answer.

He then arose, and, advancing to the altar, picked up a slip of red paper and a Chinese pen and began to write.

He made quite a number of characters upon the paper, and then, handing it to Old King Brady, said:

"Looker here. You givee dlat to lady. She tellee you what to do."

"You tell me now," replied Old King Brady. "I've paid five dollars for this paper. I might lose it—see?"

"Dat so. Allee light. Me tlink it allee light. Him say you go Chiclago; you go by Clark street—you sabee, Clark street?"

"Yes, yes. I know, Clark street. What number?"

"Me no gette nnumber. You go Pee Woo, him laundly. Him tellee you where dliamond—see?"

"All right," replied the old detective. "Did joss tell you that?"

But Charley Wing was not answering that question.

"Come along!" he said, and he started for the door.

It had all been so quiet and easy that Old King Brady now wished Alice had come, which opinion he had occasion to instantly change, for before Charley Wing could lay a hand on the door the dry goods cases which formed the altar went over with a crash.

The idol tumbled, and its head breaking off, it rolled to the old detective's feet.

There stood five of the toughest-looking toughs imaginable, not Chinamen, but three whites and two negroes.

All held cocked revolvers, covering the detectives.

"Move an inch and you are dead ones!" cried one particularly dirty-looking specimen, with a fiery red head.

Behind the altar was a door, which now partially opened, revealing the face of Mr. Bunder Penge.

"Trapped!" he hissed, and the Bradys thought of Alice's feelings about this man, for the hiss was like the hiss of a snake.

It was useless to think of resistance.

The enemy was six to two, for Charley Wing sank crouching in a corner, evidently terribly scared.

"Call off your dogs, man!" shouted Old King Brady.

"I warn you that it will be the worse for you if you don't!"

But the protest was useless.

Instead of the dogs being called off, they were further set on.

The Bradys were searched and everything of value taken from them which was not contained in their secret pockets, after which they were bound hand and foot, and Charley Wing was served in the same fashion.

And while the search was going on the detectives saw lying inside the middle dry goods case Sing Duck, the mad Chinaman!

He was not secured in any way, and was either in a trance or a profound sleep.

Bunder Penge seized the red paper, which Charley

Wing had written when it came out of Old King Brady's vest pocket and transferred it to his own.

Not a word would he utter to the detectives, but he directed the toughs in their work.

The Bradys were now dragged through the door behind the altar.

This proved to connect with a large underground enclosure, evidently the cellar of some factory.

Here the Bradys were laid side by side on the damp earth:

Charley Wing was brought in and deposited beside Harry.

Then they brought in Sing Duck and laid him down alongside of Old King Brady.

The gang filed away, Bunder Penge trailing after them, and the detectives heard the door close.

"Well!" exclaimed Harry. "We seem to be up against it all right."

"Yes," replied Old King Brady, "and our mad Chinaman, who seems to have nothing to do with the business. Charley Wing, who is that man?"

"Me no know! Me no know!" groaned Charley. "Oh, boss, me wishee me stick tight to me laundry. Blame shame me listen to him."

"Who is him—Sing Duck?"

"Yair."

"What is the matter with him—too much hop?"

"Naw!" cried Charley, disgustedly. "Not dlat. Him in tance."

"But those men who got us? Do you mean to say that you know nothing about them?"

Such seemed to be the case.

As near as the old detective could get it out of the laundryman, he had been acquainted with Sing Duck in San Francisco, and he simply brought the Bradys to the little joss house to oblige him.

As for the rest, it seemed to have come as a surprise.

And there, for nearly half an hour, the Bradys lay, unable to see any way out of their troubles.

And both knew that worse was coming, and neither spoke.

It remained for Charley Wing to suddenly break the silence.

"You no smellee? Me smellee! Me smellee smloke!"

But for at least five minutes before this Old King Brady had been satisfied that the building had been fired by the gang.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CASE MOVES TO CHICAGO.

Helpless prisoners in the basement of a burning warehouse!

Such was the situation of the Bradys now.

The smoke grew more dense.

Charley Wing did as all Chinamen do under similar circumstances.

Satisfied that his doom was sealed, he gave up and prepared to die.

Meanwhile the Bradys were struggling with their bonds all they knew.

But it was no use. They could simply do nothing, so tight were the cords tied.

Harry, being blest with small hands, has many times upon similar occasions been able to set himself free.

But it was not so now.

"No use, Governor!" he said. "I can't slip these cords. It's up to the Philadelphia fire department to save us, if there is to be any saving done."

"It is a doubtful case, Harry. Even if the engines come, seeing that the fire is above, this cellar will be the last place they will think of visiting; but there is one here who is not tied, if we could only arouse him."

"Sing Duck—yes. But I'm afraid he is too deep in the dope for that."

"No dope. Tance!" cried Charley Wing. "Tance, I tell you! Tance!"

"Can't you get him out of his tance and save our lives?" asked Harry.

"Me no can."

"Holler at him! Yell in Chinese. Try to arouse him. We'll all yell."

And they did, most lustily; but without the least effect. While they were still at it there came a diversion.

They heard the fire engines come, with all the usual noise and clatter.

Men were using axes on the doors upstairs.

They heard the doors go crashing in and then came the shouts from the firemen, which were no louder than the Bradys' shouts for help, while as for Charley Wing, he developed a voice like a foghorn, but there seemed to be no such thing as making any one hear.

Then, suddenly, they were treated to a new experience.

The firemen got busy with their hose and the water came streaming down upon the prisoners.

"This is fearful! growled Harry.

"Better be drowned than roasted," replied Old King Brady, dryly; "one thing, the water cure for trance may prove effective."

It was high time there was something doing.

The smoke had now become fairly suffocating, and the heat had increased enormously.

Water came down in torrents, fairly drenching the prisoners.

Charley Wing began to cry and moan.

It seemed as if he might be going mad, too, for his talk was all in Chinese.

Then suddenly the water began to have its effect on Sing Duck.

He groaned, turned over, and then, with a horrible yell, sprang to his feet.

Charley Wing shouted to him in Chinese.

It was impossible to see anything.

Next they knew the mad Chinaman was bending over Charley Wing, talking in loud, excited tones.

Then away he ran off into the darkness, yelling what sounded like: "Ming-mo! Ming-mo!" the cry dying away in the distance.

Meanwhile Charley Wing had scrambled up.

"He set you free!" cried Old King Brady. "Don't go back on us, Charley!"

"No, no; me won't!" cried Charley, and he began fumbling about the old detective.

Old King Brady knew that he had a knife in his hand, and the sensation was anything but pleasant.

But Charley's knife did the work, and in a moment they were free.

Harry now got out his flashlight, which had been missed in the search.

"Lead the way, Charley, if you know it!" he cried.

"De smloke! Me no can see!"

"You must see! We shall be strangled here in a minute!"

Charley pushed ahead.

They were at the door leading into the joss house before they knew it.

It was closed and, Charley throwing it open, they found the joss house comparatively free from smoke.

Harry slammed the door behind them.

"Did Sing Duck go this way?" demanded Harry.

"Me no know," was the reply. "Me tinkee him go crazy. Me no know where he go; me no care! Comee 'long!"

Guided by the laundryman, they made their way to the street, meeting no one on the way. The narrow lane—it was nothing more—was blockaded with people.

A fire engine was near a hydrant further along, and flames were pouring out of the windows of a long, brick building.

By their light Old King Brady read the sign.

It was: "Coffin and Gasket Manufacturing Company."

"By thunder! We should have had little need of either a coffin or a casket if we had stopped in that cellar much longer!" exclaimed Harry, as they worked their way through the fire lines, their detectives' shields permitting them to pass unquestioned.

When they got around on Delaware avenue Charley Wing paused.

"Me go home," he said. "Where you go?"

"Home, too," replied the old detective, feeling that it would be useless to push the work any further that night.

"Good job you makee me tellee you what I writee on paper."

"Yes. I told you something might happen."

"Yair."

"Hope you gave it to me straight, Charley?"

"Boss, me did. Me no undelstand allee ddis. Who dem fellers what ketchee us?"

"I'm sure I don't know. You will have to ask your friend Sing Duck."

"Me ask nloting," growled Charley. "Me never wantee see Sink Duck again," and with that he shuffled away.

And the Bradys let him go.

It was snowing hard and, drenched as they were, it seemed necessary to get rid of their wet clothes as soon as possible.

"What a fizzle!" growled Harry. "Now we see what comes of mixing up with strangers."

"I suppose you feel sure that Bunder Penge is one of the priests of the ruined temple," replied Old King

Brady, "but I do not. I simply can't understand this case."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"To start for Chicago by the midnight train, and follow up our joss house clew."

"There's no downing you, that's one sure thing," said Harry. "But what is going to be the end of it all? The mad Chinaman was bad enough, but, heaven deliver us from another dose of Bunder Penge!"

"The man's action is plain enough," said Old King Brady. "In some mysterious way, he got onto Sing Duck's intentions and determined to get that paper and then put us all out of business."

"Do you imagine that Sing Duck was in that box asleep all the while?"

"I certainly do, Harry; but if you ask me the why of it I cannot answer. The ways of these Orientals are past finding out."

They returned to the hotel, reaching there a little before ten o'clock.

Here Alice was informed of what had happened, and the Bradys had their clothes dried and made immediate preparations to start for Chicago.

Old King Brady half expected to get another message from Sing Duck, but none came.

At the station the detectives kept a sharp lookout for the mad Chinaman and the Cambodian, but saw neither.

And so on the midnight express, Pennsylvania, the detectives started for the fourth city to which this singular case had led them, devoutly hoping that they were not destined to pass through any such warm experiences as they had had in the other three.

But the main issue now was not the mad Chinaman, but Bunder Penge.

Was the Cambodian also on his way to Chicago?

If so, was he ahead or behind them?

For these questions, which they naturally asked themselves, the Bradys had no answers.

In due time they reached Chicago and, instead of going to the Sherman House, as they usually do, they took rooms at an obscure hotel on the West Side.

"It's a case of disguise now," said Old King Brady. "We want, first of all, to see what sort of an outfit we are up against. I think, Harry, you and Alice better make up as Chinamen and go and interview this Pee Woo."

"But we haven't got the paper," sighed Harry.

"If we had there would be no disguising," was the reply. "As it is now, diplomacy is needed, and I put it up to you, Alice; as for myself, I have other work to do."

Harry asked what it was, but could obtain no satisfaction.

Satisfied that his chief had something up his sleeve which he did not propose to give out, Harry took Alice to a State street costumer's right after supper, leaving the old detective smoking in his room.

They had no sooner departed than Old King Brady, making no change in his usual quaint dress, left the hotel.

The person he proposed to visit he did not mention, for the reason that the man was most peculiar and resented all intrusion.

Several years before, while conducting a case, Old King

Brady had come up against him, and had then been able to do him a very considerable favor.

Whether this favor was to be remembered, as was promised, he was now curious to learn, and for a reason which will presently be disclosed.

Leaving the hotel, Old King Brady hurried across town to Lake street, in the neighborhood of Desplaines.

Here he pushed about until he came to an old, dilapidated row of frame houses inhabited by colored people.

He was not sure of his number, and he passed the row several times before he could make up his mind which house to enter.

At last he made a dive in through a doorway and ascended to the top floor.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. BO, THE MIND READER.

The hall was reeking with dirt and smelled horribly.

Old King Brady pounded on a door at the rear, but his knock brought no response until it had been several times repeated, when a door in front was opened and an old, colored mammy, with a gay turban on her head, looked out.

"Who yo' want ter see?" she called out.

Mr. Bo live here still?" demanded the old detective.

"He done live hyar, yair; but he hain't hum, far's I know."

"Out begging?"

"Mebbe! P'raps. I dunno. What you want to see him for?"

"He is a friend of mine."

"Huh! I doan beliebe it! He hain't no friend to no white man, nor to no culled pusson, neder. Mebbe you t'ink him a nigger, but I'se tellin' you tain't so."

Old King Brady said nothing, but turned to the window at the end of the hall and looked out upon the wilderness of roofs.

"You'se gwinter wait fer him?" demanded the woman.

"Yes, ma'am; but what's that to you?"

"Nuffin, I specs. Wisht yo' tak him away with yo' for good an' all. He's a hoodoo sure."

With this the old woman slammed the door.

If she had said a Hindoo, instead of a Hoodoo, she would have come nearer to it, for such was the man calling himself "Mr. Bo."

This person was a legless beggar, well known at that time in Chicago.

As he was blacker than the blackest negro in the city, there was, of course, no possible chance for him to find accommodations anywhere except in a house devoted to people of his own color, and yet there was absolutely nothing in common between the man and his African neighbors.

For Mr. Bo, as Old King Brady happened to know, was a highly educated man.

The accident which cost him his legs occurred in New York—how, it would take too long to tell, and Old King Brady had befriended him at the time, paying for a private room in a hospital.

For a while he lost sight of the man, but later he found him begging in the streets of Chicago.

Harry had seen the man, but Alice had not.

Actually there was no reason for Old King Brady making a mystery of this visit. It was just one of the notions which sometimes seize him.

He waited in that hall over an hour, but not until he made sure that the Hindoo was not in his room, of which fact he assured himself by opening the door with a skeleton key.

At last he heard a strange step on the stairs.

It was Mr. Bo.

Better than to say that Old King Brady knew his step will it be to say that he knew his stump.

Mr. Bo used his hands in assisting himself up, for he practically had no legs, the stumps remaining being set in round, leather boots, which enabled the man to get about in a clumsy fashion.

The detective listened, satisfied that his man was coming, and at last he saw him crawling up the top flight.

The Hindoo caught sight of him when he was half way up.

"Ah, my friend!" he exclaimed, in the perfect English which so many of his race can speak. "At last you come to see me! You have promised so many times! Last night I dreamed of you. Thus is my dream fulfilled!"

"Here I am, Bo," replied the old detective, using the contraction of the Hindoo arm-length name which he had adopted for himself. "You must remember that I am a very busy man and have little time for making calls. I will not deny that I came here to ask a favor of you to-night."

"Anything that a poor, old beggar can grant, Mr. Brady," replied the legless one, mastering the top step.

He came up about to Old King Brady's thigh, but if one could confine observation to his intelligent face, flashing eyes and ivory white teeth, his personality was not unpleasant.

He produced a key, unlocked his door and ushered Old King Brady into a very comfortably furnished room done up in something of the Oriental style.

There was no bed; Mr. Bo could scarcely have climbed into one.

Instead there was a pile of gayly-covered cushions in one corner.

There was a table, with its legs sawed off to bring it down to Mr. Bo's capacity, and also two chairs similarly served.

"I don't know where you will sit," remarked the Hindoo, looking about in a puzzled way. "My room is not adapted to a big man, like you."

"I will sit on the table, with your permission," replied Old King Brady; "but, first, let us have a light on the scene. Shall I light the lamp for you?"

He suited the action to the word and lighted a lamp, which stood upon another table.

Mr. Bo sat down on one of his sawed-off chairs.

"And now let me see it," he said, removing his hat and letting down a mass of long, straight, black hair, which he had secured up under it with a couple of lady's hair-pins.

"You are quick," said Old King Brady; "but I have

seen you do your mind-reading act before. So you know that I have something to show you?"

"Yes; as soon as I shook hands with you I knew that. Let me see it."

Old King Brady felt in his pocket and produced a paper covered with queer characters, which looked all alike, as all were round and more or less resembled the letter "O."

He had picked it up in the joss house when he, with Harry and Charley Wing, beat his retreat from the burning factory.

At first Old King Brady forgot that he had the thing, and then, coming across it on the way to Chicago, he determined that he would privately show the paper to Mr. Bo.

For he saw that it was not Chinese writing.

"Was it Cambodian?" he asked himself.

Had the paper been dropped by the man Bunder Penge?

This was the question he determined to settle now.

Mr. Bo merely glanced at it, and said:

"The round o language, as you call it in English. These characters are used by the Siamese, Burmese and Cambodians. There are very few white people who can read these letters."

"You can?"

"Yes; better than I can read English."

"What language is it in?"

"Cambodian. Where did you get it?"

"In Philadelphia. I will tell you all about it presently. Read it to me."

Mr. Bo studied the paper for a few minutes, and then read as follows:

Turge: You are a thief! If this reaches you, as I hope, let it carry with it my curse. You are a thief! You robbed me and tried to murder me, but you will not get the diamond. That the god will give to me. I seek only the right. The diamond belongs to the sacred temple. It shall be restored to the eye of the god. Turge, you are a thief! A violent death shall be yours. I read it in the stars. Turge, you are a thief! May your lot hereafter be one of everlasting misery!

"Your master,

"Bunder Penge."

Needless to say, Old King Brady listened to this reading with close attention.

But he was disappointed.

He had hoped that the translation would give him some clew to the mystery of Bunder Penge.

Mr. Bo turned it over and then looked at Old King Brady, inquiringly.

"Bo, I have a very singular case on hand," said the old detective. "If you can spare the time I would like to tell you all about it, and to get your advice."

"Plenty of time! Plenty of time!" replied the Hindoo.

"Then listen."

Old King Brady then related the whole case from beginning to end.

Not a word did the Hindoo utter until he was through.

"The city of Lio Tai is real," he then said. "I knew

a man in India in my youth who went there and saw this god with the diamond eyes. Dangerous work, Mr. Brady! If you only knew all I know of the wonderful powers of these Cambodian priests."

"I know, I know; but this man who wrote the letter——"

"Wait! You want my advice. I go to give it. Listen! the man who showed you those letters and papers probably was not Bunder Penge, but Turge, to whom this letter is addressed. You ask me what I think. Then I say the man who tried to kill you is but the servant of the other. He robbed him, and now pretends to be Bunder Penge, and hopes to get the diamond, which he will use for his own purposes. That is what I think."

"But how could he——"

"How could he what? Know your business? Ah, my friend, the Cambodian priests are the greatest mind readers in the world! As he sat in the seat with you that time he could easily tell all you were thinking about. You have had an example of my mind-reading powers to-night, and before to-night. Would you like to have me use them for your benefit again?"

"Indeed I should."

"Well, I received alms from a Cambodian on the street to-night. I have little doubt that he is your man. He fully answers the description you gave me just now. It was on State street, my usual beat. I walked along with a few shoelaces in my hand, for on account of the police I do not dare to beg openly, as you know. I was near Randolph street when I saw this man coming. He spotted me at once, as you would say, and stopped and gave me a dollar. He addressed me in Cambodian, which I understand."

"And what did he say?"

"He asked me if I had seen any Cambodians in Chicago lately. I told him I had not. He then asked me how I came to lose my legs, and after I told him he went away. I have no doubt he was your man. You want to find this man?"

"I certainly do. He must have been a train ahead of me."

"Perhaps I can give you what you call a clew."

"By your mind reading?"

"Call it that—yes."

"Go ahead."

"I am afraid, with you in the room here, I can't do much; but I will try if you will keep absolutely silent and not interfere."

"I'll sit by the window here and smoke, if that does not interfere."

"Not at all. Draw the table over that way."

The little man went to a closet and produced a small, brass lamp of a peculiar, Oriental pattern.

This he lighted and placed on the floor near his cushions.

He then proceeded to undress in part, and, having done so, drew on a black robe and put a black silk skull cap on his head.

He then pulled a cord and a black silk curtain came in front of the cushions in the corner.

Mr. Bo, with the letter in his hand, retired behind the curtain.

"Mr. Brady!" he called.

"Well, Bo?"

"Blow out the lamp."

"All right."

"If you feel sleepy, why, sleep; I'll wake you up. Don't be afraid."

The curtain was a double affair, and after the Hindoo drew it there remained a slight space between the two.

Old King Brady made the most of this chance to see what was going on behind the curtain.

He could hear the cripple stumping about and presently he caught sight of his hand.

It held a little, silver box, from which he was shaking a whitish powder over the flame of the lamp.

Then Old King Brady heard him throw himself down upon the cushions.

A light smoke came curling up over the curtains and out through the parting.

Presently a pleasant, spicy odor became apparent in the room.

Old King Brady felt his eyes growing heavier and heavier.

Twice he aroused himself.

There was not a sound behind the curtain.

Certain that he would be able to resist this singular influence, Old King Brady had just succeeded in satisfying himself that he had done it, when all at once he found himself being violently shaken.

"Brady, wake up! Brady, wake up!" some one was calling.

Was it a dream?

Old King Brady thought that he opened his eyes on the instant, but it could hardly have been so, for when he did sit up and pay attention there was no one near him and the curtain was still in place.

But the lamp which he had blown out was lighted again.

"Are you awake, Mr. Brady?" the soft voice of the Hindoo demanded from behind the curtain.

"Wide awake," replied the old detective, shaking himself. "You ought to know. You just waked me up."

"Did I?" answered the Hindoo, with a silvery laugh.

"Well, perhaps I did; but it is all over now, and I think I have what you want."

Old King Brady heard him blow out the brass lamp on the floor.

The curtains were then pulled aside, and there lay Mr. Bo upon his cushions.

"I am going to stop here a little while," he said. "Here is your letter. The man I saw is the person referred to as Turge. The writer is in Boston, as near as I can make out. If you want to find Turge get to Whitemyer street, close to the South Branch. Sorry I can't give you the number, but there is a dance hall upstairs."

Old King Brady took the letter.

"Much obliged, Bo," he said, slipping the man a ten-dollar bill. "I'll let you know how it all comes out."

"Wish you would," replied the cripple.

He pocketed the money, rolled over on his cushions and Old King Brady left the room.

"I'm off for Whitemyer street, hit or miss," he said to himself, as he hurried downstairs.

CHAPTER X.

THE TRAILING OF SING DUCK.

Harry and Alice made their usual perfect Chinese disguises and started to hunt up Mr. Pee Woo, on Clark street.

Harry began operations by consulting the directory.

The directory contained no such name as Pee Woo.

So they started in at the bridge and trailed south, watching for signs.

They continued on for many blocks and at last, sure enough, they came upon a laundry on the ground floor in a little, old, frame building.

The name over the door was Pee Woo.

"And now, then, what on earth are you going to do?" demanded Harry, as they stepped in at a near by doorway to consult. "You can't go in there and ask those Chinks to hand you out a big diamond, you know."

"Certainly not," replied Alice. "I have been thinking it over carefully."

"There is but one way."

"And what is that?"

"I will say I come from Philadelphia, and that the joss sent me. If I am going to get any satisfaction I shall get it at once. I will say Sing Duck sent me to the joss house to find out who had the diamond—see?"

"All right. That will be better."

"But it was destined that they were not to enter the place at all, for just at that moment a Chinaman shuffled past them.

He had his head thrust forward in a most peculiar fashion, and he was moving much faster than Chinamen usually walk.

"Sing Duck himself! breathed Harry.

"It certainly is," replied Alice. "We don't want to go in there now."

They crossed the street and hovered in another doorway.

Through the window of the laundry they could see the mad Chinaman quite distinctly, for the place was well lighted.

There were three laundrymen in the shop.

All kept busily at work.

Sing Duck was talking in a very animated fashion.

He kept waving his arms and gesticulating wildly.

This lasted for a few minutes, and then the crisis came.

Suddenly all three laundrymen turned on Sing Duck with their flatirons.

The mad Chinaman grabbed an iron and backed to the door.

Harry thought he was going to throw it, but he turned and opened the door.

Before he could get out he was kicked out, and he went sprawling down the steps.

The laundrymen closed the door and went back to their ironing.

Sing Duck picked himself up and, turning, hurled the flatiron which he had stolen through the window and started away on the run.

The Chinks came tumbling out at the crash of the glass.

But they only followed the madman a short distance and then beat a retreat.

"Not much show for us now," said Harry.

"None at all, probably," replied Alice. "The sending us here was only part of his madness. No doubt it was he who talked behind the idol. I don't believe in his trance."

"You would have believed in it, then, if you had seen him when they dragged him into the cellar of the coffin factory. But, come, if we are not going in, we had better get on his trail."

They hurried after the mad Chinaman, who had now slowed down and could still be seen in the distance, walking rapidly south.

"This is certainly the most unsatisfactory case I ever had anything to do with," remarked Harry. "Really, I don't see where it is going to end."

"This makes the fourth city we have worked in, and certainly the end seems no nearer," replied Alice; "but Old King Brady will never give up."

"Never!"

"I admire his persistency, and I would like to see the diamond."

"You are beginning to doubt its existence?"

"Almost."

"Still, there is one thing which makes me like this case better than any we have had in a long time, Alice."

"So? And what is that?"

"We have been able to keep together through it all."

"Well, that is true, except for the coffin factory episode, which came near making me a widow," laughed Alice.

"A widow! I wish it might be that."

"Come, Harry! That's a fine speech!"

"Oh, I didn't mean that!" laughed Harry. "That's the time my tongue got things twisted. What I meant was—"

"What you meant was that you wish I would only consent to marry you, so that when some madman really succeeds in cremating you that I might actually be a widow."

"I think we better cut it out. The more we talk, the worse twisted we get; but any time you want me to take up the marrying end of the profession you will find me right there."

"Oh, I daresay! Some day, young man. You certainly are a most devoted suitor, and I will not attempt to deny that you deserve your reward."

While this odd sort of lovemaking was in progress they had been walking as rapidly as they could without attracting attention, and had gained considerably on Sing Duck.

The mad Chinaman had now resumed the same rapid shuffle with which he approached Pee Woo's laundry.

His head was thrust forward and he kept looking over his shoulder—a sure sign of insanity.

Harry was afraid he would catch sight of them, but he did not seem to.

At last they found themselves on Blue Island avenue, with the mad Chinaman still stepping out in lively style.

It was all they could do to keep up with him.

Block after block was covered, and Alice began to give out.

"Harry, I am afraid I can't keep this up much longer," she said at last. "What shall we do?"

"We won't use you up, whatever else we do," replied Young King Brady. "We shall have to slow down."

"Go on and leave me."

"Not in that disguise in this neighborhood. It is a wonder we haven't been stoned before this."

"Go, Harry. I'm not a bit afraid."

"Sha'n't do it!" replied Young King Brady, decidedly. "No use to ask it, Alice. We stick together whatever comes."

He slowed down, and it was time, for Alice was all out of breath.

Secretly much troubled over this unfavorable turn of affairs, Harry hardly knew what to do.

But Alice was worse troubled.

"Let me go, Harry!" she pleaded. "It isn't right that the case should be ruined on my account. I will go into the first Chinese laundry I come to and get my breath. Then I will go right back to the costumer's and from there to the hotel."

The costumer lived in his shop, and it had been arranged that they could get into his place at any time, no matter how late.

"Do you think you will be all right?" demanded Harry.

"I do, really."

"I will stick to you till we hit the laundry."

They came upon one on the next block, and here Alice was left behind.

Sing Duck was out of sight by this time.

Harry walked on at as rapid a pace as possible.

He would have run if he had dared, but a running Chinaman would have been sure to have brought a man.

He covered five blocks, and then had the immense satisfaction of seeing Sing Duck in the distance.

The mad Chinaman had slowed down somewhat, but he was still walking very fast.

Harry was able to gain on him, and he was doing very well, when some one from the other side of the street hurled an empty tomato can at him.

It was only a half-drunken fellow hanging around a saloon door, with a gang of young toughs, like himself.

The can missed Young King Brady, but, although he barely turned his head to see from whom the attack had come, the mischief was done.

When he looked up the avenue again Sing Duck was nowhere to be seen.

Harry was terribly tired.

After all his efforts, the chase seemed to have failed.

He passed several corners and looked down each street, but could see nothing of his man.

At last, realizing that he must have gone somewhat beyond the place where the mad Chinaman had vanished, he reluctantly gave it up and started to return to the laundry in the hope of finding Alice still there.

He had scarcely covered two blocks when a Blue Island avenue car stopped, and off jumped Old King Brady.

Harry stopped, and the old detective would have passed him if he had not given him a secret sign.

"Heavens! This you, Harry?" exclaimed the old detective. "Where is Alice? What ever brought you away down here?"

Harry quickly explained.

"Very strange!" muttered Old King Brady.

"What is strange?"

"Why don't you ask me what brought me here?"

"I was just going to."

"Remember that legless Hindoo, Bo?"

"Oh! You have been chasing after him, have you?"

"I have. I did not want to drag Alice into such company, so I said nothing of my intention. It occurred to me that I might pick up a clew through him on account of the paper."

"What paper?"

"I neglected to tell you anything about it. I am going to tell you all now, but where is Whitemyer street?"

"I'm blest if I know."

"We must find out before we go any further. Step into this doorway and we will have our talk and then inquire."

"Queer business!" said Young King Brady, after listening to the story of the mind-reading seance at Mr. Bo's. Do you take any stock in it?"

"Well, I can't say I took very much," replied the old detective; "but now that I meet you here I am beginning to wonder. So kindly explain your presence here, young man."

Harry told the happenings of the evening.

"Well," said Old King Brady, "this only adds more mystery to this already mysterious case. Now, if we find that Whitemyer street is in this immediate neighborhood, I shall begin to sit up and pay attention. It is certain that these Hindoos are wonderful mind readers and, as I have had some experience with Bo's ability in that line before, I can't be altogether skeptical. Wait here."

Old King Brady went into a nearby cigar store and inquired for Whitemyer street.

"Why, it's the next block north," he said, when he rejoined Harry.

"And that is just about where Sing Duck was last seen," was the reply.

"Come on!" said the old detective. "I begin to think there is something coming out of all this."

They turned down Whitemyer street.

It proved to be a neighborhood given over to colored people.

"There were several Chinese laundries between the avenue and the South Branch.

Of course, the detectives peered in at all of them, but they could see nothing of Sing Duck.

When they were almost down to the river they began to hear music.

Fiddles, a harp and a piano were at it, full bent.

They now perceived that the sounds came from the upper floor of an old building of considerable size, on the opposite side of the way.

The first floor was in a terrible condition. The windows were all broken, and the interior was one great dumping ground for ashes, garbage and all sorts of trash.

But upstairs it was different.

At a side door, over which a red light burned, was the sign:

"Assembly Rooms."

They crossed the street and entered the big room under the hall.

"Heavens! How the floor creaks! That mob will be coming through next," said Harry.

At the same instant, at the back of the place, a man rose up from the floor.

There was just light enough for the Bradys to see that he was in Chinese dress, and that he held a small saw in his hand.

He gave a yell and, throwing down the saw, made a rush for the back windows, sprang through one of them and disappeared.

"Sing Duck!" gasped Harry, and he made for the window on the run.

CHAPTER XI.

THE AFFAIR OF THE ASSEMBLY ROOM.

Alice had been for some weeks scarcely up to her usual mark in the matter of health.

It was this which caused her to fall out of the race, much to her deep regret.

But this seemed to be a case in which, while nothing could be done in the usual way, everything that was done threw the Bradys forward to some other city.

Alice was to have such an experience now.

She was really feeling worse than she had given Harry to understand.

It seemed as if she was going to faint, but she knew that every Chinaman has a simple remedy for such feelings, so she had no fear.

Entering, she told the boss of the laundry—Gin Low was the name on the sign—that she felt sick and wanted to lie down in one of his bunks for a few minutes, at the same time asking him for a dose of the medicine in question.

She got it.

None of the three Chinks in the place seemed to have the least suspicion that she was not what she pretended to be.

Gin Low took her into the back room and saw her comfortable, returning then to his work.

And here Alice lay quiet for fifteen minutes or so and the fit passed.

She was just beginning to think that she ought to get on the move, when the bell attached to the store door rang and someone entered.

Alice heard Gin Low greet the newcomer as Pee Woo.

Was this the man whose windows Sing Duck had broken with the flatiron?

Most certainly he was no one else.

Alice closed her eyes and listened.

Pee Woo greeted Gin Low.

Then he asked if he could say a few words to him in private.

Gin Low looked in on Alice, who was to all appearance sound asleep.

Next it was Gin Low and Pee Woo coming into the back room and began talking in whispers.

This is about what Alice heard, Pee Woo beginning:

"Sing Duck been here to-night?"

"No. I haven't seen Sing Duck in a year."

"He came to my place, stole a flatiron and threw it through my windows. I thought I come here. He is crazy, sure. I thought he might come here."

"No; he hasn't been here."

"Well, look out for him."

"What did he want?"

"He wanted to find Sam, the nigger lobbygow we knew in New York."

"Sam is in town. He was here yesterday. He is stopping on Whitemyer street."

"I know. He was in my place. I would have told Sing Duck, but he was so fierce I was afraid."

"What's he want Sam for?"

"Remember Moy Ting, the banker on Mott street?"

"Sure."

"He says Moy Ting was robbed by men who blew up his safe, that he lost a lot of money and a big diamond. He says Sam got the diamond, and that Moy Ting sent him out to Chicago to get it."

"Do you believe such nonsense?"

"Oh, I know Moy Ting was robbed. I had a letter from my brother in New York which told me about it."

"Did he say anything about the diamond?"

"No. But perhaps it's true."

"It is only one of Sing Duck's mad fancies."

"I don't know. If he gets it, I know what he will do, though."

"What?"

"Go to his girl in San Francisco."

"Oh! Mary Moy?"

"Yes."

"Where does she live again?"

"No. — Dupont street. She's married to another feller now. I bet you Sing Duck will try to make her run away with him to China."

"Pity he should get the diamond. If Sam really has it, and we could get it, what then?"

"It's worth the try."

"Let's go to Whitemyer street and see if we can find him. There is to be a nigger ball there to-night. Likely he will be there. We might catch him on the street." They talked further.

The possibility of meeting Sing Duck was discussed. Pee Woo vowed he would shoot him if he caught him.

Shortly after this the pair pulled out.

This conversation was made in the lowest of whispers, but Alice heard and understood every word.

No sooner were they gone than she got up and left the place.

She was bound for Whitemyer street now, for she felt that she had struck an important clew.

* * * * *

And thus Whitemyer street became the scene of action that night.

Alice and her Chinamen were all too late to take any part in the business there.

While she was listening to their talk the Bradys were having hot work on the dirty little lane.

Harry got to the back window of the old building too late.

It opened on an alley, and Sing Duck was nowhere to be seen.

Meanwhile a grand cakewalk or something of the sort seemed to be in progress upstairs in the assembly room.

The noise of the tramping feet was deafening.

The floor fairly bulged with the weight it was carrying.

"Shall we follow?" demanded Harry, as Old King Brady came up behind him.

"See anything of him?" demanded the old detective.

"No."

"It will be little use. What was that he had in his hand? I couldn't see."

"A saw. He threw it down somewhere."

"What in the world could the rascal be doing with it here?"

"Remember he is mad."

"I know—I know! Make your change quick, Harry. Great Scott! I believe those niggers will break the floor down. What a noise they make!"

Harry went at his change.

He had nothing to dispose of which he could not stow away on his person, and his ordinary coat was under his Chinese blouse.

In a minute the Chinaman had vanished, and Young King Brady had taken his place.

Meanwhile the old detective was prowling about.

Suddenly Harry heard him give a sharp cry.

"Out of this quick!" he called. "That madman has sawed the main pillar which supports that floor almost through. Those unfortunate people must be warned of their danger."

The cakewalk apparently had given place to a buck and wing competition.

It sounded as though a dozen darkies were at it, all jiggling at once.

The Bradys fled to the street.

"Upstairs! There is real danger. We must save those people if we can," cried the old detective.

They darted in through the side door and hurried up the stairs.

At the top they were met by a big, ugly-looking black wearing evening dress.

"Go 'way now, youse! No white folks 'lowed hyar!" he called out.

"Look here, your floor is going to break down!" cried Old King Brady. "Someone has sawed the main post through."

"Wha'! Wha' dat yo' say? You'se fooling me sure, man. Keant 'spectable cullud pussons hev a quiet dance witout white trash a-buttin' in?"

"You have your warning, my man, and you don't get it twice," said Old King Brady. "Your floor is in danger of collapsing any minute. If you don't believe what I saw, come and look at it for yourself."

"Go on an' I'll foller," replied the darky, impressed at last.

They ran downstairs.

But the delay proved fatal.

Scarce had they reached the street when a loud cracking sound was heard.

"Mah good gollys! Wha' shall I do?" cried the door-keeper.

He had scarcely time to speak the words when the floor collapsed and a rain of black humanity followed.

Down they came, legs and arms waving.

Whitemyer street rang with their yells and screams.

But the floor did not give way entirely.

A big hole was broken in the center where the pillar collapsed, and the sides dropped three feet or more.

Thus it was like a great funnel, down through the mouth of which the darkies came sliding.

The floor was piled high with dancers.

Some at the sides did not come down, as the Bradys later learned, but managed to crawl around to the door and make their escape by the stairs.

Of course a scene of indescribable confusion followed the accident.

More hot work for the Bradys came then, for they jumped in to help.

People crowded out from the adjoining tenements and lent willing hands.

For the time being the detectives forgot their case.

Many with broken legs and broken arms were pulled off the pile of struggling humanity, but no dead one came until at last Harry and his chief drew away a man whose head was crushed.

They carried him to the front of the building and laid him down before they recognized him.

It was Mr. "Bunder Penge!"

"Be was right!" breathed Old King Brady. "He prophesied a violent death for this fellow. It has come."

"Go through his pockets. He may have the diamond," whispered Harry.

Two colored men approached.

"Him no nigger," said one, looking down.

"You'm right! You'm right!" replied the other. "Look at him long black hair!"

Old King Brady showed his shield.

"The man is dead. Leave him to me," he said.

And the darkies, who were two roughly-dressed fellows, pulled out.

Quickly Old King Brady went through the dead man's pockets and possessed himself of all they contained.

Among other things he recovered his own watch and Harry's, which had been stolen from them in Philadelphia.

But there was no diamond.

"Exit Turge," thought Old King Brady. "Positively this is the most singular case I ever handled yet."

With Harry he stepped out into the street.

Men were bringing out the wounded.

Many of the dancers who had come out of it unhurt stood about telling their experiences.

As the fallen floor hung it was impossible to see the rear of the big room fully, but only at the sides.

Suddenly Harry made a dart into the building.

"What's struck him now?" thought Old King Brady, and he started to follow when a light hand was laid on his arm.

It was Alice in her Chinese disguise!

"You here!" breathed the old detective.

"Yes," replied Alice. "Have you seen two Chinamen here?"

"Now you speak of it, I did see two in the crowd a minute ago. What about that? Harry has just gone off on a tangent. I must follow. I— There they are now going into the building. The niggers would kill them if they had not something else to think about. Look! There they go sneaking in now. What about it all!"

"We must follow. Stand by me, Mr. Brady. Remember I am a Chinaman myself, and I don't want to be killed by niggers or anyone else."

"Come," said the old detective. "Don't stop to explain."

They entered the building on the other side of the fallen floor and watched.

The work of removing the persons who had fallen had now ended.

Several lay stretched upon the floor, but it was mostly in front of the break.

As far as Old King Brady knew, the Cambodian Turge was the only person actually killed.

But here behind the black lay a young colored man flat on his back.

"Hold!" breathed Alice.

The two Chinamen were sneaking up to the recumbent figure.

Standing in the shadows, Old King Brady and Alice apparently were not seen by them.

"It is Sam!" Alice heard Pee Woo say, for these were the two laundrymen whom she had trailed to Whitemyer street.

He bent down and began rifling the colored man's pockets.

"Go for them, Mr. Brady!" whispered Alice.

"Hold on there!" shouted the old detective.

Flashing his light upon them, he made his rush.

The Chinks beat a hurried retreat through the window into the alley.

"They got nothing; let them go," said Alice, "but search that boy, Mr. Brady, and you will find the diamond on him, unless I very greatly mistake."

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Sam the "lobbygow" was dead, and his secrets died with him.

But Old King Brady did not find the diamond upon his person.

He had quite a sum of money in his pockets but no gem.

A Low-gow-gui, corrupted into lobbygow, meaning Chinawoman's dog, was what the fellow was.

Old King Brady recognized him as one of the fraternity in New York's Chinatown, and when Alice told her story he was ready to believe that the dead lobbygow, whose neck was broken, had assisted in the safe-blowing at Moy Ting's.

Meanwhile the police and the ambulances had arrived, and Old King Brady pulled away.

Right here we may mention that the Cambodian and the lobbygow were the only persons killed or even seriously injured by the fall of the floor.

But broken legs and arms were plenty enough.

Two nights later the colored population of Whitemyer street got their revenge on the old roost by setting it on fire and burning it up.

"Where can Harry be?" queried Old King Brady, as he and Alice stood aside watching the removal of the wounded. "I don't want to leave here till he comes."

But he had to, for after waiting until the last of the wounded had been taken away, Young King Brady was still among the missing.

"We go back to the hotel, Alice," said the old detective. "No use hanging about here any longer."

And while they were on their way Old King Brady told Alice the story of Mr. Bo.

They did not see Harry until nearly midnight, when he turned up at the hotel.

"Well?" demanded the old detective. "And what sent you flying off like that?"

Harry was looking about as dejected as Alice had ever seen him.

"Why," said Harry, "I happened to look into the room there, and what should I see but Sing Duck bending down over one of those niggers away back in the rear. He was just taking something from his pocket, and I caught the glitter of a diamond. Then I went for him. I was too late. Where he went I haven't the least idea. I searched everywhere, and I have failed."

"Well, don't be downhearted," said Old King Brady.

"Where he went to of course I know no more than you do, but Alice knows something which may give you a clew to where he intends to go next. Out with it, Alice. Let Harry see that every step in this case has been but another link in the chain, even when you fell down in the chase after Sing Duck."

And Alice related her experience in the laundry.

"We shall probably hear from Sing Duck," remarked Old King Brady, "but even if we don't, I'm off for California first train."

This ended it for the night.

Next morning Old King Brady wrote Mr. Bo a letter thanking him for his advice and relating what had occurred.

Adhering to his determination to follow up Alice's laundry clew, Old King Brady with his assistants started for San Francisco, not by the first train, but by the one leaving Chicago that evening.

The day had been spent in trying to gain some clew to the movements of the mad Chinaman, but in vain.

It seemed almost foolish to cross the continent in pursuit of him, when there was no certainty that he had left Chicago.

But Old King Brady was determined, and in due time the Bradys turned up at the Lick House, on Montgomery street, San Francisco, for the events we have been narrating took place before the fire and that famous old hotel had yet to be destroyed.

It was night when they reached there, and as all hands

were pretty well fired out, it was determined to make no move until morning, and they went to bed.

Next morning at the breakfast table they were treated to a surprise.

At a nearby table sat a dark-skinned, straight-haired foreigner who was almost the duplicate of the man they had known as Bunder Penge, and whom they had certainly left behind them dead in Chicago.

Of course the curiosity of the Bradys was aroused to the highest pitch.

"I'll go to the office and find out who he is," said Harry, and he did so, returning with word that the dark man was registered as Mr. Bunder Penge, Udong, Cambodia.

"The original Cambodian, and Bo was right," said Old King Brady. "The other was a fake!"

"What do you propose to do about it?" demanded Harry. "Those papers you took from the man Turge undoubtedly belong to him."

"I'll make an appointment with him," said Old King Brady, "but first we must follow up Alice's clew."

So after breakfast he wrote Mr. Bunder Penge a brief note which informed him that a Secret Service detective staying at the Lick House wished to see him in regard to a Cambodian named Turge, who had been killed in Chicago, and that he would meet him at 12 o'clock at the hotel.

This note he gave to the clerk of the hotel to deliver.

The Bradys and Alice now started out to visit Chinatown to see what there was in the laundry clew.

They walked down Montgomery street and turned up Sacramento.

Just as they reached Kearney street a fire-engine came tearing down that thoroughfare, closely followed by the hook and ladder.

The detectives stopped to see them pass.

"A fire somewhere in Chinatown," remarked Harry.

They hurried on and, turning down Dupont street, saw that the engine had stopped on the block between Jackson and Pacific.

A light smoke was coming out of the upper windows of an old building on the uphill side of the way.

"I'll be blest if I don't think that house is very close to our number," remarked Old King Brady, looking around.

They pushed on, their detective's shields taking them through the fire lines.

"Harry!" exclaimed the old detective, "you are right. It is the very house we are after, and they seem to have got the fire out."

He approached a policeman, made himself known and inquired into the affair.

There are two Chinamen and a woman dead on the top floor," he announced, when he returned to his partners.

"It is a case of double murder and suicide. The man and the woman were shot and the room fired; then the murderer seems to have turned the revolver against himself."

"Sing Duck, I'll bet," said Harry.

"I suppose," remarked Alice, "that when he found his old flame married to another man and she refused to go to China with him he killed her."

"All this is jumping at conclusions, children," said Old

King Brady. "Let us go up there and find out the true state of the case."

They made their way to the door, and their shields gaining them admission, they passed to the top floor, where the police and firemen were in charge.

The fire had not done much damage.

In a room where a table was spread for breakfast the corpses lay.

One Chinaman had been shot in the back of the head. The woman had been shot through the heart.

The other Chinaman had been shot through the forehead, and the revolver was still clutched in his dead hand.

And this man was Sing Duck, sure enough!

The Bradys were able to instantly identify him.

After some talk with the police, Old King Brady bent over the body and made an examination.

"No doubt he killed those two and then shot himself," he said. "We have followed this man across the continent. We can explain the whole mystery. I shall go directly to the chief of police and tell him all."

He walked out, Harry and Alice following.

"Aren't you going to search him for the diamond?" whispered Harry, when they got on the stairs.

"I've got it," replied Old King Brady. "No use in bringing it into the police case at all. I felt it in his pocket, and I was able to snake it out unobserved."

And when the old detective got down to Portsmouth Square with his partners he showed them the stone.

It was certainly a wonderful gem.

They went to the chief of police and told a story, but not the whole, for the diamond was left out of it.

Little interest is felt in California about dead Chinese outside their own race.

Sing Duck's secrets had died with him.

To have told of the diamond would only have spelled all kinds of complication and delay.

"And now for Mr. Bunder Penge," said Old King Brady, as they left headquarters. "I am curious to see what he has to say."

They returned to the Lick House and remained quiet until noon.

Exactly at 12 o'clock Old King Brady sent the Cambodian his card.

Word came back that Mr. Bunder Penge would receive them in his room.

Before they started Old King Brady produced a telegram.

"See this," he said. "I received it this morning. I said nothing about it, but I wired the Massachusetts General Hospital from Ogden to inquire for Hipolyte Ti, requesting that the answer be sent to San Francisco. Here it is: 'H. Ti died this morning—J. C. Redding, Supt.'"

"That settles his hash!" exclaimed Harry. "Who owns the diamond now?"

"Who indeed? And who is to pay us for all our trouble and expense?" replied the old detective. "But let us go and see what the only original and genuine Bunder Penge has to say."

When they reached the Cambodian's room they were

met by the most courtly gentleman they had ever encountered, but right at the start they ran up against a snag.

Mr. Bunder Penge could speak only a few words of English.

He made Old King Brady understand that he had had the letter translated and was curious to hear about Turge.

Alice tackled him in Chinese, but Mr. Bunder Penge did not speak her kind.

Then it was discovered that he could speak French, and Alice was right on the job.

But the old detective was immensely disappointed at having to sit by and not understand.

"Say nothing of the diamond until we find out what he has to say for himself," he whispered to Alice before she began to talk.

Mr. Bunder Penge had a great deal to say.

He told the whole story of the diamond.

Through Alice Old King Brady took a hand in the conversation.

He asked if the Cambodian had written threatening letters to Mr. Ti.

This was denied. He had tried to buy the diamond, but Ti had refused to sell. While negotiations were on Turge, his servant, attacked him in the night, stabbed and severely injured him, stealing all his papers and disappearing.

Mr. Bunder Penge had been ill for weeks. He was now on his way back to Cambodia, having given up after hearing of the explosion at Ti's place, for he felt satisfied that Turge had captured the diamond and made good his escape.

"But, gentlemen, if you can help me in any way," he began, when Old King Brady interrupted.

"Tell him to describe the diamond," he said.

And the description was perfect, even to a slight flaw in the stone.

Then Old King Brady handed over the diamond, and the priest fell on his neck and wept.

What was more to the point, he paid Old King Brady a thousand dollars, which he assured him was all the money he had left except just enough to take him home.

And Old King Brady, feeling fully entitled to it, took the money and the balance came in thanks.

And this ended it.

Presumably Bunder Penge returned to Cambodia.

At all events, the detectives went back to New York, which was the finish of the case of "The Bradys and the Mad Chinaman."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE BLACK POISONER; or, STRANGE WORK IN PHILADELPHIA," which will be the next number (476) of "Secret Service."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

An investigation has recently been made to determine the absolute sensitiveness of the ear. By experiments with a telephone and alternating currents of frequencies 250 and 500 per second determinate pressure variation were produced at the ear. The telephone was standardized by steady currents, and the relation between current and pressure ascertained. The experiments lead to the conclusion that the normal ear can respond to a pressure variation of about four ten-millionths of a millimeter of mercury.

A 12-year old girl in Liverpool, O., went to bed all right a few nights ago, but at midnight was missing from her room. Her mother and brothers began searching, but she was not found until daylight, and then on the bank of a river four miles away. She had walked that distance in her sleep, and might have gone farther had she not walked into the water and been aroused by the shock. She was then all turned around, and did not know which way to go to reach home. She could not remember that she had had any dream at all.

One of the curious things that men of science have discovered in their innumerable efforts to measure and map the earth with the least possible error, is the fact that there are places where the direction of a plumb-line is not vertical. Irregularities of density in the crust of the globe may produce this phenomenon. A remarkable instance has been found in our new island of Porto Rico, where the deviation from the vertical is so great that, in mapping the island, the northern and southern coast-lines, as shown on the older maps, had each to be moved inward half a mile.

In Nottingham, England, a few weeks ago, a teamster loaded his wagon so heavily that the horses could not start it. He began lashing them and swearing, and a crowd gathered, but no one would take a lift at the wheels and help the horses get a move on the wagon. The driver was still lashing away when a grocer's horse standing across the road rushed at him with open mouth and seized him by the arm and bit him so savagely that he had to go to the hospital for treatment. If the horses would stand by each other this way there would soon be an end to the cruelties seen every day in the cities. The man who lashes a horse because the horse can do no more than he can, deserves a sentence to jail every time.

The manufacture of Kashmir shawls, which fifty years ago afforded occupation for whole villages and thousands of families in the province of Kashmir, is an almost extinct industry. Formerly the possession of a pair of the genuine Kashmir shawls was the hall mark of nobility, or at least of high social status, among Indian families. To-day, we are told, the cheap imitations manufactured in the Punjab, and

the machine made article from Europe dyed with aniline in striking hues and patterns, are supplanting the hand made shawl of native workmanship. An occasional order for a couple of shawls at a moderate price, to satisfy the passing whim of a potentate, or the fact that the Maharaja of Kashmir has a few shawl tents which require repair and renewal, does not suffice to keep alive the workman or the industry. The manufacture of the real Kashmir shawl is, almost wholly a manual process. The material is the soft wool of the Tibetan goat. Hand spindles are used in the preliminary operation of converting the wool into yarn; the weaving of the yarn into a texture of inimitable fineness is done entirely by hand looms manipulated with the utmost dexterity; and the colored woolen border is then interwoven. The dyes are natural and indelible. It is believed that the water of certain lakes and streams in which the shawls are dipped has virtue to make the colors permanent.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

The man wore a badge with the legend "I am an undesirable citizen." "Why go to the trouble of announcing it?" queried an observer. At this point the trouble began.

Mrs. Coldstream—Would you like a glass of water? The Conservative Customer—Not much! None o' dese new-fangled drinks fer me!

Judge—Prisoner, have you anything to say to the court before sentence is pronounced? Prisoner—I beg the court to consider the youth of my attorney.

Snooks—To what do you attribute your success as a tradesman? Sellem—If a customer doesn't see what he wants, I make him want what he sees.

"Well, Jackie, did you sleep with the wedding cake under your pillow and dream of your future wife?" "No, I—I ate it, 'cos I want my wife to be a surprise!"

Goodley—If men really would "vote as they pray" this would truly be a happy world. Wiseman—Yes, but in that case you wouldn't get some men to the polls once in ten years.

A Baltimore woman who had "a perfect treasure of a cook" was horrified recently when Maggie came to her, saying: "Please, mum, I'm givin' ye a week's notice." "Why, Maggie!" exclaimed the lady of the house, "this is a surprise! Aren't you satisfied here? Do you hope to better yourself?" "Well, no, mum," responded Maggie. "'Tis not exactly that. The fact is, mum, I'm goin' to get married."

A traveler, putting up at a fifth-class hotel, brought the "Boots" up with his angry storming. "Want your room changed, sir? What's the matter, sir?" "The room's all right," fumed the guest, scorchingly. "It's the fleas I object to, that's all." "Mrs. Blobbs!" bawled the "Boots" in an uninterested sort of voice, "the gent in No. 8 is satisfied with his room; but he wants the fleas changed."

Jones had just run over to see if Mr. and Mrs. Blank would go to the theater with them. Mrs. Blank was awfully sorry—she would so much like to go—but unfortunately Blank was out; probably he was at the club. She would telephone. The following conversation ensued: "213A Gerrard, please. Hello! Is this the — club? Is my husband there? Hello! Not there? Sure? Well, all right then; but hold on. How do you know? I haven't even told you my name." "There ain't nobody's husband here—never!" was the wise attendant's reply.

THE DOOMED BROTHERS; or, A SON'S REVENGE

It is more than thirty years ago since the Carson brothers, James and Peter, opened a blacksmith shop on the Germantown road, on the outskirts of Philadelphia.

The Carsons were tall, strong men, very industrious and saving, silent and almost unsociable in dealing with customers and neighbors, and it was noted by the helpers and hangers-on around the forge that they were very suspicious of strangers who stopped at the shop on business during the dark hours of the night.

The two brothers lived in a frame house adjoining the forge with their families, consisting of their wives and four children, as they were each blessed with a boy and a girl.

As a door opened from the forge into the dwelling, the brothers were not compelled to go out into the open air on retiring for food or rest, and it was remarked by the neighbors that they had never been seen on the streets after dark.

It was also observed that the doors and windows of the dwelling were secured with bolts and bars, as well as bullet-proof shutters; that the high fence in the rear was ornamented with sharp spikes, and that a fierce dog was loose in the yard every night.

No one knew where the brothers hailed from, as they never spoke of their antecedents; but it was supposed, from unguarded words dropped by the children, that they were born in one of the border States.

The Carsons worked away on the Germantown road for two years, prospering and increasing their business day by day, but still silent and guarded, and ever suspicious of strangers.

One winter's evening an aged traveler, mounted on a fine horse, stopped at the Bull's Head Tavern near the blacksmith shop. After calling for liquid refreshments at the bar, the old gentleman turned to the landlord and inquired:

"Have you a good horseshoer around here? My horse has cast two shoes."

"Two of the best in the country not a square down the road," was the reply. "You can't miss the shop. You can see the light from here. You'll see the name on the sign—Carson Brothers, General Blacksmiths."

The stranger led his horse down the road, muttering the while as he stared ahead at the light in the forge:

"Carson Brothers—Carson Brothers! Can they be my men? I should have asked the landlord how long they've been around here. I'll soon see if it's them, anyhow."

The two brothers were working away with three assistants when the old stranger led his horse to the door, shouting, in a husky voice:

"Hallo, blacksmith, I want you to put two shoes on my horse right off."

"Tell him we've got all the work we can do to-night," said Pete Carson to his assistant, without raising his head from the anvil, while the brother kept on at his work, without appearing to notice the old stranger's voice.

The assistant went to the door, and repeated his master's orders to the old stranger.

A grim smile passed over the old stranger's face as he heard that growling voice above the din inside; and drawing a card and a pencil from his pocket, he scratched some words as he stood in the doorway, and then turned from the place, saying to the helper:

"Hand that card to either of your bosses, and if they want to shoe my horse then, they'll find me up at the tavern."

The old fellow vaulted on the saddle with the agility of a young jockey, just as the door was closed.

"A card for me," grunted Pete Carson, as the assistant reached the anvil. "Pitch it into the fire there, and be blamed to him. Hold on a moment, and let us see it. Great God, Jim!"

The heavy hammer dropped from the strong man's right hand, and his left hand was trembling as if palsied, as he held the card in it and stared at the writing with his glaring, terrified eyes.

"What's the matter, Pete?" inquired his brother, as he drew near the terrified man.

"He is after us again!" gasped Pete. "We are doomed—doomed!"

"Where is he?" demanded Jim, in stern tones, as he drew a pistol and turned to the door.

"For God's sake, Jim, don't go out there!" cried Pete. "He's laying for us outside. Let's get into the house and lock up. We won't do any more work this evening, men."

"Nonsense!" cried the plucky brother. "We ain't going to let one man scare us any longer, Pete. Let's go out and face him."

"Let me go first, then!" cried Pete, as he pushed his brother back from the door, as he drew his own weapon. "'Twas I brought his vengeance on us, and I'll—"

"Die like a skunk!" cried a fierce voice outside, as Pete opened the door. At the same moment the report of a pistol rang out, and then the foremost brother fell back in his kinsman's arms, crying:

"He's killed me, Jim. I'm a dead man. Get in, or he'll fix you!"

"One at a time!" sang out a fierce voice, as the old rider dashed up the road on his horse. "Your turn next, Jim. You can't escape me, if you hide in a wilderness. You are all doomed—doomed to death!" and the horse and rider disappeared in the darkness.

When Jim Carson returned to the forge his brother had breathed his last.

"Poor Pete!" muttered the grief-stricken man, as he stared at the corpse. "What will his wife say to this? What will become of the women and children, if the revengeful hound kills me?"

In answer to all inquiries as to who was the assassin, Jim Carson would reply—that he was an old enemy; that it was useless to hunt him down, and he confessed that Pete was the second brother killed by the avenger. Pete Carson was buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Four days after the murder of his brother, Jim Carson received a letter through the post-office from his enemy, and its contents were brief, threatening and unrelenting.

"Baltimore, December, 18—.

"James Jackson.—If I had not more charity than you had, you would be a dead man ere this; but don't think I'm going to let up on you forever, for I have sworn that you'll all die by my hand, and I'll keep my oath. For the sake of your wife, and for the sake of the widow and orphans, I will not molest you until the young ones are able to take care of themselves. If you should live for ten years more, you will not hear from me during that time. After that, no matter where you are, you will hear my vengeful cry and feel my knife or lead in your treacherous heart. If you care to seek me at once, you know where to find me. Your foe till death,

"James Howell."

In less than a month after, the brother sold out the blacksmith shop, and moved away, bearing the two families with him. Changing his name once more, James Jackson started for the West with those who were dependent on him.

The hunted man purchased some government land in Northern Minnesota, and settled thereon with his double charge.

The spot selected was in a secluded region, more than twenty-five miles from a settlement, and there the blacksmith hoped to end his life in peace, without ever hearing from his vengeful enemy. Five years after settling in Minnesota the widow and children of the murdered Peter died by typhoid

fever, and then James had only his own wife and his two promising children to care for in the world.

Five years more of peace and plenty and solitude, and his young son was a noble, stalwart lad of seventeen, able and willing to assist him on the farm, while his daughter was a winsome creature of fifteen.

When the blacksmith settled in his Western home he assumed the name of Porter, and few and far between were the visits he paid to the nearest town for supplies, and when his son grew in years the father never left the neighborhood of the farm at all, trusting the brave young fellow with all the business in town.

Young Frank Porter had heard that his Uncle Peter was killed in a fight in Philadelphia; that they hailed from the South originally; and he knew that his father never cared to speak of his former life.

One bright summer evening as Frank was returning from the town with the team, after disposing of a load of wheat, an old man rode past him on the prairie, and the young fellow noticed that the stranger eyed him carefully in passing.

The old fellow was well mounted, and he bore himself like one accustomed to the saddle, as he set on his good horse with perfect ease, though the animal pranced and capered over the prairie.

The stranger rode on ahead for over a mile, and Frank urged on his own mettlesome animals, so as to keep him in view as long as possible, as he felt some curiosity to know where he was going.

Frank was within three miles of his own home when he saw that the old stranger wheeled his steed right about, as if to wait for his coming. The lad pushed on till he was abreast of the old rider.

"I'm looking for a settler who lives out here somewhere, young man," said the stranger. "Do you know a man named Carson in this settlement?"

"Carson—Carson," muttered Frank. "Don't know any settler of that name out here. But it strikes me I heard the name before. What do you want with him, stranger?"

The boy remembered at once that he had borne that name in Philadelphia, though he had never asked his father about the change.

"Carson is an old friend of mine," replied the old stranger, with a smile. "I knew him when I was a boy like you, and it strikes me you resemble him very much."

"My father's name is Porter, sir," said Frank, "and if you want to see him, I'll soon—there he is now, going the short cut through the pass."

And Frank pointed to a distant figure on the verge of the rocky hills.

Without uttering another word, the stranger urged on his horse and dashed off across the prairie after the receding figure. Frank could not drive the team after the old stranger, as the approach to the rocky pass was broken with ruts and rocks; but he did spring from the wagon and bounded after him at a headlong pace, as something whispered to him that his father was in danger.

Frank saw the impatient old fellow dismount hurriedly when he was within two hundred yards of his father, who was still unconscious, apparently, of his danger; and then the pursuer rushed on his enemy, leaving his horse to ramble among the rocks.

At that moment Frank yelled out with all his breath, and his father turned on the instant, to perceive the old fellow dashing into the pass after him. One fierce, vengeful cry burst from the old stranger as he recognized his enemy; and then Frank heard the quick reports of the revolvers as the foes closed and fired. And then a cry of pain burst from the blacksmith, as he pressed his hand to his breast, and fell on his

face, still clasping the weapon in his hand. The old stranger sprang on his fallen foe, and gazed on him a moment, ere he cried:

"Father, you are avenged! Jim Jackson, you are the last of the three; living or dead, you know you deserve your fate!"

With a yell of rage Frank rushed into the pass, holding the hunting-knife in his hand.

The old stranger turned on the young fellow for a moment, and raised his revolver at the same time; and then, with a sorrowful shake of the head, he thrust the weapon in his pocket, saying:

"Young man, your blood will not be on my hands. I only war against murderers."

And before Frank could reach his father's side, the active stranger sprang over a rocky mound near by, and disappeared.

"Come out here, you murdering old hound!" cried Frank, as he stood up and waved the hunting-knife. "Come out here, till I cut your heart out for killing my father!"

Ere the vengeful cry was completed, a figure appeared above the huge rock, and Frank, excited and maddened as he was, started back in astonishment on beholding a man in the prime of life.

"Hear me one moment, young man," cried the changed stranger, as he advanced on Frank, still holding a revolver in his hand.

"Hold back, Frank, I command you," groaned his father, as he raised his head. "Listen to him, and don't touch him, or I'll give you my dying curse. Go on, Jim Howell."

"Sixteen years ago," said the stranger, "when I was a boy of fifteen, I saw three big men attack my father in a bar-room in Tennessee, and they murdered him before my eyes, because he differed with them in politics. One of them—your father there—held me against the counter while his brothers beat my kind father to death. I swore next day that I would kill them all with my own hand. One of them I shot two years after in New Orleans. I killed your Uncle Peter in Philadelphia. I would have shot your father on that same night were it not that I had pity on you and your sister, and your cousins. My mother died of a broken heart, and I have been a wanderer over the world for years. Plunge that knife into my heart now, if you want to."

"Don't you do it, Frank," cried the wounded man. "James Howell, you served us all right. 'Twas a cowardly, low, mean trick we served your father, and we deserved death for it. 'Twas rum that did it, and I ain't touched a drop since. Good God, I've suffered agonies for that crime, though you know I never put a hand in the fight, only to hold you while they licked him. They didn't mean to kill him, Jim. Forgive them—forgive me!—don't you touch him, Frank. He fought me fair, anyhow."

"And you've given me a wound I won't recover from in a hurry," said the stranger, as he staggered and then fell on the ground. "Young fellow, can you forgive me as I forgive your father? God knows I hated to—to——"

The young stranger's head sank on the ground ere he could finish the sentence, and his eyes were closed as if in death.

Three months after, the stranger from Tennessee and James Jackson were seated in front of the farmhouse conversing in friendly tones, and without once alluding to the old, deadly feud. Both men had recovered from their wounds, but James Howell still lingered in his enemy's house.

Two years passed away, and the stranger lingered there still, growing more and more attached to his old enemy each day, while Frank and his mother looked on James Howell as an old, dear friend. Frank's sister never learned the secret of her father's early crime; and when she accepted James Howell as her husband, the loving girl little dreamed that she wedded the man who had avenged his father by killing her uncles.

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