

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post-Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

No. 511.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 6, 1908.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AFTER THE CHINESE TONG FIENDS; OR, THE SECRET CELLAR ON MOTT STREET.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



The Chinese girl now seized hold of a Chinaman and began pulling him about. Enclosed in the body of the idol, poor Harry could render no help. As they started to put on the head Old King Brady appeared between the curtains.

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CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THINGS CHINESE.

Young King Brady, junior in the far-famed Brady Detective Bureau, of Union Square, New York City, looking over the newspaper in his private office one December morning, came across the following, which he read aloud a little later to his partners, Old King Brady and Alice Montgomery.

The heading was:

“TONG FIENDS FIRE CHINATOWN.”

The account ran:

“Fire broke out at four different points on Pell and Mott streets at practically the same moment this morning, a little after one o'clock.

“The tenement No. — Mott street was discovered burning at that hour, but the fire, which was in a hall closet, had made little headway, and was easily extinguished by the tenants.

“No. — Pell street started up a blaze in the Newport restaurant, which threatened to be serious. The light was seen by Hop Wing, who sleeps in a shed in the yard. The man rushed into the restaurant kitchen just in time to see two Chinks running out through the side door into the front hall. The floor had been saturated with kerosene, and was all ablaze.

“Hop Wing smothered it with ashes taken from the kitchen range.

“Fire was also discovered in Li Fung's restaurant, No. — Pell street, and in King Yet's grocery, just below. Both blazes were extinguished by the fire department, the alarm having been turned in by Hop Wing after he extinguished the blaze at the Newport.

“It is understood that the damage was slight in all these cases.

“It is believed all these blazes were deliberately started by Tong fiends of the Hip Sing Tong, or Highbinder cult, as in each instance the would-be victims were members of the On Leong, or Merchants' Association, the rival tong.”

“Well,” remarked Old King Brady, “the On Leong people seem to have slipped out luckily this time. Really something should be done in the matter of the Hip Sing Tong. They are always the aggressors. I don't know that I ever heard of the On Leong tong starting one of these wars.”

The Bradys, as detectives were interested in this matter for the reason that their business frequently calls them among the Chinese.

In fact these world-famous detectives have established

quite a reputation among the Chinese, and this is largely due to the fact that Miss Alice Montgomery, who was born and brought up in China, both speaks and reads that difficult language.

Thus, as it happens, they are personally acquainted with many Chinese in New York, San Francisco, Boston and other cities.

Hence the interest shown in the item Young King Brady read.

Business called the young detective away from the office soon afterward.

Old King Brady remained studying photographs of certain crooks whose faces he was trying to fix in his mind.

Miss Montgomery was writing in her private office when a ragged street urchin appeared in the outer room and asked for the old detective.

The clerk looked in upon Old King Brady a few minutes later.

“There is a boy outside who insists upon seeing you personally, Mr. Brady,” he said. “He is rather a tough looking proposition. I can't make him tell his business or give his name.”

“Let him come in,” said Old King Brady, who is well used to all sorts of queer visitors.

He went on with his work, scarcely giving the matter a thought until he saw sliding up to his desk a little tough of the most modern and pronounced brand.

“Say, is youse Old King Brady de detective?” he asked, his jaws working over his chewing gum for all they were worth.

“Yes, I am the dee-ctective,” smiled Old King Brady. “What is it you want?”

“Say, a Chink gimme dis to give to you an' no one else—see?”

The boy produced a red slip of paper upon which Chinese characters had been hastily scrawled.

“Where is the man? How came you by this?” Old King Brady asked.

“Say, he's in a cab around de corner wit a Chineese gal. I tink he's afraid to leave dem so he hollered to me an' gimme a quarter to bring de pape up to you—see?”

“Do you want an answer?”

“Sure ting. He didn't say so, but he sure does.”

“Wait. Alice! Just a minute, please.”

Alice Montgomery answering the summons came in from her private office.

“I fancy this must be intended for you,” said Old King Brady. “I am not up in fly-track writing.”

Alice was, and glancing at the paper, said:

“Why this is from Li Fung, who helped us on in the Chinese diamond case last winter.”

“So?”

"Looks as if they may be the same trunks."

"I am very much inclined to think they are, Alice."

"What do you propose to do?"

"I'm going to see the mate of that steamer. To-night about six I shall go to Li Fung's and take Mr. Armstead with me."

"How about making an earlier move on Li Fung's?"

"I don't think it would pay. If we stick to the card Li Fung will have the trunks ready. If Mr. Armstead identifies them we can jump on the man."

"Yes. I must get to work. I have that Meyers' matter on hand, and it won't keep."

"Certainly not. You will not be able to take any part in this business to-day. Clear up the Meyers matter so that if this case proves to be a long one you will be free."

Alice left soon afterward, and having written a few letters, Old King Brady prepared to depart.

When he left the office the old detective wore the usual quaint dress which for many years has been a sort of trade mark with him.

We refer to the long blue coat with brass buttons, the old-fashioned stock and standup collar, and the big white hat with its extraordinary broad brim.

While this costume has its disadvantages at times, it also works the other way.

The police as well as the fraternity of crooks generally know Old King Brady at a glance, and if for reason he does not want to be known it is easy to disguise.

The old detective now travelled over to Brooklyn, where he found the British tramp steamer Hercules lying at Prentice's stores.

He ascended to the deck and asked for the mate.

A young man of frank and prepossessing appearance responded.

"You are Mr. Helderberg?" Old King Brady asked.

"That's my name."

"I am a detective. Brady is my name."

"I thought so. Old King Brady?"

"Yes."

"You come from Mr. Armstead?"

"Yes."

"All right. You are going to arrest me?"

"Nothing is further from my intentions, Mr. Helderberg."

"Armstead threatened to do it."

"Did he? I didn't know. My work is to get on the trail of the missing trunks."

"I am afraid you will find it a hard job. I'm not responsible for their loss, I want you to understand."

"Yes, I know. But let us try to get at facts. Are you aware that this business has assumed an even more serious aspect?"

"No; how is that?"

"Mr. Armstead's son has vanished. Also the Chinaman, Fen Pok."

"You mean the second Chinaman. The one who came to me after the trunks and did not get them?"

"Yes."

"Well! I don't know that it concerns me."

"Be accommodating, Mr. Helderberg, if you want to keep out of trouble."

"You just can't drag me into trouble in this business. I won't stand for it."

"I have no desire to. Tell me now all you know about these trunks."

"Well," replied the mate, "it's like this. I shipped at Canton. I didn't know Captain Winstrom at all. The man was sick from the start with some stomach trouble, and he died just after we were clear of the Cape of Good Hope. We buried him at sea, and I brought the old tub along."

"I didn't know anything about these trunks until just before the captain died, when he called me to him and told me where they were stowed."

"They belong to the explorer Armstead," he said, "and I daresay they are very valuable to him, although I don't imagine that they contain much that is valuable to anyone else. They are not on the manifest, and they are to be delivered only on Mr. Armstead's order."

"Plain enough," said Old King Brady. "Well, did he give you a copy of Mr. Armstead's signature or anything to go by?"

"No, he didn't," replied Helderberg. "He said he was going to, but he died that night, and I sealed up his papers according to our rule at sea. But during that interview he told me that a Chinaman named Fen Pok, who was a trusted servant of Mr. Armstead's, might come for the trunks, in which case I was to give them up to him."

"So? Did he describe Fen Pok?"

"Yes; he told me that I should know him by one peculiarity."

"Which was?"

"That he had lost the lower end of his left ear."

"Well!"

"What about that? I seem to have hit you hard."

"Did the Chinaman who came for the trunks fill the bill?"

"He certainly did. The lower end of his left ear was missing."

"And the other?"

"Was perfect."

"I did not refer to the other ear, but to the other Chinaman. The real Fen Pok."

"According to Mr. Armstead."

"I see you doubt Mr. Armstead's sincerity."

"I certainly do. The man abused me shamefully. I am not to be blamed."

"Yes, yes. We are getting side-tracked. What about the second Chinaman who came after the trunks?"

"Well, the lower end of his ear was gone, too."

"So? Did they look alike, these two men?"

"All Chinks look alike to me."

"Come, Mr. Helderberg, that won't do. You must know that there is the greatest difference between Chinamen. Did these two look enough alike to be mistaken for each other? That's the point."

"They certainly did."

"Apart from the ear business."

"Yes."

"You called Mr. Armstead's attention to this?"

"Of course."

"And what did he say?"

"That I was a fool among other things."

"Did he come with the Chinaman?"

"No; he came alone."

"Look at these pictures of Fen Pok and see if you can identify the man as your first visitor."

Old King Brady produced the pictures.

"That Chink is certainly the fellow who took away the trunks," he said.

"Was he in Chinese dress as you see him here?"

"No. He wore American clothes."

"And the second man?"

"He was the same man, Mr. Brady. He was much better dressed the second time he came, that's all."

"Did you accuse him of being the same man?"

"Yes."

"And he denied it?"

"Sure."

"How did the first man take away the trunks?"

"He came with an express wagon. There was another Chink with him. They loaded on the trunks and drove off."

"Have you the order which he gave?"

"You bet your life."

"Let me see it."

Helderberg produced a sheet of cheap note paper upon which was written:

"Dear Captain Winstrom.—Please deliver my three trunks to bearer, Fen Pok. Yours as ever,

"HENRY ARMSTEAD."

"Don't look as if any Chinaman ever wrote that?" said Helderberg, triumphantly.

"Well, I couldn't say as to that," replied the old detective. "There are Chinamen who can imitate anything. You know, of course, that they are the most expert forgers on earth."

"I have heard that."

"Did Armstead deny the signature?"

"Yes."

"Did he show you his own signature?"

"He signed his name on a piece of paper. I don't know if he wrote it in the usual way. It certainly did not look anything like this."

"Well, that is all, Mr. Helderberg. When do you sail?"

"Oh, we shan't get away for two weeks yet."

"Are you going on the steamer?"

"Yes. I take her to Newcastle, England, her home port. I don't know what I shall do after that."

"Very well. I may want to see you again, in which case I suppose I shall find you right here."

"Sure! I'm not running away on account of this trunk business, you bet. I'm not one bit afraid of Armstead. He can't make me any trouble if he tries."

And this was all Old King Brady was able to make out of the mate of the Hercules.

CHAPTER III.

MYSTERY ADDED TO MYSTERY.

Old King Brady made no further move on the case until evening.

Young King Brady, or "Harry," as his partners always call him, being busy about other matters, did not

even know there was such a case in the wind until he turned up at the office at five o'clock, when Alice started to tell him about it, and Old King Brady, coming in, completed the details.

Harry, with his usual enthusiasm, was strong in his belief that Li Fung's trunks would turn out to be the ones wanted.

"Maybe," said the old detective. "That remains to be seen. We will get down there about six o'clock with three cabs, just as the Chink directed. Mr. Armstead shall go with us, and identify the trunks if he can."

"I should like to go," said Alice. "You see I got through with the Meyers matter sooner than I expected, and here I am."

"Come along, by all means," replied the old detective.

"I suggest that you make Armstead describe the trunks before he leaves this office."

"I propose to, most certainly. I am very far from fully trusting the man."

"We don't even know that he actually is Henry Armstead, the explorer, I suppose," said Harry.

"Yes; I settled that point," replied the old detective. "I called up the St. Regis and learned that Henry Armstead was staying there. I called up a member of the Archaeological Society with whom I am acquainted, and he informed me that Armstead, the explorer, was at the St. Regis, and had delivered an address before their society only two weeks ago."

"That settles it, of course."

"Call him up, Harry, and tell him to get down here."

"And the cabs?"

"Will be here in half an hour."

The cabs came.

Mr. Armstead came also.

He seemed quite nervous now, and had been drinking, although he was but little affected.

"Well, have you accomplished anything?" he asked.

"I think I may say that I have," replied Old King Brady. "While we cannot be certain, I have hopes that I have located the trunks."

"It will be a good job for you, Mr. Brady, if you have done any such quick work. Tell me all about it."

"Later," replied the old detective. "It may turn out that I am entirely mistaken. We will make sure first. Are you prepared to go with us to Chinatown and see if you can identify the trunks, providing we get them?"

"I am. Right now?"

"Yes."

"Very good."

"We go in three cabs."

"Why three?"

"I will explain later. Incidentally, it will be a convenience in removing the trunks. We can bring one away in each cab."

"I am entirely in your hands, Mr. Brady."

They started then.

Harry rode with Alice in one cab, Old King Brady and Mr. Armstead went in another, while the third went downtown empty.

The old detective improved the opportunity by questioning Mr. Armstead a little further.

"Did you ever hear of a man named Li Fung?" he asked.

Mr. Armstead gave a start.

"Describe the man," he said.

Old King Brady did so.

"Yes," said Mr. Armstead, "there is no doubt about it. That man was my servant on my first trip into Thibet, five years ago. His name was not Li Fung, but Fung Li. As you describe him, I should say there is little doubt that he is the same man. Is he mixed up in the trunk business?"

"Yes. What sort of a man is he?"

"A scoundrel! He robbed me and deserted me at a time when I was in the deepest trouble."

"Was that the time you took Fen Pok in his place?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure that Fen Pok is all right? That he was not sent to you by Li Fung?"

"I cannot believe the last. Yet it is possible. Fen Pok has been most faithful to me."

"For five years?"

"Yes."

"He knows the full value of those trunks?"

"He knows their value. Yes."

"I said the full value."

"Why do you make such a strong point of that?"

"Because, Mr. Armstead, I am much inclined to believe that you have not told me the full story of your trunks."

"I don't have to," replied the explorer, curtly. "I have told you all that it is necessary for you to know."

"Very good, sir. I am not urging you to tell more. But I presume you want to find your son. As I told you at the office, I have made no headway in that matter. The more you keep things back the more difficult you make my work. Let me put my question again. Does Fen Pok know the full value of these trunks?"

"Yes."

"That's to the point. Now, Mr. Armstead, I visited the Hercules to-day and had a long talk with Mr. Helderberg. He positively identified the picture of Fen Pok which you gave me as that of the man who took away the trunks."

"I know, I know! He says that, but he is all wrong."

"But his identification extends even to Fen Pok's damaged ear."

"Ha! He didn't say anything about that to me."

"He did to me. Now for the main point in this business. Did Fen Pok have time to make two trips to the Hercules before he wired you, I mean trips a day apart?"

"He did not wire me; he wrote. Yes, there was time. He was certainly slow about writing—there is no denying that."

"Have I aroused your suspicions?"

"Well, I admit that you have, Mr. Brady. I—er—that is, I was foolish to quarrel with the mate. I see it now."

"I think the young man is sincere. He is certain that Fen Pok took the trunks, and that he came to him the second time somewhat disguised."

"But such a stupid thing to do. It is not a bit like Fen Pok."

"Not so stupid. In the eyes of very many people there is a general resemblance between Chinamen. Helder-

berg admits that he would not have recognized the man but for the damaged ear."

"It is strong evidence, Mr. Brady."

"You know the general belief is that no Chinaman is to be trusted."

"The general belief is entirely wrong. I have met hundreds of Chinamen who were to be trusted implicitly. The proportion of rascals among them is no greater than with any other race."

"What you say confirms my own opinion. That is all, Mr. Armstead."

"I wish you would tell me exactly where we are going, and why, Mr. Brady."

"For reasons I prefer not to, and I will tell you what I mean by that. Before I saw you this morning I had engaged with a certain Chinaman to do a certain thing. The information I obtained from the man enabled me to do what seems quick work in this trunk business. If the trunks prove to be yours, then I help you get them and tell you all. If it turns out otherwise I see no more reason why I should betray my Chinese client than that I should betray you to him."

"Right. Do you wish me to describe the trunks?"

"I had intended to ask you to do so before we entered the place where we are going."

"I'll do it now."

"Go ahead."

"They are strictly Chinese trunks; they are about five feet long by three wide, made with square corners and covered with rawhide, the hair out. The corners are protected by brass plates.

"On each cover in the centre is a brass plate with my name in Chinese. On the end of each was a piece of thick pasteboard with my name in English."

"How do you represent your name in Chinese?"

"I refer to the name I traveled under. Of course you understand that when my son and I entered Thibet we went disguised as Chinamen. It would have been death if we had gone otherwise. My name was Wang Wing."

"I see. But here we are just turning into Pell street. We shall soon know all about it now. Ha! What is the meaning of all this?"

The cab stopped, and the driver began backing around. Old King Brady opened the door and thrust his head out.

"Well! There's a fire down the street!" he exclaimed.

"We have been turned back by the police!"

The cabby went down Doyers street and stopped.

Old King Brady jumped out.

"Fire?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir. The cop turned us back," the cabby replied.

"Get out, Mr. Armstead. We must proceed on foot," said the old detective.

They went back up Doyers street to Pell, meeting Harry and Alice, who had abandoned their cab at the Bowery.

"Looks to me as if the fire was close to our place," the former said.

"Yes," replied Old King Brady. "It would not be so strange if the Tong fiends had struck at Li Fung again."

"Then we are going to see this Li Fung?" questioned Mr. Armstead.

"Yes. You think you can identify him if he is your man?"

"Not a doubt of it. I can never forget that fellow."

Old King Brady led the way to the fire line, through which they were readily passed by the police.

On the left hand side of Pell street, almost at its junction with Mott, a partially burned building could be seen. The fire appeared to have been extinguished.

"Li Fung's," said Harry. "We are going to score a failure here!"

"It looks so, I am sorry to say," replied Old King Brady.

"What is it? Tong war?" demanded Mr. Armstead.

Old King Brady explained.

"And Li Fung has the trunks?"

"Yes. I may as well tell you all now."

And this Old King Brady did.

By the time he had finished they reached the burned building.

The little restaurant which had been conducted by Li Fung was completely gutted. A policeman stood guard at the door.

The second story was also much damaged, but the third remained intact.

An ambulance stood on the opposite side of the street.

"Officer, we have business with this man Li Fung," said Old King Brady. "Is there anything wrong with him?"

"Sure there is, Mr. Brady," was the reply. "The man has been terribly burned. If you have anything with him you better attend to it quick, for I believe he is dying now."

They hurried inside, finding the ambulance doctor and a policeman standing over a Chinaman, who lay stretched upon the floor.

The man's clothes had been about burned off of him, and his body was terribly disfigured, but the face remained intact.

Harry drew Alice outside.

Old King Brady and Mr. Armstead advanced.

"Is that your man?" whispered the old detective.

"Yes; he is the man!" replied Mr. Armstead, excitedly.

"Oh, if I could only get a word with him before he dies!"

"Well, you can't," said the ambulance doctor. "He's practically gone now."

But this young doctor, like some older ones, was mistaken.

Even as he spoke the eyes of the dying Chinaman opened and fixed themselves upon Old King Brady.

"Mlister Blady! Tong fiends! Dley gettee tlunks!"

"Speak, Fung, and tell me what to do," replied the old detective.

But instead of replying the man turned his eyes upon Mr. Armstead, who said something in Chinese.

This settled it.

With a cry which rang in Old King Brady's ears for some time to come the dying man half raised himself and then fell back.

It was his last effort.

A moment later he had ceased to breathe.

"That finished him, whatever you said," remarked the ambulance doctor. "But he would have died anyway."

"I told him he was a traitor," Mr. Armstead whispered to Old King Brady. "He knew it before."

"Your man?" demanded the old detective.

"Sure. Don't we want to search this place?"

"It might be as well."

Old King Brady turned to the policeman and inquired how the fire occurred.

"It's more than I know," was the answer. "I don't believe anybody knows. The place went all ablaze in a minute, I am told."

"Was there nobody in the restaurant eating?"

"No. The place has been closed up since the fire what was here yesterday. Dat fellow was de boss. He was de only one in it, as far as we could learn."

"This gentleman has reason to believe that the dead man robbed him of three trunks. I want to make a search."

"Go ahead, Mr. Brady. Of course there is never any objection to what you do."

And the search was made, but nothing came of it.

No trace of the missing trunks could be found.

Old King Brady also made further inquiries regarding the fire.

These left him but little the wiser.

The restaurant had been closed up all day.

About half-past five o'clock smoke was seen coming out over the door.

An alarm was turned in and by the time the engines arrived the restaurant was all ablaze.

When the firemen broke in Li Fung was discovered lying where the Bradys had found him entirely unconscious.

The only words he uttered were those spoken to Old King Brady, which pointed directly to the "Tong fiends" as the cause of the disaster.

And thus what had been mysterious before became more mysterious still.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FINDING OF FEN POK.

"We shall never solve this mystery without the help of some Highbinder," said Old King Brady.

The scene was again the office of the Brady Detective Bureau on Union Square.

The detectives had been discussing the case of Li Fung, and its bearing upon the case of Mr. Armstead.

Three days had elapsed since the fire in Pell street.

They had been so many days of failure.

Every effort was made to get a start on the case.

Even the most strenuous efforts on Alice's part to locate the widow and daughter of the dead Chinaman had failed.

The woman had not come forward.

That day Li Fung was to be buried by his tong, the On Leong.

"Of course the woman cannot be his wife," remarked

Harry, for upon this subject the detectives had just been talking.

"Impossible to say," replied Alice. "She may be his wife, and still have reasons of her own for keeping out of the way. No one can tell."

"As I said before," repeated Old King Brady, "we shall never solve this mystery without the help of some Highbinder."

"Get one," replied Alice.

"Easier said than done. But how?"

"Advertise."

"Pshaw, Alice! To put a notice on the Chinese Bulletin, at Pell and Doyers street——"

"Wait. I haven't asked you to do that. It would simply expose our hand to every Highbinder in New York. Every Highbinder is a crook—Chinese crooks are like the crooks of other nations. You will always find one ready to give the gang away."

"And there is a whole lot in that, too," remarked Harry.

"Ah! So you line up with your dear Alice as usual. Not surprising. Still there can be no argument in this case, for I agree with you."

No; it was not at all surprising that Harry should usually agree with Alice.

In the first place, Miss Alice Montgomery, detective, is a wonderfully clear-headed proposition, and her judgment rarely errs.

Then again, Young King Brady is deeply in love with his fair partner.

Actually engaged they are not, but there is little doubt that some day Alice will become Harry's wife, and Old King Brady will be a thoroughly well satisfied man when this comes about.

But to return to the case.

Mr. Armstead's disappointment over the failure to secure the trunks was keen.

Next day he called on the Bradys and admitted that the contents of the trunks were more valuable than he had stated, and offered them \$5,000 for their recovery, and as much more for the finding of his son.

It was a stake worth working for, of course.

From inquiries he had made, Old King Brady was satisfied that the explorer was amply able to meet the obligation.

But he need not have "raised the ante," for merely as a matter of pride, and from a desire to finish what they had undertaken, the Bradys would have gone ahead just the same.

"This Boston idea appeals to me," said the old detective, "but I don't see how it can be done unless somebody goes over there and attends to it personally."

"True," said Alice, "and I will do that."

"You don't go alone," broke in Harry.

"Certainly not," replied Old King Brady. "You go with her. Of course the Hip Sing Tong men are just an organized gang of assassins and thieves to be hired by anyone who can pay their price."

"Exactly," said Alice. "And when they are not quarrelling with the On Leong Tong they are quarrelling among themselves. I think the thing will work."

"Go," said Old King Brady. "You will go as Chinamen, of course."

"I think I shall go as a Chinese woman, Mr. Brady. Harry can figure as my deaf and dumb husband."

"And how shall you work your advertisement?"

"Well, I was thinking about that. How would you do it?"

"Suppose you advertise for a man to join you in a scheme in which there is a lot of money, the man to be a Highbinder, of course. Could you so word your ad as to make it plain that you wanted a man who would be willing to betray the Hip Sing Tong?"

"Yes; easily. By the placing of one little mark on the Chinese character which means 'Highbinder' that could be done."

"Well, go on, Alice, and do your best. I am sure you will. I am going to Li Fung's funeral, and Mr. Armstead is going with me in his Chinese disguise."

"Hello!" cried Harry. "You had not mentioned that. What is it for?"

"To see if he can see any Chinaman whom he knows."

"Ah, ha! I tumble. Fen Pok, for instance?"

"Yes. He has lost faith in Fen Pok."

"But the suggestion was yours."

"It was, I will admit. My reasoning is this, Fen Pok and Li Fung probably stood in together in this business. Now if the Hip Sing Tong captured the trunks, and we have Li Fung's statement for that, then Fen Pok will naturally be after them. He may show himself at the funeral for that reason."

"I consider it a slim chance. Probably the trunks have been broken open and their contents disposed of long before this."

"I know that you think so, Harry, for you have said as much several times. Still Mr. Armstead, who is the best judge, does not agree with you."

"And what reason does he give?"

"An excellent one. It seems that in anticipation of the trunks being captured by Chinamen he caused a brass plate to be attached to each upon which is engraved, in Chinese, of course, that if anyone opens the trunks at any other time than the full of the moon it means death."

"Well!" exclaimed Alice, "does the man think that the Chinese are as superstitious as that?"

"Probably he does," was the reply. "More than that, he put on these brass plates that only two persons can safely open the trunks, even at the time of the full moon, the owner—that is himself—or his son."

"Now I wonder what the man has really got in the trunks," said Alice. "Their contents must be peculiar, indeed."

"He is a very peculiar man," replied Old King Brady. "The more I see of him the less I understand him. But we can only work with the materials we have at hand. You two go to Boston, I'll go to the funeral. Between the two moves we may manage to get a start."

As they decided to take the eleven o'clock train, Alice and Harry lost no time in adopting their Chinese disguises and departed for the Grand Central station.

The funeral of Li Fung was down for two o'clock.

At noon there came to the office of the Brady Bureau a

man whom the most skillful detective on earth would never have suspected of being anything but a Chinese.

Even Old King Brady, who was expecting him, did not recognize Mr. Armstead in his Chinese disguise until the explorer spoke.

"Excellent," said the old detective. "But will not Fen Pok recognize you?"

"No," was the reply. "You see how I have made up my face. It has been done by a method which I never used after I took Fen Pok into my employ. Li Fung, as you call him, might have recognized me, but I feel safe as it is. Moreover, everything I have on I bought in Chinatown. Fen Pok never saw me dressed like this."

"Very well," said Old King Brady. "All I have to say is that your disguise is perfection itself."

A carriage had been engaged, and in it Old King Brady and Mr. Armstead rode to an undertaker's shop on lower Elizabeth street, where the remains of the dead Chinaman were, and from which the funeral was to start.

As is usually the case, they found quite a gathering of carriages.

What ceremonies the Chinese have over their dead in private is something but little understood by the outside world.

Certainly there were none of any sort in this case.

A crowd of Chinks stood about outside the undertaker's, chattering and laughing and smoking cigarettes.

There was no sign of sorrow on anyone's face—there never is at a Chinese funeral, for all that sort of business is attended to in private.

At about the appointed time the hearse appeared with a Chinaman in full native costume with the driver on the box.

The coffin was brought out, placed in the hearse, and the procession started.

As it moved up Elizabeth street the Chinaman on the box began to scatter the bits of paper, which is always done at Chinese funerals.

There is nothing visible in these papers, and the meaning of this singular custom is somewhat obscure.

It is said that they represent money, which the spirit of the dead man can make use of in the other world.

In some parts of China the papers are silvered and stiff and round, and are crudely stamped in imitation of Spanish or Mexican dollars, which certainly seem to bear out the money idea.

The carriages fell in line behind the hearse, and crossing the Williamsburg bridge, took the road to the Cemetery of the Evergreen, where is located the largest Chinese burial plot around New York.

In due time this was reached, and the interment made.

The crowd stood about the grave chattering and smoking in the same unconcerned fashion.

A whole roast pig was placed in the grave, together with two chickens, a brace of ducks, a dish of boiled rice, another of sweet cakes, and another still of preserved ginger.

For some time these strange mourners stood around waiting, as they believed, while the spirit of Li Fung dined on these dainties.

This gave Old King Brady and Mr. Armstead just the chance they wanted.

The latter mingled with the Chinese, while the old detective stood apart watching it all.

It was not a particularly cold day, considering that the month was December.

But there was one Chink who underneath his hat wore a black silk muffler which completely covered his ears.

As this is no part of a Chinaman's dress, Old King Brady's attention was naturally attracted to the man.

He watched Mr. Armstead, too, but could not see that he paid any heed to this person.

At last the Chinamen began to disperse.

Many, in fact almost all, got back into the carriages, determined to get their money's worth out of the ride, no doubt.

But the man in question as soon as the break was made started to walk to the cemetery gate.

Mr. Armstead then rejoined Old King Brady.

"Well, did you see anyone you suspect of being Fen Pok?" he asked.

The old detective mentioned the man with the muffler.

"You are right," said Mr. Armstead. "In fact, you have been right clear through. That man is Fen Pok, and not even disguised."

"He is making for the gate in front. Evidently he intends to return to New York by the elevated train."

"Yes; and I can understand why. He suffered an injury of the left leg two years ago. While he scarcely shows it in his walk, it is extremely painful for him to sit in any position for any length of time. He is Fen Pok all right. The only thing he has done is to conceal his ears."

"And now, can you longer doubt that he was a friend of Li Fung's, and that he stole the trunks from the Hercules?"

"No. It is impossible to doubt it, hard as I found it to believe such a thing at first. We shadow him, of course?"

"Certainly. Such was our purpose in coming here. It is only to be hoped he don't know me."

"I can't believe that he knows you. He speaks not a word of English. He was never in America before."

"How did you manage to get him in, by the way?"

"Oh, as my body servant. I am an Englishman, you see. The British Consul fixed that."

They had been following the man while talking, and now they passed out of the cemetery.

In spite of his supposed ignorance of New York, Fen Pok seemed to know just what he was about, for he made directly for the elevated railroad.

Old King Brady and his companion boarded the same train, seating themselves at the other end of the same car.

Nothing had been said of their plans.

"What about arresting the man?" the old detective now asked.

"Mr. Brady, I leave that entirely to you," was the reply. "When I engage an expert in any line of business I never interfere."

"It is a doubtful case. If there was any chance of making him talk——"

"I don't believe it could be done. It would not sur-

prise me if he made way with himself if he was taken to prison."

"Is he that kind?"

"Yes. Very intense. He comes of what he considers one of the finest families in China. He would consider himself everlastingly disgraced."

"And yet he acted as your servant?"

"That was his desire to travel in Thibet."

"I think then that under those circumstances we will take it out in shadowing. If we can once locate him it will give me the clew I seek."

So they stuck to their work, and tracked Fen Pok back to Chinatown.

Certainly the man appeared wholly unsuspecting.

They tracked him to an old house in Mott street, near Pell.

Here he entered a banker's place on the parlor floor.

"And now?" said Mr. Armstead, as they walked on past the house, "what about Mr. Gee Gong?"

"You read the Chinese sign then?"

"Certainly. I read Chinese just as freely as you read English."

"He is a well-known Chinese banker. I am not personally acquainted with him, but I am informed that he stands high. But let us watch here on the corner and see if our man comes out again. His going in there may only be a bluff."

They waited for nearly twenty minutes before Old King Brady announced himself ready to give it up.

Meanwhile the Chinaman failed to put in an appearance.

But Old King Brady was satisfied.

He had proved his point, and incidentally had obtained a sight of Fen Pok.

CHAPTER V.

HARRY AND ALICE WIN OUT IN BOSTON.

Harry and Alice had a first-rate time going to Boston. Naturally Harry always enjoys these trips with Alice alone.

It was interesting to listen to the remarks passed upon Alice as the "Chinese woman," the "Chink lady," and so on.

As they talked in the deaf and dumb way with their fingers those about them seemed to consider themselves privileged to say what they pleased.

And not one of all who saw them probably questioned for an instant that they were Chinese.

Arrived at Boston, Harry and Alice went to a cheap hotel on Oak place, on the edge of Chinatown.

This house, although kept by a German, is much used by Chinese.

There is less objection to Chinamen in Boston than in New York, and they are seldom disturbed and insulted as they come and go.

It was too late to do anything that night, but to write the advertisement, which Alice succeeded in doing to her satisfaction after several attempts.

It was exceedingly brief, and it invited the acquaintance of a Highbinder who wanted to make money by talking, or in other words by betraying his fellows.

When Alice read it to Harry he objected.

"Why the first thing you know we shall be assassinated," he said.

"Not at all," replied Alice. "The man who answers it may be assassinated, but the Hip Sing Tong won't bother us."

The advertisement was signed "Mrs. Lee Mow," and the address at the hotel given.

First thing next morning Harry pasted the slip of red paper on the wall of the building on Harrison avenue, which constitutes the Chinese bulletin in Boston.

But the morning passed and there was nothing doing.

It began to look as if disappointment was to be their only reward, when a Chinaman announced himself by a knock on the door.

Harry opened.

Outside was a good looking young Celestial in American clothes who asked to see Mrs. Lee Mow.

Harry pointed to his lips and shook his head.

At the same time he made the peculiar whining noise which is so common with the dumb.

Alice came out of the other room and immediately the talk began.

To Harry it was horribly tedious, as Alice paid absolutely no attention to him during that time.

At last the young man left, and the door was closed behind him.

"Wait a few minutes before you speak," said Alice with her fingers.

She waited ten, and then getting up suddenly threw open the door.

But her fears were groundless. There was nobody outside.

"Well?" demanded Harry. "This is slow business. Kinkly lose no time in satisfying my curiosity."

"I think we have hit about right."

"Really?"

"Yes, really, sir. That young man claims to be a Highbinder. What is more, if you can believe him, he was initiated into the Hip Sing Tong in San Francisco and has never made his membership known in Boston, where he has only been three weeks. He declares that money and money alone is what he is after. He listened to all I had to say, and fell in with everything. Of course he may be a fraud. But if he is, he certainly played his part well."

"What yarn did you give him?"

"Why, Harry, I gave it to him pretty nearly straight, only I didn't mention any names. I told him that a young man was missing and that three trunks, supposed to contain money, and perhaps diamonds, had been stolen by Li Fung, an On Leong man, and that he had been killed by the Hip Sing Tongers. I told him that they had taken the trunks, and then I told about the naming on the brass plate, and how they would not dare to open the trunks till the moon was at the full. Right there I got a piece of information."

"What was that?"

"He seemed to think there was nothing strange about

that sort of thing. Said that the owner of the trunks had probably attached a spirit to them, who would kill anyone who disobeyed the command on the brass plate. I never heard of such business before, but it seemed all right to him."

"And is he willing to take hold?"

"Yes. I was going to add that I told him we were detectives, or rather that I was, and that we worked for the New York police, and that was how I came to know about this business; but I gave him to understand that the police would not be in it in this case if we managed to get hold of the trunks. It was to be an even divide between us."

"That is all right, Alice; but do you suppose the fellow will really lie to you in case he learns anything?"

Alice laughed.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know," she replied. "If we can only try it on."

"And when do we start back for New York?"

"To-night by the Fall River boat. He has no money, and I promised to pay his fare, and to give him twenty dollars to boot after we get to New York."

Harry had little faith in the scheme.

To him it seemed decidedly far-fetched.

But as Alice was more confident, he said nothing to discourage her.

They stuck to the rooms for the day was cold and blustery.

Three other Chinamen called in answer to the advertisement and wanted to talk business.

Alice treated all three in the same fashion, pretending not to understand, and denying all knowledge of the advertisement.

And now as the time to take the train for Fall River approached the question was, would Mr. Foo Ling, the name the young man had given, show up.

Just when it began to look doubtful he came, and they started for the station.

The ride down to the boat was anything but pleasant for Harry.

The Chink kept up one continuous gabble, and Alice held up her end.

"What in the world are they talking about?" thought Harry. "I'd give anything if I only understood Chinese."

But it was not until they got aboard the boat and had started that Harry got the opportunity to speak to Alice alone.

And even then he did not dare to talk other than with his fingers.

"He is an unusually bright fellow," said Alice, speaking of Foo Ling. "He feels very sure that there is what he calls 'magic' about this business. While he speaks the Cantonese dialect—my kind of Chinese, you know—this man comes from the far western part of China, beyond the Great Wall, the very country the Armsteads figured in. He says that there they practice what we would call the Black Art, and that all sorts of strange things are done. What he means by it all I don't fully understand, but he has promised that I shall have full explanation. He will take right hold as soon as we get to New York. He knows a Chinese woman who is right

in with the priest of the Highbinders' secret joss-house, and through her he expects to get next to the whole outfit."

"All of which promises well," replied Harry; "but there is one thing which is bothering me."

"And what is that?"

"Where are we to go when we hit New York? We are supposed to be husband and wife, which, by the way, I wish we were, and——"

"Cut that out, Harry. Stick to business."

"Consider it cut; but where are we to go?"

"I have provided for all that. I told him that we live in a house uptown, where the police keep all kinds of foreign detectives, and that it won't be safe for him to come there. He knows nothing about New York, so he swallowed it whole, and it will enable us to go home."

This was satisfactory enough, and it worked out well.

Foo Ling had never been in New York, and it was necessary to guide him to Chinatown.

He had the address of the Chinese woman of whom he had spoken to Alice.

This proved to be the same number on Mott street to which Old King Brady and Mr. Armstead had traced Fen Pok, that is Gee Gong, the banker's.

And here Alice and Harry left their man, with the understanding that they were to meet in front of the Chinese theatre on Doyers street that evening about seven o'clock.

The detectives then started uptown ready to declare their Boston trip a success as far as could be seen.

They reached the office at half-past eight, having shed their Chinese disguises in the rooms of Schmidt, the costumer, on the Bowery.

Old King Brady was on hand, and expecting them, as Harry had wired him the night before, and he listened to the story of their success.

"You have started right," he said. "I hardly thought you would succeed so well. Push straight ahead on those lines. You can do no better."

"And how do matters stand?" demanded Alice. "You seemed troubled about something, if I am able to read your face."

"You have read it correctly. I am greatly troubled. Listen to my tale of woe. We went to Li Fung's funeral, Armstead and I, and there, as I imagined, we struck Fen Pok.

"Armstead was splendidly disguised, and the man to all appearances did not know him.

"We went on the trail and shadowed him to Gee Gong's house on Mott street."

"The banker?"

"Yes."

"Why that is the very house where Alice and I left our man?"

"I know it. That is what makes your story all the more interesting to me."

"Well, go on."

"We lost no time, Harry. After waiting awhile to see if the fellow would come out again, and finding that he didn't, I went around to Elizabeth street and arranged for a raid on the place right away after dark.

"I then hurried Armstead up to the office, and we

both disguised so thoroughly that our own mothers would not have known us. Then it was back to Elizabeth street, and we were with the plainclothesmen when they made their raid."

"And what came of it?"

"Nothing. It was a complete failure. Armstead, who understood every word spoken by the Chinese among themselves, declared afterward that not a syllable was dropped which threw any light upon the mystery."

"And Fen Pok?"

"Didn't find him of course. That in a way would have been success."

"And since then?"

"Well, yesterday I did nothing, for the case received another knockout blow."

"How was that?"

"Why Armstead has vanished now. I left him with the understanding that he was going directly back to his hotel. He never reached it. What has become of him I don't know."

"But the man drinks. He may have gone on a spree."

"I doubt it. He told me that he drank just so much every day, and had for years. The people at the St. Regis say that he has never been seen under the influence of liquor to any extent since he has been stopping there. My theory is that he did overhear something during the raid, and lied to me when he said he did not; that he re-adopted his Chinese disguise and went back to Chinatown that night, when the Tong fiends got him."

"But I thought you said he left his Chinese disguise here at the office," said Alice."

"And so he did. But how many places are there on the Bowery where he could have hired another?"

"Plenty."

"Then there you are. No, children, I am bowled out for the time being. All now depends upon you, so jump in and win."

"We start in to-night."

"As you said. I shall shadow you. It may be that we can work out a quick success."

And thus ended, as we may say, the first stage of the case of the Bradys' chase after the Chinese Tong fiends.

The second stage began that night at eight o'clock, when Alice and Harry turned up on Doyers street.

Old King Brady was right behind them.

He saw a good-looking young Chink come striding out of a doorway near the Chinese theatre.

A few words passed between him and Alice, and then they turned into Pell street, and passed on to Mott, where they again turned.

"They are going into Gee Gong's surest thing," thought Old King Brady.

But he was mistaken.

They entered the next house by the basement way.

Old King Brady kept on the block for half an hour or so, but they did not reappear.

"Alice has started in sure," he thought. "Wonderful woman. She always gets there, and it is my belief that she is going to do it to-night. But now to see what relation this house bears to the one in which Li Fung met his death."

He went back on to Pell street, and as nearly as he

could make out the Mott street house was directly in the rear.

But to be sure, Old King Brady climbed the stairs and went out on the roof.

Here he saw that he had sized the situation up correctly.

There was an extension to the house in which Li Fung's kitchen had been located.

This ran to the rear of the lot, where it was almost met by a similar extension to the Mott street house, there was but a narrow space between.

"Come," thought Old King Brady. "I must try to work in there on my own account, for I don't want to let those two fight this dangerous battle alone."

CHAPTER VI.

COMING CLOSE TO THE TONG FIENDS.

When Foo Ling met Alice and Harry on Doyers street he seemed particularly triumphant.

"I have succeeded better than I hoped for," he said to Alice in Chinese. "I saw the woman; I knew her well in China; she will help. She is the wife of the priest of the Highbinders' secret joss-house, as I told you. Fortunately for us, her husband is in San Francisco, so the way is clear."

"And do we go to her to-night?" inquired Alice.

"Right now," was the reply.

"How much did you tell her?"

"I told her all. She said that she has known for some days that there was something in the wind, for the Hip Sing Tong men have been meeting in a secret cellar on Mott street, where they have their joss-house. She thought it was all about the fires which have been set in houses belonging to the On Leong Tong, but now she is satisfied that there is more to it than that. She will talk to you, and probably tell you as a woman, things which she does not care to tell me. We will go to her at once."

And Alice and Harry followed the young Highbinder around on Mott street, where they entered the next house to Gee Gong, the banker's place, as has been described.

They passed through the basement hall and came to an old man with a drooping mustache, who sat in a chair half asleep to all appearance.

Foo Ling made a sign to him, and gave a password.

The old fellow got up, and unlocking the door of the back basement, admitted them to a room entirely bare of furniture.

Here he pressed some secret spring and a little panel flew back, revealing a narrow stairs set in the angle of the wall, which led both up and down.

Foo Ling entered unhesitatingly, and led the way up; coming at last to a secret panel he rapped sharply and in a minute it was opened by an intelligent looking Chinese woman, who greeted Foo Ling as "brother."

And to this woman, whose name was given as Mrs. Fing Wang, Alice was introduced as "Mrs. Lee Mow."

As near as Harry could make out, they were now upstairs over Gee Gong's place in the rear.

Foo Ling went into another room, and motioned Harry to follow him, which he did.

Here while they sat around smoking, he tried three times to startle Harry by sudden noises. But Young King Brady was fully prepared for this, and made no sign.

Meanwhile Alice was having her talk with Mrs Fing Wang.

The first part of it we shall not give.

It referred to Foo Ling.

The woman grew quite confidential with Alice, and admitted that she had been in love with Foo Ling in China, and that she loved him still.

Then she came out boldly and stated that she meant to run away with the Highbinder if he could succeed in making the money Alice had promised him.

"Well, it all depends upon yourself," said Alice. "I suppose Foo Ling has told you who I am and what I want?"

"He has. You are a detective. You want the trunks the Hip Sing Tong men took from Li Fung."

"Yes. They got those trunks then?"

"I am told so. Remember I am only a woman. They tell me little. There are secrets in this place which even I, the wife of the priest of the secret joss-house, do not know. But after Foo Ling came to me to-day I enquired and I am satisfied that they have the trunks."

"And what is in them?"

"The bones of saints from the sacred monastery of Sze-dgong."

"Oh! Nothing more valuable?"

"No. But they are very valuable."

"Why?"

"You do not know?"

"I do not. I am from Canton. What should I know about Western China?"

"Then listen! By those who have the power, these dead saints, at the full of the moon, can be temporarily restored to life and made to tell where buried treasure is hidden, how luck can come, by the horse race, by the fan-tan table, by business, by any way."

"So! And who possesses this power?"

"It is possessed by the priests of the monastery of Sze-dgong. The white man who stole the bones learned the secret from them. Then he stole the bones. His servant helped him. To one who was with them in China his servant confided the secret, and he sent word by letter to the Hip Sing Tong men of New York, for he himself had lived here and was one of them, to look out for these trunks, and for this white thief and his son. They did; they got the son. Now I hear they got the old man. The son did not know the secret, but the old man knows, and he will be made to tell."

Needless to say Alice followed all this with close attention.

It seemed to be that the woman at least believed she was speaking the truth.

And Mrs. Fing Wang continued:

"Now tell me, where do you get the money you expect

to divide with Foo Ling? It is from the old man—the bone thief?"

"It is."

"Then what we want is to get him free, and set his son free, or there will be no money coming. As for the trunks, he must get them afterward. We can do nothing about that to-night."

"But you can help us get those two free to-night?"

"Yes; I can do it now better than any other time. At midnight the Hip Sing Tong men meet in the secret cellar, where they have their idol. What we do we must do now. Is that man your husband?"

"Yes."

"He is deaf and dumb?"

"Yes."

"Then let him beware. If the Hip Sing Tong get him they will hold him prisoner forever. You know why?"

But Alice did not know why, and she said as much, even at the risk of undervaluing herself in the eyes of Mrs. Fing Wang.

"Then you know little of the ways of the Hip Sing Tongers," said the woman, "but that is not strange. Few women do. Listen; they have their luck god down there in the secret cellar. They believe if they put inside of him a deaf and dumb man and give him the sleep drink then the idol will talk."

"Yes, yes. I remember now to have heard of this," said Alice, and she spoke the truth.

"Then he must not go with us," she added.

But Mrs. Fing Wang promptly objected.

"But he must go with us," she said. "Am I to take all risks? No! He goes, and Foo Ling goes. These Tongers are fiends when they are aroused. You should know. They will kill us both."

"He goes," said Alice. "Say no more about that."

And although the conversation was carried on to still further length, nothing more was said worth recording here.

Finally Alice suggested that the sooner they went the better.

To this Mrs. Fing Wang agreed, and Foo Ling was called in.

"You women have good talk?" he asked, laughingly.

"Yes," said Alice. "We understand each other now."

"Then let you and me understand each other, too."

"Why must we wait?" broke in Mrs. Fing Wang. "Every minute increases the danger of our undertaking. You know that, Foo Ling."

"I talk business with the detectives," replied Foo Ling, stubbornly, and he motioned Alice into the other room.

Poor Harry was left behind wondering what it all meant.

Playing a Chinese dummy when one don't know Chinese is certainly not lively work.

Foo Ling closed the door as they entered the other room.

Mrs. Fing Wang instantly made a dash for Harry, and throwing her arms about him tried to kiss him.

Her motive was clear enough.

It was to satisfy herself that he was actually deaf and dumb—to catch him napping if she could.

But Harry was not to be caught in any such fashion.

He dodged, and gently pushing the woman away, made rumbling sounds such as the deaf mutes usually do.

Meanwhile Foo Ling was going for Alice.

"Look!" he said. "I did not tell you all. Now you know. The man was hired you, is a prisoner. Before we let him out he must pay."

"Perhaps he has not the money with him," suggested Alice.

"Then he must tell us how to get it. See, Mrs. Fing Wang will take us to the secret cellar. Out of there we take him. We bring him here and lock him in this room with his son till we get the money. You must consent to that."

"Well, that will be all right."

"Good. But see! Listen! You say you give me one-quarter of all you get. It is not enough. You must give me one-half or further in this business I will not go."

"Talk to him yourself and make your own bargain. No doubt you speak English, although you say you do not."

"I do not speak one word of English."

"Then talk to him in Chinese."

"I can do that."

"But remember it is not only his own liberty and that of his son the man wants. He also wants his three trunks."

"Ah! The trunks! How can we get them out of the secret rooms below here? He must go to the police. He must do that himself."

"Let us get to work."

"Yes, let us get to work; but remember, I want half, and shall not be satisfied with less."

The man's tone was decidedly menacing.

Alice began to think that the path upon which she and Harry were about to enter was not likely to be strewn by any means.

"No matter," she said to herself. "We will get the two Armsteads up here to begin with. Then we shall see what we can do as to the rest."

She threw open the door and passed into the other room, turning her back on the young Highbinder.

"Are you ready?" demanded Mrs. Fing Wang.

"Yes," said Foo Ling. "We understand each other now."

Harry, not daring to address Alice with his fingers, stood wondering what it was all about.

Mrs. Fing Wang then turned on Alice and said:

"We must be on the safe side. See, I go first and Foo Ling goes with me. You and your husband stay here. In a few minutes we return."

She opened the secret panel and started down the stairs with Foo Ling at her heels.

Instantly Alice began making the situation plain to Harry with her fingers.

"Do you believe he will betray us?" Young King Brady demanded.

"How can I tell?" asked Alice. "Until this minute I have trusted him. Now he shows the cloven foot."

"He is a Highbinder, and necessarily a crook."

"That is so. But I think we shall have to trust him, and take our chances. Ha! Here they are back again."

Foo Ling popped in his head through the panel.

"So, so!" he exclaimed in Chinese. "Now I can trust you. Your man there is really deaf and dumb!"

It had been all a trick to entrap Harry into speaking if they could!

Alice was angry clear through.

"You would make me a fraud by your action," she said in Chinese.

Foo Ling only laughed.

"Come, let us not quarrel, but all go together," he said. "The risk may be great, it may be little, but whatever it is we will share it."

Alice and Harry now started down the secret stairs upon which Mrs. Fing Wang stood waiting, Loo Fing closing the panel behind them.

The Chinese woman had taken with her a small brass lamp, and by its aid led the way to the bottom of a long flight.

Here there was an iron door, which she proceeded to unlock.

Beyond this was the usual boarded-up passage so common in these Chinese secret dens.

But instead of leading off towards Pell street it ran in a semi-circular fashion.

Harry felt sure that its end was under Gee Gong's house.

Here there was another iron door which Mrs. Fing Wang opened with her key.

A short flight of steps descended into what happened to be the secret cellar spoken of.

The woman paused to listen.

From the depths below came deep, half-smothered groans.

The woman looked frightened and drew back.

Again the groans were heard, and louder.

"Can it be the Armsteads?" Alice asked herself.

"Are they being tortured by the Tong fiends?"

CHAPTER VII.

OLD KING BRADY GETS THE GEMS.

Old King Brady stood on the roof of the half-burned house wondering what he ought to do next.

To attempt to follow Harry and Alice into the Mott street house would only be to defeat their purpose perhaps.

This, of course, was no part of his own plan.

There was an old broken chair on the roof, however it came there, and Old King Brady sat down upon it and lit a cigar.

It was not a cold night, and the winter stars were all in evidence.

The old detective sat there watching them and pondering on the case.

A little quiet reflection often works wonders, and this is especially true in the detective business.

Old King Brady was reflecting upon the trunks.

One thing seemed clear, and that was that Fen Pok had actually taken the trunks from the Hercules and brought them in the wagon to this very house.

About this Li Fung could scarcely have lied.

It was, however, perfectly natural that he should apply to Old King Brady for help to remove the trunks to a place of safety.

The man considered the old detective his friend, and, indeed, Old King Brady regarded himself in the same light.

This being the case, equally certain it seemed that Li Fung had spoken the truth in his last moments, and that the "Tong fiends," as he called them, had stolen the trunks before setting the fire.

Then there was another strong point which now began to take shape in Old King Brady's mind.

"Look here," he said to himself. "I have been blind not to have seen this before. Li Fung never could have been where the police found him all through that fire. He would have been suffocated. He must have been brought in there just a moment or two before the firemen broke in."

This seemed certain.

Then where had the man been brought from?

Out of the kitchen?"

Hardly, for the fire had started there.

From where then?

Old King Brady had noticed that the fire had not reached the hall of the old building, although it had burned through the ceiling of the restaurant to the room above.

"They brought him up out of the cellar by way of the hall surest thing," the old detective said to himself. "Yes, it must have been that. It can't be any other way. The trunks were in the cellar, and that is where Li Fung was attacked. He saw the Tong fiends get the trunks, and that is what made him speak in the way he did."

He flipped the ashes from his cigar and continued to think.

Did the Tong fiends take the trunks up out of the cellar and carry them off in a cart?

The thought was impossible.

Then how had they managed to dispose of them?

There seemed but one way to the old detective.

"There is some secret cellar in Mott street behind here," he reasoned. "The Tongers cut through into Li Fung's cellar and stole the trunks. Probably he surprised them in their work, and that brought about his death."

Now it took time for all those thoughts to assume form in Old King Brady's mind.

By the time he had reached this point in his reasoning he was ready to take a look into Li Fung's cellar, and he wondered at himself that he had not thought of it before.

So the old detective abandoned his perch on the roof and descended to the ground floor.

Once more he took a look into the burned restaurant.

The house had been abandoned.

The front of the restaurant was boarded up, and the side door had been locked.

Old King Brady obtained admission by means of his skeleton keys.

"It is as I say," he thought. "Li Fung never could have been in here all that time. The cellar awaits me.

I am sure to make some discovery there. It may result in finding a back entrance to the Mott street den where Harry and Alice have gone."

He found the cellar door under the stairs, and somewhat to his surprise he found it locked.

This fitted with his theory.

"Perhaps the Tong fiends had locked it," he thought. He made short work of the lock himself by aid of his skeleton keys.

Descending the stairs he came up against a mass of half burned rubbish, boxes, barrels, and so on.

"But how did this stuff get afire?" he asked himself.

That the fire here had been separately set seemed sure.

Flashing his light about Old King Brady observed that this half burned stuff was principally at the back of the cellar piled up against the wall.

There was plenty of evidence that it had been so placed after it was burned.

Old King Brady threw off his coat and so fixing his electric lantern that the light would be continuous, he started in to clear away by the rear wall.

This proved to be less of a task than he had at first imagined.

In a short time he had cleared an entrance to the wall, and he was tossing the old trash right and left, when all at once he came upon a large stone in the wall which projected out beyond the rest.

Old King Brady went for the flashlight and threw it upon the stone.

The mortar about it had been carefully removed.

It was the same with several other stones.

All these seemed to have been taken out and put back again.

Probably they had not been put in exactly as they were before.

Hence when it came to the last stone it would not quite fit.

And all this went to bear out Old King Brady's reasoning on the roof.

"I am getting there. I certainly am," thought the old detective.

He got hold of the stone with both hands and pulled for all he was worth.

It moved—it moved again. It was coming out!

Old King Brady, standing with his legs wide apart, gave it a final yank, expecting to have it drop between his feet, but instead of that it tumbled against the wall below with a bang and hung suspended by a chain which was attached to a staple fastened in the stone.

"It beats all how these Chinks do get in their fine work," thought Old King Brady.

Seizing his light, he flashed it into the hole.

A narrow passage which seemed to have but just been excavated lay beyond.

And once again the old detective asked himself the same question he had asked so many times before.

"What do the Chinks do with the earth they take out of these underground burrows?"

It was a question to which no answer ever could be found.

The old detective was now well satisfied that he was

on the right track, and he was just preparing to crawl through the hole when he was startled by hearing somebody walking overhead.

"Chinks!" he thought. Am I up against trouble or is some new discovery coming my way?"

Old King Brady hastily shut off his light and dropped behind a couple of half burned packing cases, one of which he had piled upon the other.

He was just in time.

A second later and a light flashed at the top of the cellar stairs.

It was only an ordinary lantern, but it was held in the hands of a Chinaman.

Behind the man came a second Celestial.

Old King Brady peering out from behind the packing cases saw that the foremost Chink had lost part of his left ear—the lower part.

He was Fen Pok, and no one else.

As he descended the stairs, Fen Pok gave an exclamation and flashed his lantern upon the rubbish and the wall.

Old King Brady crouched low, fearing discovery, but it did not come.

A great jabbering in Chinese now started up.

Fen Pok was evidently greatly surprised to see the hole open.

For the moment it appeared as if he was afraid to approach.

His companion was a very ordinary Chink, one of the very Chinese looking sort.

He drew a big revolver and Fen Pok produced another.

They stood there waiting and watching, talking in a suppressed mumble all the while.

At last when they realized that there was going to be nothing doing, they mustered up courage to approach, and Fen Pok waved his lantern within the hole.

Old King Brady, with his own revolver ready for business, waited.

Now would have been his time to jump on these fellows, but he was anxious to see what they would do.

Fen Pok pulled back out of the hole presently, and more "hinging" and "hanging" followed.

At last they seemed to come to a decision, and both crawled through the hole and vanished.

"It spells trunks, surest thing," thought Old King Brady. "I'll keep dark awhile yet and see what comes of all this."

But he ventured to come out from his concealment to a position where he could get a look in through the hole.

He could see the light at no great distance ahead.

The two Chinamen were standing in a secret cellar.

And between them the old detective caught sight of a queer oblong trunk.

It was covered with hide with the hair out, and bound with brass.

The Chinks were still talking.

"It is really wonderful what an amount of talk these silent yellow men will make once they get started.

The reason was plain.

The newly excavated passage was barely big enough to permit them to bring the trunk through.

At last they came to an understanding apparently.

Both came back to the opening, and they set about removing the other stones which had been loosened in the wall.

When all were out the opening was wide enough to admit of the trunk being brought through.

Fen Pok put down his lantern, and they went back to the secret cellar.

Soon they came through carrying a trunk.

It appeared to be rather light, considering the great size.

With a lot of tugging and pushing they finally managed to get it through the hole.

Then they went back after another, and it ended in just such a trunk as Mr. Armstead had described being deposited on the cellar floor.

And now instead of hustling the pair sat down on the trunks to rest from their labors, and in silence smoked a cigarette apiece before they made the next move.

Fen Pok finished his smoke first, and throwing the stump away, he arose, picked up the lantern and went off up the cellar stairs alone.

"Good enough!" thought Old King Brady. "Now is my time!"

Noiselessly he crept upon his man, who sat upon the trunk, his back turned.

And he got him, too!

He wouldn't have been Old King Brady if he had missed.

He tumbled the Chink over backwards, and had the handcuffs on in no time, in spite of his struggles, and all this done in the dark.

Then Old King Brady flashed the light upon his victim.

"See here, you!" he said. "Make one sound and you're a dead one—see?"

He pocketed the man's revolver, which had fallen to the ground, and hurried to the top of the stairs.

"If there comes two I may have trouble," he thought. "But if it is only Fen Pok I guess I can manage."

He waited behind the closed door.

It was but a minute.

Then someone was heard approaching alone.

Old King Brady flung open the door at the psychological moment.

It was Fen Pok!

He gave a despairing cry as the revolver was thrust into his face, and Old King Brady backed him up against the wall.

"You are arrested—see!" cried the old detective. "Make a move and you are a dead man. Now put your hands up and walk out on the street ahead of me!"

CHAPTER VIII.

DREAMS.

The groans continuing, Mrs. Fing Wang turned back to Alice, who was immediately behind her, and whispered:

"I am afraid."

"We must either go on or get back," said Foo Ling in Chinese.

"I'm not afraid, let me go downstairs and see what it all means," breathed Alice.

"No! Don't you do it," said Harry with his fingers.

But Alice paid no attention to him, and crept down the stairs.

They ended at the commencement of another passage.

A light could be seen burning dimly behind an open transom over a door at its end.

And from behind this door the groans appeared to come.

Alice glided along the passage and listened at the door.

The groans continued, but as no word was spoken she could not tell whether they came from a white man or a Chinese.

Very cautiously she tried the door, but it was locked.

Alice started to return, and at the same instant she heard a scream.

Foo Ling shouted something unintelligible. There were sounds of a scuffle.

Alice paused, hardly knowing what to do.

But it was only for an instant.

Harry was in danger.

"We are in this thing together, and must stand or fall together," she thought.

With that she rushed up the stairs.

But the delay, brief as it was, had changed everything.

Foo Ling had vanished. So had Harry and Mrs. Fing Wang.

In their stead were two Chinamen wearing hideous paper masks.

"Spy! Spy!" they cried in Chinese, and rushed upon Alice.

She might have drawn a revolver and so defended herself, but the risk was too great.

Chinese women do not carry revolvers.

To Alice it seemed at the moment that everything depended upon holding her own in the part she had undertaken to play.

So she did what the average Chinese woman would have done under the circumstances, just screamed as loud as she could.

The masks closed in on her, caught her by the arm, and dragging her back along the passage, passed out to where the two doors had been seen.

One of them threw open the other door, and Alice was pushed into a little room, where she found Mrs. Fing Wang standing in the middle of the floor, and just screaming for all she was worth.

The door was then closed and the two women left alone.

The scheme had failed.

Four masked men jumped on the party as soon as Alice went down the stairs.

Harry and Foo Ling were forced along the passage at the points of two revolvers.

A secret panel opened, and they were crowded into a dirty little room, and left together in the dark.

Foo Ling was furious.

He said things, but as what he said was in Chinese it was lost on Young King Brady who, anxious to carry out his part as a dummy, muttered a few minutes and then relapsed into silence.

Foo Ling continued to rave.

At last he caught hold of Harry by the shoulder there in the dark and fairly bellowed something Chinese at him.

Was it a final test?

Probably.

At all events Young King Brady was not troubled again with the fellow after he once let go of him, which he did in a minute.

But the whole night had to be put in there with him.

It was one of the most trying nights Harry ever passed.

At last, hours later, the door was unlocked and a Chinaman appeared.

He carried a lantern and a revolver.

Addressing himself to Foo Ling, considerable talk was made, after which they went away together, and once more the door was locked.

And still Harry did not dare to attempt any move, for from certain sounds which he had heard from time to time, he felt sure that he was being spied upon.

Everything seemed to depend upon him keeping up the character he had assumed.

Another hour passed, and then the door was once more opened and Harry's tedious imprisonment came to an end.

A mild looking Chink appeared and motioned for Young King Brady to follow him.

Harry passed through various passages, through several doors, and at length came into the secret joss-house of the Hip Sing Tong, of which Foo Ling had spoken.

It was not a particularly large room.

Light was furnished by a suspended Chinese lantern.

At one side was an altar of two steps, upon the top of which rested a life-sized wooden figure of a Chinaman seated cross-legged.

There was nothing grotesque about the big image.

The face was that of a typical Chinaman of a decidedly stern appearance.

Behind the figure hung various scrolls bearing Chinese characters.

There were two incense cups on the lower stage of the altar, and three Chinks stood about talking, with their hats on.

Harry's conductor joined them, and the conversation continued some time.

They were talking about him, that seemed certain.

At last all began to make signs to him.

Was this Chinese deaf and dumb talk?

Harry did not know, and it is needless to say that he made no attempt to respond.

Giving this up finally, the man left the room and soon returned with a bowl of rice, another of chop suey, and a bottle of light wine.

These he placed on the lower stage of the altar and motioned Harry to eat.

Being pretty hungry by this time, Young King Brady ventured to do so.

He even drank a glass of the wine, and had immediate reason to wish that he had not, for the first thing he knew he was getting so sleepy that he could hardly keep his eyes open.

"Drugged!" he thought. "Here's a bad business. But if they had not caught me this way probably they would some other."

He got up and began to walk about.

The Chinks watched him in grim silence.

It was no use.

Harry was in the toils.

The last he remembered was feeling a sense of falling and knowing that two of the Chinamen were holding him up.

After that it was all dreams.

Now we propose to relate something of these dreams, and we want to say right here that Young King Brady never felt quite sure whether the things he went through with there in that secret cellar in Mott street were all dreams or partly reality.

Harry was rather inclined to favor the latter idea when it was all over.

However, the most of what he experienced was certainly seen in the dream world; of that there can be no doubt.

The first sensation experienced by Young King Brady after he felt everything slipping away from him, was one of suffocation.

He opened his eyes as he dreamed, to find himself sitting cross-legged in some confined space.

Wood pressed against his limbs on all sides.

There was something all around his head, but in front of his eyes were two narrow slits, and he could see through them.

He was still in the secret cellar, but well up from the floor.

He was looking at the same Chinaman, and he could hear them talking still.

"I am inside the idol," thought Harry. "I am looking out through the eyes."

Now this was part of what he afterwards supposed to be real.

What came next surely could not have been.

Harry now found himself walking in the streets of a great city.

It was a Chinese city, and he seemed to know that he was in China.

Not a white man was to be seen anywhere.

On all sides there were only Chinese.

Nobody seemed to pay the least attention to him as he wandered about, although he was in his ordinary dress. In fact the Chinamen did not appear to see him.

At last Harry came to a street where many men were moving, and he joined the procession, without having the least idea where they were going.

At last they turned into a street which ran up a hill, and on the hill was a great temple.

Still dreaming, Harry entered the temple with many others.

There was a large altar, upon which stood many idols.

It seemed to Harry that he passed around this and entered at the back by a little door.

Here was a flight of stairs, and he descended for some time, coming into a cave.

He was now all alone, and in his hand he carried a blazing torch, which he flashed about the cave.

Presently he saw two men in the distance bending down upon the ground.

They appeared to be very busy about something, and Harry went over to see what they were doing.

The men were dressed like Chinese, but Young King Brady instantly perceived that they were not Chinamen.

Now that he could see their faces, he recognized in the elder man Henry Armstead, the explorer, and he seemed to know instinctively that the younger man was his son.

The whole floor of the cave appeared to be strewn with human bones.

There were thousands of skulls scattered about.

It came to Harry in the same queer way which he was getting all this, that it had been the custom to throw dead people down through a hole into this cave for a long period—many thousand years.

But there were other things to be seen in the cave besides bones.

The place seemed to be an underground temple.

The rocky walls were carved out to represent huge animals, elephants, tigers, bulls and strange beasts, the like of which Young King Brady had never seen.

Huge stone statues of men stood about.

Some had faces like Chinamen, but most of the statues appeared to represent people of a different and much more powerful race.

Dreaming now that he was watching the disguised explorers, Harry saw that they had two big brass bowls full of many pebbles of different colors.

Then he knew that these pebbles were gems in the rough, some of which were of great value.

The two men were concealing these inside of bones.

When they had filled the hollow part of a bone with the gems they sealed each end with some substance like putty and then forced wet clay in on top of this.

These bones were carefully laid aside.

Just as matters had reached this stage Harry was switched off on a different tack altogether.

He seemed to be back inside the idol in the secret cellar in Mott street.

He could see the Chinamen through the eyeholes of the image.

One was shouting something in Chinese, and Harry knew that he himself was answering from within the idol.

He dreamed that he was talking Chinese, and that he could not understand his own words.

This bothered him.

The Chink kept on talking, and Harry answering.

He grew angry with himself for doing it.

He tried to break the spell which held him, but he could not.

Then all at once he became unconscious, and when he came to himself at last he was quite in his normal condition, lying on the floor of a little room, which was lighted by a grimy lamp.

Harry scrambled to his feet.

Stretched upon an old mattress was a young man wearing only his underclothes.

At once Harry recognized him as young Armstead, and that entirely from having dreamed of seeing him in the cave.

The young man appeared to be asleep, and every now and then he would groan deeply.

Harry continued to watch him for a few moments, when he awoke.

His eyes rolled wildly, and at last as they fixed themselves upon Harry, he murmured:

"Ah! you have come to life then!"

Harry was on the point of answering when he caught himself, and pointed to his lips and ears.

"What, deaf and dumb?" groaned Armstead, for the young man was no one else. "Little good you can do me then, I am afraid. But perhaps your sympathies may be aroused if I show you the condition I am in."

He sat up and pulled up his shirt.

His whole back was just a mass of raw bruises.

"There, you see!" he exclaimed. "I have been tortured by the Tong fiends! Now you may know what to expect if you hold out against your captors as I have done."

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT WAS IN THE TRUNKS.

Old King Brady rounded up Fen Pok with but little difficulty.

He ran the Chink out on to Pell street, and as luck would have it, a policeman whom he knew was passing and ready to render him help.

There was an express wagon standing in front of the burned building, and the instant the driver, who sat holding the reins, saw Fen Pok in the toils he whipped up his horse and drove away.

There could be no doubt that this man had been hired to remove the trunks.

Old King Brady landed his two prisoners at the Elizabeth street station, where he knew they would be securely held as long as he wished it so.

An interpreter was sent for, and every effort was made to force Fen Pok to tell what had become of the Armsteads, but in vain.

The man denied that he was Fen Pok.

He claimed to be a Chinese merchant in Chicago.

He declared that he had never even heard of the Armsteads.

And so it went. With the other man it was just the same.

Seeing how useless it all was, the old detective gave it up and went out to see what could be done about the trunks.

Engaging two cabs at Chatham Square, with the help of the drivers, he got two trunks into one cab and one in the other.

They were driven to Old King Brady's house on Wash-

ington Square, a policeman who had stood guard in the cellar going with one cab to the house.

It was with no little triumph that Old King Brady opened his door and shouted for his man Julius to come and lend a hand with the trunks.

"Oh, Mr. Brady, there came a man here two hours ago inquiring for you. He looked like he was a real gem'n, so I axed him to wait in de library. He's done gone to sleep in yo' big chair, an' I can't wake him. Spec's he's dead drunk. Dat am a fact."

"Help fetch in some trunks I have here, Julius," replied the old detective. "I'll look in on your man."

He hurried into the library, and saw that the sleeper in the chair was none other than Henry Armstead, which he had rather suspected.

The man was clearly under the influence of opium.

He seemed to be in a bad way.

Old King Brady tried to arouse him, but in vain.

He felt of his pulse, and found every evidence that the explorer had taken an overdose.

"Great Scott, I shall have a dead man on my hands here if I don't look sharp!" muttered the old detective.

He jumped to the telephone and called up the nearest doctor.

Meanwhile Julius and a driver had brought in one of the trunks.

"Julius, these men will have to attend to this themselves," said Old King Brady. "You get downstairs and make the strongest cup of coffee you can. Bring it to the library just as quick as possible."

Julius jumped to obey.

The trunks were brought in, and the drivers and policeman disposed of.

Julius soon brought his coffee and the old detective forced what he could down Mr. Armstead's throat.

He was still at it when the doctor came.

"What is all this? A case of opium poisoning, Mr. Brady?" he demanded.

"That is just what it is," was the reply. "I don't know whether we can save this man or not."

"Who is he?"

"Henry Armstead, the Chinese explorer."

"Indeed! Well, you are doing the right thing. Let me see. Is he accustomed to the use of opium?"

"I cannot say, but I rather suspect it."

"If so, he will probably come out of this all right. How came he here?"

"He came during my absence, and seating himself in this chair, went to sleep. I have been handling a case for him. That is why he called."

The doctor had been examining his patient while talking.

"I think he will come out all right," he said. "We better get his clothes off and lay him out on a bed, where I can start up artificial respiration by working his arms for—Heavens! Look!"

Clearly artificial respiration was not needed.

Suddenly Mr. Armstead staggered to his feet.

"I don't need anything of that sort," he muttered thickly. "Where's that coffee?"

He seized up the pitcher in which Julius had served the coffee and drank off its entire contents—over a pint.

Then he began pacing the room in an unsteady way, but growing steadier on his feet every instant.

"You have been using opium to excess for a long time, my friend," said the doctor.

"I use it—yes."

"Better look out. You had a close call this time."

"Nonsense. I heard every word you said only I could not speak nor move. This coffee will fix me all right."

"Yes, and you may thank Mr. Brady for your life. If he hadn't given you black coffee just when he did, you would have been a dead one now."

Mr. Armstead eyed the doctor gloomily.

"How much do I owe you?" he asked.

"I came here for Mr. Brady."

"Never mind. I'll pay."

He did so, and the doctor left.

"Well," demanded Armstead. "How goes the case? I have been away for a day or so."

"You have been on a great big opium spree, that's what's the matter with you, my friend," thought the old detective.

But aloud he merely replied:

"The case is progressing. I have no definite information of your son yet, but to-night I got the trunks!"

"You did!"

Mr. Armstead's excitement was intense.

He appeared to have but little care for his missing son, but perhaps this was due to the drug.

"Where are the trunks?" he demanded.

"Safe," replied Old King Brady. "Fen Pok is arrested. He declares that he never heard of you."

"If you have really got Fen Pok it is unnecessary to say that he is a lovely liar. But where are the trunks?"

"In the front hall here!"

"You don't mean to say that?"

"I just said it!"

"Let us see!"

Mr. Armstead went out into the hall.

"Well, well! There they are! You are certainly a great detective, Mr. Brady. Have they been disturbed?"

"Not either one of them."

"Good! The charm I put on the brass plates evidently worked. But they would have had them open soon, and it is a mercy you got them. Do tell me all about it. I am wild to know."

He lighted a cigar, and Old King Brady told his story.

"You have done wonders," said Mr. Armstead. "But now to see them, to learn if the seals actually are unbroken. Remember, Mr. Brady, a Chinaman can imitate everything, and among these Hip Sing Tong people there are some very bright men."

They went out into the hall.

Mr. Armstead still walked unsteadily, but he appeared to know just what he was about.

"Of course I don't know what you have in your trunks," remarked the old detective. "I must admit that they are very light."

Mr. Armstead bent down and examined certain strips of lead which sealed each trunk near the lock.

"The seals do not appear to have been disturbed, that is certain," he remarked, "and yet——"

"You suspect!"

"I feel afraid."

"I have made no special examination of these seals. I merely saw that they were in place, and let it go at that; but I will examine them now."

He did so by means of a powerful magnifying glass. When he straightened up Old King Brady shook his head.

"I am afraid you are doomed to disappointment," he said.

"You think the seals have been tampered with?"

"I do."

"Removed and put back in place again?"

"That's it."

"I am afraid you are right."

"Why don't you open one of the trunks and see? You need not have no fear of me exposing your secrets."

"I think I will do it. I will open them all. But after all there isn't much secret about it. The trunks only contain a lot of old bones."

"So? And what about the bones?"

"For museum purposes. Skulls and so on."

"Liar!" thought Old King Brady. "You deserve trouble for your absolute want of frankness if for no other reason."

But he said nothing, and stood watching Mr. Armstead, who produced one of those "universal tool" handles.

From this he selected a screwdriver, and fixing it in the handle, proceeded to remove the screws which secured the lead.

This done, he took out a bunch of queer looking keys and applied one of them to the lock.

It turned freely, and Mr. Armstead threw up the lid.

In the trunk was a select line of bricks wrapped in newspaper.

Mr. Armstead gave one sharp exclamation of disappointment.

But after that he was as when Old King Brady first saw him.

Scarcely a trace of his "opium manner" now remained.

"You see," said the old detective.

"Yes; it is as you feared."

"A big disappointment to you, no doubt. It is a big one for me, for now I have to go right to work again. I don't believe, however, that Fen Pok knew of this."

"I think you are right. He has no more use for bricks than I have. But let us examine the other trunks."

It was the same in each case.

The "old bones" had been removed and bricks substituted.

"Even if Li Fung had lived to get his trunks away, I fear he would have been disappointed," thought Old King Brady.

"I trust you will be patient, Mr. Armstead," he added. "I have only to go to work again."

"There is no other way," was the reply. "I will leave you now, Mr. Brady. Hereafter you can reach me at the hotel."

And the man took himself off without having mentioned his son even once.

"Cold-blooded to the last degree," thought the old detective. "Well, it is none of my business, certainly. Per-

haps Harry and Alice will be able to explain all this when they come to report."

As he had no reason to expect Harry in that night, Old King Brady went to bed.

Morning came and brought no Harry.

Old King Brady telephoned Alice's house on Waverly place and learned that she had not come in.

He arrived at his office at the usual time, and was still working over his mail when who should walk into the office but Alice, alone.

"Oh! You are out of Chinatown again!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Where is Harry?"

"I am very sorry to say that I left him a prisoner in the hands of the Highbinders," said Alice. "They captured me, too, but I have managed to give them the slip, temporarily at least. But I can only stay a few minutes. I am going back to be near Harry. I shall get him yet. Have you seen Mr. Armstead?"

"Saw him last night. He came to the house loaded with opium. He was so bad that I had to call in a doctor. He came out of it all right though. I was afraid the Highbinders had captured him."

"And they had."

"What?"

"Yes. They caught him in Bang Gee's opium joint on Pell street, and ran him into a secret cellar on Mott street, but he managed to escape, they don't know how."

And not a word of all this did he tell me!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Upon my word, I don't know what to make of that man. But let me tell you just what happened, Alice. I want you to understand the whole situation. You can tell me your story after that."

CHAPTER X.

ALICE TAKES HOLD WITH A STRONG HAND.

"Do you know, Mr. Brady, that I don't believe the Tong fiends ever opened those trunks," remarked Alice when the old detective finished his story.

"What makes you say that?" was asked.

"Hear my story and understand," replied Alice.

She ran over the preliminary points quickly.

"After Mrs. Fing Wang and I had been locked in for awhile a Chinaman came to us and told us that we could go back to the woman's rooms on Mott street," Alice continued.

"Of course we were greatly surprised. But we understood it later when our Boston acquaintance came in. He is in love with Mrs. Fing Wang, understand.

"The woman's husband has been away for a long time. She doesn't expect him back, and Foo Ling is figuring on marrying Mrs. Wang.

"Well, it seems that Foo Ling, although he was captured with us, managed to humbug these Tong fiends into believing that he was really working for the good of the order all the while.

"You see, it all grows out of Harry playing dummy. The Tongers want to use a Chinese dummy in some of their incantations—I don't understand just what—and

this wily fellow pretended that he had introduced Harry into the secret passages where we were discovered for that very purpose.

"As he also pretended that Mrs. Wang and I were merely helping him, they let him go. Meanwhile Foo Ling is as fierce as ever to get the trunks and set young Armstead free. He wants money, and has no hope of getting any out of the Highbinders. This morning he came and told me that I better go and report the situation to the police, for whom he thinks I am working. He is ready to betray his fellow Tongers at any moment. So that is the way the matters stand."

"Has Foo Ling seen Harry?" asked Old King Brady.

"No; he hadn't up to the time I left, but he reported him safe."

"How did the elder Armstead manage to escape?"

"That is what I don't know."

"Who told you that he had escaped?"

"Foo Ling."

"The man never mentioned his son to me once."

"What can you expect of an opium fiend?"

"Well, that is so. But what are we to do, Alice?"

"Well, I can work in further with these people. I really don't think I am running any risk."

"I wish I was sure of that."

"Let your mind rest easy. I don't see how I can make any definite arrangement with you as matters stand."

"You can't. You best go back and look into the business a little more deeply. Was anything said about the arrest of Fen Pok, and the trunks being missing?"

"Not a word. I have never heard Fen Pok's name mentioned. I have my doubts about this Chink knowing the man."

"And I begin to doubt it, too. Well, we must be patient."

"And in the meantime I'll get back."

"It is up to you."

"I see no reason why I shouldn't. The instant I have anything definite to tell I will find some means of letting you know; you can trust me for that."

"Where did you change your clothes?"

"At Schmidt's on the Bowery."

"Are you sure you were not shadowed there?"

"Yes."

"Well, use every precaution when you go back."

"I certainly shall."

"Do you imagine they have the least suspicion that you are not a Chinawoman?"

"I can't believe they do."

"Alice, you are a truly wonderful woman."

"Don't flatter me, or I shall have to call you a wonderful man, and you don't altogether like that, you know."

"Enough. This session is rapidly developing into a matter of mutual admiration."

"Yes. But, Mr. Brady, what if I introduce you to Foo Ling?"

"Strange!"

"What is?"

"That I was this very instant thinking of the same thing."

"How could it be arranged?"

"How did you get away from Mott street when no Chinese woman is ever seen on the streets down there?"

"In a cab which Foo Ling sent for me."

"Oh, I see. Does he know me by reputation, think?"

"The name of Brady has never been mentioned between us."

"Well, Alice, when you come to consider that he knows, or rather thinks he knows, that you are working for the police, I don't see any harm in telling him I am the man who is bossing the job."

"I don't know that there would be."

"I can be at the burned house on Pell street, say at noon. If he could drop in there I should like to have a talk with him."

"You can't. He speaks almost no English, as he claims."

"Perhaps he lies about that. There is so much English spoken in China nowadays that many of the newcomers who are smuggled into America understand it. Anyway, try it on if you don't think it will injure Harry."

"Well, I will be guided by circumstances," replied Alice, and after that she left.

She returned to Schmidt's by electric.

There her cab awaited her, and she went back to the Mott street house in her Chinese disguise, to find Mrs. Fung Wang and her friend, Foo Ling, in the former's rooms in close conference.

They greeted Alice warmly.

"Have you seen the police?" demanded Foo Ling.

"I saw the man I am working for, yes," replied Alice.

"Will they raid the secret cellar and rescue Armstead the younger to-day?"

"They will do just as I say, and nothing else."

"You must have great influence over them."

"I have. I want to get my husband out of his trouble too, remember that."

"We do not forget it," replied Foo Ling. "I have seen your husband. He is all right."

"What shall we do? I want you to make the money I promised you should make. I want to make my share, too, but I don't see how we are to do it. Everything seems to be so mixed up."

Foo Ling glanced meaningly at Mrs. Fung Wang, who nodded in return.

"See, Lee Mow," he said, turning to Alice. "I am going to take you fully into our confidence; your husband has been drugged and put inside the big idol in the Hip Sing Tong men's secret joss-house. Then the idol talked, and told secrets as I told you it would. It told us—I was there—about the bones in the trunks which were brought from a cave beneath the temple of Sze-dgong. He who gets these old bones will be able to make much money, but the idol tells us that they are not here in Chinatown; so then they must have been taken away. Who took them? Where were they taken? These things the idol did not tell us. To-day, this afternoon, they are again. I shall be present. Now I have studied this business much. It seems to me that perhaps you know more than you have told; that the police got these trunks when the fire burned at Li Fung's, and that you know it. The Hip Sing Tong men know nothing of these thoughts of mine. It is only I who think them. Tell me the

truth. These old bones are of no use to the police. If you could fix it so that they could be delivered to me I will pay well for them. Sometimes money will buy what one wants. I have no money, but Mrs. Fung Wang has plenty. We will give a thousand dollars for those bones, for we can make much money by taking them from one joss-house to another. Come, Lee Mow, can you help us? I think you can. Then you and your husband shall travel with us. With these wonderful bones and a dumb man we could make money everywhere there are Chinese, for he can make the idols on the joss-house altars talk if we do so."

It seemed amazing to Alice that Foo Ling could expect her to believe such nonsense.

And yet when she came to reflect how ignorant Chinese women are as a rule, she was not altogether surprised.

But the man's eagerness betrayed him, Alice thought. "There is something more to this business than old bones," she assured herself. "Perhaps the bones are stuffed with gold dust, or with diamonds."

She had heard of such things in China, where she was born and reared.

What to an American would have seemed far-fetched, to Alice appeared quite possible.

Foo Ling's eagerness meant something. Now would seem to be her chance to swing the whole business into Old King Brady's hands Alice thought.

"See," she said. "What you speak is true. When I said to you that I was a Chinese detective working for the New York police, I did not mean just that. I am working really for another detective who has many cases with the Chinese, Old King Brady. Did you ever hear of him?"

Foo Ling never had.

Nor had Mrs. Fung Wang, which was by no means strange, considering the seclusion in which Chinese women are kept.

"So much the better for me," thought Alice. "I'll charge right ahead on these lines and see what comes of it."

"Listen," she continued. "I saw this Old King Brady. He did not tell me much, but he did tell me enough to make me suspect that he has the trunks now."

Foo Ling jumped out of his chair.

"Is that so?" he said. "If he could only be bought——"

"I think he can," said Alice. "He wants to see you. He will be in Li Fung's house at noon. You can go there."

"Well! Can he talk Chinese?"

"Not a word."

"Then what shall I do, for I speak hardly any English?"

"Take some Hip Sing Tong man with you who does speak it."

"No, no! I don't want to mix any man up in this. What is more, I won't."

"Then take me."

"I would if this was only San Francisco, but, as you know, Chinese women don't go on the street in New York."

"Let me dress as a man. I have often done it in my work for Mr. Brady."

"Would you?"

"Certainly I would."

"You can have a suit of my husband's clothes," put in Mrs. Fing Wang, who was listening to all this.

It was so arranged.

Alice went on to talk further.

She told of the arrest of Fen Pok, and intimated that it was through this that Old King Brady got the trunks.

Foo Ling had heard of Fen Pok having been taken, he said.

But from the way he put it, Alice felt certain that he was by no means in the confidence of the Tong fiends, who were running things in the secret cellar.

From the very start there had been much that was mysterious about this case, and while we make this statement we may as well add that even when all was wound up and finished, there was much which remained a mystery still.

It is very apt to be so with Chinese cases, especially when they concern the Hip Sing Tong, which is one of the most secret organizations in the world.

Alice, with the help of Mrs. Fing Wang, now donned her male disguise.

Foo Ling complimented her, highly upon her appearance.

And certainly it was a compliment, indeed, that Alice was able to conceal the fact that she was a white woman from this shrewd pair.

She now asked Foo Ling if he couldn't take her down to the secret rooms and let her see Harry, if only for a moment.

"I would if I could," replied the Tonger, "but I don't dare go myself, much less take anyone else. When they put him in the idol again I shall see him, if I choose to go there then, but perhaps your Mr. Detective will want to bring in the police and rescue him and young Armstead right away."

"I don't know what he will want to do," replied Alice. "The only thing is to go to him and find out."

And at a little before twelve they sallied forth.

Alice felt well satisfied with her success.

She was now perfectly satisfied that Foo Ling did not understand English, and having taken pains to make him understand that she did, Alice proposed to risk talking freely to Old King Brady in his presence—when they met.

They went around on Pell street to find the old detective standing opposite Li Fung's, watching the door.

Alice made herself known by a secret sign.

"There comes my boss," she whispered to her companion in Chinese.

"A big man," was the reply. "He looks as if he would sell himself for money anytime."

"That's one on you," thought Alice as the old detective came across the street.

"This is Foo Ling," she said aloud. "He wants to talk to you."

Foo Ling shook hands vigorously.

"Gladee see—good day!" he blustered.

He was not shamming. English was a sealed book to him.

Old King Brady at once opened the door and let them into the hall of the burned house.

"What is in the wind?" he asked Alice.

"A lot," was the reply. "My people want to buy the trunks of you for a thousand dollars. In return Mrs. Fing Wang will pilot you into the secret cellar with the police. Harry and young Armstead can be rescued. All this man wants is to get his hands on those dry bones."

"Ha!" exclaimed the old detective. "That is all, is it? Well, I fancy old Armstead will be willing enough to sell out for that sum, but as for bones, where are they? Don't the Tong fiends know that?"

"Evidently not. Shall you arrest them?"

"Sure, sure! They captured young Armstead. Fen Pok betrayed him into their hands. It is enough to send them up, and the more Highbinders we run behind the bars the better for the place of Chinatown. But this man wants to talk to me, and now is our time. Come into the cellar. I want to see if he knows the way through into this Mott street den, for I am sure such a way exists."

"I don't think he does," replied Alice, as they followed the old detective down into the cellar. "However, we shall see."

CHAPTER XI.

HARRY BLUFFS THE TONG FIENDS.

Young Armstead's back was certainly a dreadful sight. It made Harry shudder to look at it.

Not only had the young man been terribly beaten, but the wounds appeared to have been rubbed with something which had greatly inflamed them.

Harry dropped on the floor beside him, and said in the lowest possible whisper at the same time making signs with his fingers:

"I am a detective. I am supposed to be a deaf and dumb Chinaman. Pretend to talk with your fingers, and we can whisper to each other for I fear spies."

The look of hope which came over the young man's face should have been reward enough for any man!

Armstead fell right in with the scheme.

"Have you worked into this den to try to save me?" he breathed.

And all the talk which followed was correspondingly low.

"Yes," replied Harry. "That is just what I have done."

"Who are you?"

"Ever hear of the Brady detectives?"

"Old and Young King Brady? Yes, many a time."

"I am Young King Brady."

"So? Who hired you?"

"Your father."

"My father!"

"Yes. Henry Armstead, the explorer."

"Oh!"

"He came to us and told about missing trunks and about you having vanished."

"I see. I understand. I was betrayed into the hands of these Hip Sing Tong fiends by my servant, Fen Pok, who tried to rob me of my trunks. Has he been captured?"

"No; at least he had not at last accounts. You must understand that I am a prisoner myself, and have been for many hours. I don't know what Old King Brady may have done in the meantime."

"I have been here for days. You see the condition I am in."

"You were tortured by these Tong fiends?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"To force me to tell where those trunks you speak of are."

"And you have refused to tell?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"They are my trunks. I have been through everything to save them. I am not going to let them slip through my fingers now."

"You and your father——"

"My father! Oh, yes! He suffered even more than I did, poor man. See, Brady, they beat me terribly, they stuck needles into my back, and then rubbed it with salt and vinegar. Those are your true Chinese Tong fiends—the real brand."

"Terrible! Did Fen Pok get the trunks from the steamer Hercules?"

"Yes; he got them."

"But I don't understand, Mr. Armstead. If the Tong fiends have got the trunks, why have they tortured you?"

Armstead was silent for a minute.

Then he said:

"See here, I have suffered enough. I don't doubt for an instant that you are the man you pretend to be. Still I do not know it. These Chinamen are up to any trick. You may just be in their employ. This may be another scheme to make me speak."

"You have the right to think so. I cannot blame you. Still I am what I claim to be, and nothing else, a detective in the employ of your father."

"My father!"

Again Young Armstead repeated the word.

It is impossible to represent on paper the bitterness of his tone.

Harry noticed it before, and it impressed himself more strongly upon him now.

"Isn't the man I speak of your father?" he asked.

"Certainly not," was the quick reply.

"Oh, I see! Who is he, then?"

"My father's servant. One Joseph Cockburn, a rascal. He sent me here to Chinatown by a trick, and I was captured by the Tong fiends, to whom Fen Pok betrayed me."

"And your father?"

"My father was murdered by the Chinese out in China. Don't ask me to tell that sad story now."

"You certainly don't have to. I see now that we have

been deceived. Are these two standing in together? This man Cockburn, and Fen Pok, I mean?"

"I can scarcely believe it. Each one is a rascal, and each is operating on his own account."

"And what is in those trunks?"

"A lot of old bones from a very sacred temple in Western China."

"What does Cockburn want of such things?"

"Don't ask me. As for Fen Pok, it is different. He believes that the Hip Sing Tong men can raise spirits with these bones, and make idols talk. He expects to sell them to the tongers for a big price. At least that is what I think. It may be different. He may suspect the truth."

"Ah! Then what you are giving me is not the truth?"

Armstead groaned.

"There," he exclaimed peevishly, "you have trapped me into an admission."

"I must, to understand the situation, naturally."

"Well, then, I have kept something back. It is my business. I don't have to tell you."

"Quite right. If you won't be frank with me at least let me be frank with you. Let me tell you all I know about this case just as it has occurred."

"I wish you would. It is something to have your company, whoever you are."

The young man was in a state of great irritability, and no wonder.

Harry now went into every detail of the case, even telling of his strange experiences inside the idol in the secret cellar.

Armstead's interest seemed to be intense when he came to that part.

"And do you mean to tell me that you actually dreamed all that?" he asked.

"I certainly did just as I tell you."

"Strange! Can it be that there is something in their incantations after all?"

"They seem to believe in them themselves."

"I know they do; and my father did, but I never could."

"The Chinese are a strange people."

"You don't know anything about them, and you don't want to know any more than you already know."

They were silent for some minutes, and then Armstead said:

"But allowing all that you have told me is true, I don't see that you can help me any, Brady. You have all you can do to get out of this business yourself. They will put you in that idol again, surest thing."

"But not drugged. I shall look out for that."

"Why do you suppose they put me in here with you?"

"I can only believe that it was that I might pump you dry and give it out to them in my drugged condition through the idol later."

"There you are! I read the riddle the same way. Can you wonder that I don't want to confide in you?"

"No; I don't wonder."

They talked and talked, but Harry did not succeed in drawing anything out of the young man.

At last the Tongers came and took Harry away.

He was carried into a small room where there was a table spread with a substantial meal.

With it was a bottle of the same sweet, white wine which he had drunk before.

Harry ate sparingly of some boiled chicken, and poured half the bottle of wine down a rat hole.

Even then he began to fear that he had gone too far.

He waited for the same sensations which he had experienced before, but they did not come.

When at last he heard footsteps approaching he dropped on the floor and pretended to be asleep.

Five Chinamen entered.

One was a big fello wwith a badly scarred face.

They looked over the situation and had some remarks to make in their native tongue.

Then they went away.

Soon after this three Chinamen entered.

They were the two he had seen before and another.

Then they picked him up, head and heels, and carried him into the secret cellar where the idol was.

Here they laid him down, and one climbing on the altar lifted off the head of the big wooden image.

This done, the man turned the body back—it moved on hinges.

Harry was then picked up and placed on the altar.

His legs were crossed, and while one held him upright by the head another brought the hollow image up so that it was just above him.

Suddenly the Chink withdrew his hand, and the body dropped over Harry, pinning him fast.

There he sat with his eyes half closed not able to move even if he had wanted to.

There was more talk.

One went out between two curtains.

A minute later who should walk in but Foo Ling and Mrs. Fing Wang.

Presently the Chink who had left the room returned, bringing an oblong glass box, which he placed on the lower stage of the altar.

It contained certain small brown objects, which looked to Young King Brady like pieces of human bones of great age.

Then one of the Chinks climbed on the altar and put the head of the image in place.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Once in the cellar of Li Fung's house Old King Brady pointed out to Alice and Foo Ling the secret passage leading into the cellar beyond from which the trunks had been taken.

Old King Brady then instructed Alice as to what to say to Foo Ling.

She accordingly told him that the trunks had been found in this secret cellar, and that Old King Brady had taken them to his house.

Foo Ling was jubilant, and wanted to know if he would sell them.

Alice assured him that he would if he, Foo Ling, and Mrs. Fing Wang would help to rescue Harry and young Armstead, and to arrest the Tong fiends, promising that

he and the woman should have every protection from the police.

And to all this Foo Ling readily agreed, the understanding being that he should pay his thousand when he received the trunks.

This important point settled, they all went to work to find out if there was any communication between this secret cellar and the one on Mott street.

But if such was the case their united skill was insufficient to reveal the fact.

"You will have to work us in the regular way from Mott street," said Old King Brady after they had abandoned the search. "If you can manage that, well and good. Everything shall then go as you wish."

"I will go and see," replied Foo Ling. "From what I heard I think I must be quick, too. Will you stay here and wait? I think they will put the dumb man into the idol again this afternoon—very soon."

"We will wait upstairs," said Old King Brady. "Be as quick as you can."

They accordingly returned upstairs and Foo Ling departed.

Their wait was a longer one than was pleasant.

At last came a knocking on the hall door.

Old King Brady stepped out and opened it.

A "lobbygow," or Chinatown errand boy, stood outside.

"Is youse Ole King Brady?" he asked.

"As you see," replied the old detective, satisfied that the boy knew him well enough.

"Well, den, here's a letter what a Chinee lady around on Mott street gimme to fetch yer."

Old King Brady took the envelope and tore it open.

Inside was a strip of red paper bearing Chinee characters, so he handed it over to Alice.

Alice glanced over the flytracks and said:

"Let the boy go."

Old King Brady accordingly tipped the lowgowgui and dismissed him.

"Well?" demanded the old detective.

"It reads this way," replied Alice.

"I cannot return. Come as quick as possible with your police. Capture the old man on guard, Mrs. Lee Mow knows where. She can open the secret panel and take you to Mrs. Fing Wang's rooms. There you will find everything open. Follow on. Take the left hand door at the foot of the secret stairs. This is the best I can do."

"Well, it is not very satisfactory," said the old detective, "but with what you know of the place yourself, Alice, I suppose it will let us out."

In spite of the way we became acquainted and the fact that the man is a Highbinder, I have considerable confidence in him. Let us go ahead."

"You must not go further than to give us a start."

"No, no, Mr. Brady. I see it through to the end."

"Don't, please! It is not on your own account so much as on mine. I don't want these Chinamen to tumble to your disguise."

"We won't argue about it now," said Alice. "I suppose we chase right around to Elizabeth street and get a move on with the police?"

They went.

Old King Brady is a power at most police stations, and particularly so at this one.

In a very short time his arrangements were made.

With a force of ten officers, for there was no telling how strong the Tong fiends would prove to be, the old detective led the way around into Mott street, leading Alice in her disguise by the arm as if she was under arrest.

Alice indicated the house, and they entered by the basement way.

The old Chink who guarded the secret panel was taken entirely by surprise.

He was promptly jumped on.

Alice opened the secret panel and eight officers with Old King Brady and Alice ascended to Mrs. Fing Wang's where, as promised, the panel leading to the secret cellar stood open.

And they started down the secret stairs.

* * * * *
Incantations were not working well that trip in the secret cellar on Mott street.

The Chinks stood about the altar in grim silence.

For once a woman was allowed to be present at these ceremonies.

She was Mrs. Fing Wang.

Through the slits in the eyes Harry could see that she appeared to regard the scar-faced man with anything but friendly looks.

Another Chinaman now came in.

Scar-face held up his hand for silence.

Foo Ling stood near Mrs. Fing Wang.

Suddenly a movement was heard outside the curtains.

Just then Foo Ling sprang upon the altar and lifted off the idol's head, revealing Young King Brady.

The Chinks roared with rage.

The Chinese girl now seized hold of a Chinaman and began pulling him about.

As they started to put on the head Old King Brady appeared between the curtains, this being Foo Ling's work as the sounds of approaching footsteps drew closer.

And then it was all over in a minute, for the old detective and his eight policemen made short work of the four Tong fiends.

Harry was promptly released, and Foo Ling and Mrs. Fing Wang were a surprised pair when they discovered that he was a white man, and could talk, which he promptly made plain.

Of course there was nothing said by the prisoners.

Mrs. Fing Wang then piloted the rescuers to young Armstead's prison.

The unfortunate man was too weak to stand, and had to be carried out, but this was not done until after the prisoners were rounded up at Elizabeth street.

Then the Bradys took Armstead home, and in their house he was nursed back to health.

Foo Ling and Mrs. Fing Wang went with them, and Old King Brady, having shown them the contents of the trunks, gave each a hundred dollars and advised them to "beat it," which they promptly did, a badly disappointed pair.

And now at last young Armstead was willing to talk.

"The man you believe to be my father is a fraud, as I

have told Harry here," he said. "As for the trunks, the real ones were shipped ahead of us by the Wells Fargo Express, and I presume are safely in their charge now. Those fake trunks you have here I used as a bluff to head off just such work as I finally ran up against. That is all I have to say."

"And it is not enough, young man, and we have a right to know more," said Old King Brady, emphatically. "There are bones in the trunks, you say, but what have you packed in the bones?"

Then at last Armstead confessed that some of the bones were filled with rough gems found in a cave.

Old King Brady and Harry recovered the trunks and brought them to the house.

They saw certain marked bones opened and the gems displayed.

Singularly enough this harmonized exactly with Harry's dream.

It is impossible to explain these things, and we shall not attempt it.

Enough to say that over a hundred thousand dollars' worth of rough gems were concealed in those same dry bones, but there were no diamonds among them.

And all this wealth belonged to young Armstead.

The Bradys went to the St. Regis to arrest the man Cockburn, but were too late. He was found dead in bed with every symptom of opium poisoning.

Armstead would not enlarge upon his capture. Fen Pok poisoned himself in his cell, so much mystery remained.

The Tong fiends were sent up the river, for the police were only too glad to have caught them foul.

After he got on his feet again Henry Armstead treated the Bradys liberally.

He appeared to have plenty of credit in New York.

One day he drew a large check for the detectives on a prominent banking house, and it was promptly cashed.

He did not attempt to sell his gems in New York, but took them to London.

It was not until some months later that the Bradys learned what he actually realized on them.

And such was the end of another peculiar case.

Try as they would, the detectives could not figure it all out.

What took Young Armstead to Chinatown in the first place?

This remained the mystery of the case of "The Bradys After the Chinese Tong Fiends."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE FATAL FOOT-PRINT; or, THE TRAIL WHICH LED TO DEATH," which will be the next number (512) of "Secret Service."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

"Cumberland, in your good State of Maryland, is about the only town in the United States where they will not furnish a lady with a glass of beer, wine or intoxicating spirit of any kind," said G. J. Brooks, of Philadelphia. "It makes no difference whether the lady is alone or duly accompanied by her husband—she simply can't get any liquid refreshment. I was at one of the leading hotels in Cumberland recently with my wife, and ordered two bottles of beer, thinking to have her consume one of them, but when I ordered the waiter to fill two glasses he politely told me that the Keating license bill prohibited ladies from being served with drinks of that character."

In the Russian Concession at Hankow, China, there are two brick-tea factories, which, with the other two in the British Concession, are undoubtedly the most important industrial institutions of the port. Brick tea is made from ordinary tea dust. It is first steamed in a cotton-cloth bag and then placed in a wooden mold, much the same as is used for making ordinary clay bricks, but stronger and not so deep. The mold is placed under a powerful press and the pressure is maintained until the requisite consistency is reached. The bricks are then removed and wrapped up in common white paper. They are exported in bamboo baskets. The Mongolians before drinking boil the tea so as to get the most out of it. About two and a half ounces of dust in a dry state without steaming are poured into a steam mold on a cylinder, and put under a pressure of two tons. When the tablets are removed from the mold they are wrapped in tinfoil, then in paper, and finally packed in tin-lined boxes. The whole of this export goes to Russia. These factories, which are fitted with costly modern machinery, employ many thousands of natives.

There are many stories told of our late ex-President, Grover Cleveland, to illustrate his dual nature, as a man of iron or of velvet, as the case seemed to demand, but one instance, related by a man of affairs in private often, has never until now appeared in print. He had called on the President at a late hour in the day and had discussed with him weighty matters of policy and statesmanship, and was just about to conclude the interview and take leave, when an almost imperceptible knock was heard upon the door of the private office, the most interesting object in which is the handsome desk made from the timbers of Sir John Franklin's ship Resolute, and presented to the United States by Queen Victoria personally. Mr. Cleveland called "Come in," but the soft rapping still kept up, until he arose and went himself to the door to investigate. As it opened, the White House baby, then "Miss Esther Cleveland," in the arms of her nurse, stood revealed, and her wee fist, in the hand of her nurse, revealed the source of the knocks. In a moment there was a transfer,

and Mr. Cleveland came back to his desk, introduced his small daughter, and, opening a lower drawer on the left side of the historic desk, took from it a handful of toys for the baby to play with. The friend who made the visit said that the scene was only paralleled in his mind by the well-known portrait of Abraham Lincoln and his son Tad, long a classic in the field of domestic art.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

Oklahoma has enacted a law against nepotism. "We had to do something to keep our poor relatives at a distance," explained the legislators.

"Frost has just had a new book published." "Is it a skyscraper or bungalow?" "What on earth do you mean?" "Fifty stories, or one?"

Lawyer—How is it that you have waited three years before suing Muller for calling you a rhinoceros? Countryman—Because I never saw one of the beasts till yesterday at the zoo.

"Frost went 'way down to Maine for a change of air." "He got it, then, didn't he?" "Not much. The first thing he heard when he struck Podunk was a pianola playing 'The Merry Widow Waltz.'"

Undertaker—Shall we arrange to have your husband's funeral at the house on Thursday, Mrs. Snow? Wife (amiably)—Oh, yes—at any hour. I know you won't make noise enough to interrupt our bridge game.

"Paw," said Teddie, reading a vaudeville poster, "what are slapsticks?" "Well, my son," said Paw, to gain time, "what do you think a slapstick is?" "Teacher's ruler," said Teddie, unconsciously rubbing the palm of his hand.

Miss Bridge Fiend—You ought to be able to write fine comedies, Mr. Post. Young Author—You flatter me, Miss Beatrix. Why ought I to? Miss Bridge Fiend—Because you make such amusing plays.

House Hunter—I have looked over that house which you recommended so highly, and I find the walls damp, the shutters half off, the drainage out of order, the cellar full of water, and the roof leaky. Agent—Yes, sir, I know the house is in rather bad condition, but think of its advantages—there isn't a piano in that block!

"I wonder what it is to-day, corsets or kimonas?" mused the conductor. "How do you know it is either?" asked a passenger. "Because there are so many stout people coming downtown shopping," was the reply. "It may not be either corsets or kimonas that are bringing them, but it is something for fat folks to wear. You can't fool me on that. I've been conductor on this line too long not to know the signs. The stout women are out in shoals to-day, which means that there has been a bargain sale in extra large garments advertised. The thin people always take things more calmly when their turn comes. Possibly they think they can get fitted any time. But the heavyweights never miss an opportunity, and the conductor who has learned to put two and two together can tell by the heft of the passengers how the day's advertisements run." The inquisitive passenger said: "That's queer," and opened the morning paper. He turned to the advertisement of the store that stands on the corner where so many stout people had left the car. A line in heavy type at the top of the page took his eye: "Special sale dressing sacques, extra large sizes." The conductor grinned. "What did I tell you?" he said.

THE OLD DETECTIVE'S STORY.

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG.

As an old detective I have had some rousing adventures and queer experiences. One of the latter has been called to mind within a day or two by reading of the death of a man in a neighboring city. For convenience sake I will call him Charles Lennox.

I was attached to the force of a Western city, and we had been running along for many weeks without any break on the part of evildoers when a murder occurred. The janitor of a bank was found dead in the business office of the bank, with the outside doors open. The man had been struck on the side of the head with some heavy weight, and his skull crushed. Nothing had been taken from the bank, and so we reasoned in this way: The robbers had called the janitor to the door on some pretext or other, and as soon as he opened it they rushed in and dealt him the blow. It was the night before a local election, and the approach of people who were carousing or electioneering had rattled the robbers, and they had fled. In these days a bank robber would have coolly shut the door and gone to work on the safe, but they were a different class of men then. If they had not been we should have probably argued differently.

An inquest was held, a verdict rendered that John Shields came to his death at the hands of parties unknown, and he was buried. The robbers had not left the slightest clew behind them, but as I was ambitious to make a name, I was allowed to begin work on the case. In a town twelve miles away I found, after a long hunt, a livery stable man who had let a horse and buggy that night to two strangers, whom he accurately described, and whom he believed to be two brothers. They had told him they were going to Amesbury, but I traced them straight to Blankville, which was the place where the murder occurred. The town where they hired the horse was Rossburg, and they had come there by train in the afternoon. They could have come down to Blankville by the same train, and that they did not I argued was a sharp trick on their part. They had driven away at half-past seven o'clock. The body of the janitor was found about ten. The horse had been returned just before midnight. About ten o'clock, as I had forgotten to tell you, there was an alarm of fire in Blankville, and the fire department was called out to quench a fire which had been set in one corner of a large tannery. The flames had not got much of a start, and were speedily drowned out, and the case was reported as the work of boys.

I had, then, after two weeks' work, a clew. Two bank-robbers, doubtless from Chicago, had come to Blankville to do up a bank, but had been frightened away after committing a murder. I knew just how they reached Blankville, and just how they left it, and I had descriptions of both. You may say I had but little to work on, as the men had come two hundred miles and might not then be within a thousand, or, if they were, they had changed their identity; but even the smallest points will encourage a detective whose heart is in his work. In describing the men the stable-keeper, who was naturally observing, and had a good memory, remembered that the older one carried a lop shoulder, had gold filling in his front teeth, and there was a tremulous motion of the eyelids. You have observed this in people. Those who do it would stammer if they did not wink. There were no points in the description of the other which would serve to identify him on the street. He simply "looked enough like the other to be his brother."

I spent two weeks in Chicago looking for my man, and, although I was well assisted by the detectives, my search was vain. No one could remember a crook bearing that description. I was at the depot ready to take the train for home,

when I ran across a C. B. & Q. R. R. detective whom I had not seen for several months. As we talked about the Blankville murder I gave him a description of my men, and I had hardly done so when he said:

"I know them both, or at least where they can be found. I saw them in R— yesterday, and they are often on the road."

The town he named was about seventy-five miles from Blankville, on a cross-line railroad, and I had not been in it two hours when I located my men. They were brothers, and one kept a bakery and the other a saloon. Both had the reputation of being peaceful, law-abiding men, and they had families.

It therefore behooved me to go slow, and the arrests were not made until they were positively identified by the livery man and I had positive evidence that they were away from home at the time. In each case, when making the arrest, I was asked concerning the nature of the offense or crime, and I replied that it was for the murder at Rossburg. The prisoners were strangely silent, and, though seemingly anxious about the future, they refused to talk of the case. I took them to Rossburg, put them in jail, and in two or three days they were arraigned. They had sent to Chicago for counsel, but he had not arrived. Temporary counsel appeared for them, they pleaded not guilty, and in an hour or two were returned to jail.

You may now ask yourself what case I had against the brothers. As I looked it over I came to the conclusion that my work had just begun. They had left home without noise, if not secretly; had hired a horse and buggy under false pretenses; had driven secretly across the country under cover of darkness. They were objects of suspicion, but I had no proofs. I went to the bank to have some questions answered. It was in summer, and the front door stood open. A new janitor had been employed, and as I entered the cashier was saying to him:

"John, get a paper and wrap around that brick which holds the door back. It is no ornament as it is."

Naturally enough I glanced down at the brick. As the janitor lifted it up I took it from his hand, and the next instant I had made a discovery. There was a clot of dried blood on the brick, and in the clot were sticking several hairs which I knew had come from the dead janitor's head. I had made an important discovery, but had at the same time ruined my case. The brick had been in the office a year or more. The blood and the hairs were evidence that it was the weapon used to strike the janitor with. Then followed the queries:

"Would men come to rob the bank without weapons? Was it likely that the brick was used?" I replied to these in the negative, and I walked straight over to the jail and into the presence of the prisoners and said:

"Neither of you is guilty of the murder of the janitor."

"We are not," they answered.

"You were not near the bank that night."

"We were not."

"But yet you had a secret purpose in coming here that night."

"We had."

"What was it?"

"We will not tell."

That ended the interview. Mind you, every man in the community believed them guilty of murder, and I was the recipient of praise on every hand for what was termed a clever capture. You may think it strange that I went away from the jail as fully determined to clear them as I had been to convict them. The drawback to good detective work is the hesitancy to drop a false scent, or to admit that a pet theory is wrong. I returned to the bank and asked for the average health of the

dead janitor. He had been heard to complain of pains around his heart, but otherwise nothing could be said.

"Gentlemen," I said to the bank officials, "your janitor had gone to his cot for the night. A sudden illness seized him, and in his alarm he made his way to the door to call for help. He had got the door open, when he fell to the floor, probably dead, and in his fall his head came in contact with the brick?"

"That is theory," they answered.

"But I will furnish the proofs. I want a postmortem examination of the body."

I had hard work to get it, but the result was that three reputable directors found that the man came to his death from heart trouble. They mixed in some professional terms and some Latin, but that was the substance of it. The day the two prisoners were discharged from custody I said to them:

"I caused your arrest, but I have also brought about your liberation. Now tell me what brought you to Blankville that night."

"To burn that tannery. It belongs to an estate in which we should have shared, but we were defrauded of our rights. In revenge we sought to burn up \$15,000 worth of property."

I kept their secret until both were dead.

THE DEFENDERS.

During the years 1840-'50 Missouri could boast about as many hard characters as any other State not double her population. Over-run by rascals of all sorts, law and order were at a discount until in self-protection the more honest among the settlers organized a vigilance committee.

David Whitley was chief of the organization, and under his lead it proved a perfect scourge to the criminals, whether real or suspected. To be accused of crime was to be prejudged, and while doubtless doing much good, the Vigilantes were guilty of more than one criminal outrage.

Their stern ministrations quelled the lawless element, however, and having effected this, disbanded. But David Whitley could no longer content himself with peaceful farming as of old. The wild excitement of the past few months had become second nature to him, and he rapidly went down the hill.

A year later he was a drunkard and a ruined man.

He took his family, consisting of wife and one daughter, in the morn of dawning womanhood, and pitched his cabin far away in the wild wood. Inside of the year, by abstaining from liquor, he had a cozy home, and crops in the ground.

Two years later he was prospering finely, having sold to advantage a tract of land, several miles distant, on which now rested a flourishing village. But he could not endure prosperity as well as adversity, and one day he again fell before the whisky demon.

He had been absent from home for two days and nights, when his wife could no longer restrain her fears, and calling their one hired man bade him saddle a horse, then return to her for his message.

She prepared then a note to an intimate friend in the village, who would be most likely to know about Whitley's doings, but still the hired man did not return from the stable.

It was growing dusk, but, as she looked wonderingly forth, Mrs. Whitley caught a glimpse of several dark figures stealing out from the outbuildings.

Like a revelation the truth flashed upon her.

The enemies made by her husband while he led the Vigilantes, and who had once dealt them such a crushing blow, had again found them, and were bent on completing their revenge.

Beyond a doubt the ruffians had first assured themselves that David Whitley was absent from home, and having taken the hired man by surprise, ruthlessly knocking him on the head, they used little precautions in making their approach, or in hiding their bloodthirsty mood.

Nearly a dozen in number, they strode up to the front door, uttering fierce curses when they found it secured.

"Open!" cried the leader, whose voice Mrs. Whitley recognized as that of a notorious gambler and suspected murderer, whose younger brother had been lynched by her husband's band. "Open the door and let us in, or it will be all the worse for you she-devils."

Both discharged their rifles at the same moment, aiming breast high at the pine panels, their bullets penetrating the wood like so much paper.

Not only wood, for a wild, gasping cry from without was mingled with ferocious curses of rage and surprise as there came a heavy fall upon the floor of the porch.

For some minutes all was silence without, but at the end of that time, Haskins, the man already mentioned as the leader, called aloud from his place of ambush, being careful to keep his precious carcass well covered from view:

"Say, you in there! It's no use your fighting against fate. We know you and Flora are alone. We laid for old Dave and knocked him cold on his way home from town, drunk again, as usual."

For her only reply the brave maiden fired a shot in the direction of his voice, with such good judgment that a fierce yell of pain told her the lead was not entirely wasted.

The outlaws withdrew in order to consult.

Much valuable time had already been lost, and fearing to lose his revenge should he delay longer, Haskins determined to force the door with a log.

They were seen by the fair defenders within in time to send a couple of bullets into their ranks, but though both pellets told, neither wound was fatal or disabling. With a loud crash the heavy log was dashed through the frail pine door, knocking down some of the lighter articles of furniture, but the bulk of the barricade remained firm. Using their revolvers, the brave women opened fire through the ragged opening, sending the bullets in swift succession, and with such deadly aim that the surviving outlaws wavered, shrunk back, and finally turned to flee, only to find themselves surrounded and their retreat cut off by at least a score of well-mounted and armed men!

What followed was little better than a massacre. Too terrified and demoralized to think of self-defense, the ruffians were butchered as they fled, not one living to clear the grounds. And Haskins fell by the hands of David Whitley himself. Then came the explanations. As stated, Whitley had fallen a victim to his old enemy, spending those forty-eight hours in beastly drunkenness, not only spending all the money he had, but selling his horse and weapons, drinking and gambling the proceeds away. When all was gone, he left the village for home, still too much of a man to ask for the poison on credit. It was in this state that he saw the enemy murder his hired man, and recognizing them, he knew that they meant still darker deeds.

The sight and knowledge of the danger threatening his loved ones sobered Whitley, and knowing that by making any demonstration in his present defenseless state he would only insure their destruction, he turned and raced back to the village, there telling his story and quickly collecting the force which he led back to the rescue.

That night thoroughly cured the drunkard. He never again touched a drop of liquor, and eventually died a wealthy and honored citizen.

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