

# 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.*

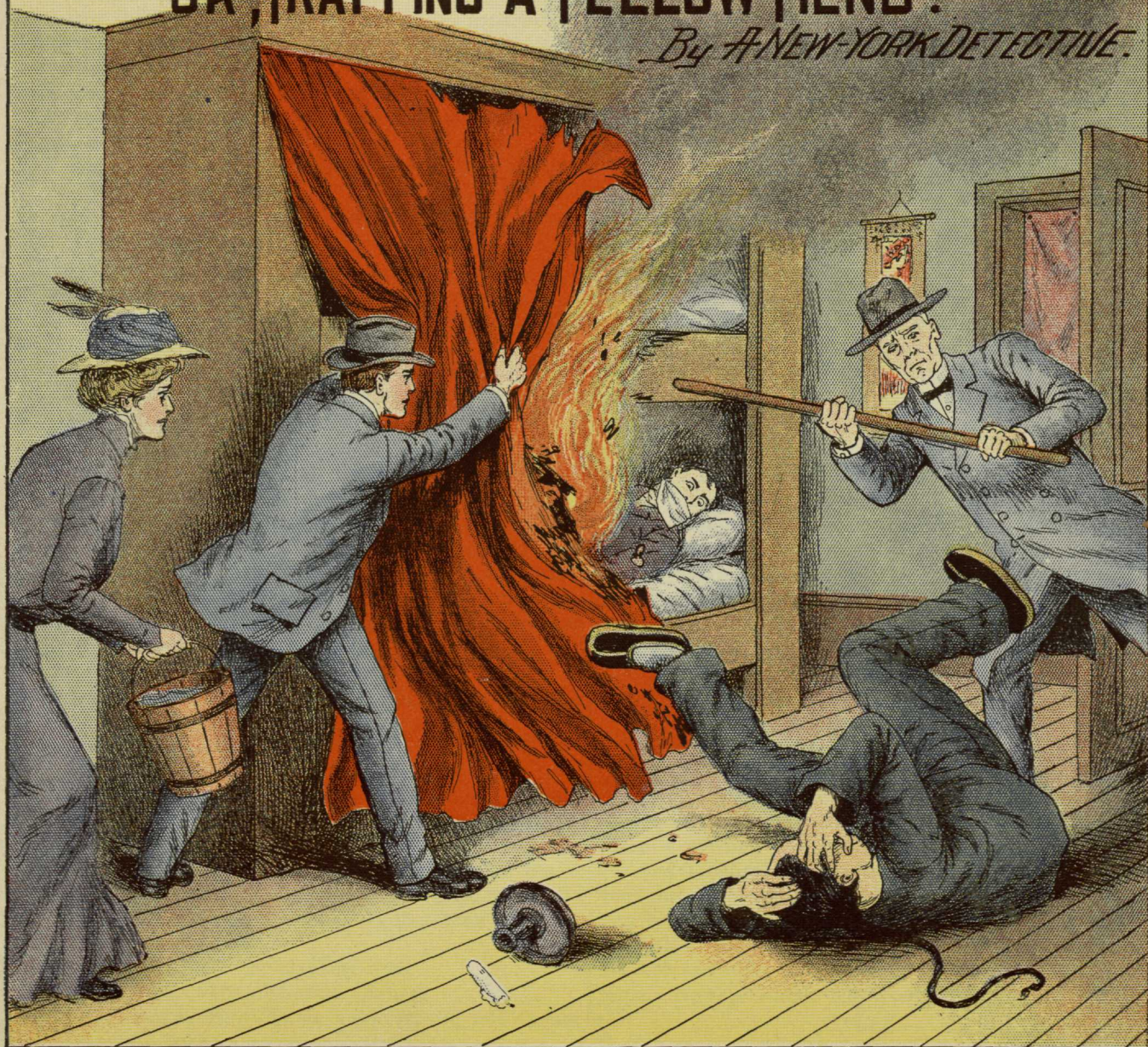
No. 546.

NEW YORK, JULY 9, 1909.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADYS SHADOWING A CHINAMAN, OR, TRAPPING A YELLOW FIEND.

*By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.*



The bunk in which the prisoner lay was now all ablaze. Harry clutched the curtains and tore them away, while Alice ran with the water pail. Old King Brady, meanwhile, had felled the yellow fiend with his own club.



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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE VANISHING OF MRS. RICHARD.

The steamer *Allianca* from Colon was docked late one hot July afternoon at her New York pier, and there was much delay on the part of the custom house inspectors in examining the passengers' baggage.

One party in particular was held back almost beyond the limit of endurance, and that for no apparent reason.

It consisted of four persons; an elderly lady of decidedly foreign appearance; a young girl of about nineteen, evidently her daughter, and a person of considerable beauty; a young man in his twenties, who wore a white pongee suit, and bore the stamp of a gentleman all over him; also a Chinese man servant in European dress.

At last the inspectors got round to this party, and their baggage was promptly passed.

A hack had been in waiting for an hour or more to carry them to their destination, and this the ladies now entered, assisted by the young man, their trunks having been strapped on behind.

The Chinese servant, his face as impenetrable as a wooden block, stood by the door awaiting orders.

Perhaps he thought the young man was about to follow the ladies into the cab, but he did not.

Instead he turned upon the Chinaman and said:

"Retire, Funk Twee. I wish to speak privately with Mrs. Richard."

The Chinaman stepped back out of hearing.

As he did so a tall man, dressed in a suit of black alpaca, and carrying a small grip which bore the inspector's chalk mark, and a green umbrella, came forward from the gangplank.

If the young man, whose head was now in the coach, had looked behind him he would have observed that this individual spoke a few hurried words to the Chinaman as he passed behind him.

The language spoken was certainly Chinese.

And yet the man with the green umbrella bore little resemblance to a Chinaman.

But there was some.

It existed principally in the slanting eyes.

As for the rest, the man's skin was rather coffee colored than yellow. His jet-black hair was cut close under his Panama hat.

He was exceedingly thin, and his high cheek bones, taken in connection with the color of his skin, made him look more like a South American Indian than anything else.

And yet there were the slanting eyes.

Those at least were distinctly Chinese.

The Chinaman, Fung Twee, however, did not answer

him nor even look at him. The man with the green umbrella moved on towards the hack.

Meanwhile the young man was addressing the elder lady.

"We are all ready to start. Shall I get it now, Mrs. Richard?" he asked.

"If you kindly will, Mr. Fontaine," was the reply.

"Then give me the order on the purser. I presume he will not deliver it to me otherwise."

"I think he will. I told him that you would apply to him for it just as we were starting."

"Oh, I did not understand that."

"You will find it all right, I am sure, Mr. Fontaine. My poor, dear husband arranged everything so that it would go smoothly, as he always did."

Tears filled the lady's eyes, and she pressed her handkerchief to them.

The young girl clasped her hand.

"Now, mamma, be good," she whispered. "Remember, you still have me."

"I will go at once," said Mr. Fontaine.

He turned and almost fell into the arms of the man with the green umbrella.

"Doctor!" he gasped.

"Pardon, Senor Fontaine," said the man, speaking with a strong Spanish accent. "I did not know that you were about to turn at that particular moment. I wished to say farewell to Madam Richard and her charming daughter."

"They are in the cab," replied Fontaine, scarcely concealing his dislike for the speaker.

He turned away, and went on board the steamer.

The custom house inspectors had now departed.

Mrs. Richard's was the only carriage left on the pier.

Now was the time to do a little smuggling, if such was Mr. Fontaine's intention.

He went directly to the purser's office.

"I have come for Mrs. Richard's box," he said.

"Yes?" replied the purser. "Have the examiners all gone?"

"All have gone, as far as I can see."

"Very well. Here is it. We shall both get into trouble if you are mistaken."

"I am not mistaken, nor do I anticipate trouble even if it is not so. Mrs. Richard positively assured me that there is nothing dutiable in the box."

"And I believe it. At the same time I want to warn you that Richard positively told me he felt that he was bringing the contents of this box to New York at the risk of his life. I don't know what he meant, and I did not ask him, for he was an old and dear friend of mine. However, here it is. Look out for yourself, that's all."

Young Fontaine took the box which the purser now produced from a cupboard.

It was round, and about the shape and size of a hat box.

The material of which it was made was some sort of dark and highly polished wood. Over the top and along the sides it was studded with what appeared to be brass-headed nails.

"The thing is light enough, whatever it is," remarked Fontaine. "The weight appears to be in the box. These brass nails, I suppose."

"I haven't the faintest idea what the box contains," replied the purser, "but incidentally Mr. Richard assured me that the heads of those nails were solid gold."

"Indeed! The box appears to be very old."

"It is old, according to poor Richard. But I have told all I know about it, Mr. Fontaine. I will wrap it up in paper for you."

"And I must not permit my curiosity to keep Mrs. Richard and her daughter waiting. Good-by, Mr. Jarvis. I trust I may some day have the pleasure of meeting you again."

They shook hands when the box was wrapped, and young Fontaine departed.

As he went down the gangplank, feeling that he had delayed longer than was necessary, he saw to his surprise, and not a little to his concern, that the carriage was not on the pier.

"What does this mean?" he asked himself. "But perhaps," he mentally added, "they have gone out on the street, and are waiting for me there."

And this theory seemed more probable from the fact that the big gate at the end of the pier was now shut.

There was nobody to enquire of.

Both the "doctor" and Fung Twee had departed.

Herbert Fontaine hurried out on the street through a side gate, running right into the Chinaman, who had an evening paper.

"Where is Mrs. Richard?" demanded Fontaine.

"In college," replied the Chinaman. "Madam Lichard, she talk with doctor. She sendee me to buy evening paper. I comee back now."

"Why, the carriage is gone, Fung!"

"Gone! No, no, Mlister Fontaine! You must be mistakee."

"No, I'm not mistaken, either. It is gone! I went back to the stateroom to get this hat Miss Bella left behind her. The carriage is gone off the pier."

"Den I don'tee know nloating about it!" cried the Chinaman, looking alarmed. "Whatee we do? Whatee Boss Lichard say?"

"He is past saying anything, poor man. But, Fung, this is very strange."

"Belly strange, yair. I go gettee plaper. Me comee fight back. Callege gone!"

There was no use in prolonging the conversation.

Herbert Fontaine saw that.

As for Fung Twee, he seemed most terribly troubled, at which Fontaine did not wonder, for he knew how highly Mrs. Richard thought of the man.

"Probably she concluded to go on to the hotel for some reason," he said. "I will follow her. But what will you

do, Fung Twee? You better come along. The detectives will get you if you don't look sharp."

"Me no flaid, boss. Me gottee plapers allee light. Dley dassen't lest Fung Twee. Me go 'long, you say so."

"Come," said Fontaine.

There were two cabs which had lingered outside the gate.

The driver of one now approached Fontaine and asked him if he wanted to ride.

"Yes, in a minute," was the reply. "Tell me, did you see a hack, a four-wheeler, come off the pier with two ladies inside, just a few minutes ago?"

"I did," replied the man. "Two ladies and a Chinaman. I took particular notice on account of the Chink."

"A Chinaman! Impossible! There could have been but one Chinaman. The one standing here."

"Standing where?" demanded the cabby.

"Why here, right behind me," retorted Fontaine, looking around.

But there was no Chinaman behind him.

Fung Twee had vanished.

"That fellow slid off just as you began to talk to me," said the cabby. "Didn't you see him go?"

"Indeed I did not. Which way?"

"I did not notice."

It was a pity he did not, for Fung Twee was no longer in evidence.

Herbert Fontaine grew greatly excited.

"There is something wrong here!" he cried. "That fellow was the lady's servant. There is no other Chinaman who could have been in the hack."

"There was one, though," persisted the cabby.

Then Fontaine thought of Dr. Ramozo, and described the man.

Not that there was any thinkable reason why Mrs. Richard and her daughter should have gone away with the doctor, who was merely a chance acquaintance on the steamer.

The cabby now became confused.

He thought the man he had seen might be such a person as Fontaine described, and then again he might not. He could not tell.

Fontaine engaged the fellow.

Then they looked on the pier for Fung Twee, and even went back on board the steamer.

But they failed to find him.

It was now quite dark, and there would have been every opportunity for the Chinaman to slip away unobserved if he was so disposed.

Filled with a thousand fears, Fontaine now ordered himself driven to the St. Denis Hotel, at which house he knew Mrs. Richard proposed to stay.

But upon reaching the hotel his fears were confirmed, for no such persons had arrived.

Nor did they arrive.

Fontaine hung around the hotel lobby until midnight, when he was forced to admit that everything pointed to the disagreeable suggestion that Mrs. Richard and her daughter had been kidnaped by Dr. Ramozo or a Chinaman.

But for what mysterious reason.

This the young man was utterly at a loss to divine.

The truth was, he also was but a chance acquaintance of these people.

It began by his showing attention to Mr. Richard, who was a very sick man when the party came aboard the *Allianca* at Colon.

On the second day out Mr. Richard died.

As he particularly requested to be buried at sea, this was done.

After that the attention of Herbert Fontaine to the widow and her daughter were redoubled.

The result was what might have been expected.

Fontaine and Bella Richard fell in love with each other.

And when the widow learned from Fontaine's own lips, and she believed his statements, that he was a young man of independent means, traveling for pleasure, she offered no opposition.

Just how far the business had proceeded the widow did not know, but when the *Allianca* made her pier at New York she had come to regard her daughter as practically engaged to Herbert Fontaine.

But why should Dr. Ramozo want to run away with Mrs. Richard and her daughter?

This question Fontaine kept asking himself all through a wakeful night.

He could think of but one explanation.

If Mr. Richard had considered that the possession of the gold-studded box endangered his life then that might be the reason.

Evidently the box must contain something which the dead South American explorer, for such Mr. Richard had been, must have regarded as very precious.

Naturally Herbert Fontaine's curiosity was aroused to the highest pitch before morning came.

But this did not make him feel justified in opening the box by any means.

It did, however, alarm him for his own safety, and he resolved that just as soon as the place opened he would deposit the box in his own vault in the Safe Deposit Company.

He also determined to at once engage the services of the best detective bureau in New York, and next morning he inquired of the hotel clerk as to which of the many detective bureaus he had better go.

"Of course I belong in New York," he said, "but I have been traveling for three years, and am feeling pretty well out of date. What detective bureau can you recommend for the handling of a very peculiar case?"

"Why, if you ask me," replied the clerk, "there is only one that I would care to recommend. It is the Brady Bureau of Union Square."

## CHAPTER II.

HERBERT FONTAINE TAKES THE CASE TO THE BRADYS.

Herbert Fontaine really knew very little about New York City, although it was his birthplace, and he always regarded it as his home.

His mother died when he was but a child, and he was cared for by relatives in the country.

After that it was first boarding school and then college.

Before he could graduate his father died and left him a large fortune.

After that the young man gave up college and started on his travels abroad.

And thus it happened that he was now returning to New York a comparative stranger.

But Herbert knew where his Safe Deposit Company was all right, and when he had seen the box safely there he started for Union Square.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when he reached the office of the Brady Detective Bureau.

"I want to consult a detective about a case," he said, handing his card to a clerk.

"Old King Brady is not in," replied the clerk, "but his partner, Young King Brady, is in his office."

"I daresay he will do as well," replied Herbert. "Be good enough to hand him my card."

The card was accordingly handed in, and after a minute the request came for the owner to follow it.

Herbert was shown through one office and into another, where a young man of about his own age sat at a desk.

This was Young King Brady, partner of the world-famous Old King Brady, who in every sense of the word may be reckoned as the most skillful detective in the United States.

"Sit down, Mr. Fontaine," he said, pleasantly. "Old King Brady is out just at present, but if I will do, I am at your service."

"I daresay you will fill the bill," replied Herbert, taking a chair at the side of the desk.

"Well, then, state your case, and we will see what can be made out of it. If there is any way of helping you out, I shall be pleased."

Sensibly, Herbert introduced himself particularly first, and made Harry, as Old King Brady always calls his young partner, understand that he was the son of the late New York millionaire, John Fontaine.

Then he launched out into the case.

"Singular business," remarked Harry, when he had finished his story. "The first question I want to ask you is what you know about this Dr. Ramozo?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I don't know anything about him," was the reply. "He informed me that he came from the interior of Colombia, and that he was a practicing physician. He seemed to be a very intelligent man. He spoke English fairly well, and as he sat at my table we naturally became acquainted. But when you come to ask me what I really know about the man, my answer must be nothing at all."

"Did he pay special attention to Mrs. Richard and her daughter?"

"I can hardly say that. You see, after her husband's death, Mrs. Richard kept her room most of the time. As for Bella, I must confess that I monopolized her. I doubt if Dr. Ramozo talked with her an hour all told during the entire voyage. Then you must remember, Mr. Brady, that I have only the statement of an ignorant cab driver to go by. I am not at all sure that Dr. Ramozo had anything to do with the affair."

"Exactly; but the fact remains that the man was left with Mrs. Richard and her daughter when you went aboard the steamer after the box."

"That is so."

"In a case like this we have to consider every point."

"Proceed. I will raise no further objections."

"But I want you to. You must talk freely. Now about this Chinaman who gave you the slip. Where did these Richards pick him up?"

"Mr. Richard was an explorer. He had been traveling in the back country of Colombia and Venezuela, which is practically unexplored. The man was with them all through their journeyings. I don't know where they engaged him."

"Did the ladies accompany the explorer?"

"Yes."

"Are they Americans?"

"Mrs. Richard is an American woman. Her husband was a Frenchman. The daughter was born in Peru."

"Then I take it he was the famous Jean Ricard, known as an explorer in South America and the Far East for many years."

"Yes. He changed his name to John Richard. There was very little of the Frenchman left about the man."

"They fully trusted this Fung Twee?"

"They seemed to. To tell the truth, I had very little conversation with them about the fellow."

"Who engaged the cab?"

"Fung Twee."

"Did he know anything about this box being placed in the purser's charge?"

"I can't say."

"Did Mrs. Richard know what it contained?"

"I assume she must have known, but she did not tell me that she did know in so many words. In fact I never heard of the box until just before we made our pier."

"Did Bella know what was in it?"

"I have no means of knowing. We had no conversation on the subject."

"How did Mrs. Richard express herself when she asked you to get the box?"

"She simply said that her husband had deposited a box containing a valuable antique with the purser. That he was particularly desirous that it should not be opened by the custom house officers. She assured me that the box contained nothing dutiable, and she then asked me to try to delay the inspection of their baggage until the last, and after the inspectors had gone to go aboard and get the box. I promised to do this, and I was able to so manage it that hers was the very last trunks inspected. Then I went after the box, leaving her in the carriage with Bella, talking with Dr. Ramozo, as I have told you."

"Was Fung Twee expected to ride in the carriage with them?"

"No; on the driver's seat."

"Can you think of any particular reason why Mrs. Richard should want to see an evening paper?"

"No; I cannot."

"To get back to Dr. Ramozo, you say he had slanting eyes like a Chinaman."

"He certainly did."

"Were they very marked?"

"Quite so."

"Did you ever observe another case of such eyes while in South America?"

"Never."

"Well, I should say that was about all, Mr. Fontaine. Do you want us to try to find these ladies?"

"I do, most assuredly. Mrs. Richard told me that she hadn't one friend left in America. Her intention was to go to France to visit her husband's relatives. I don't know who will help the unfortunate lady unless I take the matter up. You must spare no expense. I will be responsible for all."

"Did Mrs. Richard have much money with her?"

"I know nothing about her circumstances beyond the fact that her daughter told me they were not rich people. But what do you think can be the motive for this kidnaping, Mr. Brady? If you will express your opinion freely I shall be obliged."

"Well, you must understand that any expressions of opinion I may have is the merest theory, but in view of what Mr. Richard told the purser I should say that the chances are altogether in favor of the motive being to get hold of whatever was in that box."

"It certainly seems so to me. If we only knew what was in it."

"It seems to me that you are perfectly justified in opening the box."

"I had rather not do it to-day. If we don't hear from them by this time to-morrow, you have my consent."

"You see," continued Harry, "that there is only one other theory to account for this disappearance, and that is that the old lady wanted to shake you."

"I hardly think it likely."

"Very unlikely, considering who you are. Well, we will probably be able to help you out, Mr. Fontaine, but I must consult my partner first. As it happens, we have a case in which Chinamen are mixed up on hand at the present time, but it is not one of particular importance. What is more, it is likely to be a long-drawn-out affair, and there is little doubt that Old King Brady will be willing to take up a case on the side for a man like you."

"But you will have to ask him first?"

"Yes; and in order to do that I shall have to go to Chinatown, where both he and Miss Alice Montgomery, the lady partner in our bureau, are supposed to be at present. Suppose you accompany me there. There might be such a thing as our running into Fung Twee on Mott or Pell streets. In which case shadowing him might bring good results."

"If I could only lay my hands on the fellow once I'd make him talk!" Herbert cried.

To try it would be an exceedingly foolish piece of business. The man went off of his own accord. There can be no doubt of that. If you hire a doctor, leave your case in his hands. That is the best way. Shadowing is what we want."

"Well, go ahead," said Herbert. "I'll leave you to manage things in your own way."

"If we take your case at all, you must," said Harry. "But, come on. We shall see."

And in company with Young King Brady, Herbert Fontaine then proceeded to Chinatown.

"Ever here before?" inquired Harry as they turned into Pell street from the Bowery.

"Never!" was the reply. "But I must say it is rather

a disappointment. It looks like anything but a Chinese colony."

"But the people and the signs?"

"They are the only things which suggest it."

"You have been in China?"

"In all the large coast cities, and in Peking."

"Then you can scarcely be expected to get up much excitement over New York's little Chinatown. But come, we go in here."

Harry turned aside into a dirty doorway.

The building was one of those old-fashioned brick structures so common on Pell street.

On the ground floor was a Chinese grocery store. The door by which they entered opened upon a dirty hall.

Young King Brady led the way up two flights of dark stairs.

"Is Old King Brady supposed to be in this building?" asked Herbert.

"Yes; we have rooms here," was the reply. "We are working to trap certain opium smugglers. A slow, tedious job, but it is for the United States Secret Service Bureau, so we can't refuse the case, you see."

Reaching the third floor, Harry rapped on a door in a peculiar way.

It was opened by a person whom Herbert took to be a young Chinaman.

"Is the celebrated O. K. B. in?" Harry asked in English.

"Not just at present," was the reply, "but I am expecting him in every minute. Meanwhile, if it pleases Y. K. B., he can come in and wait."

Young King Brady entered and closed the door.

"Alice," he said, "allow me to introduce Mr. Fontaine, who wishes us to take up a case which has a Chinaman mixed in with it, but whether it is going to turn out to be a full-fledged Chinese case or not is doubtful."

Herbert was amazed.

He could scarcely bring himself to believe that this good looking young "Chink" was a white woman in disguise.

But such was the case.

She was none other than the accomplished female sleuth, Miss Alice Montgomery, to whom the male partners in the Brady Detective Bureau owe so much of their success.

"It is a little hard on me, Harry, to introduce me in this disguise," she said, "but I suppose you have good reasons. What about this case of Mr. Fontaine's?"

Young King Brady went on to explain it at some length.

Herbert, who sat by the window which opened on the yard behind the house, added a word or two now and then.

They were thus engaged when a tall, elderly man, of striking appearance and peculiar dress, entered the room.

A long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white felt hat with an extraordinary broad brim were very much in evidence.

"Ah! Here is Old King Brady now!" exclaimed Harry, rising.

At the same instant Herbert, who had been looking

out of the window when the old detective entered, gave a start, and exclaimed:

"Look! Quick, Mr. Brady! Over there in the middle window of that house. It is Fung Twee!"

### CHAPTER III.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MRS. RICHARD AND BELLA.

Nothing could have been further from the thoughts of the Widow Richard than the idea of running away from Herbert Fontaine when he left her there talking with Dr. Ramozo.

"So we're all about to part, madam," said the doctor, looking in at the carriage door. You have been deeply afflicted. Allow me to express the hope that you will find good friends, and that both you and Miss Bella will find health and prosperity."

"I thank you, Dr. Ramozo," replied the widow.

Bella shuddered.

She could not endure the sight of the man.

To her those narrow, slanting eyes seemed like the eyes of some unclean animal. She had detested the man from the hour she first met him.

And yet there was no good reason why, for certainly Dr. Ramozo had been politeness itself.

"I trust we may meet again, and soon," added the doctor. "Meanwhile farewell."

He extended his hand, and the widow took it, saying simply "Good-by."

Reaching across the mother's lap, Dr. Ramozo attempted to shake hands with Bella, but she pretended not to see his hand.

"Well, good-by again," he said, and withdrew.

"Bella, how could you be so rude?" asked Mrs. Richard. "We shall never see the man again. Surely it would have done you no harm to shake hands with him."

"I hate him, and I also fear him," Bella replied.

"Fear him! Why should you? He has been very civil, I am sure."

"Mother, I have an idea that he is one of those mysterious enemies father feared."

"Heaven forbid! But why should you have such a fancy?"

"Remember, we never saw Dr. Ramozo until after father's death. He must have been on the steamer from the time we left Colon. Why did he keep himself in hiding?"

"Perhaps he was seasick."

"I don't believe it. Oh, I wish Herbert would return!"

The words were spoken with a shudder, and they were no more than uttered when suddenly a Chinaman in American dress sprang into the cab and closed the door.

"Fung! How dare you! Why, what impudence!" cried the widow, who was somewhat short-sighted.

"Oh, mother! It is not Fung! He is a stranger!" gasped Bella.

At the same moment the cab started rapidly up the pier.

And now the Widow Richard realized that the person who had so suddenly intruded upon her was a man of quite different appearance from Fung Twee.

But before she could add a word to Bella's exclamation the fellow pulled out a revolver and pointed it at her.

"See, misses lady," he hissed, "you holler, dlen me shootee you! See! You be good!"

By this time they were out on West street.

Mrs. Richard was so frightened that she gave a gasp, and fell heavily against her daughter.

She had fainted!

"You yellow fiend!" cried Bella, "See what you have done! You have killed my poor mother. What do you mean by this?"

"Me no know," replied the Chinaman, coolly. "Me gettee money catchee you. Dlat allee me know, allee me care."

"Who gave you money to catch us? Why?"

"Me no know; but say, me workee good for me boss. Me shootee you, so you holler! Yair. Dlat allee light."

They were striking across town, but Bella, who knew nothing of New York, had not the faintest idea where they were going.

She was equally at a loss what to do, for she was a timid girl by nature, and the sight of a revolver had its full effect.

So for a few minutes she sat in silence.

Meanwhile Mrs. Richard revived.

After she had pulled herself together she astonished Bella, for she addressed the Chinaman in his own language, and he responded.

As for Bella, this was a revelation.

She had supposed that her mother could speak only English and French.

The conversation was exceedingly brief, however.

Then the widow turned away.

"Oh, Bella," she moaned. "This is terrible!"

"But what is it all about?" demanded Bella. "Were you really speaking Chinese to that dreadful man?"

"Yes, yes. I understand a little. I learned it when your father and I were exploring in China before you were born."

"What does he say?"

"I can get nothing out of him. But hush, child! Don't talk. I can guess what this means."

"Is it what father always feared? Something in connection with that dreadful box?"

"Hush, hush! He must not hear it mentioned. Now mind what I say, Bella, or it may cost us both our lives!"

"Oh, I am so glad it all happened before Herbert got back!" cried Bella, who did not seem disposed to be hushed up.

"How can you say so?" whispered her mother. "If Herbert was here, he might be some protection to us. The dear knows we need it now!"

They rode on, the two women talking in whispers, the Chinaman sitting in the stolid silence of his race.

"Where do you suppose he will take us?" asked Bella.

"How can I tell? I asked him, he would not say"

"Try him again."

The widow once more spoke in Chinese.

But it was useless.

The Chinaman shook the revolver at her, but made no reply.

"Fung Twee must have been in this plot," said Bella. "Surely he must have seen this man jump into the cab."

"I am almost inclined to think so myself," replied Mrs.

Richard, "and yet your poor father had full confidence in the man."

"And he had no reason to. Fung was a stranger to us all in Bogota, and applied for the place."

"That is so. Your father may have been deceived. But, Bella, you must prepare your mind for the worst. There can be little doubt that the cabman is in the plot, and that they are taking us to Chinatown."

"It is terrible! And it was Fung Twee who engaged the cab."

"That is so. I begin to lose confidence in Fung Twee."

"And well you may. But Herbert will know what to do. He will find us. That is my hope."

It was Mrs. Richard's only hope, and not a very strong one at that.

She blamed herself much that knowing what she did she should have trusted to any Chinaman; but all too late to regret that now.

The ride continued. They were now passing through a street lined with big business buildings.

Many times both the widow and her daughter were on the point of calling for help out of the window, but the sight of that grim guardian and his revolver deterred them, so they made no move.

At length they came into a large open square where there were many elevated railroad tracks.

Out of this in a minute they turned into a brilliantly lighted street, lined with squalid houses.

Mrs. Richard's heart sank, for she saw that the signs on all the stores on both sides were either Chinese names done in English letters, or full-fledged Chinese signs.

"Oh, Bella!" she breathed, "it is as I feared. They have brought us to Chinatown!"

The Chinaman appeared to hear and understand.

He spoke rapidly in Chinese.

Mrs. Richard clung closer to her daughter, and did not answer him.

In a moment the hack stopped.

The Chinaman did not get out, but sat waiting.

"What did he say?" whispered Bella. "Let me know the worst."

"Just that he would shoot us if we attempted to break away from him after we got out of the carriage."

"Do you really believe he would dare?"

"My dear, I do."

"But the law—the police."

"My dear child, these Chinamen are a law unto themselves. They are ready to dare anything. Can't you see that he is waiting now until he is sure the coast is clear?"

And the fears of the mother were thus communicated to the daughter.

Neither dared to make a move.

A wait of at least ten minutes followed.

Then a Chinaman in native dress appeared and looked in at the window.

He began talking loud to their captor, but was instantly checked, and the conversation which followed was in the lowest of whispers.

Then the man went away, and there was another wait.

The widow heard the beginning of the conversation, and understood.

"So you have got them," the newcomer said.



"Hush! She speaks Chinese!" was the answer.

One remark more she caught.

"It was:

"Get help. We must take no chances in case they try to escape."

"The case is hopeless, Bella," she whispered. "We have got to go with these men."

Foolish woman!

She seemed to imagine that she was in China or some other semi-barbarous country.

If she had known New York better she would have realized that once she got on the sidewalk all she had to do was to pull back, scream for all she was worth, and her yellow captors would vanish like the mist before the morning sun.

At last the word came for them to alight.

The Chinaman got out first and extended his hand to Mrs. Richard.

"Come," he said in his own language. "You go into the house now, and remember if you make a sound you will be instantly shot. All whom you see here are my friends."

There were six Chinaman lined up on the sidewalk between the curb and the door of a shabby old brick house, with a Chinese butcher shop on the ground floor.

They were all in native dress, and all had their eyes on the widow and her daughter.

No revolvers were displayed, but each man had his hands hidden up in the baggy sleeves of his blouse.

And Mrs. Richard, well knowing the ways of these people, firmly believed that at least a dozen revolvers were ready to do business in case she disobeyed.

So she followed her captor in through the dark doorway, and Bella followed her.

The Chinamen closed in behind them.

When they entered a room on the second floor all hands crowded in after them.

The door was shut and locked.

Needless to say that the unfortunate women were dreadfully frightened, and they clung to each other in their terror.

Not only were they at the mercy of these men, but their three trunks, which contained all their belongings, had been left on the rack behind the hack.

The situation had become strenuous to the last degree.

But there was worse in the wind, as they were soon to learn.

Their captor now produced two new white silk handkerchiefs.

"I must blindfold you now," he said to the widow, in Chinese; adding:

"Of course I need not tell you that now any trouble you may make will work against you."

But Mrs. Richard needed no such warning.

"We are to be blindfolded," she said to Bella. "We will have to submit."

"But what do you suppose they mean to do with us?" demanded Bella.

"My dear, I begin to hope that what I believe is the truth. If so, there is still a chance that we may escape these men, and I am determined to avail myself of it."

"Then I hope you will do nothing of the sort, if it means

that you are going to act contrary to father's wishes," retorted Bella.

The widow was silent.

Bella was thinking of the gold-studded box.

She had often seen the thing, and although she did not know what it contained, she did know how her father had treasured it.

Just then Bella felt that she would sooner sacrifice her own life than to act contrary to the wishes of her deceased parent.

But there was her mother to think of, so she said no more.

The blindfolding was carried out.

Then Bella was told in English to take hold of her mother's dress behind.

Someone took Mrs. Richard by the arm and led her forward, then backward, then to the right and then to the left.

The widow realized that all these movements were merely intended to confuse her.

She was perfectly aware of the fondness of the Chinese race for underground dens and secret rooms.

That she and her daughter were about to be taken into some such hiding place she could not for an instant doubt.

Presently she was led forward.

They went down stairs and along a passage. Then it was up a few steps and down as many more.

They were told to bend their heads, and then to straighten up again.

They passed along another passage, and then, turning to the left, stopped for a few minutes.

A whistle sounded, and after a while there came the shuffle of many feet.

Their captors seemed to be leaving them.

For a minute silence followed.

Then suddenly a door was heard to slam and a key turned.

"Ladies, remove your eye bandages," a deep voice said. Mrs. Richard lost not an instant in obeying.

To her utter astonishment, there stood Dr. Ramozo.

#### CHAPTER IV.

HARRY STARTS TO SHADOW THE CHINAMAN.

Young King Brady sprang to the window, taking care to keep a little back.

"Point him out to me," he said, "but move back a little: It is best that he should not see us looking at him."

"There he is. That man standing at the middle window on the second floor of that house," said Herbert, pointing as he moved back.

Old King Brady and Alice pressed near and looked over his shoulder.

They all got a look at the Chinaman.

But while they were looking the man suddenly vanished.

"Has he gone?" questioned Alice. "I can't make out." Old King Brady produced a glass and turned it on the window.

"I can't see him," he said. "It would seem to me that

he has gone out of the room, but then even with a glass like this my sight is none of the best."

"Let me have a look," said Harry, and he took the glass.

"There is no one there," he answered.

"What is it all about?" demanded Old King Brady.

"We want that man!" cried Harry, "and to get him we must act quick. Governor, follow me around there and we will see what we can do. You come, too, Mr. Fontaine."

"And what about me?" demanded Alice.

"You better remain here. You know you are liable to have a caller any moment."

Alice silently assented, but it was with some inward reluctance.

The fact is, she had been waiting for the "caller" for many days, and she was heartily sick of the inaction of her life. She had, moreover, become interested in the story Herbert Fontaine had been telling.

"Note this house well," said Harry, as they passed out. "You may have to come here alone some time."

"Now give me an outline of this gentleman's case as quick as you can," said Old King Brady, as they started around on Mott street, where the house fronted at the window of which they had seen Fung Twee.

Harry complied.

And so well does he know how to state a case in brief that by the time they had reached Mott street Old King Brady knew all that it was necessary for him to know in order to understand in a general way what it was all about.

"It all hangs on the box," he said promptly. "Doubtless it contains what these Chinamen want. If I recollect aright, this man Jean Ricard, accompanied by his wife, made some very extended explorations in the interior of China a number of years ago."

"It may be so. I'm sure I don't know," Herbert replied. "All I have heard about is their work in South America."

"This box need not necessarily contain anything of great money value," continued Old King Brady. "It may be some sacred relic or something of that sort. Something stolen from a temple. The Chinese prize such things highly, and I have known of more than one case where they have gone to great lengths to recover them when they have been stolen by explorers, missionaries and the like."

"I know nothing about it," replied Herbert, "but I do know that the man I saw standing at that window is Fung Twee."

"How can you be so sure?" questioned Henry. "Not that I am throwing any doubt on your assertion, but all Chinamen bear a general resemblance to each other."

"I have good cause to remember Fung Twee. Besides you must remember that I saw the fellow daily all the way up from Colon."

"Do you take the case, Governor?" demanded Harry, abruptly.

"Certainly," replied Old King Brady. "We are not at all busy, and since we have those rooms on our hands we are in good shape to work up a Chinese case."

"I can give you a retainer if you wish," said Herbert. "I have money with me, and can pay you right away."

"No retainer is necessary," replied Old King Brady. "Although you might not be aware of it, young man, I once successfully conducted a case for your father, and it will give me pleasure to help you out in this trouble."

"You are very kind to put it that way, I am sure."

"But here we are at the house," said Harry, stopping.

"Sure it is the right one?" asked Herbert.

"Positive," was the reply. "I haven't been looking at those back windows for more than two weeks without knowing to which house they belong. It is a bad joint, too. Twice we have trapped Chinese gangs under this place. I supposed the secret rooms had been closed up, but the Chinks may have opened them again."

"Or this case may have nothing to do with secret rooms," replied Old King Brady. "It is hard to tell. However, both Harry and I have been in where we saw that Chinaman, so we will proceed there now."

They ascended the stairs.

The house was one of the older buildings on Mott street which had been raised up and provided with a new front.

Passing to the end of a long hall, Old King Brady rapped smartly on the last door.

There was no response.

Knocking again, and louder, and still receiving no answer, the old detective tried the door.

This brought results, for the door yielded to his touch.

The room behind was entirely unfurnished and deserted.

"As I feared," remarked the old detective.

"There is but little doubt, Mr. Fontaine," he added, "that Fung Twee was spying on you."

"Why, I hardly think so," was the reply. "He did not appear to look at me."

"You can't tell anything about it when a Chinaman is concerned," said Harry; adding:

"But, by the way, Governor, isn't this the room where we discovered the secret panel?"

"No," replied Old King Brady, "that was on the floor above; besides, the police detectives nailed that up, and the owners of the property were made to fill up the underground passage, and so cut off the secret rooms."

But it would be just like the Chinks to open them up again."

"It is possible, of course. Let us see if we can discover anything."

Old King Brady proceeded to examine the walls of the rooms.

He discovered nothing; still the examination was not as thorough as he sometimes makes.

They returned to the street.

"Let us stand on the opposite side of the way a few minutes and watch," said Old King Brady. "The fellow may show himself. As Harry says, this is a case which calls for shadowing. It is not at all likely that Fung Twee is the principal in this business. The thing for us to find out, Mr. Fontaine, is who that person is."

"They took up their place across the way.

"Now go all over the case again," said Old King Brady. "We have plenty of time, and I want to hear it in all its details."

Herbert complied.

But such details as he was able to add to Harry's brief explanation was not calculated to throw much light upon the mysterious affair.

They had been talking about twenty minutes when a Chinaman in American dress came out of the door of the house they had been watching.

"There he is!" cried Herbert.

"I will take him in hand," said Old King Brady. "You come, too, Mr. Fontaine. We will see what the fellow has to say for himself."

"But I thought you were going to shadow him," said Herbert as he started to follow Old King Brady across Mott street.

"So we are. Leave me to manage it."

Harry did not accompany them.

"Isn't Young King Brady coming?" demanded Herbert, looking back. "I don't see him anywhere."

"No; he is not coming," was the reply.

Herbert said no more, for there was that about the old detective's manner which made him reluctant to press the point.

They got in behind Fung Twee, who did not seem to have seen them, and followed him down to Chatham Square.

Here the Chinaman stood hesitating for a minute, and then turned up.

But before he could take three steps Old King Brady laid a heavy hand on his shoulder.

The Chinaman swung around with a sharp exclamation.

"Oh! Mislér Flontaine!" he gasped, and he gave another gasp when he saw Old King Brady's shield.

"What made you run away from me, Fung Twee?" demanded Herbert.

"Me flaid," whined the Chinaman.

"Afraid of what?"

"Dlat you have me 'lestid."

"But what nonsense! If you had nothing to do with Mrs. Richard's disappearance, why should you be afraid?"

"Me no know. You lookee terrible mad, Mislér Flontaine."

Meanwhile Old King Brady had been looking the Chinaman over.

He could not recognize him as anyone he had ever seen before.

"Leave me to question this man," he said; adding to the Chinaman:

"Your name is Fung Twee?"

"Yair, boss."

"You are just off a steamer. Let me see your papers. I am a Secret Service detective."

"Yair, me know. Me see your goldee plate, boss. Me gottee plapers allee light."

"Let me see them quick, or I'll put you under arrest."

Fung Twee winked hard.

It was evident that he was afraid of the old detective.

He began fumbling in an inside pocket.

Suddenly Old King Brady put the question to him:

"Do you know who I am?"

"Sure ting, boss," replied the Chink.

"Who? What is my name?"

"You Ole Kling Blady, de dletective."

"I see you are well posted. You are no stranger in New York. Out with your papers, quick!"

Fung Twee produced them.

They were perfectly regular, and the name and photograph attached corresponded.

"I see you were given permission to go to Panama and return six months ago," said the old detective.

"Yair. Dlat so."

"What took you down there?"

"I went cookee on ship."

"Why didn't you come right back?"

"Me sick. Me losee job."

"And then?"

"Me hab no monee, me go slervant with Melican gentleman to Blogota."

"And then?"

"He die dead. Dlen I go slervant with Boss Richard, and he die, too."

"He tells the truth," said Herbert. "Mrs. Richard informed me that he had formerly worked as a servant for a mining engineer who died at Bogota."

"Do you know what has become of Mrs. Richard and her daughter?" demanded the old detective, sternly. "If you do, you better tell."

The Chinaman assured him most positively that he knew nothing about the matter. His manner seemed sincere, and he expressed the greatest concern when Old King Brady informed him that nothing had been heard of Mrs. Richard and Bella since they left the pier.

"Where are you stopping?" demanded Old King Brady.

Fung Twee gave an address on Pell street.

It rather surprised Herbert that Old King Brady made no allusion to the appearance of the Chinaman at the window of the house on Mott street, but he wisely concluded not to interfere.

Old King Brady wrote down the address.

"If you see anything of Mrs. Richard, come up to my office and tell me," he said; adding:

"You know where it is?"

"Yair, me know," replied Fung Twee. "Me can go now?"

"Yes, you can go now," replied the old detective.

"Belly good. Thank you. So-long. So-long, Mislér Flontaine."

And away went Fung Twee, looking highly pleased.

"Why, aren't you going to shadow him?" demanded Herbert. "You said you were."

"He is being shadowed," replied the old detective, quietly.

"Being shadowed? Who by?"

"My partner, Young King Brady."

"Oh!"

"Do you doubt it?"

"Why certainly I don't doubt your words, Mr. Brady."

"But you didn't see Harry. Perhaps you noticed that young tough who jostled you just now."

"Why, yes. Can it be——"

"That he was Harry? He was, no one else. And now, Mr. Fontaine, let me suggest that you join Miss Montgomery at the Pell street rooms and await results, that is,

unless you are willing to take me to the Safe Deposit Company and let me open that box, which I advise."

Herbert hesitated.

"What do you think I ought to do about that matter?" he asked.

"I have just said that I advise it."

"Well, it is up to you."

"No; in this case it is up to you. If Mrs. Richard really has no other friend in the city but yourself, I think you ought to be willing to act. For my part, I can only act as you direct."

"Suppose I go to the St. Denis and see if she has turned up."

"Not necessary. We can telephone and learn in a few minutes."

"Then let me do that."

They did so, telephoning from the Summit Hotel, on the corner of Canal street.

The answer was Mrs. Richard had not appeared, but that a gentleman had called to see Mr. Fontaine, and had left his card.

"What is his name?" demanded Herbert, who was doing the telephoning.

The name was Dr. Ramozo!

#### CHAPTER V.

##### PRISONERS UNDERGROUND.

Mrs. Richard's heart sank as she found herself face to face with Dr. Ramozo.

For, as has been said, the widow knew that her dead husband had reason to fear Chinese enemies.

She had not considered the doctor a Chinaman in spite of his resemblance to that race, but the matter had been several times discussed.

Now she felt that she had been singularly blind, and that Dr. Ramozo must be a Chinese halfbreed at least.

"Why, doctor!" she exclaimed, "it cannot be possible that you are in any way responsible for this outrage?"

Dr. Ramozo's answer was in Chinese.

And now, to Bella's surprise, her mother asserted herself as she never seen her do before.

"I won't!" she cried in English, at the same time stamping her foot. "I positively refuse to speak one word which my daughter cannot understand. Talk English! I see now that you must be at the bottom of all this.

The doctor smiled evilly.

"Well, I am!" he replied. "I, alone, am responsible, and you know what I want, Mrs. Richard. There is only one way out for you and your daughter. You will have to give up."

The answer was spoken with a strong accent.

Heretofore Bella had taken the doctor's accent to be Spanish, but she now felt that it could not be altogether that—that it must be a mixture of Spanish and Chinese.

"I will not give up!" cried the widow. "What you want my poor husband bought and paid for. Find it if you can."

"And that is your challenge?"

"That is my challenge, Dr. Ramozo; or whatever your name is. I am not the woman I once was, but you have aroused all my energy. I defy you! Find it if you can!"

"Very well," replied the doctor. "I accept the chal-

lenge, and will proceed to see what can be done. To begin with, I shall examine your trunks, ladies; not that I expect success to come from that effort, but it is the proper way to begin."

He unlocked the door and blew a whistle.

After a minute the Chinaman who had captured the widow and her daughter appeared.

The man was now in native dress.

He scarcely glanced at the ladies. His face was as expressionless as a wooden block.

"Let the trunks be brought in," ordered Dr. Ramozo, in Chinese.

The Chinaman retired.

"I suppose you are curious to know who I am, Mrs. Richard?" the doctor then said.

"I have expressed no curiosity, and shall express none," was the reply.

"But just the same you have it. Well, I will satisfy that curiosity. I could fully identify myself if I chose to wash this stain off my face which makes me look like a South American, but as it took time to put it on, I shall not do that. Meanwhile look here."

He pushed aside his long black hair on the right, and exhibited his ear, which had previously been wholly concealed.

There was but half of the ear in evidence.

It had been slit perpendicularly, and the half furthest from the head was missing.

Mrs. Richard shuddered and turned her head away.

"You know me now?" demanded the doctor.

"Yes, you yellow fiend! I know you!" cried the woman. "You are Ram Zo!"

"Exactly. You might have guessed. The addition of an extra o, and the joining of the syllables gave me a very good Spanish name, you see. I rather like it, and I think I shall keep it after my work is done."

Mrs. Richard sank into a chair and buried her face in her hands.

Bella placed her hand on her mother's shoulder, and stood glaring at the "doctor," as for convenience sake we shall continue to call the man.

He scarcely looked at her, and that was a relief.

At first Bella had feared that she might have attracted his fancy.

But she saw that it was evidently not so. The whole matter appeared to hinge on the mysterious box.

The room was fitted up as a bed chamber, and from certain little "fixings" which had been placed around, evidently by a woman's hand, it looked as if it might have been especially prepared for their reception.

The doctor now lighted a cigarette and began pacing up and down the room. He had not even removed his hat.

Bella could scarcely believe that this was the same polite "South American gentleman" whom she had sat at table with on the steamer.

But Chinamen in their way are good actors—there are none better in the world.

"Come," said the doctor at length, "cheer up, Mrs. Richard! The situation is not so bad after all. I only want what belongs to me. Give me that, and you and Miss Bella shall be promptly set free."

"It don't belong to you," flashed Mrs. Richard, removing her hands from her face. "It is no more yours than it was my poor husband's, and you know it. What is more, you will never get it! So there!"

"We shall see about that," retorted the doctor. "There are ways and ways. Let us consider a few of them. By the way, it is a relief to see you show flashes of your old spirit. It reminds me of the time you and I and Professor Ricard were traveling in the wilds of Western China. You were plucky enough then, little lady! Remember the night the savage Thibetans attacked the camp? You shot four with your own hand."

"For which may heaven forgive me!" groaned the widow.

"Bah! What could you do?" retorted the doctor, shrugging his shoulders. "If they had captured the camp they would have killed us, but yours and you would have been carried away into the mountains and never seen or heard of again. You have nothing to reproach yourself with on that score. But I suppose what you really mean is that you wish you had only shot me along with the rest."

"I did not mean it, as you well know, Ram Zo. Probably it would have been better if I had."

"You may think so. Naturally I can't agree with you. But I was about to speak of a few ways which I might try to make you come to terms. For instance I might put you and your daughter on starvation diet, nothing for breakfast, same for dinner, ditto for tea. I might separate you, and turn Bella over to my Chinese friends to look out for. I might——"

"Stop it!" cried the widow. "Do you want to drive me mad?"

"Indeed, I might even do that if it was necessary to accomplish my purpose; but here come the trunks, so for the present I shall say no more."

A trampling of feet was heard in the hall.

The doctor threw open the door and a procession of Chinks filed in.

They had the widow's trunks, and there were two to a trunk.

They set them down and departed.

"Suppose you give me your keys, Mrs. Richard?" said the doctor. "It will save me the necessity of spoiling your trunks, as I shall otherwise be forced to do, for open they have got to come."

Mrs. Richard silently handed out her bunch of keys.

But before he could take them, Bella snatched them away.

"Here, you horrible man!" she cried. "You shan't paw over my things. I simply won't have it. I'll open the trunks and you can satisfy yourself that whatever it is you are looking for is not in either one of them."

Bella felt that it must be an object of some size when the doctor raised no objection to this, and she proceeded to open the trunks and to overhaul their contents.

The doctor watched everything as it came out.

Bella repacked each trunk after she had finished unpacking it.

The doctor watched patiently.

When the contents of the last trunk had all been displayed he turned away with a shrug.

"It is not there, and I did not suppose it was," he said.

"Come, Mrs. Richard, better avoid trouble and tell. I suppose the professor kept it in the box and shipped it to New York ahead of him. I was afraid he had, but, of course, there was always the chance that he took it out and put it in a trunk."

"I will never yield, Ram Zo!" cried the widow.

And then going back on her own words, she began to talk in Chinese.

The doctor promptly responded, and they held quite a conversation.

Mrs. Richard grew fearfully excited, but the doctor remained perfectly calm, and did not even raise his voice once.

Bella was simply amazed at the ease with which her mother carried on the conversation.

At last the doctor, saying something particularly emphatic, emphasized it by shaking his finger in the widow's face and withdrew, locking the door behind him.

Then, as might have been expected, the afflicted lady went all to pieces, and poor Bella had quite a time with her, so hysterical did she become.

But at last she calmed down sufficiently to talk.

"Mother, what is this mysterious thing?" demanded Bella then.

"Hush!" breathed the widow. "I must not tell it here. The very walls may have ears. Oh, Bella, you do not know these people as I do! Of course there are many good people among them, but when you find a bad Chinaman you have found the worst man alive."

"And Dr. Ramozo is that sort?"

"He certainly is."

"Strange you did not recognize him on the steamer."

"There was no reason why I should."

"But father expected trouble on account of this mysterious thing which he left concealed in the gold-studded box."

"That is true, but not from Ram Zo. He believed that yellow fiend to be dead."

"Oh! Then I see why you are so careful. There may be others to fear."

"There may, indeed. Believe me, Bella. That man is playing what I consider a very dangerous game."

"What did he say to you when he went out and shook his finger at you?"

"That he would try the effect of starvation first. Whether he meant it or not, he said that not a soul would come near us for twenty-four hours."

"Well!" cried Bella. "It is one consolation to feel that for that length of time at least we shan't have to look at his ugly face. Perhaps by that time Herbert will come to the rescue with the police."

"Hush!" breathed the widow. "If Ram Zo knew that Herbert had the box he would not hesitate for an instant to murder him."

"If he got the chance. Herbert might have something to say about that."

And the doctor was as good as his threat.

The night passed, and no one came near the prisoners.

Still they occasionally heard the sound of footsteps outside the door, so they knew that someone must be watching.

In the early morning these footsteps grew more frequent, but at length they ceased altogether.

The room was evidently underground, and it was fearfully hot and stuffy.

It was only by her watch that Mrs. Richard could follow the passage of time.

At last a positive calamity came upon them.

The hanging lamp, which was their only source of light, burned itself out for want of oil.

The poor ladies were now in the dark, which made their situation infinitely worse.

And some hours of this sort of thing followed.

Bella could tell by her mother's talk that she was on the point of yelling.

At last over on one side of the room, quite distant from the door, a curious noise attracted their attention.

"Oh, what is that?" groaned Mrs. Richard. "What new trouble is coming upon us now?"

"Hush!" breathed Bella. "I think it is only rats in the wall."

But it was not that.

Suddenly a light flashed upon them.

Mrs. Richard screamed as she saw a Chinaman step into the room through a secret panel in the wall.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ON THE TRAIL OF FUNG TWEE.

Young King Brady had undertaken a job at which he felt particularly at home.

Shadowing!

It sounds easy, but in reality it is most difficult.

Practice makes perfect, however, and the young detective's practice extends over several years.

Hence Harry anticipated no trouble with his man, and more especially so since he had adopted a disguise which would permit him to pass almost anywhere a Chinese servant would be likely to go.

But right away at the start Young King Brady found himself up against conditions which his disguise would not work so well.

Fung Twee walked up the Bowery to its end, turned and went on through Astor Place, and crossing Broadway, went north on the west side.

He turned in at the St. Denis Hotel.

Now, as it happened, the office force of this hotel had been recently changed, and Harry knew it.

Dressed as he was, he scarcely liked to follow the Chinaman in.

But there is a way out of every difficulty, and Young King Brady promptly found one out of this.

He hung about the entrance until he spotted the hotel detective to whom, although the man was a stranger to him, he made himself known.

"I am shadowing a Chinaman who just came in here," Harry explained. "Can't you find out for me what became of him?"

"Sure I can," replied the detective. "Just stand where you are. I'll be right back."

"I'll wait on the other side of Broadway," replied Young King Brady. "I am particularly anxious not to attract the man's attention."

"All right," said the detective. "I will come right over there."

He joined Harry inside of five minutes.

"Why, that fellow went upstairs by request of a guest," he said. "He is with him now."

"Who is the guest?"

"A South American doctor. Name of Ramozo, who, by the way, looks mighty like a Chinaman himself."

"That fits in with my case."

"Of course you don't have to tell me, but I am somewhat curious to know what sort of a case you have on hand."

"Lady and her daughter supposed to have been kidnaped by Chinamen from the Panama line pier yesterday."

"Oh! And is this Dr. Ramozo in the job?"

"There is no particular reason to believe that, but the doctor was a fellow passenger of these people on their voyage up from the Isthmus. I wish you'd keep an eye on him. Bill the Brady Bureau for any expense you may be at."

"Sure, I'll help you. Glad to."

"When did Dr. Ramozo register here?"

He came first about nine o'clock this morning and inquired for a gentleman who registered last night, a Mr. Fontaine."

"Yes. That's right."

"Is Fontaine mixed up in the deal, too?"

"He is a friend of the lady and her daughter. We are working for him. Did they meet?"

"No. Fontaine had gone out, and he has not been in since. When I learned that the doctor asked for a room I was opposed to letting him have it, for he looked like a cross between a mulatto and a Chink, but the manager thought differently."

"Is his room near Mr. Fontaine's?"

"It is on the same corridor, on the other side, further down."

"Well, look sharp, but now as I see my man coming out, I must be on the move."

Fung Twee's session with Dr. Ramozo had been a short one.

He came out of the hotel and walked down to Eighth street, where he stood for some time on the corner.

Harry thought that he was waiting for a car. Perhaps this was so, but the man allowed several cars to pass him.

At last, however, he boarded one going west.

Harry got on the same car, paying no apparent attention to the Chinaman during the ride to the Christopher street ferry, where Fung Twee left the car and walked leisurely along West street until at last he turned in at a Chinese laundry.

Harry strolled past several times.

Fung Twee stood talking to one of the laundrymen, who kept on industriously ironing all the while.

The third time Harry passed the place he saw that the pair had adjourned to the back room.

The red curtain which cut off this room was drawn back, and Young King Brady could see them sitting at a table smoking cigars.

All this looked harmless enough.

But the fact that Dr. Ramozo had taken up his quarters

at the St. Denis, and was there called upon by Fung Twee, looked highly suspicious.

Yet Herbert Fontaine had only mentioned the doctor casually, for he entertained no suspicion of the man.

Patience is the one thing necessary in a case of shadowing, and Young King Brady had to exercise a lot of it now.

For two hours elapsed and there was nothing doing.

At last a Chinaman, roughly dressed, whose bronzed features made it appear that he was probably just off of some ship or steamer, came down the street carrying a large parcel wrapped in newspapers.

Twice Harry saw this man glance behind him, and he seemed to be eyeing everybody who passed.

When he reached the laundry he made a sudden dive through the door.

"Opium smugglers, surest thing!" thought Harry. "Can that fellow have come off the Allianca? Can it be possible that he is one of the gang we have been after so long?"

And the thought greatly increased Young King Brady's interest in Fung Twee.

He had been lurking in a doorway further down the street.

Now he passed the laundry again.

The curtain was drawn between the back room and the store. The Chinese sailor man was nowhere in evidence.

Harry got across the street and stood behind a telegraph pole.

A cat watching a rat hole could not have exercised more patience, and it was needed, for another hour passed before anyone but customers passed in or out of that laundry.

At last the man came out without his bundle.

Harry observed by his appearance and walk that he had been hitting the opium pipe.

He merely glanced at him and let him go, for Fung Twee was his game.

And then, after another long wait, came Fung Twee, and he had a bundle of about the same size as the other had carried in, but it was done up in brown paper, such as Chinese laundrymen use.

All this appeared to have little to do with the case of Mrs. Richard and her daughter, but it certainly appeared to have a great deal to do with smuggled "hop."

Fung Twee now took the back track and boarded an Eighth street car of the Brooklyn line going east.

Harry got on the car, fully expecting that it was going to be a case of returning to Chinatown.

It proved otherwise.

Fung Twee stuck to the car until it landed him at the Williamsburg plaza, where he left it, and started with his bundle north.

"He is going over to North Sixth street," thought Harry. "I wonder if there isn't some mistake? It begins to look to me as if I might be shadowing the wrong man."

Still the matter had developed interest enough as it was to keep Young King Brady down to business, and he trailed on after his Chinaman.

Now over on the "North Side," as the district of Williamsburg lying north of Grand street is locally known, there is a little Chinatown.

It is a very little one, and it centers around about two blocks on North Sixth street.

It began through peaceably disposed Chinks of the On Leong "tong," or society, getting out of New York's Chinatown to avoid the frequent revolver raids of the Hip Sing tong, or "Highbinders" society.

Young King Brady knew all about it, having been there many times.

Harry's guess proved to be quite correct.

Fung Twee traveled on over to the north side and entered a ramshackle frame tenement of the sort so common there.

There was no store on the ground floor.

The whole building appeared to be given up to Chinamen, judging from the red paper signs posted in the hall beyond the open door.

Harry was able to see the man ascending the stairs, but whether he went on to the third floor or not it was impossible to tell, and the chances are Young King Brady's shadowing would have come to an end right here but for the skill he has acquired in the art of remembering voices.

This point Harry had made his especial study.

He prides himself upon being able to remember any voice he has once heard for a long time, and those he hears frequently become so firmly fixed in his mind that he never forgets them.

It was the only thing which could aid him now.

He waited on the block a little while watching the doorway.

Several Chinks passed in and out, but there was no sign of Fung Twee.

At last Young King Brady boldly entered and ascended to the second floor.

The hall was dark and dirty, and, as it is always the case with Chinese tenements, all doors were closed.

As he had the hall to himself, Harry was able to listen at these doors.

There was only one room in which talk was in progress, and it was in Chinese.

"I am afraid I should not recognize his voice, even if I heard it," thought Harry.

For he had only caught it on the fly as he passed Old King Brady and Herbert Fontaine while they were talking with Fung Twee, and then the few words spoken by the Chinaman had been in pigeon English.

Behind the door where the talk was going on it was all Chinese.

The voices sounded altogether different to Harry's ears. But he had better luck on the floor above.

Here in the back room were two voices to be heard engaged in earnest conversation.

Both were speaking Chinese, but Harry, listening, was soon satisfied that one of the speakers was certainly Fung Twee.

There was a certain whine about the Chinaman's voice, as has been already mentioned.

This whine Young King Brady distinctly recognized now after a few moments' listening, although he could not understand a word that was said.

"How in the world am I to get next to this outfit?" he thought.

Of course to attempt to learn what the talk was about was hopeless.

But it was possible to find out what was going on inside.

Harry looked around for the scuttle ladder, and easily located it in a closet.

He ascended to the roof, and found, as he hoped, a fire escape in the rear.

Looking down over the gutter, he saw that it passed midway between two windows, from either of which access was to be had to the iron balcony.

Harry promptly descended.

This was better than if the fire escape had been directly behind one of the windows, for it gave Young King Brady a chance to hide.

Harry made the most of it.

Concealing his body as best he could, he took a hurried glance into the window nearest the hall.

And he knew as he drew back that he had gained his point.

For in the room into which he peeped was Fung Twee standing beside a table.

An elderly Chink was sitting on the other side working a "sampan" or counting machine.

Spread out upon the table were a number of packages of opium; the paper which had enclosed the Chinaman's bundle lay upon the floor.

The opium packages were done up in the usual style, and one of them lay open on the table.

Clearly the old Chink was calculating their value on his sampan, and was preparing to pay Fung Twee.

"Just a little private venture on the part of Mrs. Richard's servant," thought Harry, "but he knows where to dispose of the stuff all right, so after all this may be the holdout of the gang we are after—one of them at least."

He drew back to think.

The fire escape was crowded with washtubs, flower pots and other things.

It seemed old and shaky, and Harry decided that it was carrying about all the load it would bear.

"I may as well arrest him," Young King Brady determined. "He don't look like a man who would put up much of a fight."

Just then he caught the sound of an altogether different voice—a woman's.

He peeped in at the window again.

It was as he supposed.

A Chinese woman stood on the other side of the table.

She was old and had big feet. It looked as if she might be the opium dealer's wife.

As she was facing the window, Harry drew his head back in a hurry.

In doing this he shifted his position a little.

The fire escape squeaked and trembled.

"This thing will be coming down if I don't look sharp," Young King Brady thought.

He peeped again, exercising every precaution.

The old man was now counting money, while the woman was engaged in untying the opium packages.

Evidently the old fellow was not buying a "pig in a poke."

It seemed as good a chance as any to jump in and make the arrest.

Young King Brady looked around to see if he was being observed, but he could not discover anyone looking at him.

He laid his hand on his revolver, and was just about to boldly enter through the open window and arrest Fung Twee when he heard the Chinaman say in English, which we render correctly, although it was not so spoken:

"And now, my friend, I have something to tell you, which it will pay you to listen to, for there is a lot of money in it. Speak only English, for I do not want your wife to hear."

"What is it?" demanded the opium buyer. "If it is anything out of my line I don't think I want to have anything to do with it."

"Wait till you hear what I have to say, and you will think different," replied Fung Twee. "Do you remember Ram Zo?"

The old Chink gave a sharp exclamation and began talking volubly in Chinese.

"No, no!" cried Fung Twee. "I tell it only in English. Yes, he is the same man, but now he calls his name different. He calls himself Dr. Ramozo."

#### CHAPTER VII.

ALICE BREAKS ORDERS AND GETS HERSELF INTO TROUBLE.

Alice, although as good a female detective as ever worked at the business, possesses one failing.

And who is there who does not fail in at least some one point?

Alice's failing is a certain impatience, which at times certainly does interfere with successful detective work.

She had been now three weeks watching a rathole, so to speak; or in other words, waiting in that room for a certain white woman, the wife of a Chinaman, to come to her with information likely to lead to the beginning of a trail which, if followed, might lead the Bradys to their opium smugglers.

But as yet there had been nothing doing, and Alice's patience had become completely exhausted.

After Old King Brady and Harry left the room with Herbert Fontaine, Alice got to thinking much about the case the young millionaire had brought to them, and she felt a longing to take hold of that or any other case which might give her more active work.

She also remembered the secret rooms beneath the house in the rear and the adventures which she and Harry and Old King Brady once had there, already alluded to.

The desire to have another look at those rooms grew on Alice.

She had seen the Bradys and Herbert Fontaine appear at the windows.

Indeed, Harry, who is her devoted slave and hopes some day to marry Alice, had waved his hand to her upon leaving, saying, by a secret sign, of which the Bradys have a regular code, that they had met with no success.

"The Chinese have opened up the underground dens again, that's all," thought Alice. "If the Bradys expect to find the secret panel in the same place it was before they expect what they won't get. Of course, the Chinks



have changed its position. I should like to wager that I can find it, then."

And the more she thought of it the more Alice wanted to try her luck.

At last she yielded to the impulse.

"I'll just locate it and come away," she said to herself. "Of course it won't do to venture down into the underground rooms. That is man's work."

She determined to go, and she went, getting around on Mott street, just after Old King Brady and Herbert Fontaine started for the Summit Hotel to do their telephoning.

But Alice had no expectation of seeing them.

She had figured it out that they had probably abandoned the field long before.

She had no fear, for her Chinese disguise was perfect.

Moreover, Alice can speak Chinese like a native, being the daughter of a missionary, born and brought up in China.

So she entered the Mott street house boldly and passed upstairs.

She knew that the room into which she proposed to go was unoccupied, Harry having told her so by a secret sign.

Thus, when she found the door unfastened, it was no more than Alice had expected.

She immediately began to search for the supposed secret panel.

And where the Bradys failed, Alice succeeded.

They had confined their search to the side where the panel had been before and to the end of the room towards the back yard.

Alice took the opposite side and, sure enough, success crowned her efforts, but it was quite an accident, for she touched the secret spring inadvertently.

A narrow space within the walls was revealed, from which there were stairs, so narrow as to scarcely admit the passage of one person and as steep as a ladder, leading down.

"I knew it! I was sure of it!" muttered Alice. "What could the Bradys have been about that they failed to get next to this?"

She stepped inside, curious to see what the mechanism of the fastening really was.

As she crowded into the narrow space she accidentally jostled against the panel and it closed with a sharp click, leaving Alice in the dark.

"Careless!" she murmured. "This will never do. Old King Brady will never forgive me if I get captured by Chinamen in here."

She made all haste to get out her flashlight, and when she turned it upon the secret panel Alice discovered, to her dismay, that there was no trace of a fastening on this side.

Evidently the secret spring had been set into the wood—the Chinese are most expert at such work.

But whatever the true explanation was, Alice, after the most careful examination, failed to find any means by which she could open that secret door. She threw her whole weight against it many times, but in vain.

She was now simply disgusted.

Here she was trapped, and what was more, she had deliberately trapped herself.

Certain at last that she was not going to be able to get out by the way she had come in, Alice started to explore.

And, to tell the truth, she rather enjoyed the prospect, for she is brave almost to recklessness.

"Anyway, it is a break in the horrible monotony of staying in that room," she said to herself. "I daresay I shall find a way out and, as it is daytime, the risk is not so great."

She descended the ladder.

At its foot she came upon a hole cut through the foundation wall.

It looked like a new break and was barely big enough to enable Alice to crawl through.

"Leads into the old secret passage, of course," she thought. "I knew very well some gang would take up with the place, sooner or later, and for that matter I don't believe the landlord ever closed it up."

And, sure enough, after she got through the hole, there was the same old passage.

Alice knew that it led through to Pell street, where before the Bradys' raid, beneath the very house in which they now had rooms, a secret joss-house had been conducted.

And out of that room Alice knew the way, or thought she did.

"I may slip out of this without the least trouble," she assured herself.

Flashing the light before her, she advanced boldly.

At the end of the passage she had reason to change her mind about the doings of the landlord.

She remembered two doors, one opening into a vault in which Young King Brady had been held a prisoner for awhile, the other into a second passage which led directly through to Pell street.

Alice tackled both doors, which were unfastened and made of iron.

The space behind each door was bricked up from floor to ceiling.

And apparently there was no other way out of the place, save by the direction in which she had come.

"This won't work," muttered Alice. "There is some humbug here. The Chinese would never have gone to the trouble of making that new secret panel for nothing. Let me see; let me see."

And she flashed her electric light up and down the walls.

It was but a minute before the riddle was solved.

The Bradys have had much to do with such situations as this, and Alice has had her full share.

In the case of the righthand door the bricks seemed solid enough, but with the one at the left it was different.

Alice felt certain that the bricks were merely set in a box.

Perhaps the intention of the landlord had been good enough, but the Chinamen had bribed the workmen in charge not to fully carry them out, Alice thought.

At any rate, she now felt certain that the bricks simply represented an inner door, and she started out to find the secret spring which controlled its movements.

It did not take long.

The spring was set in the floor and worked by the foot.

When Alice trod on the round-headed iron button the bricks swung slowly inward.

They were set in a box, as she had supposed.

Made wise by experience this time, Alice took more care.

Examining the door, to see if there was any way to holding it open, she discovered a hasp and staple, and having thus secured it, she hurried along the well-remembered passage to its end.

Nothing was changed here.

Alice came up against the room in which the secret josshouse had been carried on at the back.

The only way out of the passage lay through the room in question, and the entrance on this side was by a secret panel, which she found unchanged.

Alice listened, but could hear no sound.

She then flashed her light upon the panel and, easily locating the spring, threw it back, flashing her light inside.

The room which had been the josshouse was now fitted up as a bed chamber, and there stood two ladies in black, clinging to each other in apparent terror.

"Who are you? Do you come here as a friend or an enemy?" demanded the elder of the pair, in Chinese.

"The Richard women, surest thing!" thought Alice.

"This is great! If I can only manage to get them out of here it will be one on the Bradys!"

She instantly determined to keep her incognito, for awhile at least.

"I come as a friend," she replied in Chinese. "Are you Madam Richard?"

"That is who I am, good man. In the name of justice, help us!" replied Mrs. Richard, using a Chinese form of speech which fitted the situation.

Alice took care to secure the secret panel open and advanced.

The ladies backed away in evident terror.

"Oh, you need not be afraid of me!" said Alice. "I do not belong to the gang who captured you. I am a detective. See?"

She flashed her shield.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Richard, "and who sent you here?"

"Mr. Fontaine."

Bella caught the name.

"Oh, ma, I knew that Herbert would not desert us!" she exclaimed. "He has engaged detectives, just as I said. Of course he had to get a Chinaman to work on a case like this."

"Mrs. Richard," said Alice, pretending not to understand this, "tell me who is at the bottom of your capture? It is necessary that I should know."

"He is a man named Ram Zo," replied the widow. "He pretends to be a South American. He calls himself Ramozo."

"And why has he made you prisoners here?"

He thinks I have something which he wants, but it is not so. Please do not ask me any further questions. Get us out of here, and Mr. Fontaine will reward you well."

"That is just what I propose to do," said Alice. "Is that door locked?"

"It is. Can we not get out by the way you came in?"

"Unfortunately my retreat is cut off. Still, three of us may be able to burst in the secret panel which closed on me. I was not able to do it alone. But allow me first to examine that door."

Alice tried the door.

"It is not only locked, but it is bolted on the other side," she announced. "I can do nothing with it. The only way is to try to break through the secret panel I refer to. Will you follow me?"

"Anything to get out of here!" cried Mrs. Richard. "We have been locked in since early yesterday evening. We are almost starved."

"Let us hope we may be able to remedy that in a few minutes," replied Alice. "Now come."

And she led the ladies back by the way she had come.

They had scarcely reached the brick door when the sound of footsteps and voices talking in Chinese were heard behind them.

"Oh! Our escape has been discovered!" gasped Bella. "They are coming after us!"

Alice was equally alarmed.

She hastily closed the brick door and, pushing the iron door shut against it, looked for some way of securing it, but there was none.

"Come! We must not lose an instant!" she exclaimed.

She led on through the secret passage and up the steep stairs.

Before they were halfway up the stairs the voices were heard again, but Alice could not make out what was being said.

"Oh! They will get us!" wailed Bella. "I shall die of fright if they come up behind me. I know I shall."

"Keep cool!" cried Mrs. Richard. "The young man is going as fast as he can. Here, get in ahead of me, Bella. At least I shall know how to talk to them. Oh, that yellow fiend, Ram Zo! If he is with them I feel as if I could strangle him with my own two hands!"

"Here we are at the secret panel!" breathed Alice. "It opens outward! Now both of you crowd in here beside me. Let us throw our whole strength against it and see if we can force the thing."

Mrs. Richard translated for Bella's benefit, for Alice still stuck to her Chinese.

They flung themselves against the panel and, sure enough, did succeed in forcing it.

The thing flew outward, nearly knocking over a Chinaman who happened to be on the other side!

Not only one, but three.

The one who had been hit by the door was the same man who had captured the Richard ladies.

"Ram Zo's prisoners escaping!" he cried in Chinese.

At the same instant two more Chinamen came tearing up the secret stairs.

Alice and the Richard ladies were now between two fires. There was no such thing as escape.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OLD KING BRADY BOWLED OUT.

Herbert Fontaine, turning away from the telephone, told Old King Brady what he had heard.

"You see!" he cried, "that man must be at the bottom of it all! I disliked him from the first. From the first, also, I suspected him of being a Chinaman. I am sure of it now. What shall I do?"

"Let us think," said Old King Brady. "The matter is too serious to be decided offhand."

"Ought I go there and see him?"

"If you want my opinion it would be very imprudent for you to have any talk with the man until you understand the case better. At least, you ought to know what is in that singular box."

"Do you think I am justified in opening the box then?"

"I have already told you, Mr. Fontaine, that I think you are. These ladies have now been in the hands of Chinamen nearly twenty-four hours. It is a dangerous situation for them. Something ought to be done."

"Well, then, I yield. Let us go to the Safe Deposit Company and have a look at the box."

"And I will assume the responsibility," said Old King Brady. "If we are fortunate enough to rescue Mrs. Richard and her daughter, I will make them understand that the opening of the box is my work."

"Well, let it go so," replied Herbert, and they started downtown.

Arrived at the Safe Deposit, Herbert secured a private room and brought in the gold-studded box.

Old King Brady examined it critically.

"That box is unquestionably Chinese," he said, "and it is also very old; but how is it secured? I see no lock, yet the cover seems to hold fast all right."

"Must be some secret spring which holds it, I suppose," replied Herbert.

"It can be nothing else. The Chinese seem to be stuck on secret springs. But I suppose you know even less about how to open this thing than I do. I have had much experience with Chinese secret springs."

Old King Brady sat pondering over the problem for some time, turning the box this way and that.

At last he turned it upside down and then after a minute, suddenly exclaimed:

"Here you are!"

There were gold-headed nails on the bottom of the box, as well as on the top and sides.

Old King Brady pointed to one of these, which had a Chinese character engraved upon it.

"If that won't do the business then I give up," he remarked.

"Try it!" cried Herbert. "Anything to get the thing open now that we have started in to do it."

Old King Brady found the nail, but there was nothing doing.

Then he pulled on it and the thing came almost out and then stuck.

The old detective tried then to pull up the lid of the box but that stuck, too.

"I am afraid I am wrong," he said, "but we will make one more try."

And this try was to turn the nail.

It moved readily to the right.

And this did the business.

Now the lid opened without the least difficulty.

"There don't seem to be anything here but old newspapers," Herbert exclaimed.

The box was stuffed full.

The papers proved to be in Spanish, printed in Lima, Peru. They dated back two years.

Old King Brady pulled them out and stowed away in the midst of them came upon a most remarkable object.

It was a human skull, evidently of great age.

All around the head gold settings had been skillfully let into the bone and in each setting was a diamond!

Some of them, especially those above the forehead, were of considerable size, the stones tapering down to smaller ones at the back of the head.

The whole formed a sort of diamond crown.

"What an amazing object!" exclaimed Herbert. "I never saw anything like it before, not even in a museum."

"Nor did I," added the old detective.

"But, ah, here is a gold plate let into the top of the skull," he added. "There are Chinese characters engraved upon it. This is what those people are after beyond all doubt."

"Are those diamonds very valuable, think?" questioned Herbert. "I never cared so much for diamonds myself, so I am really no judge."

"Some of them are. Others are flawed. I should think there was easily fifty or sixty thousand dollars' worth of diamonds here, perhaps even greater value. But look, this gold plate pulls out. There may be more diamonds inside."

There was a little gold ring which folded down into a slot in the plate.

Old King Brady picked it up with the point of his knife and, pulling the ring, the plate arose on concealed hinges.

"Oh, I see! This is Professor Richard's treasure chest!" cried the old detective.

He drew out a fat roll of bills from the interior of the skull.

It was secured by an elastic band, and examination revealed many United States \$1,000 gold notes.

There were also many bank of England notes of high value.

Altogether there was about a hundred thousand dollars in the skull.

"Foolish man!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "What on earth ever possessed him to hide so much money in a thing like this?"

But Herbert could throw no light on the subject, as his acquaintance with Mr. Richard and Belle had not begun until after Mr. Richard's death.

"I suppose we better pack up," he said at length. "This stuff is as safe here as anywhere."

"It is certainly the place for it," replied Old King Brady. "Just the same, I should like to show that skull to a friend of mine who has charge of one of the departments of the Metropolitan Museum. That will come later, perhaps. I wonder if Mrs. Richard knows that money is concealed here?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Herbert. "I can't give you the slightest information on the subject."

"Well, pack it up and put it away," said Old King

Brady. "At least we know what these Chinese are after now."

Herbert accordingly packed the box and secured it with the secret spring.

He had scarcely finished this when something happened which certainly could not have been caused by the Chinese enemies of the Widow Richards.

Suddenly there was a tremendous explosion and the whole building shook.

Floor tiles, bricks and pieces of iron beams went flying about the heads of the old detective and Herbert Fontaine, and the next they knew they were falling into an abyss which had opened at their feet immersed in a cloud of smoke and steam.

It was a case of an exploding boiler directly under the safe deposit vaults, killing the engineer, as Old King Brady learned afterward.

Just then the old detective was in no shape to inquire into anything.

He struck his head in his fall and lay half unconscious for a minute.

Herbert, who was not hurt a bit, at first thought that the old detective was dead.

In the excitement and confusion which followed, young Fontaine had but two ideas—to get Old King Brady safely to the street and to secure the gold-studded box.

The old detective revived on the instant, but he was a badly shaken-up man when Herbert got him out on Broadway and free from the crowd.

Until then the old man clung to his arm and had scarcely spoken.

"You have got the box all right," he then said.

"Yes! I never let go of it!" replied Herbert. "How lucky that I had finished packing it up and had hold of it when the explosion came."

"It is heaven's mercy that we are alive to tell the tale," replied Old King Brady. "That building is an old one, and really it is not a fit place to have safe deposit vaults. I hardly see how we came to escape."

"Why, we did not fall more than ten feet, but you landed on a lot of rubbish. The wonder is you did not break your back. But what are we to do with this infernal box? It is attracting everybody's attention. If we only had a paper around it!"

"Best thing you can do is to deposit the money in your bank," said the old detective faintly, for he was still in bad shape.

"I have no bank account in New York at present," was the reply. "For certain reasons I have been doing business with a Boston bank since I have been abroad."

"Then take it to mine," said Old King Brady, naming his bank, "but kindly get me into a cab first of all, for I feel quite faint."

Herbert hailed a passing cab and they were driven to the bank.

"You go in, Mr. Fontaine, use my name and card and leave me here to pull myself together," the old detective said. "I shall be all right in a few minutes; all I need now is rest."

But Old King Brady was not all right in a few minutes.

When Herbert came out of the bank bringing the box

with him, he found Old King Brady leaning back in the cab in a dead faint.

Now what Herbert did was certainly not the wisest thing under the circumstances, but he acted on the spur of the moment, much as any other stranger in New York would have done.

He could think of no better plan than to take Old King Brady to his hotel and then to summon a doctor, not knowing where the old man lived.

Before they had gone far up Broadway Old King Brady revived and faintly asked where they were going.

"To the St. Denis," replied Herbert. "There I will get a doctor for you. I hope you are better now."

Old King Brady, who felt too weak and faint to speak, closed his eyes and remained silent.

He knew that the St. Denis was but a short walk from his own residence in Washington Square, and feeling that he should be able to pull himself together after a few minutes, he raised no objection.

The old detective was rather misty as to what happened immediately after that.

When he finally did begin to revive, he was lying in a bed in a hotel room.

Herbert Fontaine stood beside the bed and with him was a dark man with most peculiar features.

Even in his present mixed-up state, Old King Brady recognized the strong resemblance to a Chinaman.

"He will do all right now, Mr. Fontaine," the man was saying. "It is simply a case of shock. There are no bones broken and no internal injuries that I can discover."

"Thank you, Doctor," replied Herbert. "How much do I owe you?"

"Nothing at all," replied the dark man. "Only too glad to have been of service to you. By the way, Mr. Fontaine, can you give me Mrs. Richard's address? I promised to call on her and Miss Bella before I leave New York. From what she said to me when we parted on the pier, I expected to find them at this hotel."

"They are not here, and I don't know their address," was the reply.

"What!" exclaimed the Doctor, "you don't know? No quarrel I hope. I imagined it was a settled thing between you and Miss Bella."

"I don't know their address," repeated Herbert stiffly, and the dark man withdrew.

Old King Brady, who was now feeling very much better, sat up on the edge of the bed.

"Oh, you must lie still!" cried Herbert.

"No! No! It's all right," replied Old King Brady. "Was that man Dr. Ramozo?"

"Yes."

"How came he here? This is the St. Denis, I suppose?"

"Yes. I thought I better bring you here. There is no doctor living at this hotel now. I asked for one and they sent Dr. Ramozo."

"Ha! Fontaine, that man is certainly a Chinaman in disguise!"

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. Did he give me any medicine?"

"Well, he did, Mr. Brady. He mixed up a dose in this glass here on the table and you drank it."

"I am very sorry for it.

"I should not have allowed it, I suppose, but I was terribly rattled."

"Don't worry. Let us hope it is all right. He must have seen the box."

"Yes. It was all a bad blunder."

"Did he make any remarks?"

"None."

"The box is empty, I trust. You put the money and the diamond skull in the bank?"

"I deposited the money in Mrs. Richard's name. They would not accept the skull. It is in the box."

"Pshaw! If I had been able to go in, it would have been all right."

"You were in a dead faint in the cab when I came out to you."

"It is most unfortunate, but it can't be helped now. What time is it?"

"About one o'clock. Shall I call a cab and take you to your home?"

"No. My home is close by here and I shall be able to walk there after a little if it is necessary to go. I am not so hard hit. I shall be all right again after a little sleep, and I propose to take that now; meanwhile, you take that box down to the parcel-room and get a check for it. Wrap it in paper. Tell the parcel-room man that it is an old hat. Look out you don't meet the doctor on the way down."

Old King Brady spoke drowsily.

The fact was a sleepy fit was strong upon him.

He now stretched himself on the bed and was off in an instant.

The doctor's dose had done its work. Hours were destined to elapse before Old King Brady came to himself again.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BRADYS START ON THE SHADOW TOGETHER.

Harry expected to pick up some substantial clew as he stood there on the fire-escape over in Williamsburg's little Chinatown listening to Fung Twee and the old opium buyer.

And certainly Fung Twee's order that the other should "speak only English" justified him in the thought.

But it was not to be.

"Me 'linglis' too muchee bad. Me slend she away," said the old man. "Waitee you, Fung Twee. Whatee hully anyhow?"

And this settled it.

Evidently Fung Twee was not in a hurry, for he accepted the situation and lit a cigarette.

The old Chink then relapsed into his Chinese talk again, taking hold with the woman and helping her to examine the opium packages.

Seeing little hope of learning anything Young King Brady once more resolved to jump in and make arrests.

But again he was headed off just as he was about to make a move. Fung Twee suddenly stepped directly to the window and looked out.

Of course the first thing his almond eyes rested upon was the detective on the fire-escape.

This brought matters to a climax.

Harry whipped out his revolver and covered the Chink.

"Stand as you are! You are under arrest!" he cried.

He flung back his coat, displayed his shield, and was just about to jump in through the window when suddenly the rotten old balcony gave way beneath him.

The danger Harry thought of had been real.

Down he went amid wash-tubs and flower-pots, his descent accompanied by a yell from Fung Twee.

And as this happened up on the third story, it bid fair to be all day with Young King Brady.

Certainly he would have fallen to his death if he had not by rare good fortune been able to grasp the pulley line extending out from the floor below.

This gave the wrecked balcony and the stuff upon it a chance to get down ahead of him.

Harry hung to the pulley line while Chinese heads, some with pigtailed and some without, were poked out of nearly every window.

It took Young King Brady but a second to collect his wits.

It was either a case of work in on the pulley line or drop.

Thankful that his revolver, which had gone down in the crash, had not exploded and killed him, Harry started in toward the house hard over hand.

But luck appeared to have deserted him.

Before he had gone five feet the clothesline gave way and down he went.

The back yard into which he fell was paved with flagstones.

Although he tried his best to hold himself upright, Young King Brady landed on his back and his head coming in violent contact with the pavement, he lay there a badly knocked-out detective.

As to what followed Harry had no part in it.

In a moment that yard was swarming with Chinamen.

A policeman was summoned.

Seeing Harry's shield and recognizing him as belonging to the Brady Detective Bureau, the policeman called an ambulance and Harry was carted away to St. Catherine's Hospital on Bushwick Avenue.

It was not until he was laid out on a cot there and the doctors were examining him that he fully revived.

But it was a relief to learn that he had escaped with nothing worse than a badly bumped head.

Still, like Old King Brady, Harry was badly shaken up and the doctors would not hear to him going out until the next day.

Harry, knowing the ways of hospitals, said nothing then.

He got an orderly to telephone the office hoping to get Old King Brady on the wire, but the answer was that the old detective had not been in since early morning.

The orderly having reported Harry's situation, Young King Brady expected to hear from either his chief or Alice, but the afternoon dragged by and no word came over the wire.

It was easy enough to account for it in Alice's case.

Harry assumed that she was sticking to her post, but he wondered about the old detective.

About seven o'clock, feeling perfectly able to go out, Young King Brady sent for the house surgeon and put it up to him with such success that, after a careful examination of his wound, he was discharged.

He was by no means in a serious condition and feeling better, after he had got out into the street, he readjusted the bandage on his head so that his hat would conceal it.

This done, he hurried over to New York.

His first call was at Alice's rooms on Pell Street.

The place was locked.

Harry let himself in with a key he had.

Alice was missing and there was no note stating where she had gone.

There was only one natural conclusion to draw, and that was that matters had come to a head in the opium smuggling case, and that Alice had gone either to the office or to Old King Brady's house to report.

Harry, knowing that the office was closed by this time, started for the house.

Naturally he fell to wondering what headway had been made in Herbert Fontaine's case.

As the St. Denis was only a little out of his road, he determined to call there and see if he could strike Fontaine.

He had changed to his usual dress at the Pell Street rooms and he did not hesitate to present himself at the desk this time.

But first he looked about for the house detective.

The man was not in evidence, however.

Inquiring at the desk Harry was told that Mr. Fontaine was in his room, for the key was not in the box.

"He has a sick man on his hands and I presume he is looking out for him," added the clerk. "You can send up your card."

Harry handed out his business card.

"Young King Brady!" exclaimed the clerk. "Why the sick man is Old King Brady. You are his partner, I suppose?"

"Yes. I will go right up. What is the matter with him?"

"He and Mr. Fontaine were caught in an explosion at the — Safe Deposit Company. He is not seriously injured. The doctor says he will come around all right."

This sent Harry upstairs as fast as the elevator could get him there.

He readily found the room and knocked on the door. There was no response.

Harry knocked again, with no better result.

Determined to settle the question, he looked into the keyhole to see if the key was in the lock.

It was not, and Young King Brady getting busy with his skeleton keys, had the door open on the instant.

The room was dark, but the light striking in from the hall showed him Old King Brady lying on the bed in a profound sleep.

Herbert Fontaine was not in the room.

Harry closed the door, lit the gas and looked his partner over.

He could not see that he was injured in any way.

He shook him several times and at last succeeded in arousing him.

Old King Brady sat up on the edge of the bed, looking dazed.

"Why, is that you, Harry?" he exclaimed. "Where am I then? It seems to me as though I had been miles and miles away!"

"You are in Mr. Fontaine's room in the St. Denis Hotel," replied Harry. "Where is Fontaine?"

"Why, he was here a minute ago. But, no! I see it must have been some time ago, for it is now dark. I must have slept a long time."

"It is half past eight."

"So late? Where can he be? I don't understand!"

Old King Brady rubbed his head looking much confused.

"The clerk in the office said that you had been knocked out in an explosion," said Harry.

"Yes, that's so. Down at the — Safe Deposit Company. Boiler burst. Pretty near killed Fontaine and me. It is a wonder we escaped with our lives. He wasn't hurt, but I was terribly shaken up. He brought me here and that man, Dr. Ramozo, attended me. Harry, I think he must have doped me the way I have been sleeping. But what has become of Fontaine?"

"That is more than I can tell you. But what did you go there for? To look at that box?"

"Yes. He brought it here. The last I remember I told him to take it to the parcel-room and tell them it was a hat. I must have gone to sleep right away after that."

"And what time was it this happened?"

"About half past one. But tell me, what have you been about and what's the matter with your head?"

"Governor, my shadowing of that Chinaman came to a fool end. Shall I tell it now or inquire into the Fontaine matter?"

"Tell it. It will give me a chance to pull myself together. Yah! How sleepy I am!"

Old King Brady stretched and yawned.

He was not fully awake yet.

But he was awake enough to listen to Harry's story and then he told his own in detail.

"Now, then, I feel quite like myself again!" he exclaimed, jumping up when he had finished. "This business must be taken in hand at once. There is no earthly doubt that Dr. Ramozo doped me, but I seem to have survived it all right. Come, let us get on the move."

They turned off the gas, locked the door and went downstairs.

At the office they were able to get full attention.

Inquiry showed that Herbert Fontaine had not been seen since he brought Old King Brady into the hotel.

Nor had Dr. Ramozo been seen since he was called upon to attend the old detective.

At the parcel room search was made for the box, but unsuccessfully.

The man in charge was very certain that no such package had been left there.

Indeed, there were very few packages in the parcel room, so it was easy to determine that point.

The Bradys now visited Dr. Ramozo's room, accom-

panied by a bellboy who opened the door with a duplicate key.

There was a big grip here but no sign of the doctor.

The Bradys examined the grip.

It contained only Dr. Ramozo's personal belongings.

Nothing was found in it which threw any light on the case.

Perplexed and scarcely knowing what to do, the detectives started downstairs.

"Telephone Alice's room and see if she is there," said the old detective abruptly. "I don't like her being out of the Pell Street rooms that time you called. I have little belief that she will ever get any information out of that woman she is waiting for. I am afraid that in some way she has got mixed up in this case of ours and I did not intend she should have anything to do with it."

Harry did the telephoning.

Alice has a private wire connecting her rooms on Waverly Place with the Bradys' house on Washington Square, but she is also on the general line.

There was no answer to the call.

"She seems to be out," Harry announced.

"Telephone that woman who keeps the house," ordered Old King Brady. "I never can remember her name."

This was done, and over the wire came the announcement that Alice had not been home in several days.

"She may have just stepped out," said Old King Brady. "I think we better get down to Chinatown and see what we strike. It looks as if Dr. Ramozo had got the box and captured Fontaine into the bargain. If so, it is a very serious affair."

They were just leaving the hotel when the house detective came up behind Harry.

"Oh, how are you, Mr. Brady? You are just the man I want to see!" he exclaimed.

"Hello!" cried Harry, "and what is in the wind now?"

"That Chink has been here inquiring for Dr. Ramozo again. They told me in the office to look you two up. They are holding him there at the desk till I give word."

Harry looked back.

Sure enough, there at the desk stood Fung Twee looking as "childlike and bland" as the majority of his race.

"This is luck!" said Old King Brady.

"Shall we arrest him?" demanded Harry.

"No, indeed! It is a case of shadow. If we can't find Dr. Ramozo, then perhaps he can."

"Shall I start him off?" demanded the house detective.

"I wish you would," replied Old King Brady.

"Has he been here before since I saw him the first time?" demanded Harry.

"No. Haven't seen a thing of him," was the reply.

"They were telling me at the office about your business. I'm sorry I was out when you came, but I can tell you something now that will interest you."

"What is it? Out with it!" cried Harry.

"The woman who sits at the ladies' entrance reports that Dr. Ramozo went out that way carrying such a parcel as you were asking about at the parcel-room."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, and a couple of minutes later Mr. Fontaine rushed out after him, holding a handkerchief at his face."

"Why didn't she report such a thing as that to you?" demanded Old King Brady.

"She is a new hand and stupid. Does it let you out at all?"

"It lets us out a whole lot. Now let loose your Chink and we will start on the shadow."

The house detective proceeded to the desk.

"We have made a start anyway," remarked Old King Brady. "Pity I had to lose my grip and let that green-horn fall into the hands of the Chinks."

"I don't see how you could very well help it, fixed the way you were," Harry replied.

They crossed Broadway and waited.

A moment later Fung Twee came out of the hotel.

As he turned down Broadway Old King Brady and Harry fell in behind him.

Once again the Bradys were shadowing a Chinaman.

## CHAPTER X.

### WHERE IS THE DIAMOND SKULL?

Alice and the Richard ladies were certainly "up against it."

There were Chinamen in front of them and others crowding up the steep stairs behind.

Revolvers were turned on Alice and the man who had spoken demanded who she was.

"A friend of these ladies," Alice boldly answered, but hope died within her.

For in the speaker, who was the Chink who had captured Mrs. Richard and Bella, she recognized one Wang Top, a notorious Highbinder.

Worse still, the man had had to do with the Bradys before and had seen Alice in her Chinese disguise.

"Once he gets a good square look at me I'm in the soup," Alice assured herself.

But the man had already done that.

He winked at Alice, adding a villainous leer, but he did not reply to what she had said.

The Chinks now began talking to each other.

Those behind had not discovered the escape of the ladies it seemed. They were merely coming out of other secret rooms connected with the passage.

"We must take them all back?" said Wang Top. "This man must be locked in with them until we can consult with Dr. Ramozo."

The captured ones were then ordered to descend the stairs after the Chinamen who came up behind them passed out.

Wang Top, revolver in hand, followed them up, his friends accompanying him.

When they got to the secret panel he opened it and ordered the widow and her daughter back into the prison, but Alice was told to remain behind.

"Leave me with this woman," he said to his companions in Chinese after he had closed the secret panel.

"Woman," said one, "what do you mean, Wang Top?"

"What I say," replied the Highbinder. "Leave me with this woman. Isn't that plain enough?"

The others retreated along the passage.

Wang Top then went for Alice in his best Chinese.

Our translation is a liberal one.

"Well, so the Bradys are butting in again!" he began.

"You are the same old Wang Top. Sharp as ever, I see," replied Alice, anxious to get on the good side of the man if such a thing was possible.

"I am wide awake. Who are you working for in this case?"

"As though I could tell you. Who is the last On Leong man you Hip Sings killed? Answer my questions and perhaps I will answer yours."

Wang Top laughed heartily.

"You make such a good Chinaman, Miss Montgomery," he said. "Why don't you turn into a Chinawoman? I will marry you if you will. Or perhaps you are already married to Young King Brady. How is that?"

"Not yet. What are you going to do with the ladies?"

"I don't know. I am holding on to them to oblige another fellow. I don't know what he is driving at, I am sure."

"Who is he?"

"Who are you working for?"

"All right. I ring off."

"You better, for you will get nothing out of me. And look here, I had just as soon throw the fellow down. If you know anything that will show me that it is going to pay to throw him down, why tell me and we will work it together."

"No. It is no use to try to bribe the Bradys, Wang Top, and you know it very well."

"Well, that's so, too. I am sorry you are here, for I really like you, although you may not believe it. But say, you do make a good Chink. Those other fellows were completely fooled."

"Were they? Well, I had no hope of deceiving you then."

"Of course you couldn't. Let me have your revolver, Miss Alice. Sorry to trouble you, but of course I have to."

Alice handed over the weapon.

She knew the man to be a desperate criminal, smooth spoken as he was now.

And she feared him more than she would have done a stranger, for she knew from past experience that he really was smitten with her charms.

"Now you can go in and talk to the ladies," said Wang Top, as he pocketed the revolver. No use to try to get out by the secret panel again. I am going to fasten it up."

He opened the panel as he spoke and Alice passed into the room.

Bella sat on the edge of the bed.

She had been weeping.

Mrs. Richard was pacing the floor looking pale and determined.

"You have failed, my friend!" she said in Chinese. "I am obliged to you for what you tried to do, but why did you let them put you in here? Can't you understand that it must not be? We want to be by ourselves at least. It is an outrage to expect us to stay in this room with a Chinese man."

"You don't have to," replied Alice in English. "I am no Chinese man."

"What! Impossible!"

"It is as I tell you."

"But we don't want any man here!" flashed Bella. "You really must make them take you away."

"I am not a man. I am a woman disguised as a Chinaman. My name is Alice Montgomery. I am a partner of the Brady detectives to whom Herbert Fontaine confided your case."

Alice spoke in her natural voice and convinced them of the truth.

"Oh! I can hardly believe it."

"Dear me, dear me, this is truly dreadful!" moaned Mrs. Richard. "Did that Chinaman tell you what Ram Zo intends to do with us while you were talking with him out there?"

"He did not. He professes to know nothing about it."

"But he is the man who captured us. He must know."

"He assures me that he does not and that he is only working for another. He is a notorious Highbinder. His kind are hired by the Chinese to do their crooked work."

"Oh, I know! I know! Murder and robbery is their trade, and they glory in it. I am afraid, Miss Montgomery, that there is little hope for any of us."

"I don't feel so sure of that. But if I understood the case better, I should be better able to judge."

"I cannot explain. I will not give in until the last gasp."

"I wish you would then, mother!" cried Bella. "I feel that I can stand this no longer, and I am sure if father was alive he would want you to do it under the circumstances."

"Hush, child! You don't know what you are talking about. It would cost us our entire fortune were I to yield and we should be left paupers. No, it will not do. If I was to tell all I know about the skull, we should be ruined."

"The skull!" cried Bella. "Is it only an old skull they are after, such as father was always collecting? Then I say, give it up."

"Hush! Hush!" said the widow. "Don't talk to me any more."

And as the day wore on neither her daughter nor Alice could succeed in getting anything out of her.

Some hours passed, no one coming near them.

At last a noise was heard in the passage and some one started to unfasten the door.

It was thrown back and who should enter but Herbert Fontaine.

Bella screamed and ran to him.

But her lover did not seem to know her.

His eyes had a strange, vacant look.

He stopped short and regarded the ladies and Alice with a fixed stare.

Then right behind him came Ram Zo carrying the gold-studded box.

The doctor had washed the stain off his face now. He had also assumed Chinese dress, even going to the length of putting on a false pigtail.

Needless to say he now looked like a full-fledged Chinese.

The widow gave an angry exclamation as he came through the door.

"Oh, you yellow fiend! So you have got it!" she cried. "What have you been doing to Mr. Fontaine?"



What, sure enough?

Poor Herbert was evidently in a sad condition.

Alice thought he had been drugged and she was quite correct in her suspicion. The way it came about must now be told.

When Herbert started to carry the box to the parlor after carefully wrapping it up in brown paper, he concluded that it would be safer to go down by the stairs instead of taking the elevator.

And right here he made his mistake.

What the doctor was doing there it is hard to tell, for it was, of course, impossible that he could have known, but certain it is Herbert Fontaine ran into him just as he turned a bend in the flight.

"Ah, Mr. Fontaine!" cried Ram Zo. "Coming down? I was just going up. How is our interesting patient then?"

Herbert was disgusted.

The very thing he sought to avoid had come to him.

"I left him asleep," he said, devoutly wishing now that he had gone down by the elevator.

"Yes, yes. That's right. He will come out all right," pattered the doctor.

He had his right hand in the outside pocket of his loose coat.

Now suddenly he threw his whole weight against Herbert, pressing him up against the bannisters, at the same instant grabbing him by the throat with his left and planting his knee in the young man's stomach.

Herbert struck at him and tried to call for help, but it was no use.

With amazing quickness the doctor struck Herbert's right arm.

The blow nearly paralyzed the arm and he dropped the box.

All in the same breath the doctor with his right hand thrust a gelatine capsule into Herbert's mouth, choking him in a different way so that he was forced to swallow it.

"Now, Mr. Fontaine! Now, Mr. Fontaine!" he hissed. "Now, we'll see!"

And with that he seized the box and darted down the stairs.

By this time Herbert had been choked almost into insensibility.

It was a minute or more before he recovered himself.

Running downstairs then he found a colored woman sitting near the head of other stairs leading down to the ladies' entrance.

"Did you see a dark man with a bundle pass this way?" he demanded.

"Ah sure did, boss!" cried the woman. "He sure jes' go downstairs."

Herbert dashed down the stairs with all speed.

As yet the dose had shown no effect.

But Herbert Fontaine was up against a "sure enough" doctor.

Ram Zo was a graduate of the English medical college at Hong Kong.

The dose he had given the young man was bound to do the business.

Herbert would have done better if he had gone back to

the St. Denis and tumbled into bed if he wanted to remain master of his mind.

For the drug he had swallowed was a genuine mind stealer.

Herbert's idea now was to follow Ram Zo until he came up against a policeman and then have the man arrested.

It was not so easy.

He saw no policeman, nor for the moment did he see Ram Zo.

Uncertain which way to turn, he stood looking about and suddenly spied the doctor in the distance hurrying down Broadway.

Herbert lost not an instant trailing after him.

He trailed the man to Chinatown, walking all the way, as did the doctor.

But long before he got there Herbert Fontaine was dead to the world.

Afterward when he came to think of it, he could not remember a thing which happened to him after he was part way down the Bowery, over to which broad thoroughfare the doctor led him.

He was utterly oblivious to his surroundings when he came into the room where Mrs. Richard, Bella and Alice were.

Possibly the doctor took him in charge and brought him the last part of the way.

At all events, there he was, and there he stood with open mouth and staring eyes.

"You see, ladies!" cried Dr. Ramozo. "It is all working my way. I've got your would-be protector and I have got the box, Mrs. Richard."

He turned on Alice and added:

"I've got you, too, miss detective. I know who you are. You made the mistake of a lifetime when you butted in on my business. You will never leave this place alive!"

Alice regarded him steadily, but never said a word.

Strange to say, her hope lay in Wang Top.

Somehow she felt that the Chinaman would not allow her to be murdered by this yellow fiend.

"And now for the diamond skull!" cried the doctor. "Well must you remember, Mrs. Richard, the night your husband and I stole it from the temple of Sang Tze."

"He did not steal it!" cried Mrs. Richard. "As you well know, the temple was in ruins and stood in the middle of a desert. My husband unearthed the skull and he had a perfect right to it. He paid you in cash for your share in the thing, and after that you tried to murder him in order to obtain it. Ram Zo, you are a fiend! You have followed my husband for over three years, and——"

"And now is the hour of my success!" broke in the doctor. "I swore I would get possession of the diamond skull, and now I have done it. It is not so much for its value, Mrs. Richard, and you may as well understand that. The skull is the sacred emblem of a peculiar religious sect of which I am a member—Leong lost it, is well found and to the living temple of that sect I shall restore it. It is the skull of the priest who was the founder of our order. But enough of this. Why do I waste words with one who cannot understand its value to me? Now to have a look at it. The hour of my triumph has come."

Turning the box upside down, the doctor worked the golden nail and opened it.

He began pulling out the paper.

"Certainly the professor packed this box securely," he said.

Paper after paper came out until at last the box was empty.

"Ten thousand fiends! What is the meaning of this?" cried Ram Zo.

And well might he exclaim.

The hour of his triumph was very far from having come.

The diamond skull was not in the box!

## CHAPTER XI.

### STILL SHADOWING CHINAMEN.

"I think, Governor," said Harry, "that Fung Twee meant to go back on this man Ram Zo, or Doctor Ramozo, for that they are one and the same I cannot doubt. Don't you think our best plan would be to come up with the fellow and try to make terms with him? It seems so to me, but of course I am willing to do whatever you say."

"Not yet," replied Old King Brady. "It may be just as you put it, but at the same time I doubt if we should get much out of him were we to take him in hand. I favor shadowing him."

Harry yielded.

He never stands out against his chief nor attempts to argue with him, and to this in a large measure is due the great success of the Bradys in their peculiar work.

They shadowed Fung Twee over on to the Bowery where he took a Third Avenue surface car.

Evidently the Chinaman was perfectly well acquainted with New York.

Equally evident was it that he was bound for Chinatown.

But on this occasion the shadowing of the Bradys was not a success.

Fung Twee left the car at Pell Street.

Unfortunately for the plans of the detectives there was an unusual crowd on Pell Street that night.

Fung Twee pushed his way among the Chinks and sightseers until he had almost reached the house where the Bradys had their rooms, and there they suddenly lost sight of him.

It was most provoking.

Just as the detectives thought they were going to get somewhere, their shadowing came to an abrupt end.

"Where did he go?" cried Old King Brady.

"Do you know, Governor, it seemed to me that he went into the doorway of our house, and yet I can't feel sure."

"It is not impossible," replied Old King Brady. "You know, Harry, there used to be secret rooms under that house. To be sure, the police claim that they have been closed up, yet it may not be so."

"It is so. The entrance to those rooms was from the back room of the floor which we engaged. I examined the secret panel myself. It is securely nailed."

"But there may have been a new entrance made."

"Well, of course that is true. If we could only get down into the cellar."

"That can be arranged. But let us see Alice first."

"If she is there. I doubt it."

"It is soon settled. Let us see."

They ascended to the rooms.

Alice was still absent.

"It is just as I feared," said Harry. "Something has happened, but whether it has anything to do with this case or not, is a question."

"Let us have a look at that secret panel," said Old King Brady and he walked to the mantelpiece alongside of which the secret panel was located.

But it was, as Harry had stated, so securely nailed that to open it was impossible unless an entrance was forced.

"She never went that way," said Old King Brady. "That much is certain. If only we had not lost our man we might have some idea as to what we ought to do."

"Can it be possible that Alice went around on Mott Street and got nipped in that vacant room?" suggested Harry. "It would be just like her to be suddenly seized with a notion that she must take a hand in our case."

"We can try it on," reflected Old King Brady. "But what about examining the cellar of this house first? I think it would be a good idea to make sure if the secret rooms are closed up or not before putting in time in other directions."

As usual, Harry yielded.

"If we can get into the cellar without making a demonstration," he said.

"We can try it at all events," replied the old detective. "You will remember, I think, that there was an outside door leading down into the cellar from the back yard."

They went downstairs and out into the yard.

Here they found the cellar door open.

It was a flat cover beneath which were stone steps.

"Listen!" said Old King Brady. "It seems to me I heard voices down there."

"You certainly do, for I hear them myself," replied Harry. "Hark!"

They bent down and listened.

The voices were distinct enough.

Unfortunately the conversation between the two men who were talking was in Chinese.

"If Alice was only here!" murmured Harry.

"Ah, yes," replied Old King Brady. "We always miss her help when we come up against the Chinks. No use to stand here, boy. We may as well butt in now as later. Whoever is down there shall give an account of himself, or I will know the reason why."

They started to descend the steps.

In some way Harry missed his footing and went sliding down.

It was a wonder he did not break his back the way he went.

Old King Brady hurried to the rescue, but Harry had already regained his feet before his partner got there.

The instant he did so he flashed his electric light through the cellar.

It was half filled with old boxes and barrels.

But no trace of a Chink could the Bradys see.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Harry. "I made noise enough to wake the dead. They are scared off whoever they are."

"Exactly so, but we have proved our point," replied the old detective.

"That the secret passages are still open?"

"Exactly."

The Bradys prowled about among the boxes and barrels, but it was all in vain.

"Let us give it up and get out," said Old King Brady at last.

He led the way to the street.

For half an hour and over the Bradys stood watching that hall door.

Nobody passed out in all that time, but several Chinamen came and went by the door of the Chinese grocery on the ground floor.

At last out of that grocery store den came a Chink whom the Bradys instantly recognized.

Old King Brady caught Harry by the arm and pulled him back into the shadows.

"Do you see?" he whispered.

"Why, yes! It is Wang Top. I thought he was on the island."

By this time Wang Top had passed the Bradys without seeming to see them.

The detectives fell in on his trail.

Wang Top led on around into Mott Street.

He turned at the very house where the detectives had started business in this peculiar case.

"I'll bet you what you like he is going to that vacant house!" exclaimed Harry, as the Chink dodged in through the door.

"Hurry!" said the old detective. "It is not likely that we can prove that point, but at least we can try."

They made all haste to get into the house.

There at the head of the stairs stood Wang Top talking with another Chink.

The Bradys stood below, watching.

Presently the other man went on up the second flight of stairs while Wang Top dodged in through the door of the vacant room.

"There, now!" breathed Old King Brady. "The secret panel still exists and it is up to us to locate it. Come on, Harry. That room for ours, but we must find Wang Top!"

The door was still unfastened and the room vacant just as the Bradys had found it before.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

It would be difficult to describe the fit of rage which Ram Zo flew into when he discovered the emptiness of the gold-studded box.

"What does it mean?" he demanded of Mrs. Richard after he had calmed down a bit. "Didn't the professor put the skull in this box, then? It is the box he found it in, and I made sure that I would find it here. He had it when he was in Guayaquil as I happen to know. Where, then, is it now? Speak!"

"It is easy enough to order me to speak, and now I shall keep nothing back," replied the widow, "but I have nothing to tell you. The diamond skull was certainly in that box when we left Panama, for I saw my husband put it in there with my own eyes, and so far as I know, the box has not been opened since."

Ram Zo now quieted down.

"Tell me all about it," he said. "Where was the box while you were on the Allianza?"

"In the hands of the purser."

"How did Mr. Fontaine come to get it then?"

"I asked him to get it and bring it to me in the cab. When you had Bella and myself spirited away, you defeated your own purpose, Ram Zo."

"I see! But it is not too late to remedy the blunder. This fellow knows what has become of the skull and he must be made to tell."

He raised his hand and beckoned to Herbert, who followed him out of the door.

And this time Ram Zo merely locked the door. He did not bolt it.

This Alice particularly observed.

"Listen, Mrs. Richard!" she whispered, as soon as the doctor was out of hearing. "This is our chance. I can open that door."

And Alice at once got busy with her keys.

She had to try several before she found one which would fit the lock, but at last she opened the door.

"Thank heaven!" breathed the widow. "If we can only make our escape."

"Don't you doubt it," replied Alice, encouragingly. "Ladies, follow me."

Following the passage beyond the door they came to two other doors at its end.

Alice paused and listened.

Behind one of the doors she could hear a man talking.

The voice was Ram Zo's.

The words were repeated twice again.

There was a narrow flight of stairs behind the door.

It was locked and once more she got busy with her skeleton keys.

This door yielded more readily.

There was a narrow flight of stairs behind the door.

Up these Alice led the Richard ladies.

The stairs ended at a seemingly solid stone wall.

Flashing her electric light upon it, Alice discovered that here was a similar arrangement to the brick door in the secret passage, and in a minute she found the spring and had the thing open.

Beyond was a cellar half filled with old boxes and barrels.

It was the same cellar which the Bradys had examined.

Alice lost not a minute in getting the ladies out of it and up on to the street.

Now she perceived that all these happenings had taken place under the house where she had her rooms.

She hurriedly explained the situation to Mrs. Richard and Bella and led them upstairs into the rooms.

"Oh, Miss Montgomery, how can I ever repay you!" cried the widow. "But what can we do for poor Mr. Fontaine?"

"I will go around to the Elizabeth Street police station at once," replied Alice, "but first let me change my clothes."

The change was quickly made and Alice started for the station.

! \* \* \* \* \*

Herbert Fontaine knew nothing of all that occurred there in the secret room.

The next he did know after losing himself on the Bowery he was sitting in a chair in a small, scantily furnished room, where there was an opium bunk with curtains in front of it.

Dr. Ramozo, as he called the yellow fiend, was pacing the floor.

But Herbert did not recognize him then.

The doctor, it will be remembered, had disposed of his disguise and was now dressed like a Chinaman.

Herbert's head was whirling.

He called to the Chinaman faintly.

"Where am I?" he asked. "What are you doing here?"

"You are here as my prisoner, Mr. Fontaine," replied the doctor. "So you have come to your senses at last."

"Dr. Ramozo!" gasped Herbert, recognizing the man now.

"No one else. Are you then so surprised to see me in this dress? Did you never suspect that I was a Chinaman?"

"I suspected it from the first," replied Herbert.

"I want you to tell me what became of the diamond skull," said the doctor.

"The diamond skull! Why, you got the diamond skull. You snatched the box away from me there on the stairs in the hotel."

"Yes, but the skull was not in the box and you know it."

"I know nothing of the sort. The skull was in the box. I put it there with my own hands."

"You lie and you know you lie!" stormed the doctor. "I opened the box in Mrs. Richard's presence. The skull was not there."

Herbert was deeply puzzled.

He was utterly unable to account for the fact that the skull was missing.

His patience exhausted at last, the doctor pounced upon poor Fontaine and, throwing him into the bunk, tied a handkerchief around his mouth and his hands behind his back.

"I'll fix you!" he cried.

He drew the curtain and Herbert heard him striking matches.

The yellow fiend had fired the curtains.

The intention seemed to be to burn poor Herbert alive.

He struggled with his bands, but it was no use.

Thicker and thicker grew the smoke.

The case seemed to be very hopeless, when all at once the door broke in with a crash.

It was the Bradys on the job!

They failed to find the secret panel in the Mott Street room a second time, but when they came back to Pell Street who should they run into but Alice who was just coming out of the house.

She quickly explained the situation.

"And you believe Fontaine to be down there now?" demanded Old King Brady.

"I haven't the least doubt of it!" replied Alice.

"Lead the way!" cried the old detective. "We need no police. If it is only that yellow fiend we three certainly ought to be good for him!"

And that was the way the Bradys came to be on hand at the critical moment.

They smelled smoke as they passed along the secret passage and, seeing a pail of water standing there, Alice caught it up.

"The place is certainly on fire!" she cried.

They burst in the door, to run up against the doctor who had a big stick in his hand.

He let out one yell and aimed a blow at Harry.

Old King Brady grabbed the stick and, wrenching it away, brought it down on the doctor's head with a force which sent him sprawling.

The bunk in which the prisoner lay was now all ablaze.

Harry clutched the curtains and tore them away while Alice ran with the water-pail.

The doctor had been completely knocked out.

Harry and Alice put the fire out without difficulty and Herbert Fontaine was speedily released.

Getting Ram Zo on his feet, the Bradys hurried him upstairs and around to the Elizabeth Street station.

The man seemed dazed and would not talk.

There they left him and there the case ended save for the diamond skull.

Where was it?

Fontaine could not tell.

Even when it was Old King Brady who put the question, his reply was that he certainly put it in the gold-studded box when he exhibited it to the people at Old King Brady's bank and asked them to take care of it.

Herbert was rattled when he went to the bank, and it must have been a bad case of the rattles, for as it turned out he closed the box and left the skull on the little ledge outside the teller's window.

Fortunately it was promptly discovered by the teller, and when Old King Brady and Herbert went to the bank next day there was the diamond skull.

And so it all ended.

Ram Zo went to the penitentiary for a year.

Fung Twee and the old hop buyer were arrested in the Mott Street house next day.

This gave the Bradys a clew and they captured the last man of their opium gang before the week was out.

Fontaine married Bella within a month and took her and her mother to England where the diamond skull was presented to the British Museum in accordance with Professor Richard's wish.

Mrs. Richard rewarded the detectives liberally.

And thus satisfactorily ended the case of "The Bradys Shadowing a Chinaman."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE FATAL LETTER; or, THE MESSENGER BOY'S SECRET," which will be the next number (547) of "Secret Service."

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## ITEMS WORTH READING.

No fact in modern social life is more striking than that so many of the queens of Europe find as much solace in tobacco as men do. The striking exception to this rule is Queen Alexandria, who has never smoked. In this respect she is different from her sister, the Dowager Empress of Russia, for the latter smokes a good many cigarettes a day. Another queenly smoker is the Queen of Roumania, the highly accomplished Carmen Sylva, whose life, devoted to art, makes her need of the soothing power of tobacco as great as that of any other writer or painter. The Queen Mother of Spain, as Alfonso's mother is still called, is another smoker of cigarettes, as is the widowed Queen of Portugal, who, contrary to what might be expected in a resident of southern Europe, prefers Russian tobacco to any other.

Spinning glass for practical uses was very well known by the ancient Egyptians, and we are now rediscovering it. Spun glass has long been known as a curiosity. A Frenchman in the middle of the last century developed the process along commercial lines, but died without revealing his secrets. These seem, however, to have been recently rediscovered in Germany. Glass thus drawn out into very thin threads is flexible, and it is thought it will be possible to spin and weave it into cloths. These garments would be incombustible, non-conducting and impervious to acids. They can be beautifully tinted by using tinted glass. The insulating properties of the glass-wool would render it valuable as packing where it is desirable to keep in or exclude heat. In this case we should be resorting to the mineral kingdom for our clothes, though as yet we have not got those asbestos garments which could be washed by throwing them on the fire.

Perhaps the most remarkable bridge in the world, in fact the only bridge of the kind in the world, is the aerial ferry which extends across an artificial canal separating Minnesota Point from the city of Duluth. In order to provide a short cut to her harbor, Duluth dug a canal across the point, thereby turning its extremity into an island, much to the chagrin of sundry residents thereon. To help them the city for a while carried them to and fro in rowboats, then by a steam ferry as their numbers increased. The steamboat was slow and expensive, and everybody soon wanted something better. Then Duluth built an aerial ferry, 186 feet high in the clear, so as not to interfere with the tallest masts, and from the bridge suspended a car 50 feet long by 34 feet wide, in which passengers travel across the canal rapidly and in comfort.

The floor of the car is 6 feet above the ground and only a little more than that above the water. The car itself is fastened to metal rods or hangers, which in turn are attached to wheels that roll on a track on the overhead bridge 135 or more feet in the air. The car is moved by electricity, and makes the passage across the canal in a little more than one minute. It will carry at one time 125,000 pounds, which is said to be equal to a fully loaded double truck street car, two loaded wagons with their teams, and 350 passengers. It makes twelve trips an hour between 5 in the morning and midnight, and two an hour after midnight.

## WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

The child saw Mr. Smith, wearing a silk hat and smoking a cigar, go past the house. "Mamma," said she, "why doesn't Mr. Smith fix the draught so's the smoke'll go up his chimney?"

"And what do you know about Homer?" asked the literary person. "Lots," replied Dickey Finn, proudly. "Didn't Duckey Williams and Petey Sanks make three homers in de last game on Goose Hill?"

"So your father said you were destined to be a newspaper humorist, did he?" snorted the city editor in fine sarcasm as he examined the young applicant's work. "Oh, well, he didn't use exactly those words," answered the applicant for a place on the staff. "He simply said I would never amount to anything."

A little boy in Trenton, who has but recently mastered his catechism, confessed his disappointment therein in the following terms: "Say, dad, I obey the fifth commandment and honor my father and mother, yet my days are not a bit longer in the land, for I'm put to bed every night at 7 o'clock just the same."

A "low-brow" who in some manner had gained admission to the inner circle of a well-known literary organization in Boston was busily engaged in conversation with a charming girl from Beacon street, when suddenly she asked him: "Do you like 'The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table?'" "I don't know that I ever tried it," responded the rank outsider cheerily. "To tell the truth, I'm not much of a hand for breakfast foods of any kind."

It was her first ball game. She lived in Pittsburg, too. Yet there she sat in the crowded grand-stand, gazing out at her home team battling against the Chicago Cubs for the pennant. "Harry," she inquired, during a lull in the excitement, "which is the great Wagner?" Her escort gallantly pointed out the famous Pittsburg shortstop. "My!" exclaimed she, after scanning Honus's bowlegged figure awhile, "who'd ever think that man could write operas!"

A youth in Trenton whose devotion to the young woman of his choice has encountered many obstacles during his long courtship recently sought her out with this apparently encouraging statement: "I think it's all right now, Alice. I managed to get access to your father the other day, and while he wouldn't exactly give his consent, I rather imagine I've made some headway. He borrowed \$40 of me. Surely he can't stand me off much longer after that!" The young woman sighed. "Yes. I've heard about it," she said, "and I think you've made an awful mess of it. Father mentioned the \$40, and remarked that I'd better give you up—you were too easy."

## THE SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLAR CHECK.

By HORACE APPLETON.

On Tuesday, Dec. 10, 1872, I paid my first visit to New York City, a visit which I shall not soon forget, for reasons which I will proceed to make known.

I was then a clerk in the employ of Clayton & Brodt, wholesale woollen merchants of Chicago; and my visit to this city was on business for this firm. I was commissioned to collect, if possible, a bill of over seven thousand dollars, due from a New York merchant, who had persistently ignored all letters which had been sent him on the subject, and who, it was believed, was about to become a bankrupt. The firm had directed me to spare no effort to collect the money, as the loss of it would be a serious blow to them; and I keenly felt the responsibility of my position. I went to the merchant's office prepared for battle; but to my surprise and gratification the gentleman at once handed me a check for the sum, with many apologies for his delay in remitting. Of course, I was highly elated at my unexpected success. I spent the remainder of the day in executing several minor commissions with which I had been entrusted, visited the theater in the evening, and retired in excellent spirits, with the opinion that I was a remarkably shrewd and sagacious fellow, and that the man who attempted to outwit me would have to get up at a very early hour in the morning. My self-esteem was destined to soon receive a very severe shock.

The next morning as I sat in my room in the hotel before a cheerful fire, reading the daily paper and awaiting the hour when it would be necessary to leave for the 10:20 train, on which I was to return to Chicago, a knock sounded on the door.

"Come in," I cried.

To my surprise Mr. Lucius Brodt, the junior partner in the firm of Clayton & Brodt, entered. Mr. Brodt was a man of about thirty-five years of age, a nephew of Mr. Clayton's, and had been admitted to the firm about a year before. He was by no means a favorite with the employees, for he was insolent and overbearing in his manner, and treated those who were under him with less consideration than he showed his dog. He was, in short, an unmanly, brutal fellow. He was addicted to the use of brandy, and on this occasion had evidently been indulging to a considerable extent in his favorite beverage.

"Well, Graham," he said, throwing himself into a chair, "how are you?"

"In first-rate condition, sir," I replied. "I did not expect to see you."

"Humph! Did you get that money?"

"I did."

His countenance brightened.

"Good enough!" he exclaimed. "I didn't think you would. You have it about you, of course?"

"It is safe in my pocket-book."

"I'll take it."

I hesitated a moment.

"I'll take it, I say," my employer repeated in a louder tone. "Are you deaf, or drunk, or what's the matter with you?"

I handed him the check without replying. He put it in his vest pocket, and immediately rose to his feet.

"I'm off now," he said. "Da-da, Graham, till we meet again."

His face wore a peculiar smile, the meaning of which I did not until afterwards understand. As he put his hand upon the knob of the door there came a quick, sudden knock.

Brodt started back as if he had been shot, and I noticed that his hand swiftly sought an inside pocket, where I knew

he carried a revolver. He turned to me, his face as white as a sheet, and asked in a husky voice:

"Graham, who's that?"

"I don't know, sir," I said, mentally attributing his agitation to the near approach of the delirium tremens, a disease of which he had once before had a touch. "I'll go to the door and see."

"Go, then," he said, still standing with his hand in his breast pocket.

I opened the door, and there stood a boy, who handed me a telegram and a little book in which to sign my name.

Having dismissed the boy, I was about to tear open the envelope, when, to my astonishment, Brodt snatched it from my hand.

"It's about some of the firm's business, of course," he said, tearing it open.

"It may be on business which concerns me alone," I said, angrily; "at all events, the envelope bears my name."

But Brodt made no reply. He ran his eyes over the telegram, then said:

"It's as I thought. Mr. Clayton wants you to try and collect that little bill from Brimlon Smith; that's all," and he threw the sheet in the open grate, and watched the flames consume it.

"You'd better be about it at once," he added, "if you expect to return to Chicago on the 10:20 train, as I suppose you do. Now, I'm off. Good-by, Graham."

My employer left the room.

For a few minutes I sat wondering how Mr. Brodt had happened to visit New York at this time, for both members of the firm had been very busy when I left Chicago—indeed, it had been on account of the inability of either of them to leave the city that I had been commissioned to visit New York. As I sat there meditating upon the subject my eye fell upon the telegram which still remained, a blackened cinder, upon the coals, swaying to and fro in the draught. It still retained its form, though a touch would have reduced it to ashes. I noticed that the message was still faintly visible in letters of white upon the blackened and shriveled sheet, and bending over I read as follows:

"Brodt is a defaulter to the amount of over fifty thousand dollars. He has fled the city, and we believe has gone to New York. We made the discovery not five minutes ago, so cannot send particulars. Are going to notify the police throughout the country at once, and want you to see detectives in New York. Do what you can.  
William Clayton."

And I had given this man the seven thousand dollar check! I started to my feet, seized my hat, and rushed down to the office.

"Where is the man who left my room about five minutes ago? Has he gone?"

The clerk looked at me for about two minutes without replying; then, with great dignity, he asked:

"Who are you?"

"I am John Graham, the occupant of Room 38, and——" I began.

"Oh, you are, eh? Well, John Graham, I don't know anything about the man who visited your room. Ask the hall boys."

This was all I could get from the clerk, so I followed his advice, and asked the hall boys. One of them had shown the gentleman to my room, he said, and had afterwards seen him come downstairs and leave the hotel. This was all the information he could give me.

What had I better do next? Why, go to the M— bank on which the check was drawn and warn them not to cash it.

Acting upon this impulse, I rushed from the hotel and ran down the street at full speed, heedless of the inconvenience I caused the unlucky pedestrians who chanced to come in my way. Arrived at the M— bank, I approached the paying teller's window, and asked:

"Have you cashed a check this morning for seven thousand dollars, drawn by G. H. Fennimore, in favor of Clayton & Brodt?"

"I paid the money to Mr. Brodt himself, not three minutes ago," was the reply.

"Which way did he go?" I demanded excitedly.

"Look through the window and you will see his carriage about two blocks off," replied the clerk, pointing up the street. "It is that clarence which is just passing the corner of Fulton street."

Without stopping to make any explanations, I hurried from the bank.

As luck would have it a disengaged hack stood at the door.

I pointed out the clarence which contained Brodt to the hackman.

"I want you to follow that carriage," I said. "For your life don't lose sight of it," and I jumped into the vehicle.

"I understand, sir," replied the hackman, with an intelligent wink, as he whipped up his horses.

In about ten minutes the hack drew up at the curbstone on Broadway, not far from Fourteenth street.

The driver descended from his box and opened the door.

"Yonder's the carriage, sir," he said. "The gentleman who was in it has gone into the G— Hotel."

"All right; wait here until I get back," and I rushed into the hotel.

Brodt was not to be seen.

"Is Mr. Brodt, of Chicago, stopping here?" I asked of the clerk.

"No, sir."

"I mean the gentleman who just came in; he must have gone upstairs—a short, stout man with a red mustache."

"Oh, that's Mr. Willet," said the clerk, and he opened the register and showed me the entry in Brodt's familiar handwriting: "G. Willet, Milwaukee, Michigan." "He leaves for Europe to-day, sir," he added.

"I should like to be shown to his room at once," I said.

The clerk summoned a hall boy.

"Show this gentleman to Room 20," he ordered.

In two minutes I was at the door of Room 20. I did not think the ceremony of knocking necessary. I opened the door and entered. Brodt stood in the center of the apartment, a valise in his hand, a traveling shawl upon one arm. He was evidently all ready for departure. His face paled as I entered.

"Ah, Graham," he said, "what do you want?"

"I want you," I replied, advancing toward him.

In very much less time than it takes to describe the scene, Brodt sprang forward, locked the door and then turned and rushed upon me.

"Curse you!" he hissed, "I'll teach you to meddle with my affairs! You want me, do you? Well, you shall have enough of me before I'm done with you!"

He fought like a madman—indeed he was almost crazed with drink. Though I was the stronger man, the suddenness and impetuosity of his attack placed me at a disadvantage, and before I could collect my scattered faculties he had me on my back upon the floor, and was kneeling upon my prostrate body, both his hands clutching my throat.

"Do you know what I'm going to do with you?" he said. "I'll tell you. I'm going to strangle you. I'll show you that you can't trifle with me, blame you!"

His grasp around my throat tightened; his fingers were like steel. The pain was horrible; a strange humming noise

sounded in my ears; my eyes seemed starting from their sockets; my brain began to whirl.

"I'm going to hold you like this till you're dead, you blamed spy!" he said. "Oh, you needn't struggle; it's no use!"

Suddenly my eye fell upon the bell rope, upon the wall just above my head. Could I reach it? I raised my arm, and by a mighty effort succeeded in seizing and pulling it before Brodt could prevent the act.

"Confound you, that will not save you!" he hissed in my ear, "for I'll admit no one to the room!"

His voice sounded as if it came from a great distance, and I could scarcely see him. Lights danced and whirled before my eyes, the noise in my ears increased to a terrible roar.

Was it imagination, or did I hear Brodt cry to someone at the door that he had rung the bell by mistake, and that they might go away?

I attempted to utter a cry, when suddenly the lights vanished, the noises ceased, and I knew no more.

When I recovered consciousness I lay on the bed in the same room, and half a dozen strangers were clustered around me.

"Where is he?" I cried, half rising, and then falling back with a groan of agony.

"Hush!" said a man by my bedside, "you must keep very quiet for a while."

"But where is he?" I persisted. "Have you got him?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "We've got him all right. Who is he, anyway?"

I told them who he was, and then asked the particulars of my rescue, which were given me.

When a servant had knocked at the door in answer to my ring Brodt had ordered him away.

As he was about to obey the man had heard a low moan, and curiosity had prompted him to look through the key-hole.

Brodt and I had fortunately been within range of his vision, and he had been thus made aware of my perilous position.

He had summoned assistance at once, entered the room from an adjoining apartment, rescued me, and captured my assailant.

It was several days before I was able to travel, and many weeks before I entirely recovered from the effects of my adventure.

Brodt's trial brought to light a number of rascalities in which he had been engaged, unsuspected by anyone, and he is at present serving his sentence in the State prison.

---

"Paw," queried little Tommy Toddles, "what's a parasite?" "How long have you been going to school, young man?" asked Toddles, Sr. "Four years," answered Tommy. "Well," continued the old man, "there is something wrong with our educational system if four years of schooling hasn't taught you that a parasite is a person who lives in Paris."

Last winter a gentleman was advertised to sing at a charity concert in an English provincial town, presided over by a local city councillor, a self-made man. The first song was "The Owl." On rising to announce it the chairman was informed that the singer had not arrived, a fact that he duly notified to the audience. A little later the missing baritone made his appearance and was observed by the worthy chairman, who rose with evident pleasure, and innocently announced with marked confidence: "Mr. Ampton will now favor us with the longed-for 'Howl!'"

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