

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.

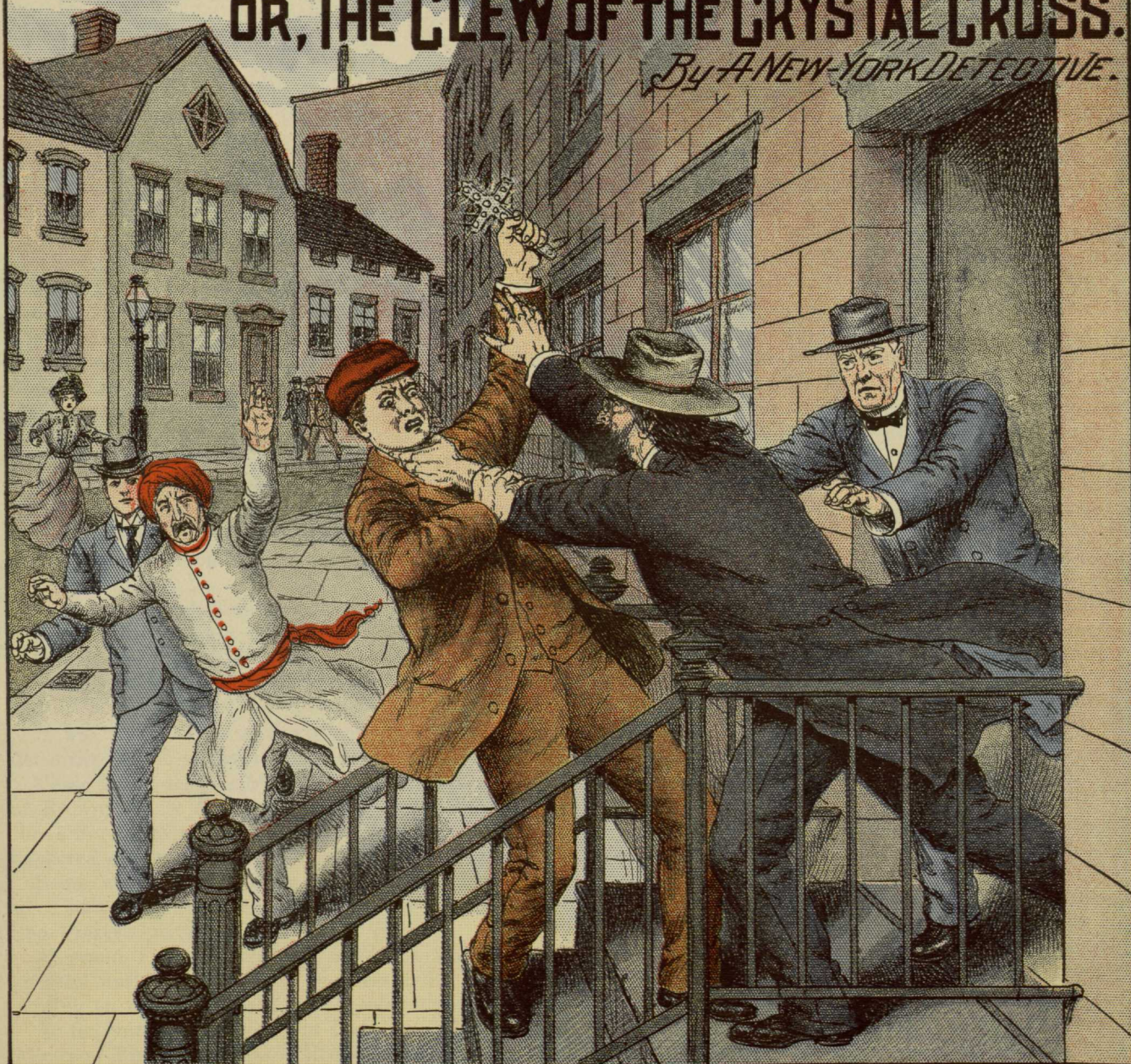
No. 562.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 29, 1909.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE IDOL'S EYE; OR, THE CLEW OF THE CRYSTAL CROSS.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



As Old King Brady looked at the crystal cross, the old man darted past him through the door, and tried to snatch it away from the boy. "Hold!" cried the Hindoo, who was approaching with Harry. Alice hurried across the street.

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CHAPTER I.

TWO PACKAGES BY EXPRESS.

Although not everyone is aware of the fact there exists in New York several private express concerns which are entirely separate from the big companies, like the Adams, United States, Wells Fargo, and so on.

These are generally styled foreign expresses, and it is a fact that all of them do principally a foreign business.

It is also a fact that all of them have either officers or agents in the principal cities of the United States, and that there are certain firms who prefer to trust these private carriers rather than the public ones.

Nor is this strange, for several of them have been over half a century or even longer in business and enjoy most enviable reputations for promptness and reliability.

At the head of the list of these old-style expresses stands Brown, Frazee & Co.'s European Express, of lower Broadway, New York.

These people number among their clients many of the richest families in the city, and also similar people in Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Chicago.

And Brown, Frazee & Co. had a boy messenger in their employ, and his name was Walter Darrell.

He was a Brown on his mother's side and a Frazee on his father's.

Thus he was a "child of the house." Everybody in the office believed that it was a sure thing that some day this bright, black-eyed youth, with his turn-up nose and his stubby hair, which stood up straight all over his head, was destined to become a member of this highly-respected, old firm.

And it is upon the singular adventures of this boy that this story is to be built up.

It began one day in November, 190—; Indian summer time, when some people think New York is at its best.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon and the western deliveries had just been sorted out.

These were packages from the different western agents of Brown, Frazee & Co., which had been brought in by the different express companies and were to be locally delivered or forwarded to different parts of the world.

Some where in the delivery room, and those which were supposed to be the most valuable were in Mr. Algernon Frazee's private office.

Algernon Frazee was a first cousin of Walter Darrell and the working head of the business as his father, now verging on to ninety years of age, seldom got downtown.

At ten minutes past four on that November afternoon Algernon Frazee rang his bell in a peculiar way, which meant Walter, and the boy answered it.

"Walter," said Mr. Frazee, "here are two valuable packages, contents unknown, which I want you to personally deliver. The one is valued at six thousand dollars and the other at sixteen. I presume they contain diamond jewelry. As we have guaranteed these valuations it is unnecessary to caution you to be most careful. You will take a cab so that you run no chances, for the more valuable package is to go to rather a shady neighborhood. I should take these out myself, but I am fearfully busy and you have got to learn to accept these responsibilities if you are to rise in this business."

"That's all right, Mr. Frazee," replied Walter, addressing his cousin, as he had been told to do during business hours. "I'd like to see the man who can get them away from me."

"Don't boast," said Mr. Frazee. "New York is a bad place and this business is full of risks. Now, then, here we have the \$6,000 one. It is addressed to Mr. Dagha Bund Poot, Hotel Albert—that's on University Place, corner of Eleventh or Twelfth street, I forget which. The other goes to Peter Smithson, No. — Van Dam street. Know where that is?"

"No, I don't. Never heard of it."

"It's over in the Ninth Ward. The cabby will know. While it is not exactly what one might call a bad neighborhood it is rather a shady one, and it is unusual to have such a package go to a place of that description, but it's all right. Both packages are from Chicago and I have talked with Mr. Hollerman, our Chicago agent, over the telephone. You are to collect on the Poot package, but the other one is prepaid."

"What kind of a name is this Poot?" asked Walter.

"Hollerman says the man is a Hindoo; that is all I know about it. Get along, Walter, for it's getting late. Will you come up to supper to-night? The girls are going to have a few friends in this evening and we should be very glad to have you."

"Thank you, I don't think I can," replied Walter. "I've got an engagement."

"With that girl you are chasing up, I suppose? Go slow, boy. You are altogether too young to think of marriage yet."

Walter blushed and was silent.

His cousin said no more, but handed him the two packages.

They much resembled each other in general appearance, each being about the size of an ordinary pound candy box.

Both were wrapped in brown paper and plainly addressed.

Walter's sharp eyes were quick to discover that the handwriting was much alike on both packages, and he called Mr. Frazee's attention to the fact.

"There is a resemblance," admitted Mr. Frazee, "but it must be accidental, of course, since they come from two entirely different persons, as I understand it. But get along, Walter. You better go to the Hotel Albert first."

Walter went.

He went in a cab, and the driver was a man who had been very frequently employed by the firm and was perfectly reliable.

Reaching the hotel, Walter went into the office and inquired for Mr. Dagma Bund Poot.

A bellboy was sent upstairs, and later Walter was taken to a room, where he was received by a small man almost as dark as a negro, who wore the peculiar black coat, the colored sash and the white turban affected by high-caste Hindoos.

Walter carried Mr. Poot's package in his hand. The other he had in the inside pocket of his coat, where it made a big bunch, but still he felt safer with it so.

"You are from Brown, Frazee & Co.?" demanded Mr. Poot in the perfect English, which nearly all the high-caste Hindoos speak in these days.

"Yes, sir," replied Walter. "Here is a package for you," and he named the charges.

"That is very moderate," said the Hindoo, and he seemed surprised. "I understood a valuation of \$16,000 was placed upon this package?"

"No, sir; \$6,000," replied Walter.

"Sixteen," corrected the Hindoo. "I know perfectly well what I am talking about, young man. I trust there has been no mistake made."

"Brown, Frazee & Co. don't make mistakes," retorted Walter, rather insolently, for he resented what he was pleased to call to himself being "called down by a coon."

"We all make mistakes," replied the Hindoo, quietly; and he added:

"Before receiving this package and receipting for it, I must examine it."

Nothing had been said about this by Mr. Frazee, but it was customary, and Walter did not attempt to refuse.

So the package was opened by the Hindoo.

It proved to be a pound candy box, bearing the name of a Chicago confectioner, and when that was opened there was found inside a plush-covered jewelry box, and when this was opened inside lay a diamond necklace of no special beauty. Valuable, no doubt, but just an ordinary affair, such as one could find in any first-class jewelry store.

Mr. Poot uttered an exclamation of immense disappointment, but he instantly controlled himself.

"This is wrong," he said. "This is not my package. As I feared, there has been a mistake."

"It is no mistake of ours then!" snapped Walter. "You see the address? You are Mr. Poot?"

"The address is correct, and I am Mr. Poot. Still there has been a mistake. This necklace is not mine and I shall not receive it. Have you no other package?"

He looked at Walter searchingly.

Wondering if he was thinking of the bunch in his pocket, Walter replied that he had no other package for him.

It was all he could say, for, of course, he had no right

to open the other package, nor was the fact that he had it any of Mr. Poot's business.

Evidently the Hindoo was a man well trained in the difficult art of self-control.

"There has been some terrible mistake here," he said. "Take away this necklace. I have nothing to do with it. How late do you people keep open?"

"Five o'clock," replied Walter.

"It is almost that now," sighed Mr. Poot, looking at his watch. "Have I got to wait until morning before I can do anything about this?"

"I expect you have," replied Walter, "and I don't know what you can do about it then. We shall have to write out to Chicago. Whatever mistake there has been it was made at the other end of the line."

"I fail to see how it is possible that a mistake can have been made."

"That sounds as if you suspected Brown, Frazee & Co. of crookedness?" flashed Walter. "I want you to understand——"

"Enough!" broke in the Hindoo. "I want you to understand that I am not the sort of person to be spoken insolently to by a boy like you! Go! I will deal in this matter only with the head of your firm!"

Walter had sense enough to shut up after that.

If Mr. Poot would not receive the necklace, then the only thing which remained was to take it away.

Walter proceeded to tie up the package as best he could.

The Hindoo then very quietly asked his name and noted it in a memorandum book.

Walter got back to the cab, not a little disturbed over the affair.

Naturally he thought again of the similarity of the two addresses.

He compared them again.

Certainly the writing looked as if it might have been done by the same person, and yet there were points of difference.

"If he only would have told me what it was he expected," he said to himself.

He had asked that question, but the Hindoo declined to answer it.

For a few moments Walter felt that he ought to drive to his cousin's house and tell him what had happened.

But he was most anxious to keep his engagement that evening with his girl, and it was getting late.

Perhaps this had a good deal more influence with the boy than it should have done; at all events, he decided to go ahead with his work as laid out.

After all, he reasoned, it was nothing to him if people out in Chicago had blundered. All he had to do was to deliver the goods.

So he let the order he had given the cabby to take him to No. — Van Dam street stand.

They struck west and, crossing Sixth avenue, went over into the "Greenwich Village," as the Ninth Ward of New York is locally known.

They got as far as Hudson street and were just turning into Van Dam, when another mishap hit this branch of the Brown-Frazee Foreign Express.

For the driver turned short, hit the curb and off came a wheel.

The cab went over with a crash, taking poor Walter with it.

The window was smashed and his face was cut with the broken glass.

Worse still, his left ankle got a wrench.

It was all he could do to stand on his feet when he finally climbed out of the wreck.

Of course Walter "said things."

The cabby said things back. There was hot talk for the moment.

It ended in Walter wiping the blood off his face with his handkerchief as best he could, and then hobbling off down Van Dam street, disgusted with the situation.

Next came the locating of the number.

The houses on the block were pretty nearly all alike—old-fashioned three-story brick affairs, with sloping slate roofs. Here and there was a modern house sandwiched in between.

Walter soon found the number.

It proved to be attached to one of the old-fashioned brick dwellings.

The green blinds were closed on the parlor floor, as were green shutters at the basement windows, but lights burned behind drawn curtains on the second floor.

It certainly did seem an odd place to deliver a \$16,000 express package in, but there was the number.

Walter compared it with the number on the package to make sure, and then ascending the steps, rang the bell. He had to ring twice before he got an answer.

It came from a window overhead.

This was raised and a woman, looking down, demanded to know who was there.

"Mr. Smithson live here?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"Express package."

"Where's your wagon?" demanded the woman, suspiciously.

"Broke down," replied Walter, thinking that the easiest way out of it. "Hurry up, will you?" he added. "I've got other places to go to."

He was still in bad temper, and he had yet to learn to control his tongue.

Still there was some excuse for the boy, for his ankle was hurting him horribly.

"Wait!" said the woman, and she shut down the window.

In a minute she appeared at the door, which could not be opened until a chain had been let down, bolts shot and a key turned.

There seemed to be a lot of precaution taken about that door.

Walter entered.

It was now half-past five o'clock.

Half-past six came along in due time.

In proper sequence followed half-past seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve.

It was now midnight.

Not yet had Walter Darrell come out through that door.

CHAPTER II.

THE CASE OF THE IDOL'S EYE.

The next day at four o'clock there entered the office of Brown, Frazee & Co. three persons, who in their way are perhaps as prominent as anyone in America.

We refer to those famous detectives, the Bradys, with whom is associated Miss Alice Montgomery, the widely-known female sleuth.

She was with them now.

This world-famous trio had an appointment with Mr. Algernon Frazee, which had been made by telephone.

It might, indeed, have been somewhat difficult for Mr. Frazee to have got the Bradys to make such an appointment, for the Brady Detective Bureau is by no means ready to give its services to everyone.

But in this case there had been no trouble, for Old King Brady was particularly requested to take up with Mr. Frazee's business by his friend, Inspector Black, of the New York police.

Old King Brady is ever ready to go a long way out of his road to oblige Inspector Black.

And on this occasion Old King Brady was attired in his usual peculiar style.

That is to say, he wore the long, blue coat with brass buttons, the old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and the big, white felt hat with its extraordinarily broad brim.

The mere mention of the name of Brady was enough to gain the detectives prompt admittance to Mr. Algernon Frazee's private office, and here they found a very badly-troubled man.

With him was a police detective—one McCormick, whom the Bradys knew very well.

He arose and, greeting them, turned to depart.

"Wait a minute, Mac," said Old King Brady. "If you are working on this case I——"

"I'm on another end of it," broke in McCormick. "Mr. Black told me to pull out when you came. Some private matter, I believe."

Old King Brady said no more, and the detective then departed.

Meanwhile Mr. Frazee had been introducing himself and had been introduced.

Chairs were placed for the detectives, and the interview began.

The story of the two express packages was told, and added to that was the story of Walter Darrell's disappearance.

For twenty-four hours had now elapsed and the boy had not been seen.

The story of the opening of the Poot package was given, as told by Mr. Poot himself.

The story of the breaking down of the cab was also told, as received from the cabby.

Having reached this stage, Mr. Frazee leaned back and added:

"And as the boy is my first cousin, Mr. Brady, I naturally feel very much concerned, but there is more yet."

"Ha!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Not at the end of your troubles. Well, what now?"

"At first this Hindoo was singularly reticent about the

contents of the package he expected," continued Mr. Frazee, "but when he found that we would do nothing for him unless he declared its contents, he let it come out. As he tells it, the package was supposed to contain a wonderful diamond which had once been the eye of an idol somewhere out in India. As he tells it, this diamond, which is worth all kinds of money, was stolen by a missionary some forty years ago, but in spite of the lapse of time the priests of this idol have never ceased to hunt for it. They have traced it through many hands and now at last located it in Chicago, where it was purchased for this man Poot for a large sum by a jeweler, who acted as his agent. Poot was in England at the time. He had previously seen the diamond and identified it. The jeweler also bought for him a superb diamond cross of great age—this as a matter of speculation. He cabled Poot, who ordered him deliver the diamond and the cross to our Chicago agent, addressed to him at the Hotel Albert and to declare a value of \$16,000 on the package, which was to be so delivered as to time with his arrival in New York. The jeweler, I may add, confirms all this by telephone. Of course the value was immensely understated, and that alone ought to let us out, but this house has a reputation and we want no legal fight."

"Of whom did the jeweler buy the diamond and the cross?" asked Old King Brady.

"That he declines to tell," replied Mr. Frazee, "nor will the Hindoo tell, either."

"He will have to tell if he expects us to do anything about it. But you say the other package, the one which went to Van Dam street, was valued at \$16,000. Is it possible that both these packages were from the same jeweler and got mixed?"

"They were from different jewelers. However, that brings me to my point. Our Chicago agent, Henry Hollerman, who has been with us for years, now turns out to be a defaulter and has decamped with some eight or ten thousand of the firm's money. The jeweler puts the mixing-up to him."

"That certainly complicates the case. When did you learn of this?"

"Over the telephone to-day. I was talking with the man about these packages only this afternoon."

"And the necklace? Is it known who that belongs to?"

"Yes; to a man named John Henderson. It was addressed to him, according to the jeweler who sold it. He claims that the wrappers of the two packages must have been changed. He denies all knowledge of such a person as Peter Smithson. The Henderson necklace should have gone to West Eighty-first street to Mrs. Henderson, the man's wife."

"You are making careful notes of all these points, Harry?" asked Old King Brady, turning to his partner, who was writing in a memorandum book in shorthand.

"I am," replied Harry. "I think I have everything down."

"Are we expected to work on the Hollerman end of the business?" asked Old King Brady.

"No. That is in the hands of Chicago detectives," replied Mr. Frazee.

"And the missing boy? What did Detective McCor-

mick mean when he said he was working on another end of the case?"

"That is what he meant. I have put Walter's disappearance into the hands of the police."

"And what we are expected to do is to find this wonderful idol's eye and the diamond cross?"

"Yes, if you can. Of course you may find out what became of Walter at the same time."

"His disappearance is so intimately connected with the diamond end of the case that I fail to see how they can be separated. Have the police visited that Van Dam street house?"

"Yes. They find it vacant. The neighbors report that a man and a woman have hired it for a month and that they had many visitors. They were regarded as suspicious people. They moved out early this morning. That is all that could be learned, according to this McCormick."

"But the agent? Does the house belong to Trinity Church, like most of those on Van Dam street?"

"Yes. You won't get anything out of them. All the agent had to say was that the rent was paid in advance. He claimed not even to know the tenant's name."

"It can be learned if you go at them right. I'll attend to that. Still I doubt if it amounts to much. All they want out of those old houses is the rent. Many of them are sub-let, and that may be the case with this one. But now an important question."

"Ask it, but I think I can anticipate it."

"Well?"

"You want to know if there is any chance of my cousin having gone crooked?"

"That is it."

"And I answer emphatically no."

"Another point settled. I think I understand everything now, Mr. Frazee."

"And you will take the case?"

"Certainly, if you wish it. I never refuse Inspector Black."

"I certainly do wish it. I leave everything in your hands."

Old King Brady put a few more questions to Mr. Frazee, and then the detectives withdrew.

"Looks like a big case," remarked Young King Brady when they got out on Broadway.

"It looks like a complicated one," replied the old detective, "and that is the kind I like. But we must get busy. I think I shall call on this Hindoo now. I will come to the office later and meet you there."

And this arrangement was carried out.

Old King Brady went directly to the Hotel Albert.

There he is well known, and at his own request he was allowed to go right up to the room of Mr. Dagha Bund Poot.

His knock was promptly responded to by the Hindoo in person.

"Come right in, Mr. Brady," he said. "I was expecting you."

"Expecting me?" questioned Old King Brady.

It was not strange that the Hindoo should recognize him if he had ever seen his picture, of course. Old King

Brady's peculiar style of dress makes that an easy matter.

The point was that Mr. Frazee had particularly stated that he had not mentioned his intention of engaging the Bradys to anyone.

But Old King Brady has had dealings with Hindoos before now.

He is quite well aware that they can do wonderful things, especially in the mind reading line.

Still he wanted an explanation.

He failed to get it.

"Yes, I was expecting you," repeated the Hindoo. "Come right in. You have been sent here by Brown, Frazee & Co. to help me find our sacred diamond. Sit down."

This was not put as a question, be it understood, but as a statement.

"I must go slow with this man," Old King Brady said to himself. "He evidently is a highly educated person in his own way."

He took the offered chair.

Mr. Poot took the floor and, crossing his legs, also folded his arms.

"Well, sir," said Old King Brady, "you are right. I have been sent here by Mr. Frazee. I want to ask you a few questions, which it will be necessary for you to answer if you expect to recover your sacred diamond, as you call it."

"I will freely answer such questions as I can," said Mr. Poot, nodding.

"Tell me first then why you expected me."

"Pardon me, Mr. Brady, but that is one of the questions I must decline to answer. It cannot be essential to your purpose."

"I admit that such is the case. You have heard of me?"

"Yes and no."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That I have certainly heard of you, but not until today. I know nothing of your record as a detective. I am not familiar with criminal business in this country."

"From whom did you hear of me?"

"From a person you do not know."

"Any more definite answer coming?"

"I regret to say no."

It seemed useless to proceed any further on these lines.

"To come to business and permit you to keep your own secrets," said Old King Brady, "from whom did the Chicago jeweler purchase that diamond?"

The Hindoo never changed countenance, as he replied:

"From a thief."

"His name?"

"I don't know it."

"Does the jeweler know it?"

"I cannot say. I have not seen the jeweler in two years. He had a description of the diamond. He was perfectly capable of identifying it."

"You have not seen it then?"

"I never saw it in my life, Mr. Brady. The diamond was stolen before I was born. I have not been in America in two years."

"And yet you feel confident that there actually was a diamond bought of this thief and that said diamond is the idol's eye, of which you are in search?"

"Absolutely confident."

"May I ask why?"

"Yes, but I cannot answer."

"What did you pay for this diamond? Have you paid for it?"

"I have. I have cabled \$50,000 to the jeweler. It is what he paid for the stone, with his commission added.

"This all sounds very singular, Mr. Poot. It is almost past belief."

"I knew you would say so. I refer you to White Brothers & Co., the bankers. They paid the draft."

"Was this money yours, sir?"

"Not at all. It belonged to the Hindoo religious organization of which I am a member. It is a fund which has been accumulating for years to be devoted to the purchase of our own property.

"But we waste time, Mr. Brady," continued the Hindoo. "We shall never get together on these lines. In short, I have ways of finding out things of which you know nothing."

"Do you mean supernatural ways?"

"There is no such thing. I don't wish to discuss that point. But I will tell you what I can and will do to help you along."

"What is that?"

"I can draw a picture of the man who has now got the diamond. Perhaps you may be able to recognize him as some well-known crook."

"Let us see what you can do in that line," said the old detective, skeptically.

He had heard of Hindoo jugglers doing such things before now. He was accordingly anxious to witness some demonstration of their peculiar powers with his own eyes.

CHAPTER III.

CRYSTALS VERSUS DIAMONDS.

When the door of the Van Dam street house was opened and Walter Darrell, with his lame foot, hobbled in, he did so with some misgivings.

He did not like the look of the place.

Cheap rugs had been thrown down on the bare hall floor; there was a strong smell of cooking cabbage.

The walls were bare and dirty. It seemed hard to understand how a \$16,000 package was going to fit in here.

The woman threw open the parlor door and told him to enter.

It was a plainly furnished room and looked like anything but a parlor.

A folding bed in one corner proved that it had been used as a sleeping room. It was lighted by a cheap lamp placed upon a center-table.

Walter looked around, but could see no one.

The woman, meanwhile, had retired, closing the door behind her.

Walter thought of the diamond necklace and heartily wished himself through with the business. He wondered

at Mr. Frazee for having sent him on such an errand alone.

His confidence was not particularly restored by the appearance of the man who now entered by an inner door.

He was tall, red-faced and had little shifty eyes.

But he was well dressed and wore diamonds.

He looked like a sport or a crook.

"Mr. Smithson?" asked Walter.

"That's me," said the man. "What have you got? Package from Chicago?"

"Yes."

This looked favorable.

Clearly the package had been expected.

"Got your bill?" the man asked.

"Yes," replied Walter, and he produced it.

It was a heavy charge, but then the value declared on the package had been heavy.

Its amount did not seem to bother Mr. Smithson any, however.

He merely glanced at it and then, seating himself at the table, drew out a fountain pen and a checkbook.

"That's all right," he said. "I'll write you a check."

"Excuse me, sir," replied Walter, "but my orders call for cash."

"How?" demanded the man, fiercely. "Do you decline to accept my check?"

"I cannot," replied Walter. "You are a stranger to me and to Brown, Frazee & Co. It is their invariable rule. If you will bring a certified check to the office in the morning it will be all right, of course; but I can't deliver this package on a check here."

Mr. Smithson put up his checkbook and pen.

"Where is the package? Let me see it," he said.

Walter hesitated.

"Come, what in thunder is the matter with you?" cried the man. "At least you can let me see the package, young feller."

"His manner was so coarse that Walter was now seriously alarmed.

He determined to beat a hasty retreat, for he saw at a glance that he was no match for this man and he felt that there was trouble in the wind.

He backed to the door, saying:

"You call at the office in the morning."

The man gave a low whistle.

"All right," he said, more mildly. "All right, boy. Just as you say."

Walter turned and opened the door.

He instantly shut it again, his face turning as white as a sheet.

For there by the outer door stood a man, wearing a mask and with a blackjack in his hand.

"Well?" demanded Mr. Smithson, sneeringly. "Why don't you go?"

"Are—are you going to force me to give up the package?" gasped Walter.

"Sure thing, unless you give it up without being forced," was the reply.

"You will get yourself into trouble for this."

"So will you! Bank on it! Hand over!"

There was no help for it.

The blackjack man came into the room and the fearful club was held over Walter's head.

Now the boy had been warned about such business as this before.

"They have got me," he thought. "I'm not going to risk my life, that's one sure thing."

Perhaps he was right.

What could a boy of eighteen with a twisted ankle do against two such men as these?

Clearly nothing.

Walter produced the package, burning with rage and chagrin.

Smithson took it.

Walter started to back away.

"Stand where you are!" was fiercely ordered. "I am not through with you yet. If this package proves to be all right, I'll pay that bill in cash."

This was some relief, if Walter could believe it, which he found it hard to do.

Smithson glanced at the address and then tore off the wrapper.

Within was a candy box precisely like the other.

"This is strange," said Smithson to his companion.

"What in thunder made them put it in a candy box, do you suppose?"

"Give it up!" snarled the other. "If we wait long enough I suppose H. H. will catch us here. Mebbe he can explain."

"It will be a sorry day for H. H. if he does catch us here," was the reply.

Smithson meanwhile kept turning the candy box over and over, as if it was some rare and curious specimen.

"Thunderation! Why don't you open it and see what there is into it!" cried the mask.

"Before the boy?" demanded Smithson.

"Come out here in the hall. I want to talk with you," said the mask.

He turned to Walter and added:

"If you follow us or I catch you listening, it's all day with you—see?"

They went into the front hall and closed the door.

Walter slid to the inner door with some wild idea of escaping at the back.

Nothing doing!

When he opened the door, which he did most carefully, there stood the woman with a revolver in her hand.

She gave a contemptuous snort and shook the weapon at him.

Walter closed the door.

Before he could reach the other, Smithson and the other entered.

The second man was now without his mask.

He was a rough-looking fellow, without even as much pretention of being a gentleman as Smithson.

Walter's heart sank.

"They mean to do me up," he thought. "Only for me he never would have shown his face."

Smithson still held the candy box, and Walter could see that the inner seal was unbroken.

"We will now proceed to open this, young man," said Smithson. "If it's all right, well and good; but if it is wrong, then woe be unto you—see?"

"What in thunder have I got to do with it?" demanded Walter. "I'm only a messenger boy."

"Wait! We shall hold you responsible, just the same."

"But that's absurd. If you want to rob me I can't help it, but let me go."

"Go where? To report to the police? I think not! But wait! We are going to open the box now!"

He broke the seal, cut the cord and lifted the cover.

"Good! Good!" cried the other. "H. H. hasn't went back on us! It's all right!"

Within, resting upon a cushion of red cotton, was a large, glittering white stone.

Walter never doubted that it was a diamond.

But it was as big as a pigeon's egg. It was the biggest diamond he had ever seen. It reminded him of the glass imitations of the biggest diamonds in the world, which one often sees in the windows of the wholesale jewelers on John street and Maiden Lane.

Smithson took it out and held it up to the light.

He said nothing. There was no enthusiasm in his manner. On the contrary, his face wore a troubled look.

He pulled out the red cotton and below lay a gold cross which was as long as the box.

It was studded all over with glittering white stones.

"Lovely!" cried the woman, who was looking in through the folding doors.

But Smithson spit on the cross!

"Nothing but quartz crystals!" he exclaimed, "and the other is only a big one of the same sort of goods. H. H. has gone back on us, just as I said."

"Never!" cried the other. "Them's diamonds if I know diamonds!"

"Which you don't and I do."

"But see how they glitter. There can't be no mistake. I'll bank on it H. H. ain't went back on us."

"Dope it out as you will, what I tell you is true," replied Smithson, who had completely recovered his coolness. "I know my business. These stones are excellent imitations of diamonds, wherever he got 'em, but they are only crystals. Someone has played it on us, that's sure."

Walter stood by taking all this in.

Who was H. H.?

Naturally he thought of Henry Hollerman, the Chicago agent of Brown, Frazee & Co.

But could he have gone crooked?

Knowing the estimation in which the man was held by the firm to Walter this seemed incredible; but he was only a boy and had yet to learn the world, and how frequently and how easily men in high places fall.

The man who had been masked now appeared to give in, though grudgingly.

"Well, I suppose you know your biz," he said. "It hain't no use to dispute with you."

"Not when it comes to diamonds," replied Smithson, grimly.

And he added:

"But say, sicker horses than this have got well. I don't believe the doctor is much of a judge of diamonds. He is only an old crank, anyway. These are very clever imitations. They might fool a man who is half blind like he is. Pat, what do you say?"

"It might be," replied the other. "You know the man and I don't."

"At least we might try it on," continued Smithson. "It can only fail, and the way I've doped it out is the ideal way of doing it."

"Yes, if it will work," replied Pat, "but I haven't much faith in your scheme."

"We shall see," said Smithson, and he proceeded to restore the crystal cross and the idol's eye to the candy box.

"Leave me with the boy," he said when this was done. "I'll have a little talk with him and we will see how close we can get together."

Pat left the room by one door and the woman by the other.

Smithson then lighted a cigar and sat down.

"Now then, young feller, take a chair," he said. "We will talk this situation out. First of all, I want to make it plain to you that I'm a very fair man and one very easy to get along with, if you only rub my fur the right way. Sit down, I tell you."

Walter dropped into a chair.

He was a shrewd boy, and enough of a New Yorker to realize the danger in which he stood.

Having had plenty of time to think he had already made up his mind that his chances were altogether better of working out of his trouble by pretending to stand in with this man than by showing temper and fight.

So he sat down and, putting his hat on the table, boldly faced the enemy, wondering what was going to happen next.

CHAPTER IV.

A SINGULAR SESSION IN THE HINDOO QUARTER.

This is to be a chapter without explanation.

What Old King Brady saw in the presence of the Hindoo, Dagha Bund Poot, he saw. We find it recorded in this notebook as we give it. There can be no mistake.

We also find written on the margin of the page the following:

"I distinctly saw a wire, as fine as the finest thread, extending from under his sleeve over the palm of his hand and touching the lead pencil. It was perfectly white and had a slight silvery glitter. Query: Was it connected with some pocket battery? This don't explain, but something of the sort must have been."

So much for Old King Brady's views expressed at the time on paper. Let them be accepted for what they are worth.

"Certainly, Mr. Poot," said the old detective, "if you can give me any clew to work on I shall be glad. I have always understood that you Hindoos can do remarkable things in the way of what we call jugglery, 'mind reading,' and so on."

"Yes, and you have seen a lot of it for yourself," said the Hindoo, looking him full in the eye.

"I have seen some of it. But how do you know?"

"Now, look here, Mr. Brady, why ask that question? In one breath you assure me that people of my race can do wonderful things in the way of mind reading. I pro-

ceed to read your mind and you immediately ask me how I know, because I tell you the truth. Isn't that just a shade unreasonable? Now come!"

"It is," assented Old King Brady, with a short laugh.

"Very well. Now listen! I cannot do my tricks, as you call them, here, so well as I can in a place—a room, I should say—which has been for some time occupied by people of my own race. Now I happen to know of such a room. Will you meet me there, say at nine o'clock this evening?"

"You refer to some place in the Hindoo quarter?" questioned Old King Brady.

"I do."

"Where?"

"Tomgee Chunder's saloon on Albany street, in the Hindoo quarter."

"I know the place and I know the man. If you are acquainted with him then that explains how you came to know about me."

"There you go again!" retorted the Hindoo, with a peculiar smile. "Now, as it happens, I have never seen the man, nor have I ever held any communication with him. But that makes no difference. I know of what I speak. Will you meet me there at nine o'clock?"

Old King Brady assented.

So far as he was aware, Tomgee Chunder, or "Lascar Tom," as he was known to the police, merely kept a sailor's boarding-house for people of his own race; sailors arriving in New York on English tramp steamers and others.

The dark-skinned Hindoo, even though he be an educated gentleman, as many of them are, finds it very difficult to obtain lodgings in New York.

They are invariably mistaken for negroes.

But naturally they do not care to lodge in the colored quarter, and most hotels refuse to take them in, so they have to seek the hospitality of their own race.

Such a lodging-house was Tomgee Chunder's.

Old King Brady had known a number of perfectly respectable Hindoo gentlemen who made headquarters there.

"Very well," said Mr. Poot. "Then so let it be. Now put the question which is in your mind. No, I have no objection to you bringing two friends. Now have I correctly read your mind?"

"You certainly have."

"You sit there amazed, and yet it is all so simple, if you only understood it."

"I wish you would show me how you do these tricks."

"Impossible! I have been taught these tricks, as you call them, in my boyhood. They are the secrets of our order. I am sworn never to reveal them."

"That is different. I will press you no further."

"Thanks! Who are these people?"

"My partners, Young King Brady and Miss Alice Montgomery. But how is it, Mr. Poot, that you could not tell that?"

"There are some things I can tell and others which I can't. I knew that one was a woman. That was as far as I could get. Nine o'clock, Mr. Brady, and now good day."

Mr. Poot did not rise, but merely dismissed Old King Brady with a wave of his hand.

There was nothing to do but go, and Old King Brady started for the door.

"One question, Mr. Poot," he said, looking back. "Are we going to be successful in this search?"

"Sir!" cried the Hindoo, hotly. "I am no cheap fortune teller, and I want you to distinctly understand it! I know no more about that than you do, but this much I will tell you for your satisfaction: The idol's eye will be recovered and restored to its proper resting place sooner or later, but whether you or I will live to see that day is more than I can tell."

Of course, after this rebuke there was nothing for Old King Brady to do but to get out, which he promptly did.

He went to his office on Union Square and told Alice and Harry of the interview.

"I should like very much to go with you, Mr. Brady," said the former. "I have seen some of that sort of business out in China, and I should like to see how this man can do it."

"You go, Alice. I shall be glad of your company. Want to go, too, Harry?"

"It is up to you," replied Harry. "I have caught on to something since we parted. I should like your opinion on it."

"What is that?"

"Why, I remembered while Mr. Frazee was telling his story of seeing an advertisement in the personal column of the Herald for a diamond cross, so when we got here I started in to look it up. It is a matter of three months ago, but I managed to find it. I was thinking that perhaps one of us better look into the matter."

"I can tell better about that when I hear how the advertisement reads," said Old King Brady.

Harry accordingly went to the newspaper file and opened it where he had put in a mark.

He then read as follows:

"If the party who took the diamond cross by mistake will return it, he will be liberally dealt with and no questions asked. Call or address FRARY, No. — Grove Street."

"Little chance that it refers to our diamond cross," said Old King Brady.

"That I grant you. There is just a chance, and no more."

"Go, if you wish. It can do no harm. Perhaps you can go now and get back before Alice and I start for Albany street."

"I'll try it, anyway," said Harry, and off he went.

Old King Brady and Alice went out to supper together, and when, at half-past eight, Harry had not returned, they started for Albany street.

It was a cold, raw evening and seemed to threaten snow.

They left the train at Rector street and turned down that dismal alley, walking as far as Washington street, where they struck off for Albany street.

Before they had gone half a block they ran into the Hindoo.

He was walking slowly ahead of them, still attired in his peculiar dress, which attracted no attention in this part of the world.

Old King Brady did not fully recognize the man until he was right upon him, when Mr. Poot suddenly turned and bade him good evening.

"Oh! It is you, is it?" said the old detective. "You see we are on time. Haven't you been there yet?"

"Not yet. I am a bit turned around in this part of town. I don't know just where to go. I was never here before."

"Then let me put you right, which I can easily do. In fact, I know the man to whose place we are going. This lady is my partner, Miss Montgomery, Mr. Poot."

The Hindoo bowed profoundly.

"And your other partner?" he asked.

"Did not come. Let me ask you one question."

"Mr. Brady, you are always asking one question. This time you have my permission to ask two."

"Such an effective way he has of calling one down," thought the old detective. "I never met such a man."

"Do you know a person named Frary in connection with this diamond business?" he added aloud.

This time he seemed to have hit the Hindoo hard.

Mr. Poot gave a quick start.

"I have heard of such a name," he replied. "Dr. Frary. What of him?"

"I did not know that he was a doctor. What has he to do with the case?"

"That is your second question. I turn it over to you to answer, for I shall not."

"You keep me most beautifully in the dark, Mr. Poot."

"I am only too anxious to help you, Mr. Brady. Better do as I ask."

"An advertisement appeared in the Herald some months ago seeking to recover a stolen diamond cross. Can it be the one you are interested in?"

"I am certain that it is. Where does this Dr. Frary live, here in New York?"

"Yes. On Grove street."

"I don't know your streets. Your partner has gone to interview him after the manner of you detectives?"

"That time you hit it."

"It can do no harm, nor am I able to see how it can do any good. We will let the subject drop."

"I am sorry to hear you say so," replied Old King Brady, "but I suppose it is useless to ask you what you know about Dr. Frary."

"Quite useless."

They turned into Albany street and walked on in silence down that dingy, dimly-lighted alley.

"Here is the place," said Old King Brady, pausing before the door of a dirty-looking saloon.

"Enter," said the Hindoo, "and say as little as possible. I do not wish to have my mind disturbed."

Old King Brady opened the door and they passed directly into the barroom.

It was a low-ceilinged apartment and so thick with tobacco smoke that it was for the moment difficult to make out much.

Then out of the smoke came the little black bar and its bottles, and a black Hindoo behind it with several other

Hindoos, dressed like sailors, all of different shades of blackness, sitting about at tables, smoking clay pipes.

The man behind the bar was Tomgee Chunder himself and he greeted Old King Brady cordially, at the same time looking inquiringly at Mr. Poot, who now addressed him in his native tongue.

Lascar Tom made a profound salaam before he answered.

They spoke rapidly together.

Then Tom gave a call and a young Hindoo appeared and took his place behind the bar.

"Take the lady into the back room, Mr. Brady, there are fewer people there and you can sit down," said Tom. "I will call you when the Sahib is ready."

Old King Brady walked through with Alice into the back room.

There were only three men there, and they had the politeness to get up and walk through to the front.

It was more than a quarter of an hour before Tom returned.

He closed the door behind him and came forward, looking very mysterious.

"Dat man is way up, Mr. Brady," he said. "Way up. Way up high."

"High in what?" demanded the old detective.

"Big priest," said Tom. "Out in India everybody bow down to him. Thank you for bringing him here."

"Do you know the man?" asked Old King Brady.

"No, no! I no know him, but I know who he is. Way up high. Come! He waits for you, but say, don't you tell he do dose tings here. De cops come and clean me out."

"Have no fear," replied the old detective. "You know me, Tom."

Tom, apparently satisfied, led the way by a side door into a hall, and then up a flight of narrow stairs.

Here he opened the door of the front room, which was fitted up as a bedchamber.

"This my room," he said. "He in back. He come in a minute."

He placed chairs and moved the furniture back a bit, so as to leave an open space on the bare floor which had been swept clean.

Between this room and the next one was a door concealed behind a deep-red curtain.

Tom now withdrew, and after a few minutes' wait the curtain was suddenly thrust aside and Mr. Poot, wearing a white linen robe, which looked very much like a night-gown and reached from his neck to his feet, stepped into the room.

This robe was belted in at the waist by a yellow sash, covered with silver stars and crescent moons.

The Hindoo's eyes were closed, nor did he open them again during this peculiar exhibition.

"Turn the lamp down low," he said, speaking in an altogether different voice.

Then he seated himself cross-legged on the floor and let his head drop upon his breast.

"Watch him closely, Mr. Brady," said Alice. "These people really do wonderful things."

"Trust me for that," whispered the old detective.

And there for ten minutes and over the Hindoo sat and never uttered a word.

Now Old King Brady and Alice were watching him all the time, and so far as they could see he never moved his folded arms.*

And yet there suddenly appeared in front of him upon the floor several sheets of plain white paper.

Each sheet lay by itself.

They formed a semi-circle around Mr. Poot.

Now suddenly he unfolded his arms and in his right hand there appeared an ordinary lead pencil.

Bending down to the floor, but without raising his head or opening his eyes, the Hindoo made rapid motion with the pencil over one of the sheets of paper.

Evidently he was drawing, but neither Old King Brady nor Alice could see much, owing to the dimness of the light.

Through with one sheet, he pushed it aside and tried another, which went aside when he turned his attention to a third.

He began on a fourth, but scarce had he done so when the pencil dropped from his hand, and he raised his head, opened his eyes and looked around.

"That is all," he said.

Old King Brady was distinctly disappointed, and so was Alice.

For both had hoped to see some wonderful display of Hindoo juggling.

But what was on the three papers?

This still remained to be seen.

CHAPTER V.

SKULLS AND CROOKS.

Harry could hardly have helped being late if he wanted to carry out his intention of thoroughly exploiting the Frary advertisement, for when he got to Grove street, which is also in the Greenwich Village and at no great distance from Van Dam street, the man was not at home.

The house was an old brick dwelling, reached by a flight of stone steps, guarded by an old-fashioned iron railing.

There were muslin curtains in the parlor windows and the front of the house appeared to be well kept, although it was not lighted up.

Harry ascended the steps and, ringing the bell, his summons was answered by a young Chinaman.

"Is Mr. Frary in?" demanded Harry.

"No in," was the reply. "Him Doctor Flaly. Him gone out."

"When do you expect him in?"

"No can tell. Any ole ttime. Mebbe long ttime, mebbe no. What wantee?"

"Is Mrs. Frary in?"

"No Mlissis Flaly. Nobody here only Doctor Flaly and me."

"Oh, you are the doctor's servant?"

"Yair."

"Can I come in and wait for him?"

"No. What wantee say?"

Harry had taken the trouble to cut out the advertisement and he now exhibited it to the Chink, pasted on a card.

But this did no good.

The Chinaman declared that he could not read English, and as Harry did not think it best to explain the nature of his business, since the Chinaman did not appear to recognize the advertisement, there was nothing to do but to beat a retreat.

But Harry had learned enough to make him convinced that he had come up against a peculiar household, so he determined to stay right on the job.

He accordingly walked up and down, determined to await the doctor's return, no matter how long it took.

It took over two hours.

But Harry would not be up to his business if he had not long ago learned the virtue of patience, so he stuck it out until finally he saw an old man, with long hair and a beard, approaching.

He was a peculiar-looking old fellow, gotten up something in the style of Old King Brady, with a broad-brimmed hat and a long frock coat; tinted spectacles concealed his eyes.

"The doctor at last, surest thing," thought Harry, and so it proved, for the man turned in at the proper number and, ascending the steps, opened the door with a latch-key.

Harry hurried forward.

"Excuse me, but are you Dr. Frary?" he asked.

"That's my name," replied the old man, looking around. "Who are you?"

"A detective. My name is Brady. Here is my card."

"Ha! You are Young King Brady then?"

"I am."

"I have heard of your firm, of course, same as everybody has. What is your business with me?"

"Did you put an advertisement in the Herald some weeks ago about a diamond cross which had been stolen?"

"I did."

"Well, that is my business."

"Come inside then. I don't want to talk about such business on the stoop, young man."

"Peppery," thought Harry, as he followed the doctor into the house.

Here everything was neat and clean, but decidedly old-fashioned.

Dr. Frary rang a bell.

The Chinaman promptly put in an appearance at the head of the basement stairs.

To Harry's surprise, the doctor addressed the man in what certainly sounded like his own language.

He then unlocked the back parlor door and ushered Harry into what seemed to resemble an anatomical museum, all twisted in one direction.

That is, it all ran to skulls.

There were hundreds of them.

Skulls ranged on shelves, each with its label; skulls piled in corners, on tables, on an old desk, on a couch, which looked as if it might be a folding-bed, and on the floor itself.

Such a gruesome display Young King Brady had never seen, and it looked more gruesome still when the gas was lighted.

"Skulls, young man," remarked Dr. Frary. "As you see—skulls."

"I should say so!" replied Harry. "Where in the world did you get them all?"

"I have collected them in all parts of the world," replied the doctor. "I have been a great traveler. I am writing a book on comparative craniology; thus you see it is necessary for me to run to skulls."

"I follow you. Some of these are very old, I suppose?"

"Thousands of years old. Take this one, for instance."

He picked up a blackened skull from the table.

"This," he said, "belonged to a man of the race of cave dwellers in France. Its age can scarcely be less than twenty thousand years."

"Is that so?" replied Harry. "That is some thousands of years older than most people believe this world to be."

"What does anyone know of the age of the world?" retorted the doctor, harshly.

"But sit down, young man," he added. "That is, if you can find a place."

He had to move two skulls off the seat of a chair before Harry could find a place, and he took three out of a big armchair, in which he seated himself, without removing his hat.

"Well," he demanded then, "and what about the diamond cross? I promised in my advertisement not to ask questions. I hardly think you can be the thief."

"That remark is quite uncalled for, doctor," retorted Harry, rather hotly. "My business is to catch thieves."

"Ha! Just so. But what about the diamond cross? Have you brought it to me? Have you located it, or what?"

"I am here for information, Dr. Frary," replied Harry, "and when you have heard what I have to say you will understand why I want it."

He then went on to tell the story of the two express packages and the disappearance of Walter Darrell.

"Do you imagine," he then asked, "that this can be your diamond cross?"

The doctor eyed him through his glasses in silence for several minutes.

"How can I possibly tell that?" he finally said.

"Under what circumstances did you lose this diamond cross?"

"It was stolen from me."

"So I supposed; but, pardon me, doctor, your answer don't convey much information."

"I know it."

"Possibly you could supply more."

"Possibly I might, but I don't think I shall."

"Why?"

"I shall not answer. Send your Hindoo to me and I'll talk to him."

"That, I presume can be done. But it seems to me——"

"What seems to you? That I am going to give my private business away to a stranger? I shall not do it, young man. I don't see where I am going to benefit by doing anything of the sort."

"If the cross belongs to you I may be able to assist you in getting it back."

"It does belong to me, young man."

"And this big diamond the Hindoo tells about, this idol's eye, do you know anything of that?"

"I am not answering any question you can put to me, young man," said the doctor, sourly.

"Indeed! In that case I suppose you would like to have me get out?"

"I should like it very much, for I have work to do on my skulls."

Harry arose.

"I am afraid, doctor, you will have to reconsider your intention of keeping silent about this business," he said, as he picked up his hat.

"You're afraid!" sneered Dr. Frary. "And what have you to do with my private business, pray? If I lose a diamond cross, that is my private affair, and all the detectives in New York can't make me talk about it unless I choose."

Seeing him in this mood, Harry could only pull out.

The doctor got up out of his armchair and stood watching him until he closed the outer door.

"What a singular man," thought Harry, "and yet somehow or another it does seem to me that he is in some way connected with this case."

He started towards Hudson street.

As he did so a big, red-faced man, wearing a slouch hat pulled down over his eyes, passed him.

With the man was a young fellow—a mere boy—very shabbily dressed.

The big man had his arm through the boy's, in what appeared to be a familiar way, and yet Harry did not fail to notice a certain scared look on the boy's face and that the man had his hand closed upon the arm, just as though he was ready to tighten his grip upon it if the boy attempted to escape.

All this Young King Brady took in at a glance.

And he saw more than that.

Harry recognized the man!

"Big Pete Rheinhardt," he said to himself.

Yet he had never seen Big Pete Rheinhardt, who was a noted crook.

But he had seen his picture.

It came about because this particular crook, who had been noted in the past for his fondness for diamonds, had finished up a Sing Sing sentence about a year before.

Old King Brady knew the man well, and when any of the oldtime crooks come out of prison he has a habit of making Harry study their photographs, taken from those in the Rogues' Gallery, this just in a general way of business.

Harry had carefully studied the photograph of Big Pete Rheinhardt, and he felt now that he had made no mistake.

Of course he did not care to stare at the man, but he did want to keep an eye on him for the moment, at least.

So he slid across the street and turned in at a dark doorway.

Then he looked around to see what had become of the supposed crook and the boy.

The sight was interesting.

The pair had stopped in front of Dr. Frary's house.

Big Pete, if he was Big Pete, was pointing at the house and appeared to be saying something to the boy.

"Come, this is queer business," thought Young King

Brady. "What's in the wind now, I wonder? I must keep an eye on you, my friend."

They did not tarry long in front of the doctor's house.

Within a minute they were on the move again, with their arms locked as before.

Then Young King Brady, who had made a few quick changes, got on the trail.

His interest in the man did not appear to be suspected, for he never once looked back.

Harry followed them to Hudson street, where they entered a restaurant and sat down at a table to eat.

A patient wait was the next thing on the programme.

It took three-quarters of an hour, and then Young King Brady found himself on the trail again.

This time it took him to Watts street, where the ill-assorted pair turned down a dark alley alongside a stable.

Later, Harry went down that alley.

He found that it ended in front of an old, tumble-down rear tenement.

And there the shadowing ended.

It seemed reasonably certain that Big Pete and his companion had entered this rear tenement, unless, indeed, they went into the stable at the back.

Feeling that he had much to tell his chief, in spite of his failure with Dr. Frary, Harry now gave it up and, finding that it was all too late to join Old King Brady and Alice, he went home to the old brownstone house on Washington Square, in which he and his chief have kept bachelors' hall now for several years.

CHAPTER VI.

RIGHT IN WITH THE CROOKS.

"What's your name, young man?" demanded Mr. Smithson, as Walter sank wearily into a chair.

"Walter Darrell," was the reply.

"How old are you, Walter Darrell?"

"Between seventeen and eighteen."

"Do you live in New York?"

"Yes."

"With your folks?"

"With my mother. My father is dead."

"What pay do you get at Brown, Frazee & Co.'s?"

"Why all these personal questions?" Walter asked himself.

But he answered meekly enough: "Ten dollars a week."

"Good pay for a boy of your age."

"My position is a responsible one."

"So? Say, have you got a girl?"

The questioning was becoming still more personal, but Walter, determined to see it through, answered: "Yes."

"You'd like to get married to her as soon as possible, I suppose?" continued Smithson.

"I certainly should."

"And would, if you had money enough?"

"That's right."

"Thank you for all these frank answers. Now I understand the situation. Walter Darrell, let me tell you something about myself. I am what the world calls a crook."

Walter sat perfectly unmoved.

"You don't seem surprised?" said Smithson, who himself appeared rather disappointed.

"I am not. It's nothing to me, anyhow."

"Nor shocked?"

"Why should I be? As I said before, it's nothing to me. I've got all I can do to attend to my own business."

"Ninety per cent. of the world are crooked if the truth were only known."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Honestly now, young man, just between ourselves, do you belong to the ninety or to the ten per cent.?"

"I am supposed to belong to the ten."

"Supposed is well put. Would you consider a proposition to get over into the ninety class if you could see money enough in it?"

"Shouldn't wonder. I'm no better than the rest of the world."

"If I could show you a chance to make a thousand dollars all in a lump, would you take it and marry that girl?"

"I am too young to get married, but the thousand would be a temptation, I will admit."

"Then I make you such an offer. Remain with me for a day or two; do just as I tell you, and the thousand is yours. I don't want you to steal anything, nor to kill anybody, merely to act as a go-between—see?"

"I shall lose my job."

"But you will have your thousand dollars. How long would it take you to save up a thousand on ten per, say?"

"I couldn't save it; but you are stranger to me, mister. How do I know that you will keep your word?"

"I'll keep it. You'll get your money."

"Suppose I refuse?"

Smithson smiled in a peculiar way, displaying all his teeth.

"It won't pay you to refuse, boy," he said.

"Do you mean that you would kill me? Are you that kind of a man?"

"I am not, but I wouldn't like to say as much for that fellow who was here just now. You better decide to stop, boy, and we'll make things as pleasant for you as we can."

"Very well," said Walter quietly. "There's no use talking any more about it, I suppose."

"There is just one thing more to say," replied Smithson, "and that is if you will take my advice you will make us as little trouble as possible. In a day or two you will have your thousand dollars, it will all be over, and you will never see or hear of us again. Follow me, Walter, and be good."

He took Walter up to the top of the house and locked him in a small room, furnished only with a cot-bed and a chair.

"Sleep till I call you," he said, as he pulled out and locked the door.

But there was no sleep for Walter.

He would have dropped out of the window into the back yard and tried to make his escape over the fences if he had dared, but it was too high up from the ground.

Restless hours followed.

Part of the time Walter paced the floor, then again he

ly on the cot. At last he fell asleep, to be rudely awakened by Smithson, who was shaking him by the shoulder.

"Wake up!" he said. "We are on the move now!"

Walter started up, hardly realizing where he was for the moment.

It was still dark, and the crook held a lantern.

Walter got right up, for, of course, he had not undressed.

"Where are we going?" he asked.

"We are moving out," was the short reply.

Walter did not understand what he meant then, but when Smithson ordered him to carry the cot downstairs, while he himself took the mattress and chair, and he saw, in passing the parlor door, that the room had been stripped of its furniture, it appeared that the crook's words were to be taken literally.

It was so.

There was a wagon at the door, upon which such furniture as there had been in the house, and it was not much, had been loaded.

They put the cot and other things on the load, and the man, Pat, drove it away.

Smithson locked the door and took Walter in tow.

They walked for several blocks.

Not being at all acquainted in that part of the town, Walter had not the least idea where they were going.

The cart stopped at the entrance to an alley, which ran down alongside of a stable.

Here he helped Pat and Smithson move the furniture into a tumble-down rear house, where they took possession of the top floor.

The woman was here and assisted in the arrangement of things.

All being completed, Walter again lay down in a little room which had been assigned to him, and slept until long after daybreak, being locked in as before.

Smithson let him out when breakfast was ready, but he locked him in again afterwards, and Walter was kept a prisoner until late in the afternoon, being let out temporarily when dinner-time came, and again at seven o'clock, at supper.

During the meals the two crooks and the woman said but little, and nothing at all to Walter. Their talk was so mixed with a peculiar slang that the boy could scarcely understand them.

Supper over, however, Smithson turned to Walter and began to talk "United States."

"Tired of it, boy?" he asked.

"You bet!" replied Walter.

"It is rather hard on you, I'll admit. Come and take a walk with me, but don't you try to escape, or I'll make things warm for you."

"I've got no-such notion," returned Walter, determined to throw the best bluff he could.

"Sensible," said Smithson. "Come on. Do you smoke?"

Walter did not smoke, so the crook lit a cigar himself and they descended to the alley and out on to Watts street.

It was now about eight o'clock, and this time the boy was able to locate his prison.

He had no thought of trying to escape.

Walter was in many respects a peculiar boy.

He had not only become interested in the singular happenings with which he found himself mixed up, but he had also come to have an intense desire to "get square."

"I'll stop with these people till I know what they are driving at," he said to himself, "and then if I can land them in the hands of the police I will."

How many boys would take a like view of such a situation?

Not one in a thousand, we are safe in asserting; but Walter did. He wanted to be able to report having done something to "get square" when he returned to the office, if he ever did.

Smithson took him by the arm and kept a hold on it during the entire walk.

Of course we know where they went.

Young King Brady saw them on Grove street.

And now our Mr. Smithson becomes Big Pete Rhinehardt.

The man was none other than that notorious crook.

He talked in a general way to Walter as they walked along and broached nothing in the way of business until they reached Dr. Frary's house, and pointed it out as they paused before the door.

"See that house?" he said then. "It is No. — Grove street. An old crank named Dr. Frary lives there. I want you to remember the house and to remember the name, for to-morrow you have to go there."

"What for?" demanded Walter, as they walked on.

"I'll tell you," replied Smithson. "You are to go there and take with you that crystal cross—see? You may have trouble in getting at the doctor. There is a Chink servant, who will come to the door. He will ask you your business. You just hold up the crystal cross and say, 'it's about this. Mind you, don't let him get it away from you now.'"

"I'll look out for that. But what kind of a looking man is this Dr. Frary. I don't want to make any mistake."

"There's nobody else in the house but him and the Chink, I tell you. However, he's an old man; wears a big, broad-brimmed hat and a long coat. He never takes his hat off, they say, so you can't mistake him. 'Tisn't likely the Chink will let you in; the doctor will probably come to the door. Show him the cross and say, 'I come from the parties that have the idol's eye'—see? Don't make any mistake."

"I shall remember."

"And don't let him touch the cross. Put it right in your pocket, just as soon as you have held it up. Then let him spout out whatever he has to say, and don't you say a word nor answer one question until he has blown himself out. Then you say: 'What will you give for the idol's eye, with the cross thrown in. Tell me, so I may take back word.' You stick to that form of words, Walter. Whatever he says, you just say those same words over again, unless he comes to the point and makes an offer. When he does that, you come right away—see?"

"And if he don't make an offer?"

"Of course, if the case seems hopeless, you will come

away; you can't do anything else. But don't you let him get the cross."

"Suppose he calls me a thief and hollers for the police?"

"He won't. He doesn't want to get mixed up with the police."

"Why don't you go yourself?"

"That's a leading question, boy, but I'll answer it. I stole the real idol's eye and the real diamond cross from that old man. He knows me. To be sure, I could bluff him, but he's a bad one, and to tell you the truth, I am afraid of him. As for Pat, I can't trust him to do the business. He is too rough and he drinks too much. He couldn't hold his temper to make a bargain with the doctor."

"It seems strange that you should pick out a boy like me for such a job."

"No. You're a stranger to the whole business. You can give nothing away. But it was Pat who picked you out for the job when he saw how cool-headed you were."

"And you expect to stick him with the bogus diamond and cross?"

"They are exact duplicates of the originals as far as appearances goes, and the old man is half blind."

"I see. You want me to try it on."

"Rather to let him try it on you. I want to know what he has to say before I move in the matter. If we can fool him, why we shall be so much to the good. I am prepared to take any offer he makes."

"How much is the idol's eye worth?"

"Oh, any old price! It is impossible to fix a price on such diamonds. To sell the whole business for fifty thousand would be giving the goods away, but I'll take that offer for what we have got to sell."

This was said with a chuckling laugh.

"Who has the real idol's eye and the real cross?" asked Walter, determined to find out all he could while the crook was in the mood to talk.

But he had got as far as he was going to get, for Big Pete told him to shut up and not ask too many questions.

After that they went back to the rear house on Watts street and, as we know, Young King Brady shadowed them to the entrance to the alley.

And that was the end of Walter's outing.

That night he remained a prisoner.

There was no move made until nine o'clock next morning, but Walter was let out to an early breakfast, and Big Pete was particularly pleasant.

Pat was not on hand.

Rhinehardt said he guessed he had gone on a drunk.

At last they left the house together.

This time Walter's arm was not held.

Perhaps Rhinehardt wanted to see if he would attempt to escape, but he made no such attempt.

He was determined to see the thing through, and to watch for his chance to turn the crook over to the police.

Rhinehardt grew more and more sociable as they advanced.

When they got to Grove street they entered a saloon on the corner below Dr. Frary's house, and here Big Pete coached Walter in his part again and gave him the crystal cross.

"Now, boy, I shall wait here on the corner and watch," he said. "You will notice that I have not said a word about you giving me the slip."

"Yes, I notice that," replied Walter.

"And the reason is because I don't think you mean to do it."

"I don't. I am bound to see this thing through and earn that thousand."

"You get it—don't you fret. I'm a square man. Go! Keep cool, and don't let the doctor faze you!"

And Walter went.

He ascended the steps of the old brick house and rang the bell.

The door was immediately opened by an elderly man with a broad-brimmed white hat and a long blue coat.

"Dr. Frary?" said Walter, questioningly.

"Dr. Frary," replied the old man.

"I came about this," said Walter, holding up the crystal cross.

But, after all, he had blundered.

The man wore no spectacles—he should have noticed that.

He was Old King Brady!

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROPHECY OF THE PICTURE.

What brought Old King Brady at Dr. Frary's?

This is the question, and the answer is Dagha Bund Poot, the Hindoo.

This makes it necessary for us to hark back to the Hindoo quarter on the previous night and finish up our business at Lascar Tom's.

Having announced the completion of his peculiar exhibition, Mr. Poot arose, turned up the light and gathered up the papers.

The three upon which he had used the pencil he handed to Old King Brady, the other sheets he tore up and threw into an old-fashioned open grate set in the fireplace.

Then he sat down on the floor again and folded his arms, saying:

"Examine those pictures well, Mr. Brady, and believe me, you will find something out in your work on this case."

Old King Brady and Alice proceeded to study the pictures.

The first was a sketchy portrait of a man.

But, in spite of its sketchiness, it was wonderfully plain.

"Huh!" muttered Old King Brady. "This is certainly very singular. It is hard to believe that you could ever have known this man."

Mr. Poot smiled, but made no reply.

"Who is he?" asked Alice, by a secret sign, of which the Bradys have a regular code.

But she did not press the question when Old King Brady failed to respond.

He looked at the next picture.

It represented a cross, studded all over with what might have been mistaken for diamonds, but underneath it was written something in Hindustanee.

"Fly-tracks," said Old King Brady. "I shall have to ask your assistance here, my friend."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Hindoo. "Did I write something? I didn't know it."

He said it, but Old King Brady did not believe him, of course.

"Why all this nonsense and all this secrecy?" he asked himself more than once.

But he never got any answer to this question.

The Hindoos are, to say the least, a mysterious people.

The mystery surrounding this particular specimen of the race was never fully cleared away.

Mr. Poot took the paper as Old King Brady extended it to him.

"This seems to be somewhat mysterious," he said. "It reads: 'Follow the clew of the crystal cross, 86 John.'"

"I thought it was a diamond cross," put in Alice.

"And so it is a diamond cross," replied Mr. Poot. "I don't know what it means any more than you do."

"And yet you wrote it," said Old King Brady.

"My hand certainly wrote it," replied the Hindoo. "But the rest—86 John—what can that mean?"

"Is it 86 John street?"

"I don't know. I didn't know there was a John street in New York. I know little of the city, as I told you before."

Old King Brady did not believe him, but he said nothing and turned to the other paper.

This was a regular picture.

It represented the front of an old-fashioned house. Upon the steps stood a boy, holding up what appeared to be the same "crystal cross."

In the doorway stood Old King Brady himself. Behind him was another figure looking very much like him, but for a beard and spectacles.

It was all very crude and sketchy, but perfectly distinct.

"Is this figure in the foreground intended for me?" asked Old King Brady.

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Or perhaps the other?"

"I don't know. I cannot tell you. Really, Mr. Brady, it is useless to question me about those pictures. I am half asleep when I sketch them off. Believe me, I don't know what I am about."

But Old King Brady did not believe him.

He did not raise the question, however, but quietly asked if the picture was intended to be regarded in the light of a prophecy; as something which was going to happen in the future.

"I suppose so," replied the Hindoo, adding:

"May I see that sheet?"

"Certainly."

Old King Brady passed it over.

"Looks like you and your brother," he remarked.

"I have no brother."

Suddenly Mr. Poot let the picture fall.

At the same time his head dropped forward.

In the same peculiar voice in which he had spoken while he was doing the drawing, he said:

"Turn out the light."

Old King Brady turned down the lamp.

"Turn it out!" cried the Hindoo, almost fiercely.

Old King Brady turned it out.

In a few seconds he heard the pencil scratching on the paper.

It was only for a moment.

Then Mr. Poot was heard saying in his natural voice:

"Why, how is this? We are in the dark. Has the lamp burned itself out then?"

"You told me to put it out," replied Old King Brady.

"I—oh, no!"

"But you did."

"Bless me! I must have dropped asleep again. Light it, please."

It seemed a cheap deception, but there was a surprise to come, however Dagha Bund Poot worked it.

For, when the lamp was lit and the Hindoo handed back the picture, there was a lot more to it.

A street had been crudely sketched, there were buildings opposite the house in which Old King Brady stood.

Poot himself was well drawn in the act of approaching the house.

With him was a young man who was unmistakably Harry, while behind, in the act of crossing the street, was Alice.

Now all this, be it understood, was drawn in the merest outline, but it was all very distinct.

Poot, who had examined the picture before passing it over, regarded Old King Brady with a peculiar smile.

"You are fortunate," he said, adding:

"Do you know those people?"

"I know them all. Do you?"

"I recognize Miss Montgomery and myself, of course—but the young man?"

"Is my partner, Young King Brady."

"Ha! Do you recognize the place?"

"No."

"Perhaps he does."

"It is possible. But this portrait, Mr. Poot. For whom is it intended?"

"I don't know any more than you do, but if you ask my opinion, I should say it was probably the person in whose possession the idol's eye and the diamond cross now rest. But this is all I can do for you, Mr. Brady. Kindly leave me now, and as you pass out say to Tomgea-Chunder that I would like to see him."

"Then you will not go with us?"

"No. I shall remain here to-night."

Thus dismissed, Old King Brady and Alice pulled out, delivering the message on the way.

"Did you get what you wanted?" demanded Lascar Tom curiously, as they passed out.

"We did," replied the old detective, feeling that assent was the easiest way out of it.

"You are lucky," said the Lascar. "Him high up. Way up high. Yes."

When they got out on Albany street, Alice asked about the portrait.

"I judge you recognize that man, Mr. Brady," she said.

"It most certainly does look amazingly like a crook I once knew," replied the old detective. "I thought the man was in a southern prison, but upon figuring it out I make it that his time was out some three years ago, and

the singular part of it is that he was originally a wholesale jeweler. He was a great diamond swindler."

"His name?"

"His real name is Jacob Mandel, but he traveled under many aliases."

They discussed the other pictures as they walked towards Broadway.

Old King Brady did not place much faith in them, and he openly said so.

Alice expressed no opinion. When they got to the Wall street station of the subway, Old King Brady rather surprised Alice by saying:

"Late as it is, I am going to Mr. Frazee's house. If it is lit up I shall try to see him. If not, we will go home."

"Why?" asked Alice.

"I want him to see that portrait. Don't say anything about the other pictures, please."

They went.

The house was on East Fortieth street, near Park avenue, and it proved to be all lighted up.

Old King Brady sent in his card, and he and Alice were shown into a reception room, where Mr. Frazee presently joined them.

Old King Brady produced the portrait.

"In working out our case this has come into my hands," he said. "I want to see if you recognize it."

He unrolled the paper and held it up.

"Why, most certainly I recognize it!" exclaimed Mr. Frazee. "It is our defaulting Chicago agent, Henry Hollerman. Where did you get this?"

"It was handed me by a person I am working with. He believes that the original has the stolen diamonds."

"In the light of what I know now I shouldn't wonder."

"How long had Mr. Hollerman been in your employ when he defaulted?"

"Three years."

"How came you to get hold of the man?"

"He applied for a position in the Chicago office and was taken on. The old agent died. Hollerman had proved trustworthy and very efficient, so he was advanced to the vacant position."

"Is he a married man?"

"He claimed not."

"Then you really know nothing about him?"

"Nothing at all, when you come to boil it down, but I didn't realize that until after this affair occurred."

That ended the interview with Mr. Frazee.

Old King Brady escorted Alice to her room on Waverly Place, and then went home to find Harry waiting for him in the library.

Of course a comparison of notes followed.

When Harry looked at the larger picture he at once exclaimed in surprise:

"Why, Governor, that is where I was to-night. That's Dr. Frary's house on Grove street, with you and the doctor standing in the doorway. Here am I and Alice, too. I suppose this figure is intended for the Hindoo, but who is the boy holding up the cross?"

"Don't know. You are sure of what you are saying?"

"Absolutely."

Further talk about the pictures followed.

"It is all very singular," Old King Brady wound up by saying. "The whole amount of the matter is that these Hindoo fakirs—and this Poot is evidently one of them—certainly do very wonderful things—things which no white man can begin to explain."

That ended it for the night, except that Old King Brady announced his intention of tackling Dr. Frary the first thing in the morning.

His intention then was to go there directly after breakfast, but he changed his mind and went to the office first, for there he had a picture of Jake Mandel, the diamond crook, and he wanted to compare.

While he was looking for it, Harry got at the big picture again.

"Why, look here, Governor!" he exclaimed, "this is surely the boy I saw with Big Pete Rhinehardt last night."

"So? Then why didn't you say so last night?" replied Old King Brady.

"I didn't recognize him then, but I do now. It's the same fellow, sure."

"Singular. But here is Jake Mandel's picture. Yes, he is the same man."

"Very mysterious."

They were at it when Mr. Poot was announced.

He was dressed now in his black coat, white turban and red sash.

"Good morning, Miss Montgomery. Good morning, Mr. Brady," he said, as he entered the office, "and this young man is your other partner, I presume?"

Harry was introduced.

The Hindoo took a chair.

"I called to see if you would let me go with you this morning," he said. "You see we want to make the prophecy of the picture come true if we can, and it cannot unless I go along."

"You seem to know just what we propose to do, Mr. Poot," said Old King Brady. "Perhaps then you can tell us where we are going?"

"I cannot. I haven't the faintest idea."

"You can go."

"I thank you. When do we start?"

"Now."

"I am ready."

"I shall go ahead and interview the doctor alone for a few minutes," said Old King Brady, calling Harry aside. "You take this man in tow. Walk there. It will give me just the start I need."

"My partner will take charge of you, Mr. Poot," he added aloud. "I shall perhaps meet you at our destination."

With that Old King Brady left the office, beckoning to Harry to follow him to the outer room.

"Don't attempt to enter until I come out," he said, "but keep an eye on the house. I am most anxious to see what is going to be the outcome of this 'prophecy of the picture,' as he calls it."

Harry held back about fifteen minutes in order to give Old King Brady a good start.

He then came back into Old King Brady's private office, where he had left the Hindoo with Alice.

To his surprise they were talking together in Chinese.

But the surprise was confined to the fact that the Hindoo could speak that difficult language.

As for Alice, she is the daughter of a missionary and was born and brought up in China. She can both speak and read Chinese, which is a very remarkable attainment for a white woman.

"I compliment you upon having so talented a partner, Mr. Brady," said Poot, as Harry entered. "She speaks Chinese almost as well as I do."

"You speak the language?" replied Harry.

"I do. I have lived much in China. But when do we make our start?"

"Now."

"And where do we go?"

"To Grove street, to the house of a Dr. Frary."

That was the time Mr. Poot made his start.

"Dr. Frary!" he cried. "That name again!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A SINGULAR TURN OF AFFAIRS.

"What about that? Do you know this Dr. Frary then?" asked Harry.

"No," replied the Hindoo. "I never saw the man, but this time I will be more frank than I was when Old King Brady asked me the same question. The man at one time had the idol's eye and the diamond cross."

"Indeed! How about that?"

"I shall say no more. Let us go."

Feeling that it would be useless to press this singular man further Harry made the start, and with Mr. Poot and Alice, walked to Grove street.

It was quite a long walk, and in any other city but New York the Hindoo would have attracted a lot of attention.

As it was, everybody stared at them, but to Harry's relief, no crowd of small boys gathered in their wake.

And the prophecy of the picture?

Strange as it may seem, account for it as you will, it actually did come true as they neared Dr. Frary's house.

For their arrival was so timed that Walter Darrell, with the crystal cross in the inside pocket of his coat, was just ascending the steps.

"The same boy!" muttered Harry.

"The boy of the picture?" questioned the Hindoo. "I can hardly see the resemblance at this distance."

"It is the same boy! Hello! The Governor has opened the door, but I don't see the old man!"

The boy said something and then, thrusting his hand into his coat pocket, produced a glittering object.

It was certainly the cross of the second picture.

All recognized it.

As Old King Brady looked at the crystal cross the old man darted past him through the door and tried to snatch it away from the boy.

"Hold!" cried the Hindoo, who was approaching with Harry.

Alice hurried across the street.

Old King Brady caught Dr. Frary by the shoulder and pulled him back.

"Wait, my friend, I am running this business!" he cried.

He was amazed at what had occurred, for most certainly the prophecy of the picture had come true.

Meanwhile the doctor had caught sight of the Hindoo.

He turned deathly pale and drew back.

Walter, not knowing what to make of it all, pocketed the cross and glanced behind him to see if his man Smithson was in evidence.

"Come inside here, all of you," said Old King Brady. "Boy, we are detectives," he added. "You will do well to obey."

"Good!" cried Walter. "If you are a detective then you are just the man I want to come up against. Just hold on a second, the chief crook in this business is hanging out at that saloon on the corner. He's the man you want to get."

"The man I saw you with in front of this house?" asked Harry quickly.

"The man I was with in front of this house, yes," was the reply. "His name is Pete Smithson."

Harry looked at Old King Brady.

"Go!" said the old detective. "Arrest him if you can. If you fail, then return here."

Harry hurried away, the others entered the doctor's house, and the door was closed.

Meanwhile Mr. Poot kept his eyes steadily fixed upon Dr. Frary.

And, strange to say, the doctor stared at him in return.

He seemed unable to detach his own eyes from the Hindoo's gaze, and when they got inside his face still wore that same deathly lure.

From the moment he laid eyes on Mr. Poot he had never uttered a word, but he had had enough to say to Old King Brady before.

Their interview had been much on the same lines of Harry's with Dr. Frary.

The skull collector would answer no question and was as sarcastic as he was stubborn.

Old King Brady got no further than the hall. They had been talking there when Walter Darrell rang the bell.

Waiting a few seconds for either Mr. Poot or the doctor to speak, and finding that neither of them was inclined to say anything, Old King Brady started in with Walter.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"My name is Walter Darrell. I am with Brown, Frazee & Co.," was the prompt reply.

"The missing boy?"

"Yes, the missing boy, and it's all owing to that fellow Smithson that I am missing. He's a crook."

"Yes. Let me see that cross. Hold on now. Don't start to tell your story until I give the word."

Walter produced the cross.

"Quartz crystals cut like diamonds and set in plated copper," said Old King Brady. "You see, Mr. Poot?"

"Keep it. I have no interest in the thing," replied the Hindoo, never removing his eyes from Dr. Frary, who stood peering at him through his spectacles in the same peculiar way.

"Now then, boy, where did you get this thing?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Shall I tell the whole story now?" demanded Walter.

"Yes; tell it."

Only too anxious, Walter lost not a moment in complying.

As he talked, Dr. Frary several times started to speak, but he seemed to get no further than opening his mouth.

Mr. Poot still kept looking at him. Old King Brady thought it was time to interfere.

"Come!" he cried. "Take your eyes off that man! If you are trying to hypnotize him or anything, stop it!"

The Hindoo gave a low laugh.

"I'm done," he said. "Inside of a few hours he will be a dead man and I shall have no hand in his death."

He snapped his fingers and the doctor seemed to pull himself together with a start.

"No, no! Don't say that!" he cried. "I know you—I know your power. You are one of the priests of the Temple of Bhramapore."

"I am. The spiritual brother of the man you murdered and robbed of the idol's eye and the diamond cross at the inn at Lwang Fung, in Western China, five years ago."

A fearful spasm seemed to seize the doctor.

"You know all," he repeated. "Of course you know all! Save me! You can do it!"

"Why should I? When my brother priest trusted you and showed you the idol's eye you betrayed, robbed and murdered him. But listen, Dr. Frary! I have no hand in your death, as you seem to believe. I can read the stars. Yours I read last night. I can tell you all if you wish to know all."

"I do! I do! Tell me the worst!"

"First answer my questions before these detectives. Did you ever see me before?"

"Never."

"Do you know my name?"

"I do not, but I know your power."

"My power is limited. I could not save you if I would. Do you accuse me of having any hand in your death?"

"No, no! It is impossible! But tell me what you mean—what you know."

"I know nothing beyond what I have read in the stars. By that I know that you have been poisoned by one whom you trusted."

"Hing Dock, my Chinese servant! I thought as much! That accounts for his mysterious absence."

"He will return, but you will then be dead. I have said all."

The Hindoo turned to Old King Brady.

"If you want to use ordinary means to save this man better rush him to a hospital," he said. "What I state is true."

Harry came just then.

He reported nothing doing.

Clearly Big Pete Rhinehardt had seen the Bradys and had promptly taken to his heels.

Dr. Frary had now grown calmer.

"You seem to be master here, Mr. Brady," he said to the old detective. "I am a man without friends. I need help. Oblige me by sending for an ambulance, as he says."

"Do you feel sick at all?" demanded the old detective.

"I have felt sick all the morning, ever since my Chinese servant brought me my breakfast at six o'clock."

"I will send for the ambulance. But don't let your imagination play any part in this business, Dr. Frary."

"It does not."

"Nor the mental influence of this Hindoo?"

"Nor does that. The influence, as you call it, was directed in another channel."

"What channel?"

"To make me confess my part in the matter of the idol's eye."

"Harry, go for an ambulance," said Old King Brady.

Harry immediately left the house.

"Come into my museum," said Dr. Frary. "I am going to make a confession."

It was marvelous the change which had come over this man who had been so surly and violent with Old King Brady but a short time before.

He led them into the room of skulls.

Mr. Poot followed in silence.

When he entered he looked around curiously, but even then he did not speak.

Dr. Frary cleared skulls away and placed chairs.

He then produced a key and, unlocking his desk, took out a folded paper.

"My will," he said, handing it to the old detective.

"You are supposed to be reliable, Mr. Brady. See that it is delivered if I die."

"I shall do so, doctor. But mind what I tell you. Don't let this thing get on your nerves."

"I am not doing it and I shall not do it. Sit down."

Old King Brady and Alice complied. Mr. Poot pushed the chair which had been placed before him over towards Walter, and sat on the floor cross-legged and with folded arms, as usual.

Dr. Frary sat by the desk with his head resting on his hand, and for a few minutes remained silent.

The situation became as peculiar as it was strained.

At length the doctor raised his head and addressed Old King Brady.

"You came here asking about that advertisement," he said. "I am prepared to answer now. I owned the idol's eye and the crystal cross. Three months ago they were stolen from me by professional burglars, as I believe, who broke into this house."

"Aided by your Chinese servant?" demanded the old detective.

"It may be so. I cannot tell you. At all events, they were stolen and I advertised for the cross."

"Why not for this diamond—the idol's eye?"

Dr. Frary waved his hand towards the Hindoo.

"I feared his people, and that is all I shall say," was the reply; and he added:

"If I live, Mr. Brady, I may decide to tell more. If I die, you see that my will is probated and charge for your services. These skulls are valuable. That, sir, is all I have to say to you, except to warn you that if Hing Dock really has poisoned me, he will no doubt return here tonight, as the Hindoo says."

So far silence on the part of Mr. Poot.

It was broken now, but the breaking did Old King Brady no good.

For the change came when Dr. Frary began talking to him in his own language.

The Hindoo responded.

The conversation was conducted with the greatest calmness on both sides, but as it proceeded the doctor grew paler still and began to writhe in his chair.

Old King Brady asked him if he was suffering, and he replied that he was.

"Have you no idea what he has taken, Mr. Poot?" demanded the old detective. "We ought to try to help this man?"

"I have no idea. He says it is a Chinese poison, to which there is no known antidote," was the reply.

"How is it, doctor?" asked Old King Brady.

"As he says!" groaned the doctor. "He has told the truth. I have been poisoned. There is no doubt of it. I shall certainly die."

Old King Brady begged him to give further details, but he shook his head.

Presently the ambulance came.

The presence of Old King Brady made it easy, when it might have been otherwise.

Dr. Frary was taken away to the hospital.

His last words were addressed to Old King Brady, and he said:

"I leave everything in your charge."

And all through the whole business Mr. Poot sat there on the floor with crossed legs and folded arms, maintaining utter silence, unless addressed by Old King Brady.

There was another silent one, and that was Walter Darrell, who was mightily puzzled by the turn affairs had taken.

He was wondering "where he got off the cars."

Very far from having anything to report to Cousin Frazee, he began to wonder if he was not going to find himself accused of mixing up with crooks.

CHAPTER IX.

STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT DR. FRARY'S.

As soon as the ambulance had gone the Hindoo turned to Old King Brady with an air of triumph.

"We are on the right road," he said, "and now I am going to leave you. I can be found at my hotel whenever I am wanted. Let me advise you to devote your attention to the second picture and follow the clew of the crystal cross. Any reason why I should not go?"

"None," replied Old King Brady, "and your advice shall be heeded; but, Mr. Poot, I think you owe it to me to tell me all Dr. Frary said to you."

"No," replied Poot, rising. "I shall tell you nothing, except that I believe someone in this room will succeed in recovering the diamond and the cross."

"Do the stars tell you that?"

"Sneer as you will, my friend. I have spoken."

And with that Mr. Poot walked out of the house.

Old King Brady did not attempt to stop him. He felt that he had no right.

As soon as he had departed Walter turned to the old detective and asked in his manly fashion if he did not think he ought to go at once to the office and report.

"Decidedly," replied the old detective; "but go with me. There is danger of your meeting your crooked friend and getting into trouble. I am going downtown."

Walter assented. Old King Brady took Harry and Alice aside.

"You two remain here," he said. "I have a stray idea that something may come of it. If the Chinaman should return, arrest him. Same with Big Pete. Remember that much as we have learned about this singular business, we have still made no headway towards recovering the big diamond and the cross."

Harry assented, and Old King Brady went away with Walter Darrell.

In the old detective's pocket went the crystal cross.

Was it indeed to prove a clew?

This was a question hard to answer.

In so singular a case it was hard to tell what might or might not turn out to be a clew.

"Well, Alice," remarked Harry, after they had departed, "this appears to be a most unique case, but it is a relief for you and me to find ourselves alone."

And Harry shot a meaning look at his partner.

Alice laughed.

"Come now, don't you begin any love-making business, Harry. "It is too early in the day," she said.

They were lovers in a way.

The last three words could be dropped as far as Harry is concerned, for he would have married Alice at the drop of the hat long before this.

The fascination of a detective's life stands between them.

Alice is devoted to her profession and refuses to discuss marriage as yet.

Some day a wedding will doubtless happen between these two.

"Your will is law," replied Harry. "Let us look over Dr. Frary's collection of skulls."

"Quite a museum," replied Alice.

"Quite a museum, as you say," said Harry. "Dr. Frary seems to be altogether a remarkable man."

They had previously been all over the house before Old King Brady went away with Walter.

On the upper floors but two rooms were furnished, one for the doctor, evidently, and the other for his Chinese servant.

Tired at last of examining the skulls, Harry and Alice settled themselves down for their long wait.

At last the bell rang sharply.

It proved to be a letter-carrier.

He had several letters for Dr. Frary, which Harry received.

"Where's the Chink?" asked the carrier. "Isn't he around to-day?"

"No," replied Harry. "He is out, and the doctor is away, too. I'm in charge here."

Harry went back with the letters.

"I don't suppose we have any right to open these letters," he remarked, "but all the same I am tempted to do it."

"I would," replied Alice. "We have our rights as detectives. I should not hesitate."

Harry then opened the letters, of which there were five.

Four were from persons who had evidently been in correspondence with Dr. Frary on his hobby.

They were all about the one subject—skulls.

But the fifth was different. Its wording was mysterious and significant.

It was neither addressed nor signed, and ran as follows:

"If the lost is to be found, then take a hint, Dr. Frary. Be on the Brooklyn Bridge at midnight. If you are addressed by a woman, listen. If she asks you to follow her, do so. Have no fears. This, if you are ready to redeem for cash, and not otherwise. You are not expected to bring money with you, however, nor to buy without having seen the goods."

"Most important!" cried Harry. "Alice, I thank you. I don't believe I should have opened these letters without you to back me up."

"Well, there you are," said Alice. "At what hour was this letter posted?"

It was not over two hours before.

Alice and Harry had now been in Dr. Frary's house three hours.

"Plenty of time for Big Pete Rhinehardt to have written the letter and posted it," remarked Harry. "If that boy's story was true, then this letter may not be of so much importance after all."

It was rather puzzling.

Alice began to talk about the Hindoo's pictures.

"If you can believe in that sort of thing then the crystal cross is going to prove the real clew," she said.

"It is hard to know what to believe," replied Harry. "I only wish the Governor would come."

But time passed, and Old King Brady did not come.

About one o'clock Alice cooked up a little lunch, finding plenty of provisions in a pantry in the kitchen.

At half-past two the bell rang violently.

Harry hurried to the door to find Inspector Black outside.

"Ha! You here, Harry?" he exclaimed. "I was in hopes I should find Old King Brady. I have important news."

"I can guess it," replied Harry. "Dr. Frary is dead."

"Yes, he died two hours ago. The post mortem which has been held shows that he undoubtedly died of poison, but the doctors cannot tell what sort it was."

"How did you hear about Dr. Frary?"

"Old King Brady called me up from somewhere downtown."

"Any orders for us?"

"No; he said you were here and he expected to be here."

"We are stuck here, I am afraid. I wish he would come and let us out."

They talked further, and finally the inspector went away.

But the hours passed and Old King Brady did not come.

Night settled down upon the old house on Grove street.

About nine o'clock Alice lay down on the lounge in the museum, declaring that she was tired out.

"Go to sleep," said Harry. "I'll slip out to the corner and telephone again. I will be right back."

He had been out three times, telephoning both the office and the house, but Old King Brady had not been heard of at either place.

He went out now, leaving the front door on the latch, intending to return within ten minutes, which he did.

As he tried the door he found it fast.

"Can Alice have sprung the latch?" Harry asked himself.

He was about to ring when something restrained him. Instead, he tried his skeleton keys and noiselessly opened the door.

As soon as he threw it back he heard certain queer sounds, apparently coming from the museum, which awakened a thousand fears.

It was the gasp and gurgle of someone being choked to death.

Harry pushed on through the hall with all rapidity.

As he burst into the museum he saw the Chinaman, Hing Dock, bending over Alice, who lay stretched upon the floor.

Apparently she was unconscious.

The Chinaman's long fingers were about her throat.

Never stopping to draw his revolver, Harry flung himself upon the brute.

With a snarl like some wild beast Hing Dock turned upon him.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Me killee you, too!" he yelled.

And it was the yell of a madman!

His strength was enormous.

He gave Harry such a twist as he had never had.

In an instant Young King Brady was down and the Chink on top of him.

And now he gripped Harry's throat.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Nother one! Nother one!" he yelled. "Me doee dloctor! Me doee gal! Now me doee you!"

Harry kicked, struggled and struck out.

But still that terrible grip was maintained.

And through it all Alice lay silent and motionless.

Was she dead?

CHAPTER X.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE TWO JOHN STREETS.

Old King Brady went directly to Brown, Frazee & Co.'s office with Walter Darrell.

To do Mr. Algernon Frazee full justice he told the old detective that if he did nothing else than to bring him back his young cousin he was satisfied.

And Walter not only came in for no blame, but Mr. Frazee praised him for what he had done.

"Why, really I think you would make a good detective, Walt," he said.

"I should like it!" cried Walter. "I wish I could stick by the Bradys and see this case through."

"Stick by for a while then," said Old King Brady, who had taken a fancy to the boy. "To you we owe the recovery of the crystal cross. I regard that as a clew and I am going to follow it up now. If you would really like to see how I do it, why come along."

"Go if you want to, Walt," said Mr. Frazee, "but look out the crooks don't catch you again."

And thus it happened that the boy and the great detective joined forces that morning.

Old King Brady's intention now was to put the clew of the crystal cross to the test.

He had not forgotten the second picture sketched by Dagma Bund Poot at Lascar's Tom's nor the number on John street, and it was to this number he and Walter Darrell now went.

It proved to be one of the old red-brick buildings between Nassau and William streets.

Old King Brady had not attempted to explain the singular manner in which he had come into possession of the picture to Walter, feeling that it would involve more talk than he cared to make.

Thus Walter was perplexed as to the old detective's intention, and he asked him why he had come to this place when he turned in at the doorway, leading to the rooms upstairs.

"To find out who made the crystal cross if I can," replied Old King Brady. "Let us have a look at the bulletin board."

He hardly hoped for success himself, but that was no telling.

Among the names on the board was one which now attracted his attention.

It was: "J. Peltier, Working Jeweler."

There was no other "working jeweler" down on the board.

"This seems to be the party I want, young man," he said. "We will go upstairs and interview him."

"But why do you say so?" demanded Walter, anxious to know all.

His curiosity was not gratified, for Old King Brady only gave a grunt.

They went upstairs into a dirty little office, where sat a dirty little man.

There was a workroom behind a partition, over the top of which came the sound of someone hammering.

"Mr. Peltier?" demanded Old King Brady.

"That's me," replied the jeweler.

The old detective produced the crystal cross.

"Did you make that?" he demanded.

The jeweler gave a start.

"Who are you and why do you want to know?" he asked.

The old detective displayed his shield.

"Huh! A detective! I tort so!" the man cried.

"Did you make this?" repeated Old King Brady.

"Yes. I will not deceive you. I don't want no trouble."

"You better not try to deceive me. Who did you make it for?"

"A man came here and ordered it."

"Did he show you a pattern?"

"Yes. A diamond cross just like it. I tort it was a fake."

"Did he supply these crystals?"

"Yes."

"Who made them?"

"I don't know. I made the cross and put them in. That's all I know."

"His name?"

"Smith."

Walter listened in amazement.

Certainly Old King Brady had come to the right spot. He little guessed that Old King Brady himself was equally amazed to find the prophecy of the second picture thus fulfilled.

"Smith is no name," he said. "There is crooked business connected with this crystal cross."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied the jeweler. "I tort so at the time. But I'm not in it. I just make what's ordered—that's all."

"Should you know the man if you were to see him again?"

"I certainly should."

"Would you know his picture?"

"Why not, if it is a good one?"

Old King Brady produced the portrait.

"That's the feiler," said the jeweler, after examining it attentively for a few minutes.

"You are sure?"

"Almost sure. It is very rough, though."

"But in a general way, it looks like your Mr. Smith?"

"It certainly does. But say, what's it all about?"

"There has been an attempt made to pass this crystal cross off as a diamond cross," said Old King Brady. "We want to catch this swindler. Can you help me out? Do you know his address?"

"He never gave me any address; but say, boss, mebbe I can help you out, just the same."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, the day he called here for the cross——"

"Which was when?"

"About a month ago."

"All right. Go ahead."

"Well, that day after he had gone I found a letter on the floor. I think he dropped it out of the big pocket-book he opened to pay his bill. I have kept it ever since, for I thought like enough some detective would be nosing around about the business."

"Good! Let's have the letter."

"You can't read it. It's written in cipher."

"Let's see it."

"You can have it if you want it," said the jeweler, and he went to his safe and produced the letter.

Walter's interest in all this was increasing every instant.

He had recognized the picture as that of Henry Hollerman, the Chicago agent for Brown, Frazee & Co., and now came the address on the letter confirming, for it read:

"Mr. H. Hollerman,
No. — John Street,
Brooklyn."

Another John street!

Walter did not know that another street of that name existed in Greater New York.

Old King Brady opened the letter.

It was written in a cipher in common use among crooks. The old detective was able to read it at a glance.

There were only a few lines, and translated they ran:

"Jake:—I'll be over this evening. Don't believe there is nothing in the lay you put me on to. PETE."

"From Big Pete Rhinehardt," thought Old King Brady. "Another link in the chain. Wonderful about those pictures, but Poot must have known all about this business. It can't be otherwise."

Perhaps he was right.

But we may as well add that it was a point destined never to be proved.

Thanking Mr. Peltier, and assuring him that there was not the least chance for him to get into any trouble about the matter, Old King Brady now pulled out.

"Well, boy," he said, as they walked up John street towards Nassau, "that's the way we do it, you see."

"But I don't see how you did it," replied Walter. "You must have known a lot about the case that you did not tell Mr. Frazee."

"I knew some things—yes. Did you recognize that picture as anyone you know?"

"Yes. Mr. Hollerman, our Chicago agent."

"Who has turned defaulter and disappeared?"

"What!"

"Oh, you did not know that! But how should you, seeing that Mr. Frazee did not tell you. Did you recognize the face before you saw the address on that letter?"

"Certainly I did."

"Then, there you have it. I have no doubt that Henry Hollerman is the H. H. who fooled Big Pete."

"Big Pete? Do you mean Mr. Smithson?"

"Smithson is an assumed name. The man who captured you was a well-known crook named Big Pete Rhinehardt."

"Oh! I see."

"But, understand," added Old King Brady, "we are making great headway. Perhaps you thought I could not read that cipher letter. On the contrary, I was able to read every word of it. I know just where I am going now."

"I didn't know there was a John street in Brooklyn."

"Yes, there is. The number given belongs to a house which was formerly a hang-out for crooks. I pulled that same house three years ago and I had no idea that crooks had taken up their quarters in it again, but now it would seem so."

"And what are you going to do?"

"I am going straight there. The man you know as Hollerman is really one Jake Mandel, an oldtime diamond crook. He knows all the ins and outs of the jewelry trade and could easily have had the idol's eye and the diamond cross imitated, which I have no doubt he did. I fully expect to find him there, though perhaps not this trip."

"And to arrest him?"

"Most decidedly. When was Hollerman last on from Chicago?"

"About two months ago."

"It all dove-tails."

"But why should he send the crystal cross and fake diamond to Big Pete?"

"Don't ask me. How can I tell any more than to say that anyone who believes in the saying, 'honor among thieves,' believes in what never had any existence. They are constantly fooling each other, and this appears to be a case in point. You can come along if you want to, or you can pull out. It may be dangerous."

"Oh, I'll stick, Mr. Brady! I want to see this thing through. But say, do you think I really would make a detective?"

"Better stick to your express business. A detective's life is one full of danger."

"Oh, I don't mind that! I rather enjoy it."

"Think twice before you take up the business if you have any such idea."

Perhaps Walter may have had some such idea then, but he was destined to get bravely over it.

They crossed the bridge and went to Brooklyn.

Turning back on their tracks then they went down the hill to John street, which beyond the Catherine Ferry at the foot of Main street, runs along the waterfront.

Soon they came to the number in question, for the street is but a short one.

It was attached to what had once been a brick dwelling of the old-fashioned sort.

Later it had evidently formed part of a factory adjoining, which was now closed up and going to ruin.

The house itself appeared to have been recently patched up and to be used for a tenement again, for there were shades at all the windows, but these, in every instance, were pulled two-thirds of the way down.

On the ground floor—there was no stoop—there were heavy green shutters, which were closed.

"This is the place," said Old King Brady; "walk straight on. I am not going to enter yet."

They passed on along the block and still on to the lower corner on the block lower, where Old King Brady entered a saloon.

A red-faced man of forbidding appearance, who was sitting at a table half asleep, immediately arose, and, coming forward, shook hands with Old King Brady.

They withdrew to a corner and talked in whispers for some minutes.

Old King Brady then left the place, making a sign for Walter to follow.

"I was right," he said. "There are crooks hanging out there again, or rather were, a few weeks ago. My friend here thinks they have all gone now, if he knows anything about it, which I am inclined to doubt, for if the crooks have struck in there again they will go and come as pleases them."

"Most likely we will find them out this time of day," said Walter.

"Can't tell. We will try it on, anyhow. We can only fail."

They returned to the house, where Old King Brady tried the door, but only to find it fast.

Producing a bunch of skeleton keys he tried one after another in the lock, for he quickly discovered that the door was not bolted on the inside.

He was easily able to open it, and he and Walter passed in.

The place was dark and silent and had a shut-up smell.

"Doesn't look as if anyone lived here," said Walter.

"Be quiet," replied Old King Brady. "We don't want to advertise our presence, but I agree with you in thinking that there is probably nobody here just now."

He opened the first door he came to.

It communicated with the room behind the closed shutters, which proved to be full of foundry patterns.

Old King Brady got out his flashlight, for it was decidedly dark.

They pushed through to the door at the end of this room, which stood slightly ajar.

They had almost reached it when they heard a door slam somewhere in the rear and heavy footsteps walking across the floor of the room beyond.

"Hush!" breathed Old King Brady. "Who have we here?"

He drew back, shutting off his light, and even then it was not so dark but what they could see.

Evidently the newcomer had not observed the light, nor had he any intention of coming on into the pattern room.

Old King Brady flung back the door.

There, standing by a table in a room which had been roughly fitted up for living purposes, stood the man he sought.

"That's him! Hollerman!" cried Walter, excitement getting the best of his good judgment.

"Old King Brady!" gasped the crook, and on the instant he whipped out a revolver and fired.

The shot was intended for Old King Brady, but it took Walter in the left side.

"Great heavens! I'm shot!" gasped the boy, and he sank to the floor.

Bravely the old detective flung himself upon the crook. Old King Brady struck the revolver out of the man's hand.

The struggle which followed was a fierce one.

Locked in tight embrace, neither getting the best of the other seemingly, they wrestled all over the floor.

At last they fell heavily, and as they did so, following the noise of their fall, came a crack and a crash.

The flooring, rotten with age, gave way beneath them.

Down went Old King Brady and the crook! Down! Down! Down!

CHAPTER XI.

THE VEILED WOMAN.

Writhing in the clutches of the mad Chinaman—for such was the man's condition—Young King Brady gave himself up for lost.

As Hing Dock bent over him, doing the choking act, Harry managed to get his foot between the fellow's legs and trip him up.

Hing Dock fell sprawling on top of him.

Harry drove his knee into the pit of his stomach and doubled him up.

The grip on his throat relaxed, Harry quickly got the best of the Chinaman.

Choking him until he was black in the face he pinned him down with his knee and actually managed to handcuff him.

The last stroke was to tie his legs.

Hing Dock revived as Harry was doing it and began to rave in his own language.

Alice was just opening her eyes.

"Oh, Harry! Have you come!" she gasped.

She sat up and saw the Chinaman was in Harry's power.

Harry's face was all covered with blood where Hing Dock had clawed him.

"Are you hurt, you poor boy?" Alice asked.

"Not at all. But can you stand on your feet?"

"Certainly. I'm not hurt at all, only he came near choking me to death."

"Same here, but he got his own dose. If you could get to the drug store on the corner and telephone for the patrol wagon."

Alice got up and, after a moment, announced herself able to go.

"Do it then," said Harry, "and I will watch out here, and after you have done it, call up Mr. Frazee's house and see if you can find out anything about the Governor, for I am getting greatly worried about him. But tell me, Alice, how did this come about?"

"Why I hardly know," was the reply. "He was in the room before I realized it. I did not hear him come into the house."

Alice departed.

In a few minutes she was back again.

"The patrol will be right along," she said. "I got Mr. Frazee on the wire. All he knows is that Old King Brady called at his office and left soon after with that boy. That was about eleven o'clock. Where they went, he does not know, nor has he seen or heard of them since."

"It looks as if they might have run into Big Pete."

"Possibly."

They stood in silence, listening to the Chinaman's ravings.

At last the patrol wagon came and they took him away.

Harry and Alice now started for home.

Harry left Alice at her own door and got into his house at about half-past ten.

Old King Brady had not been in all day, so Julius, the Bradys' faithful colored man-of-all-work, reported, nor had he telephoned.

It began to look bad, but Harry was powerless.

He felt that there was but one thing to do, and that was to act upon the letter addressed to Dr. Frary.

Harry went to his room and began experimenting with certain costumes that he had there, although the Bradys' costume room is at the office on Union Square, where they keep everything in that line imaginable.

For a young man like him to make up like an old fellow, such as Dr. Frary, seemed a hopeless task, but at length Harry succeeded to his partial satisfaction.

Surveying himself in the glass he could not but admit that the resemblance was fairly close.

Still he hardly expected that it would deceive so shrewd a crook as Big Pete Rhinehardt.

By this time it was considerably after eleven o'clock.

Determined to carry out his plan, Young King Brady now went to the Brooklyn Bridge and started across on foot.

He walked almost to Brooklyn, but no woman accosted him.

Returning on his tracks then he reached the middle of the bridge a little before midnight, and here he took his stand, determined to await events for half an hour at least.

But he did not have to wait that long, for in less than

ten minutes a flashily-dressed young woman, wearing a veil, who was walking along towards New York, suddenly turned aside and approached him.

Harry pretended to be oblivious and stood staring off on the river.

She touched his shoulder, and he wheeled about and faced her.

"Are you Dr. Frary?" she asked in a low voice.

"I am," replied Harry, imitating an old man's voice as best he could.

"I am the woman."

"Mentioned in that letter I received this morning?"

"Yes."

"What do you propose?"

"You lost a big diamond some time ago; also a diamond cross of considerable value."

"I did."

"You would like to recover them, I suppose?"

"I certainly should."

"I can help you to do it if you are prepared to pay."

"How much?"

"That is not for me to say. I am only a go-between."

"What do you want me to do?"

"To go with me to a place in Brooklyn, where you can see the diamond and cross. The party who has them will tell you how much you have to pay."

"Very well. I will go."

"Come with me," said the woman, "and rely upon it that you shall come to no harm."

They walked back towards Brooklyn.

Harry tried at first to draw the woman out, but it was a hopeless case.

And the veiled woman took him to No. — John street.

When she paused at last it was before the door of the closed-up house, where Old King Brady and Walter Darrell had tumbled into trouble the forenoon before.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

The tumble taken by Old King Brady and Jake Mandel, the diamond crook, had come as a complete surprise to both.

The fall was about twenty feet.

The landing place was the bottom of an old cistern, which, in the days of the foundry, had been used to store rain-water for certain purposes.

It was now dry, and detective and crook landed on the cemented bottom with force enough to kill them both.

The crook broke his right leg and arm and injured himself internally.

Old King Brady, more fortunate, received nothing worse than a good shaking-up.

Old King Brady, as soon as he could collect his wits, went for the fellow and got his revolver and knife away.

He continued his search; Mandel, powerless to prevent him, made no resistance.

And from the inside pocket of the crook's vest the old detective drew a plush case.

He opened this before his flashlight.

He had drawn the capital prize.

Here was the idol's eye and also the diamond cross.

It was as big as a walnut and glittered like a star.

And the diamond cross was also an object of great value.

Satisfied with his discovery, Old King Brady shouted aloud to Walter.

No reply was returned.

"The unfortunate boy is dead," thought the old detective. "I am much to blame for bringing him into danger as I did."

He was right about the danger part.

But Walter was not dead.

He had only fainted from loss of blood.

And a minute or so later Jake Mandel went the same road.

Old King Brady forced whisky upon the crook from the little flask he always carries for such emergencies.

As soon as Jake realized what he was getting Old King Brady's little flask was not in it, for the crook snatched it away and drained it.

"Brady, you have saved my life!" he groaned.

"And you would have taken mine," returned Old King Brady.

"Can you blame me?" whined the crook. "When a fellow like me sees a man like you butting-in on him, what is he to do?"

"Well, that's so. It is a long time since we have met, Jake?"

"Not long enough."

"But I saved your life."

"It wouldn't be necessary to save it only for you. However, old man, I owe you no grudge. You attend to your business and I attend to mine. But say, you are something of a doctor, I have always heard. How hard am I hit?"

"Your leg is broken and your arm. I can't tell how much more."

"Can you set my leg?"

"I can set both your leg and your arm if you will let me do it."

"Do it."

"I will on one condition."

"Name it."

"That you tell me all about the big diamond and the diamond cross."

"Are you out after me or was our meeting only an accident?"

"I was out after you."

"Then whatever brought you to this house? I thought I was safely hidden here."

"I know that house of old, Mr. Hollerman. It was the most natural place to look."

Just then a faint voice called down from above: "Mr. Brady! Oh, Mr. Brady! Are you alive?"

"I am, my poor boy, and how is it with you?" called the old detective.

"I have been shot in the side. I'm afraid I am dying. I wish I could help you, but I can't."

"Help yourself if you can. Crawl to the door. Try and get on the street. You can do nothing for me."

But poor Walter had but little strength to work on.

With the greatest exertion he did manage to crawl to the door and get outside.

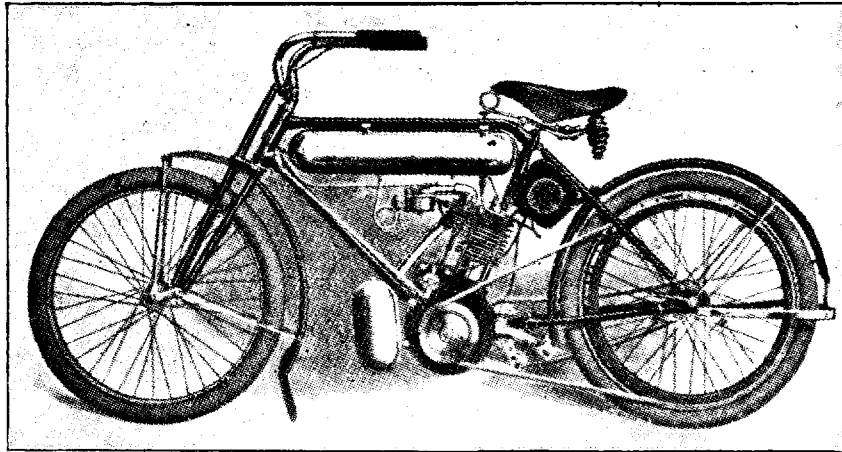
(Continued on Page 26.)

Free!

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We Are Giving Away

5 M. M. MOTORCYCLES 5

To the Readers of Our Interesting Weekly Story Paper

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This Grand Premium Contest Begins

TO-DAY!

TO-DAY!

TO-DAY!

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EVERYBODY HAS A FAIR
AND EQUAL CHANCE**

SAVE YOUR COUPONS!

Begin To-Day!

Begin To-Day!

FOR COUPON SEE PAGE 27

The door swung to behind him and fastened itself with the spring latch.

Before Walter could get ten yards away he sank down and lost consciousness.

When he came to himself, hours later, he was in bed in the Brooklyn Hospital.

Meanwhile Jake Mandel determined to comply with Old King Brady's demand.

"All I know about the diamonds are that they were stolen from a Dr. Frary, on Grove street," he began.

"By Big Pete Rhinehardt," broke in the old detective.

"Yes. I see you know. Well, Pete brought them out to Chicago and sold them through me to—the jeweler."

"Did he know they were stolen?"

"I guess he suspected it. He could not sell the idol's eye, as he called it. In fact, he was afraid to offer it, and talked of cutting it up.

"Then Pete suggested selling both the cross and the diamond back to Dr. Frary, and he undertook to engineer the job. I was to send the goods to him by our express. I delayed matters; slipped on to New York, and dodged Pete. Got a big crystal cut to match the diamond, and a crystal cross made in exact imitation of the other one. With these I returned to Chicago."

"And when you received the diamonds from the jeweler you substituted the bogus for the real and sent them to Pete."

"Exactly."

"And then swiped all of Brown, Frazee & Co.'s money you could lay your hands on and decamped."

"Just so."

"What was your idea in all this?"

"To sell the diamond and the cross to Dr. Frary myself, to be sure."

Old King Brady could only draw one conclusion, and that was that the Chicago jeweler had accepted Mr. Poot's money and sent him the diamond necklace instead of the cross and the idol's eye.

But as to that, the truth was never known, for the jeweler had turned defaulter and decamped with all he could lay his hands on. That Mr. Poot actually paid him a hundred thousand for the idol's eye and the cross was subsequently proved.

Old King Brady now managed to so place his flashlight that the light was continuous.

He then proceeded to set the crook's leg and arm.

Hours passed.

It was now midnight.

Jake Mandel had become delirious. Old King Brady's situation was trying, indeed, when suddenly a light flashed and he heard footsteps above him.

He shouted for help, and to his infinite relief Harry's voice responded.

For the veiled woman had opened the door with a latch key and ushered Harry in.

She had thought to meet Mandel.

She took to her heels when she found how the land lay, and was never seen nor heard of again.

Harry had a hard time getting Old King Brady out of the hole, but he finally accomplished it with help which he summoned.

An ambulance was called. Mandel was taken out and

carried to the Brooklyn Hospital, where he died of his injuries the following day, but Walter Darrell recovered after several weeks, and returned to the express business thoroughly cured of his desire to become a detective.

Old King Brady started for the Hotel Albert next morning to deliver the diamond and the cross to Mr. Poot, but the Hindoo had vanished.

He had left a letter behind him, however, which read thus:

"Mr. Brady.—You have the diamond and the cross. Deliver them to White Bros. & Co., Bankers, No. — Wall street. They will pay you \$5,000 as a reward. I should like to make it more, but our funds are about exhausted. Many thanks for your excellent work.

"Faithfully yours,

"POOT."

Old King Brady duly delivered the goods and claimed the reward, which was promptly paid.

Dr. Frary's will being opened, a prominent lawyer was found to be his executor. The will left the skulls to the Smithsonian Museum at Washington. The house on Grove street and much other New York real estate went to distant relatives.

Old King Brady subsequently learned that the Smithsonian people were greatly astonished to find one of the skulls stuffed with valuable gems, which realized a large sum.

What they did not get was the diamond cross and the idol's eye.

The Bradys were satisfied that these had gone where they properly belonged.

The Chinaman, Hing Dock, died a raving maniac some weeks later.

Big Pete Rhinehardt vanished. Old King Brady has not seen nor heard of him since.

And thus the case ended.

Begun in mystery, it ended in mystery.

Taken as a whole, the detectives consider that not for a long time have they worked out so singular a case as that which we have styled "The Bradys and the Idol's Eye."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS CHASING THE RED LEAGUE; or, ROUNDING UP A BOWERY BUNCH," which will be the next number (563) of "Secret Service."

SPECIAL NOTICE:—All back numbers of this weekly, except the following, are in print: 1 to 5, 6, 9, 13, 42, 46, 47, 53 to 56, 63, 81. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York City, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

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NEW YORK, OCTOBER 29, 1909.

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

A curious source of wealth is reported by the French Consul at Mongtze, in upper Tonkin. It lies in wood mines. The wood originally was a pine forest which the earth swallowed in some cataclysm. Some of the trees are a yard in diameter. They lie in a slanting direction and in sandy soils which cover them to a depth of about eight yards. As the top branches are well preserved it is thought the geological convulsion which buried them cannot be of very great antiquity. The wood furnished by these timber mines is imperishable and the Chinese gladly buy it for coffins.

People in Cleveland, O., pause to watch John Taber paint a sign whenever they get a chance. Of course there's a certain fascination about even a common 6-7-8 sign painter at work, but this interest is increased a hundredfold when John Taber is the man on the sign painting job. He is one of the few ambidextrous sign painters in the business. He can paint with equal artistic effect whether it's his right hand or his left hand that he's using. When he gets tired using one hand he uses the other. Sometimes when he's hurried he uses both at once, and the fact that he's dividing his attention between the two doesn't cut down the quality of his workmanship in the least.

Baked loaves of bread are practically unknown in many parts of South Austria and Italy as well as the agricultural districts of Rumania. In the villages of the Obersteiermark, not very many miles from Vienna, bread is seldom seen, the staple food of the people being sterz, a kind of porridge made from ground beech nuts, which is taken at breakfast with fresh or curdled milk, at dinner with broth or fried in lard, and with milk again at supper. This sterz is also known as heiden, and takes the place of bread not only in Steiermark but in Carylthia and in many parts of the Tyrol. In the north of Italy the peasantry live chiefly on polenta, a porridge made of boiled maize. The polenta, however, is not allowed to granulate like Scotch porridge, or like the Austrian sterz, but is boiled into a solid pudding, which is cut up and portioned out with a string. It is eaten cold as often as it is hot, and is in every sense, the Italian peasant's daily bread. The modern Rumanians are held by many scholars to be descended from a Roman colony, in other words to be the cousins of the Italians, and curiously enough a variation of the polenta called mamaliga is the national dish of Rumania. The mamaliga is like the polenta in that it is made of boiled maize, but it is unlike the latter in one important respect, as the grains are not allowed to settle into a solid mass but are kept distinct, after the fashion of oatmeal porridge.

NO. 1. OCTOBER 29, 1909. NO. 1.

"HAPPY DAYS"

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TO THE FIVE PERSONS.

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M. M. MOTOR CYCLE.

NO. 1. SEE 16th PAGE for PARTICULARS. NO. 1.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

"Doctor, do you think the operation will prove fatal?" "If it does, it sha'n't cost you a cent."

"In politics, I presume it is always well to saw wood and say nothing." "Not always. Sometimes the people send a man to Congress to get rid of his gab."

"Has your courtship borne fruit?" "Yes, but not to my liking." "How so?" "I proposed to her that we make a pair, but she handed me a lemon."

Mrs. Knicker—Henry, why did you leave your shoes on the stairs last night? Knicker (dazed but inspired)—English custom, m'dear; left 'em to be blacked.

"Waiter," said a guest at a hotel as he inspected his bill before leaving, "there is one item omitted." "What item, sir?" inquired the waiter. "The manager said 'Good-morning' to me yesterday, and he has forgotten to charge for it."

Pat, Sr.—Phwat do ye be shtudying in school now, Patsy? Patsy—French, English composition, algebra, and geometry. Pat, Sr. (shaking his head hopelessly)—Divil a help'll wan av thim be to ye whin ye grow up t' be carryin' th' hed!

Aunt Mandy is an old colored mammy, with a philosophical turn of mind, but given to many platitudes. Last Christmas Day her mistress, an exceedingly pious lady, was in a contemplative mood. "Just think, Aunt Mandy," she said, "1908 years ago to-day the Saviour was born, 1908 years ago." "My! My!" said Aunt Mandy, "how time do fly!"

The customer flung himself heavily into a chair. "Waiter, a little beefsteak and onions, please." "Yes, sir. Have some nice ham and cabbage also?" "No." "How about some prime roast beef?" "Don't want any." "A little of our elegant tripe would do you good." "John," called the proprietor, "what d'ye mean by annoying a customer like that?" "Just trying to make him feel at home, sir. He's a barber."

Two matrons of a certain Western city, whose respective matrimonial ventures did not in the first instance prove altogether satisfactory, met at a woman's club one day, when the first matron remarked: "Hattie, I met your 'ex,' dear old Tom, the day before yesterday. We talked much of you." "Is that so?" asked the other matron. "Did he seem sorry when you told him of my second marriage?" "Indeed, he did; and said so most frankly!" "Honest?" "Honest! He said he was extremely sorry, though, he added, he didn't know the man personally."

ENGINE AND ELEPHANT.

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG.

I worked on the Jubbulpore road when it was built.

I took the first locomotive over portions of the line as fast as the rails were laid.

It went through the wildest jungles, still inhabited by the most savage of wild beasts—elephants were as plenty along the road as chickens along the Melville & Northern.

"Gannon, you will fun your engine and tender five miles farther than you have been yet," said Mr. Bell, the contractor, to me one morning. "You will run very carefully, for the track has not been proved yet. In the afternoon, if everything is right, a party will go down with you in a passenger car."

This part of the route was through the wildest section of the country.

I had not yet seen it, for I had been employed in bringing up iron and other supplies to the depot.

My fireman, or, as I should have called him in India, "my mate," was a Scotchman by the name of McNabb.

He had come out to India to be an engine-driver, or engineer, as we say.

He was a very competent man, but there was no situation for him when he arrived.

His machine had not come from England.

He was very uneasy and cross-grained in his inferior position.

He wanted my place and pay.

He was jealous of me, and had done his best to supplant me.

Of course, my relations with him on the footboard were not pleasant.

I said very little to him, and tried to get along peaceably.

I started the machine for the first trip through the wild jungle.

The road lay on or near a considerable stream.

As I had been directed to do, I ran very carefully, making not more than five miles an hour.

This was a creeping pace for the engine, and as the earth was not very solid, it made hardly any noise.

"See on the river!" said McNabb, suddenly, as he pointed over the boiler; and the cab on an engine is an American institution.

"What is it?" I asked, looking in the direction he indicated.

"Why, man, don't you see that big tiger?" he added, very impatiently, as though it was stupid of me not to see the animal.

"I see him now," I answered, as I discovered an enormous tiger in the gloomy shade of some overhanging trees on the border of the river.

He had come to the stream to drink.

As the engine noiselessly approached the spot, the tiger raised his head and bestowed a patronizing glance upon it.

He did not seem to be at all alarmed; on the contrary, he looked as though he owned that jungle, and the machine was the intruder upon his domain.

"He takes it coolly," I remarked to McNabb, for I could not help being civil even to my enemy in the face of such a novel sight as a royal Bengal tiger.

"He is an ugly fellow, and you had better hurry out of his way," added the fireman, in a surly tone.

"I don't think he will meddle with the engine," I replied.

I had seen several of these beasts along the road, but not

one that could compare in size and dignity with this fellow.

I had reduced the speed of the engine till it hardly moved, so that I could get a better view of him.

He was as handsome as a picture.

As we came nearer to him he gave a prolonged growl, as though he was not satisfied to have us invade his territory.

"Pull out your throttle, man!" said my mate, sharply; and he was evidently very much alarmed at the presence of the tiger.

"I don't think he will care to meddle with the engine," I added, still gazing at the beautiful beast.

"If you don't go ahead, I will start the valve for you," continued McNabb, angrily.

"No, you won't! If you meddle with the throttle I will pitch you off the footboard, and you may fight the tiger on foot if you want to do so," I responded, irritated at his threat.

"You have no right to keep me in peril of my life, Gannon. If you choose to expose yourself, that's another thing; and you can do it if you like."

I did not care to debate the question with him, for he was disposed to find fault with everything I did.

I blew the whistle to see how the sound would affect the tiger.

It startled him, but it seemed to rouse his ire.

He showed no inclination to run away, as I thought he would do when he heard the strange noise.

He looked for an instant at the engine, and then fixed his gaze upon me.

I never saw such a pair of eyes. They seemed to be coals of fire.

I pulled out the throttle, for I felt as though the animal was fascinating me, as a snake does a bird.

But the increased speed of the locomotive appeared to kindle the wrath of the tiger.

Very likely he had an idea that the ponderous machine was about to make an attack upon him, for suddenly he bounded towards it.

"There, man, he will tear us in pieces!" shouted McNabb, terrified by the movements of the beast.

My mate climbed upon the fender, behind which the engine-driver and stoker stand.

But the tiger did not come near the tender; and until he attacked us in that direction, I felt that there was no danger.

If he leaped upon the forward part of the machine I could bewilder him with the steam.

The tiger was no sneak.

He placed himself in front of the engine, as though he scorned to make an assault in the rear of his foe.

I had no speed on, and before I could get well under way the animal was crouching for a spring.

"Urmph! Urmph! Urmph!"

We heard this noise just ahead of the engine.

It consisted of three enormous grunts, with a heavy blowing sound.

"An elephant!" gasped McNabb, as he leaped down from his perch on the fender.

I looked ahead, and there, upon the track, was a monstrous elephant, the largest one I had ever seen up to that time.

I have heard of elephants sixteen feet high, but there never was on.

This one was nine, and I have since seen one that was very nearly ten feet high.

When I saw that the tiger was about to spring upon the engine, I let off all the steam I could.

It seemed to bother the animal.

"Urmph, urmph, urmph!" grunted the big elephant, and his cry was hoarsely savage.

"More steam, more steam, McNabb!" I called to my frightened mate.

He was so nearly paralyzed with fear that he could hardly shovel the coal into the furnace.

I had shut off the steam, for I had no idea of bunking into the monster that had taken possession of the track.

The tiger made his spring; he aimed at the part over the cylinder.

I opened the steam upon him.

As I had hoped and believed, he did not like this mode of warfare.

At the same time I reversed the engine and began to back it.

The motion of the machinery bothered the tiger, and very likely his paws were pinched by it.

At any rate, he beat a hasty retreat, dropping off the machine in front of the boiler.

As I backed out of the way, the elephant roared again, and then made for the tiger.

Not one in ten of these huge animals will venture to attack a tiger, even after long training for the purpose of hunting them.

The big fellow in front of the engine was alone, though they generally go in herds of from ten to thirty.

A solitary elephant is a dangerous one.

He is too irritable to live with others, and is called a "rogue" in India, sometimes a "mad elephant."

The monster before us was one of this kind.

He went for the tiger.

A fierce fight ensued.

In the end the elephant crushed the royal beast under his feet.

He got his trunk around his neck as he leaped upon his back.

Dragging him down, he placed his foot upon him.

The enraged monster did not seem to be satisfied with what he had done.

He plainly had a grudge against the engine, and with a succession of grunts he rushed upon the machine.

McNabb yelled with terror when he saw him coming.

I pulled out the throttle and gave the engine all the speed I could.

The big beast had a clear road before him, and before I could get fairly under way, he put the end of his trunk on the right cylinder.

I opened the clearing cocks, and let him have all the steam that would pass through them.

But the cylinder and piston-rod were hot, and the moment the elephant touched them he was glad to let go.

He retreated a short distance, and then began to sway back and forth, and whirl about, roaring fiercely all the time.

I stopped the engine.

"Don't stop, man," pleaded McNabb. "He'll be at us again."

"I am not going to give up the trip on account of any of these beasts," I replied.

"But the elephant is on the track, and you can't get by him," added the fireman.

It was a down grade, and we had to hold the machine with the brake. I made up my mind to go ahead again, whatever happened, and I told McNabb so.

"Then I will leave you. I won't risk my life in this way," he answered, and he jumped down.

The fellow was a fool, and I told him so.

He was safer on the engine than on the ground.

I pulled out the throttle, and the engine went rapidly down the incline.

I gave her more steam as fast as I could.

As I approached the elephant, I thought he would have ~~sense~~ enough to get out of the way.

But instead of doing that he dropped his head, as if to bring his long tusks to bear on the machine, and then rushed upon the machine.

The machine struck the monster.

The shock was tremendous, and I was afraid the engine would be thrown from the track.

In place of that the beast seemed to be pitched aside, or he jumped aside, if that were possible.

I think he went down and was rolled out of the way.

I ran on for some time till I heard a fearful yell from McNabb.

I looked back, and saw the mad elephant rushing upon him.

He did not seem to have the power to move out of danger.

I reversed the engine and then ran back in order to save him.

Again I hit the monster with the back of the tender just as he was upon the fireman.

The shock upset him again, and he rolled out of the way of the machine.

I went by him far enough to get a good start for another hit at him.

The rascal acted as though he was iron-clad, for he picked himself up and rushed back upon the track. At this moment McNabb yelled again, and his cry attracted the attention of the mad beast.

The fireman had retreated into the jungle a little way.

I saw the elephant charge upon him, but I could not discover with what result.

I stopped again, and then returned, hoping to make a diversion in favor of my mate.

The engine went at a good speed.

Before I reached the place where I had last seen the monster, he was on the track.

He charged on the engine again.

The machine struck him fair on the forehead.

Over he went, and was shoved out of the way by the engine.

He did not move again.

I got off and looked him over; the front of his head was entirely beaten in, and he was dead.

Then I went to look for McNabb.

I found him a few rods from the track.

He was stone-dead.

Half the bones in his body were broken, and I had no doubt the mad beast had trampled him to death.

If he had stayed on the engine he would have been safe as I was, for steam conquers in the battle between Engine and Elephant.

An American was showing some artist friends from Munich the sights of New York City. As they stood in front of the Shakespeare statue in Central Park, discussion arose whether the figure was resting upon its right or its left leg. "Er steht auf dem rechten bein." "Nein," retorted another, "er steht auf dem linken bein." "Auf dem rechten," argued several. "Auf dem linken," retorted the other faction. An American gentleman, overhearing the dispute, came over and politely tipped his hat. "Excuse me, gentlemen," he said, "but this isn't Lincoln, this is Shakespeare."

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