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SECRET SERVICE.

THE BRADYS AND THE YELLOWCROOKS.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE



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Five Chinks against two detectives! Not much show for the Bradys now. They lowered the old man over the stringpiece into the water. "If they let go the rope he is done for," thought Harry, for Old King Brady cannot swim, nor could his partner help.

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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Price 5 Cents.

The Bradys and the Yellow Crooks

OR,

THE CHASE FOR THE CHINESE DIAMONDS

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

TWEE HOP STATES HIS CASE.

Scarcely anybody appreciates the number of really wealthy Chinamen in the United States.

We do not mean the high-toned ones sent to our American colleges by wealthy parents in China.

These are many, but what we refer to is the money-making "Chink" who comes from laundrymen stock.

Actually, these, too, are many.

They have accumulated wealth in various ways.

For the average Chink is a good business man in his own line.

We who despise him cannot comprehend what those who best know John Chinaman tell us that he is as shrewd and hard-headed when it comes to business as a German.

But the world-famous Brady detectives know all about this, for they have had a lot to do with the Chinese.

And certainly Alice Montgomery, their talented female partner, knows it, for she was born and brought up in China, and can read and speak the language.

We now propose to deal with a case which came the Bradys way about two years since.

It involved one of these rich Chinamen who, in spite of his wealth, preferred to live among his own countrymen in Pell street up to about the time of which we write.

Many times had the Bradys seen the man around the Wall street district, and had noticed his diamonds and expensive dress, but they never interested themselves to find out who he was.

Thus it came as a surprise when they learned.

It began by the receipt of a letter which arrived at the Union square office of the Brady Detective Bureau in the second delivery.

Young King Brady opened it.

The letter was on fine paper and bore the following heading:

OFFICE OF T. W. E. HOPPER,
66 Broad Street, New York City.

It failed to state what business Mr. T. W. E. Hopper was in.

The body of the letter ran thus:

"BRADY DETECTIVE BUREAU, NEW YORK:

"GENTLEMEN—I would like to have a confidential talk with one of your firm, preferably your Mr. Old King Brady.

"As I am at present suffering from an attack of rheumatism, and find it difficult to get about, may I request that Mr. Brady or his representative call at my office to-day. I shall be continually in attendance up to 4 P. M.

"Very truly yours,

"T. W. E. HOPPER."

Now who would ever imagine that this letter was written by a Chinaman?

Certainly neither Harry nor Old King Brady guessed it, yet so it proved.

"I am going downtown. I'll call on the gentleman," said Old King Brady. "We are absolutely without a case, and have been idle for a month, strange to say. If this man has anything to offer which is at all in our line, I shall probably take him up."

"I would," replied Young King Brady. "I am tired of being idle myself."

So about eleven o'clock Old King Brady presented himself at the Broad street office.

On the door beneath Mr. Hopper's name was the word "Importer," which, of course, gave very little clew to his business.

Old King Brady opened the door and walked in.

The office was well furnished and a civil-spoken young man immediately arose from a desk and came forward.

"You are Mr. Old King Brady. Mr. Hopper is expecting you. Will you kindly walk into his private office?" he said.

Now it is not at all strange that Old King Brady should have been thus promptly recognized.

For always when not in disguise the old detective affects a peculiar style of dress.

A long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white felt hat with a particularly broad brim are the peculiarities to which we refer.

Old King Brady nodded.

The young man opened the door of the private office and announced him.

"Please to walk right in," he said, turning.

And then it was that Old King Brady found himself in the presence of the stylish Chinaman he had so often seen on the street.

Mr. Hopper was a man of about fifty, short, stout, and decidedly good looking.

He arose and received his guest with all the courtesy of a Frenchman, placed a chair and reseated himself.

It was easy to see that he was very lame.

Meanwhile the clerk closed the door and left them to themselves.

"You see, Mr. Brady, I am only a Chinaman," said the "importer," with a touch of sarcasm. "I trust I haven't prejudiced my case by asking you to call on me."

"Not at all," replied the old detective. "I have many good friends among the New York Chinese."

"I am aware of that. It was my friend Quong Lee who recommended you. But indeed you needed no recommendation, for I am quite familiar with your work. My Chinese name, by the way, is Twee Hop. For convenience I have changed it to Hopper."

"You speak excellent English, Mr. Hopper."

"And why not? I was born in San Francisco and educated by a private tutor. In fact, I speak better English than I do Chinese. But to business. Are your engagements such that you can take up a case for me?"

"I think so. I never decide till I have heard the case, however."

Certainly not. Mine is disgustingly simple, and at the same time of considerable importance. Let me give you the details right now."

Old King Brady bowed.

"I have lived for a number of years at No. — Pell street," began Mr. Hopper. "My father left me quite a fortune at his death, and I have added to it since. My business is that of a general importer of Chinese goods. I also do considerable in stocks on the curb, principally for my Chinese friends.

"Recently I made a business trip to the Philippines, and while there married a Spanish widow of about my own age, and brought her back to New York with me. I have long been a speculator in diamonds as a side line. I owned at the time of our arrival here some three weeks ago several very fine pieces of diamond jewelry, which I value at about \$60,000. These brooches—they are all brooches—I presented to my wife, taking them from my safe deposit box

for that purpose. These diamonds Mrs. Hopper promptly managed to lose. What I want you to do is to recover them if possible, but I fear it is a pretty hopeless case."

"What are the circumstances under which they were lost?" inquired the old detective.

"I am about to explain," was the reply. "It is rather a long story and may tax your patience a bit. You must know to begin with that Mrs. Hopper's first husband was a Manila Chinaman, so she is used to our ways. I had really elegant bachelor quarters in Pell street, where I lived for a number of years, and as I belong to no tong and minded my own business, I never had any trouble. Still I felt that Pell street was not going to suit Mrs. Hopper."

"Probably not," replied Old King Brady with a faint smile.

"I told her all about conditions there," continued the Chinaman. "She agreed to live in my rooms until we could arrange to buy a house somewhere, not so easy for a man of my race, you know. We arrived three weeks ago, and have not been able to suit ourselves with a house yet. Three days ago I had to go to Boston, where I remained over night. It proved a mighty expensive trip for me, as you will now see.

"Mrs. Hopper in the meanwhile was foolish enough to wear one of these diamond brooches while visiting several Chinese ladies, to whom the wife of a banker on Mott street undertook to introduce her. I warned her, but she would not listen."

"Thus the fact that she had the diamonds in her possession became generally known in Chinatown," remarked Old King Brady.

"I am afraid so. But now to introduce one more character, Mon Wow, a young Chinese woman whom we brought with us from Manila. Mrs. Hopper used her as a maid, and felt every confidence in her. She does still, although I can't help having my doubts.

"On the evening of Monday last, while I was in Boston, a tong shooting broke out in Pell street."

"Yes, and three men were killed."

"Exactly. The fight broke out on the floor above us. It was continued on the stairs and in the hall. Mrs. Hopper was terribly frightened. She feared they would break in on her and try to steal the diamonds, and she said as much to Mon Wow. Hastily they gathered up the jewel boxes and tied them in a handkerchief. Mrs. Hopper proposed to take them to Wing Yet, the Mott street banker, a good friend of mine.

"When the noise in the hall quieted down she opened the door and saw a dead man lying just outside. She was taken faint with horror, but was able to hold herself together. Still fear had seized her. She told Mon Wow to run to Wing Yet with the handkerchief and return as quickly as possible. The girl left. She did not reach Wing Yet's, nor has she ever returned. Search has been useless. She seems to have vanished off the earth."

"Ha! Disgustingly simple, as you say," remarked Old King Brady.

"Is it not? But Mrs. Hopper's fears were by no means groundless. Within five minutes two tongers broke in upon her and demanded the diamonds. They would not believe her when she declared that she did not have them. They

tied her up and made the search. Finding nothing, they threatened to shoot her if she did not tell what had become of the diamonds. She refused, and after every effort to force her to yield, the thieves went away.

"As soon as she could gather strength, Mrs. Hopper went to Wing Yet's and remained there till my return. That is all there is to the story, Mr. Brady. We want the diamonds and we want to learn the fate of the maid. A difficult case, you think, if I can read your face."

"Very," replied Old King Brady. "Still it is by no means a hopeless one. I have successfully handled similar cases."

"And you will take the matter up?"

"Oh, yes, I will do the best I can. But now a few questions."

"As many as you will."

"This girl, do you believe in her honesty?"

"I don't know. Mrs. Hopper has had her around her since she was a mere child. She has every confidence in her. For that reason she thinks the girl has been murdered, and she is really more anxious to avenge her than she is to recover the diamonds, it seems to me."

"How old is Mon Wow?"

"About twenty-two."

"Does she speak English?"

"Not a word, but having been born and brought up in Manila, she speaks Spanish perfectly."

"Does Mrs. Hopper speak English?"

"No."

"Are you still living in those rooms?"

"No. I am staying at the — Hotel, uptown."

"Have the police been notified?"

"Yes; that is the first thing I did, but I can't say they gave me much satisfaction. In fact, I don't think they believe that I ever owned the diamonds."

"Give me a particular description of those brooches," Old King Brady continued, and it was done.

"Have you given up your Pell street rooms?" the old detective now asked.

"I have not," was the reply. "I have sent some of my more valuable things to storage. The rest remains locked up there. I am waiting till I find a house."

"To return to Mon Wow. How well did she know Chinatown?"

"She did not know it at all. She never went out. You know it is not customary for our women to go out. If my wife wanted anything she called a lobbygow through Mon Wow. They did not either of them know Chinatown."

"Then it would seem to have been a foolish piece of business to send the woman out with the diamonds."

"In a way, yes. But you must remember that the tongs came, and that Mrs. Hopper would surely have lost the diamonds if she had kept them by her."

"Have you any enemies among the tongs?"

Twee Hop shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know," he replied. "I have tried to deal fair with everybody. I can't think of anyone who is my especial enemy."

"Well, said Old King Brady, "I will take up your case, Mr. Hopper. Give me the key to your rooms. I shall want to visit them."

The Chinaman produced the key.

But he looked troubled.

"Now let me ask one question, Mr. Brady," he said.

"As many as you wish," replied the old detective.

"Do you suspect my wife?"

"My dear sir, in a case like this everybody concerned must be suspected if it is to be properly handled. You can see that for yourself."

"I suppose it is so," sighed Twee Hop, "and I am bound to admit that I have had my own suspicions."

"Then there you are. For any particular reason?"

"No; merely that my acquaintance with Mrs. Hopper before I married her was very short."

"For which reason you feel that you don't know her any too well yourself."

Twee Hop nodded.

He remarked that it was "very hard."

Old King Brady pressed him further along this line, but got no more information.

He left shortly after, promising to take up the chase for these Chinese diamonds.

CHAPTER II.

THE CELLAR OF DEATH.

On the evening when the tongs shot up the house on Pell street, which was that of a certain November day, a boy of peculiarly dejected appearance might have been observed to turn in on Pell street off the Bowery.

He was probably not over seventeen, judging from his general make-up.

Any one of experience could have seen at a glance that he was a Spanish-American of some sort.

He was undersized even for his age, slim and dark.

His clothes consisted of a white suit, terribly shabby and not over clean. He wore low shoes and a Panama hat.

Such an outfit might have done well enough in New York on a July day, but as this was November, and the night exceedingly chilly, it looked an absurdity even for Chinatown, where every style of dress is to be seen.

Evidently this was a fresh arrival from the tropics, and being clothed in tropical style, he was blue with cold.

His name was Jose Randega; his home was the island of Cuba; where death had recently deprived him of father and mother.

Being in dire poverty and not over strong, Jose wrote to an uncle in New York for assistance.

The reply came promptly.

Jose's uncle told him that if he would come to New York he would get him work and look after him.

Accompanying the letter was a draft for a sum sufficient to pay the boy's way.

So Jose Randega came to New York, but it was only to run into more trouble, for when he tried to find his uncle, who worked as a cigar-maker on lower Maiden lane, he found that he had died suddenly a week before.

It left Jose stranded, for his uncle was a bachelor, and there was now no one to take any interest in the boy.

Fortunately Jose had been taught to speak English, and he spoke it fairly well.

But this did not seem to help him much.

If it is asked what brought him to Chinatown, we can only say curiosity.

The Bowery and its breadline had claimed him already.

This was the fourth or fifth time Jose had wandered about Chinatown. What he saw there interested him as much as he was capable of being interested in anything in his present situation.

And so he wandered along on Pell street just in time to run into an adventure which was destined to lift him out of the rut he had been in for the past week.

As Jose passed a certain house on the left-hand side of Pell street, a young Chinese woman came suddenly rushing out.

"Boy! Help me!" she cried, catching Jose by the arm.

Evidently she took him for a lobbygow.

"Boy, help me," is the way some of the Chinese women summon the lobbygows out of their windows.

But this was all the English this Chinese woman knew.

"What do you want? What's the matter with you?" demanded Joe.

Having been caught unawares, he said it in Spanish without thinking.

To his surprise the woman instantly began talking in his native tongue.

"They are murdering people in that house," she said. "I must go quick to Wing Yet on Mott street. Help me to find the place. I don't know where it is. My mistress gave me the number, but in the confusion I forget."

She had a handkerchief clutched in her hand which appeared to contain something.

That the woman was terribly frightened was easily seen. She was trembling all over.

"Don't shake so," said Jose. "Keep hold of me and I will show you how to get to Mott street. Once we are there we will inquire for this Wing Yet."

"Quick! Oh, quick!" said the young woman. "I am afraid they will follow me, those dreadful tongers."

Now Jose had not the least idea what a "tonger" was, but he felt that he must be something particularly dreadful to scare the Chinawoman so.

"Where did you learn to speak Spanish?" he asked as they hurried on.

"In Manila, where I was born," was the reply.

"Oh!"

"Are you from Manila?"

"No; I come from Cuba."

"I don't know where that is. But do let us walk faster. I am in such a hurry to get back. I am afraid the tongers will murder my mistress."

"Who is your mistress?"

"Mrs. Hop."

They were now almost at the junction of Pell and Mott streets, and were walking very fast.

Suddenly two Chinamen brushed past them.

One said something to the woman in Chinese.

She gave a scream and darted into the middle of the street, dropping the handkerchief as she did so.

The two Chinamen who did not appear to have observed

the handkerchief sprang after her, each seizing her by an arm.

Jose gallantly jumped in to help.

It was a useless effort.

One of the Chinks gave him a backhander in the face.

It sent the slightly built boy sprawling.

Before he could recover himself the Chinamen had dragged the young woman into a dark doorway.

Jose got on his feet just in time to see her disappear.

No one had shown any disposition to interfere.

In fact, word that the tongers were shooting up Pell street had been passed along the line, and every Chink in Chinatown was strictly minding his own business in consequence.

Perhaps that was the reason why no one stopped to pick up the handkerchief which the Chinese woman had dropped, or perhaps it was because there was nothing to indicate that it concealed anything as it lay.

Jose picked it up.

He concluded that he could do nothing to help the woman.

But the handkerchief?

There was something hard in it—several hard things.

Stepping up to the window of a Chinese grocery store which occupied the ground floor of the building into which the Chinamen had dragged the young woman, Jose untied the handkerchief, which was knotted together.

He was amazed at what he saw between its folds.

Brooches—several of them.

Diamonds—lots of them.

Now it happened that Jose knew diamonds when he saw them, for his father had been a jeweller in Matanzas before failure and death overtook him.

"Why, these brooches are worth thousands of dollars!" the Cuban boy muttered.

Hastily he knotted the handkerchief again and then looked around to see if he was being watched.

Very speedily he found out.

For at the same instant one of the same pair of Chinamen who had captured the young woman darted out of the doorway and snatched the handkerchief from him, instantly darting back again, all like a spider working a web to catch a fly.

Now if Jose had been slow to follow matters up before, it was not so now.

The boy had a hot temper of his own, and it was now thoroughly aroused.

In through the door he dashed just in time to see the Chink running out by another door at the end of the hall.

Jose hurried after him.

He was blind in his rage and determined to get back those diamonds at any cost.

Thus he ran into the yard, and when he saw the Chinaman dart into a small one-story brick building which stood in the rear, Jose made for the open door.

He was now possessed of but one idea—to get back those diamonds.

And now came a crash.

With the sound of the crash came also a sharp cry, and then all was still.

As for Jose, when he got inside the door—it was a smoke-house used by the Chinamen to smoke hogs whole after their fashion—he was not quick enough to save himself from a fall.

For evidently a very rotten floor had given way under the weight of the Chinaman, who went in ahead of him, and Jose went down through the break, landing on his feet in the darkness and unharmed.

He was a pretty badly scared boy, though.

Realizing that he had escaped the consequences of his fall, his next fear was that the Chinaman would jump on him.

Nothing of the sort occurred.

The place was pitch dark and deathly still.

“He has sneaked out some way,” thought Jose. “I’m too late. It’s a shame.”

He had a few matches with him and he now struck one.

A single glance showed him that the situation was altogether different from what he supposed.

There lay the Chinaman all in a heap.

Beside him lay the handkerchief which had slipped from his grasp.

Jose made a grab and got it, the man making no move to interfere.

And when Jose looked a little closer into the situation he saw that there was good reason for this.

For the man was dead. His neck had been broken by the fall and there he lay among the broken boards and beams which the Cuban boy had fortunately missed.

Jose did not care.

All he wanted was the diamonds, and he had got those.

Not that he meant to steal them. The boy was honest enough.

His idea was, so far as he had given it any thought, to go to this Wing Yet, tell him what had happened to the woman, and deliver up the diamonds.

He expected that he might get a reward.

But how to get out?

This cellar was fully ten feet deep.

If there was a staircase or steps, then they were invisible.

Jose soon arrived at the unpleasant conclusion that it was impossible to get out of that cellar without help.

And to make matters worse, by the time he came to this same conclusion Jose had used up all his matches and here he was in the dark.

Certainly the monotony of the wretched life this boy had been living was broken at last.

But what to do?

Jose was more than puzzled.

He had now exhausted every effort to find a way out of this cellar, which before the breaking of the floor appeared to have been sealed up tight.

As there seemed no other way than to wait, Jose resigned himself to his fate.

The only comfort he had lay in the fact that it was warmer in the cellar than it was outside.

Imprisoned with a dead man in the dark!

The very thought of it is enough to make some people’s flesh creep, and we are obliged to confess that Jose Randega was built that way.

Thus it will be understood what a relief it must have

been to the boy when some hours later he suddenly caught a glimmer of light.

Jose at the time was crouching in a corner as far away from the corpse as he could get.

Sleep was something not to be thought of.

The boy was fully on the alert, waiting and watching.

What he saw was enough to try even stouter nerves than his.

The wonder is, considering how superstitious Jose was, that he did not break out with a yell which must have revealed him on the instant.

For through a hole in the wall over near the dead Chinaman a head and a hand were now projected.

The hand held a lantern; but the head—that awful head!

It was just a grinning skull.

Jose felt that King Death had taken a lease on that cellar then.

Tremblingly he watched the head.

It remained motionless for some moments.

The eyeless sockets were turned upon the corpse.

Then the lantern was raised and the head looked up at the break in the floor.

Next and the lantern was waved about, the skull following its movements.

That was the time Jose could hardly hope to escape.

Nor did he.

Suddenly guttural sounds issued from that skull.

“Chinese!” thought the boy. “After all, it is only a mask.”

He saw it now, for a Chinaman was climbing through the hole in the wall.

Jose got on his feet.

Trouble seemed to be coming his way again, but after all no matter what happened to get out of that horrible cellar of death would be a relief.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. WING YET.

If Old King Brady could have known what happened to Jose Randega on the night the toppers shot up Pell street he would also have known just where to begin with his case.

As it was, it seemed somewhat difficult to know where to begin, so the old detective concluded that the first thing to do was to try to find out a little more about the Chinese importer.

With this thought in his mind he called on Quong Lee.

Now this man Quong Lee keeps an opium joint in the basement of an old building on Chatham square. The old detective has known him for many years.

Once it fell in Old King Brady’s way to do the dive-keeper a very important favor.

This he has never forgotten.

Quong Lee has reckoned himself a friend of Old King Brady ever since, and many a time has the old man helped the detectives of the Brady Bureau in their Chinese cases.

Quong was in his little office when the old detective en-

tered, and he received his visitor with considerable enthusiasm.

"Yair, I know Twee Hop," he said. "Him good man, Blady. Likee big fool he go gettee mallied. Now see allee tlouble dlat makee yair!"

Now this remark might have made some feel that Quong thought Twee Hop's case an "inside job."

But Old King Brady knew that the dive-keeper was something of a woman hater, so it made very little impression on him, and he went on to question the old man more closely.

But beyond the fact that Quong Lee considered Twee Hop perfectly reliable, Old King Brady learned little.

While he was still talking, Harry and Alice looked in.

"I thought we might find you here," remarked the former, "particularly if you have decided to take up that Chinese case."

"I have already taken it up," replied Old King Brady. "I came to Quong for points."

"Get any?"

"Well, nothing of any importance."

The conversation was cut short by Harry giving a secret sign which said "pull out."

As quick as he decently could the old detective took leave of Quong Lee, and they passed out on Chatham square.

"What's up, Harry?" Old King Brady asked.

"Secret Service order for you to get busy on an opium smuggling case, oddly enough."

"Chinese?"

"Yes."

"Who is the party?"

"A man named Twee Hop, No. — Pell street."

"Well, upon my word!"

"What now?"

"He's the very man whose case I have just taken up."

"I know it."

"I wondered how you knew that the man who wrote me signing himself Hopper was a Chinese."

"This letter will explain."

The letter was, in fact, a typewritten order from the Chief of the U. S. Secret Service Bureau.

It informed the Brady Bureau that one Twee Hop, who had an office at 66 Broad street, New York, passing under the name of T. W. E. Hopper, was suspected of being the head of a gang of Chinese opium smugglers which the Government was most anxious to get, and the Bradys were ordered to take the matter up.

Now Old King Brady and partners are not, strictly speaking, Secret Service detectives.

Nevertheless, they have a contract with the Government to help out in Secret Service matters at any time.

"The two cases dovetail and can be worked together," remarked Old King Brady as he glanced over the order.

"I half suspected that the man might be in the opium smuggling line," he went on to say. He is evidently very rich for a Chinaman, and because he poses as an importer, the thing naturally suggests itself. But let us see, let us see."

He read the paper through carefully.

"They seem to have got hold of something which they don't give out," he remarked.

"Evidently," replied Harry. "We are ordered to watch

to-night at Meyer & Henkle's old sugar refinery in Williamsburg, and the order fails to state why. It is to be wished that the Secret Service people could be more definite."

"That is so. Alice, what about your doing a bit of Chinese work alone to-day to help us out?"

"Why, surely," replied Alice. "Always ready."

"Let us walk through Chinatown and I will explain the case as we go along."

This was done.

"And my job is to interview Mrs. Wing Yet," said Alice.

"Why not, seeing that you know her well?"

"Yes, and she will tell me all she knows."

"Don't be too sure."

"Well, that is true. Perhaps she is mixed up in the case herself."

"It is a matter to be handled cautiously, Alice, but you know just how to do it. Go on around there now and come back to No. — Pell street, third floor. Those are Twee Hop's rooms. I have the key, as I said. Harry and I will take them in now. There is a photograph of the Mon Wow woman there which I want to see."

They separated at the door of the number in question, Alice going on to Mott street.

Old King Brady found no difficulty in effecting an entrance to Twee Hop's abandoned flat.

Here things were in considerable confusion. The windows being all closed, the place had a musty smell, and Harry let one sash down at the top.

"This must be the picture," remarked Old King Brady, halting before a framed photograph which hung against the wall.

It represented a courtyard in which sat several persons.

Twee Hop himself was among them; also his wife.

Behind Mrs. Hop stood the missing young woman.

All this had been described by the importer.

"A very good-looking person for a Chinese woman," Harry remarked.

"Isn't she," said Old King Brady, getting out a magnifying-glass and holding it over the face.

"Do you know I rather like her looks," he added. "I don't believe she stole the diamonds."

"Come, come, governor. Don't pretend that you can read a China woman's character by her face."

"I stick to my opinion," said Old King Brady. "But now to make a thorough search here. Even if we don't find the diamonds, which is hardly to be expected, we may find something to help us out in our Secret Service work."

A very thorough search of the premises followed, but the only thing the Bradys could discover which in the least interested them was a bunch of keys.

These were found between the mattress and the side of an old-fashioned bed in the middle room of the suite.

It looked as if they had fallen out of somebody's pocket and had not been missed or were supposed to be lost somewhere else.

They were very peculiar keys—different from any the detective had ever seen. Old King Brady considered them of Chinese make.

"We will keep these for luck," he said to Harry.

They now settled down to wait for Alice, who presently came.

"Well, what luck?" Old King Brady asked.

"The best that can be expected," was the reply. "Mrs. Yet is interested in the case on her own account, for, as you know, she is rather a leader among the women of Chinatown. She does not take kindly to Mrs. Hopper, as you call her, which is natural. Her idea is that the woman herself stole the diamonds, and is deceiving her husband. She thinks she has a clew to where Mrs. Wow is being kept a prisoner. Says if I will call this evening about eight o'clock she will probably be able to tell me more."

"You better go then," said Old King Brady.

"No nonsense now, Alice," added Harry sharply. "We shall be in Williamsburg, you know. You won't go in for any risky work."

"Why surely I ought to be able to take care of myself in Chinatown by this time," retorted Alice, laughing at Harry's fears.

But Young King Brady was quite justified in what he said, for he is practically engaged to Alice, and none knows better than he how reckless she sometimes is.

When they parted that afternoon at the office, Alice had left the impression in the minds of the Bradys that she simply intended to call on Mrs. Wing Yet for information.

She did wrong, for her intention was far different.

But Alice knew that the Bradys would violently oppose what she intended to do, hence she kept her plans to herself.

Instead of going to her rooms on Waverly place after parting from the Bradys shortly after five that afternoon, Alice went back to the office, and, entering the costume room, locked herself in.

Here the detectives keep a most extensive line of disguises. Indeed, there is scarcely anything in the way of wigs, beards, peculiar clothes and so on which it does not contain.

Alice went right to work and made up as a Chinaman, something which she has often done before, and at which she is most expert.

This done, she provided herself with a good revolver, locked up and returned to Chinatown, where she went to the Tuxedo restaurant on Pell street for supper.

After supper she wandered about Chinatown for two hours, watching and listening to the talk of such groups as stood about.

Eight o'clock found her at the corner of Doyers and Pell streets, where the Chinese bulletin is.

Here she halted and pretended to be engaged in reading the numerous red papers posted on the brick wall of the corner house.

These are advertisements of the "wants" of Chinatown, of things lost and found, and so on.

Formerly it was more of a feature than now, since a regular newspaper has been established.

While Alice was thus engaged, a young Chinaman suddenly turned the corner of Pell street and confronted her.

"You see I am here," he said in Chinese.

"Ah!" exclaimed Alice, "and right on time, too."

"Yes. Certainly you are well made up. Anyone would take you for a Chinaman."

"I can return the compliment. No one would mistake you for a Chinese woman."

"Hush! Don't breathe it if you expect success to-night!"

"I do expect success, and I am under deep obligations to you for your hint."

Then they walked down Doyers street to Chatham square.

And this was another woman in disguise!

She was Mrs. Wing Yet, who at the time of which we write might have been termed the "new woman" of Chinatown.

The banker's wife was, in fact, a reformer. She was doing her best to break up the conditions in Chinatown which made it necessary for women to live practically as slaves.

This she could do, as she possessed plenty of money and a husband who was too old and indolent to interfere with her.

Alice had been informed of some of Mrs. Wing Yet's doings, and knew that she was bold even to recklessness. Now she was to learn more of this singular woman, and she was very glad to have the chance.

"It is early," remarked Mrs. Yet. "Too early for our purpose. Let us walk up the Bowery and have a talk. I will explain what I meant when I told you this afternoon that if you would meet me to-night in disguise I might be able to put you in the way of locating this woman, Mon Wow."

Alice assented and they walked on.

"You must know," began Mrs. Yet, "that while this man Twee Hop is undoubtedly very rich, he is not at all to be trusted. I have it direct from one who knows that he is the leader of a gang who have branch organizations in the different cities. These men make a practice of robbing their countrymen—the richer Chinese, I mean. They are also blackmailers. The name of this band translated into English would be the 'Yellow Wickedmen.'"

"Or, as we would say it, 'Yellow Crooks,'" put in Alice.

"Yes, that would be better. This gang has kept very quiet for a long time. The police scarcely know of its existence, and has confounded it with the old Hip Ling tong or Highbinders society, with which it has nothing to do. Now the same party which told me this believes that there is a movement among these Yellow Crooks to turn on Twee Hop and get him out of the leadership. He thinks that the Manila woman Hop married was hired to marry him and to rob him of all she could. They dare not kill him on account of the oath they all have to take when they join the society to protect their leader with their lives. Do you follow me?"

"Oh, yea," replied Alice, "but about Mon Wow? If you are right, then we cannot do anything about finding the diamonds to-night. But I should like to find the woman, so that I can report to the Bradys that I have done something."

"To find where the woman is will be one thing, to get her away from those who have her will be another, and that we can't do anything about to-night either. The point is this: Somewhere, probably not in Chinatown, the Yellow Crooks have a secret meeting place. I understand that it is very elaborately fitted up, that they have an opium

joint, a restaurant, a little joss house, and if you will believe it, even a little theater of their own where they give performances after our style. Now it seems that this Mon Wow is a beautiful dancer and has performed in the Chinese theater at Manila. My idea is that the men who captured her know this, and that Twee Hop himself arranged it all that she should be captured, taken to their secret rooms and made to dance, I mean. What I want to do to-night is to find out where those rooms are, for there are others being held prisoners there, and I think I shall succeed."

To all of this Alice listened with interest, but not with much faith in its truth.

It sounded too fanciful.

Still Mrs. Wing Yet was certainly a woman of unusual intelligence, and ought to know what she was talking about.

"It is up to you," said Alice. "Take me where you will. I am entirely at your service to-night."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOY AND THE DIAMONDS.

Jose, as the son of a jeweler, was taking no chances with his diamond find.

Instead of leaving the brooches in the handkerchief, he had carefully stowed them away in different pockets.

But there was no way in which he could hide them against a search of his person. This was what he feared now.

The Chinaman with the death-head mask came on holding up the lantern.

Even now that Jose saw the thing was only a clumsy pasteboard contrivance he could not get over his fear of it.

He stood trembling as the man approached.

Again he was in luck in a way.

The mask looked him over and then addressed him in pretty good Spanish.

"Boy, how came you here?"

"Fell through that hole," faltered Jose.

"But what brought you into the smoke-house? Were you with him?"

He pointed to the dead man.

"No," lied Jose, afraid to mix himself up in any Chinese business. "I am only a poor boy. I was looking for a place to sleep."

He hardly expected this explanation would be accepted, but it seemed to be.

"You look it," said the mask. "You come from South America? I lived many years in Peru."

"No, I am a Cuban."

"Just came to New York?"

"Yes."

"You speak English?"

"No."

"You have no money?"

"Not a cent."

"What brought you to Chinatown?"

"I don't know. I was wandering about. It was as good a place as any other. I thought if I could hide in some shed I could get a sleep."

This was not all a lie. Jose had some such notion when he came up Pell street. He was horribly afraid of the toughs of the Bowery lodging houses. It seemed to him that the Chinese minded their own business and were to be preferred.

The man with the mask still eyed him steadily and in silence for some minutes.

"Swear by the holy cross that you had nothing to do with this dead man," he fiercely exclaimed after a moment.

"I do swear it," replied Jose earnestly.

"That you don't even know him—swear!"

"I do swear it. Are you a Christian?"

"No, no! But I know how you Christians swear. The man was dead when you fell down here?"

"Yes."

"How long ago was this?"

"I don't know; ever so long. Hours ago."

"Strange—very strange! Boy, I like to look at your brown face and white clothes. It reminds me of old times when I lived in Peru."

"Help me to get out of here, will you?" blurted Jose. "All I want is to get away."

"And why? If you have no money, and no place to go, what is your hurry? I can give you something to eat and a place to sleep. Why not stay with me?"

Jose shuddered.

"You are afraid. Is it the mask?" demanded the man.

"I suppose so. I am tired and nervous, too."

"We will fix all that. See that hole in the wall?"

"Yes, I see it. Crawl through. Wait for me on the other side. I have work to do here. When I come to you then you shall see my face."

Perhaps there was some way by which he could escape once he got through the hole in the wall. Any way, he would try it—anything to get out of that horrible cellar of death.

So he crawled through the hole which was protected by a wooden door made to match the stone of the wall in appearance, and dropped on the other side.

"Stand where you are," ordered the mask. "In a minute I will be with you."

He turned away with his lantern, which had already shown Jose that he stood in a narrow passage.

But instead of standing still the boy hurried away on tip-toe, hoping to escape.

There was no such good fortune.

The passage ended before he had gone a dozen yards.

Here was a door which he could not open. The best way seemed to be to return, which he did.

He was glad to find that the Chinaman had not come out of the cellar of death yet.

He came in a minute, however, and, ordering Jose to follow him, they proceeded to the door, which the mask opened by touching a secret spring.

Behind was a flight of stairs.

These they ascended, went along another passage, passed through another door, which took them out into a narrow courtyard.

The mask was now removed, and Jose saw that he had to deal with an old man with yellow, murken features and wicked little eyes. He shuddered as he looked.

They crossed the courtyard, popped in through a door, went down into a cellar and came to their journey's end.

"Here's where I live, boy," said the Chinaman, "and here you can stay to-night. I have nobody belonging to me. I live all alone. What is your name?"

"Jose Randega," replied our hero, shudderingly.

He was wondering what was ever to become of him if he was searched and the diamonds discovered.

"And mine is Hip Mow," replied the Chinaman. "Sit down. I will get supper. You shall have chop suey. You like chop suey?"

"I never ate it. I don't know what it is," replied Jose, looking around.

Hip Mow hung up his death-head mask and busied himself at a little cook-stove in which a fire burned.

There were two rooms, both quite comfortably furnished in Chinese style.

Along the wall on one side was a lounge above which hung a three-string fiddle, a moon banjo, a pair of cymbals, a drum and a good Spanish guitar.

Now Jose was passionately fond of music, and his father had been before him. He had been taught to play the guitar in his early childhood, and he played it well. Moreover, he had a fine voice, which had not yet changed.

Old Hip Mow watched him as he looked these musical instruments over.

"I used to play in the orchestra of a Chinese theater," he explained, and added:

"Do you play the guitar?"

"Yes, sir."

"I used to play. I learned in Peru. I like the guitar. Play me something now."

"Oh, my hands are too cold," objected Jose, who felt bashful.

"Warm them at the fire. Play me something, boy. I love to hear you Spanish people play the guitar."

Jose warmed his hands and got down to business.

Hip Mow went into raptures over his playing, which was not strange if the man had any real love for music in him.

"More! More!" he cried.

This time Jose sang as well as played.

Hip Mow was so taken with it that he dropped the big spoon with which he was stirring the chop suey into the pot.

"Great! Wonderful!" he cried. "Look, you Spanish boy, I can get you good job to play in orchestra. Yes, sir! You wait and see."

It seemed as if Hip Mow must have something definite in his mind, for all the rest of the evening he kept chuckling to himself and promising that good job.

But we must pass along more rapidly to other things.

Jose slept on the lounge that night.

He was not searched, so the diamonds were not discovered.

Next morning Hip Mow bestowed upon him a good suit of American clothes, also underwear, a derby hat and shoes.

"It's all right," he said. "You can pay me when you get to work. You must have decent clothes."

But where was this good job?

That was something Hip Mow would not tell.

"You'll see. You'll see," was all he would say when Jose pressed him for further information.

Two days and another night passed.

Jose found himself practically a prisoner.

Hip Mow went out several times.

Each time he locked the door behind him.

There were no windows here. The cellar was lighted by a hanging lamp which was kept continually burning.

Jose tried to open the door the first time the old man went out, but it was no use.

He was comfortable, he was getting good food, he would not have objected to the plan of playing and singing for his living, but there were the diamonds!

He did not know what to do about them.

Although he had been able to shift the brooches into the pockets of his new clothes, the boy was horribly afraid they would be discovered.

What might happen to him in that case he shuddered to think.

And now came the third night in Hip Mow's underground retreat.

The old fellow fixed up a particularly choice supper. He certainly was a most excellent cook.

After supper he kept Jose playing and singing for an hour.

Then he played the moon banjo and three-string fiddle himself.

The music sounded barbarous enough to our Cuban boy, and yet there was a certain fascination about it, too.

About nine o'clock Hip Mow produced oranges and proceeded to squeeze them into a glass pitcher, mixing them with sugar and other things.

He gave the decoction some Chinese name and they drank it together.

Jose went into the other room for a moment.

When he came out he found that Hip Mow had poured out a second glass.

"Drink that and go to bed, Jose," he said. "No more music to-night."

"Aren't you going to take some more?" Jose asked.

"No," replied the Chinaman. "I have had enough."

As Jose had taken quite a fancy to the mixture, he drained the glass.

It was but a few minutes after this when an intense sleepiness came upon him.

Hip Mow asked him what was the matter.

"I don't know," muttered Jose. "I'm half asleep. I can't keep my eyes open."

"Don't try," said Hip Mow. "Lay down and sleep."

Jose dropped on the lounge and was off in a minute.

It never occurred to him that he had been drugged; in fact, he was too sleepy to think clearly.

But drugged he was beyond all doubt, and with some of those singular drugs with which the Chinese alone are familiar.

From the time he flung himself on the lounge to the time of his awakening seemed but a moment to Jose. How long it actually was he never knew.

And now to attempt as best we may to describe the singular experience through which he passed.

He was first aroused by feeling someone pulling his tongue.

Opening his eyes Jose saw a strange Chinaman bending down over him.

A man did we say!

Why it was a giant

He seemed to tower to an immense height above Jose.

His arms looked like the limbs of trees, his fingers seemed a yard long at least.

He had hold of Jose by the tongue with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand.

He drew the tongue forward, while with his right hand he dropped a few grains of a white powder upon it.

Then letting go he tilted the boy's head back, forcing him to swallow.

Jose was entirely unable to help himself.

But the powder did him good.

Jose closed his eyes and probably slept.

The next he knew giants again had him in their clutches. Chinese giants, and one of them was old Hip Mow, now as tall as a tree.

"How do you feel, Jose?" he asked.

The boy tried to answer, but no sound escaped his lips.

Speak he could not in spite of every effort.

Twice again Hip Mow questioned him in Spanish.

Then seemingly satisfied that Jose could not speak, he gave it up and with the other man led him up out of the cellar and on to the street.

It was night.

There was nobody about.

A crazy old hack stood at the curb with a man seated on the box.

But the houses seemed as high as mountains, while the hack was a hill and the horses bigger than elephants.

It made Jose sick to look at it all, and he shut his eyes as the two Chinamen helped him into the hack, nor did he open them again when they drove away.

"What is the matter with me? What does it all mean?" Jose asked himself.

Then it came to him that these men had found the diamonds and that they meant to kill him.

It was a thoroughly frightened boy who went away in that hack.

CHAPTER V.

THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS.

Old King Brady found it easy enough to believe that Twee Hop was a slick Chinese crook and had accumulated his wealth by crooked methods, but he could not believe that the man was other than sincere in the matter of the diamonds.

And as we know, having followed the history of Jose, the old detective was right.

But there was another side to it all which made Old King Brady feel that it behooved him to be particularly wary.

This was the fact that he and Harry possessed many enemies among the opium smuggling Chinese.

Nor could it be otherwise, considering the number of this unsavory fraternity which have been rounded up during

the last few years by the keen detectives of the Brady Bureau.

"We want to look sharp," he said to Harry when they started for Williamsburg that night. "This may be a stall and a plot to trap us. I don't like the way it reads."

"What! Do you imagine that the Washington order is a forgery?" questioned Harry.

"Not at all. On the contrary, I know it is straight, for I got the chief on the 'phone while you were out."

"Oh, I didn't know that. Then that settles it."

"No, it don't settle it either, Harry. Now listen to my theory. It is time you were on to every curve these Yellow Crooks may have in their way of working."

Inadvertently Old King Brady had employed the name of the band he was after if Wing Yet could be believed.

"Just what I want," said Harry. "If you can give me any points, why let them come off the reel."

"Suppose, then, we are marked for death by opium smugglers. They could get at us in two ways, which would fill the bill in this case."

"Well."

"Hold on. I am coming to the point. The Washington people are tipped off that there are yellow crooks hanging out at this old deserted sugar house.

"Very good. The Bradys are supposed to be experts when it comes to abandoned factories, and so on. Result, out goes the order to send the Bradys, just as the opium smugglers know it will go."

"And then they are lying low for us," said Harry.

"Exactly. We can't be too careful over there."

"But where does Twee Hop come it?"

"That brings me to my second proposition. Let us suppose that those who have tipped off Washington are right and that Twee Hop is the head of this bunch. You can dope the real situation out in two ways."

"First——"

"First, that Twee Hop made an enemy; that he knows it. That he suspects the enemy has tipped off the S. S. B., and that the Bradys will be after him. What does he do? Trumps up this diamond business to lure us into Chinatown, where his agents can get at us and put us out of business. That's your first proposition, boy."

"Reasonable enough, too. And the second?"

"The second supposes that Twee Hop does not know that the S. S. B. has been tipped off, that he really has lost valuable diamonds, and that he is perfectly sincere in employing us. But who stole the diamonds? Enemies of Twee Hop in the band of which he is boss? They know—or the tipsters do—that we are coming their way on Twee Hop's account if we can get there. What do they do? Immediately tip off the S. S. B. so as to steer us to the old sugar house. Do you follow me?"

"Yes, but I prefer the first proposition."

"Well, it certainly is the most reasonable, but neither one of them may be right. However, I simply go over this ground in order to show you how necessary it is for us to be on our guard."

"Which I fully appreciate, governor. Take the lesson to heart yourself, for if I may be allowed to say so, you are fully as rash as I am."

Old King Brady gave a grunt at this and the matter was dropped.

About nine o'clock they turned up at the foot of one of the "North Side" streets in Williamsburg.

Here stood Meyer & Henkle's sugar house, called old by those of the neighborhood, but in reality comparatively new.

The firm in former years did a fine business; then along came the Sugar Trust and gobbled them up.

The refinery equipped with expensive machinery had stood idle ever since up to the time of which we write. It has been pulled down within the past year.

The building with its yard occupied one side of the block from Kent avenue to the river front.

On the opposite side was another vacant space where a cooorage had been.

This business, also wrecked by the Sugar Trust, the buildings in which it was carried on had been removed.

Thus it will be seen that no better place for a crook's hang-out could have been chosen provided they could devise some way to secretly get into the building.

And it was particularly adapted for a bunch of "yellow" crooks, owing to the fact that the little Chinatown of the North Sixth street section was close at hand.

All this the Bradys knew before they went there, for this was not the first time they had exploited the old sugar house.

They had taken a gang of river thieves out of it some years before.

The first thing the detectives now did was to walk to the foot of the street, taking in their surroundings on both sides.

They met nobody. There was nothing to be seen which conveyed the least suggestion that the deserted refinery was a hold-out for crooks.

The detectives were unable to get down upon the wharf in front of the property, as a high board fence extended out over the water for about ten feet.

"We need a boat," observed Old King Brady, "and I vote that we look one up before it is too late."

"Second the motion," assented Harry. "It is my opinion that these yellow crooks come and go by water, anyway."

"There is a man down at the foot of North Tenth street who rents boats, or was," observed the old detective. "We may as well go there."

"Now look here, governor, may I say a word?"

"Well? My hat, et cetera?"

"Yes. He may rent to the Chinks or even stand in with them."

"Perhaps you are right. You want to go alone?"

"Yes."

"Go on then. I'll hang around here."

"Don't get yourself into any trouble now."

"Bother, Harry! One would imagine you considered me in my second childhood."

They walked up to Kent avenue and parted.

Old King Brady strolled south.

Secretly he felt sorry that he had not disguised.

But the reason he did not was because he always feels that he is the one man most dreaded by Chinese crooks, and is rather proud of it.

Still it did seem to him that this was one of the times when he had allowed his peculiar dress to interfere with business.

He walked as far as Grand street, and there turned.

As he did so a trolley car going north shot past him.

On the rear platform stood two Chinamen in American dress.

"Confound the luck. I wish I had held the fort," muttered the old detective.

He quickened his steps, keeping an eye on the car.

Sure enough, it stopped on the corner of the street which led down past Meyer & Henkle's old sugar house, and the two Chinks dropped off.

They stood on the corner for a moment until the car got well away, and then turned down the cross street and vanished.

"The clans begin to gather," muttered Old King Brady, "and they came by land as well as by water it would seem."

He walked on and turned down the street once more.

Meanwhile Harry hurried to the foot of North Tenth street.

Here, as Old King Brady had stated, was a man who rented boats.

His name was Bates, and he also kept a little saloon. He had carried on both lines of business for many years.

Harry did not immediately enter the place.

There seemed to be several people in the saloon. He could see their heads over a screen in the window.

Two came out.

Harry decided that they were a pair of river thieves.

"A hold-out for crooks," he thought. "I must be very careful. The governor usually gets what he wants when he goes to such places, but word is passed along the line that he has been there just the same."

He was now about to enter when looking up the street he saw two under-sized men coming down.

It occurred to him that they might be Chinamen, and he drew back into the shadows between two piles of timber which lay stacked up against a fence.

And Chinamen sure enough they proved to be.

Old King Brady was right.

The clans were gathering.

They were coming by water as well as by land.

But these Chinks, both of whom were in American dress, did not enter old Joe Bates' saloon.

They went on to the foot of the street, opened a gate and vanished inside.

It was along a narrow strip of water front beyond that gate that Joe Bates kept his boats tied up.

"Regular customers," thought Harry. "I was right. For the governor to have been seen around here would have ruined all."

He now determined to try his own luck, so he boldly entered the saloon.

There were four men drinking at the bar behind which was a grizzled old salt, who proved to be Joe Bates himself.

"I want to hire a rowboat for the night," said Harry. "Can I get one here?"

"Don't think so," was the reply. "I don't rent my boats to strangers after dark, and not often to them anyway."

There was only one thing to do, and that is what Old King Brady would have done—to show the shield.

Harry stood quiet for a moment, and then seeing that

the old fellow was at leisure, made a sign that he wanted to speak to him at the end of the bar.

Doubtless Bates suspected him, for he promptly came.

Harry exhibited his Secret Service shield with one quick movement.

"I thought so," growled Bates in an undertone. "What is it—police?"

"No, Secret Service. I'm not out after river men. This is a private matter. I simply have to have a boat."

"Well, I don't know whether you'll get one or not. I'm not obliged to rent my boats to detectives."

"Suit yourself. It may pay you to be obliging. As for me, I am ready to pay double price."

"How long do you want it for?"

"Mebbe all night."

"Got your card? I have a right to know who you are."

Harry produced his card.

"Oh yes, Brady. I know the old man. I've rented to him many a time. Well, I suppose you can have the boat. How is the old man, by the way?"

"He keeps about as usual. Don't grow any younger."

"Sure not. We can't any of us do that. Who are you after, anyway?"

The question was bound to come.

Old Joe Bates might just as well have saved himself the trouble of putting it, for he got a nice little fairy tale in exchange.

Whether it satisfied him or not was difficult to tell.

At all events he made no comments, but telling Harry to follow him, he led the way out into the yard and down to his floats where the boats lay.

Harry looked around for the two Chinamen, but they were nowhere to be seen.

He got a good boat and paid double price, although the old man at first refused to accept it.

"You want to look out for yourself, Brady," he remarked as Harry pushed off. "I know it isn't for me to warn a man like you, but you may as well understand that there is a bad bunch hanging around the Williamsburg docks after dark, particularly over here on the North Side."

Harry briefly thanked him and pulled away, keeping on till he got opposite the old refinery.

Here at the foot of the street he was lucky enough to find a standing ladder leading up to the stringpiece.

He climbed up, being just in time to see Old King Brady coming towards him down the street.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOLD-OUT OF THE YELLOW CROOKS.

Alice, if she had only known it, was taking big chances when she told Mrs. Wing Yet to take her where she would.

For as we have already hinted, this "new" Chinese woman was a pretty strenuous proposition.

Alice knew this, however, for she had been thrown up against her in a previous case.

"We don't go back to Chinatown," said Mrs. Yet. "We are going to Williamsburg, Miss Montgomery."

"So? To little Chinatown?"

"Yes."

"Then we may as well cross the Williamsburg Bridge."

"That is what I am intending to do. But we must first decide upon our names in case we are asked."

"When I am disguised like this I am generally known as Sam Quee."

"That will do. You can call me Jim Wing. It will do as well as any other."

"But the best way will be for us not to address each other by name at all."

Mrs. Yet assented to this.

They now crossed the bridge to the Williamsburg plaza and walked over to North Sixth street.

Here quite a considerable Chinese colony has sprung up of late years.

They are people of the quieter sort, driven out of New York's Chinese quarter by the incessant tong wars.

"I would not attempt to do too much talking," said Mrs. Yet. Though your Chinese is good, you sometimes misplace words which is liable to arouse suspicion. As we are only going to be lookers-on to-night, there is no use in saying much anyway."

Alice assented.

She wondered where they were going, but Mrs. Yet gave her no hint.

They walked down North Sixth street and entered a house a few doors from Roebing street, where Mrs. Yet led the way to the top floor.

She knocked and was admitted by a woman who seemed to know her well enough in her disguise.

And now Alice found herself up against something altogether unexpected.

Nearly all the Chinese in New York are from the province of Quang Tung—or Canton, as the English call it—and the important city which it contains.

Thus New York Chinese is Cantonese dialect, and that is the kind Alice speaks.

But there are as many different languages spoken in China as there are in Europe, and Alice found these two women talking a language of which she knew nothing, and she now understood why Mrs. Yet wanted her to keep her mouth shut.

Alice was not introduced. All she could do was to sit and watch.

Presently a good-looking young Chinaman came in and joined in the conversation.

Whether he knew that Mrs. Yet was a woman or not Alice could not tell.

Again she was not introduced.

The young man who was in American dress eyed her from time to time.

At last he said to her in Cantonese that they were going to have something to eat, and asked if she would like to join them.

"Of course," said Mrs. Yet. "My friend Sam Quee is hungry, same as I am. Whatever I do he does, and wherever I go he goes, that is settled, Hing Lee."

Hing Lee did not seem to like this very well.

There was more talk in the unknown tongue.

Then Hing Lee and the woman bustling about, a neat little spread was put up.

It was ten o'clock by the time they were through with

this, and then Alice, Mrs. Yet and Hing Lee went out on the street.

Hing Lee walked ahead, leaving the two women to themselves.

"Well, it is all fixed," said Mrs. Yet.

"That's good," replied Alice. "And where do we go?"

"To the hold-out of the Yellow Crooks."

"Do you mean it? Isn't that rather bold?"

"I have long wanted to see the place, but I did not like to risk it alone. This seemed a good chance. All the same you don't have to go if you feel afraid."

"How dangerous is it?"

"I don't know. Hing Lee promises to bring us back safely. I know I can trust him."

"Does he know who you are?"

"Oh, yes."

"Where do I come in? Does he know that I am a woman?"

"No; he thinks you are a man and that you are here to look after me."

Alice asked just where they were going, but Mrs. Yet declared that she did not know. Her orders were to follow Hing Lee, she added, and that was what she was doing now.

Alice assured her that she had no intention of backing out, and they walked on.

She began to wonder if she was not being steered to the Meyer & Henkle sugar house, and so it proved.

And now Alice regretted the steps she had taken.

Here she was running right into the bunch concerned in the Bradys Secret Service case, and the fact of her doing so might interfere with their work.

But it was too late to back out now.

Alice looked all around for her partners as they went down to the water's edge, but she could see nothing of them.

As they neared the stringpiece Hing Lee looked around and called out something.

"We have to wait," said Mrs. Yet, and she drew Alice into the shadows of the fence which surrounded the old refinery here.

Meanwhile Hing Lee climbed down over the stringpiece by the ladder which Harry used to come up by earlier in the evening.

They heard him whistle.

A brief wait followed, and then came the sound of oars.

In a few minutes Hing Lee's head appeared and he beckoned to Mrs. Yet to approach.

They went to the stringpiece and saw a rowboat below in which sat a Chinaman.

"We are to go in that boat," said Mrs. Yet, translating.

All three now got down into the boat and they were pulled in under the pier in front of the old sugar house.

And here we propose to leave them, devoting the remainder of this chapter to the further adventures of Jose, which we may as well state occurred the night before.

The ride in the hack was pretty much all a blank to the Cuban boy.

He may have slept; if not his mind was too much dazed for him to remember.

Indeed, it seemed only a minute when he found himself

being helped out of the hack by Hip Mow and his companion, who had now resumed their normal size.

The hack drove right off and left them standing on a street where there were tall brick factories and low, shabby frame buildings.

"How do you feel, Jose?" demanded Hip Mow in Spanish.

"Why, I feel better," replied the boy, rejoiced to find that he had recovered his speech.

"What made you drug me?" he added. "I would have gone with you without that."

"Come with us now," said Hip Mow, evading the question. "I am taking you where you will get that job to play the guitar."

Jose suspected as much, for Hip Mow had the guitar with him.

They turned down a side street and went on past a large brick factory, coming presently to the water front.

Here Hip Mow's companion whistled several times through his fingers, and they waited.

Jose grew so sleepy that Hip Mow had to hold him.

He must actually have slept standing, for the next thing he knew they were shaking him.

"We want to get into the boat now," said Hip Mow. "Are you able to climb down the ladder? I don't want you to tumble into the water and get drowned."

A boat had come up alongside the stringpiece at the foot of the ladder.

A strange Chinaman held the oars, and Hip Mow's companion was seated astern.

Jose thought he could safely manage it, and he did.

Hip Mow passed the guitar and followed on down.

Then the boat was pulled in under the pier until they came to another ladder near which were several boats tied up.

They went up this ladder, passed along a narrow passage and entered a large room inclosed with rough boards.

It was rudely furnished in Chinese style and well lighted by lamps.

Several Chinamen lay on mattresses asleep.

The place smelled horribly—it was opium if Jose had only known it.

Hip Mow and his two companions now began an animated conversation.

"They want to hear you play and sing, Jose," said the old Chink at last. "Do you think you are wide awake enough for that?"

"I can try," replied the boy. "I'm pretty sleepy, but I am willing to try."

"Do so then," said Hip Mow. "Just let them see what you can do. Of course, they will understand that it is not your best, that you can do better if your head is clear."

Jose, who was always ready to play and sing, got on the job and really did pretty well, considering.

The two Chinamen seemed immensely pleased.

Two of the slumbering opium fiends raised their heads to listen; as for the others, perhaps they heard music in their dreams.

At last Hip Mow told Jose to quit, and he took him to a little room where there was a cotbed and informed him that he was to go to sleep.

And this was the location of the "good job."

Poor Jose! When morning came he found himself still a prisoner, and likely to remain one.

There were three rooms down here, and several Chinamen appeared to live there right along. The opium smokers Jose did not see that day, nor did he ever see Hip Mow again.

They put the boy to work as a servant.

He was made to sweep out the place and then to help in a kitchen where a young Chinaman was preparing breakfast.

This fellow who informed Jose that his name was Joe told him that he also had come from Cuba, and that he was born in Havana.

It was a relief to have some one to talk Spanish with, and the young man was pleasant enough.

"Three or four of us live here," Joe went on to say, "and every night there are others who come in here. It is a kind of Chinese club. We have a little theater, and that is where you are going to sing and play."

"But am I never to go out?" demanded poor Jose. "Are they going to keep me locked in all the time?"

Joe shrugged his shoulders and said he didn't know; that he supposed Jose would be let go out some time, but that he was not boss.

Later he showed Jose the little stage which was in a room which must also have been used as a joss house, for there was an ugly idol here with a little altar before it.

And the day passed, Jose being kept busy in one way or another most of the time and perpetually worrying about his diamonds.

"Sooner or later these Chinese are bound to find them," he said to himself, "and when they do find them that's the end of me."

Heartily he wished that he had never seen the diamonds, for he felt that they were almost certain to cost him his life.

Evening came. Jose ate supper with his Chinese jailers the same as he had breakfast and dinner.

After supper he was made to sweep the stage and to fill lamps and to do other work about the joss house theater.

Joe then told him that he could lie down and sleep for a couple of hours so as to be fresh for the evening performance.

This was all well enough, but he also told Jose that he was to sleep with him, and he took him to a different room from the one he had occupied the night before.

"And now I'm done for! He'll go through my clothes sure," thought Jose.

He begged hard to be allowed to have the other room, saying that he never could sleep in the same bed with anyone.

But Joe told him that his room had been given to another and that he must do as he was told, after which he went away, leaving the boy to himself.

Jose lay down, and troubled though he was, slept after a little.

He did not imagine that he was going to have to guard his diamonds before he and Joe retired for the night.

But that was because he did not know Joe.

The Chinaman was a crook.

They were all crooked here; Jose was in the hold-out of

the "Yellow Crooks" under Meyer & Henkle's old sugar house.

The little Cuban boy, all tired out by the labors of the day, slept so soundly that when Joe came in to waken him he was dead to the world.

Probably the chance looked too good to be resisted. At all events the light-fingered Chinaman at once started to go through Jose's pockets.

But light-fingered as he was, Jose felt him. Suddenly he sprang up from the bed.

With equal suddenness Jose sprang away from it, holding in his hand a diamond brooch, his eyes big with amazement.

It was too much for the hot-tempered little Cuban. Forgetting where he was, and the extreme danger such a move was sure to throw him into, he made one jump for Joe, and got him by the throat.

"Drop it! Drop it!" he cried in Spanish. "Drop it or I'll strangle you—that's what I will!"

CHAPTER VII.

A CLEW TO THE DIAMONDS.

"Well, Harry," said Old King Brady, "what's the word?"

"I got a boat," replied Harry.

"Much trouble?"

"Not so much. Two Chinks took out a boat ahead of me from the same place."

"Yes, I know."

"How?"

"They came here."

"Did they? As I supposed they would."

"They have been coming by land, too."

"How many?"

"I have only seen four altogether. Two by land and two by water. The last two pulled in under the pier in front of the sugar house as nearly as I could follow their movements."

"And the others?"

"I didn't see where they went," replied Old King Brady, and he proceeded to explain that he had been at a distance when these men got off the car.

"We ought not to hang around here so openly; that's one thing sure," observed Harry. "Suppose we take to the water?"

"Agreed. It is now ten o'clock. I should imagine we might see more Chinks come along before midnight."

They went out on the river, keeping at a distance and watching the pier as well as the foot of the street.

Shortly after ten three Chinamen were seen coming down the street.

One whistled sharply when they reached the string-piece.

A few minutes later a boat shot out from under the pier.

It was pulled by a Chinaman.

He rounded it up at the standing ladder and took the

three Chinamen aboard, after which he pulled in under the sugar house pier.

Now these people were unquestionably Alice, Mrs. Yet and Hing Lee.

Through his night glass—a most powerful one—Old King Brady carefully studied them. He put all three down as Chinamen.

It would have been better if Harry had worked the glass, for he might have recognized Alice in her disguise even at that distance.

As it was, Old King Brady had no suspicions.

"There go three more," observed Harry.

"Yes. What ought we to do, think? Try to work in under the pier?"

"It is up to you, governor. It seems to me, however, a very dangerous plan."

"It is a dangerous plan, Harry. I am almost of a mind to give it up after midnight and tackle it again to-morrow. We have already proved that these Yellow Crooks hang out here and that would seem to be enough for a starter."

"Yes, and considering the number we actually know to be in there now, we are in no shape to tackle them."

"Decidedly not. We need help."

"Well, then, let us decide to hang around till midnight. Then we will pull back to Joe Bates', leave the boat and quit."

Midnight came and no more Chinamen went in or out under the pier.

But Old King Brady, with his usual persistency, was not ready to quit even yet.

"There must be some other way of getting into the place," he remarked. "It can't be that they use the water-way exclusively. At least so it seems to me."

"What are you thinking about?" demanded Harry. "You've got something in your head."

"About that bunch of keys which I discovered in Twee Hop's room."

"I see. Thinking that they may fit in here?"

"Such is my idea. There's a gate in the fence. Then there are two doors to the sugar house and a horse gate under the big shed. Wherever the Chinks are you can be sure it is as low down as they can get; you know the liking they always have for cellars."

"Well, suppose we try it on. It is getting so late now that it is hardly likely any more of the bunch will show up."

This was agreed to.

The Bradys pulled to the foot of the next street landing at a pier there, where they left their boat.

They now went around to the sugar house, and having made it as certain as they could that no one was watching them, the old detective got out his bunch of Chinese keys.

But none of them fitted the doors of the sugar house—all were entirely too small for the locks, and it was the same case with the horse gate.

Besides this larger gate there was a little gate in the fence as has been told.

This carried a different lock, and it took one of the larger keys of the bunch.

In a twinkling the detectives slipped inside.

"This is good business," chuckled Old King Brady. "Now we ought to be able to do something."

They were on the side of the building towards the pier.

Here there were a number of low sheds, the gate opening directly into one of them.

The sheds connected and presented a dark interior of considerable extent.

"I hardly like to use a flashlight here," observed the old detective, "and yet it's as dark as a pocket."

"The idea is to work inside the building if we can, I suppose," said Harry.

"That's it. We shall have to find the door first. It must be a flashlight after all."

"Just for a minute till we find the door."

"Yes, but unfortunately a minute may do the business. However, here goes."

One flash of the light revealed a door which apparently led into the main building.

The detectives were just about to head for it when suddenly they heard a noise which sent them back into the shadows.

The door opened and two Chinamen appeared.

One carried a lantern which threw light enough upon the face of the other to enable Old King Brady to recognize the so-called T. W. E. Hopper.

The man with the lantern held it up against the lock of the door.

Twee Hop now produced a piece of wax and took an impression of the lock.

"He has missed his keys and he means to get new ones made," breathed Harry.

"Hush!" whispered Old King Brady. "Not a sound."

But this was evidently what the two men were about.

They did the same thing at the gate, the man with the lantern using a key of his own to open it.

Having secured his wax impression, Twee Hop went away, while the other locked the gate and retreated through the door.

"Well, we have certainly scored a point," observed Harry.

"Yes," replied the old detective. "We have definitely connected Twee Hop with this bunch of Yellow Crooks, so we have something to report to the Secret Service Bureau."

"Going to ring off then or shall we push the matter further?"

"I hardly know, Harry. Having started in to explore, I hate to ring off now that we have fairly begun."

"It is up to you to decide."

"I know it. Let's take one look inside there just for luck."

Knowing full well that his persevering partner had no idea of doing anything else, Harry assented.

They easily opened the door with a key on the bunch and began prowling about, passing from room to room.

Of course it was absolutely essential to use a flashlight now.

There was considerable machinery in these rooms, and yet it seemed as if much had also been removed.

The Bradys came at last upon a flight of iron steps leading down to a lower level, and they were just about to descend when suddenly they heard a voice call in Spanish:

"Jose! Jose! Where are you, Jose? Answer. I know you are here somewhere. I forgive you, Jose! Show yourself. I mean fair."

Instantly Old King Brady extinguished the flashlight. "Did you hear that?" breathed Harry. "What can it mean?"

"Not a word! Not a sound!" answered Old King Brady. He knew that it was not Chinese which had been spoken, but he could not tell whether it was Italian, Spanish or Portuguese.

Harry, on the contrary, understood every word.

There was silence for a moment, and then the voice resumed:

"Jose! Don't be a fool! You can't possibly get out of this building. I sha'n't do anything to you for choking me half to death. Speak! Where are you, boy? I'll help you out of this. We will go away together. I am ready to shake the gang and be your partner. You can't do a thing with those diamonds without getting arrested, but I can. Answer me, Jose."

After this long speech Old King Brady's curiosity got the better of him.

"What's he saying? What's it all about?" he whispered in Harry's ear.

"Diamonds," breathed Harry. "We're on the trail."

"You don't mean it! Now aren't you glad we came?" Silence again.

It was Joe, the Chinaman, of course.

Jose's attack on the young Chink had indeed been fierce.

He half strangled Joe, threw him down, got the brooch away, and then dashed out through the door which stood open.

Which way to go was something he scarcely thought of.

Running along the passage which would have taken him to the theater joss house, he darted up a flight of iron steps which he had previously observed.

At the top was a door which he opened.

It took him into the basement of the old sugar house, where there were great vats and much machinery.

It was pitch dark, and the boy who had now in a measure come to his senses, hesitated, uncertain what to do.

Just then he heard footsteps on the stairs.

It was Joe, of course, he reasoned.

Dark though it was, he started to run, but he didn't get far before he bumped into a vat.

"Jose! Hold on or I'll kill you!" shouted Joe.

Jose crawled around to the other side of the vat and crouched down.

His heart beat wildly. He did not know what to do.

Joe did not get him then, nor did he get him when he came later on with a lantern and made a thorough search of the place.

After that he had to give it up, for he knew others would be after him, and Joe wanted to work this little diamond mine himself.

So he locked the door and went away.

That Jose could get upstairs into the building he knew, but he felt almost certain that he could not get out of it, for he also knew that every door was securely locked and every window on the ground floor nailed down.

So now seizing the first opportunity that came to him here, was Joe the Chink trying to work his little private diamond mine again.

This time he was trying coaxing, but Jose did not respond.

When Old King Brady caught the word diamonds he was all on the alert, of course.

He drew Harry away from the iron stairs and made him repeat just what had been said.

"But who can this Jose be?" he questioned. "Evidently some Spanish-American boy."

"It must be so. But the other—the one who is calling—we ought to get a sight of him. I think he is Chinese, by the accent he put on his Spanish."

"Let us go back and see if we can't sneak down the stairs unobserved."

The calling had now ceased.

Joe was again searching with his lantern.

As he had passed over into a distant part of the basement, the Bradys were able to get down the stairs.

They slipped in behind a vat and continued to watch.

Soon they caught sight of Joe, and knew that they had a Chinaman to deal with.

He was looking behind the vats, which were many, and also inside of them, for each vat was provided with a little ladder against its side.

"He will be up against us in a minute," observed Harry in a whisper.

"Let him come," said Old King Brady. "I shall take him when he does, for I am determined to know what this talk of diamonds means."

They watched and saw Joe examine two other vats.

He then tackled a third one near a large open trap door which he was careful to avoid.

Having gone all around this vat, Joe started to climb the ladder.

He had barely reached the top when there was a sharp crack.

The round on which the Chinaman stood had broken under his weight.

Joe lost his grip and came crashing to the floor, the lantern slipping from his hand.

Now precisely what happened the Bradys could not tell for the lantern was extinguished as it fell.

But there could be no doubt that Joe in attempting to rise missed his footing and fell through the trap, for a wild yell rang out and then all was still.

"By Jove, he has fallen down that hoistway!" cried Harry.

"Must be so," said Old King Brady, flashing his light.

There was no Joe visible, but above the rim of the vat a boy's black head was raised.

It was Jose!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FATE OF THE INFORMER.

Could the Bradys have looked in on the little theater joss house about half-past ten they would have seen a number of Chinese gathered, some seated on the benches and others on the little stage.

These latter were provided with musical instruments, such as the moon banjo, the three-stringed fiddle, cymbals, drum and so on.

Among those in the audience were Mrs. Wing Yet, Alice in her disguise, and the smooth-spoken young Chink, Hing Lee.

Twee Hop was there, too, all ablaze with diamonds.

He seemed to be master of ceremonies, for he sat on the stage apart from the orchestra.

Alice had seen about all there was to see in this hold-out of the Yellow Crooks.

And yet she had not learned much.

For nearly all the Chinamen they came up against spoke the, to her, unknown tongue.

Alice took an early opportunity to ask Mrs. Yet what language it was, and she was informed that it was what was spoken in the extreme southwest of China.

Now they had gathered in the theater joss house to witness the performances of the wonderful dancer, who Mrs. Yet felt certain would prove to be the woman Mon Wow.

They had been sitting for some little time in silence, why neither Alice nor Mrs. Yet understood.

At last Twee Hop arose and came to the front of the stage. Alice knew who he was, for the banker's wife had already told her.

"The importer" now began to speak, and to Alice's satisfaction the language he used was Cantonese.

"Brothers of the yellow band," he commenced, "I have a word to say before the performance begins, and although we have two strangers among us, inasmuch as they are vouched for by our brother Hing Lee, I shall speak freely.

"As I informed you a few nights ago, I have every reason to believe that we have been betrayed by one of our number of the Secret Service men. Perhaps the traitor may be listening to me now. I hope so, and if so let me say that discovery is certain, and when discovered, death by torture will be his lot. His eyes shall be put out, his ears cut off, his tongue torn out by the roots. Such is to be his fate, and from it I feel certain he cannot escape.

"To-night will end our meetings here. Where we shall gather next I cannot now say, but you shall be duly informed. It is my belief that the noted Brady detectives will be put on our track—perhaps they may already have been told of this place. In order to have a hold on them I have given them a case of my own. During the next few days I expect to see them frequently. I shall watch. If they are the Secret Service men set upon us, I shall surely know it, and if so, when the right time comes, I shall deliver them into your hands. Thus to-night we break up here forever. During the next few days I shall arrange to remove such stuff as belongs to us to a secure place. Each one of you will be informed when and where we are to meet again, and to the traitor, if he hears me, I say once more, beware! But why do I give the warning? He cannot escape us. His doom is sealed! Let the performance begin. Once again you are to have the pleasure of witnessing the wonderful dancing of the girl I brought from Manila, Mon Wow; also shall you hear a boy musician from Cuba, brought to us by our brother, Hip Mow. These are to be our novelties to-night."

Twee Hop resumed his seat and the Chinese orchestra began its awful din.

"Did you understand all that?" whispered Mrs. Yet?"

"Every word," replied Alice in the same low tone.

"Then you see that I was right. Mon Wow is here. But

we are in the greatest danger. I came here because I hoped to rescue that poor girl. Now I understand it all, and I wish we were well out of it, but I am glad you were able to hear what he said about the Bradys."

"What, you don't mean to say that——" breathed Alice, dropping her voice still lower, and she made a slight motion of her hand towards Hing Lee.

Mrs. Yet nodded and put her finger to her lips.

Then Hing Lee was the traitor!

Was it really known?

If so their situation was dangerous indeed.

Still nothing could now be done about it, but to patiently wait, hoping that they might be able to slip out as easily as they had slipped in.

Already the performance had begun.

A Chinaman naked to the waist took the stage and was doing those wonderful stunts at tumbling which only a Chinese tumbler could do.

Such somersaults Alice had never seen, and she has witnessed much of this sort of thing.

At the last he seemed to wind himself up into a ball, and went rolling about the stage with startling rapidity until he rolled himself off at the back and vanished.

Mon Wow now appeared.

Whether Twee Hop had caused her to be kidnaped on Pell street that night or not the Bradys never learned, but such in all probability was the case, and the opium smuggler's intention was to rob his wife of the diamonds he had bestowed upon her.

At all events here Mon Wow was now, attired in a most gorgeous Chinese costume, and the dance began.

And such a dance!

We cannot attempt to describe it, but shall only say that it was as wonderful as the tumbling, and the most wonderful part of it was how anyone could execute such a dance, keeping time with that barbarous Chinese music, which Mon Wow certainly did.

Over at last, a little play in Chinese style succeeded.

It was supposed to be a farce, and only lasted half an hour. As the dialogue was in the unknown tongue, Alice could make nothing of it, but as the assembled Chinks roared with laughter, she concluded that it must be extremely funny.

This over, Twee Hop called out something, and the drummer left the stage at the back. He returned in a minute looking excited and saying something to Twee Hop, Both hurried away together, the Chink who played the moon banjo going with them.

In a few minutes they were back again.

Twee Hop appeared to be very angry.

"Brothers!" he called out in Cantonese, "this traitor business is still working. The boy we call Joe has now vanished, taking the Cuban musician with him. Can he be the one who has betrayed us? It begins to look so, yet if it is so then it is not as I thought. It is all over for the night, brothers. Those who wish to retire may do so now."

The music ceased, and the gathering began to break up.

It did not appear that many proposed to leave the building; almost all went to the smoking-room, where the matresses and opium lay-outs were.

It was Alice's hope now that they would be able to slip quietly out.

But Hing Lee was the kind to keep one guessing, for he evidently could not speak either English or Cantonese.

Mrs. Yet talked with him and two others for a few minutes in the unknown tongue. Then others going into the smoking-room, it was with Hing Lee alone.

Twee Hop had taken himself off, but a few others still lingered when Mrs. Yet turned to Alice and said in Cantonese:

"We will go now."

"I am ready," replied Alice. "Hing Lee goes with us?"

"Yes."

"It is all right?"

"All right so far as I know. But we must not even breathe about that."

All this was said in the lowest whispers.

Hing Lee appeared to watch them uneasily.

Presently he started, and they followed, Mrs. Yet going ahead of Alice.

They passed along the passage, which was lighted by a hanging lantern, went through an open door, and descended into a lower passage.

It was here they were to take the ladder leading down to the boat.

Hing Lee stooped to pull up the trap door.

It would not yield.

The Chinaman grew greatly excited.

Again and again he tried it, but without success, and all the while he kept gabbling to Mrs. Yet.

"What is the matter?" demanded Alice. "If he can't open the trap door himself why don't he go for help?"

"He begins to feel afraid," replied Mrs. Yet, "and so do I."

Alice looked back up the stairs uneasily.

Even as she did so the light—they could see the lantern from where they stood—was suddenly extinguished.

Mrs. Yet screamed.

Hing Lee probably swore as he jumped in front of the women.

He had reason for his fears, for now at the head of the stairs three men wearing death-head masks just like the one with which Hip Mow so scared Jose, suddenly appeared.

Behind was Twee Hop carrying a lighted torch in his hand.

As the death-head men came rushing down the stairs, the "importer" shouted something in a loud voice.

Doubtless Hing Lee knew that his doom was sealed, for quick as thought he pulled out a big revolver, pressed it to his forehead and fired, falling dead at the feet of the masks.

Mrs. Yet let out another scream, too decidedly feminine to be mistaken, and promptly fell in a faint, leaving Alice to face this tragical situation alone.

The excitement now became intense.

Twee Hop and the others bent over Hing Lee.

Ascertaining that he was certainly dead, they turned their attention to Mrs. Yet, removing her hat and the wig she wore.

Though Alice could not understand what they were say-

ing, she realized that the sex of her companion was certainly discovered.

She could not hope to escape herself, and she knew it.

Backing against the wall she waited for what was to come.

Twee Hop now straightened up and flashed the torch upon her.

That is Mrs. Wing Yet," he slowly said in Cantonese, at the same time pointing to the unconscious woman, and he added in the same breath:

"Who are you?"

"Her friend. Name, Sam Quee," replied Alice, steadily. But it was no use, of course.

At a sign from Twee Hop, who seemed to be perfect master of his band in spite of the story Mrs. Yet gave Alice, the masks seized her, pulled off hat and wig, and promptly revealed the truth.

"You are a woman, and a white woman," cried Twee Hop in English.

"Well, it is no use to try to deny it," replied Alice with such calmness as she could assume. "That is what I am."

"And yet you speak Chinese. You can be but one person—Alice Montgomery, of the Brady Detective Bureau. I doubt if there is another woman in America who can speak the Cantonese language as you can—at least so I have been told."

"Shall I speak in that language now?" demanded Alice in Cantonese.

"Yes, for these men do not understand it," promptly replied the importer.

"Very well; then all I have to say is that you are right. I am Alice Montgomery, Mr. Twee Hop, and I am here working on the case you gave Old King Brady, to try to recover your Chinese diamonds."

Now if there is such a thing as a Chinaman looking confused, Mr. T. W. E. Hopper certainly looked that way then.

"Unfortunate woman! You might better have put your head into a lion's mouth than to have come into this place," he cried.

"I came, where I thought I should find a clue to your diamonds. How could I know that I should meet you here at the head of this bunch of Yellow Crooks?"

"But perhaps," Alice added, "it is all false about the diamonds anyhow. You also engaged Old King Brady to look for the woman Mon Wow. It appears you have her here."

Again Twee Hop appeared to be confused.

"Never mind about Mon Wow," he replied, "but as for the diamonds, I have really lost them, and want to recover them if I can. It is unfortunate, Miss Montgomery, that you heard the speech I made. But for that I might take a different view of your case."

Alice was silent.

Twee Hop paced the floor in an agitated way.

"I don't know what to do," he muttered. "I wish you had not come here. However came you to mix up with that traitor who lies dead there?"

"I know nothing of him; never saw him until to-night," Alice replied, striving to appear calm.

Just then Mrs. Yet revived.

She got on her knees before Twee Hop and appeared to make a wild appeal in the unknown tongue.

The importer listened for a moment and then motioned for her to get up, which she did.

"This fool woman claims it is all her doings, Miss Montgomery," Twee Hop then said. "But it makes no difference. You have both heard too much. By Hing Lee you were introduced as members of the Yellow Crooks, as you would call our band in English, hailing from Chicago. I had nothing to do with receiving you, as you know, but so well were you disguised that I think even I would have been deceived—indeed, I was deceived, for I have been looking at you all the evening and never once suspected you."

"And what is your decision?" demanded Alice as the Chinaman paused.

"Under the circumstances there can be but one decision," replied Twee Hop. "You must both die, and as to-morrow we leave this place forever, you must die to-night. Deeply as I regret to say it, so it must be."

Mrs. Yet began to scream at this, but Alice stood calmly gazing at the leader of the Yellow Crooks.

"And you think it will help your case to kill us?" she said slowly. "Let me tell you, Mr. Twee Hop, that you could hardly make a bigger mistake. If you kill us then beware of the vengeance of the Bradys, for it is bound to come, and when it does come it will be swift and sure."

CHAPTER IX.

"IS IT A MATTER OF DIAMONDS?"

If the Bradys could only have known what happened to Alice within those walls that night they would have realized that here was another illustration of the danger of undertaking a Chinese case.

But of course there was no possible reason why Old King Brady should not have undertaken the chase for those Chinese diamonds, considering the way in which the case was put up to him by Twee Hop.

And now the chase had brought them very close to the goal it would seem.

Jose seeing that the eyes of the detectives were upon him, promptly ducked down out of sight.

"Come, come, you boy!" cried the old detective, "we saw you. Come out of that and give an account of yourself."

Jose heard but did not understand.

The round black head did not appear.

"Mebbe he don't speak English. I'll try him in Spanish," Harry remarked.

"Jose! Listen!" he called in that language, "your enemy has fallen through this trap. He is probably dead. I can hear no sound down below here. Come out. We want to talk to you. We know you have diamonds about you which have been stolen. We are detectives; but if you will tell us the whole truth it is not sure that any trouble will come to you. Perhaps it will be just the other way; you may get a reward."

Silence.

Jose heard but was afraid.

"Give him a moment to chew on what you have said, Harry," whispered Old King Brady. "If he don't come out then we must make him; that's all."

He was wise.

Jose was already "chewing" on what Harry had said.

The fact was the little Cuban was so thoroughly frightened that he was almost beside himself.

He had tried every way possible to get out of the old refinery, but had not succeeded. And what added to his fears was being in the dark. Jose had climbed into the vat and hidden as a frightened dog might hide in some hole.

So now he concluded that the only way was to make a clean breast of it and give himself up.

Anyhow it would not be Joe who was getting the diamonds.

As for himself, he had never intended to steal them.

Probably after all the best way would be to give them up.

So Jose once more popped his head over the rim of the vat.

"Mister, I didn't steal the diamonds," he called down.

"Come down," said Harry kindly. "Come down and tell us all about it, Jose.

"And mind how you do it," he added. "There is a broken round on the ladder here. You don't want to fall into that hole, too."

Jose, who was standing on an inside ladder, now climbed over the rim of the vat and cautiously descended.

He was shaking all over, his teeth chattered, it was all he could do to keep from crying.

The fact is Jose expected nothing less than to be sent to prison for the rest of his natural life.

But Harry's friendly tone reassured him.

"Let's see the diamonds, Jose," he said. "Out with them. Tell us where you got them and all will go right."

And Jose yielded readily enough, telling the whole story.

As this had to be translated to Old King Brady, it took time.

"It would seem that Twee Hop told the truth," remarked Harry after thy examined the brooches which Jose produced before he began to talk.

"Looks so," replied the old detective. "What a singular thing it is that this boy should be brought in here. Of course, Twee Hop must have known it. The wonder is he and the others have not searched for him."

"The why of all that can only be explained by this fellow Joe, I suppose."

"Yes, if he still lives. But now to get the boy out of here and to get away ourselves."

Jose was only too glad to go.

The Bradys now retraced their steps by the way they had come.

But escape was not to be so easily effected.

When they reached the door leading out to the sheds which they had left open, they found it locked.

"Somebody has been here after we were," whispered Harry, who tried it.

"That's a bad job," muttered Old King Brady.

He had been using Joe's lantern, which was recovered and lighted.

He flashed it on the lock and tried the door.

"It is locked all right," he said. "Well, luckily we have a key."

But the key would not work, nor was the door locked.

Clearly it had been securely fastened in some other way on the outside.

"Provoking enough," growled the old detective. "Can our presence be known here? It almost looks so. I don't like this."

"There must be plenty of other doors," said Harry. "All there is about it we shall have to look for them. Jose, what do you know?"

"Nothing," replied Jose, "except that I can take you down into the place where the Chinamen are. I don't know anything at all about it up here."

"We won't go in for that to-night," said Old King Brady quickly. "Let's look for other doors."

They did and found three.

But all were locked and neither the Chinamen's keys nor their own skeletons would help them out any.

As for the windows, they all appeared to be securely nailed down.

Old King Brady was puzzled to know what to do.

He had stowed the diamonds away in the secret pockets of his peculiar blue coat.

With these to work with he had a hope that he might be able to get a confession out of Twee Hop that would result in securing the whole gang and saving himself.

In these Chinese opium smuggling cases there is almost always one of the gang used as an informer and allowed to escape.

"There seems to be only one thing to do," remarked Old King Brady when it became certain that they were not going to be able to make their escape, "and that is to let Jose take the lead."

They returned to the basement and the Cuban pointed out the steps which led down into the cellar.

"It ought to be done in the dark," said the old detective after listening for a few minutes. "It really isn't safe to risk it with this lantern. How many Chinks do you suppose are down there, Jose?"

He forgot that Jose could not understand him.

"He says he has no idea," said Harry after translating the question.

"Ask him if he thinks he can grope his way in the dark to the door which cuts off those stairs leading to the water ladder," said Old King Brady.

They determined to try it.

So the lantern was extinguished, and Harry taking hold of Jose's coat, while Old King Brady got hold of Harry's, they descended.

Jose, guiding himself by the wall, now cautiously advanced.

It was pitch dark, yet all went well for a short distance.

Then suddenly Harry's coat was jerked out of Old King Brady's hand.

A wild cry from Jose broke the stillness.

"Look out for yourself, governor! A trap!" shouted Harry in the same breath.

With a despairing gasp Old King Brady produced his flashlight.

There directly in front of him was an open trap door.

Harry and Jose had vanished.

Old King Brady flashed his light down the trap, but could see nothing.

He was just about to call when a noose suddenly dropped over his head.

Old King Brady whirled around as it was drawn tight to find himself facing the three death-head masks which Alice had to face when she was captured by Twee Hop.

One of these held a flashlight, another pulled at the rope, while the third held a huge revolver planked at Old King Brady's head.

It was a case of capture, and the old detective resigned himself to his fate.

"Well!" he exclaimed, folding his arms, "you have got me. Now what do you mean to do with me?"

A mumbling chuckle behind the masks was the only answer.

The one who held the rope now turned, and slinging the rope over his shoulder, traveled off along the passage.

Of course all Old King Brady could do was to follow like a horse at the end of his tether.

They took him into the theater joss house where the rope was tied to a big upright post which supported the low ceiling.

Then all three masks went away, leaving the old detective in the dark, but this was not done until they had tied his hands behind him.

Helpless, thus all Old King Brady could do was to wait.

"If they only don't make too thorough a search," he thought. "I hardly think they will find the diamonds unless they do go at it thoroughly."

The wait was not for long.

Presently a well-dressed Chinaman with an ordinary black cloth mask over his face entered accompanied by one of the three of the death-heads.

He was certainly not Twee Hop, being a man of a different build.

He carried with him an ordinary lantern, which he flashed in Old King Brady's face, and for a moment stood there looking at him in silence.

"Yes," he said at last, speaking in good English, "you are Old King Brady the detective, all right, there is no doubt of that."

"None whatever," snapped the old detective. "Here I am. You have got me. Now what do you intend to do with me?—that's the question."

"I hardly know," replied the Chinaman; "but first of all you must be searched."

His revolver, flashlight and some money were taken from him; also Twee Hop's bunch of keys.

The diamonds, however, much to the detective's relief, were not discovered.

The black mask now ordered the death-head to leave the room, apparently. At all events, the man retired.

"Now for a moment's talk with you, Mr. Brady," the other said.

"Well?"

"Why did you come prowling about this place?"

"Ask your friend, Twee Hop."

"You are assuming that Twee Hop actually is my friend

when you really know nothing about it. It is true then that you have taken up a detective case for that man?"

"Yes, it is true."

"You are playing with a high hand. I advise you to be careful."

"I have to deal with a high-handed man, I fancy. When a Chinaman speaks English as well as you do, he is apt to be a pretty important person among the people of his own race."

A satisfied smile played about the lips of the mask.

"Well, perhaps I am all of that," he said; "all the more reason then that you should have a care what you say. I ask you again what sort of a detective case you have in hand for Twee Hop?"

"And I answer again that for that information I must refer you to Twee Hop himself. Doubtless you are well enough acquainted with him even if he is not your friend."

"Is it a matter of diamonds?"

"I refer you to Twee Hop."

The mask drew a revolver, and stepping closer, aimed at Old King Brady's forehead.

"Speak! Answer!" he hissed. "Do it now or I fire! Is it a matter of diamonds?"

CHAPTER X.

ALICE MAKES AN ESCAPE.

Alice expected nothing but to be shot then and there from the manner in which Twee Hop pronounced her sentence.

But it was not so.

For in the same breath the importer informed her and Mrs. Yet that they were to follow him.

He led them through various passages to the room which Jose had occupied the first night, and then locked them in.

And this after a hasty search of both.

Alice lost her revolver—nothing else. From Mrs. Yet nothing at all was taken.

A lantern was left with them.

The door having been locked upon them, Mrs. Yet sat down on the edge of the bed and began to ease her mind about Twee Hop.

Alice let her talk herself out before making any remark.

"All that talk is of little use," she finally said. "We seem to have got ourselves into serious trouble. How are we going to get out is more to the point."

"You ought to be the best judge of that, seeing that you are a detective," replied Mrs. Yet.

"I have a bunch of skeleton keys which may open this door, but I hardly know whether I better use them now or wait. I suppose there is somebody on guard outside."

"If we got out I am afraid we should never succeed in escaping from the building."

"Oh, I don't know. There are more ways than one, probably."

"Poor Hing Lee!" sighed Mrs. Yet. "He was a good man. He was also my cousin. Now he is dead. It makes me very sad."

"Is he—was he, I mean—actually the informer who gave away these Yellow Crooks to the Government?"

"I think he was. I don't actually know, for he did not tell me, but from some remarks he dropped I think it is pretty certain that he was the man."

"Then he has met with his reward. He could not expect anything else."

"I can't see how they found out. I am sure he never told anyone."

"You can't be sure of that. He must have given himself away somehow or we should not be in this fix now."

Alice listened at the door.

"I can't hear anyone outside there," she remarked. "I think I will venture to use my skeleton keys."

"Do you think they really mean to kill us, Miss Montgomery?"

"You ought to be a better judge of that than I am, for you know your own people better than I do. It seemed to me that Twee Hop meant what he said."

Alice now went to work with her skeletons, but found herself unable to master the lock.

"We can do nothing here," whispered Alice.

"But there is still another door," replied Mrs. Yet. "What about that?"

Now this other door opened the other way. It was nearly opposite to the door of their room.

A light shown through the keyhole.

Alice got her eye against it, but could see but little, and nothing to give her any clew to what the room might contain.

She tried listening next.

Snoring in various keys seemed to be the order of things behind that door.

Alice, in a whisper, so informed Mrs. Yet.

"It must be an opium joint," the broker's wife said.

Alice cautiously tried the door, finding it unlocked.

She opened it and peered inside.

At least a dozen Chinks lay sprawling on mattresses asleep.

There were as many as six opium lay-outs in evidence.

Alice stood studying the situation, trying to locate Twee Hop, but he did not seem to be there.

There was one big Chinaman over at the other side of the room.

One of the death-head masks had been just such a man. He was the one who had locked and unlocked doors as they passed along, and who had finally locked Alice and Mrs. Yet in the little room.

"I believe that fellow carries the keys to this place," breathed Alice. "I've a great mind to try and get them."

Mrs. Yet nodded.

Alice stole in among the slumbering opium fiends and crept up to the big fellow's side.

Cautiously she felt him over, and sure enough located a bunch of keys in the pocket of his blouse.

These she was able to possess herself of without arousing him, and returning she joined Mrs. Yet in the passage, closing the door behind her.

"That was well done," said the Chinawoman approvingly. "You seem to be equal to everything."

"It was pure luck," replied Alice. "If one tries one gets there I suppose. Now to see if we can get out of this."

They now retraced their steps and gained the door which

led to the stairs, at the foot of which Hing Lee met his fate. It was locked, but the right key was speedily found.

Descending the stairs they found the corpse of the dead Chinaman still lying where it had fallen.

Just beyond was the trap door.

"If we can only get that trap door up we have every chance," said Alice. "There must be boats down there."

She tried the trap, but found it fast.

Flashing her lantern down upon it she made a careful examination, and in the frame in which the trap door closed found a small opening which looked as if it might be a keyhole.

Kneeling down, Alice tried key after key, and at length found one to fit it.

The key turned and then she was able to raise the trap.

"At last!" cried Mrs. Yet joyfully. Oh, Miss Montgomery, if we can only once escape from this dreadful place I will never take such chances again."

"We are going to escape," replied Alice. "Follow me."

She cautiously descended the ladder which was nailed against a pile and reached to the water.

Several rowboats were tied up here.

Alice pulled one in towards the pile and got into it.

Mrs. Yet following, she cast off, took up the oars and began to pull out from under the pier, when all at once her attention was attracted by a splashing close by.

"Someone after us," breathed Mrs. Yet. "We shall never get away from this."

Alice lay back on her oars.

"Who's there?" she called in Chinese.

There was no answer, but the splashing kept up.

Alice raised the lantern and was just in time to see a slight figure climbing into one of the boats.

It was a bareheaded boy with very black hair.

He had all his clothes on, so it looked as if he might accidentally have tumbled into the water.

Determined to know more and to take no chance of being followed, Alice passed the lantern to Mrs. Yet and pulled boldly up to the boat in which the boy had now crouched down.

And this was the time Alice made the acquaintance of Jose.

He sat up when he saw that he had only women to deal with, but he did not speak.

Seeing that he looked like a Spanish-American, Alice addressed him in Spanish.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"I want to get away," mumbled Jose. "I wasn't going to steal the boat, missus, only going to use it to take me where I can get on shore."

"Have you been in this building overhead here? Are you the Cuban boy who plays the guitar?"

"Yes, missus."

"I see. You were a prisoner of these Chinese?"

"Yes, missus. Please don't hurt me. All I want is to get away."

"You get in this boat with us, I will put you ashore," Alice said.

"Will you, really, missus?"

"Yes, yes; I am no Chinese. I have been their prisoner

myself. I have just made my escape. What is your name?"

"Jose Randega."

"Then trust to me, Jose, and I will see you out of this. I may as well tell you that I am a detective. I will see you safe."

"A detective?" cried Jose. "Oh, I am so glad."

"Why glad?"

"Because then you surely will help me. Listen missus; there is another detective close by here. A young man. His name is Brady; he has sprained his ankle and can't walk. I was going to try to get him into the boat."

"Brady!" cried Alice. "Do you mean Harry Brady?"

"Yes, yes. That's what Old King Brady called him—Harry!"

"What is it all about?" demanded Mrs. Yet, puzzled at all this Spanish. "Why do you make so much talk with the boy?"

Alice hastily explained.

"Tell me all about it, Jose," she continued. "I am Old King Brady's partner. I am ready to help you, of course."

Jose's tongue was loosed now.

He rattled away at race-horse speed, and Alice got everything, the story of the diamonds included.

"We fell into a dirty cellar where it is all mud," he went on to say when he came to the trap door incident. "That Chinaman Joe who tried to rob me of the diamonds is there, too, but he is dead. He seems to have broken his neck when he fell. I did what I could for Young King Brady. He can scarcely stand, and he suffers terribly. Of course, we did not know what to do for we could not get up out of the cellar, there are no stairs. Mr. Brady had a flashlight, and finally we found a sewer pipe leading out into the water. As I am a good swimmer I crawled into it, for Mr. Brady was sure it did not go very far. It didn't, either. I managed to get through, and then I let myself come up to the surface of the water, but I shouldn't want to try it again."

Alice thought all this a remarkable story, but Jose seemed to be sincere, and as she knew that the Bradys were due at the Meyer & Hengle sugar house that night, she could not doubt its truth.

"Show me how to get to the place at once, Jose," she said.

Mrs. Yet put up a kick when she found that they were going further in among the piles instead of out on the river, but Alice silenced her.

They soon came up against a brick wall which seemed to rise directly out of the water, and here was a small window not too high for Alice to reach.

There was no sash. Alice raised her lantern, and throwing the light in through the window, called Harry's name.

There was no answer.

"Boy, are you not mistaken?" demanded Alice. "Is this really the place?"

"It surely is," replied Jose. "Let me climb up on the window ledge, then with the lantern I can see inside."

Jose could just clutch the window sill. Alice gave him a boost and he managed to climb up.

"Why, he is gone!" he cried, flashing the lantern down inside the window. "I see the dead Chinaman, but I can't see Mr. Brady. Yes, he has gone!"

But Alice was resolved to make sure, so calling Joe down, she climbed up on the window sill herself.

But there was nothing to be seen of Harry.

She dropped back into the boat and explained to Mrs. Yet.

"We need police help here," she declared. The Bradys must be rescued."

"Doz't mix me up in it," pleaded Mrs. Yet. "When we get ashore let me go home. It is the last time you will ever catch me going in among Chinese crooks."

"You can do as you like. I propose to rescue my partners," Alice replied as she pulled away among the piles.

CHAPTER XL

UP AGAINST TWEE HOP.

When the Chinaman with the black mask demanded of Old King Brady if his case with Twee Hop was a matter of diamonds, the old detective for the moment gave himself up for lost.

"Take away the revolver," he said. "I will talk."

"You do well," was the reply. "Instead of holding me as an enemy, you may turn me into a friend. Answer my question now."

"The answer is yes; it is a matter of diamonds."

"I thought so. They were supposed to have been taken from Twee Hop's white wife by a Chinese servant, one Mon Wow."

"That is it."

"And Twee Hop hired you to find the diamonds?"

"Yes, and the woman."

"And the woman!" repeated the Chinaman, sarcastically. "It is all straight about the diamonds, Mr. Brady. He really has lost several valuable diamond brooches, and he wants to recover them, but the woman is here. Twee Hop knows it. He was here himself to-night."

"Yes, I know," replied Old King Brady. "I saw him when he left."

"You have seen too much for your own good I am afraid, old man," said the mask. "However, we shall see about that. What have you done about the diamonds?"

"I have not been able to do anything about them. It seems to be a case without a clew."

"You may well say that. How much did Twee Hop tell you about the loss of these diamond brooches?"

Old King Brady repeated the story of the loss of the diamonds just as he had received it from Twee Hop.

"I can go you one better on that," said the mask. "The Wow woman had the diamonds in a handkerchief. She was attacked on Pell street, no matter why or by whom. Then she dropped the handkerchief and that is the last we know of it. Somebody picked it up, of course, but how can even you, the greatest detective in New York, ever hope to find out who that someone was?"

"It looks to be a difficult case, I admit," replied Old King Brady, "yet such things have been done, and I don't despair of success."

"If anyone can find those diamonds, you're the man," the Chinaman said.

"And now let me tell you something," he went on to say; "we who meet here are a gang, as you would call it. Twee Hop is our leader. No matter what our line is, though I dare say you know, for we have been given away to the Secret Service men. The man who did this is now dead. He shot himself to avoid a worse fate. Had he lived we should have forced him to tell who put him up to informing on us, and had he spoken the truth there is no doubt that he would have named Twee Hop."

"Ah, ha!" said Old King Brady. "All very interesting, but where do I come in on this?"

"I'll explain. Meanwhile you will be wanting a name for me. Call me Tom Gum, it is as good as any other. Now listen! Twee Hop is about breaking up here. He expects to bring the gang together in another place, but he never will. Let me tell you there will be a dead Twee Hop before many days have passed, so it will pay you better to deal with a live one."

"Oh, I don't mind," replied Old King Brady. "If you are giving it to me straight then there is a lot in what you say. But I can't work tied up. You will have to set me free."

"To-morrow, in the early morning of to-day, rather, for it is now after midnight, you shall go free."

"And my partner?"

"I can do nothing about him. He is probably dead."

"That must be proved. Something must be done about him if you want my help."

"I will see what I can do. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes, if you will restore my partner to me or prove that he is dead, and give me a chance to properly care for him."

"What you ask is reasonable."

He climbed upon the little stage, helping Old King Brady up.

They passed through a door at the back, descended a few steps and halted before an iron door.

"Here is a room where you will be secure," said Tom Gum, "and here you must remain for awhile. I will untie you and leave you this lantern. It is all I can do for you at the present time."

And so Old King Brady found himself locked in.

The place was more of a vault than a room.

The old detective put it down for the store-room, where the chemist of the sugar house had formerly kept his chemicals.

Time passed and Tom Gum did not return.

It was beginning to get along towards morning.

Old King Brady's impatience was intense.

Tired of remaining seated on the old broken chair which had been provided for him, he tried pacing the floor.

As for opening the iron door, that was impossible. Tom Gum had bolted it on the outside.

It was an intense disappointment not to have got word of Harry. The old detective had tried to make himself believe that Tom Gum really meant what he said.

Perhaps he did, but certain it is that this same Tom Gum was the sleeping Chinaman from whom Alice secured the keys.

Equally certain would it appear to be that Tom Gum, when that happened, had been hitting the dope, so the fellow probably had no intention of doing anything before morning anyway.

While he was thus pacing the floor Old King Brady's attention was attracted by a peculiarity of the shelving in one particular corner.

The shelves seemed to have been sawed through at a certain point.

It looked suspiciously like a door. Old King Brady caught hold of one of the shelves and gave a pull.

Nothing doing, but when he came to search for a secret spring he found instead a bolt which had nothing secret about it.

This having been drawn, the sawed-off shelves opened like a door, bringing a section of the brick wall with them.

Old King Brady caught up the lantern and flashed it into the opening.

Here there was a winding iron staircase leading down.

The old detective carefully examined the outfit, and having made sure that there was no way of permanently closing the door except by the bolt, he descended the stairs, coming up against another iron door which had two sizeable round holes bored in it.

This proved to be unfastened.

Opening it and walking in, Old King Brady found that he had made a discovery likely to please the Secret Service Bureau if nothing else.

For here were many packages of opium.

Clearly this was the store-house of the Yellow Crooks.

There was another iron door to this room, but it was locked.

Old King Brady now got busy with his skeleton keys and soon managed to open it.

Beyond was a narrow passage.

He hurried along the passage, coming to a heavy wooden door at its end.

This was locked, and the old detective's skeleton keys refused to work.

Old King Brady hastily got out his flashlight.

It did seem as if everything was against him.

The flashlight which before had been all right now appeared to have suddenly taken it into its head to go out of business, for it would not work at all.

Not a little disturbed at all this, Old King Brady started to grope his way back, determined to return to the room from which he had started.

He had taken but a few steps when the door behind him was suddenly thrown open and five Chinamen came tumbling into the passage.

It was all so sudden that to avoid discovery was out of the question.

Wheeling about, the old detective saw that he had to do with Twee Hop at last.

"Old King Brady!" cried the importer, who carried a lantern.

Then shouting something in Chinese, all the others rushed upon the old detective and pinned him against the wall, while Twee Hop, whipping out a revolver, planked it at his head.

"You here!" he cried. "Come, old man, this visit is not on my business. You are trying double duty in this case; you have come here to do Secret Service work. It is going to cost you your life!"

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

We seem rather to have lost the run of Harry.

That he has been neglected is, however, because there was nothing to tell that Jose has not already told.

Harry and the Cuban boy went splashing down into muddy water.

By the aid of his flashlight Harry speedily discovered the dead Chinaman.

Joe seemed to have come down through a shaft which led up several stories, and there he lay with a broken neck.

At last came the time when Jose, after several experimental efforts, decided to try to escape by the big sewer pipe which drained the place, and Harry was left alone.

He had scarcely gone when Harry's attention was attracted by a noise overhead, and looking up he saw that the trap door had been opened.

Through it somebody was lowering a ladder now.

Harry breathlessly watched it come down.

The ladder in place, a light flashed, and a Chinaman carrying a lantern began to descend.

It was Tom Gum.

Half way down the ladder he turned and peered down, discovering Harry standing there looking up at him.

Now Tom Gum no longer wore a mask.

"Where's that Cuban boy?" he asked.

"Gone."

"Gone where?"

"Out by the sewer pipe."

"You don't mean it! Then he is drowned, of course."

"Oh, I don't know. He claimed to be a good swimmer. But here am I answering all your questions when I don't know whether you are my friend or my enemy."

"Friend. I came to take you to Old King Brady. I have made a deal with him."

"What kind of a deal?"

"A diamond deal. He has promised to cut Twee Hop out, and we are to stand in together. I am coming down."

"Why don't you come on then? What do you hang to the ladder talking about it for?"

"I suppose you've got a revolver, Brady?"

"I dare say I have."

"You won't shoot?"

"Not as long as you play square."

"I play that way all the time. I'm a square man."

"Come on then. I won't shoot."

Tom Gum came down the ladder then.

"Are you very lame?" he asked.

"Very."

"Can you climb the ladder?"

"Oh, I think so. I must."

So he climbed the ladder, not without considerable difficulty, and Tom Gum following, the ladder was pulled up and the trap door closed.

"Come on! Follow me," said the Chinaman, and he led Harry to the theater joss house, climbed on the little stage, descended the steps behind it, and brought up at the iron door where he shot the bolts and fumbled for his keys.

(Continued on page 26).

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But he failed to find them.

"I seem to have lost my keys," he growled. "I don't know what it means. They must have dropped out of my pocket. Stand where you are for a minute while I go back and see if I can find them."

He was gone more than a minute, and he came back minus the keys.

"I've lost them," he growled. "I don't understand it either. Old King Brady is behind that door, and I can't open it without a key. I don't know what we shall do."

"I have a bunch of skeleton keys," replied Harry. "Perhaps I can open the door with them."

"Try it! Try it! We want to be quick. We have delayed too long as it is."

Harry produced his skeletons and readily got the door open.

An exclamation of disgust escaped Tom Gum.

For there was no Old King Brady in evidence.

And as the old detective closed the inner door when he departed, Tom Gum was left guessing, as he did not know of the existence of the door.

"Why he's gone!" the Chinaman exclaimed.

"So it would seem," replied Harry, dryly.

Tom Gum now relieved himself by doing a little swearing.

"Come," said Harry, "that's no good at all. What do you propose to do now?"

"I'm sure I don't know. It all depended upon Old King Brady."

They were standing in the passage.

Tom Gum gave the door an angry slam.

He had no sooner done so than two Chinamen came tumbling down the steps at the back of the little stage.

Tom Gum looked disgusted.

There was a brief talk, and then Tom Gum ordering Harry to follow, they followed the men up the steps, over the stage and down into the theater joss house.

When they got on the stage Harry saw what they were up against.

There stood Old King Brady with his hands tied behind him.

Facing him was Twee Hop.

He held a superb diamond brooch in his hand.

Several other Chinks were admiring it.

The chase for the Chinese diamonds was over.

When Twee Hop came to search Old King Brady they were found.

But there was little cause for congratulation.

Twee Hop began to talk, and what he said was discouraging enough.

"And now, Mr. Brady, you have won out in your diamond case," he began. "I suppose you think you are entitled to the reward I promised you."

"It would seem so," replied the old detective calmly.

"Where did you find these diamonds?"

"You are entitled to know," replied the old detective, and he told the story of Jose.

"You two certainly have luck in whatever you undertake to do," said Twee Hop. "I doubt if that boy would ever have been brought in here if any other detective had undertaken the case. Do you ever fail?"

"We have failed many times. But about that reward. Let it come, for we want to get out."

"And get out you shall," replied Twee Hop. "Out of the world, and that will be your reward. Old man, when I made that bargain with you I was sincere and intended to keep my word. But circumstances have changed. My band, known as the Yellow Crooks, has been betrayed to the Secret Service Bureau, and you are the detectives chosen to follow the matter up.

"Very likely you did not know you were coming up against me. I can believe that. But it makes no difference. Even if I was disposed to spare your lives, these, my friends, would not stand for it. So prepare to die."

"But how?" demanded the old detective.

"You will find out soon enough," replied Twee Hop coldly, and he left the room.

When he returned he was shabbily dressed in Chinese style.

And now it seemed as if there really was no hope for the Bradys.

In silence the detectives were led out of the building, through the big sheds and out upon the end of the pier.

Two pieces of iron were hung over Old King Brady's neck. A rope was attached to the one which secured his hands.

It was to be death by drowning then!

Harry, also bound, could only look on in horror, knowing that his turn must come.

But help was close at hand, for at that very moment the police boat came steaming around the corner of the next pier.

On the deck were several men. Alice and Mrs. Yet in their male disguises were with them, also Jose.

Instantly revolvers were turned on the Chinks, who fled up the pier and in under the sheds like so many rats.

Fortunate was it for the Bradys that the police so quickly responded when Alice applied for help at the nearest station.

Old King Brady and Harry freed, led the raid on the sugar house.

All hands were captured after some search, Twee Hop included. Also several opium fiends in the smoking-room.

The opium smugglers got the usual prison sentences.

As for the diamond brooches, Mrs. Twee Hop got those, as the importer was unable to prove them his property.

Jose was taken care of by the Bradys, who got him a place with a Maiden Lane jeweler, where he still is.

Thus everybody got something out of the case.

Even the detectives themselves got the usual Secret Service fees, which seemed rather a poor return for so dangerous a case as that of the Bradys and the Yellow Crooks.

Read "THE BRADYS' STRANGE CASE; OR, THE SKELETON IN THE WELL," which will be the next number (617) of "Secret Service."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

An ingenious taxicab has just made its appearance in London. In addition to recording the fare on a dial, it will, at the end of a journey, issue a ticket stamped with the exact fare a passenger has to pay, with any extras incurred. The new taxicabs also record on paper the details of the vehicle's daily work—the distances covered, waits, number of fares, and receipts.

A curious result of operations by the Trigonometrical Survey in India was the conclusion that there was, in the middle of India, an underground, or buried, mountain range, a thousand miles in length, and lying about parallel with the chain of the Himalayas. This conclusion was based on the singularities of the local attraction of gravitation in Central India, the plumb-line being deflected southward on the north side of the supposed subterranean chain and northward on the south side, leading to the inference that a great elongated mass of rock of excessive density underlies the surface of the earth between the two sets of observing stations.

The youngest divorced couple in the world are to be found in the Court of Abyssinia; so we learn from a Paris contemporary. On May 16 of last year the Princess Romanic Onosk was married to the Prince Lidj Eyassu, the heir apparent, the bride then being eight years of age and the bridegroom fourteen. Now they have been divorced. It is not a question of fault on either side, no incompatibility of temper, none of the causes which figure so frequently in our divorce division. The Princess happens to be the niece of the Empress Taitu, and this lady is not popular with the Regents of the country. So to prevent the Empress exercising any baneful influence upon the future ruler's wife the statesmen have required the Prince to divorce her.

An American furniture manufacture, who counts his genuine mahogany boards as a jeweler counts his stones, would probably burst into tears if he should go to the state of Chiapas, in Mexico, and contemplate a bridge which spans the Rio Michol, for this entire structure, which, with its approaches, is one hundred and fifty feet long, with a width of fifteen feet, is built entirely of solid mahogany. The bridge is used both by teams and by foot passengers, and, though roughly constructed, is very substantial. None of the massive timbers were sawn, as there is not a sawmill in the region, but all were hewn out with the ax from the logs. On a New York valuation, at least two hundred thousand dollars' worth of material was used in the construction of this rude country bridge.

There are over ten million telephone stations in the world. A statistical review of the telephone industry gives this astounding fact and also states that there are over twenty-seven million miles of wire. Two-thirds of the telephones and wire mileage are in the United States. The telephone business is put in the third rank among this country's industries, putting it on the basis of per capita investment. It is slightly exceeded by the iron and steel and the foundry and machine interests. In Europe, Germany leads all other countries in the number of stations, boasting some nine hundred thousand. Los Angeles, Cal., leads the world in the number of telephone subscribers to population. Stockholm, Sweden, runs a close second. The telephone investment of the world on January 1, 1910, amounted to \$1,500,000,000, and the telephone conversations for last year numbered nineteen billion. We in the United States used nearly two and a half times as many calls as any other country.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

"Whar you' boy now?" some one asked the old Georgia dardy. "De gover'mint's takin' care of him." "Dat so?" "Yes, suh! He's in the new Fed'ral prison, wid a nice gray suit on him."

A seven-year-old had a great appetite for buckwheat cakes, and could stow away an amazing number of them for breakfast. One morning his grandfather, who was watching the performance, asked: "Have you ever in your life had all the buckwheat cakes that you could eat?" "Yes, sir," replied the boy. "Lots of times I've felt I'd had enough." "How do you tell when you have had enough?" "I just keep on eating until I get a pain, and then I eat one more to make sure."

Dr. George A. Gordon, pastor of the Old South Church, Boston, tells how a witty Irishman stood before the gate of the other world, asking for admission. St. Peter refused him, however, telling him he was too great a sinner to enter there, and bade him go away. The man went a little distance from the gate and then crowed three times like a rooster. St. Peter at once threw open the gate and cried out: "Come in, Pat! We'll let bygones be bygones!"

"De beauty of de Scriptures am in deir incipency," impressively remarked good old Parson Bagster in the course of a recent Sabbath morning's sermon. "When yo' finds a text dat 'pears convoluted and devolved des put yo' focus to it wid de eye of simple faith, and, lo, behold it opens out befo' you, like de unfoldin' of yo' hand! Take de commandment, 'Put not new cloth into old garments'; what do dat signify? Muh friends, don't turn and twist dat promulgation, uh-lookin' for some deep, sonorous meanin' in it, but dess 'ply sense to it—'ply sense, and what do we find? De fact dat a hole will last longer dan a patch, o' cou'se! Dat's what we finds!"

A Richmond minister not long ago was asked to perform a marriage ceremony for a young negro couple. As he had employed the bridegroom for a year or two, he consented, knowing what prestige would come to the couple by reason of having been married by a white minister. At the appointed time the happy pair arrived, and the ceremony proceeded. "Do you take this man for better or for worse?" the minister asked. For all her shyness, the bride spoke up bravely: "No, sah; ah don't," she said. "Ah'll take him just like he is. If he was ter get any better, I's 'fraid he'd die; an' if he was ter get any wuss, ah'd kill him myself!"

SAM, THE STOWAWAY.

By John Sherman.

"Shine, sir, shine?" eagerly asked a boy of a pedestrian.

"No!" was the gruff reply of the man addressed, and he hurried on along South street, casting a sour glance at the little bootblack who accosted him near Burling slip.

Sam—he had no other name—looked disappointed, for he had not made a cent that day, on account of the rain, and expected he would have to sleep out of doors without any supper that night.

He was a waif of New York, about fourteen years old, his gaunt body clad in a pair of tattered pants, held up by one suspender, a ragged shirt, and an old cap covered his frowsy head.

It was long after ten o'clock and few people were out.

Sam saw the man he spoke to go in a ship-agent's office by means of a key, on Front street, a moment afterward.

There was something suspicious in the way the fellow glanced around, and the boy was attracted by it and stood near the door, when he saw the man unlock a safe in the office.

He opened a drawer and took out a small package, but the moment he did this he heard a distant electric bell violently ring, and then there sounded the patter of hurried footsteps coming down through the hall from the office above.

The man rushed out to the street, and flinging the package to Sam, he ran around the corner, shouting:

"Run, or you'll be arrested!"

Sam took fright and ran toward the river with the package in his hand, as he suspected the man of being a thief, and feared to get mixed up in what the rascal was doing.

But no sooner did Sam start off when two detectives ran after him, coming from the ship-agent's building.

"It's a boy—a bootblack!" said one, "and there he goes now, Charley."

"After the little thief, Ned!" panted the other. "We've got on to his identity now."

Glancing back over his shoulder, and seeing the two detectives chasing him, Sam dodged out on a dock, flitted behind a pile of freight, and sprang on board a brig moored there.

He saw the hatchway open, and going down the ladder into the vessel's hold, he hid himself among the cargo.

A short time afterward he heard the two detectives come on board and ask some one if they had seen him, to which a negative reply was given.

"What did he do?" asked Captain Jim Ranger, who commanded the brig.

"Robbed the safe of Hopkins & Co.," replied the eldest detective. "For some time sums of money were missed every week from the safe, and the matter was put into the hands of the chief of detectives. He ascertained that some one had a duplicate key to the office door, and a duplicate safe key. So he drilled a hole in the back of the safe, attached an electric wire to the money drawer, and ran the wire up to an office on the second floor, where it was attached to an alarm bell. We were stationed there to watch for the bell to ring, as opening the safe drawer would cause it to, and as soon as we heard it, down we ran to capture the thief, but he escaped us."

"And you say he is a bootblack?" queried the skipper.

"Yes; we saw him running away with a package of marked bills that belong to the firm. As he isn't here, we'll look further," said the officer, as they left the vessel.

Sam was cast into a fever of alarm over the scrape he was

in, for he knew that, although he might protest his innocence, appearances were so much against him he might go to prison if they caught him.

He began to cry, and nestling down in his dark corner, fell asleep.

He did not wake up till the next day, and then there was a queer motion to the vessel which told him plainly that the brig had, during his slumbers, put out to sea, carrying him with it.

It was the Harpooner, of 150 tons burden, bound for Bermuda, laden with a miscellaneous cargo, under command of Captain Ranger, a mate, ten seamen and a negro cook.

He remained down below two days, afraid to show himself, but as soon as the misery of seasickness left him, hunger and thirst drove him to desperation, and he resolved to go on deck.

Accordingly, he ascended the ladder of the midship hatch which was open, startling the watch on deck by his unexpected appearance and their cries of astonishment, as they surrounded the poor boy, brought the skipper to the spot, demanding, anxiously:

"What's the matter here, boys?"

"A stowaway, sir," replied the mate.

"I couldn't help it!" exclaimed Sam, tears starting to his eyes.

"Ho, ho! So you are one of those young lubbers who wants to be smart, and run away from home to become a sailor, hey?"

"I was hidin' from the cops an' fell asleep. When I woke up we was away from land," explained Sam. "I was scared you'd throw me overboard or beat me, so I stayed hid till I got so hungry I didn't know what to do."

"Starved out, eh?" grinned the skipper. "Well, that's generally the way. Now, what were you hiding from the police for, I'd like to know?"

Sam tearfully explained what happened to him, the captain listening attentively, and at the end of the bootblack's story, he said, vehemently:

"By thunder, I believe you, my boy! I'll tell you why. Hopkins & Co. are owners of this craft, and the man you saw I recognize by the description as the bookkeeper of the firm, Tom Sikes by name. I always disliked that sneaky-looking cuss, and when we get back to port, I'll see that you are exonerated, and he gets his deserts. Now, where is the package he flung to you?"

Sam handed it over, and the skipper opened it.

The parcel contained several hundred dollars in bills.

"It would have been a good haul for him, if he kept it," said the captain, grimly, but he took alarm, and fearing to have the telltale package found in his possession if captured, he flung it to you so as to lay the blame at your door. Now, my lad, as you can't expect to go to Bermuda for nothing, you'll have to work your passage. Do you know anything about a ship?"

"No—nothin'," replied Sam.

"Well, you can learn. I'll take you for my cabin boy. Of course, I can't blame you for stowing away in the manner you did to escape the police. But if you had done it on purpose to go to sea just for the fun of it, you'd have had a hard life of it here."

He explained to the boy what was required of him.

Then Sam was fed and decently clothed, and as the days went by he quickly learned his duties, and made himself valuable.

In due course of time the vessel came in sight of Bermuda, and on the night the islands were discerned, Sam made a discovery.

While lying apparently asleep in the shadow of the lee bul-

warks he overheard a conversation between the mate, Peter Hawley, and several of the crew who were on watch.

"Thar must a be'n nigh onto a thousand dollars in that ere package o' money ther lad gave ther captain," said the mate in low tones to the men, "an' as all ther crew is willin' ter jine me, we kin not only git it, an' divide ekal like amongst us, but we kin seize ther brig."

"How about the old man?" whispered one of the watch.

"Why, now, we'll make a prisoner o' him, an' set him ashore on Bermuda, then we'll sail away, sell this 'ere craft in Cuby or St. Thomas, an' then we'll disband, all o' us well off wi' money."

"Ay, ay! When will we do it?"

Before the mate could reply, the captain came out on deck, and the conspirators dispersed about their various duties.

"We are going to have a storm, Peter," said the skipper, pointing at the lowering sky. "See there, black clouds and chain-lightning."

"Ay, sir," replied the mate. "Best ter shorten sail, too, 'cause we're in mighty dangerous water, an' mustn't run afoul o' ther rocks."

The watch was piped up from below, and sharp orders rang out, when in came the fluttering canvas, but while furling it to the yards a squall struck the Harpooner, and sent her flying.

Off to the leeward arose the rocky islands of Bermuda, with nothing more remarkable about them than the great coral reef fending off the sea on the northern side.

It stretched out in a semi-circular belt, two leagues from the mainland, and on these treacherous reefs Sam saw a vessel bilged, its crew seeing land so far away imagined they were perfectly safe to run where the hidden reefs laid.

The gales swung the Harpooner in amid the reefs of coral and it became caught like a fly in a cobweb near North Rock.

By that time the tempest was raging and the sky dark, but by the flash of the lightning Sam saw a boat put out from shore containing a solitary oarsman, and come toward them.

Every moment the Harpooner was in danger of going to pieces on the reefs, and imagining that help was coming, Sam shouted:

"There's a boat coming from land, Captain Ranger."

"Ay, now! And a darky in it, too!" said the skipper.

"Brig ahoy!" came a hail from the water.

"Ahoy, there!" responded Ranger.

"Heave me a tow line!" said the negro.

This was done, and making his boat fast astern, he came aboard.

"What brought you out here in this storm?" queried the surprised captain.

"I came to see what you would give, if I pilot you away from here."

"Do you gain your living saving distressed vessels here?" asked the skipper, who did not like the man's ugly black face.

"Ay, sir. I know all about these waters. You will perish if you stay here."

"I know it. Name your price—anything you like."

"Five hundred dollars," said the negro, coolly.

"Isn't that rather steep?"

"You are at my mercy. If you don't agree, I'll desert you."

"Scoundrel! But—never mind. Pilot us out. I have no money of my own, but the thousand dollars Sam saved belonging to the ship owners shall go toward paying the bill."

The negro smiled sardonically with satisfaction and took the wheel.

Once more the black pilot steered the brig, following a winding passage, unseen and unknown to the crew.

It was barely wide enough to go through, and scarcely deep enough to leave six inches of water to spare under the Har-

pooner's keel, but a half an hour she was almost out in blue water, out of soundings, and out of danger, when Captain Ranger seized the black pilot by the throat and roared.

"Turn about is fair play, you infernal black scoundrel! I won't give you a cent now! I'll cut your boat adrift, and I'll carry you to Cuba and sell you as a slave, for blackmailing me as you did!"

"Let go!" gasped the negro, and he gave the wheel a wrench.

Around spun the bow of the brig, and with a grinding crash that sent two of her masts by the board, she struck the reef.

Tearing himself free, the negro sprang overboard, got in his boat, cut the painter, and made his escape in the darkness, leaving the Harpooner a wreck upon the reef.

All night the men worked to save her from destruction and the wind drifted her in toward the shore.

She struck a rock in deep water and held fast within fifty fathoms of the beetling cliffs, slowly going to pieces as the roaring waves broached over her, and her hull beat on the rocks.

By the lightning's glare they saw some people appear on the cliff tops, but they could not then aid the shipwrecked crew.

"If we could only get a life line ashore," groaned the captain, "every soul might be saved. But it seems impossible—impossible!"

"I dunno about that!" said Sam, overhearing his remark. "I've got a plan that might work. Anyway, I'll try it."

He went down in the cabin, and brought up a kite he had made during the voyage, and started it up in the fierce wind.

A yell of delight burst from the frantic sailors when they saw through the ingenious boy's plan, and they brought a line.

Sam fastened it to his kite string, and just then the people on the cliffs caught the kite and began to haul in the string, leaving the kite to mount in the air with the slack.

In this manner the hawser was drawn ashore, and the men made it fast to the rocks as securely as possible, the other end being fastened to the brig.

The boy slipped down on the sagging rope into the boiling sea, and dragged himself toward the cliffs, while the men watched him from positions in the shrouds on the sinking ship, by the glare of the lightning.

Upon seeing him safe, the crew followed with equal success, the captain being the last to leave the sinking brig.

They found themselves among some kindly fishermen, to whom they related the story of the black pilot's perfidy, and in return heard from them that the rascal had perished in the waves before their sight.

The fishermen who aided them thus far brought the whole party to the nearest town, where the crew was left, and the skipper and Sam took a conveyance to Hamilton, their destination.

A report of the loss of the Harpooner was made to the consignees of the vessel, and then the boy and the skipper shipped for New York.

They arrived there in due time, and proceeded to the office of the ship owners, accompanied by a Central Office detective.

As soon as Sam saw the ship owners' bookkeeper, he pointed him out, and said to the officer:

"That's the thief—arrest him!"

Before the startled man could resist, he was made a prisoner. The skipper then related Sam's story, and gave Hopkins & Co. the stolen money, explained about the wreck of the Harpooner, and ere Tom Sikes was taken away he broke down and confessed his crime.

The ship owners took an interest in poor Sam at once, and gave him a good position in their employ.

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