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SECRET SERVICE.

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.

THE BRADYS
AND THE VOODOO QUEEN.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



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It was three against two, but the Bradys were more than a match for the negroes, and knocked them down rapidly. The Voodoo Queen stood on the stairs with a lamp in her hand, yelling at the detectives furiously.

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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NEW YORK, DECEMBER 30, 1910.

Price 5 Cents.

The Bradys and the Voodoo Queen

OR,

A Dark Case From San Juan Hill

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MURDER ON SAN JUAN HILL.

"This must be the number, Harry," said Old King Brady, the detective, addressing his partner, Young King Brady, as they halted on West Sixth street before an old frame dwelling.

"Evidently," was the reply. "I thought we should find it attached to a big tenement packed from cellar to roof with negroes."

"I was of the same opinion. This house is evidently an old-timer. There are few of its kind remaining in this part of town."

"The question before the house now is what are we here for?"

"Exactly. Another Secret Service mystery."

"Let us walk up and down until we get the word. It won't do for us to be seen watching the house."

And while the Bradys are pacing up and down the block, an explanatory word may be said.

The part of the city of New York in which the detectives found themselves now is locally known as "San Juan Hill."

Here dwell the bulk of the colored population of the city.

Just what the limits of San Juan Hill are we have never been able to learn.

Some claim that it is bounded on the south by West Fifty-ninth street, and yet many colored people live in the upper 50s and on Ninth avenue. Certainly it does not extend further north than Seventieth street, nor further east than Columbus avenue. The river is its boundary on the west.

And in this confined space there are in round numbers 200,000 colored people, a black city of itself.

It is the dread of the police and the terror of the adjoining neighborhoods.

Fights are frequent, and murder a common occurrence, yet taken as a whole San Juan Hill is orderly enough considering the class which dwell there.

The Bradys, while not regular Secret Service detectives, still have a contract with the United States Government whereby their services can be secured at any time they may be called upon.

Such a call had come now.

A despatch from Washington ordered the detectives to present themselves at the street and number mentioned at eight o'clock on the evening of December 30, 19—.

They were to take up the case of a man not named, who should approach them and speak the word "Voodoo."

Further than this the detectives had received no instructions.

It is often so with their Secret Service work, and this mystery proves very aggravating to Young King Brady at times.

The Bradys continued to cover the block.

Old King Brady attracted more or less attention, for many know him all over New York, and San Juan Hill offers no exception.

This because of the peculiar style of dress which the old detective always affects when not in disguise.

We refer to the long blue coat with brass buttons, the old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and the big white felt hat with its extraordinarily wide brim.

After a tramp of about half an hour the detectives saw coming towards them a man of such striking appearance that he attracted their attention at once.

He was very tall and very thin.

Colored he certainly was, yet he was no darker than many a West Indian.

He was scrupulously dressed and wore his hair in long curls which hung almost down to his shoulders under a wide, black hat.

This would seem to indicate the possession of Indian as well as colored blood in his veins.

"Can he be the man?" questioned Harry as the stranger advanced.

He was eyeing them closely.

As he passed, for he did not slacken his pace, he pronounced the word "Voodoo" in a low, distinct voice, adding:

"Follow me!"

Clearly he did not wish to be spoken to, for he walked right on.

The Bradys fell in behind him.

As he reached the old frame house, which was entirely dark, he ascended the steps, dropping a bit of folded paper on the sidewalk, and at the same time making a backward gesture with his hand, which seemed to say:

"Come no further."

Harry picked up the paper and they walked on.

Glancing over his shoulder, Old King Brady saw the man enter the house.

"So we have to deal with a darkey," observed Harry.

"Did you expect anything else?" inquired Old King Brady.

"One never knows what to expect from the Secret Service Bureau; but what have we here?"

They paused under an electric light, and Harry read as follows:

"Wait ten minutes; then ring the bell and I will let you in."

"Mystery," laughed Old King Brady. "You don't get your curiosity gratified yet, boy."

They kept on walking for ten minutes, and then presented themselves at the house.

Just as Harry was about to ring, a shot was heard.

Clearly it came from inside this darkened house, for no light had appeared in its window even yet.

"That's queer," said Old King Brady. "But ring the bell, boy. We must obey orders even if we break our necks."

There was no answer to Harry's ring.

"I am afraid there is something wrong," muttered Old King Brady. "Ring again."

Harry did so, but with the same result.

"I'm going in if I can get in," said the old detective, trying the door.

It was locked, but not bolted.

Old King Brady got out his skeleton keys.

A negro passing called out:

"Nobody lives in that house, boss."

"Don't answer," whispered Old King Brady. "I've got it now."

He had found a key which mastered the lock.

Opening the door, they entered, closing it behind them.

The negro ran up the steps and opened the door just as Old King Brady got out his flashlight.

"Why fo' yo' come here?" he demanded. "I done tole you nobody lives in dis yere house."

"Are you the janitor or the agent then?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Ise de caretaker. Ise paid to keep an eye on de house by de owner."

"Look!"

Old King Brady displayed his shield.

"Oh! A detective!" gasped the man.

"Exactly. A shot was fired in this house just now. We propose to find out what it means."

"Oh, dat's different. Who could have fired? Dere hain't nobody libin' here lak I tell yer."

"We shall soon find out what it means. You can stay by us if you will."

This was said for the reason that there was no apparent way of getting rid of the fellow.

It proved to be as the man said.

The house was not only untenanted, but unfurnished.

They went from room to room on the first floor—there was no basement—but found nobody nor anything to account for the shot.

But when they went upstairs it was different.

"Mah good gollys! A dead man!" gasped the negro when he saw what the Bradys saw.

For there stretched upon the hall floor lay their man with the curls face downward in a pool of blood.

"Murder!" cried Harry. "What dark work is this?"

He had been shot in the back and was already dead when the Bradys found him.

Thus was Harry's curiosity baffled.

"But we must hunt for his slayer!" added Old King Brady. Follow me."

"Don't we want to search him first?" asked Harry.

"He seems to have been pretty well searched as it is," replied Old King Brady.

This was a fact.

The dead man's pockets were all turned inside out.

Harry went through the form of a search, however.

Nothing was discovered.

The body appeared to have been stripped of everything.

The detectives now made a complete tour of the house.

Every room was unfurnished.

The negro, indeed, had told them this before.

The back door was found unfastened, which seemed to indicate the avenue of the murderer's entry and escape.

"What's your name?" asked Old King Brady, turning suddenly on the coon.

"Sam Wing, sah."

"And your address?"

Wing gave an address nearby, which later proved to be false.

"Who owns this house?" Old King Brady asked.

The name of a certain Realty Co. in the neighborhood was given.

The Bradys appeared to have reached the end of their rope.

Behind the house, which occupied a lot of fifty feet frontage, were the back yards of a row of tenements.

The murderer could easily have scaled the fence and passed into one of these.

He might also have hidden in the yard and passed out by the front after the Bradys came in, for the house did not occupy the entire lot.

Apparently the mystery was destined to prove a very difficult one to solve.

"We shall now report this case at the police station, Wing," said Old King Brady. "Let me ask you one question: Do you know this dead man?"

"Deed I don't, sah. Hain't no idee who he is. Nebber laid eyes on him before."

There was no more to be said.

The Bradys now went to the police station and made their report after they returned to their own home on Washington Square.

This is an old brownstone house where the detectives have kept bachelors' hall for several years.

A faithful colored man looks after their wants, and the first thing Old King Brady did was to summon him to the library, where he told him just what had occurred.

"Julius," he went on to say, "this is a case for you. Harry and I will get our meals out, you get up to San Juan Hill right now and see what your people are saying about this murder."

"Deed I will, boss," replied Julius proudly. "Ef dar's any way of solbing de mystery, I'll find it, yo' bet."

It was a wise move.

If there is anything Julius delights in it is to lend his partners a helping hand, and more than once the faithful fellow has been of great assistance to him in cases which concern the colored race.

This done, Old King Brady wrote out a despatch to the chief of the Secret Service Bureau, from whom his orders had been received direct, and sent Harry out with it.

All these matters attended to, the Bradys went to bed.

Next morning there came to breakfast Miss Alice Montgomery, the talented female detective, who is a full partner in the Brady Bureau.

Alice lives in rooms of her own around the corner on Waverly Place.

She and Harry are practically engaged, and Young King Brady is her devoted slave.

To Alice he told the story of the preceding evening.

If Julius can't help you out then nobody can," Alice observed.

And it is a good deal so.

Colored detective cases are hard to handle.

None so close mouthed as the average negro where criminal matters are concerned, nor are any people so free with their confessions once they are cornered.

There was nothing doing in the matter that day.

The report from the police was that the remains of the dead man had not been identified.

Several prominent colored men had been requested to view them, and all united in assuring the police that the man did not live on San Juan Hill.

Next day came a telephone call from the Secret Service chief.

Old King Brady answered and got the following over the wire:

"You can do nothing more in the matter, Mr. Brady, until further orders. You may think it strange that I keep you in the dark about this business, but I am in the dark myself and could not tell you more if I would."

"At least tell me the name of this dead man," replied the old detective, "and instruct me what to do with the remains."

"I cannot even do that," was the reply. "All I know about him is that he was a secret agent of the Haitian Republic. I have reported his death to the Haitian minister.

He has cabled Haiti for instructions. That is all I can say."

Two days later Old King Brady received orders to have the remains embalmed and shipped to Port-au-Prince, and to draw on a certain commercial house in New York for funds to cover the expense.

It was done, and this seemed to be the end of the Bradys' dark case from San Juan Hill, for Julius returned with the report that he had not been able to accomplish anything.

If he had failed, Old King Brady saw no use in wasting his own valuable time over the matter, and it was dropped.

CHAPTER II.

THE GENTLEMAN FROM JAMAICA.

Several weeks passed and the matter of the murder on San Juan Hill was practically forgotten when one morning the Bradys, at their office on Union Square, received a call from a very elegant looking gentleman, who brought a letter of introduction from the chief of the Secret Service Bureau.

His name was Rufus Rollman, and the letter instructed the Bradys to attend to his case and charge the expense to the Bureau.

Mr. Rollman was tall, dark and very stylish in dress and appearance.

There was little about him to intimate to the ordinary observer that he had a dash of colored blood in his veins, but the practiced eye of the old detective saw that such was undoubtedly the case.

It made no difference in his reception, however.

Secret Service orders are Secret Service orders, and had Mr. Rollman been as black as the stove his wants would have been attended to just the same.

Thus Old King Brady received his visitor with all due courtesy, and when Mr. Rollman requested a private interview, he got what seemed to be one, although Harry at the listening panel in his own office heard every word which passed in the office of his chief.

Nor is there any treachery in this.

The Bradys have found it absolutely necessary.

Beside this it saves time, for these detectives have few secrets from each other.

"Mr. Brady," began Rollman, "it is necessary to make a beginning of a somewhat lengthy story, therefore let me say that I am a coffee planter in the island of Jamaica, as my father was before me. My age is thirty-five. My father died two years ago. His will, made some years before his death, bequeathed the estate in equal divisions to me and my brother Henry.

"The estate consists, besides the plantation, of much valuable property in the city of Kingston.

"I am a bachelor and have no taste for coffee planting. I am exceedingly fond of travel, and have the means to gratify my tastes. It is my wish, therefore, to dispose of the plantation, and I have secured a purchaser, but there is an obstacle in the way of giving a clear title to the prop-

erty. This I must overcome before it can be sold, and it is with that end in view I have come to you."

Mr. Rollman paused.

As Old King Brady seemed to be expected to say something, he inquired what the obstacle was.

"I alluded to my brother Henry," continued Mr. Rollman. "He was different from me, being disposed to be wild. He engaged in trade and dealt largely with the island of Haiti, to which he paid frequent visits. During one of these visits he married a quadroon, and they had one child, a boy, who was named for the father. It may strike you as strange that he would make such a marriage, for our father was an Englishman, but it was only a case of history repeating itself. My mother was also a quadroon."

Again Mr. Rollman paused and seemed to be surveying the old detective out of the corner of his eye to see how he would take the announcement, but Old King Brady betrayed neither particular interest nor surprise.

"My brother," continued Mr. Rollman, "in one of his trips from Kingston to Port-au-Prince was lost in a hurricane, the steamer sinking on which he was, all hands perishing. At the time his wife and child were at Port-au-Prince.

"My father at once despatched me to bring them to Jamaica, but when I arrived at Port-au-Prince I found more trouble. The child had been kidnaped on the night of his father's death, and carried into the mountains by negroes, who were known to be Voodoo worshippers. The mother, it appears, came of a family which had been long addicted to these barbarous practices, the great-grandmother being a Voodoo priestess, and, according to tradition, the first born of each member of the family was sacrificed to the sacred serpent these barbarians worshiped. It had been so with Mrs. Henry Rollman's elder brother. He also was kidnaped in his third year and never seen again. If my brother knew of this he never told my father nor myself. The chances are he never did know it. At all events, the kidnaping took place and the unfortunate mother was discovered running half clothed through the streets late at night raving mad and calling for her child. She was confined in an asylum when I reached Port-au-Prince, and did not even recognize me. Before I left the island she died."

"A sad story," remarked Old King Brady as Mr. Rollman paused again. "And the child was not sacrificed after all," he added. "Hence the flaw in your title."

"That is exactly the point," replied Mr. Rollman. "I put the matter into the hands of the Haitian authorities with whom I had much influence, partly on my brother's account, but more particularly on the mother's, for she came of a well-known Haitian family. They certainly did exert themselves all they could, but nothing came of it. I gave little Henry up for dead, and so believed him until a few months ago, when just as I was about to make the transfer of my plantation came a letter from one Nicolas Mendies, the head of the Haitian Secret Service—they have such a service down there, Mr. Brady—to the effect that a Voodoo worshiper who had been hung for murder had confessed to him that Henry lived, that another child had been substituted for the sacrifice at the last moment, that Henry had been secretly taken to New York by a woman, a Voodoo priestess, whose name he would not re-

veal, but he did tell Mendies, so he claimed, where her name could be discovered, together with proofs of Henry's identity."

"And this Nicolas Mendies wore his hair in curls and was the man whom I reported murdered on San Juan Hill," put in Old King Brady.

"You have guessed it," replied Mr. Rollman. "I went at once to Port-au-Prince, for I am an honest man, Mr. Brady. I would neither sell my plantation with a flaw in the title, nor would I see my little nephew deprived of his rights, nor have him brought up among colored people in such a place as I understand this San Juan Hill to be. As soon as I had conversed with the man I was satisfied that he was a scoundrel; also that he had told the truth in all particulars save one; in short, that he knew the name of this Voodoo woman. He pretended that the man who was to reveal her name and furnish the proofs had sailed for New York before he was able to get at him. He offered to go on to New York and hunt the fellow up, but he made much mystery of it and would not tell me the man's name. Incidentally, of course, he wanted money—a lot of it. I, having found what I was up against, cabled the Haitian minister at Washington, who was a particular friend of my brother's, and known to myself, asking his advice as to how I ought to act. By return cable I was instructed to leave the matter in his hands and let Mendies come on and look for his pay from the minister."

"And this was done?" remarked Old King Brady.

"It was, and with the result of which you know," was the reply. "I was promptly notified of Mendies' murder. As soon as I could get away from business I came to New York myself. The minister introduced me to your Secret Service chief, who sent me to you, and here I am. And now, Mr. Brady, what can you do for me? The mystery seems a dark one. Yet I am satisfied that my nephew still exists and is at the present time living somewhere on your San Juan Hill."

"And the point is to find him. If I could have talked with Mendier it might have been easier. Do you imagine that his murder occurred in connection with your case?"

"I would not pretend to decide. The man had many enemies, and there are many Haitian negroes in New York, I suppose."

"I doubt it. Most of our negroes are from old New York and New Jersey stock, or from the Southern States. They are all English speaking and don't take kindly to those who speak only French and Spanish. Such would have a hard time earning a living in New York. Still, undoubtedly there are some such on San Juan Hill."

"Do all the New York negroes live there?"

"Not at all. They are scattered about the city. There are many in Brooklyn and also in Jersey City, which is practically New York."

"And you will take the case up?"

"Most assuredly."

"I have business in Boston which will occupy me for several days. In case you wish to communicate with me, I will leave you my address. If you have any questions you want to ask, now is your opportunity."

"I don't know that I have. How old will the boy be now?"

"About five."

"It is not likely that he remembers his parents?"

"Very unlikely. Still he was an exceptionally bright child."

"Have you anything further to say which may help me out?"

"Nothing."

"The child bore no distinguishing mark?"

"Not that I know of; yet it may be so. I never saw him but once, and that was when he was a baby."

"That will be all then, Mr. Rollman. Rely upon it, we shall do our best to solve this dark mystery."

The West Indian gave his Boston address and left.

Old King Brady called Harry in.

"Then we are thrown back on this San Juan Hill case," Harry observed.

"So it seems," replied the old detective. "If it wasn't Secret Service business I wouldn't touch it. I despise these colored cases, as you know, for they are not only difficult, but dangerous. Where is Alice?"

"Out."

"Call up Julius and ask him if he knows of any French speaking negroes on San Juan Hill."

Harry obeyed.

"He says there are a bunch of them living on Sixty-fourth street," Harry announced.

"Does he know any of them?" Old King Brady asked.

Harry put the question.

Julius replied that he did not personally know any of them, but he knew a man who probably did, since he lived in the same house."

"Tell him to lock up and get up to the Hill on the job," ordered Old King Brady. "He can report here. Stay! Tell him it is Voodoo business. He is to keep his eyes and ears open. The person we really want is a woman who is a Voodoo priestess or something of the sort."

Harry obeyed and reported Julius ready to start.

"What about calling on the Haitian consul?" he asked.

"I think not," replied Old King Brady. "The man may be a Voodoo worshiper himself and sound the warning."

"But, governor, don't you think the people who have the child will be willing enough to give him up when they learn that there is money coming to him?"

"You can tell nothing about it," replied Old King Brady. "The colored people are very strong in their affections. If this Voodoo woman has had the child in her possession since its infancy, she may be madly attached to it. We have got to proceed with the greatest caution. One thing, we don't want to particularly concern ourself in this matter of murder, but to devote our energies to discovering the child."

Shortly after this Harry went out on other business.

He had no more than gone when Alice came in.

"Alice," said Old King Brady without offering any explanation, "I want you to go into the costume room and make up like a West Indian quadroon. Not that I have decided to send you out on any case which calls for such a disguise, but I want to see what you can do in that line."

Alice paused a moment, expecting an explanation. None being forthcoming, she retired and obeyed without question.

It was some time before she returned, but when she did so Old King Brady looked her over admiringly.

"Certainly you have hit it wonderfully well," he said. "I could not have come so close to what I desire."

"And what about it?" asked Alice then.

That time she got the explanation.

"Oh, the San Juan Hill business!" exclaimed Alice.

"What is the idea? To send me among these people?"

"Don't know," was the reply. "I have put Julius on the job again. I am waiting for his report. Better remain as you are till he comes in. By the way, what sort of French do these Haitians speak? Not your kind, I suppose?"

The lower classes certainly speak a dialect of their own, but I imagine the richer ones speak good French. I understand many of them send their daughters to French convents to be educated. They are all nominally Catholics, you know."

"Yes, I know. Well, we will wait for Julius."

It was late in the afternoon before Julius turned up.

His face was wreathed in smiles.

"Well, boss, Mr. Brady, I think I done git dar pretty good!" he exclaimed.

"Good!" cried Old King Brady. "Let it come."

"Dar's a woman on de Hill what's known as de Voodoo Queen, dat's one sure t'ing."

"And just where does she live, Julius?"

"Well, dat I didn't 'ceed in 'scoverin'. She keeps herself mighty close."

"Rather unsatisfactory, Julius; you will have to hit the job again."

"I'se prepared to do hit, sah. Den I'se made de oder 'scovery all right."

"What's that?"

"Dat ar' nest of French negroes, sah. I'se been in among dem. I'se got hold of a yaller gal what's promised to help me for pay."

"One of them?"

"Yes, sir."

"Speaks English?"

"Yes, sir, an' French, too. She's all right. Libs in de house; knows ebery blame one of dem."

"Alice!" called Old King Brady.

Alice entered.

"Lawsee massy; Am dis Missy Alice?" cried Julius.

"No one else, Julius. Why are you so surprised?" Alice said.

"Kase yo's de libin' image ob a yaller gal I'se jest left in dat ar' disguise."

"Thanks for the compliment, Julius," laughed Alice.

"Praise from you is praise, indeed."

CHAPTER III.

ENTER THE VODOO QUEEN.

Harry was still absent.

Old King Brady, Alice and Julius continued to discuss their plans.

"Look here, Julius," said the old detective, "are you sure

that Alice bears such a strong resemblance to that yellow girl of yours, or is it only your imagination?"

"I'se dead suah, boss, an' as it happens I kin prove it, too," Julius replied.

"How can you prove it?"

"Why," chuckled Julius, "I pretended to be dead stuck on her, an' I made her gib me her picture."

"Good for you! I suppose you have it with you?"

"Sure t'ing, Mr. Brady. Hit am only a ping-pong, but yo' kin see for your ownself dat what I say am true."

He produced a photograph cut from a string of ping-pong pictures.

Old King Brady studied long and earnestly, comparing it with Alice's face.

"Julius, you're an artist," he finally said. "This picture certainly does resemble Miss Alice to a remarkable degree. What's the name of this girl?"

"Her name am Celia Reno, boss."

"Renard, probably," said Alice, "a common French name."

"Likely," admitted Julius.

"Where does she come from?" asked Old King Brady.

"New Orleans, boss."

"I could wish it was Haiti."

"Dere's a hull nest ob dem from Haiti in dat house."

"Is it so? Well, that's what we want to get at. How does this woman live?"

"In a room by herself."

"What does she do for a living?"

"Boss, she says she's a model artist, whatebber dat ar means."

"An artist's model, Julius."

"What's de difference?"

"Never mind. How did you get acquainted with her?"

"Oh, a friend of mine he introduced me."

"Did you tell her you were looking for this Voodoo queen?"

"Dat's what I done. Was I wrong?"

"Oh, no. I don't know that you were. What did she know of the woman?"

"Nuffin, but she promised to look her up."

"Who told you that there was such a person on San Juan Hill?"

"Three or four fellers what I talked with. Dey's all heard tell of her. Say she's a wonder at telling fortunes, layin' de cards an' sich like."

"And she knows you are a detective, Julius?"

"Yes, sah, I tole her dat."

"Very good then; you take Alice to her and let them work together, and you better go now. After you are through, inquire for the address of a negro named Sam Wing, and then come home and get my supper."

It was a proud darkey who left the office of the Brady Detective Bureau then.

If there is anything Julius likes it is to be called to work for the Bradys on a colored case, and it is only just to add that he has displayed considerable shrewdness at such detective work as he has done.

Harry came in shortly after, and Old King Brady reporting what little there was to tell, they soon went home to supper, which Harry cooked, for Julius did not get in

until after six, when he came full of apologies for being late.

"Which I couldn't help," he said. "I done try my best to find out whar dat ar Sam Wing lib, an' I tort you'd sooner I kep' de tective work goin' dan to attend to de cookin', but after all I'se failed."

"Couldn't locate him then?" said Old King Brady.

"Couldn't find no one what knowed him, boss. I done my best. 'Twasn't no use."

"Probably I can locate him in another way," said Old King Brady, adding:

"And now, Julius, Mr. Harry and I are going up to San Juan Hill this evening, and it is just possible that we may be gone all night. Did you have any difficulty about Miss Alice?"

"None at all, boss. Dat ar Celia she done tuk to her at first sight. You orter heered dem talkin' French togoder. Miss Alice she's a wonder when hit comes to talkin' furrin lingo, she is."

And Julius is not alone in this idea.

For Alice Montgomery is a most expert linguist.

She can speak many foreign languages, including that most difficult of all languages, Chinese, which she learned to speak in China when a child, her father having been a missionary out in the Far East.

"And now, Harry, for my plan," said Old King Brady as they sat at supper. "As I have not the most remote idea how to begin on this case, I am going to begin where we left off. I propose to return to that deserted house, and if it is still deserted, to put in the night there, for I have an idea that it may prove to be a hold-out for some of these Voodooists. Julius' failure to locate Sam Wing, as that fellow called himself, suggests the idea that his presence right behind us may not have been altogether an accident, and that he may be one of them. However, we shall see."

"Don't you think," suggested Harry, "that even if you are right, the negroes will have cut it out there since the murder? The police must have done something in the matter, and the first thing they would have been likely to do would be to watch that house."

"Well, that's so, too. Possibly you are right. However, it can do no harm to make the attempt."

They accordingly turned up at the deserted house at a little after nine.

It was as they had seen it before, entirely dark.

"We won't go in just yet," observed Old King Brady, "but will do a little watching from the outside, always keeping on the move."

This they did, but nothing came of it.

"What about tackling it from the rear, and so not attracting so much attention?" suggested Harry.

"A good idea," replied Old King Brady. "I was thinking of the same thing myself."

The house did not occupy the full width of the fifty foot lot upon which it stood.

The fence had been carried away, and the lot which once had been a garden, doubtless, was now used as a dumping ground for all sorts of rubbish.

The Bradys made their way over old tomato cans and heaps of ashes to the rear.

Here they discovered that the house had been subjected to further wrecking since they had last seen it.

The back door had been wrenched off its hinges and was gone altogether. It was the same with two of the windows, the sashes having been removed.

"This rather knocks my theory," said Old King Brady. "Somebody has been helping themselves to second-hand building material here."

They entered, the old detective using his electric flashlight.

From room to room they passed, finding the same desolation everywhere.

"It would seem to be a hopeless case," observed Harry. "I don't believe there will be anything doing here."

"Perhaps not," replied the old detective, "all the same I propose to carry out part of my original plan, anyhow. Let us watch until midnight and see what comes."

It was cold, lonesome work.

The detectives hardly knew how to place themselves.

At last they concluded to sit on the stairs in the dark.

Old King Brady ventured to smoke even at the risk of giving himself away, which at that time certainly did not appear to be very great.

And yet, after all, something did come of it, for along toward eleven o'clock they caught the sound of footsteps at the back door.

"Some one coming, surest thing you know," breathed Harry.

"Back upstairs! Noiselessly and quick," whispered Old King Brady.

They sneaked into the back room and waited behind the door.

Presently a glimmer of light was seen.

"So dis am de place where he died," a woman's voice said in broken English, which we do not pretend to imitate, merely giving the woman's colored accent.

"Dis am de place," replied a man's voice. "Dunno misses, as yo' kin do any better than I've done, but as yo' seem to t'ink so, I've brung yo' heab."

"The cards tell me so, man," was the reply, "and the cards can't lie when I lay dem, mark yo' dat."

"Dunno nuffin 'bout dat. Dey lied when yo' tole me I was goin' to find dem papers and bring dem to yo'."

"Are yo' dead yet?"

"No, ma'am, not ef I know it."

"Well, den, dere's time for de keards to make good."

"Hope dey do it to-night, den. But say, yo' sez de keards done tell yo' dat yo' would find de papers yer ownself. Now yo' say mebbe I see gwinter find dem lak yo' said dey said before. What about dat ar? Don't seem to fit somehow. Hain't dat right?"

"Yo' talk too much wit yer mouf, nigger, dat's what yo' do."

"Nigger yer ownself. Youse blacker dan I be a hundred times over, and yo' know it."

"Well now doan less quarrel. Show me de place whar dey done him, and mebbe de spirits will tell me whar to look for de papers."

"Spirits nuffin. Yo' keant make me believ yo' talk wiv spirits nohow. I kin swaller a good deal, but not dat."

"Never said I could talk wiv spirits."

"Yes you did."

"Didn't, I tell yer. Said dey talk to me, an' so dey do."

"I doan believ one word ob it."

"Belieb what yo' like. Will you take me to de place whar dey done him, den?"

"Come on upstairs. It was just dar in de hall dat dem Brady 'tectives foun' him."

They were coming upstairs now.

"It's sure Sam Wing's voice," breathed Harry.

"Sounds so," said Old King Brady in his ear, "but we can't be sure. Not another word now."

They came on and stood in the hall at the head of the stairs where the body of the dead man had lain.

The Bradys peering through the crack of the door could see them plainly.

Harry was right.

Sam Wing it was.

The woman with him was very black and foreign looking, as far as they could see, but as she had some sort of worsted muffler over her face they were not able to study her features with any distinctness.

Around her shoulders was an old shawl which she held close with her left hand.

On the middle finger was a silver ring which reached from one knuckle to the other. It was a twisted affair and looked as if it might be in the form of a snake, but this in the uncertain light thrown by Sam Wing's lantern it was impossible to tell.

"So dis am whar he died," said the woman. "Good enough for him. Say, he muster hid de papers on dis floor den."

"Doan t'ink so," replied Sam Wing. "T'ink he was done jest as soon as ebber he come up on dis floor, befo' he had any chanst to hide dem. Dat ar's mah theory, anyway."

"You t'ink he done hid 'em downstairs befo' he come up?"

"I do."

"Den dat's whar we wanter search."

"Why doan yer spirits tole yer whar to search?"

"Shet up! Deyse not talkin' now. Why would dey wiv de likes ob you a-chatterin' all de time? Spirits is easy scared off. Dey on'y talk to me when I'm alone."

"I'll go downstairs an' leab yo' alone den if dar's any chanst. What about dat den?"

"Doan t'ink nuffin about hit. Doan believe I'll get nuffin out ob dem to-night nohow. 'Pears to me lak yo'd scared dem all off. Le's get to work downstairs."

"You kin work, an' you can work lak I've done, but I doan 'spect nuffin to come ob it. Whoever done him, done him fo' dem papers, an' dey done got 'em, too—dar ar's what I say."

"But it hain't what de keards say," was the reply. "I see gwine downstairs to begin work."

They went.

The Bradys stood in the back room listening.

"This is certainly a good starter," observed Harry.

"It is," replied the old detective.

"Do you believe she can be this Voodoo queen, governor?"

"I am much of that opinion; still, it is impossible to tell."

"What shall you do? Arrest them?"

"Yes, if they get what they are looking for. Otherwise it is a case for shadowing."

"I suppose so. Can these papers be the proofs of this boy's identity?"

"Looks like it."

"They don't seem to know who murdered Mendies."

"No; but we have talked enough, Harry. We want to do our listening now."

They listened at the head of the stairs.

The talk kept right up in the same vein.

It would be tedious to give it all.

Enough to say the couple did not seem to find what they were looking for.

At length the Bradys heard the woman remark that they might as well try it on the floor above, as they would certainly not find anything there.

"We must get behind the door again," breathed Young King Brady.

"And sneak downstairs at the first opportunity," replied the old detective.

But before they had a chance to do either something occurred.

Suddenly there was a rush of feet.

"Heah he am! Gib him de razzer!" a voice yelled.

"Back, yo' fools! I'se got a bettah razzer dan yo', an' yo'll blame soon fin' it out, too!" Sam Wing cried.

"We's two to one! Look out for yo'self!" was shouted.

And then the voice of the woman speaking in clear, distinct tones in French was heard.

"What does she say?" whispered Old King Brady, for Harry can understand French.

"Depart, I am the Voodoo Queen," Harry replied.

Silence followed.

CHAPTER IV.

GETTING NEXT TO THE VODOOISTS.

The room of Celia Renard was on the top floor of a tenement immediately in the rear of the deserted house.

When Alice was introduced by Julius, the young woman, who certainly was exceedingly good looking, received her civilly enough.

"I thought," she said, speaking without a trace of the colored accent, "that I was to work up this case for the Bradys on my own account. Now it seems that I am to be assisted by one of the firm. Well, I don't know that I object. I am no detective, that's sure."

"Mah good gollys, ef yo' two doan look lak twin sisters!" cried Julius, gazing upon them admiringly.

"There certainly is a resemblance," added Alice.

"I can't deny it," admitted Miss Renard. "But of course you are made up like one of my people, Miss Montgomery."

"Sure t'ing she am," broke in Julius. "Yo' doan t'ink Miss Alice am culled, I hope!"

Alice saw that it would be advisable to dispense with

Julius as soon as possible, or some bad break would surely be made.

Having sent him home, she settled down for a good talk with the artist's model.

The woman seemed not only particularly shrewd, but singularly refined for one of her race.

She informed Alice that she had posed for some of the most noted artists in New York, mentioning their names and showing herself familiar with their work.

"I would not have taken up with this matter, Miss Montgomery," she went on to say, "but for one special reason."

"And what may that be?" inquired Alice.

"Because I have posed as a Voodoo queen myself."

"You? Do you believe in such things?"

"You seem surprised, and naturally so. No, I do not. I come of a well-known Creole family in New Orleans, on my father's side, my mother being a quadroon. I suppose I can truthfully call myself an Octoroon, although I am a little darker than most Octoroons. There is an artist for whom I pose—Mr. Laidlaw, on Thirty-fourth street—who is now painting a picture of a Voodoo worshipping scene, whatever he expects to do with it, and I have posed as the priestess. This interested me, and I had already made some inquiries about Voodoo worship in New York before your man Julius came to me—in fact that is why he was brought to me by the colored man who introduced us."

"And you find that it exists in the city?"

"It certainly does. I have been promised the address of the woman who presides over these ceremonies, but as yet I have not been able to get it. On the other hand, I have heard of a woman who is said to be a most successful fortune teller. She comes from Haiti. She has been in the city for about two years. Is it not possible that she may be the woman you seek?"

"Altogether possible, I should say," replied Alice. "Suppose we pay her a visit?"

"Just what I was about to suggest."

"Where does she live?"

Celia gave the street and number. We do not propose to definitely locate the house.

It was decided that they should call on the woman directly after supper, and they did so.

"We will pose as sisters," said Alice. "Let us see if she can detect the fraud."

"Some of them are very shrewd," replied Celia, "but this woman may be a mere impostor."

"We can only try it on," replied Alice, and shortly after seven they presented themselves at the house.

It was one of a row of brownstone English basement houses on a block which was terribly run down and entirely given over to colored people.

Entering they knocked on the first door they came to and inquired of a colored girl who answered for Madam Gomerier.

"Floor above," grinned the girl. "Going to get yer fortunes told?"

Neither answered, and they ascended the stairs and tried it there.

A man answered this time.

He was very black and spoke broken English.

"Can we see Madam Gomier?" asked Celia, in French, for it had been arranged that she should do the talking.

"You can walk in," replied the man in that language.

The room was gaudily furnished and filled with many knickknacks which appeared to be of foreign make.

"Madam will see you in a few minutes," announced the man after going into the back room.

Presently a bell rang.

"Enter, ladies," said the man.

They passed into a darkened room where in a sort of alcove made of standing screens sat a stout negress with a great mass of woolly hair.

She wore a dress all embroidered with moons and stars.

Coiled around her neck was a live snake of considerable size, although of what species Alice was unable to determine.

It raised its head and gave a hiss as they entered.

"If this isn't the Voodoo queen it will be a wonder," thought Alice. "Certainly she looks the part."

Two chairs had been placed in front of a little table, behind which the fortune-teller sat, and on the table was a human skull and a pack of greasy cards.

The woman eyed them sharply but did not speak.

"You are Madam Gomier?" demanded Celia.

"I am," was the reply in French, for the model had addressed her in that language. "You want your fortune told?"

"We do."

"I cannot tell two fortunes together."

"We do not expect that. Tell my sister's first."

"She is not your sister."

"You are sharp."

"It is so?"

"Yes."

"Do not try to deceive me if you want me to tell you a true fortune."

"We look so much alike that we pass for sisters."

Madam Gomier gave a grunt as if she did not endorse this sentiment.

Alice now seated herself in one of the chairs.

Celia drew the other to one side.

Madam took up the cards and shuffled them.

"Cut," she said.

Alice cut the ace of spades.

"Good fortune," said the seeress. "You will succeed in your undertaking."

Rapidly she dealt the cards, one to herself and one to Alice.

The first face card which fell to Alice was the queen of hearts.

"You are a white woman," said Madam Gomier promptly. "You have a lover. Let us see if we can find him."

Rapidly she continued to deal the cards.

Oddly enough the jack of hearts fell on Alice's pile.

"Here he is," said Madam, pausing. "Let me describe him."

It is a fact that the description she gave perfectly fitted Harry.

And so it went.

Madam Gomier described Old King Brady when the king of clubs fell to Alice's pile.

But there the truth ended.

What followed was a mere bunch of nonsense.

Alice was to take a long journey, to have money left her, and so on through the usual rigmarole.

Celia's turn came next.

The snake seemed ever on the watch.

Every now and then it would raise its head and give a hiss.

What Celia got was on the same lines.

But she was told that she was colored, and that she sat for artists.

There seemed to be a touch of mind reading connected with Madam Gomier's work.

The session over, Alice paid the bill.

She felt that she had failed to make a good impression on the seeress.

But it was not so with Celia.

The woman now arose and put the snake in a box with a glass front, carefully closing the lid.

"Where are you from, my dear?" she asked in French. "Haiti or San Domingo?"

"Neither. I am from New Orleans," replied Celia.

Seeing how matters were turning, Alice determined to let Celia work the Voodoo end of the business in her own way.

"New Orleans," repeated Madam Gomier. "I wish I had gone there instead of New York."

"Why?"

"Because I could make more money."

"You are from the West Indies?"

"Yes, Haiti—Port-au-Prince."

"I always wanted to visit Haiti."

"You wouldn't like it. They are barbarians down there. I shall never return."

"I have become deeply interested in it for certain reasons."

"What are they?"

"Can't you guess? You told me what business I follow, and you spoke the truth. My reasons are connected with that business."

"I can tell some things, but I fail in others."

"I will explain. I have been sitting for an artist here in New York who is painting a very peculiar picture. It represents Voodoo worshipers in a cave. The scene is supposed to be laid in Haiti. I have posed as the Voodoo queen."

"Huh!" sniffed Madam Gomier. "Your artist would have done better to have got the real thing."

"How could he have done that in New York? There are no Voodoo queens here."

"Are there not? Perhaps that is all you know about it."

"If you know more the artist would be very glad to find it out. The picture is not finished yet. He would pay well to have a real Voodoo queen to sit for him."

"I can get him one."

"Will you?"

"Perhaps."

"But he would have to know that she was the real thing."

"No white man can sit at a Voodoo seance, young woman."

"Can I?"

"You?"

"Yes."

The woman seemed to hesitate.

"Would your artist take your word for it?" she asked.

"He would."

"What would he pay?"

"For a sitting?"

"Yes."

"I shouldn't wonder if he would pay as much as \$25, providing he could be sure that he was getting the real goods."

Come and see me to-morrow and I will let you know."

"I should not want to come alone," added Celia. "I should want to have a man go with me."

"A colored man?"

"Yes."

"That could be arranged."

"Then there really are Voodooists in New York?"

"Of course there are. There is everything in New York."

"What time shall I call?"

Madam Gomier named ten o'clock.

"By that time I shall be able to tell you whether the matter can be arranged or not," she said.

It seemed a good time to ring off, and Alice arose as a signal that the conversation had better cease.

Celia took the hint and they at once left the house.

"Well, how did I make out?" she asked.

"You managed it beautifully," replied Alice. "You couldn't have done better."

"She seemed to take to me."

"She is very shrewd. You noticed that I could not fool her about being colored, but I shall try again. I consider that we have been very lucky. I am quite sure she is the Voodoo queen herself."

"I shouldn't wonder, but it is hard to tell. I suppose I shall have to take your man Julius along with me."

"Julius! Oh, he would never do," laughed Alice.

"Why not?"

"He would be scared out of his wits. I will go."

"You!"

"Yes; made up like a colored man."

"I am afraid you couldn't fool her, Miss Montgomery."

"All the same I should like to try, and I propose to. You can judge better when you see me made up what chance I have of success."

They returned to Celia's room.

As near as Alice could discover they had not been followed.

Still she determined to take no chances, but to remain with Celia until her work was finished, feeling that to attempt to communicate with the Bradys would be to run a risk.

So Alice spent the night with the Octoroon.

Next morning at ten o'clock Celia went to Madam Gomier's alone.

Alice waited on the street for nearly half an hour before she came out to report that all was arranged.

"I am to be let into a Voodoo meeting to-morrow night," she said, "and I am to be allowed an escort, providing he is black. No mulatto will be allowed."

"And where is the place?" asked Alice.

"That the woman would not tell me. I am to come here and the man we saw will escort me to where the meeting is to be held. I am afraid it will never do for you to go, Miss Montgomery. You will surely be detected. You run a terrible risk."

"Wait till you see me made up," replied Alice. "I think I shall leave you now," she added. "I must consult with Old King Brady."

She had changed her mind about keeping away from the office, as there was nothing to indicate that she was being shadowed.

Moreover, she did not feel quite certain that Old King Brady would approve of the course she had laid out for herself.

Thus Alice parted with the artist's model at Ninth avenue and took the elevated road downtown.

CHAPTER V.

OLD KING BRADY CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

Silence followed the announcement of the negress who was with Sam Wing that she was the Voodoo queen, it will be remembered.

Young King Brady peered down over the bannisters to see what was going on.

The sight was at once comical and showed the deep superstition of the colored race.

For there were two big colored men on their knees before the woman, who stood with folded arms looking down contemptuously at them.

Sam Wing, razor in hand, stood grinning at one side.

"Get up and go about your business," ordered the woman in French. "I know you and now you know me. Bad luck will come to you for this!"

The two promptly got up and sneaked.

"Why did they come here?" demanded the Voodoo queen, turning to Sam Wing as soon as they were out of hearing. "I know those fellows; they know nothing of this affair. They must be Mendies' murderers then."

"It might be," replied Sam Wing. "They know me, however, and have sworn to lay me out the first time they caught me. It is no use, madam. We shall find nothing here. Let us go."

"It is my unlucky night," said the woman. "We will go, but to-morrow we will come and try it again."

They at once left the house.

"Shadow them, Harry," ordered the old detective. "I will remain behind and look for these papers. You needn't come back. I shall go directly home."

Harry promptly left.

Old King Brady now got busy with his flashlight.

He hardly knew what to make of the situation.

To him it seemed as if there must be something about this deserted house as yet unexplained, for surely without

some powerful motive the Haitian Secret Service agent would never have gone to the trouble of making an appointment for the Bradys to meet him there.

But the dead man's motive was locked in the grave.

Old King Brady's search was quite unavailing, and at last he gave it up and went home.

Harry was in bed and asleep when he got there, so the old detective did the wisest thing under the circumstances—went to bed, too.

When Alice reached the office next morning she found the Bradys in.

"Well, and how have you been making out?" the old detective inquired.

Alice made her report.

"Couldn't be better," said Old King Brady. "You have located the Voodoo queen. Next thing is to find if she still has the child; if not, what became of it."

"Why are you so sure this Madam Gomier is actually the Voodoo queen?" asked Alice. "Not that I question it, but we do not actually know."

"You are wrong. Harry and I settled that point last night. You have described a woman we saw at the deserted house. That she is the Voodoo queen we have from her own lips."

"That would seem to settle it."

"And we have additional testimony. Harry shadowed the woman to the same house where you went."

"That settles it, of course. What is to be done? Shall I go ahead with this Voodoo seance business?"

"I say no," objected Harry. "Let me go with the Renaud girl."

Alice expecting this, silently waited for Old King Brady's decision.

The old detective reflected for a minute and then said:

"Alice began this, so let her finish it. The risk is great, of course, but that is the way it ought to be done."

"Settled," said Alice, triumphantly. "I have no fears. Indeed, I rather enjoy the prospect."

"I don't see what is to come of it anyhow," objected Harry. "Of course I must shadow them."

"We will both do that," said Old King Brady, and so the matter was settled.

As there seemed nothing to do but to await the outcome of Alice's venture, the Bradys went about other business that day, but in the afternoon Old King Brady visited the deserted house again, being anxious to see it by daylight.

"Why did Mendies appoint the meeting here?" he asked himself again and again.

He could think of no reason which could have any bearing on Mr. Rollman's case.

Reaching the house, Old King Brady paused for a moment to take in its surroundings.

On either side were modern tenements.

Across the way there were others, two rows, but separated by a large, two-story brick stable which was closed and bore a "To let" bill on the door.

The building was as old as the house, and evidently dated back to a time before the tenements were built.

"Used to be part of Beizel & Schwan's ale brewery," thought Old King Brady, letting his memory drift back to former times. "I remember it well now. Old man Beigel

lived in that house. The whole outfit stood in the lots before the street was cut through. Can that stable be in any way connected with the mystery? It gives me an idea. Let us see."

Entering the deserted house, Old King Brady, instead of going upstairs this time, sought the cellar.

The stairs were broken and the enclosure filled with old boxes and barrels, all empty.

What was the meaning of such an accumulation? the old detective asked himself. Why had they not been carted away for firewood long ago?

The cellar was so dark that he got out his flashlight and proceeded to study the situation.

An immediate discovery was the result.

The floor was uncemented and a distinct path was to be seen leading to a point in one corner where the boxes were piled up on top of one another.

This worked in with the old detective's idea, which was nothing less than that there might be some secret connection between the deserted house and the stable across the way.

He accordingly proceeded to remove the boxes.

Sure enough, set in the wall was a wooden door with a brick arch turned above it.

There was nothing secret about the door, but the boxes had completely hidden it so that when Old King Brady and Harry visited the cellar its existence had not been suspected.

"Now business begins," muttered the old detective. "Mendies' motive is what I want to get at, and it occurs to me that I am in a fair way to do it, but we shall see."

He examined the door, finding it secured by an ordinary lock.

This he was easily able to master by means of his skeleton keys, and as the door opened he was not surprised to see before him an arched passage leading under the street in the direction of the stable opposite.

"Now we begin to get there," he muttered. "Here is where old man Beigel used to go to the brewery without going outside. Probably the storage vaults are still under the stable, which I am certain is part of the original brewery altered over."

He pushed on to another door, which was secured by a strong, new lock.

Listening, Old King Brady, hearing nothing, worked his skeletons again and easily opened the door.

It was as he had supposed.

Here was an extensive sub-cellar with stone walls and cemented floor.

Over at one end were several big vats.

There was no stairway leading up to the stable, but there was a trap door, and evidence that stairs had once existed under it.

But what attracted instant attention was a long rack against one wall which supported as many as fifty rifles. On a table lay a military drum. There also were several flags on poles. Examining them the old detective discovered that they were Haitian flags.

On one side there were as many as twenty long cases piled up.

Old King Brady examined one on which the lid was loose and found it filled with new, modern rifles.

"Now what in the name of sense does all this mean?" he asked himself. "Are the negroes of San Juan Hill betting ready for a riot? There has been a lot of money spent here, that is certain. Who can be putting it up and why?"

It was a question difficult to answer.

But it seemed pretty certain to the old detective that the presence of these rifles here was in some way connected with the murder of Mendies.

Having examined this strange armory to his satisfaction, Old King Brady turned to depart.

He had almost reached the door when to his disgust he caught the sound of voices in the passage.

There was not an instant to be lost if he wanted to avoid discovery.

Old King Brady dodged in behind one of the big vats.

He was none too soon.

Three men had entered this singular armory and a flash-light was thrown around.

They were talking, but Old King Brady could not understand what was being said, for the conversation was in French.

A match was struck and a big bracket lamp lighted.

The men spoke very rapidly—excitedly, in fact.

The old detective peered out from behind the vat and saw that they were all colored men, but well dressed and very foreign looking.

He could only conclude, therefore, that they were Haitians, which showed him that the collecting of arms here probably had nothing to do with San Juan Hill nor its affairs.

But now Old King Brady made another discovery which bothered him not a little.

The light shone in behind the vat, and he perceived that the space which he had chosen as a hiding place was a sort of dressing room.

There were many uniforms hung on pegs.

"I couldn't have picked out a worse place if I had tried," thought the old detective. "It is to be hoped that they don't take it into their heads to come in here."

They did not.

For nearly an hour they stood around talking and smoking cigarettes.

It seemed to Old King Brady that they must be waiting for somebody.

It grew very fatiguing, but there was no help for it.

At last the worst thing possible happened.

The old detective was seized with a desire to sneeze.

In vain he tried to control it, rubbing his nose and using every device he could think of.

For fully two minutes he managed to stave it off, but at last the explosion came.

At the time the men were talking as rapidly as ever.

Instant silence followed.

"Discovered! Bad luck!" muttered Old King Brady. "What is to be done now?"

He started to draw his revolver, but halted.

They were three to his one and had their rifles.

Probably they knew how to use them.

To shoot one of the three could do no good.

It was necessary to go slow if he expected to save himself.

And he was wise, as will be seen.

A slight noise was now heard.

Then came the advance.

Old King Brady stepped out into full view.

It was as he had expected.

Each man had his rifle in hand.

Instantly the old detective was covered.

One of the men addressed him angrily in French.

"Don't understand," said Old King Brady as coolly as possible. "I speak only English."

Still keeping him covered, the men rattled away to each other.

Clearly none of them spoke English.

What to do the old detective did not know.

It was just at this embarrassing moment that the door was suddenly flung open and in walked a tall, distinguished looking individual.

His hair was straight and intensely black, his complexion what might be termed a coffee brown. His nose was large and curved like a hawk's beak.

Altogether, he was one of the most peculiar looking colored men next to Mendies himself that Old King Brady had ever seen.

He spoke rapidly in French to the others.

They answered briefly, each one putting in his oar.

Then the newcomer turned on the old detective.

"Who are you? How came you here?" he demanded in English.

It seemed best to tell the truth, and Old King Brady did it with his accustomed boldness.

"I am a private detective," he said. "My business took me into that deserted house across the way, and by accident I discovered the passage into this place. These men came and kept me from retiring. You know the rest, but I want to say that I don't understand French. Whatever secrets they may have been talking are secrets still. If you are wise you will let me go about my business, and I faithfully promise to forget what I have seen."

"You speak like a gentleman and a man of good sense," replied the stranger. "It is most unfortunate for you that this has happened. You have discovered matters which cannot interest you. I am almost of a mind to take you at your word, but I must confer with these gentlemen. It is as much their affair as it is mine."

His English was perfect; his whole manner that of a gentleman. That he was some distinguished person among the people of his own race it was easy to see.

A consultation of considerable length followed.

Then the stranger addressed Old King Brady again.

"What is your name?" he asked. "Be perfectly frank with me—it will pay you best."

"My name, sir, is Brady," was the reply.

The stranger started.

"Do you mean to say you are the famous Old King Brady?" he asked.

"I do. You have heard of me then?"

"Who has not? This is perplexing. My companions wish me to kill you, Mr. Brady. Naturally I hesitate about disposing of a detective of such prominence as yourself,

although I want you to understand that the taking of a human life means as little to me as the killing of a fly who had bitten you would be to you. But stay, I will confer with them again."

This time the talk was still longer.

Over at last, the stranger again turned to the old detective, who was still covered with the three rifles, and said:

"It is no use, Mr. Brady. I cannot save you. It has been decided that you must die."

CHAPTER VI.

HARRY STRIKES A NEW MYSTERY.

Harry was detained until too late an hour to go to the office, so he went directly home, expecting to find Old King Brady there.

He was not, nor did he come home that night, much to Harry's discomfort, for not knowing just where his chief had gone, he had not the slightest idea where to look for him.

After breakfast he called on Alice, thinking that she might know something, but of course she did not.

That the old detective had got himself into serious trouble seemed highly probably, but it was not easy to see what could be done.

The day passed and nothing was seen or heard of him.

Towards the end of the day Harry and Alice had an earnest talk.

"It must be this San Juan Hill business," said Harry. "He had nothing else on hand of any consequence. What ought we to do?"

Alice thought the best way was to go right ahead, and said so.

"Then you mean to keep your engagement with the Renaud woman?" Harry asked.

"I do," replied Alice. "Such was the program. I see no reason for changing it. You know how often Mr. Brady has been missing. He always turns up all right. Rest assured he will do so in this case."

"I propose to take Julius along and shadow you," said Harry.

"Such is your privilege, but I don't regard it as at all necessary."

"I do, then. At what time do you start?"

"We are to be at the Voodoo Queen's at eight."

"All right, I'll be on hand. I'd like to see you made up before I go home, however. I may have something to suggest."

"I'll make up now," replied Alice, and she went into the costume-room, which is across the hall from the Bradys' offices.

It was no burnt-cork business with Alice.

The Bradys have a special wash made for them by an expert chemist, which they always use when they make up colored.

When Alice returned to the office she was made up like a light mulatto man.

Harry looked her over, admiringly.

"Well, you certainly are perfect!" he declared. "I don't see how any one could ever suspect you."

"Unless my speech gives me away," replied Alice. "I am afraid of that."

"Don't speak unless you have to."

"I certainly shall not. I am going now, Harry. Don't bother your head about me. I shall be all right."

Harry bade her good-by without further comment, but he had no idea of relaxing his vigilance in the least, so he hurried home and told Julius what was in the wind, but not until he had made up like a colored man himself.

Julius did not know him at first.

"Wha' yo' want heah, nigger? How yo' get in dis house? Come to steal?" he cried, as he looked up the basement stairs and saw Harry in the hall.

"Come, come, Julius, don't pretend that you don't know me," said Harry. "Hurry up with the supper. You and I are going on the warpath up at San Juan Hill again."

"Well, upon my word, I didn't know yer, Mr. Harry! Say, youse is made up fine. Anybody would tak' yo' for a negro, I'm suah."

They were ready to start by half-past six.

Harry was anxious to get away early, for he had resolved to pay another visit to the deserted house before going to Madam Gomier's.

Old King Brady was still missing, and Harry could think of no other likely place to look for him.

It was a cold, raw night, and Young King Brady was glad to bundle up well.

Reaching the house, he was about to go through to the rear when he saw a very black coon come out of the lot from around the corner of the house.

Harry and Julius stopped and pretended to be in earnest conversation.

The man, who had evidently been drinking, slowed down as he passed them and said, in French:

"Good evening, brothers!"

"Good evening!" replied Harry, in the same language, willing to pick up any points he could.

"To-night is the night!" said the man. "You better go on in. You get your orders."

And with this the man went on.

"What's all dat about?" questioned Julius.

"Blest if I'll ever tell you," replied Harry. "I propose to find out, though."

"Shall we go in?"

"Yes, come on."

They went around to the rear, but it was only to find the house dark and deserted.

They had walked about but a minute, though, before they heard heavy footsteps on the cellar stairs.

Harry instantly shut off his flashlight.

It was well that he did so, for now the cellar door opened and out stepped a big negro, carrying a lantern.

He wore a sort of military uniform.

Raising his lantern, so that the light fell on Young King Brady's face, he said, in French:

"Good evening, Brother Berard!"

"Come," thought Harry. "I have made up well with a vengeance. They take me for some one they know. Strange that I should hit it that way."

He responded, of course.

The negro looked at Julius.

"Who is he?" he asked.

"Just a friend of mine. He can't speak French," replied Harry. "You need not be afraid to talk out before him."

"You ought not to have brought him here."

"Have no fears. He is a stupid fellow and knows nothing. I understand we get our orders to-night."

"Yes. The general will be here at midnight and give them out. Why didn't you come down cellar? I heard you walking about, so I came up to see who it was."

"Was I going to bring this fellow down cellar, then?"

"You ought not to have brought him at all, I say."

"Oh, cut that out! What's the news?"

"News? I wasn't here yesterday. Saw some of the boys who were. They say the general captured a detective last night in the armory, spying around."

"What was his name?"

"I don't just know. Heard, too. Strikes me it was King."

"And what did they do with him?"

"Took him away. I understand they mean to kill him, but I don't know much about it, any way, only what I heard."

"I suppose you heard where they took him?"

"No, I didn't, either. I've told you all I know. Better be around here at midnight and get your orders. I'm here to tell all the boys who look in; as for anything else it is none of my business, anyhow."

Seeing that the fellow was getting tired of answering questions, Harry pulled out.

"Well, Julius, these French negroes have got the governor, all right," he said.

"Am dat so, Mr. Harry? Don't tell me dey'se done him up!"

"Couldn't find that out," replied Harry, and he went on to make a detailed report to Julius of what he had heard.

"Too blame bad!" said Julius. "What's to be did?"

"It's time enough to decide that point at midnight. I don't see how I can possibly do anything as the case stands."

"We better be gettin' down to dat ar' Voodoo woman's house, den, doan' you t'ink so, Mr. Harry? Hit am gettin' late."

It was but a short distance, and Harry and Julius reached the place ahead of time.

But they had their labor for their pains.

Eight o'clock came and passed, but no Alice appeared.

They waited an hour, but still she did not turn up.

Harry was in despair.

"Can it be that she has gone and got herself into trouble, too, Julius?" he finally said.

"Dunno, Mistah Harry. Kean't say."

"Let's go up to Madam Gomier's and see if she is in. We can pretend we want to get our fortunes told."

They ascended the stairs and knocked at Madam's door.

A slovenly negro girl answered.

"Can we see Madam Gomier?" Harry asked.

"She hain't heah, mistah. She done go out."

"Has she been long gone?"

"Since two o'clock."

"When will she be back?"

"Not till to-morrow, she done tole me."

Here was another balk.

"Let's go to dat ar' yaller gal's," suggested Julius. "Mebbe dey done ring off on de hull business fo' some un-s'plained reason."

"Good suggestion. Let us go," replied Harry, and they hurried to the negro tenement.

And still the game was blocked.

Miss Renaud's door was locked and knocking brought no answer.

"Julius, we have to give it up," said Harry. "You go on home. I'll peg about alone till midnight."

"Now, looker heah, Mr. Harry, doan' yo' chase me," pleaded Julius. "Wiv Boss Brady in trouble, an' Missy Alice likely so, too, 'pears to me dat I done order stick clost to yo' and see dat yo' doan' git into trouble, too."

"All right. We will stick together, but when midnight comes I shall have to go into that house alone. That fellow kicked at you as it was. It won't do to take you in there again."

"I kin wait on de outside. I kin go after you if yo' doan' come out."

"What shall we do in the meanwhile?"

"Whateber yo' say. Mebbe yo'd like to take in a cakewalk? I know whar' dey'se gwinter be one to-night."

But Harry was in no mood for cakewalks.

"What we really want is to do something on the case," he said, "but as I can't think of anything to do I suppose we may as well watch that house."

"An' git spotted by some of dem ar' French darkies an' so spile yer pie?"

"That's right, too. I don't know what to do. Let's walk down Tenth avenue, perhaps you will see some one you know."

They strolled down the avenue as far as 50th street, and then, turning, came back on the other side.

It was lucky they did so, for now something happened which Harry had asked himself if it might not occur.

If one man took him for this unknown Berard, might not another?

Another did, and that other was the tall, stylish foreign-looking colored man, whom Old King Brady had seen in the old ale vault.

It was just as they crossed 59th street.

Harry saw him coming and was struck with his appearance, just as Old King Brady had been; the man suddenly stopped and addressing him in French, said:

"Good evening, Brother Berard! This is well met. Where were you last night?"

It came as a genuine surprise.

But Harry was equal to the occasion.

"I'd like to bet that this is the general that fellow spoke of," flashed across him, and no wonder, for the man had a decidedly military appearance.

He resolved to risk it.

"General, I found it impossible to come last night," he replied, in French.

It set all right. Harry felt that he had made no mistake.

"Does your friend understand us?" was asked.

"Not a word. If there is anything you want to say to me you are perfectly safe."

"I have much that I want to say. First of all, bad luck has come to me. They have kidnapped the boy."

Harry was duly surprised.

"And who do you suppose can have done it?" he asked.

"Who? Can you ask? It is one of two things. Either that infernal witch, the Gomier woman, knowing Rollman is after the child, has hired men to steal him for the reward she expects to get, or Rollman's detectives have got him."

"How did it happen?"

"He was playing on the sidewalk in front of the house the last that was seen of him. I know no more."

"Provoking!"

"Is it not? And to-morrow we sail, and he would have been on his way to Port-au-Prince."

"What have you done? What do you mean to do?"

"I am trying to find the Gomier woman, but she has been out since noon and her people tell me she is not expected back until to-morrow."

"Can I help, general? Why not get a good detective on your own account?"

The general started.

"Why did I never think of that!" he exclaimed. "Do you know, heaven has sent me that very thing. The best detective in America is even now a prisoner in my hands. I have him on board."

"Who is that?"

"He is Old King Brady. He came spying around the armory last night, and three of the brothers who happened in, captured him. They wanted to kill him off-hand, but I did not like to kill so prominent a man, especially as he pretty well convinced me that he was not in the least interested in our affairs, so it ended up in drugging him and taking him aboard."

"Did you mean to take him to Haiti?"

"Yes; it would prevent him from giving us away. Once there, I meant to set him free. If I was positively certain that he is not spying on us, I'd set him free now and put this kidnapping case in his hands."

"Better do it. They say he is the keenest detective ever."

"I will think of it. Meanwhile, I may as well give you your orders now. I suppose you were at the house?"

"Yes, and was told to come at midnight for orders."

"Exactly. It is only that the arms are all aboard and we are ready to sail. I want you and all hands to be aboard before ten o'clock. Good night, Berard. I'm glad I met you. Don't fail to be on hand."

And with this the "General" hurried away.

"What new mystery was this?" Harry asked himself.

There seemed to be no end of mystery in this dark case from San Juan Hill.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE VOODOO SEANCE.

When Alice got to Celia Renard's she found the artist's model out.

But she had given Alice a spare key to her door, so

she let herself in and found, lying on the dresser, a note addressed to herself, stating that Celia would soon return.

The girl came within twenty minutes.

"Well, you certainly are a wonder, Miss Montgomery!" she exclaimed. "If I had not known that you were coming in this disguise I never should have dreamed it was you. I doubt if Madam Gomier will tumble to you this time. You are perfectly safe."

"It is to be hoped so," replied Alice. "Any news?"

"Well, yes. Do you know that woman was here?"

"Madam Gomier?"

"Yes."

"How did she get your address? I didn't hear you give it to her."

"I positively did not give it to her and I haven't the faintest idea how she actually got it. What she claims is that spirits gave it to her."

"Rather fishy."

"I should say so."

"But what did she want?"

"She called about noon and told me that important business was calling her away so that it would be of no use for us to go to her house this evening. She came to give me the address."

"Where this Voodoo seance is to be pulled off?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Hudson avenue, Brooklyn. No. —."

"Close down by the water front. Of course, you know that Hudson avenue is to Brooklyn what San Juan Hill is to New York."

"Yes, I know, but I never was over there. Is it a very bad neighborhood?"

"It could hardly be worse. At the other end of Hudson avenue many respectable colored people live, but down by the water front it is tough."

"Well, that is where it is. When I told Madam Gomier that my cousin was going to escort me she seemed satisfied and wanted her twenty-five dollars in advance."

"You didn't give it to her, I hope?"

"I gave her ten. I had to or I don't think I should ever have got the address."

Alice promptly paid the ten dollars.

"I am just as well satisfied that you and I are going alone," she said. "What time are we due there?"

"The seance begins at nine o'clock, so madam says."

"We will get there about half-past eight. Are they all French-speaking colored people who attend, do you know?"

"Yes, so she says; all French, either from Haiti, San Domingo or New Orleans."

Alice helped Celia get supper, and about half-past seven they started for Brooklyn.

And thus it will be seen why Harry's wait was in vain.

Arrived at the number on Hudson avenue, Alice found it attached to an old tumble-down house half a block up from the water.

It was evidently inhabited, however, dilapidated as it looked, for there were lights in the windows.

They stopped a minute to look it over.

A fat negress came waddling down the avenue.

She ascended the steps and disappeared through the open door.

"One of them, perhaps," said Alice. "I forgot to ask you who we were to inquire for."

"Nobody in particular," was the reply. "Madam gave me her card with something scribbled on the back of it, which I can't quite make out. I am to present it at the door."

"We may as well tackle it, then. It is almost half-past eight."

"Yes. There goes another."

It was a man who entered this time, very black and dressed like a sailor.

Alice and Celia crossed the street and followed him in.

Ascending the stairs, they found the man standing in the hall.

Celia spoke a few words to him, which Alice could not understand, nor could she make anything out of the reply.

"Haitian dialect," whispered Celia. "He says this is the right place. He is a sailor just off a Havana steamer, up from Port-au-Prince."

"Why don't he go in?" asked Alice.

"He has knocked, but they have not answered. He doesn't know why."

They continued to wait for nearly ten minutes.

Celia asked the man to knock again, but he shook his head, saying that they would open the door when they got good and ready.

At last they did, and a colored man stepped out into the hall, holding the door partly closed after admitting the sailor.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked, in French.

"To attend the meeting," replied Celia.

"What meeting? You must have got into the wrong house."

"No, this is right. See, here is the card."

The man took it, gingerly.

"I can't read," he admitted. "I must go inside and see."

He went in and closed the door.

In a moment he was out again with his face all smiles.

"Come in!" he said—the conversation was all in French.

"Any friend of Madam Gomier is welcome. We have the meeting pretty soon."

They entered the front room of the old house.

It was none too large, and was packed with people, men and women of all shades, from the blackest to the Octoroon.

There was a hot fire burning in an old stove and as the windows were shut the result may be imagined.

The smell was awful. Alice thought, for the first few minutes, that she should certainly faint, but she gradually got used to it.

All were standing, there was not a chair in the place.

Nobody paid any special attention to them.

Alice's disguise seemed to perfectly fill the bill.

At one end of the room a black curtain hung which cut off the room behind.

It seemed to Alice as if the partition between the rooms must have been taken away, for a faint light shone behind the curtain and could be seen all the way across its width.

"Isn't this something fierce!" whispered Celia, in English.

"I wouldn't speak," breathed Alice behind her hand. "We can't be too careful."

She listened to the incessant chatter going on about her, all in French.

"Who would believe that such a gathering as this could take place in Brooklyn?" she thought. "It seems just incredible, but here it is, and in a few minutes a Voodoo seance will probably be in full swing."

They had not long to wait.

Suddenly a deep-toned bell sounded behind the curtain.

Silence instantly followed.

The Voodoo worshippers were all attention now.

Three times it rang, and then the audience all united in a weird chant.

The words seemed to Alice mere gibberish. She could make nothing of them, but it seemed to be the same thing over and over again.

As the chant proceeded, the black curtain was suddenly drawn, revealing a sort of stage occupying nearly the entire room, being raised about a foot above the floor.

There was crude scenery, if you please.

It represented a tropical forest.

In the middle of the stage was a pole which reached to the ceiling and around it was coiled a snake.

It was Madam Gomier's snake, Alice felt sure, but madam herself was not in evidence.

"All hail to the sacred serpent!" cried the worshippers, three times, and every head was bowed.

Alice and Celia bowed, too, not knowing what the result might be if they held back.

When they raised their heads, Madam Gomier had appeared upon the scene.

She stood beside the pole, dressed in a robe similar to the one she had on the day before, but of much finer quality.

It was all covered with half moons, stars and snakes, probably painted. The light on the stage was so dim that Alice could not determine this point.

Then another shout went up.

"All hail the Serpent Queen!"

Three times it rang out and again every head was bowed.

This done, madam got down to business.

Stretching out her right arm, the snake coiled around it.

From thence it glided up over her shoulder and coiled itself about her neck, erecting its head with tongue protruding and many a hiss as it went along.

What immediately followed was lost on Alice, and Celia as well, for it was in a gibberish which, while containing many French words, was perfectly unintelligible.

This address was delivered by the Voodoo Queen.

Finished, there was a general clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

After that the worshippers fell on their knees and touched the floor with their heads.

Then, suddenly, two banjos started in business, the players being unseen.

(Continued on page 20.)

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

The most destructible wood is the jarran wood of Western Australia, which defies all known forms of decay, and is untouched by all destructive insects, so that ships built of it do not need to be coppered.

The Shah of Persia has a dandy bed-chamber. Its suite of furniture is made of ivory and inlaid with gold and precious stones. The curtain and curtain hangers are of the finest Brussels net, interwoven with silk.

A Raleigh paper asserts that the people of North Carolina live longer than those of any other place in the world, chiefly because they lead the simple life, drink buttermilk, and eat blackberries fresh in summer and dried in winter.

There are many small savings banks in Germany which accept deposits of 10 pfennigs (2 1-2 cents). Thirty per cent. of the people in Prussia have savings-bank accounts. Travelers are struck by the absence of beggars. The government permits no person to solicit alms.

A rat plague prevails in Haddingtonshire, England. Every man has his hand against rats, and they have rat-hunting days. Although slain by the thousand, the rats are still killing chickens, pigeons, ducks, geese, and rabbits and destroying gardens and eating fruits, grain and vegetables.

The highest railway in the Alps is now working. It is that of the Col de la Bernina, between Engadine and Valteline, from Saint Mortiz and Putresna to Tirono. It is a narrow line and rises to 2,380 metres, or nearly 7,340 feet. The railway is worked by electricity, and the declivity is 70 in 100. There are only three small tunnels, so the excursionists enjoy the scenery to the full.

On one "trot" line at a single haul C. D. Rider caught 200 pounds of catfish in the Arkansas River, near Muskogee. There were five fish, one weighing sixty-five pounds, another fifty-five pounds and the others ranging from thirty to thirty-five pounds each.

Julius Weinstein, who tills the soil in an humble way on a bit of land fronting on Blue Hill Avenue, Roxbury, Mass., was a very much surprised farmer this season when he watched a bunch of cabbages break through the ground. There were

many of the usual size and shape, but somehow or other a sort of brotherly attachment was formed between a bunch of heads so that they insisted on playing the role of Siamese twins eight times over. When they had reared themselves about a foot above the ground Mr. Weinstein cut short their existence in the soil and he then had a fine freak to show his neighbors, sixteen heads of cabbage on one stalk.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

"It may be for years and it may be forever," the young man sadly speaks. "Bosh," says the girl, "you're the softest ever; it's only for two weeks."

Wadsworth (at the telephone)—Hello! Is this Main 3967? Voice at Other End—Yes. Who do you want to see? Wadsworth—Is Mr. Hammersly there? Voice at the Other End—Yes. Do you want to talk to him? Wadsworth—No. I want to kiss him.

Tom bought a gallon of spirits to take home, and, by way of a label, wrote his name upon a card, which happened to be the seven of clubs, and tied it to the handle. A friend, coming along and observing the jar, quietly remarked, "That's an awful careless way to leave that liquor!" "Why?" said Tom. "Because somebody might come along with the eight of clubs and take it."

A little three-year-old, who had often been reprovved for eating the inside of her pie and leaving the outside, was recently afflicted with a sore toe. One day at dinner she was observed to remove the crust of her pie, slyly, and place it under her plate while eating the inside. On being discovered, she innocently replied: "Well, papa, my toe is so sore I couldn't eat the crust."

A gentleman who follows the profession of school-teaching gave out one morning as a reading lesson to his first class that portion of "The Merchant of Venice" in which the "pound of flesh" scene occurs. The reading finished, he asked the class what Shylock meant when he said, "My deeds upon my head." "Well," said the tallest boy, "I don't know, unless it means he carried his papers in his hat."

In one of the tallest office buildings in Philadelphia a man and his wife keep house. "When they came to me and asked to rent a suite of offices for housekeeping purposes," said the agent of the building, "I told them it couldn't be done. I had heard of janitors keeping house in office buildings, but I hadn't heard of anybody else trying it. So I told them no. But the young man reasoned with me. 'We got to be as high as we can go,' he said. 'My wife has an aunt who won't ride in elevators. She has trailed us up eight flights of stairs, but I think she'd balk at fifteen.'"

Everyone knows one or more of those conscientious egotists who cannot rid themselves of the idea that no one can be trusted to carry out the simplest details of routine work without their personal supervision. It was one of these men who sailed for Europe, leaving in his brother's care a parrot, of which he was very fond. All the way across the Atlantic he worried about the bird, and no sooner had he landed at Liverpool than he sent over this cablegram to his brother: "Be sure and feed the parrot." And the brother cabled back: "Have fed him, but he's hungry again. What shall I do next?"

A WANTON ACTION.

By Kit Clyde.

"I say, Mat, who was that fresh-looking girl I saw you on the avenue with to-day?"

"Oh—fresh-looking girl—you must mean Miss Springer," Mat Lewis drawled lazily out.

"She don't belong in New York?"

"No."

"Nor even in a very large city?"

"No."

"What is the meaning of these short answers? Nothing serious, I hope. You haven't fallen a victim to the naked little god, after all, have you?"

Mat Lewis laughed.

He also flushed just a little.

He belonged to a little set—just ten in number—who made it a cardinal principle never to allow themselves to entertain for any woman more than a mere friendly regard.

It was because of this that his friend joked him. Usually the best of feeling existed between these ten boon companions, and none of them ever took offense when being joked with by the others.

Knowing that all that passed would be in strict confidence, Mat Lewis would not generally have answered so briefly. He would have gone on to describe the lady about whom he was being joked, and, ten chances to one, would have mimicked her peculiarities.

But in this instance he refrained from doing so, and, as we have seen, replied in monosyllables.

Naturally enough, the others took the cue from his silence, and many of their witticisms bore rather hard on him.

At last he was goaded into stoutly defending himself from the charge of having surrendered his heart at discretion to a bread-and-butter miss from the country.

One thing led to another.

Some one offered a wager that inside of a year Miss Springer would be Mrs. Mat Lewis.

Gages of different descriptions were thrown down, and banter after banter was forced on the escort of Miss Springer.

Exactly how it came about Lewis could not tell. He only knew that he had wildly accepted a bet, which he would have given worlds to be able to retreat from without doing that thing which is so hard for a man—backing down from a positively asserted position.

He went home that night angrier with himself than he had ever been in his life before.

"Confound that unlucky encounter with Smith! If he hadn't seen me with Elsie Springer, this would never have happened."

He clenched his fist, as if he would like to have struck himself, and then groaned.

Although Elsie Springer was a country girl, as a matter of fact she was as well-bred and as highly cultivated in the amenities of social life, as to be able to put to the blush not a few of the acknowledged arbiters on points of etiquette.

And she was highly educated, spoke French with a fair accent, was an excellent musician, and sang contralto almost divinely.

And, withal, she was as modest and good as she was cultivated.

Mat Lewis had been attracted to her side the first evening they met each other.

That was now several months past, and during this space

of time he had not been an infrequent caller on Miss Springer. He had also taken her out a few times, and, until this day, had been fortunate enough to keep the little affair from the knowledge of his "set."

He had really begun to believe himself invulnerable to charms feminine, and after meeting Elsie, though willing to admit that he felt a pleasure in being in her company, he would have flouted the idea of entertaining toward her a more serious feeling than friendship.

But, during that badinage concerning Elsie, after he had committed himself to the performance of an extremely foolish thing, his heart had asserted itself, and bearing down all the opposition raised by cold and calculating reason, said:

"You love that woman as you have never before loved any one."

And when he reached home and looked inward on his most secret feelings he knew that it was the truth.

He groaned aloud, and paced the floor with nervous step and anguished face.

He had made a wager that he would take Elsie to a noted dancing hall, and while there would give the other parties to the wager a glimpse of her face.

He called himself all manner of harsh names—called himself a brute, a cowardly wretch, but he could not bear to think of the laugh at his expense in case he backed out.

He knew he could inveigle Elsie into the place, innocent as she was of the wickedness of the metropolis, and he believed he could get her out again without her suspecting the manner of place she had entered.

But, now that he knew that he loved her, his sense of honor more forcibly rebelled against his taking advantage of her innocence, and trust in him.

And, with a new light shed over many incidents and words of Elsie's, he began to think it possible, even probable, that she loved him.

He called to see her the next evening, and when he left the house he felt sure that Elsie did love him before all the world.

"I will first win my wager," he said, hoarsely, "and then the 'set' can go to blazes! I believe she cares for me, and I know that I do for her. If she will have me, we will become husband and wife."

Foolish Mat.

Then, when he had thus made up his mind, he should have forfeited his wager, out of respect for the woman he thought of marrying, if for no other reason.

But few people can stand being laughed at, and Mat less than many others, and he took a false step.

He called in a carriage the next evening, according to arrangement, to take Elsie to the theater.

When the play was over, and Elsie had taken her place in the carriage, Mat gave the driver a few orders in a low tone.

"We will get out here," Mat said, when the carriage drew up to the curbstone and halted.

"We are not home yet?" Elsie inquiringly said.

"No, nor shall we return home until we have had some refreshments. But before getting the latter I have taken the liberty of bringing you here to witness one of the gayest scenes of our city life."

"How—what do you mean?" came wonderingly from Elsie. "It is not—surely——"

"Have no fear," Mat soothingly said. "I would not take you anywhere that would be improper."

And she trusted him, and entered the place. He had not told her an actual falsehood, for the place was one where all kinds and classes mingle—the good and the bad, with all the intermediate grades. And yet it was not such a place as a refined lady would wish to enter.

He suggested that she should drop her veil, and while she thought it a singular request, she complied with it.

Mat Lewis glanced around.

He saw his friends, and a triumphant gleam flashed into his eyes. And yet at the same time there was an ache in his heart.

Never mind—let it go! During the ride to Elsie's house he would redeem her name from any tarnish it might now receive—for he meant to tell of his love, to call her his own.

His friends gradually drew near, as if by accident and not design.

Mat was about to brush aside her veil, as if by accident, when he was spared the necessity of doing so.

"Let's see your face once," said a woman's voice, with a laugh accompanying the words. "Nobody has any business here, if she is ashamed of having her face seen," and Elsie's veil was drawn forcibly back.

One frightened but penetrating glance Elsie bestowed on her who had taken such a bold step, and then she knew the truth.

Mat would have come to her assistance, but she waved him back, as she turned on him a face no longer rosy and soft in expression, but like marble in color, as well as in rigidity and coldness.

The only animation was in her eyes, and they flashed like stars of fire.

"Mr. Lewis, I pray Heaven that I may be charitable enough to acquit you of all evil intention. Yet, for all, I can only consider this a wanton action, a brutal deception practiced on an innocent and unsuspecting girl."

She turned proudly away from him, and with regal hauteur drew down her veil and crossed the floor in the direction of the door, through which she disappeared.

Soon Mat darted after her.

His carriage stood before the door, and Elsie had vanished. She had not deigned to use the carriage he had procured.

He hoped to overtake her, and hurried along on foot, anxious to make some explanation concerning his monstrous conduct.

But he saw no more of her.

"Lost—lost forever!" he moaned, as he that night flung himself on his bed, as miserable a being as ever drew the breath of life.

He determined to go and see her, tell her the truth, and throw himself on her mercy.

"Not at home," the servant said, when he rang the bell. "Not at home," until he knew there was no use of calling more.

Then he wrote to her, but his letter was returned, unopened.

The next he heard of her was in an indirect manner, and was to the effect that she had brought to a conclusion her lengthy visit at her uncle's and had returned to her country home.

"It was a wanton action," he repeated to himself, until the words became stereotyped on his brain—until they were a part of his being, and were in his mind night and day.

And, looking back, he could not say that the anguish he suffered—that the loss of the woman he loved—was not his own fault.

And while he suffered in silence, Elsie went to her country home, her roses gone, her step less light than it used to be, but striving ever to bury her sorrows by sharing those of other people.

And then a noble-hearted man came to her, and offered her his heart and his hand. He was wealthy; he placed his purse at her disposal, and in this she saw the means of doing even greater good.

She told him that she had no affection to give him—that her heart was dead.

"I will take you as you are," he said, and Elsie became his wife.

It was a bitter hour to Mat Lewis when he heard of her marriage.

"It is no more than I deserve," he sadly moaned, and went on living his solitary life in expiation of his wanton action.

Years passed on.

He heard at last of the death of Elsie's husband, and something like a gleam of hope entered his darkened heart.

And then, just after she had put on second mourning, Elsie returned home one day, to find her little Willie prattling to a gentleman whom she did not recognize at the first glance.

But when he arose and came toward her with outstretched hand and pleading eyes, she recognized Mat Lewis and started back, the look of surprise gradually giving place to one of intense scorn.

"Elsie—Elsie——"

"Sir!" said she, "by what right do you presume to thus speak to me?"

"By the right of my love!" he quickly replied, determined that now she must at least learn of his love, and hear the explanation which had been on his lips for years.

"Your love?" and she clutched at her heart, while the color deserted her face, leaving it waxen white.

"Yes, my love! I have loved you since long before that accursed night, and was going to open my heart to you on our way home. You would not see me, you returned my letter unopened, and I now demand as a right that you should hear the explanation—hear the story of a weak man's folly."

And then, without reserve, he told her the plain, unvarnished truth; and she could not but believe him, when she saw that impassioned and earnest face and pleading eyes.

"And you have been true to your love for me during these long years?" she said dreamily, and yet in an agitated tone.

"I have. And, Elsie, I once was certain that your heart beat responsive to mine. Does it do so still?"

"The boy—my Willie?" Elsie said.

"He is only a child, and will not understand. Speak—tell me, are you going to send me forth again to live a lonely life, or will you bless it by joining yours with it?"

She had loved this man. But she had thought her heart pulseless now. She was undeceived when she saw him, when she heard his voice, and somehow she found herself in his arms, heard him call her his darling, and knew that a void in her own life was filled at last.

"I like him," Willie emphatically said afterward. "He'll make a jolly new papa."

Both were happy, for they loved each other; but neither can look toward the past without a shudder, for it brings back painful recollections of the anguish they both suffered because of a wanton action.

With every big robbery reported in hotels furniture manufacturers come to the front with the boast that, wherever else the robber may have hidden himself, it certainly wasn't under the bed, because beds nowadays are built too low for even the thinnest of villains to hide under them. "For many years losses of money and jewelry," said a furniture manufacturer the other day, "were attributed indirectly at least to the bed, which was built high enough to afford protection to the thief. Finally, in order to save the good name of that necessary piece of furniture we decided to build it so low that not even an infant can crawl under it, thereby compelling the enterprising burglar to seek a hiding place elsewhere."

(Continued from page 16.)

The worshippers at once made ready for a dance.

Those who were not dancing ranged themselves along the walls, leaving the floor space for those who were.

Some danced in couples, the men whirling the women around furiously; others took to jiggling. Another such a comical sight Alice had never seen.

The Voodoo Queen beat time with her foot.

As the dance continued the dancers grew more and more excited.

They shouted and yelled and it seemed a wonder that the police did not come in on them, but the house stood between two factories, and there were factories across the way.

Suddenly the bell rang again.

The playing instantly ceased. So did the dancing.

Every one straightened up at once and silence followed.

"If we could only get out," whispered Celia. "I am almost tsified."

"It would never be safe to attempt it," replied Alice. "We can only wait."

The Voodoo Queen now closed her eyes and stood motionless.

Suddenly and without opening her eyes a name was pronounced.

A very black man advanced and stepped on the stage, taking good care to keep at a respectful distance from the snake.

Madam spoke to him in French.

She appeared to be delivering a message from the spirit of some one dead.

The man asked a few questions, which were answered.

He then returned to the audience and another was called up and got a message.

At length Celia's turn came.

"The yellow lady standing by the door!" cried the Queen, pointing directly at her, but not opening her eyes.

Celia seemed to hesitate, but she finally went up.

The message she got purported to be from a dead sister, who told her that she was going to have a stroke of good luck; that she would soon be married to a man darker than herself, and so on, in the usual style.

She had no sooner returned than the finger of the Voodoo Queen pointed at Alice, who had sincerely hoped that she might escape attention of this sort.

She walked boldly upon the stage, however.

Madam Gomier's eyes winked rapidly, but did not open.

"Something wrong, something wrong!" she muttered, in French.

It made Alice terribly nervous.

Discovery might mean all sorts of trouble. She waited, for silence followed.

Suddenly the woman gave a scream.

"A spy! A white woman disguised as a man!" she shrilly cried.

The worst had happened!

Alice knew not what to do.

There was a general cry of indignation.

Several pressed forward.

Two big fellows, as black as possible, jumped on the stage.

"Back!" cried the Voodoo Queen, opening her eyes now.

"Back! Do not touch her. Leave her to me. Bring the woman who was with her here!"

Celia was seized by two and hustled on to the stage.

Immediately the curtain was drawn and the Voodoo Queen called out: "Good night!"

Alice could hear the worshippers trooping out of the room.

Madam Gomier eyed her fixedly.

Then turning to Celia, she said:

"You have basely deceived me. This is the same white woman who came with you yesterday to my hous, is it not so?"

"It is so," replied Alice, speaking for herself. "Do not blame her, it is all my fault."

"Who are you?" demanded the fortune-teller. "Why did you do this thing?"

"You, who know everything, should be able to tell who I am without asking," replied Alice, boldly.

"Aye! and I can tell!" cried the woman. "You are a detective. You seek a stolen child. So much my power tells me. Is it not true?"

"It is true."

"I knew it! You can't deceive me. For what you have done you deserve to die. So does your companion, who has betrayed me. Look behind you!"

Alice turned and saw the two colored men who had jumped upon the stage.

One leered at her and showed all his teeth.

"Away with them!" cried the Voodoo Queen. "I will deal with their case later. Know, young woman, that according to the law of our band there is but one punishment for what you have done and that is death."

CHAPTER VIII.

TURNING THE TABLES ON THE DOCTOR.

Old King Brady, standing before the guns of his captors, inwardly reviled that unfortunate sneeze.

"You will do well, sir," he said, "to think twice before you kill me. As you truly observed just now, I am a man of some prominence. Trouble may follow if you go too far in this business."

"I am well aware of it," was the reply, "yet I have to do the best I can for myself and for those who are associated with me. However, I will make it as easy as possible for you.

He spoke rapidly in French to his companions.

Instantly two laid down their rifles and seized the old detective, the third still keeping him covered.

One held his arms behind him, the other laid his hand on the old detective's throat, but did not attempt to choke him.

Meanwhile, the rifle was thrust directly against his heart.

It was a ticklish situation.

Old King Brady did not dare to move an inch, and any further talk seemed useless.

The tall man now got out a morocco case, which contained many vials.

Selecting one he poured a portion of its contents, a white liquid, on the floor, saying something in French.

The man who had his hand on Old King Brady's throat, threw his head suddenly back and pinched him until he was forced to open his mouth.

Then what was expected followed.

The remaining contents of the bottle was poured down the old detective's throat.

The result came quickly.

While they still held him, Old King Brady's head began to spin and everything began to fade away about him.

Complete unconsciousness quickly followed.

It must have lasted for a considerable time, as Old King Brady figured it out afterward, and yet it seemed but a moment when he again awoke to life, deeply confused and with a badly aching head.

He was now in total darkness, lying on an uneven floor. "Where in the world am I?" he asked, himself.

The floor seemed to be moving beneath him.

At first Old King Brady attributed this to his own condition, but soon he discovered that it was real.

"Why, I must be on the water," he said to himself. "Can this be a ship's hold? It smells that way, too."

He tried to get on his feet and although he did not succeed in doing it then, he did a little later, and then he felt for his flashlight first thing.

He did not find it.

Everything had been taken from him but a roll of bills in a secret pocket, some matches and a few other things of no importance to him in his present fix.

The matches fitted in all right, though.

Old King Brady struck one and found himself, sure enough, in the hold of some vessel.

What he had taken for the floor were long cases on which he had been lying; there were many of them, also other cargo; the old detective found himself completely hemmed in a comparatively narrow space.

But above him was a hatch, so it would not be difficult to reach him if any one was disposed to come to his aid.

The vessel was not moving. Old King Brady was soon able to determine that it was tied to a wharf.

At last the hatch was raised and light streamed down on Old King Brady's prison.

A man looked down through the hatch.

"And are yez there, boss?" he called.

"Am I likely to be anywhere else?" snapped the old detective, who, as may be readily imagined, was in no very pleasant humor by this time.

"Don't be grumpy!" said the man, who was a red-faced Irishman, wearing an officer's cap with gold lace around it. "I am the only friend you've got on board this craft, where there's only a lot of haythen nagurs. Is it hungry you are about now?"

"Indeed I am. Do you propose to feed me?"

"Sure an' I do, an' I'd a-done it before only I had no chanst: Look out! I'm going to let the basket down."

He was as good as his word, for he lowered a basket containing good food, a plate, a knife and fork, a bottle of coffee and another of water.

"Ate, drink and be merry!" he called. "I'd leezed you the loan of a lantern if I dared, but I dassent, so yezse will have to ate in the dark."

"One moment, friend, before you close the hatch!" called the old detective. "Are you the captain of this craft?"

"No, only the engineer."

"What do they mean to do with me?"

"Now, boss, that's more than I can say. I've entered me protest ag'in the whole business, but I've been over-ruled."

"Am I in the power of a tall, stylish-looking colored man?"

"You are so. Dr. Lambier, or the ginerel, as the nagurs call him."

"Do you know who I am?"

"Sure an' I don't."

"Well, then, I am a detective. My name is Brady."

"Not Old King Brady?"

"The same."

"Sure it's a bad job. I only wish I could help you. I—hush! I am being watched. I must go. Later on, perhaps."

The hatch was instantly closed and Old King Brady left to eat his meal in the dark.

Old King Brady now remembered that one, Dr. Lambier, had been for a short time president of Haiti, a few years before.

On that unfortunate island, where revolution is a continuous performance, one had then occurred, and Dr. Lambier narrowly escaped with his life.

It was all plain. The rifles, the drum, the standards, the steamer.

That the doctor had been organizing a filibustering expedition was clear.

"I certainly have butted into a bad shop," muttered the old detective. "They have seen my Secret Service shield—in fact, they have swiped it—I am the last man they will be likely to let up on. Indeed, the mystery is that they did not kill me outright."

He ate his dinner and slept.

Later the hatch was opened again and the friendly Irish voice of the engineer was heard, but now it was dark.

"Hello! Are yez all right down dere?" was asked.

"As right as I can be, under the circumstances," replied the old detective.

"And do yez want some more grub?"

"I shouldn't mind."

"T'row me de rope an' I'll haul up de basket."

Old King Brady gave the rope a toss and the engineer deftly caught it.

Up went the basket and again the hatch was closed, to be soon opened again and more food came down.

"What's your name?" asked Old King Brady.

"Jim Flanagan."

"Flanagan, I don't know how you are fixed this trip, but there'll be a fat check blowing your way if you can only help me out of this."

"I don't doubt it, boss. I've heard a lot about you. I know you are rich and very liberal, but I'm afraid there's little I can do."

"You lack courage, that's what's the matter with you, Flanagan. Have you a moment to talk?"

"Yes, I have now. Dey have all gone ashore, except a few of de sailors, and dey won't be interfering wif' me, so."

"What steamer is this, or is it a steamer?"

"It is. She's de Pelican."

"Who's the captain?"

"He's a German, name of Gratz. You needn't expect not'in' from him. Sure, he's a crook from Crookville and don't you forget it."

Flanagan bent lower still as he said it, and covered his mouth with his hand.

"When do they intend to sail?"

"To-morrow."

"Look here, Flanagan, my influence is great. I will guarantee you three hundred dollars if you will help me to frustrate the plans of this Dr. Lambier."

"I dunno. Dere's my license to be considered."

"I guarantee that you shall not lose it. I suppose you know that I am a Secret Service man?"

"Yes, I know, boss. Dat is understood."

"Think it over," said Old King Brady. "I don't want to go to Haiti, nor do you, under the circumstances. How long have I been here?"

"You came here late last night, boss."

"What time is it now?"

"Nine o'clock."

"And just when do you sail?"

"At daylight to-morrow."

"Are the negroes aboard?"

"They all were aboard, but they all went away again to attend some sort of meeting. Dey all speak Frinch, so you see I don't understand just what dey are saying."

"And the captain?"

"He's ashore, too."

"You want to think it over, Flanagan, and to decide quick. There's no time to be lost."

"Ate yer supper and I'll be back again for de basket. Mebbe by dat time I will have made up my mind," said the engineer.

"In the meantime, for heaven sake lend me a lantern," replied the old detective. "It is no joke being shut in here in the dark."

"Well, I'll do that for luck," said the engineer, and he went away, quickly returning with a lantern, which he lowered into the hold, then closing the hatch and going away.

The old detective ate his supper and felt better.

An hour passed and brought no Flanagan, but shortly afterward the hatch was raised and Flanagan's face once more appeared.

"I tink I'll risk it, but I must desert. I can't stop here."

"And you are going to set me free?"

"Yes, but what will you do?"

"Have this steamer promptly libeled and the doctor arrested."

"Can you do that to-night? Dey sail at daybreak?"

"Can they sail without you, Flanagan? Can they get another engineer to-night?"

"Faith an' dey can't, so!"

"Then be sensible and all will be well. Get me out of this, quick."

"I'll do it when the watch turns in," said the engineer, "and dat's in an hour. I've got to fix it so's dere will be nobody on deck, and I tink I can do dat same."

And with this Old King Brady had to be content.

At the end of an hour Flanagan returned with a stout rope.

This he lowered and Old King Brady, making it fast under his arms, the engineer pulled him up out of the hold.

"We want to be quick," he said. "Just for the minute the deck is deserted. I am all ready to go."

He had his grip with him, and hurrying Old King Brady to the gangplank they went ashore.

The old detective, who knows his New York as few men know it, quickly took in his surroundings.

"Foot of Bridge street, Brooklyn," he remarked, looking around.

"Dat's right," replied Flanagan, "and we want to get out of it just as quick as ever we can. When do I get my money?"

"Now," said Old King Brady, and he produced his roll and handed Flanagan three hundred dollars.

They hurried up Bridge street.

"Which way are you heading?" demanded Old King Brady.

"For de bridge. I live in New York," replied Flanagan.

They hurried on towards Sands street.

Just as they turned the corner, who should they run into but the very man the engineer least wished to meet.

It was the doctor himself.

Old King Brady promptly pounced upon him, Flanagan, without even stopping to say good-by, took to his heels.

Old King Brady got him by the throat and was having the time of his life when two colored men dashed up alongside of him.

It was startling enough at first.

But what was his relief to discover that they were Julius and Harry, in disguise.

"Hold him, governor! I'll handcuff him!" the latter cried.

"On with the bracelets, Harry!" the old detective said.

And snatching the revolver from his partner's hand he left him free to act.

The doctor was promptly handcuffed.

The doctor concealed his manacled hands under his overcoat and they started for the station.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PUOT REVEALED.

Alice was in despair at the turn affairs had taken. What to do or say she did not know.

As for Celia, she showed signs of fainting, as one of the negroes clutched her by the arm.

The Voodoo Queen spoke rapidly in the jargon which neither of them could understand.

Then they were led back of the stage through a door, up a flight of back stairs into an attic.

Here the door was locked upon them and they were left there under the eaves in the dark.

"Now we have certainly got ourselves into trouble," sighed Celia. "What is going to happen to us in this horrible house?"

"Impossible to say," replied Alice. "What puzzles me is to understand how that woman came to see through my disguise, which every one else considered so perfect."

"She must be a witch."

"Do you really believe in such things?"

"How else can you account for it?"

"It is past accounting for, but we must not be credulous enough to believe in such nonsense. The question is, what are we to do?"

"I have my electric flashlight. It will show us our surroundings, at all events."

The light produced, Alice saw that the garret was but a small affair, the roof sloping only on one side.

On the other side it was flat, and there were little windows in front.

The place was unplastered, and in the flat part of the roof there was a scuttle, high up out of reach.

There was an old sofa in one corner and a couple of bottomless chairs. This seemed to be all the furniture the place contained.

Alice pulled the sofa forward and they sat down upon it.

Scarcely had they done so when a movement outside the door was heard. It was opened and the Voodoo Queen entered, accompanied by one of the coons, who carried a lantern.

The woman was in the same fantastic dress, but she had cut out the snake.

Her face wore an expression of sullen perplexity.

She paused close to the door, against which the coon placed his back.

"Now, then, I wish you would tell me what all this means," she said, in English. "I don't understand why you should come bothering around me."

On the spur of the moment Alice decided to comply with this request, and tell the truth.

Whether this was wise or otherwise the sequel will show.

"Madam Gomier," she said, "since your miraculous powers tell you so much, I should suppose that they would have already told you that I am a detective and that my business with you has nothing to do with your snake worshipping affairs, but something totally different."

"It tells me nothing of the sort," replied the woman. "My power, as you call it, does tell me some things, but it falls down when it comes to others. I wish you would explain. Personally, I have no desire to harm you, but I want you to understand that I am not altogether mistress of the situation here."

"Then I shall speak out plainly," replied Alice. "Did you ever hear of a man named Henry Rollman?"

The Voodoo Queen gave a convulsive start.

"Shall I say more before this man?" demanded Alice.

"He speaks no English," replied Madam Gomier, hastily, and she added:

"You are after a missing child?"

"I am."

"Employed by Dr. Lambier?"

"I never heard of Dr. Lambier. I am employed by Rufus Rollman, the uncle of the boy."

"Yes, yes! Why does he want the child all of a sudden? It is two years since his brother was lost at sea. I have not heard that he ever made any effort to find his nephew."

"Probably you know the story of the child's disappearance better than I can tell it. He believed little Henry dead."

"And dead he would have been but for me!" cried the Voodoo Queen, excitedly. "It was I who saved his life."

"He was stolen by Voodoo worshippers?"

"Don't say stolen. He was dedicated to the sacred serpent before his birth. Had his mother lived it would have been the same. She would have been forced to give him up. But for me he would have been sacrificed. You don't know Haiti. You don't know the risk I ran to save him."

"And it was you who saved his life, then? Mr. Rollman only recently learned that he had been saved."

"Yes, I did it. I had to fly from the island for my life, too. That is how I came to be in New York. But for that I should have been—but no matter. It does not concern you."

"A Voodoo Queen in Haiti, I suppose you would say," added Alice, "but as to the boy, does he live?"

"He does. When I reached New York I was penniless. I could not support the child, so I was obliged to place him with a man who had known his mother's people, and who was able to care for him and educate him."

"And is he with that man now?"

"He is not. I don't mind telling you who the man was. His name is Dr. Lambier. He was once president of Haiti."

"And where is the child?"

"I shall not tell you. You tell me why Mr. Rollman wants him. Is there money coming to him, then?"

"There is, as I understand it."

"And what is your real name?"

"My name is Alice Montgomery. I am connected with the Brady Detective Bureau."

"I am glad you told me this, Miss Montgomery. It puts an altogether different face on the matter. I will think it over; perhaps I can help you to get the child, but if I do so you must promise to do something for me."

"I will if I can, I assure you," replied Alice. "What is it you want?"

"This Dr. Lambier."

"But I don't know the man."

"My chief, Old King Brady, is a very powerful man. If you can give me any hold on Dr. Lambier—"

"I can and I will. You have been frank with me, Miss Montgomery. Let me be equally so with you. I knew Mr. Rufus Rollman was after little Henry, and the man who told me is now dead."

"Do you refer to Nicholas Mendies, the Haitian Secret Service agent?"

"I do."

"He was murdered."

"He was, and I know by whose orders, but I don't know who actually killed him nor does it matter. Dr. Lambier is responsible for the crime."

"Why did he kill him?" questioned Alice.

"I am coming to that," replied Madam Gomier. "You must understand that the man was very powerful in Haiti."

He was killed for two reasons. First, because he possessed proofs of little Henry Rollman's identity, which he stole from me; papers, letters and so on. Dr. Lambier knew this and wanted them, for he intended to declare the child alive and have himself appointed guardian by the Haitian courts; this done, he would have claimed his share of the Rollman estate on the island of Jamaica, but he had another reason for killing Mendies, which was more powerful still."

Alice remained silent as the woman paused.

"You must understand," continued Madam Gomier, "that Dr. Lambier was once president of Haiti. A revolution came and he was chased out. He wants to be president again, so he has organized a filibustering expedition and to-morrow he intends to sail and to capture the country if we can. Mendies got wind of this, no doubt. The doctor knew that he knew it and so had him killed. Now you know as much about the business as I do."

"All except the whereabouts of the child," said Alice.

"And that I am not telling yet. May later. Have your detectives break up this filibuster business and arrest the doctor—then come and ask me to produce the child."

"Has the doctor chartered a steamer?" asked Alice.

"He has, and she lies at the foot of Bridge street, here in Brooklyn," was the reply. "He is taking about fifty men down to Haiti with him. You saw some of them at my seance to-night. Can you put a stop to all this? Can you put the doctor behind the bars?"

"Easily," replied Alice. "Set me free, Madam Gomier, and that steamer will never sail."

"I'd do it right now if I dared," replied the Voodoo Queen, "but there are others in the house who will object. I shall have to bring them around to my way of thinking and that may take a little time. They might even kill me if I did not do this."

"Then we must wait?"

"It is absolutely necessary, but let us hope it won't be for long. I am going now, Miss Montgomery. You shall see me back again soon."

She left the garret then and the door was again bolted.

They waited an hour, but the Voodoo Queen did not show up.

Celia grew more and more nervous.

"Let us see what we can do towards escaping," Alice said.

"I don't see how you can possibly escape with the door bolted," declared Celia.

"At least we can try. See that scuttle?"

"Yes, but you can't get up to it."

"I am not so sure. Help me to turn this sofa on end."

It was easily done.

By the aid of one of the old chairs, Alice managed to get upon the ended sofa and, to her satisfaction, found that she could easily reach the scuttle.

It was secured only by a couple of hooks.

Opening it, she drew herself up and with some difficulty managed to climb out upon the roof.

"Wait where you are till I see if there is any use in this," she called down to Celia, and then disappeared from the opening.

A moment later Celia, to her immense alarm, heard her scream.

Following the scream came a revolver shot.

What had happened to Alice now?

CHAPTER X.

STORMING THE CASTLE OF THE VOODOO QUEEN.

The Bradys walked on down Sands street with Dr. Lambier, handcuffed, between them.

Julius trailed on behind.

He and Harry had been shadowing the Haitian when he ran into Old King Brady.

And now Dr. Lambier began his talk.

"You see, Mr. Brady," he said, "I am a man of sense. One can't have all he wants in this world. You have learned some of my secrets and have turned the tables on me. I want to turn them back again if I can."

"The quickest way to turn them is to get to the point, I should imagine," replied the old detective, seeing that he had to do with a long-winded man.

"Exactly," continued the doctor. "Now, the point is right here. I am willing to trade secret for secret. You have been aboard that steamer. I assume that my engineer turned traitor and set you free, from the way he ran. Doubtless he told you all he knows, which isn't much. Now if you will keep your mouth shut, set me free and let the steamer sail, I will tell you something which you want to know."

"You are asking a good deal, it seems to me, considering the way you have treated me," replied the old detective. "But go on with your story. I don't see the point yet."

"The point is just here. You have been employed by Rufus Rollman, of Kingston, Jamaica, to look up a missing boy, child of his brother—is it not so?"

"It is so."

"Then let me tell you that the boy has been living with me for the past two years, here in New York."

"How came the boy in your possession, then?"

"I bought him from the woman who saved his life when he was about to be sacrificed to the sacred serpent at a Voodoo seance, down in Haiti—doubtless you know the story."

"Very probably, but I must have the boy and the proofs in hand first before I talk."

"I can give you the proofs as soon as I can visit the cabin of the Pelican, but the boy I can't give you. Yesterday he was kidnapped. This young man whose resemblance to one of my men is most remarkable, suggested that I employ a good detective to find him. I know of none better than yourself."

"Have you any idea what became of the boy?"

"My theory is that the woman from whom I bought him had the kidnapping done. Her name is Madam Gomier. She lives at No. 515 West 5th street. Among the colored people of New York she is known as the Voodoo Queen."

"What about this, Harry?" demanded Old King Brady. "Is he giving it to me straight?"

"I believe it," replied Harry. "As he gave it to you now, so he gave it to me awhile ago when he believed me to be his friend."

"What do you say, Harry?" asked the old detective. "Shall we take him to the steamer?"

"You know best, governor. You say you have been on the steamer. I have not."

It was rather a puzzler for Old King Brady.

"Wait," said Old King Brady, "we will decide this point right now."

He took out his memorandum book, wrote a few hasty lines and tore out the page, handing it to Harry, who produced his flashlight and read it.

"All right," he said.

"Now, doctor," continued Old King Brady, "I am going back to the steamer with you, with my man Julius as a bodyguard. If in one-half hour I am not at a certain place, the Secret Service commissioner will be telephoned by my partner at his private house, giving full particulars about you and your affairs."

"And otherwise not if I help you to get the child?"

"In answer to that I order your handcuffs off. Harry, remove them."

The answer seemed to satisfy Dr. Lambier.

Harry removed the handcuffs and they parted, Old King Brady and Julius accompanying the doctor to the foot of Bridge street.

Arrived at the wharf, they went aboard the Pelican.

Three black sailors constituted the watch.

They seemed surprised to see Old King Brady, but the doctor pushed past them without even looking around, and led the way directly to the cabin, where he proceeded to light a lamp.

Then, opening a locker, he produced an old leather wallet, from which he took several folded papers.

"Here you are, Mr. Brady," he said. "Certificate of the birth of Henry Rollman, Jr.; certificate of baptism, copy of mother's marriage certificate, and so on. Sworn statement of Chloe Duprez, once known as the Voodoo Queen of Haiti, that the boy was rescued from the secret Voodoo camp by Elise Gomier, her assistant. My own sworn statement that I bought the child from the Gomier woman. Is any further proof needed?"

"I think not," replied the old detective, running his eye over the papers. "I will take charge of these. Now, the next thing is to find the boy."

"In that matter the only thing I can do is what I told you," replied the doctor. "My men are almost all off, attending Madam Gomier's seance. Where it is being held I know no more than you do, for I make it a practice to be deaf, dumb and blind to all this Voodoo nonsense. They will not return to-night. I can't sail to-morrow. Shall have to look up another engineer. I will question some of these men in the morning and report to you by telephone what I learn. Rest assured that I shall do exactly as I promise. I am a man of my word."

He seemed perfectly sincere and certainly his manner was most business-like.

But Old King Brady felt that he had had much rather act that night if there was any possible means of doing it.

"What about those men I saw on deck?" he asked.

"They are not Voodooists. They are three men I picked up in New York."

"Do you positively know that they are not Voodooists? These matters are closely guarded secrets, you know."

The doctor appeared to reflect for a minute, and then said:

"You are right, Mr. Brady. I am not positively certain. I cannot be. I will go on deck and see what can be done."

"The expense is on me and comes out of Mr. Rollman," said the old detective, and he handed the doctor fifty dollars, adding:

"I suppose I get back what was stolen from me?"

The doctor eyed the big roll in surprise, and perhaps with some regret.

"The money we took from you was divided among those three men," he said. "One hundred and fifty, was it not?"

"About that, as I remember."

"I will write you a check for one hundred dollars. Take back this money. As for your other belongings, I have them here."

He opened the locker and handed Old King Brady his revolvers, flashlight and so on.

Then the doctor went on deck.

They waited some little time, and then the doctor returned.

"Well, we win," he said, and he gave the number on Hudson avenue to which Alice and Celia Renaud went.

"Now, hurry, for heaven's sake, or your partner will be telephoning the Secret Service commissioner," he anxiously said.

Old King Brady and Julius then promptly left.

They had arranged to meet Harry at the corner of Bridge and Sands streets, and he was on hand.

They hurried to the foot of Hudson avenue, where they readily located the house.

There was a light to be seen in one of the windows of the upper story, otherwise the place was in darkness.

"Now, then, how do we handle ourselves?" questioned Harry.

"You and I will go directly in," replied the old detective. "If we don't come out in fifteen minutes, Julius, you go to the police station, give the sergeant my card and tell him to send men around here to pull the place."

He went on to tell Julius where the station was located, and then he and Harry ascended the rickety steps.

The door was locked. Old King Brady pounded upon it. No answer came for several minutes.

Then when he knocked again a window was raised and a coon looked out.

"Wha' youse want dis time ob night?" he cried. "Why fo' youse come botherin' roun' when fok's is abed an' 'sleep?"

"We want to see Madam Gomier. We have important business with her," the old detective replied.

"No sich a pusson heah, boss."

"I know better," replied the old detective, sternly. "Open the door or I shall break in!"

Slam! went the window, but the door was not opened.

"I hear them sneaking downstairs," whispered Harry.

"I think they mean mischief."

Old King Brady looked around.

It was a cold night. This end of the block was a lonely spot. There was not a soul in sight.

"You are right," he said. "It would be an easy matter

to do us up here and drop us off the end of the dock without any one being the wiser. We must act."

Up went the old detective's foot, and in flew the door with a broken lock.

Three coons went tumbling back with it.

At the same instant Madam Gomier appeared on the stairs.

She still wore her mystic robe and the snake was coiled about her neck.

Certainly she was a weird-looking object.

"Don't give them a chance to draw their razors!" cried Harry. "Sail in!"

It was three against two, but the Bradys were more than a match for the negroes, and knocked them down, rapidly.

The Voodoo Queen stood on the stairs with a lamp in her hand, yelling at the detectives, furiously.

Now was the time the Bradys drew their revolvers.

In a moment they were complete masters of the situation.

CHAPTER XI.

THIS TIME IT IS ALICE IN THE TOILS.

We have already stated that the castle of the Voodoo Queen was located between two factories, but we failed to mention that the one on the south side, which was an old and dilapidated brick building, was in bad repair and had a sign on its wall announcing that the property was for sale.

Opening on the roof of the old house there was a window in the wall of this factory from which the sash was missing.

This brief explanation is necessary to account for the presence of the undesirable citizen whom Alice encountered on the roof.

She did not see him when she pulled herself up through the scuttle.

Probably he was crouching behind the chimney.

But the instant she attempted to move away from the scuttle he jumped out.

"Oh, you beauty!" he cried. "Come here, honey, an' lemme kiss yo' lilly white hand!"

It isn't often that Alice does the screaming act, which every woman claims as a privilege, but she was so startled that the cry came out unawares.

Instantly she drew her revolver and fired.

Purposely she missed.

Her hope was that the man would beat a retreat through the open window.

It worked just the other way.

Undeterred by the revolver, the fellow made one spring, wrenched the weapon from Alice's hand and struck her a blow on the side of her head with the flat of his own black paw.

The force of the blow nearly knocked Alice off the roof.

Before she could do a thing the coon turned the revolver on her.

"Now, den, dis yere am de time I git yer!" he cried.

"March! climb in troo dat winder. Luk out fo' yerself. Dar's a big open hatchway dar. Doan' yo' tumble into it now."

It was too despairing!

Poor Alice, however, could only yield.

She paused in the dark, just inside the window, expecting the worst.

But this dark case from San Juan Hill seemed to be filled with unexpected happenings.

Once the negro came in through the window his whole manner changed.

"Looker heah," he said, "I know what yo' am a-tinkin' 'bout, yo' tink I'm done gwinter hurt yer, but hit hain't so. I'se gib yo' one good scare. Coz why? To show yo', missy, what I mought be tempted to do 'less yo' do what I want yo' to do. Onerstan' me—say?"

"I understand," replied Alice, but slightly relieved. "What do you want of me, then?"

"Missy," he went on, "when dat ar' ole snake witch wuz a-talkin' to yo' down dar in dat garret, I wuz a-listenin' at a hole in de scuttle. I done heah ebery word she say."

"Ah!"

"Yair."

"And what about it?"

"Dis much about it: She's all for herself, she is."

"So am I—so are you."

"Suah! Well, to come to de p'int. I'se de present garden ob dat dar chile."

"Oh, I see!"

"Yair. I'se got him hid in dis yere building. Yo' want him, Miss 'Tective, doan' yo'?"

"I certainly do."

"Waal, den, how much yo' gib me ef I gib him up to yo'?"

"And let us both go free?"

"Suah t'ing. Would it be any good any oder way?"

"I have no money about me, but I will see that you get a hundred dollars."

"A hundred dollars! Not on yer life! Dat yere boy is hair to a lot ob money. Hit will cost a t'ousand dollars, an' yo' don't 'scape me till I hab de cole cash in mah hand."

He picked up a lantern, struck a match, and lit it.

"Ob coase," he continued, "I doan' expect yer to hab dat much about yer, but youse one ob de Brady 'tectives. Yo' kin git dat much an' mo', so now I'se gwinter lock yer in till we hab a chanst to 'gociate. I'se all bizness, I is. Toddle on ahead now, missy. I'll tell yer how to go."

He directed Alice's course to the floor below.

Here there was a small room partitioned off in one corner.

It had a cot bed in it, also an old chair and a washstand.

"Dis yere am mah room," said the fellow. "Tain't so awful scrumptious, but such as hit ar' I gib hit up to yo'. So mak' yerself at home heah. I shan't 'sturb yer. Tomorrow yo'll gib me a letter to Ole King Brady, he'll gib me de cash and den yo' an' de lilly boy done go free."

That the situation might be much worse was the only comfort Alice could feel.

The door was locked upon her—the partition in which it was set did not quite reach to the ceiling—she was now left alone, but it was not for long.

Within half an hour the man was back, outside the door.

"Say, missy, what yo' name?" he called. "I didn't get dat. Got enough, but I want to know yer name."

"My name is Alice Montgomery."

"'Tis, hey? Dat's a fine name. Say, want to buy an other secret?"

"You must tell me what it is before I can tell whether it's worth buying or not," Alice replied.

"'Bout de murder ob dat ar' French 'tective."

"That secret is worth nothing to me."

"'Tain't, hey? I kinder 'spicioned yo'd say dat. Waal, say, I'll t'row hit in. Nuffin' lak bein' liberal an' gibbin' a baker's dozen, am der? Do yo' know a negro wit' a big nose, what dey calls General Lambier?"

"No, I know no such person myself, but if you really overheard all your Voodoo Queen said to me, you, of course, understand that I know who he is."

"Yair. Waal, dat's de man."

"How do you know?"

"Heered it from a French feller what seen him do de job."

"He shot dat ar' 'tective, an' went troo him. Dat's right."

"It doesn't interest me a bit."

"Don't, hey? Waal, I kinder tort hit might. Good night, Missy Alice. I'se gwine erway now. Won't 'sturb yo' ag'in."

"If you would give me a light I'd be obliged to you," called Alice.

"Say, I'd like to, but I kean't, nokow, for I'se on'y got de one lantern," was the answer, and once again Alice was left alone.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

"Give up your razors, you men!" cried Old King Brady, as he stood over the three coons with a revolver in each hand.

"Go through them, Harry," he added. "And as for you, Madam Gomier, you will stop that noise if you know when you are well off."

"One question," replied the negress, instantly suppressing her cries. "Are you, or are you not, Old King Brady, the detective?"

"I am," said Old King Brady, as surprised at the correct English the woman used as Alice had been.

"Then you are just the person I want to see."

"You see me."

"I will retire to my room. You can wait on me at your leisure."

"I'll be with you in one moment," said the old detective, "but kindly cut out that snake of yours before I come. I have to settle with these friends of yours first."

"Don't harm them and they won't harm you."

She spoke a few hurried words in French.

"Hit's all right, boss," said one of the men. "What the Queen says goes. You are as safe here as you would be in your own house now."

"All the same, we will keep these razors and revolvers until we are leaving," replied the old detective.

Harry had taken a razor and a revolver from each.

They went upstairs, then.

"First door yo' come to, sah!" called the talking coon.

"Everybody is falling over themselves to sell the other side out," whispered the old detective.

"Looks so," replied Harry. "This seems to be the door." It was closed and, to keep on the right side of the woman, Old King Brady knocked.

"Come in, Mr. Brady!" called the Queen.

Her voice was really musical.

Evidently Madam Gomier knew how to handle herself. The Bradys entered.

The room was cheaply furnished and very slovenly.

Madam was seated in a rocking-chair, with a broken back; the snake had disappeared.

"Sit down, gentlemen," said the Voodoo Queen. "I regret the disorder of the room as much as I do your peculiar reception, but I am not the housekeeper here."

The Bradys helped themselves to chairs.

"May I ask to what I owe the honor of this visit?" Madam now inquired.

"You are Madam Gomier?" asked Old King Brady.

"I am."

"Commonly known in New York as the Voodoo Queen?"

"I am, but I want you to distinctly understand that I am no cheap skate fortune-teller, sir. I was educated in a convent, on the island of San Domingo."

"I see you are an educated woman, madam."

"Yes, but it isn't everybody who appreciates the fact. I am also a true clairvoyant. I have asked you a question. You don't have to answer. I can tell you just why you have come."

"Do so, then," replied the old detective, curious to see if she could make good.

"It is about the boy, Henry Rollman. Am I not right?"

"You certainly are."

"You have arrested Dr. Lambier. He has informed you where I was to be found. He has given you the papers which he stole from Nicholas Mendies, the man he murdered. Is it not so?"

"It is true," cried the old detective, more and more surprised at the knowledge which the woman displayed.

"Mr. Rufus Rollman is now in Boston; he has hired you to recover his little nephew in order that he may take him to Jamaica and restore him to his own. Is it not so?" continued the woman.

"It is so, madam. All true as you say."

"Very good. I am only too ready and willing to help you. I have the child."

"Now let me do a little of your clairvoyant business," said the old detective. "You kidnapped the child from Dr. Lambier, to whom you had previously sold him."

"It is true that I parted with the child for money," replied the Queen, "but it was a matter of absolute necessity. I had to live. I had to get established. Money was absolutely necessary, and I had no other way of procuring it than to place the child with one who knew who he was and what his expectations were, and whom I also knew would treat him well. Was there anything so very wrong in that?"

"No, madam, no. But the child? We are taking up your valuable time."

"Wait! Do not think that I am going to restore little

Henry to Rollman without pay. "I expect money, and a lot of it."

"How much?"

"At least a thousand dollars."

"You will get it," promptly replied the old detective, wondering why she had not said five.

"In that case, I am ready to act at your service," continued Madam Gomier.

"But," she added, "you may as well know that I have done you another service to-night."

"And what is that, may I ask?"

"I have saved the life of Miss Alice Montgomery, who, disguised as a man, intruded on our secret ceremonies, readily enough."

"She is here?" cried Harry.

"She is," was the reply, "and she assured me that if I would give up the child I should be liberally dealt with."

"And so you shall, madam. I give you my word for it," the old detective said.

"Enough! Let us go to Miss Montgomery, then," said the Voodoo Queen.

She arose and, opening the door, led the way to the garret.

"She is in there," she said, pointing to a door.

"Listen!" exclaimed Harry. "Something is the matter. I hear her moaning."

"It may be the other," said Madam Gomier, hastily. "Miss Montgomery is cool enough."

She unbolted the door and threw it open.

There lay the artist's model on the floor, moaning; the sofa was turned up on end.

"What in the world is the matter here?" demanded the Voodoo Queen. "Where is Miss Montgomery, then?"

But they could get nothing out of her.

"Evidently getting over a fit of hysterics," said Old King Brady.

He pointed to the sofa.

"You see the road by which she went, Harry!" he exclaimed. "Let us follow—"

"But stay!" he hastily added. "Tell me, madam, where is the child? I must know before I leave you."

"He is in a room in the old factory next door, in charge of the caretaker," Madam Gomier replied.

"A colored man?"

"Yes, but he is perfectly reliable. You need have no fears for the child's safety. I have known the man a long time—but, hush! She is trying to speak!"

It was Celia.

Opening her eyes, she murmured:

"Oh, they shot her! They shot her on the roof!"

This was enough to send the Bradys up through the scuttle, flying.

But there was no dead detective, either male or female, lying on the roof.

"What can have become of her?" questioned Harry.

Old King Brady pointed to the sashless window.

"That's the only road by which she could have gone, unless they threw her from the roof," he remarked.

"Then that is the road we travel!" cried Harry, making for the window.

They both went through into the factory. First, the old detective looked down through the scuttle and told Madam Gomier what they were going to do.

"You will find the man on the floor below," said the Voodoo Queen. "His name is Sam Johnson. Tell him I sent you, and there will be no trouble."

The Bradys, therefore, wasted no time on the floor which they reached through the window, but hastily descended the stairs.

The floor was just one large loft, save for the room partitioned off in the corner.

The detectives hurried to it.

Supposing that Sam Johnson was asleep there, they were not a little surprised to find the door bolted on the outside.

Old King Brady shot the bolts.

"You, again!" called a familiar voice. "Please, please don't come in here just now."

"Alice!" cried Harry.

"Thank goodness you have come!" Alice exclaimed. "I thought it was my black jailer, a horrible man—you can come in, of course, Harry. Where is Old King Brady?"

"Right here, my dear," replied the old detective, throwing open the door.

Alice was standing beside the bed.

"Whatever brought you here?" she exclaimed. "How did you ever find me out?"

Old King Brady explained.

"Then the child is here in this building?" said Alice. "I am not surprised. My jailer told me as much, but I didn't know whether to believe him or not. Let us get on the job at once."

"He is on the ground floor, your Voodoo Queen says," replied Harry.

They hurriedly descended.

As they hit the ground floor a draught of cold air struck them.

Flashing their light about, they saw that the front door leading out on to Hudson avenue stood wide open.

Near it, stretched upon the floor, lay a man.

The Bradys hurried to him.

"That's my jailer!" cried Alice. "Is he dead?"

"Looks enough like it," muttered Old King Brady, bending down over the man and turning him over, for he lay all doubled up on one side.

"Ha! he got the knife!" he exclaimed. "See! Still sticking in his breast!"

It was so!

Here was another murder growing out of the Bradys' dark case from San Juan Hill.

"The child has been stolen again, surest thing!" cried Alice. "This can't mean anything else!"

"I am afraid it is so," said the old detective, "and in that case it can be the work of but one persons—Doctor Lambier.

"And yet I can scarcely believe it after all he said to me," he added. "When I parted with him you would have supposed he was my best friend."

"We want to get on the job," said Harry. "Remember, the doctor is playing for big stakes."

"I know it," replied Old King Brady. "I forget noth-

ing. Back, children! Back to the steamer, but it must be by the way of the police station. We need help and must have it. Alice, is there any reason why we should arrest Madam Gomier?"

"None that I know of," replied Alice. She has treated me well enough."

"But we certainly ought to look for the child here before we leave," she added. "Whoever killed Sam Johnson may have killed him, too."

"That's right. Let us go over that ground right now," said the old detective, and they made a hurried examination of the floor.

Quickly they discovered a little room partitioned off, the same as the one above.

The door stood wide open.

Inside were a few bits of old furniture, some child's toys and other things, which seemed to indicate that little Henry had probably been kept there.

"It is as we feared," declared the old detective. "Dr. Lambier has used the information he got from me for his own purpose, if, indeed, he did not know all about it before."

"There comes Julius!" cried Harry.

"Seen yo' look out de do' so I tort I'd look in, boss, Mr. Brady," said Julius. "What am dis outfit? A dead niggah? Who done killed him—say?"

"More than we know, Julius," replied the old detective. "Did you see anybody come out of here while you were watching?"

"Not a soul, boss, Mr. Brady. No, sah! I was watchin' fo' youse to come out. Began to git a bit nervous. I tort hit was about time to go to de station when I seen Mr. Harry look out de do'."

"Let us travel on," said Old King Brady. "Harry, you, with Alice and Julius, make for the foot of Bridge street and begin to spy out the land. I'll go to the station, since I am more likely to get a prompt response than you."

So they parted.

The foot of Bridge street reached, Harry was easily able to identify the Pelican, with Julius' help, without going too near.

"Why, they have got steam up!" he exclaimed. "Looks as though they meant to sail right now, in spite of what the governor said. Can the engineer have come back, then?"

"Perhaps they have got another," suggested Alice. "You can see the men moving about the deck."

"There seems to be a lot of them, too."

"An' all niggahs," added Julius. "Dis am Darktown afloat, dis am."

"I wish Old King Brady would come," said Alice. "Of course, we can do nothing against that bunch."

"I don't see how we can," mused Harry. "It seems as if we ought to make a try for it, however. They certainly are getting ready to sail."

"Don't think of it," said Alice. "You are all the time calling me to order for my rashness. This is the time I give you the call along the same lines."

But Harry had no serious intentions of moving against

such a bunch as was now plainly visible on the Pelican's deck.

They waited with all impatience for the arrival of Old King Brady and his reserves, and at last they came.

None too soon, either.

Dr. Lambier was not visible on deck, but a man who appeared to be the captain was, and preparations were advancing rapidly, when Old King Brady, with a dozen officers, came charging down the street.

"Quick!" cried Harry, hurrying to meet them. "They are just going to sail. Look at the bunch there is aboard!"

"Lucky I suspected it," replied the old detective, "but I did and so I came with help enough to do the job."

They did it!

The charge up the gangplank was not a surprise, for the men saw them coming.

Many jumped ashore and escaped, some were captured.

"I libel this steamer in the name of the United States of America!" cried Old King Brady, as the captain, a Scotchman, came bristling up, demanding the cause of the intrusion.

He was promptly arrested.

So was Dr. Lambier, who was found in the engine-room, where he was taking the place of the engineer.

Little Harry Rollman was found asleep in the cabin.

Thus the Bradys won out, through promptness and persistency.

The arms were discovered in the hold.

Dr. Lambier put up a big legal fight, but in the end he went to the electric chair for the murder of Mendies.

Before his death he confessed to the killing of Sam Johnson, too.

Restored to his family, little Henry went to Jamaica.

The child was so nearly white that no one would have suspected his ancestry.

The Voodoo Queen got her thousand dollars and Celia Renaud a handsome reward.

As for the Bradys, they were never treated more liberally than they were by Mr. Rollman for their excellent work in the dark case from San Juan Hill.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BRADYS AND THE BOY SPY; OR, SOLVING A SECRET OF SEVEN YEARS."

SPECIAL NOTICE:—All back numbers of this weekly, except the following, are in print: 1 to 6, 9, 13, 42, 46, 47, 53 to 56, 63, 81. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York City, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

A SECRET OF THE SEWERS

OR

A DARK MYSTERY OF NEW YORK

By Col. Ralph Fenton

(CHAPTER V—Continued)

"What are you to old Kutchins?" asked the detective as Luke Link was about to hasten away.

"Nothing! That is I am only his bound boy. He took me from a charity-house."

"Do you know your parents?"

"No. I never knew anything about them."

"What are the relations between Kutchins and Darwin. Can you tell me?" the detective asked.

"They are old acquaintances. Darwin seems to have known Kutchins somewhere years ago. Kutchins only pretends to be a friend of Darwin, because he is afraid of Darwin. The latter has some powerful hold on Kutchins, I am sure."

"Well, my boy, I am very much obliged to you. Now, if you want to make some money, and, at the same time, do your friend Mark here a great service, you need only to play the spy on Kutchins and Darwin for us. Will you do it?"

"Yes," answered the strange boy, his great black eyes snapping.

"All right."

"Good-night, sir; good-night, Mark."

The detective and his boy companion responded to Luke's parting salutation, and then they went on toward the storage-house.

Luke Link turned in the opposite direction.

"That boy looks like a Spaniard," said the detective.

"So he does," Mark assented.

"Now, thanks to the dark-faced lad, we may foil the villainous Darwin in his attempt to steal something from among your father's effects," said Damond.

"Yes."

"And we may find the clew to the mystery."

"Which Darwin is after?"

"Yes."

"I hope so."

"And I."

"Now we are certain from what Luke Link overheard that Darwin and the Spaniard have not yet got at the secret of the sewers."

"That's so."

"And we have the proof positive that the secret of the sewers is the object of their plot."

"That is to say that it is their motive to get the secret of the sewers solved."

"Yes, and it is also a certainty now that your father was the custodian of the secret."

Thus conversing Mark and the detective arrived at the storage house.

It was dark and silent.

They saw no one about it.

But Damond rang a bell, and presently a side door opened. A man appeared in the door.

He was the proprietor of the place, and he had just descended from his rooms over the storage house.

He recognized Damond.

The officer stepped inside the door and drew Mark after him. Then Damond whispered to the man of the storage warehouse, after he had closed the street door:

"I want to get into the storage house, Briggs," said the officer.

"What for?" demanded Briggs.

"To foil a robbery."

"How's that? Is my place threatened? Nonsense! No one wants to carry off old furniture. My customers are only poor people."

"That may be, but burglars will enter the storage rooms to-night all the same."

"Are you sure of what you say?"

"I am."

"Then have everything your own way. I'm much obliged to you for telling me. How can I help you to balk the burglars?" said Briggs.

"Let me into the storage rooms. With my boy assistant here I will conceal myself, and when the burglars appear we will try to capture them at the muzzles of our revolvers," said Damond.

"And what am I to do?"

"Go to bed and leave it all to us."

"Not much, I won't. I'm not posing as a hero, but I'm not more cowardly than the general run of men, and I mean to help you protect the property that has been intrusted to me."

"Very well. Then come into the storage room and lay in wait with us for the arrival of the burglars."

"I'll do it. Wait until I get my revolver," said the storage man.

He procured the weapon and then unlocked an interior door, and led Damond and Mark into a spacious apartment occupying the entire ground floor.

This great room was divided into box-like spaces for separate storage of the goods of different customers.

"Show us the compartment in which the goods of Manton Manvill are stored," said Damond.

Briggs led the way to a compartment near the rear of the room.

The partitions around this compartment were about fifteen feet high. It was entered by a small door.

Briggs started to open the door.

But before he could do so the door was dashed open so violently from the interior, that Briggs was hurled back against Damond who stood next him, with such force, that the officer was almost overthrown.

A man bounded out of the compartment.

He was masked, but Mark thought he was Darwin. The fellow dashed for a rear window.

Damond recovered himself and leveled his revolver at the man. As he covered him the officer ordered:

"Halt, or I fire!"

But the man had now reached the window for which he was rushing. He did not obey Damond's command.

He had entered by forcing open the rear window and he had left it open.

With one bound he leaped through the window, just as Damond's revolver exploded.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STOLEN DIARY—DAMOND ON THE TRAIL.

A taunting shout came back from the burglar and Damond knew that his bullet had not hit the rascal.

The detective rushed to the window, through which the man had escaped.

Looking forth, he failed to discover anything of the rascal. He had disappeared.

Under the circumstances Damond concluded that it would be folly to undertake a pursuit.

He knew that the vicinity was full of hiding places, and that "crooked people," who would readily assist the burglar, abounded in the neighborhood.

"Well," said the detective, looking disgusted, "Darwin has escaped us after all. Now the question is, has he found what he came here to secure?"

"Let's search father's goods at once," suggested Mark.

"We will do so," responded Damond.

Then while Briggs retired to his rooms up-stairs after carefully nailing up the window through which the burglar had escaped, Mark and Damond entered the compartment, in which they had surprised the burglar.

The household goods the compartment contained were scattered about in confusion.

Evidently the burglar had searched everything.

A trunk stood open. It contained books and letters and papers.

"Ah, I intended to come here in a day or two to get father's diary. He kept a diary for years and not a day of his life passed in which he did not write in it. I packed the diary, which was really a large account book, in this trunk when I sent the goods here for storage," said Mark.

"Let's secure the diary if we are not too late," said the detective, at once realizing that the record of Manton Manvill's life might be invaluable to him.

Indeed, he thought the book might reveal the secret of the sewers.

Mark began to search the trunk.

Presently he exclaimed, in tones of bitter disappointment:

"The diary is gone!"

"Then the villain has secured it! We came too late. So to say, a great prize has probably slipped through our hands," replied Damond.

"We will search everything, though," he added.

Then they began the task systematically.

All the letters and papers in the old trunk were carefully read.

The books were closely examined.

In short, every article was subjected to the keenest scrutiny. But all in vain.

What they sought was not found.

No clew to the secret of the sewers, which they had decided Manton Manvill had known, was discovered.

Damond was disappointed.

But not as much so as Mark.

The boy had counted upon a discovery of importance with so much certitude that he felt completely baffled.

Mark showed his feelings in his face.

"Do not be down-hearted. Failure once should only make

a detective more determined. We have not lost the battle even yet."

"Do you say that? But suppose the villains learn the secret of the sewers from my father's diary?"

"Then I mean to know it, too for I am a-going to join the gang of the mysterious Spaniard," replied Damond quietly.

"Are you in earnest?"

"Yes. But let us away from here, as there is nothing to detain us."

They then called Briggs. He let them out by the door through which they had entered.

The next evening, quite late, as they were going along a prominent street a man went swiftly by them.

It was evident that, as the officer and Mark were just then in the midst of a throng of people who were coming out of a place of amusement, that if he knew them the man did not notice them.

"That fellow is the mysterious Spaniard who brought the two Boston desperadoes to New York," said Damond to Mark, indicating the man who rapidly passed.

Mark caught a glimpse of a dark, evil-eyed face.

"How do you know him?" the lad asked.

"Because I spotted him long ago."

"Shall we follow him?"

"Yes, I want to locate the fellow's present quarters."

A long chase ensued.

The Spaniard did not know he was followed but he had a long distance to go.

Finally he entered a house in Harlem.

The dwelling in question stood at the side of an alley. There was a high board fence along the alley.

Beyond the fence were the side windows of the house entered by the Spaniard.

Leaving Mark on the watch at the front of the house, Damond went into the alley, and seeing a light in a side window, he climbed upon the fence.

Then he found himself on a level with the window from which the light came.

The detective caught sight of the Spaniard in the house, and he saw a trellis against the building, close to the window.

It was a ladder-like frame, intended to support a sturdy climbing vine. It looked stout enough to bear his weight, and in order that he might, if possible, overhear what was passing in the house, the detective climbed over the fence and mounted the trellis.

In a moment he had gained a position from which he could see and overhear all that transpired in the house.

He was close beside the window.

The Spaniard seated himself at a table and touched a bell.

The next moment a servant appeared from an interior room.

"Send the man who is waiting in the back room here," said the Spaniard.

The maid withdrew, and in a moment she opened the door through which she had gone and ushered Darwin into the apartment.

"What success?" demanded the Spaniard.

"Excellent!"

"Then you were successful?"

"To a certain extent."

"What do you mean?"

"I have a great clew."

"To the secret of the sewers?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Here."

Darwin drew an old account book from under his coat, and he added:

"This is really the diary of old Manton Manville."

"Bravo!"

"I found it in the old man's trunk, at the storage house, and I narrowly escaped capture. Damond was on my trail."

"Never mind that now. Let's know what the clew of the diary is."

"Here it is."

Darwin opened the book to a certain page, and pointing with his finger at it, he said:

"Read that page."

The Spaniard did so.

Then he said:

"To-night the secret shall be ours, and then for a treasure such as man has seldom owned. Call Bragg."

Darwin stepped to the door and called the villain named.

He immediately entered from an interior room.

Then the Spaniard said:

"To-night—within the hour—we must get the clew to the secret which this diary has told us of. When we have certain documents the game is won. But there will be a night watchman on duty. He must die if he interferes with us. I chance to know that the night watchman is but a mere lad of eighteen who had had the situation at the building we must visit but a single day. The fact is the night watchman in question is Luke Link, old Kutchins' bound boy."

"Ha! I'd as lieve slit the young rascal's throat as not. Some way I distrust him. I've caught him looking at me very sharply several times of late, when I've been at old Kutchins' place," said Darwin.

"Understand, we must avoid bloodshed if we can. You are only to kill the youth if he cannot be gotten rid of for the night in no other way," said the Spaniard.

"Come, let's be off to test the truth of the revelations we have gained from the diary. But first I'll burn the book."

Then he thrust the diary into the flames of a fire that burned brightly in an open grate at the side of the room.

The Spaniard and his two comrades in crime stood and silently watched the burning book until it was reduced to ashes.

The detective had heard and seen all.

He would have given much to have obtained possession of the diary. But now it was lost to the detective.

The three conspirators presently hastened from the house. "No. 108 W— st. We'll not be long in getting there," said Darwin as he passed out of the house.

Damond overheard this remark.

Damond crept to the end of the alley in front of the house they had just left.

There he found Mark, crouching, at the entrance of the alley.

In a hurried whisper Damond told Mark all he had just found out, and Mark exclaimed:

"Luke Link must be saved!"

"Yes. Now do you make a dash to get ahead of the scoundrels. Go to 108 W— st., and warn Luke Link. The boy who sent the police to our rescue when we were caught in the sewer shall not perish if I can help it," said Damond.

"And you?" asked Mark.

"I'll follow the scoundrels, and be at their heels when they reach the building where Luke is employed."

"Then I'm off!" cried Mark, darting away.

CHAPTER VII.

"NO. 108 W— STREET"—THRILLING SCENES AND STARTLING ADVENTURES.

Mark Manville made a swift detour so as to get ahead of the mysterious Spaniard and his confederates.

In a very few moments the lad was speeding along in advance of them, in the direction of No. 108 W— street.

Mark Manville presently availed himself of rapid transit facilities, and continued onward yet more rapidly.

The lad felt that he was striving to save an innocent life. It might be given him this night to pay.

Then, too, he experienced the greatest satisfaction in the reflection that he was working to baffle his father's assassins.

Mark was brave and determined. He shrank not from the performances of any service looking to the defeat of the villains, against whom he and Damond, the detective, were pitted.

Meantime Damond shadowed the Spaniard and his men.

Damond did not for a moment lose sight of them.

He was an expert, and it was an easy matter for him to keep the villains in view, while he was not discovered by them.

But all at once something for which the detective could not satisfactorily account transpired.

The three villains drew close together at the entrance of a passage between two buildings.

In a moment then the Spaniard and Darwin went on. But Bragg was no longer with them.

"What does this mean?" wondered Damond.

But he did not halt on the trail.

On the contrary, he went straight on.

Arriving where Bragg had vanished he looked into the passage mentioned.

It was not an alley.

One swift inspection convinced Damond of that, and he saw that the passage ended at a high fence at the rear of the building in the next street.

Bragg was not in the passage.

"Well, I'll follow the main villains, though this disappearance of Bragg troubles me a little," said Damond, mentally.

He kept on the trail of the Spaniard and Kane Darwin.

They did not pause.

When they presently took a street car, Damond did the same. But he previously paused long enough to make a facial transformation by means of appliances he always carried.

The Spaniard and Kane Darwin finally arrived at the building No. 108 W— street.

There, as we have learned, Luke Link, the junk-dealer's bound boy, had now obtained employment as a night watchman.

Old Kutchins had made the acquaintance of a retired sea captain, who owned the building.

The junk dealer had secured the situation for Luke.

As the lad was well-grown and manly-looking, his age did not militate against his obtaining the place.

Kutchins was a veritable miser, and he intended that the wages earned as a watchman by Luke should go to swell his savings.

This night was the first one Luke had been on duty at his new place.

During the day the lad had visited the building, and the janitor had shown him over it and instructed him in his duties.

The building was in a business street, which was well-nigh deserted at night after the offices therein closed.

There was a public entrance to the building that was always open, and the entire structure was devoted to offices.

Among the other tenants was Lawyer Stanton.

At the first landing, right at the head of the stairs, was the door of Stanton's office with his name on the upper half of the door, which was of glass, covered with a curtain on the inside.

Mr. Stanton had a private agreement with the last watchman to sweep out his office before he left the building in the morning each day.

(This story to be continued in our next issue.)

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