

# SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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No. 246.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 9, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADYS AND HI-LO-JAK; OR, DARK DEEDS IN CHINATOWN.

*By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.*



The Chinaman made a leap at Old King Brady. He might have reached him with his weapon. But a voice behind the old detective cried: "Look out, Governor!" A heavy vase flew through the air. It struck Wun Gu on the head.

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(Continued on page 2 of cover.)

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# The Bradys and Hi Lo Jak;

OR,

## DARK DEEDS IN CHINATOWN.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A YELLOW VISITOR.

Old and Young King Brady, world famous detectives, sat in their Park Row office looking idly out upon the throng of passersby in the great City Hall Square of New York.

Each seemed absorbed in his own reflection.

The truth was a mystery, deeper than any either had yet essayed to fathom, had long held them at bay.

Many a dark crime had been unearthed, many a savage murderer brought to justice by these human sleuths.

But now they had hit upon a problem which baffled their best efforts.

Upon Old King Brady's knee rested a copy of a New York newspaper.

Across its face was a bold heading:

"The Great Yellow Peril Which Threatens New York Today. The police powerless. They are utterly unable to find or identify one of the Chinese gang of blackmailers, kidnapers and assassins. The series of robberies and mysterious murders of a year past go unpunished. Rumor that the Highbinder Societies are at the bottom of it all is vigorously denied by Hang Ho, a leading member of the Chinese colony.

"In upper New York there is almost a reign of terror. No citizen can tell what hour he may find the heathenish death characters marked upon his door. Children of tender years are not allowed out of sight. Every wearer of a pigtail is shadowed whenever seen.

"The last threatening letter received by any New Yorker

was yesterday found in the mail of Justus Clarke, of West Eightieth street. The missive was superscribed in a fair, bold hand. It was the usual demand for money, with a threat of horrible death for a refusal, and signed with Chinese characters.

"It would seem from this that one of the yellow gang is an educated man or there is some white crook in league with them, who writes the letters. It is reported today that the famous detectives, Old and Young King Brady, are going to take up the case. This is good news, for the Bradys are always successful!"

For a long time the two detectives sat there looking out upon the busy throng.

After awhile, though, Old King Brady picked up the newspaper again and glanced at it.

At this Harry Brady awoke from his reverie with a start.

"Well, Governor," he said, quickly, "I've reached a conclusion."

"Eh?" exclaimed the old detective, with interest. "I'm glad to hear that, my boy."

"Perhaps you may not agree with me."

"I shall have to know your conclusion first."

"Well, it's just this: Like all affairs of crime involved in deepest mystery, there is a woman at the bottom of this!"

Old King Brady wheeled about in his chair.

He was astounded.

"A woman!"

"That's what I said."

"Are you dreaming, Harry?"

"Well, I hope not."

"Give me your best reason for the belief that there is a woman in this Chinese mystery. Do you mean a Chinese woman?"

"No, no! I mean an American woman. Everybody knows that there are very few Chinese women in New York, and they are seldom seen."

"Well, I am interested."

The young detective lit a cigar.

"It is also well known," he said, "that many of the Chinese of the lower class have found American women willing to marry them. It is a woman of this type who, I believe, is at the bottom of the mystery."

Old King Brady's face cleared.

"I see your point," he said. "You assume that some degraded woman of a scheming and soulless type is the master hand, and that the yellow assassins are doing her work."

"In the main, you have my idea!"

Old King Brady nodded slowly.

"It is quite a logical theory," he said; "but I am at a loss to understand why you charge all this up to a woman."

"For the fact that no white man can ever enter into any collusion with the Chinamen. The woman, in her capacity of wife, could do so. This alone can explain the chirography of the letters. Some educated person, certainly no Highbinder, wrote those."

Old King Brady nodded again.

"Boy," he said, "you have hit the right scent. We will go to work on that line."

The young detective's face showed pleasure.

"And you'll give me credit for one good bit of deduction, Governor," he said.

"That I will, my boy."

"Well, what will be our first move?"

"We must, of course, locate the woman."

"Yes."

"In order to do that we must spend most, or all of our time, in Chinatown. We must hob-nob and live with the Chinese."

"That's right. But——"

"What?"

"I'd like first to see Mr. Justus Clarke and secure that letter, or at least get a good look at it."

"A good plan!"

"Suppose we go up and see Mr. Clarke?"

"Very good!"

The two detectives arose and reached for their hats.

But in that instant they paused.

There came a rap on the door.

"Come in!" said Old King Brady.

Gently the door swung slowly open. What followed startled as well as surprised the detectives.

A yellow face appeared in the opening. A blue-clad, pig-tailed Celestial stood there.

He seemed to wait in a half timid way. Old King Brady sung out:

"Well, Charlie, what is it?"

At this the Chinaman entered. It was seen that he was a powerful Mongolian of the coolie class.

But a glance at his face showed that he was in many respects superior to his class.

The stolid, brutish expression was not there. Every line of his yellow, repulsive face showed cunning, craft and greed.

He ambled forward and held out a card.

"Me wantee slee Melican detectives," he said, simpering. "Allee samee, you be?"

"Yes, we be!" said Old King Brady, as he glanced at the card.

Below a list of Chinese heiroglyphics was printed in English:

"HI LO JAK,

Cheap Laundry. Good Work.

32 Mott St."

Old King Brady passed the card to Harry. An idea struck him.

"Come around again and we'll give you some washing, Charlie," he said.

The Chinaman shook his pig-tail vigorously.

"Me no wantee washee dis time," he said, energetically.

"Me come to slee dlectives."

"Eh?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "What's happened, Hi Lo? Sit down."

The Chinaman sat down. He played with his fingers nervously. But his snaky eyes were fixed on the old detective.

"Mebbe you know Highbinder?" he asked. "Heap bad Chinee man. Killee in dark."

"Yes," said Old King Brady, penetrating the fellow with his gaze.

"Me comee tellee you. Keepee way Chineetown. Me hear Highbinder say killee dlectives quickee, so!"

He drew a yellow finger across his throat.

"Me heap fliend to dlectives. Highbinder know I come here, killee Hi Lo Jak allee samee quick!"

Old King Brady's face was like the sphinx.

It did not change a particle in expression. He looked steadily at the yellow heathen before him.

It might be said that there is little character distinction in Chinamen.

"All Chinees look alike to me," had been the refrain of nearly every detective who in the past had sought to seek out a special criminal in New York's Chinatown.

But Old King Brady stamped every feature of this fellow upon his mind.

He felt sure that he would know him anywhere and at any time.

What was more, the old detective had sized the fellow up very carefully.

"Hi Lo," said the old detective, quietly, "what made you think of bringing me this warning? I have never seen you before and have never done you a favor."

Hi Lo Jak simpered and rubbed his gaunt yellow hands.

"Me honest Chinee!" he replied. "Me no wantee slee Melican man alle kill. You not know me, but me knowee you. Me helpee you findee Highbinder dogs. Me hatee allee samee. Slee?"

"Yes," said Old King Brady. "You've got a little axe of your own to grind. Some personal grudge. You want to get square."

Hi Lo Jak grinned and his snaky eyes gleamed hideously.

"Melican man speakee stlaight," he replied. "Allee samee slee!"

"Yes," said the old detective, thoughtfully. He sat for a moment looking at the strange type of the human race before him.

In all his career Old King Brady had never seen a human being to him so hideous and repellant, so cruel and cunning of expression.

But the old detective was shrewd.

He believed that he had probed the purpose of this yellow cur.

To revenge himself upon certain of his own race he was ready to betray them to the detectives.

While he could not but despise the fellow for his treachery, at the same time the detective was not blind to the value of all this information.

He knew well the terrible difficulty of locating crooks in Chinatown.

So he said quietly:

"Hi Lo, I will find more money for you in a month than you'll make in your laundry in ten years if you'll give me the names of these fellows and arrange it so that I can get them in my power."

Hi Lo Jak grinned in a sardonic way.

He arose softly:

"Sh!" he whispered, with glittering eyes. "You makee me plomise you no tellee on Hi Lo Jak—no givee way, payee me monee, me findee you Highbinders."

"And the woman, too?"

The Chinaman started, and for one swift instant a startled light shone in his beady eyes.

Then he simpered:

"Me no savvy."

"Oh, yes you do, Hi Lo! You know that there is a woman in Chinatown who directs everything. She writes the notes of warning an——"

Hi Lo Jak shook his head.

"Nope! No whitee woman in Highbinders," he said. "No Chinee woman, no woman gettee in."

"I don't care about the Highbinders. It's this yellow gang which has been murdering and blackmailing people in New York. You know whom I mean. A woman is at their head."

## CHAPTER II.

### TAKING UP THE THREADS.

Old King Brady had a deep purpose in pressing the point thus:

Of course he had nothing but the theory that a woman was at the bottom of the mystery. But he fancied that Hi Lo Jak might establish the truth for him.

But the Celestial only looked up in a blank, meaningless way.

"Me not knowee! Mebbe me findee out. Tellee slome-time."

Old King Brady was disappointed.

He saw that if the fellow knew, he would not tell. He could only wait for further developments.

Hi Lo Jak now ambled to the door.

He stood there with the same strange, weird grin on his hideous face.

"Melican man comee slee me tonight," he said. "Bringee washee! Slee? Mebbe hittee pipe. Hi Lo helpee!"

Then the door closed behind him.

For a moment the two Bradys stood silent and thoughtful.

"Well," said Old King Brady, finally, "the outlook is certainly good, Harry. We have made a step up the ladder."

Harry bent forward.

"What do you think of that yellow cur?"

"What do I think of him?"

"Yes."

"Well, you puzzle me. I haven't had time to think yet."

"Do you know what I think?"

"What?"

"First, that he is taking a mighty chance in stacking himself up against the most formidable secret society of assassins in the world. Only a Mongolian of nerve would do that."

"I agree with you."

"Now, did he look like a chap with the nerve to do that?"

Old King Brady's mind had been crossed by the same thought.

But he replied:

"Provocation may exist. He is of the type that sacrifice all for revenge."

"I think so, too. But whenever, in all the ages, did a Chinaman ever before make a bargain to betray the Highbinders?"

Old King Brady whistled softly.

He paced up and down a moment.

"You've put it to me plainly, Harry," he said, "but what other motive could he have in coming here?"

Harry knit his brows.

"Do you see that newspaper?"

"Yes."

"Well, in that first column our names are mentioned as being employed to track down the yellow gang."

The two detectives looked at each other in a comprehensive way.

"If it is a trap," said Old King Brady, "we must not walk into it."

"Of course not!"

"We will go to Hi Lo Jak's laundry with our eyes open.

At the first sign of treachery, he is our game."

"Yee."

"Now," said old King Brady, donning his hat, "let us pay that visit to Mr. Clarke. It will be well to take a look at that letter."

"Very good!"

The detectives left the office.

They crossed to Park Place and ascended to the elevated station.

Mr. Clarke lived in Eightieth street on the West Side. The Bradys stepped aboard a Sixth Avenue train.

Opposite them in the car was seated an individual who at once claimed their attention.

He was a thin, attenuated man, dressed in seedy black. His appearance was entirely that of the shabby genteel.

But there was an air of refinement and a stamp about him that was evidence that he came from aristocratic and wealthy stock.

His long features were covered with a yellow parchment skin. His eyes were dull and fishy.

His jaw hung down listlessly. His thin, yellow hands worked nervously all the while.

The Bradys needed no second glance to read the character of this individual.

He was only one of many unfortunates.

The stamp of Chinatown was upon his miserable soul.

It was inefaceable and horrible.

The curse of opium was written in the parchment hue of his face. He was away from the deadly haunts just now, but he was as sure to return as the rising of the sun.

The detectives took careful note of the fellow.

But as they did so, it hardly occurred to either that they would meet him in a tragic way before they were done with the Chinatown case.

On rushed the train uptown.

At Eighty-first street the detectives got out; so also did the opium fiend.

The Bradys descended to the street and walked back a short block down Columbus avenue.

They turned into Eightieth street and were soon before the door of Justus Clarke's house.

They ascended the steps and rang the bell.

A shuffling sound in the rear now caused them to look back. They were given a shock of surprise.

The opium fiend, with his uncertain gait and languid manner, was coming up the steps.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," he said in a weak voice. "You also have come to see Mr. Clarke?"

"We have," replied Old King Brady.

"Is your mission an urgent one?"

"It is important to us."

"I had thought of asking you to yield me the precedence. My business is brief and will be quickly done."

At this moment the door opened and they were ushered into a reception-room.

Harry and Old King Brady sat down.

"We will defer to you," said the old detective, with a bow.

"I thank you greatly. This is my card. I may be of service to you some day."

He was then ushered into the adjoining room by a servant.

Old King Brady glanced at the card:

"Count Varoni, Naples, Italy."

"Eh?" exclaimed the old detective, in a low tone. "He is an Italian, Harry."

"Indeed!" said the young detective, with mild curiosity.

Now a strange thing happened.

Justus Clarke received his visitor in the adjoining room.

Every word uttered came plainly to the hearing of the Bradys. At first they gave no heed to this.

But presently the drift of the conversation was such that it could not help but claim their interest and attention.

Finally, Clarke grew pointed in his talk.

"I am your guardian, sir, appointed by law to look after the Varoni estate, which you are not competent, mentally, to handle. Do not forget that."

"Be assured I do not forget it, signor," said Varoni, quietly.

"I would accede to your request for the money if I were sure that you would keep faith with me."

"A Varoni does not break his word!"

"That is what you said before."

"Ah, signor, but the fiend had me then."

"And the fiend will get you again. You are a wretched, worthless fellow, Varoni. You spend your life in opium dens and brothels. Shame on you! Why do you not make a man of yourself?"

"Ah, signor, I am trying hard. I am very much in earnest. I will never again enter the opium dens."

"Do you mean it?"

"I do, signor."

"Well, I'll do this for you. I will give you one thousand dollars now, and if I find that you are using it well in the enterprise of which you speak, you shall have another thousand next week. Do you see?"

"I do, signor."

"Now tell me. What is your opinion of this yellow gang which threatens the city just now; you have been much among the Chinese?"

"Ah, signor," said the Italian, softly. "It is all very much exaggerated. The poor Chinese are greatly abused. They are a harmless and industrious people, I assure you."

"I might believe that if it were not for their filthy opium habits."

"That is their misfortune."

"Well, I suppose so. But keep away from them, Varoni. Turn over a new leaf. Be a man. Your father was one of the best men in Italy. It is sad for me to see his son in this condition."

"I will do my best, signor."

"Here is the check."

A moment later Varoni emerged. The detectives saw that there was a faint spot of color on each of his sallow cheeks.

"I thank you, gentlemen," he said, as he passed the detectives.

The Bradys a moment later were closeted with the banker.

He at once produced the strange letter which he had received.

"The handwriting is unfamiliar to me," he said. "I will turn the letter over to you. I do not fear any serious results."

"I would advise you to take all precaution," said Old King Brady.

"Bah! I do not fear the cowards!"

"Yet there is danger. We hope to round up the gang soon."

"It is unusual for Chinamen to go outside of their own class for crime," said Clarke. "It is seldom we hear of a Celestial being convicted of any serious crime."

"Ah, that is partly because they are, in the main, law-abiding. But when the rogue does do a bad thing the law-abiding ones all shield him."

"I suppose so. But what such a letter was sent to me for is a mystery. I never did them any harm."

"There may be another motive."

"I can't imagine what it is. So you think this handwriting is a clew?"

"It is valuable as such. It establishes one fact to my satisfaction."

"What?"

"The writer is a woman."

"A woman?" gasped Clarke.

"Yes."

"How do you reckon that?"

"Well, the chirography is far too delicate for a man. Every line indicates the touch of a woman's pen, and, if I were to speak my own honest conviction, a woman of aristocratic origin."

Justus Clarke sat a moment staring at the old detective. His face had grown as pale as chalk.

"Brady," he said, in an agitated voice, "you have put something into my head. Let me see the letter."

The old detective gave him the missive. He studied the handwriting closely.

Then he opened a secret drawer in his desk. From it he took a small bundle of letters tied with a faded ribbon.

There was still a faint perfume as of a lady's boudoir about them.

"Compare the two specimens of handwriting," he said to Old King Brady. "What do you see?"

The old detective did so.

He studied them closely.

Then he drew a deep breath.

"They are one and the same," he said.

"By which you mean that the same person wrote both?"

"Yes."

Much agitated, Justus Clarke closed his desk. He was white and trembling. The Bradys waited for him to speak.

They knew that a crisis had been reached in this strange case.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DEATH WARNING.

"Gentlemen," said Justus Clarke, finally, "I am going to agree with you that this little revelation places me in peril of my life."

"I am glad that you accept the warning," said Old King Brady.

"I would be a fool otherwise. All is now as plain to me as a printed book. To make it plain to you I must tell you a story.

"You no doubt know that I am a bachelor. My home here is presided over by my mother and two sisters.

"Ten years ago I was engaged to be married. I loved a young woman very dearly and I believed she loved me.

"She was of humble fortune, but good family. Not until a week before the day set for our wedding had I found aught of a reason why I should not place trust in her.

"Then a friend of mine, Marcus Varoni, father of this unfortunate youth who was here a few moments since, gave me an awful warning. I would not at first believe him, and we quarreled. I challenged him and would have fought him, but other proof was afforded me in a startling manner.

"Myrtella Haines, the girl who was to be my wife, was found in a Mott street opium den and taken to the Tombs prison with other habitues of the place. To me it was like a fearful nightmare.

"Then I learned of the double life she had been leading, and that she was an opium fiend. Of course I broke the engagement. She sought by law to hold me and failed.

"Her recriminations were of the vilest. I speedily found that she was a creature steeped in sin. Twice she attacked me, threatening to kill me. For the last five years I have lost sight of her and believed her dead.

"I can see now that she is still upon my track. She is leagued with this yellow gang, and she means to wreak her revenge upon me. Yes, I can see my peril."

To all this the Bradys had listened with interest.

As Justus Clarke finished they turned and Old King Brady said:

"She is the woman in the case. Hers is the master hand. The gang of Chinatown are her minions doing her work."

"And the Highbinders have strictly no hand in it," said Harry.

"No!"

"Then Hi Lo Jak——"

"Is a scoundrel and a traitor. He was sent to us as a

decoy. Learning that the Bradys were to take hold of the case she has determined to nip our game in the bud."

"By entrapping us——"

"And murdering us!"

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Clarke, "this is horrible!"

"Mr. Clarke," said Old King Brady, arising, "I warn you to protect yourself in every way possible. We can do nothing for you, for we must go to work and round up this treacherous gang of assassins."

"I shall heed your warning," said Clarke. "If I can furnish any further clew——"

"You have furnished us a solution of the whole mystery. We know that Myrtella Haines is the ringleader, and we shall find her and put her where she can do no more harm."

It could be seen that Clarke was in a state of nervous terror.

He glanced at the windows apprehensively, and, drawing a revolver from the desk, placed it in his pocket.

"I shall be on my guard," he said.

The Bradys now took their leave.

Their visit to the Clarke house had been productive of important results.

The detectives were reasonably confident of the accuracy of their deductions.

It was all quite logical that Myrtella Haines, the victim of the opium dens, and the discarded fiancée of the rich banker, should seek revenge.

Neither was it unreasonable that she should be the master hand in the game of crime.

She had descended to the very lowest depths of human misery and sin. She was crowning her dissolute career with the awful crimes of the secret assassin.

"Ugh! it's about as ugly a case as we ever undertook, partner," said Harry.

"You're right, my boy. But we'll win it or die."

"What do you propose to do first?"

"Let me see. We have an appointment with Hi Lo Jak at his laundry for tonight."

"Yes."

"We are quite sure it is a trap."

"Yes."

"If we walk blindly into it, then it is our fault. I mean to keep that appointment and yet avoid walking into the trap."

"All right. We'll try it."

"But first——"

"What?"

"I'm going to see the mayor."

"The mayor?"

"I mean Hang Ho, who is at present known as the mayor of Chinatown."

"You mean to see him first?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Well, for several reasons. Perhaps he can assist us in some way."

"Whew! He may be right in the job. I wouldn't trust any Chinaman."

"That's all right. You don't understand me. Hang Ho is the richest tea merchant in Chinatown. He has a good name. It is hardly likely he is in the gang."

"But whether he is or not, we will not betray ourselves. We will use subterfuge to get from him what we can."

"Oh, I see."

"Is not that a good idea?"

"Certainly."

The Bradys went back to the office.

They did not tarry there long.

A short while later they were on their way to Chinatown for the night's work.

And that night in the Chinese quarter of New York they were destined to long remember.

When they entered Mott street it was ten o'clock. The hour was early for the frequenters of the Celestial joints.

But for all this the place presented a lively appearance. The narrow streets were jammed with the blue-shirted coolies.

The detectives selected Hang Ho's tea house as the first place to visit.

They were welcomed by the suave proprietor, who was of the higher class of Mongolians.

"Muchee welcome, Melican gentlemens," he said. "Havee seat. Makee tea?"

In a few moments a yellow attendant brought steaming cups of tea.

The Bradys sipped this and talked leisurely with Hang Ho.

They found the tea merchant a valuable talker and it was easy to lead him to the subject of most importance to them.

They discovered at once to their satisfaction that if Hang Ho knew the members of the yellow gang, he was not one of them.

They were able to get the names of at least two, Li Hun and Wun Gu.

Very cautiously Old King Brady asked about Hi Lo Jak.

The tea merchant immediately grew noncommunicative. In vain Old King Brady tried to draw him out.

They were sitting at the moment at a small table in the front of the little shop.

Through the glass show window the passersby on the dimly-lighted street could be seen.

The Bradys had made up their minds to abandon the pumping game and take their leave, when a startling thing happened.

Crash!

A small section of the window-pane flew in. The glass scattered in all directions.

The Bradys started up. Hang Ho sat still and glanced at an object in his lap.

The detectives stared at the window and then at the tea merchant. His appearance startled them.



His face was ghastly, his eyes rolled and he frothed at the mouth.

"What's the matter?" cried Old King Brady, starting forward.

But Hang Ho put up his hands.

"Keepee way!"

Then he arose and held up the object which had fallen into his lap. He was calmer now, but yet trembled violently.

"Slee!" he said, pointing to the object. "Me dead man!"

The detectives saw a pyramid-shaped billet of metal which weighed a number of ounces. It was covered with hieroglyphics. To it was attached a short but thick silken cord.

It was this which had crashed through the glass, and either by chance or by accuracy of aim had landed in the tea merchant's lap.

"Slee!" he repeated. "Me sure die! Me dead man! No faille! Highblindee warning! Me dead man!"

Aghast, the Bradys at once caught the meaning of it all.

Hang Ho had spoken truly.

It was the warning of the Highbinder Society that the recipient had been selected as the next victim of the order.

For some moments the Bradys were unable to speak.

Hang Ho had now quite recovered. He even smiled gaily.

"Nebber mind!" he said. "Chineeman hab die some time. Mebbe allee light."

"Whew!" exclaimed Harry, as he loosened his collar. "You take it cool, Hang Ho; but perhaps that wasn't meant for you."

"Oh, yeppe! Alle samee me!"

"Perhaps they meant us!"

"Nope!" replied Hang Ho, positively. "Nebber send to Melican man. Only send Chinee man!"

The Bradys tried to persuade Hang Ho to avail himself of police protection.

But he only laughed lightly.

The Bradys now decided to take their leave. They shook hands warmly with the tea merchant.

Harry shivered as they elbowed their way through the yellow crowd.

"Ugh! this isn't the sort of job I'd like to tie to, Governor," he said.

"Why?"

"I don't like these snaky, treacherous dogs. They are worse than Kanakas or Malays."

"Well, we're in for it, and we're going to hold out."

"Oh, sure!"

They now had reached the lower end of Mott street.

The sign of Hi Lo Jak's laundry was before them. But as the Bradys reached the door they saw that the place was dark.

It was closed up.

"Humph!" said Old King Brady. "What do you think of that?"

Harry did not reply.

He placed his ear to the door and listened.

"I hear voices," he said.

"You do?"

"Yes."

The door to Hi Lo Jak's laundry was back a few feet from the pavement.

The building had once been a dwelling house and the upper stories were yet used as tenements.

Standing close to the door and leaning against it as he was, Harry was in gloom.

Old King Brady had stepped back to look up to the windows above.

Something like a glittering pair of eyes looked down at him through darkened shutters above. The old detective was so engrossed in gazing upward thus that he did not notice Harry's movements.

Then a startling thing happened.

Something flashed bright in the crevice of the shutter above. The old detective guessed its meaning and sprang under the cover of the arched doorway.

Crack!

A bullet went "ping" against the pavement, and the old detective realized his very narrow escape.

"Harry!" he gasped. "We've struck the den all right, I guess!"

Then the detective's veins froze. An awful fear seized him.

The young detective was gone. He had strangely vanished.

## CHAPTER IV.

### IN THE DEN.

Old King Brady might ordinarily have attached little significance to Harry's disappearance.

But he knew that he had been standing against the house door a moment before. He could not believe that he had entered the house and closed the door behind him.

At least if he had done so the detective would have heard him.

For a moment or two Old King Brady hardly knew what to do.

Pig-tailed Celestials strayed by the spot.

None of them heeded the detective.

The pistol shot had attracted no attention, for no passerby had seen the flash or could tell from whence it came.

The old detective tried to reason out the theory of Harry's disappearance.

He tried the door.

It would not yield.

He went down into the area. Nobody was there.

But as he ascended the steps a figure glided almost into his arms. The stranger stepped back with an exclamation.

Then, as old Old King Brady stepped aside, the dark figure slipped by him and descended to the door of the laundry.

The click of a key was heard.

"Who be?" a soft voice exclaimed. "Wantee washee? Waitee, Hi Lo open door."

"Is that you, Hi Lo?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Where have you been, you yellow rascal? Didn't you tell me to come here tonight?"

With an agile bound Hi Lo Jak was at Old King Brady's side.

"No speakee loud," he whispered. "Makee Highblinder hear. Keepee still! Hi Lo heap 'flaid. No dare come before!"

"Eh?" exclaimed the old detective, keenly. "Is that what kept you?"

"Yeppe! Me heap 'flaid!"

It was a fact that the laundryman was shivering.

Whether this was real or assumed the old detective could not guess.

But he said quietly:

"Where is the door to your laundry?"

"Rightee here," replied Hi Lo, pointing down into the area.

"Ah! Well, what door is this?" indicating the one against which Harry had been leaning a moment before.

Hi Lo shivered and whispered in reply:

"Dat allee samee door to Highblinder house. Me in laundly hear talkee through floor. Slee? Me hear, me tellee you."

The detective was astounded as well as puzzled. But here was an unexpected diversion.

He had made up his mind that Hi Lo Jak was crooked.

But certainly the Celestial's actions and his story found logical verification. That he might have overheard the Highbinder plot through the floor was of course possible.

Yet Old King Brady was not ready to trust the yellow informer.

"See here, Hi Lo," he said, "my partner a moment ago stood against that door. He disappeared. Where did he go? What could have happened to him?"

Hi Lo Jak gasped in a gurgling way, looked nervously about him and whined:

"Muchee bad! Hi Lo sure gettee killed. Dat Highblinder door. Melican detlective allee samee dead."

A terrible fear struck into Old King Brady's heart.

He gripped the laundryman by the arm.

"Do you think they could have got him? Tell me how."

"Hand reached out door! Takee so!" said Hi Lo, gripping his throat. "Holdee fast! Den pullee in. Melican man killee quick."

Aghast, Old King Brady saw the force of the laundryman's claim.

He had noted that there was a little closed wicket, or hinged panel, in the door. This seemed a logical explanation of all.

As Old King Brady reached this conclusion he started for the door.

Hi Lo glided in front of him.

"Where go?"

"I'm going after my friend."

"No good! No go! You be killed. He not dere! Me tellee tluth."

The laundryman was powerfully in earnest. Old King Brady, however, did not heed him.

Again High Lo pleaded.

"No go! No use! Highblindere gone! Too late! Melican man no be found. Him dead, carried away. Slee?"

But Old King Brady had only one thought. A hundred deadly Highbinders behind the door would not have stopped him.

He hurled himself against the door. It was of frail material.

It yielded and went crashing in.

Old King Brady pulled out his dark lantern. He sent the rays flashing before him.

He saw a passage, or corridor, leading to stairs. Up these he rushed.

The furnishings of the house were of the Chinese type. Strips of matting covered the floors, curious drawings covered the walls.

In place of beds in the rooms there were bunks, draped with silk.

There was the smell of opium in the air.

The rooms were dimly lit with oil lamps. From one to another the old detective sprang.

It was his expectation to at any moment be surrounded by the Highbinders.

He held his revolver in readiness for a desperate resistance.

But as yet not a Chinaman was seen. Hi Lo Jak had remained behind.

As he rushed from one room to another and still encountered nobody, Old King Brady was astonished as well as puzzled.

What could it mean?

Where were the Highbinders?

He had time now to reflect upon the rashness of his move.

He was alone in the den of the yellow foe. It was almost equivalent to sudden death.

That they would not allow him to go forth alive seemed almost a certainty.

Yet, the place seemed in no wise the den of a dangerous secret society.

It was apparently the simple home of a well-to-do Chinese merchant.

There was no paraphernalia, no talisman on the walls, no evidence of a council; nothing, in fact, to stamp the place as a Highbinder den.

The old detective's astonishment grew greater as he went on.

He was even disposed to wonder if he had not made a mistake and got into the wrong house.

But just then he reached the very last room on that floor.

He heard the rustle of curtains. A woman stood before him.

She was dressed in a semi-Chinese costume; silver bangles hung from a sash about her waist.

Her face was regular and brilliantly beautiful. But its expression was cold and cruel, stamping its owner a person of evil mind.

She faced the detective.

One moment they stood thus.

Old King Brady was for a moment too astonished to speak.

But presently he recovered his faculties.

"Pardon me," he said. "I have no desire to intrude. But I am looking for my friend."

The woman's eyes glittered and she affected cool surprise.

"Your friend!" she asked. "Pray, whom do you mean?"

"A young man, who only a few minutes ago was dragged into this house."

"This is astonishing. Who dragged him in?"

"I was informed that this was the headquarters of the Highbinders."

"Indeed! You are somewhat mistaken!" she said, with a scornful smile. "You have hit upon the wrong house."

"Impossible!"

"Who told you this was the headquarters of the Highbinder Society?"

Old King Brady checked himself. He had come near betraying Hi Lo Jak.

"A credible person," he said.

"That person is hardly credible. This is a private house. I shall request you to take your leave at once."

Old King Brady was dumfounded.

Here was a fine go.

He remembered that, after all, he could not be sure that Harry had been dragged into this house.

That it was the headquarters of the Highbinder Society he had only the authority of Hi Lo Jak, and he might be lying.

He stepped back, but at that moment another recollection came to him.

He recalled the pistol shot fired from between the blinds. Who had fired this?

Another question presented itself.

Who was this handsome American woman who maintained a home like this in the heart of Chinatown?

She was a Mongolian's wife, of course.

Was she Myrtella Haines?

If so, the old detective could see that she was working a big bluff. He was determined to find out.

"Perhaps you can tell me," he said, "who fired at me from the second-story blinded window of this house?"

The woman's face did not change.

"I cannot," she said. "The front room is not occupied by me. It is the abode of a couple of young men whom I sometimes see, but do not know."

"Will you kindly tell me your name?"

"I am Mrs. Li Hun," replied the woman, with snapping

eyes. "I have adopted this life because I am treated more kindly by my Chinese husband than I ever was by a white man."

"Your choice is permissible, madam," said the old detective, gravely. "But I am bound to ask if you are not she who was once known as Myrtella Haines?"

The effect of this question was thrilling.

Like a flash the woman's manner changed. She had been frigid, but polite.

Now lightning leaped from her eyes.

A serpent hiss escaped her lips. She crouched like a tigress.

"Ah, I know you!" she screamed. "You are sent here by him to hound me. But you'll never go from here alive."

Then a series of Chinese exclamations sprung from her lips.

Instantly arras at the end of the room parted. Four powerful Celestials armed with keen-edged daggers sprung into the room.

"Kill him!" she shrieked. "Cut him down, you dogs! He'll hang us all!"

Never in his life had Old King Brady faced more awful danger.

Death was before him in its most awful form. He knew now that he was in a trap of death.

Old King Brady was a man of quick thought and lion courage.

He made up his mind in that instant what move to make.

The Chinese janizaries were rushing upon him. Quick as a flash he acted.

Crack! Crack!

Two reports almost blended in one. Two of the Highbinders went down, each shot in the leg.

Then the old detective sprung for the door. But, instead of making the stairs, by a mistake he turned the other way.

Before him was a heavily draped window. He did not know what was beyond it.

For that matter he did not care.

It afforded an avenue of escape.

He made a terrific blow at it and dashed the sash out. All this had been done in the twinkling of an eye.

The shrieks of the woman fiend filled the place.

"Get him! Kill him! Don't let him get away!"

But the old detective saw by a gleam of light that the window opened upon a roof.

In an instant he was out upon it.

It was the roof of a rear addition and led to a fire escape some feet away.

## CHAPTER V.

WUN GU.

Everything was in an uproar behind the old detective.

He heard the rushing of feet, the jangle of weapons, the tinkling of bells and the roar of excited voices.

He had given Harry up as dead.

At present he could think only of his own safety, and it was certainly at stake.

Across the roof he sprang and reached the fire escape.

It led down into a dingy alley between the buildings. Old King Brady slid down the ladder and dropped ten feet.

He struck upon a pile of refuse. He regained his feet and crawled toward the street.

A moment later he was in the shadows on the other side.

There was a light in Hi Lo Jak's laundry, but the windows above were dark.

Presently he saw dark forms emerge from the alley.

Several pig-tailed fiends came out by the smashed door. They all scattered into the gloom.

Old King Brady realized his peril in full. He knew that if he was met in the dark by one of these assassins it would mean a knife in the back.

He had no idea of throwing his life away. There was too much at stake.

"All right!" he muttered. "The game has only just begun, and I'm in it."

He slipped down the street and then keeping on turned into the Bowery.

Making sure that he was not followed, he turned into a cheap lodging house.

"Give me a room," he said.

Paying for it, he entered it. Water and towels were ready.

Then the old detective proceeded to show what he could do in the way of disguise.

He completely metamorphosed himself.

With wig and beard and the aid of cosmetics he completely changed his appearance.

His broad-brimmed hat, folded and strapped under his vest, was replaced by a cap.

His coat turned inside out showed another color. He thrust a short pipe into his mouth.

He was now a seedy, semi-respectable old man. The marks of dissipation, however, were upon him.

Then the old detective managed to slip out of the lodging house unnoticed.

He made his way quickly back into Mott street.

Soon he stood before Hi Lo Jak's place. All was now quiet in the vicinity.

The detective boldly descended the steps into the laundry.

Hi Lo Jak was busily engaged in ironing at his table. He looked up with an affable grin at the bearded old man.

Old King Brady approached him.

"Washee?" asked Hi Lo.

"No," replied the old detective in a mysterious way. "I want a pipe."

"Oh! Me slee! Wantee hittee pipe?"

"Yes, that's it."

"You never comee here before?"

"No."

"Someone sendee you?"

"Yes, a friend. Hurry up!"

"Tellee who."

"I think his name was Varoni. Confound it! I'm all right! I can't wait all day."

Hi Lo Jak's face lit up at the mention of Varoni's name. It was apparently familiar.

"Me know! Alle light," he said, readily. "Comee dis way."

Old King Brady followed Hi Lo beyond a curtain in the rear of his shop. Here were stairs with a brass rail leading upward.

Up two flights they went.

The odor of opium was plain.

The murmur of voices could be heard. The next moment Hi Lo Jak pushed open a door and they were in the den.

It differed little from most places of its kind.

White men and women were lying about the place.

Some were on the floor, some on diyans and some in the bunks. The air was fetid and sickening.

Old King Brady accepted a pipe and climbed into a bunk, where he pretended to smoke.

Nobody noticed him.

The habitués of the place were too deeply engrossed in their intoxicating dreams.

The voices which he heard did not emanate from them.

They came from a room beyond.

The rear of Old King Brady's bunk formed the partition.

Drawing the curtains, the old detective put his ear to the thin wall of boards. He could hear every word.

And it was of interest.

An animated conversation was taking place between a man and a woman.

The woman, as Old King Brady had good reason to believe, was Myrtella Haines. He tried to identify the man's voice.

It was slow and feeble, and after a moment's reflection Old King Brady had the truth.

"Count Varoni!" he muttered.

It was a revelation to the old detective.

He proceeded to listen with deep interest.

"So you had success, Rony?" asked the woman, in a rasping voice.

"I did, Signorina Cara!" replied Varoni. "We shall soon be able to carry out our dream of happiness. Ah, it will be a literal realization of a pipe dream. We will seek joy and the delights of Paradise in the South Sea Islands."

"Oh, sure!" said Myrtella, with a tinge of sarcasm, "but what will become of Li Hun."

"He can keep a laundry or do any old thing. We don't care, Miss Cara."

"I don't know, 'Rony, I've got a fat thing here. Do you know the gang brings me in a fortune every week?"

"Ah, but I have a large fortune if I can get it away from that old fellow."

"You saw him today?"

"Yes."

"Ah!" exclaimed the woman, eagerly. "Did you meet with success?"

"I got a thousand."

"That is a bagatelle!"

"Of course. But I got it."

"Where is it?"

"I have it here."

"Well," said the woman in a soft, insinuating voice, "the understanding was that I am to be banker in this South Sea enterprise."

"Everything I have is yours, Myrtella. You know, signorina, how madly I love you."

"Yes, and I know how reckless you are with money. I am not only going to be a wife, but a mother to you."

"Then you will be mine?" cried the Italian, eagerly.

"Yours? Is the bargain not made? When you get that fortune into your own hands are we not going to the South Seas?"

"That is my dearest dream. But—old Clarke is so odurate——"

"Eh? That has been provided for?"

A sharp exclamation escaped Varoni.

"Is he to become a victim——"

"His name is in the hands of the committee. We have only to wait a little while."

Varoni drew a deep breath.

"I wish it were over. Come, let us have a pipe, Myrtella, and we will float in the clouds and dream of the future."

"I can't do it now, 'Rony. I've got too much else on hand. Do you know we are in great danger."

"Danger?"

"Yes."

"How is that?"

"Do you know of a couple of detectives known as the Bradys?"

"The Bradys? Oh, yes!"

"Well, they are on our track. They have been here to-night. We have got to shut off their career, or they'll shut off ours."

"Put Wun Gu on their track."

"I have done so!"

"Well," said Varoni, with a yawn, "I am very tired. I shall try a pipe."

"I wish you pleasant dreams."

"Thank you."

Varoni came now into the smokers' room. He got a pipe and sank down on a divan near Old King Brady's bunk.

It was not long before he was in the depths of the opium dream.

Old King Brady had learned another important fact.

Varoni was an accomplice and also a victim of the siren who was the master hand of the deadly yellow gang.

To Old King Brady the revelation was a disgusting one.

That a man of Varoni's breeding and fortune should descend to such vile depths was beyond comprehension.

It could only be attributed to his mania for the deadly opium drug.

The old detective peered out from behind the curtains of his bunk.

He knew that the night was well-nigh spent.

With the coming of daylight the opportunity for work would not be so good.

He decided to take a terrible risk.

Seeing that there was no attendant in the room, he crept out of his bunk.

The opium victims were too dazed to pay him heed.

Old King Brady quickly crept to the curtained door of the next room.

It was unoccupied.

The Chinese attendants did not put in an appearance. Old King Brady felt reassured.

Myrtella had left the room. Old King Brady softly glided over the threshold.

Beyond was a door leading into yet another room. Into this the detective also glided.

Then he met with a thrilling experience.

From the floor at his very feet there arose the strangest looking object his gaze had ever rested upon.

At first, as it had sat before him in the center of a great Oriental rug, the detective had thought it a hideous idol carved out of wood.

But, as its eyes rolled and its frightful mouth opened in a hideous grin and it rose from the rug, he saw that it was what was indeed a rarity—a Chinese hunchback dwarf.

A more hideous creature the detective thought he had never seen.

The creature grinned and showed a row of decayed yellow fangs.

The nails grew on its fingers to a length of several inches. This added to its uncanny appearance.

The old detective came to a halt.

A guttural exclamation escaped the dwarf.

His fingers played with a dagger in his belt.

"Ugh!" he grunted. "Me Wun Gu! No go by me! Slee?"

The old detective effected confusion.

"I want to go out on the street," he said. "I don't know the way!"

The dwarf grinned again.

He turned a couple of lightning handsprings and landed between Old King Brady and the door.

He held a keen dagger in his hand now. There was cool, crafty murder in his face.

"Wun Gu no foolee. No gettee out now."

Old King Brady's hand was in his pocket and on the handle of his revolver. For a moment he believed he would have to use it to defend his life.

But just at that critical moment a newcomer appeared on the scene.

It was Myrtella.

She stopped and stared at the old detective and at Wun Gu. The dwarf grinned.

"What's the matter, Wun Gu?" she asked. "What have you got here?"

Old King Brady was astounded at the reply.

"Him big detective! Me knowee him. Wun Gu killee quick! Cuttee up so!"

He brandished his knife.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DEATH HOLE.

But what of Young King Brady?

The young detective's disappearance had been a great mystery to Old King Brady. The explanation was very simple.

When the young detective leaned against the door he heard plainly the murmur of voices beyond.

While he was trying to distinguish them a startling thing happened.

The panel of the door slipped in.

Before Harry could draw away a powerful arm shot out through it.

Strong fingers clutched his throat.

All had happened in a flash of time.

He had no time to cry out before the fingers closed on his windpipe. After that he could not cry out.

Harry gasped and tried to break away.

But the door swung in and another hand clutched his throat while the first was withdrawn.

The door closed.

All was quick, and instant, and silent.

Powerful arms encircled him and he was swept away through a dark passage.

Then the grip relaxed on his windpipe.

He felt himself lifted and hurled over a verge. Then he shot down through space.

He struck in mud and slime. For a moment he was stunned.

He was in utter darkness.

Where he was he had no means just then of knowing. But at a venture he guessed that he was in a foul underground pit or cellar.

After awhile Harry was able to collect his senses and strive to locate his position.

He felt the slimy stones of a wall. He crept along this for a ways.

The stench of the place was terrible.

At first it seemed akin to that of decomposing flesh. An awful horror seized upon him.

The premonition of a fearful fate was before him.

He could not shake it off.

He knew that in the purlieus of Chinatown there were terrible holes of death.

From these an unfortunate victim never came forth

alive. For awhile the young detective was overcome with this reflection.

Then a recollection came to him. He had a few matches in his pocket.

He struck one of these.

It lit up a small circle about him.

He saw the reeking wall of a cellar. The damp floor in places reflected puddles of slimy water.

Then he gave a gasp of horror.

The sight before him verified his first awful suspicion.

Several mouldering skeletons were crumbling in the damp mire. They were victims of the Highbinders.

Death by the dagger or the pistol is merciful in its way. Death by starvation is the most awful of all.

Harry Brady knew this well.

As the match went out and he was again in utter darkness his horror was great.

But he was a youth of pluck.

He remembered that there were yet chances for him. Old King Brady would leave no stone unturned to find him.

Therefore he had only to wait and hope.

This was somewhat cheering.

But in a few moments even this crumb of comfort was swept away from him. The certainty of awful death seemed again to shut down upon him.

He detected an odor which at once caused his heart to sink.

It also furnished an explanation of the method of the death trap.

It was not slow starvation after all, but death by asphyxiation. The cellar was slowly filling with illuminating gas.

Its odor was becoming overpowering.

Harry was aghast.

He knew that there could be no surer way of ending his chances.

An hour or two would put him forever beyond recall.

It might have taken days to starve him.

Horror unspeakable seized upon the young detective.

But after its first thrill he was a changed youth. Love of life is strong and will always lead to invention of a desperate kind.

"I'll not give up!" he muttered. "I'll try every way I can."

While yet it was safe, he used his matches in an examination of the place.

He followed the wall carefully and examined it. His attention was suddenly arrested by a peculiar sound.

It was like the rushing of water. The young detective listened intently.

There was a body or stream of water rushing under the wall.

Several theories were suggested to the young detective. There might be a water main there. He tried to remember the location, and suddenly gasped:

"A section of the great sewer, that is what it is!"

But it was hard for him to see how this could save him.

Even if he was able to dig his way into the sewer he would drown in its ramifications, from which he could never hope to find his way.

Despair seized upon him.

The gas was growing stronger.

Soon it would overpower his senses. A thought came to him.

If he could dig a way to the sewer it would at least afford him air and so avoid asphyxiation. But could he succeed in doing this?

The soil was soft.

But he knew not what might be under it. From the sound, it was but a few feet to the sewer.

But his heart sank. He remembered that the arch of the sewer would be of brick or stone and cement. He could not hope to dig through it with only his hands.

Thus despair again came upon him.

He had almost become resigned to his fate when a voice reached him.

It was a woman's voice:

"Fools! What did you throw him down there for until you'd searched him. We want to know who he is!"

It was Myrtella's voice, though Harry had never heard it before.

Then a ray of light shot down into the place. It dazzled Harry.

A deathtrap had opened overhead.

As soon as he grew accustomed to the light, Harry saw a number of yellow faces looking down at him.

Then a ladder was lowered.

Two of the yellow rascals slid down into the cellar.

"Melican man climbee up. Go quickee!"

Too much astonished to express himself for a moment, Harry said nothing.

He went up the ladder with alacrity.

He stood in what was the real cellar of the house. Myrtella and half a dozen of the yellow fiends stood before him.

The woman looked Harry over keenly.

She saw that he was young and handsome. This counted for much.

It was Harry's good looks and his ready wit that saved him.

A sudden clever idea had occurred to him.

He proceeded to act upon it.

He knew that none of the gang knew him. It was hardly likely that they suspected him of being a detective.

"Well," said Myrtella, sharply. "Who are you, young man, and why were you trying to break into my home?"

Harry rubbed his head in a dazed way.

"I didn't try to break in," he said. "I was trying to find the joint."

"The joint?"

"Yes! I wanted to hit the pipe."

"Who are you?"

"Theodore Bent."

Myrtella looked at him keenly. She saw only a youth of a type commonly seen about the city.

"Were you alone?" she asked.

Harry was astute enough to answer:

"Yes."

"Did you see an old man with a broad-brimmed hat near the door at the time you were there?"

"Yes!" replied Harry, shrewdly. "I saw two men."

"Two?"

"Yes. One was an old man and the other was a young man. I heard them say something about Hi Lo Jak."

Myrtella was instantly disarmed.

Harry had saved his life by the simplest sort of a subterfuge. He could thank his ready wit for it.

"See here, boy," said Myrtella, stepping closer. "It's a mistake. Those two chaps out there were detectives, and we thought you was one of them. See?"

"Me?" exclaimed Harry, in surprise. Then he laughed.

"Do I look like a detective?"

"No, you don't," said Myrtella. "Close the trap, Hi Lo. You are all right, Theodore. I'll have a coolie clean the dirt off you and he'll show you to the opium room."

"Thanks," said Harry, carelessly. "I didn't know what it all meant."

"It was a mistake."

"I guess it was."

"Well, you'll say nothing about it?"

"Not I."

One of the coolies now took Harry in charge. The young detective's garments were cleaned of the mud.

Then the coolie led Harry to the opium room.

All this happened just after Old King Brady's thrilling escape by means of the roof and his departure for the Bowery to effect a disguise.

Harry climbed into a bunk and pretended to indulge in a pipe dream.

But in reality he kept watch of all that was going on in the place.

Habitues of the den came in. Others went out.

Time drifted by and still the young detective waited.

He was trying to formulate a plan of action when Hi Lo Jak came in with a bearded old man.

Of course Harry knew him in a moment. He was Old King Brady.

The young detective was too discreet to make himself known to the old detective at once.

He was content to await developments.

"I'll give the Governor a surprise by and by," he mused.

Old King Brady remained in his bunk a long time. Harry did not know that he was listening to a very interesting bit of conversation.

But when the old detective climbed out of his bunk the younger sleuth was interested.

"I wonder where the Governor is going?" he muttered. "There is something up!"

And there was something up, as the reader well knows.

When Old King Brady vanished Harry crept out of his bunk.

He entered the first room just as Old King Brady glided into the next.

So it happened that as the old detective was so shrewdly unveiled by Wun Gu, he did not dream that his young partner was so near him.

Harry heard and understood all.

It was a thrilling tableau.

Myrtella stood transfixed at the declaration of the Chinese caliban.

Old King Brady played his part as well as he could.

But he knew that an awful crisis was at hand. It meant a desperate dash again for life.

Wun Gu had in some manner penetrated his disguise. The caliban made a move to make attack.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH.

But Myrtella cried:

"Stop, Wun Gu! Stop a moment!"

With a growl the dwarf complied. But he glared fiendishly at Old King Brady.

"Who are you?" asked Myrtella. "Is it the truth? Are you a detective?"

"I don't understand," said Old King Brady, simulating the opium-dazed man. "I want to go to the street. Which way?"

"You've made a mistake, Wun Gu," cried Myrtella, angrily. "He's lost his way. He's been hitting the pipe."

But the dwarf growled savagely.

"Me know. Me no fooler. He big detective. He wear false beard! Pullee off!"

Wun Gu spoke with such a positive manner that the woman was impressed.

Old King Brady smiled in a dazed and uncomprehending way.

"I must go!" he said. "I'll come again."

Myrtella took a step forward and took a sharp look into Old King Brady's face.

The detective could not evade it.

Then a sharp cry escaped her.

Before Old King Brady suspected her purpose, she snatched the beard from his face.

At the same moment she gave a shrill and strange whistle.

The effect was startling.

The Chinaman made a leap at Old King Brady. He might have reached him with his weapon.

But a voice behind the old detective cried:

"Look out, Governor!"

A heavy vase flew through the air.

It struck Wun Gu on the head.

The dwarf went down in a heap. The rush of feet was heard. It was plain that reinforcements were coming.

"Quick, Governor!" yelled Harry. "This way! It's a break for life!"

The old detective leaped back.

Myrtella had vanished behind a curtain. Her reason was apparent.

Her right hand reappeared through the curtain holding a revolver.

Crack!

The bullet just grazed Old King Brady's head. The two detectives rushed into the opium den.

Old King Brady remembered that stairs led down into Hi Lo Jak's laundry.

They dashed down there.

Hi Lo Jak looked up from his work.

"Whatee matter?" he demanded.

"Matter enough!" cried Old King Brady, seeing the way to the street clear. "We want you! We know you now!"

Then the detective discovered just what sort of a fellow Hi Lo was.

The Chinaman's urbane and innocent demeanor changed. He was a fury.

Over his table he sprung with knife in hand. Murder was in his face.

"Killee, killee!" he screamed. "Detectives die. Killee quickee! No livee now."

Old King Brady hurled a chair at the oncoming brute. It knocked him over. The old detective had started to rush upon and handcuff him.

But Harry cried:

"Look out, Governor! Here they come!"

And they did come.

Into the laundry swarmed a motley crew of the yellow gang. All were armed and all were ready to murder.

Myrtella's shrill voice was heard.

"Don't let 'em escape! Cut 'em off. If they escape we're lost."

"We're in a tight box, Harry!"

"No use! We've got to get out, Governor!"

This was true enough.

But the Bradys lost no time. They carried out the programme.

With a quick movement Old King Brady swung the laundry counter around between them and the yellow foe.

Then both detectives burst through the door and up the steps.

They were in the street.

They did not stop there.

They ran until out of Mott street. They turned down Chatham Square on the run.

The Highbinders did not pursue them.

When they were assured they were safe they came to a halt. Two bluecoats bore down upon them.

"What's up, gents?" asked one of them. "Are ye in trouble?"

"Heaps of it."

"What's wrong?"

"Everything's wrong," said Old King Brady. "But see here, Smith. You know me."

The old detective showed his badge.

The officer scanned his face.

"Brady!" he gasped, "the detective!"



"You know me?"

"Yes."

"Well, we're in hot work up here in Mott street. We want help. Send for twenty-five officers and a wagon."

"In Mott street?"

"Yes."

"All right!"

The officer hurried away to carry out the order. The two detectives, exhausted, sat down on a doorstep.

"We'll raid the place, anyway!" said Old King Brady.

"We may not get anything. But we'll do our best."

"That's right!"

It was not far to Mulberry street.

In a remarkably brief space back came the officer. The patrol wagon and a score of the reserves followed.

By Old King Brady's direction a descent was made upon Hi Lo Jak's laundry.

The building was ransacked.

So, for that matter was the most of Chinatown. But not a clew was there.

Every one of the yellow gang were missing, not a sign of them could be found.

All lights were out and the place deserted. It was evident that they had all taken a hasty departure.

The Bradys were chagrined.

Luck had been against them.

Already daylight was breaking. They had put in a hard night's work.

But all to little avail.

"Harry," said Old King Brady.

"What?"

"I'm sick."

"How is that?"

"I am sick and disgusted at our failure. We didn't play our cards right."

"You think so?"

"I know it!"

"Well, we couldn't help it."

"Yes we could."

"In what way?"

"I had a number of chances to get that Hi Lo Jak. Do you know I believe he is the king-pin of the gang?"

"You do?"

"Yes."

"I hadn't thought of that."

"Well, it's so!"

"Why do you think so?"

"Can't you see? He is the head and front of it. He is the one who boldly came to us and led us into a trap."

"Well, that is so."

"Of course it's so. He thought he would cunningly get rid of us in that way. He hasn't done it. You'll see things move in Chinatown now."

"Well, I hope so."

"So do I."

"I don't like waiting."

"Nor I."

Old King Brady was not yet just satisfied. He went through the Hi Lo laundry again.

He found a letter signed by Varoni. It implicated him in the latest startling murder committed by the yellow gang.

"He's in the game!" cried Old King Brady. "That is easy to see."

"I think so, too."

"This letter incriminates him. We know that he is scheming to kill his guardian and trustee, do we not?"

"So we do."

"Well, the gang is scattered. It makes the case harder."

"Yes."

"But they will come together again soon. Then our case will be easy."

"I hope so."

Day was at hand.

The Bradys were not superhuman. The need of sleep was telling upon them.

So they decided to abandon the case for some hours while they slept.

They went to the office and cast themselves down upon a shabby couch. Old King Brady slept like a rock.

When they awoke it was noon.

Old King Brady sprung up and then aroused Harry.

"Come on, my boy!" he cried. "There is lots of work for us today."

"Well, I'm with you."

Looking out of the window of the little Park Row office, the Bradys saw a great many in the street.

As they hastily dressed they studied the personnel of many who passed.

Suddenly Harry gave an exclamation. He threw on his coat and hat.

"What's the matter?" asked Old King Brady, in amazement.

"There goes Varoni!"

"The deuce!"

"Yes. I must catch him!"

Harry dashed out of the office at full bent. Old King Brady went to the window.

He saw the young detective vanish down the street.

Then it occurred to him that he ought to have gone, too.

The arrest of Varoni just at this moment might mean much.

He threw on his own hat and coat and followed. He tried to locate the young detective.

Feeling sure that that would be the route taken by Varoni, he went toward Chinatown.

But he could find no trace of Harry or of the Italian count. Finally he abandoned the quest utterly.

He returned to the office.

He waited some while, but Harry did not return. This would seem to be evidence that Varoni had eluded him.

Old King Brady now decided to go it on his own hook.

He was hungry, and decided to first satisfy the inner man. He went into a restaurant just opposite the post-office.

Here he indulged in a good, hearty meal. Near him sat a gentleman who seemed engrossed in the latest edition of a newspaper.

Suddenly he turned and met Old King Brady's eye.

"That's a curious affair," he said.

"What?"

"That mysterious disappearance."

"Disappearance? What do you mean?"

"Oh, haven't you seen it yet? Well, Mr. Justus Clarke, one of our best New Yorkers, has disappeared from his home. Some think it is mental aberration, others that he has fallen a victim to the yellow gang."

Old King Brady nodded.

"Which is very likely," he said.

The gentleman gave a start.

"Can that really happen?" he asked. "Are they daring enough for that?"

"There is nothing too bad for them, I can assure you."

"Well, this is dreadful! What is their purpose in kidnapping Mr. Clarke?"

"They doubtless mean to murder him."

"Do you believe it?"

"I know it!"

The gentleman looked at Old King Brady in a strange way. Then he said:

"But how is it that such high-handed proceedings can be tolerated in the city of New York? Where are the police?"

"They are powerless!"

"Well, I think there should be a general uprising and Chinatown should be wiped off the map."

"I don't agree with you."

"You don't!"

"No!"

"Will you tell me why?"

"Certainly. It would be unjust. All the Chinamen in New York are not bad. Many of them are law-abiding and industrious."

"They are a pack of heathens, that's what I think, and ought to be wiped out."

Old King Brady saw that the man was of radical tendencies and was disposed to carry the conversation no further. But he was accorded a great surprise.

The stranger leaned over the table and laughed.

"Well, well, I fooled you well, Brady! You thought I didn't know you, eh? Shake hands! I am a detective also, and I am working on this same Chinatown case on my own hook. My name is Paul Armstrong."

Old King Brady was surprised. He looked keenly at the other.

He knew that dozens of detectives were working on the Chinatown case. But he never made a practice of affiliating with strangers. So he said:

"Ah, is that so? Well, I wish you success, Mr. Armstrong. I have an appointment."

Armstrong put a hand on Old King Brady's arm. His eyes gleamed and his manner was forcible, as he said:

"Pardon me, but will you break that engagement if I tell you some important facts concerning Myrtella Haines?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SOME REVELATIONS.

The impulse was upon Old King Brady to break away. He did not like the fellow's face or his appearance, for that matter.

He had received many overtures from other detectives of co-operation or assistance. He had always refused.

The mention of Myrtella Haines' name, however, assured him that this fellow had some knowledge of the case.

Curiosity more than aught else led Old King Brady to partly yield.

"Pardon me," he said, quietly. "Do you know that woman?"

The other's eyes glittered.

"Do I? Well, I ought to. I have a scar on my shoulder where she once put a knife into me. She is the worst bundle of femininity I ever knew in my life."

"Yes."

"Now I tell you, Brady. I know you feel too high-toned to have anything to do with a second-rate fellow like me. You didn't know me. But I knew you the moment you came in the door. I also know you were working on this case. I saw you in the Hi Lo Jak den last night."

Old King Brady was astounded.

"You were there?"

"Yes; I was in bunk No. 4. I have been there many nights trying to get a chance to get further. I never kicked up the rumpus you did. But I was getting there all right."

"Then we interrupted you."

"Oh, that's all right. Only the gang are frightened now."

"Ah! You think we pushed them too hard?"

"Well, I don't know. That is a matter of opinion. But it's all over now. Sit down and I'll tell you something."

Old King Brady complied.

He did not like to admit it, but the fellow interested him.

Armstrong smiled in a peculiar way.

"See here," said Old King Brady, with sudden thought. "Let's see your credentials before we talk further."

"We'll exchange."

"Very good! Here's my badge, Secret Service."

"Very good. Here's mine."

"Pinkerton, eh?"

"Yes."

"All right," agreed Old King Brady. "I am satisfied. No offense. But you can understand if you are a detective, I never saw you before."

"That's all right. We won't quarrel on that point."

Armstrong lowered his voice.

"There'll be something doing in Chinatown tonight. I have it straight."

"Is that so?"

"Yes! You see Myrtella Haines is the ringleader of the gang. She has pulled in a big fortune, and these yellow dogs have done the work. She pretends she is married to Li Hun, but all the while is making up with the Italian Varoni."

"I am aware of that."

"Yes. Well, there is much dissatisfaction in the gang now. It's my opinion they're going to put Varoni out of it."

"Ah! You say that you know they are all in Chinatown yet?"

"Certainly!"

"Can you locate them?"

"I know where they will be at eleven o'clock tonight." Armstrong drew a piece of rice paper from his pocket. He held it up to view. Old King Brady saw that it was covered with Chinese characters.

"That is Greek to me," he said.

"So it is to me. But I have had one of the Chinese embassy to decipher it for me. It is a ukase signed by the Highbinders."

"A decree of——"

"Death!"

"Old King Brady's face grew grim.

"Against whom?"

"There are five names here. The first is Justus Clarke. The second is Hang Ho; the third is Old King Brady; the fourth is his partner, and the fifth is Count Varoni."

"And you say the Highbinders have issued this decree?"

"Yes."

"It means then——"

"Simply that these five people are under the ban. They will be killed as fast as the opportunity offers. It may not be at once. It may not be for some months, but it is sure to come."

Old King Brady shrugged his shoulders.

"Certainly it is a pleasant thing to contemplate that one is living under such a sentence," he said.

"That is true! But you have little to fear. You can take care of yourself. The others are sure to fall victims."

"And Mr. Clarke is already in their power?"

"He is probably dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that?"

"Oh, no! Not for certain."

And you say that the gang meets in Chinatown tonight? Also that you know where?"

"Yes."

Old King Brady was silent for some moments. Then he said:

"Well, I wish you luck!"

"But I want you to co-operate with me, Brady," said the Pinkerton detective.

"You do!"

"Certainly!"

"You are very kind. It is my duty, though, to immediately investigate the disappearance of Mr. Clarke."

"Why, hang it, I've already done that. You'll be only losing time. I learned that he was entrapped by a decoy letter."

"What was the letter?"

"I have a copy of it here!"

Old King Brady took the copy of the letter from Armstrong's hand and read it.

"Dear Clarke: Come at once in the cab I send for you. I am in the Bellevue Hospital a victim of a railroad accident. I may not live to see you. Come at once.

"VARONI."

Old King Brady gasped:

"There could have been no better decoy," he said. "Of course Clarke would not think of such a thing as personal peril, but enter the cab at once."

"Just so!"

"And in the cab would be the messenger. A drug or a sudden attack would render him helpless."

"You have it!"

"I had intended to send Clarke warning today. This is Varoni's work."

"Yes! Now, my opinion is that Clarke's body is by this time in the East River."

"Ugh! What reason have you for thinking that?" asked Old King Brady.

"Well, I discovered who the cabman was. The bell-boy at Clarke's house knew him."

"Whew! That was a great point!"

"I think so. He was Jim Keegan, the notorious night-hawk, who carries slumming parties through the East Side every night."

"Keegan! I know him. We must find him and make him tell where he took Clarke."

"I think I know where to find him now."

Old King Brady had acquired an instant and profound respect for Armstrong.

Certainly he was much above the ordinary detective. He had gained even a more comprehensive view of the case than the Bradys themselves.

"It seems to me!" said Old King Brady, "that it wouldn't be a bad idea for us to see and talk with this fellow."

"Will you accompany me?"

"I shall be pleased to."

Armstrong led the way to the street. They turned down Park Row toward the bridge.

Pushing through the hustling crowd they kept on until beyond the bridge entrance.

Across the street in front of the German Bank stood a cab.

It was a battered vehicle of the type seen in the slums after midnight.

Its windows were so dirty and dingy that the interior could not have been seen even in lamplight.

At this time of day, the middle of the afternoon, Keegan was not on the lookout for fares of a profitable sort.

Later in the day he would pick up dissolute men.

As Old King Brady and Armstrong now approached them he looked at them sharply.

His face lit up.

"Ah!" said Old King Brady. "He knows you!"

"He ought to. I have employed him many times on other cases."

Armstrong saluted the cabby.

"Hello, Keegan!" he said. "Anything on?"

"Naw!" replied the fellow. "What's doin'?"

Armstrong rubbed his hands and faced the fellow. In a stern voice he said:

"I'm onto you, Jim! Now I want the truth. You know what it means to lie to us."

The cabby's eyes gleamed sullenly.

"I never lie!" he said.

"See that you don't"

"What do yer want?"

"I want you to tell me what the gang did with Banker Clarke last night!"

Keegan's face was inscrutable.

"I dunno!"

"Look here! I thought you never lied!"

"Well, I hain't!"

"Yes you have, you white-livered scoundrel. Now I want the whole truth. What did they do with him?"

"I dunno, I say!"

"Confound you! I'll have to run you in. Didn't you go to his house?"

"Yes."

"You took a message there?"

"Yes."

"Then you drove Clarke and another chap away. Where did you take them?"

"To the Bellevue."

Armstrong advanced threateningly. The cabby's face showed fear.

"You know better. They took Clarke's body away in your cab. Two other men got in over on the East Side. Where did they take the body? You see I know all, and you'll hang if you don't make a clear breast of it."

Keegan's manner now changed. He grew abject and trembling.

"I didn't know what they was doin'," he said. "I couldn't help it."

"That's all right. If you'll take us to the spot where they dumped that body in the river or tell us what they did with it I'll see that no harm comes to you."

"I will! I will!" agreed Keegan, opening the door of his cab. "Get in, gents!"

Armstrong stepped into the cab.

Old King Brady followed.

Keegan slammed the door and sprung upon the box. He lashed his horse and the cab rolled away.

"First of all, I want to find out what they did with

Clarke," said Armstrong. "Then I think this fellow will put us on the track of his murderers."

"Very good!" agreed Old King Brady. "But where is he taking us?"

They had turned down into Chatham Square. The carriage rattled on and, turning a corner, the occupants saw the purlieu of Chinatown before them.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Armstrong. "Where is he taking us?"

They now turned into Mott street. On the lower side of the street stood an unoccupied warehouse.

It was half dismantled, had been condemned, and was shortly to be pulled down. The lower part had once been a stable for horses.

The lower door was arched and made to slide up and down as a fire screen and protection against invasion at night.

This door stood open.

Before Old King Brady could realize what was taking place the cabby wheeled his horse sharply and dashed through this door into the disused building.

Almost in the same instant, with a crash, the door descended behind them.

For the first time Old King Brady scented the trap. He dashed open the cab door and leaped out.

Armstrong was after him and sprung upon him like a tiger.

The old detective, with a roar like a mad bull, flung him yards away.

"Traitor!" he yelled. "You haven't got me yet. I'll die game!"

Armstrong gave a shrill whistle. From the gloom of the building came swarming yellow-faced foes.

"Close in on him!" yelled Armstrong. "Don't let him get away!"

When Armstrong was thrown by Old King Brady his hat was knocked from his head. Off came the black wig he wore.

A mass of light hair fell down over his shoulders. Then Old King Brady realized how cleverly he had been sold.

"Jupiter!" he exclaimed. "Is it you?"

The Pinkerton detective, the man Armstrong, was no man at all, but Myrtella Haines in clever disguise.

"Don't kill him!" shrieked the woman. "Capture him alive! I have use for him!"

Like wolves upon their prey, the yellow fiends hurled Old King Brady to the floor and rendered him helpless.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A GAME OF FAN-TAN.

Meanwhile Young King Brady had been having some experiences of an exciting sort.

When he left Old King Brady his one thought had been to overtake Varoni.

It was a surprise to him that the opium victim should so recklessly show himself on the street after what had happened.

Through the crowd Harry dashed.

Varoni was just ahead of him.

The young detective's first impulse had been to rush upon him and make a prisoner of him at once.

But on second thought he did not.

"I would only get him," he thought, "and that would amount to very little. I will shadow him instead."

So he proceeded to carry out this plan.

Varoni was on his way to Chinatown

As the young detective followed him he became aware of his own peril.

He had removed his disguise and would at once be recognized in Mott street. What should he do?

If it had been at night he would have cared little, for he might have depended upon the shadows to hide him.

However, the young detective kept on.

Suddenly Varoni dodged into a dark doorway. He vanished in a twinkling.

The young detective was baffled.

He dared not go further.

But it gave him a clew.

Beyond a doubt, this house was the new headquarters of the yellow gang. This was certainly worth knowing.

This led the young detective to adopt a daring plan.

At first he thought of going back after Old King Brady. But he finally decided to act alone.

He was curious as to the interior of this forbidding-looking house with its festoons of colored lanterns.

So he retraced his steps into a side street. In a doorway he made a few changes which served for a disguise.

Then he went back into Mott street.

Across the street from the home of suspicion was a Chinese curio shop.

Over the door was a sign:

"Hop Lee and Kee Lo."

Into this shop Harry made his way.

He wore a pair of goggles. His whole appearance was that of a curio seeker.

The obsequious shopkeeper proceeded to show him various objects of Chinese art.

Harry pretended to be interested and purchased a few articles such as he could stow in his pocket.

All the while he kept a watch of the house opposite.

But suddenly his attention was distracted by a very curious incident.

Bending over the counter Harry suddenly became aware of a glint of light at his feet; also he heard voices beneath him.

Very cautiously he managed to discover that there was a crack in the floor. Through this crack he beheld a remarkable scene.

At a table sat white men and Chinamen playing cards.

The money piled high told the tale that it was the favorite game of fan-tan.

This might not have greatly interested the young detective but for another fact.

One of the players was recognizable.

It was Hi Lo Jak.

It is hardly necessary to say that Young King Brady was at once interested. He could see the party below but dimly.

Moreover, it was necessary to act with the greatest of discretion, for the wily Kee Lo was watching him.

Then an idea came to him.

He knew that there were many of these gaming joints in Chinatown.

The Chinese are inveterate gamblers. A Mongolian will forego his dinner at any time to play a game of fan-tan.

He also knew that it was not at all difficult to get into a game.

So he looked shrewdly at Kee Lo.

"Fan-tan?" he asked. "You play?"

The Celestial's eyes twinkled.

"Belly muchee likee!" he replied.

"Play with me?"

"Yeppe!"

"All right!"

Kee Lo made a hissing sound with his lips. From an inner room appeared a decrepit old man.

Kee Lo launched some lingo at him in the Chinese tongue.

Then he motioned Harry to follow him.

They passed behind the arras at the rear of the shop.

Stairs led down to the basement, which was lit with gas jets. Harry followed Kee Lo down into the place.

Four men sat at one table playing fan-tan. One of these was Hi Lo Jak.

The players hardly noticed Harry and Kee Lo. They sat down nearby.

Kee Lo produced the layout and the game began. Harry pretended to be interested in the game.

But while it progressed he kept a careful watch of the other table.

For hours they sat there.

The afternoon waned and evening came. So absorbing is the game of fan-tan.

Harry was not losing much, but Kee Lo was winning.

This pleased the curio dealer and he was willing to continue the game.

So they played on.

Harry finally consulted his watch.

It was eight o'clock.

At this moment the two white men at the other table rose to take their leave. Hi Lo Jak remained sitting.

Harry saw the look of satisfaction upon his face.

He was evidently a winner.

Hi Lo Jak flung some sort of gibberish at Kee Lo. The curio dealer looked at Harry.

"Me go!" he said. "Wantee play more. Hi Lo playee my place."

Nothing could have worked to suit the young detective better.

He looked carelessly over at Hi Lo Jak and nodded. In a moment the Highbinder was opposite him.

The play began.

For an hour they played hard.

Then Harry held up his hands.

"Dead broke!" he said.

Hi Lo smiled in his easy way.

"No monee?" he said, softly. "Lendee Melican gentleman allee samee. Play some more."

"No," said Harry. "I want to hit the pipe. Where shall I go?"

Hi Lo looked at Harry's watch guard. His crafty eyes were half shut as he said:

"Puttee up watch. Me givee odds."

"No, hanged if I will!" cried Harry. "I'll come back tomorrow with some more money. Come with me and show me to a joint."

Hi Lo's cat-like eyes gleamed.

"Me show," he said. "Belly glood place."

They ascended the stairs and passed out of the shop.

Harry had made up his mind to one thing.

Hi Lo Jak was his game.

He would have the Celestial rascal in handcuffs the moment they reached the sidewalk.

He believed he had plenty of evidence now to convict the yellow scoundrel.

As they emerged upon the street the young detective saw that everything looked favorable.

There were few people seen on the street. As they left the shop Harry stepped behind the laundryman.

And just as they reached the sidewalk, quick as a flash the young detective sprang upon his man.

Hi Lo was taken completely off his guard. He went down beneath Harry's weight, but squirmed and writhed with superhuman strength.

At the same time he opened his throat and sent out a series of strange, unearthly calls.

In an instant it seemed as if that part of Chinatown was alive with yellow figures.

From every quarter they sprang.

Harry saw that his attempt to capture the villain was a failure. The foes were upon him like an avalanche.

The young detective was obliged to cease trying to capture his man.

In fact, he had now quite all he could do to look out for himself.

So he sprang across the street and ran for his life.

After him came several of the pig-tailed foe. Had they overtaken him his fate would have been brief.

But Harry dashed under the light of a red lamp, slipped, fell and rolled down a flight of steps.

He rolled down into a basement and struck against a door. The door yielded and he fell inward.

There he lay, half stunned in utter darkness.

Only the greatest of good fortune saved his life then. His pursuers had not seen him fall into the place.

He had flashed under the red light and into the gloom on the other side.

There they lost him.

When Harry recovered himself he rose on his elbow. He could see nothing.

He lay on damp earth, the floor of the basement or cellar.

Just as he was about to clamber to his feet a strange sound arrested him. He lay still and listened.

It was a groan as of some person in deadly agony.

What could it mean?

## CHAPTER X.

### IN DISGUISE.

Old King Brady was as an infant in the hands of so many of his yellow captors.

He was rendered almost instantly helpless. Tight cords bound his wrists and ankles.

And over him triumphantly stood the scheming woman who had so cleverly deceived him.

Myrtella Haines laughed in her most mocking way.

"That is it, boys! Just truss him up safely. He won't escape now."

Then she bent over and said:

"Well, good friend, you over-reached this time, didn't you? To think that a shrewd old detective like you would let a woman fool him. Ha, ha, ha!"

Old King Brady was cool.

"You certainly succeeded," he admitted. "I can't deny that."

"You must have thought John Armstrong was an uncommonly smart detective."

"Well, I did."

"Now, shall I tell you where Justus Clarke is at present?"

"That is your own discretion."

"Well, I am so sure of you and that you cannot escape that I'll tell you."

She leaned nearer and said:

"He is a dead man. His body is in the black hole with the others, under Hi Lo Jak's laundry."

She hissed the last words.

Old King Brady shivered.

The woman noted this and laughed.

"Oh, you'll shake more than that before I'm through with you," she declared. "You shall see. Do you know what I'm going to do with you?"

"Do what you please."

"Oh! so you are one of that kind that does not fear, eh? Well, we shall see."

"No, I shall not fear death."

"Death is nothing. What you will suffer is living death. I mean to put you in the same hole with Justus Clarke. But I mean to put you there alive."

Old King Brady realized the horror of this.

Harry had told him about the awful horror of the place. But the old detective made no comment.

Myrtella turned and gave orders to the coolies.

They lifted the old detective's body and carried him to a far corner of the building. Here he was laid upon a pile of straw.

"Let him lie there until it is dark enough to carry him over to Jak's place," said Myrtella.

From his position the old detective saw her confer with Keegan.

Then the door was raised and the nighthawk drove away.

Myrtella now disappeared.

Three of the coolies watched over Old King Brady. He laid there helpless for hours.

Unknown to him, Harry was at that moment but a few doors away, playing fan-tan.

If the young detective had realized the plight of his partner, it is safe to say he would have wasted little time there.

But he did not.

So Old King Brady continued to lie there. He knew it was of no use to appeal to the coolies.

But he kept at work on his bonds.

There was a possibility of loosening them, and he did not neglect it.

Steadily he worked on them.

The rope was new and stretched. It was with sudden relief that he suddenly felt one wrist free.

Hope was renewed in his bosom.

Now that one hand was free, he felt there was a chance for him. It did not take long to free the other.

He could use his hands now all right. But that was not enough.

His ankles were bound.

How to release them was a question. It would have been an easy matter ordinarily.

But to bend over with that purpose in view might arouse the suspicions of his three guards.

What was to be done?

For a long time he studied the problem.

Meantime the coolies had begun to relax their vigilance. One of them went to sleep.

The other two kept up a jabbering conversation. Old King Brady waited until their attention was diverted before making any sort of a move.

Then he managed to reach down with one hand and give the knot a pull.

Again and again he did this.

It began to loosen.

Then hope thrilled him utterly. He believed that escape was certain.

He did not fear a battle with the three coolies. They were powerful fellows, but he did not care for that.

He already had his plan of action carefully mapped out.

He would spring upon the first one and grab his cudgel, for the coolies had no other form of weapon.

Then he would trust to his skill at breaking heads and quarter staff practice to dispose of the trio.

He believed he could do it.

Finally, so engrossed did the two guards become that they failed to regard the prisoner at all.

It was Old King Brady's chance.

He sat up boldly and silently untied the knots. He was free.

He at first considered the possibility of slipping silently away in the gloom unknown to the coolies.

But he speedily saw that this was out of the question.

The rustling of the straw had already caused one to turn his head.

He gave a yell.

But, quick as he was, the detective was quicker. Old King Brady launched himself upon him like a thunder-bolt.

The astonished coolie went over like a nine-pin and Old King Brady wrested his cudgel from him and knocked him senseless.

The other coolies were descending upon him savagely. But Old King Brady met them fairly.

He struck one an awful blow across the face and felled the other with a blow on the head.

With a leap the detective gained the storehouse door. He lifted it just enough to enable him to creep out.

He was in Mott street.

It was now dark as Erebus.

Just in front of the warehouse there was no light. The old detective dashed down Mott street toward Chatham Square.

He heard scuffling feet and hurried shouts from different quarters in his rear. But he kept on.

He felt safe now.

He came to a halt just in the edge of Mott street. Something like an uproar could be heard.

The old detective chuckled.

"I'll get 'em yet," he muttered. "They haven't done me up after all. But that is the keenest woman I ever ran up against."

This could not be questioned.

Myrtella Haines was certainly a female crook of resource and evil qualities.

The old detective had no fear of recapture. The uproar died out almost as soon as it started.

Two blue-coated officers came sauntering down the street. Old King Brady understood now why the uproar ceased.

It was early in the evening and there were few astir. For some reason or other all seemed disposed to take the other side of the street.

So Old King Brady felt secure in his position. He waited some time.

But he had no idea of leaving.

The night was before him, and there was work to do. It did not take him long to decide on a plan.

He went across the street and slipped into a dark area.

Here he made a complete change in his personal appearance. He assumed a very clever disguise.

It was that of a Bowery sport.

He assumed a swagger and thrust a piece of tobacco in his jaw. Thus equipped he set forth.

He steered straight for Hi Lo Jak's laundry. The place was open, as the lights might attest.

A number of coolies were busy at a table sprinkling clothes. But the proprietor himself was not there.

Hi Lo Jak was missing.

At that very moment he and Harry were emerging from Kee Lo's place.

The old detective entered Hi Lo Jak's laundry with an open manner. One of the coolies waited on him.

"Comee for washee?" he asked. "Gettee allee lightee; slow checkee."

"Oh, come off!" said the old detective, with a swagger.

"I want ter see der boss. See?"

"Hi Lo comee soon. Waitee?"

"All right," said Old King Brady, sinking into a chair. "I'll wait."

He had not long to wait.

Hi Lo Jak burst into the laundry.

But he was in far from a presentable appearance. His tunic was torn and daubed; there was blood on his face, and his manner was all excitement.

"Foreign debbil hittee me. Tly killee me!" he cried, excitedly.

Then he turned to his visitor. Old King Brady bowed suavely.

"Hello, old man!" he said, in an offhand way. "I've come all the way from 'Frisco to see you!"

The Celestial looked surprised.

"Whatee want?"

"I want you to tell me where she is? You know! Li Hun's wife, the woman with so much grit!"

The Celestial looked surprised again. He made no reply.

"Your wantee see Melican leddy? Me telle her allee light!"

Old King Brady had no idea of doing this. He was determined to have an interview with the woman herself.

So he insisted. It was not long before Hi Lo returned and said:

Melican lady see you. She come now."

It was Myrtella Haines who appeared at the door at the rear.

She glanced at Old King Brady critically.

"Who is it, Hi Lo? Who wanted to see me?"

Hi Lo pointed to Old King Brady.

She looked at the pseudo sport keenly.

"You want to see me?" she asked.

"Yes."

"What do you want?"

Old King Brady shifted his quid and said:

"There's a tall gent wants to see you at onct. He's waitin' down there at ther square."

Myrtella looked surprised.

"Who is he?"

Old King Brady described Varoni. The woman gave a start.

It had all been a clever guess on Old King Brady's part. By great good luck he had hit the nail on the head.

Varoni was absent.

## CHAPTER XI.

### LIVELY WORK.

The old detective was elated when he realized that his game was likely to be a success.

If he could only decoy Myrtella it would mean the winning of the game.

So he said:

"I reckon ther guy's name is Varoni. He sent me hyar to escort yer."

So she said:

"Varoni is his name, eh?"

"Yes, miss."

"Why didn't he come himself?"

"He didn't darst ter."

"Why?"

"Well, he said as how ther place was watched by coppers. They'd nab him."

Myrtella's face cleared.

"I see!" she said. "He always was a cautious one. I'll be ready in a jiffy."

She left the laundry, going into a rear chamber.

Old King Brady sat expectorating tobacco juice into a cuspidor nonchalantly.

The coolies worked away stoically at the ironing-board. They paid no heed whatever to the detective.

Thus matters stood.

Old King Brady waited.

The suspense was awful.

It seemed as if Myrtella would never come. Thus Old King Brady grew nervous. He knew that if she walked to Chatham Square with him that night she would not come back.

The Tombs would have an important prisoner. But would it come to pass?

It was a certainty if she should appear on the scene.

But, while he was waiting, an unexpected thing occurred.

The door of the laundry opened.

A man walked into the place.

At sight of him Old King Brady was aghast. His plan was done for.

It was Varoni.

The Italian looked timidly around. He nodded to Hi Lo Jak.

"Is she here?" he asked

The laundryman turned to Old King Brady with a



curious, baleful light in his eyes. He looked at him sharply.

"All wantee see Melican lady," he said. "Me tellee her!"

"That's right!" said Varoni, sinking into a chair. Old King Brady leaned forward.

"I say, boss!" he said. "Ain't you ther feller dey calls Count Varoni?"

The count gave him a cold stare.

"I suppose I am," he said.

"Then I kin tell ye something'. Thar's a chap named Clarke wants ter see yer out at Chatham Square."

"What Clarke is it? Not Justus Clarke?"

"Dat's der chap, sir!"

Varoni stared at the Bowery boy.

"Pardon me, signor," he said. "but your story will not do. I happen to know that Justus Clarke is dead."

"Ye're wrong," persisted Old King Brady. "He's all alive an' he wants ter see yer at Chatham Square."

Varoni's face changed.

"I heard he was dead," he said.

"Waal, it's a mistake. See?"

The old detective tried to draw Varoni to the door. It was his one hope of getting at least one prisoner.

But he was too late.

The plan failed by a narrow margin.

Myrtella, with hat and coat on, came in from the rear.

Then followed a tableau.

In the astonishment of the moment the old detective might have escaped.

But he did not desire to do so.

He was determined to stay and face it out. It was a daring resolve.

"Varqni!" cried Myrtella. "You have come."

"Yes, signorina. I have returned," was Varoni's reply.

"Why did you send for me?"

The Italian looked at her in a dumfounded way.

"What do you mean?"

"Do you mean to say that you didn't send and that this fellow lied to me?"

Myrtella turned upon Old King Brady with suspicion. Hi Lo Jak ran and pulled the door shut and locked it.

It was too late for escape.

But it was not the first time in his life that Old King Brady had been in a bad scrape.

So he was cool.

Myrtella looked hard at the old detective. Then she advanced and bent her gaze hard upon him.

"What do you mean by bringing me such a yarn?" she demanded.

The pseudo sport yawned and made a lazy reply:

"Oh, I thought I'd have a little fun."

"Is that your idea of fun?"

"Well, p'raps so. But thar's no copyright on it," said Old King Brady.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Bill McGee, and I travels on my shape. Do yer wanter dispute it?"

Old King Brady gave his interlocutor such a savage look that she shrunk back.

In a moment a peal of alarm escaped her lips. It was then, when it was too late, that Old King Brady saw he had done a foolish thing.

He had acted on impulse.

He had gained nothing and put his life in jeopardy.

With the woman's cry of alarm, the old detective acted.

Quick as a flash he leaped over the counter among the coolies.

He reached the gas jet and turned it out. The place was in darkness.

Pandemonium followed. Old King Brady made a desperate effort to get at the woman Myrtella.

Once he had hold of her dress. Her shrieks brought others from the rear rooms in hot haste.

Lights shone upon the scene.

The excited coolies were tangled up behind their table. Varoni was in a corner making wild blows with an uplifted chair and Myrtella was on the table.

But the cause of all the rumpus was nowhere to be seen.

He had disappeared.

Old King Brady had played a daring game. He had made a dash in the confusion for the inner room.

He knew that the opium den was in that direction.

He could not get out upon the street. But in the opium den he was for a moment safe.

Half a dozen dazed victims lay about the place. They paid no heed to the old detective.

He was surprised to see that the place was running again in full blast, despite the raid of the night before.

This was because the police had not cleaned the place out as they ought to have done.

Old King Brady had no idea of being overtaken by the gang who were now in quest of him.

He dodged into the shadows and made a lightning change in his appearance.

The coat turned inside out was of another color; hair and beard were displaced. In a twinkling the Bowery sport was a hard-visaged, stoop-shouldered man with a penchant for opium.

He grabbed the disused pipe of one of the smokers.

Then he lay down upon the rug and was in the apparent embrace of the dope. The gang burst into the place.

The den was ransacked.

The smokers were not disturbed. The searchers repeatedly stepped over Old King Brady. They searched the bunks and every part of the den.

But in vain.

Finally it was abandoned, and Old King Brady heard the murmur of voices in the next room.

The old detective distinguished the voice of Myrtella; also that of Varoni.

This interested Old King Brady, and he was resolved to know what was the subject of the conversation.

Making sure the coast was clear, he arose and crept to the hangings between the two rooms.

He peered through and saw Varoni seated at a table.

Myrtella, much disturbed in mind, was pacing the floor. Every word they uttered came to the old detective plainly. He was interested.

"It's getting too hot for us," Myrtella said, angrily.

"Ah, signorina, but say the word and we fly——"

"Hang your flying! You're always flying. Why don't you get the money to fly with?"

Varoni leaned forward and said:

"I have consulted a lawyer. He says I shall have no trouble in getting my inheritance now that Clarke is dead."

"Well, dead or alive, things are getting too hot for us here."

"What shall we do, signorina?"

"We must leave Chinatown. Leave the country. Now is the time for you to come forward with your fortune."

"Ah, signorina, I shall lay it and my heart at your feet."

"You Italians are so confounded romantic. But I tell you it is money we want. You must have it in forty-eight hours."

"I shall promise."

The woman now adopted a cooing manner.

"And you will be sure to get the money, Varoni? Sixty thousand, you say?"

"I shall!"

"All right! Bring it to me here. Every hour now is precious. If we could have killed those detectives—why did I let him live? I should have put him out of the way then."

Varoni sprung to his feet. Myrtella turned with a start.

Into the room had glided half a dozen almond-eyed Celestials. At their head was Li Hun, the Chinese husband of Myrtella.

Behind him were Wun Gu, the dwarf; Kee Lo and Hop Lee, with others. Wun Gu carried a two-handed sword, and he had a diabolical smile on his hideous face.

Li Hun's brow was dark. His manner was savage in the extreme.

"Killee Melican man!" he hissed. "No takee Chineeman wife away. Cuttee head off quick! Takee now!"

In an instant the yellow gang surrounded Varoni.

Wun Gu held his two-handed sword ready.

Varoni turned deadly pale and sprung up. For a moment awful terror shone in his face.

Myrtella seemed for a moment dazed with astonishment. Then, like a tigress, she sprung between them.

"What's this?" she cried, hotly. "You're a fool, Li Hun! Jealous, are you? Ha, ha, ha! You're a fool!"

Li Hun was like a murderous fiend.

"No takee wife away. Killee dago man!"

Myrtella's eyes flashed.

"No, you won't kill him!" she cried, hotly. "Put that sword away, Wun Gu. Do you hear? I'm boss here!"

But the Chinese dwarf only grinned and lifted the sword higher.

It looked like a crisis.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A CLOSE CALL.

Harry Brady, lying on the damp, earthen floor of the cellar, heard a faint groan of mortal anguish.

It sounded near at hand. For a moment he listened intently.

In a moment it was repeated.

The cellar had another occupant.

The young detective was determined to find out who this could be. He arose cautiously and felt in his pocket for a match.

He struck it on his shoe. The flame lit up the cellar momentarily.

And in that moment Harry received a startling shock.

On the damp earth not a dozen feet away was the prostrate figure of a man.

By his apparel Harry could see that he was not a Chinaman.

The stranger moaned again and gave another groan. Harry crept to his side.

"What's the matter, my friend?" he asked. "What's happened to you?"

"My head; they struck me!" huskily came the reply. "I broke away and ran. I fell down here. It was the yellow gang after me. They meant to kill me."

"Ah!" exclaimed Harry. "I had the same experience."

"You are a white man? Thank God! I feel some hope now. Where are we? Can we not make our escape?"

"Certainly. But tell me, who are you?"

"I am Justus Clarke, of West Eightieth street. Varoni, a friend, sent a cab after me. When I got into the cab the messenger drugged me. I was driven away, mercy knows where.

"But I came out of the drug, and when they were taking me from the carriage I broke away. They chased me. I fought madly. One of them gave me an awful blow on the head.

"But I ran and ran, until I felt myself falling. And here I am."

"You are in a cellar, and you fell down the outer stairs," said Harry. "I had the same experience."

"Who are you?"

"I am Harry Brady, the detective."

Clarke gave a gasping cry.

"Brady!" he cried. "Where is Old King Brady? Thank heaven, I have a chance for life!"

"Indeed you have!" declared Harry, who had listened with wonder to the banker's remarkable story.

Harry now got upon his feet.

"You have had a narrow escape, Mr. Clarke," he said.

"But I think the turning point is near. I doubt if you will be troubled much longer by the yellow gang."

"That is good news."

"We have the ringleaders spotted already. When once we get them in limbo the yellow gang will fade from existence."

"Good! I know you Bradys can bring that about if anybody can."

"We have nearly succeeded."

"Where is your partner?"

"I left him at the office."

Then Harry detailed his adventures. The banker listened eagerly.

"Well," he said. "I never dreamed that Varoni would treat me in such a way. It is the influence of that evil woman."

"Oh, yes!"

Mr. Clarke now tried to get upon his feet. He was weak and faint.

Harry now produced his dark lantern and lit it.

By its rays he was able to inspect the banker's wounds and dress them.

He also had a flask of whisky, which he gave him and which greatly aided in resuscitating him.

Gradually Clarke regained strength.

Then Harry crept up the steps and reconnoitered. He presently returned.

"The coast seems clear," he said. "Park street is but a few steps away. If we can turn down there we will soon get out of Chinatown."

"Let us try it."

They crept up the steps out of the basement. Emerging upon the street, Harry supported the banker.

Thus they made their way along until they reached the corner of Park street.

Here a very steep hill leads down into the Italian quarter.

Several Chinaman were passed on the way. But none of them were of the yellow gang, for they offered them no injury.

Harry was now completely recovered.

He was eager to return and again get into the game. When they reached the small park below they sat down on a bench.

"Look here, Mr. Clarke," said Harry. "If I find an honest cab driver to take you home will it be all right?"

"Certainly!" agreed the banker. "You are anxious to go back?"

"I am."

"That's all right. Find the cab!"

Harry went in quest of the cab. He had to go as far as Chatham Square.

When he returned he assisted Clarke into the cab. The driver was given orders to proceed to West Eightieth street.

Then Harry started back to Chinatown.

In a short while he turned again into Mott street. At this hour Chinatown was in full blast.

The restaurants and shops were in full glow.

The young detective, however, kept on by all these places.

He knew that Varoni must be found wherever Myrtella Haines made her quarters.

Impulse led him to the laundry of Hi Lo Jak.

But it was dark.

As it chanced, Harry reached the place soon after Old King Brady's visit in the guise of the Bowery sport.

The Celestials had taken fright and closed the place.

Harry lounged about for awhile, keeping his eyes and ears open.

He was now somewhat at a loss what to do. Slipshod Mongolians passed him in the gloom, and he soon felt that his position was not of the best.

He would surely become an object of suspicion.

So he decided to change his position. He started down the street at a leisurely walk.

Suddenly a startling thing happened.

From a dark alley glided a number of shadowy figures. They brushed past Harry, and as they did so he caught the gleam of steel.

In an instant his nerves were all a-tingle.

Something was up.

What was it?

Instinctively he fell in behind the gliding figures, some half dozen in number.

He saw them suddenly pause before the entrance to Hang Ho's tea store.

One instant in the gleam of the shop windows and he realized what was up.

They all wore masks.

They were Highbinders.

"My goodness!" he muttered. "They will kill Hang Ho! It can't be prevented."

Suddenly the young detective saw the door of Hang Ho's shop open.

A customer came out.

Then he saw the Highbinders make their rush. Knives flashed in their hands.

A loud, long-drawn wail of terror, a cry for help, smote upon the air. Chinamen rushed from their shops on the opposite side of the street.

But not one of them dared to interfere in the work of death.

The spell of the Highbinders was upon them. It was a terrible moment.

But there was one who was not deterred by fear from acting.

This was Young King Brady.

He rushed forward like an arrow. When he sprung into Hang Ho's shop the merchant was behind his counter wielding a huge two-handed sword.

Harry grasped a heavy carved club from the curio counter and felled the nearest Highbinder with a terrific blow on the skull.

Hang Ho's desperate and blood-stained face lit up as he saw that he was to have assistance.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE LAST STROKE.

Old King Brady was intensely excited and interested with the scene in the opium den of Hi Lo Jak.

Wun Gu did not seem disposed to obey the command of the queen of the yellow gang.

"You yellow curl!" she gritted. "You dare defy me? I'll have your heart cut out for this."

Varoni trembled with fear.

Wun Gu held the big sword longingly close to his neck. It would be an easy matter to lop off his head with that keen blade.

Threats and fury had not availed Myrtella.

The obduracy of the Mongolian nature told her that she had failed.

There was another way.

She adopted it.

Her manner changed. She slipped to Li Hun's side and whispered something in his ear.

At first the jealous Mongolian was incredulous. Then gradually his face changed and he nodded eagerly.

"Me slee!" he said, finally. "Dat allee light. You keepee sword. Melican man go way, neber come back!"

Varoni had retreated to the entrance to the opium den.

He stood within touching distance of Old King Brady at that moment.

So when the woman glided up and whispered to Varoni he heard every word.

"It's all right, Luigi," she said. "You get the money tomorrow. Meet me at the corner of this street tomorrow night at eight. We will leave Chinatown, never to return."

Varoni was apparently under the woman's hypnotic influence. The shadow of momentary doubt vanished.

"You won't go back on me?"

"Never!"

Varoni turned and brushed past Old King Brady. He went out to the street by a side door.

Wun Gu evidently was disappointed. He put the big sword in the corner reluctantly.

Li Hun held a long whispered consultation with Myrtella.

They sat on a divan in a dark corner of the room.

Old King Brady could but dimly see them. But once he thought he heard a spasmodic exclamation of pain from the corner.

In a few moments Myrtella arose and crossed the room.

With her serpentine motion she glided to the door of the opium den and looked in.

Then she went to a desk which stood in the room beyond. She opened this and took some articles from it.

Then she glided from the room by the outer door. Old King Brady noted all these things with wonder.

Li Hun remained sitting motionless in the corner where she had left him.

Old King Brady would have followed the woman.

But this would have exposed him to Li Hun's gaze.

As it afterward proved, he would have been safe in this. But he dared not move from his present position.

Old King Brady was waiting for Li Hun to change his position, so that he might return to the opium den.

But the Chinaman did not move. He continued sitting there motionless.

Five, ten, twenty minutes drifted away and a half hour had passed.

Then there glided into the room Wun Gu. The dwarf looked about him and gave a start as he saw Li Hun sitting in the corner of the room.

He at once addressed some conversation to him in the Chinese tongue.

But Li Hun did not answer.

The dwarf spoke angrily next time. But it had no effect.

Then he cried in pigeon English.

"Li Hun fool sleepee allee time. Melican wife maybe gone."

Old King Brady gave a start.

A thrilling suspicion came to him. The next moment it was verified.

Wun Gu went up and placed a hand on Li Hun to shake him.

The latter pitched forward heavily. As he rolled into the light the set eyeballs and protruding tongue told the truth.

He was dead.

A knife was buried to the hilt in his yellow neck.

It was the treacherous work of the woman fiend, Myrtella Haines.

Wun Gu opened his mouth and let out a yell which seemed more animal than human.

It echoed through the house and had a startling effect. From all quarters the Chinamen came rushing.

They filled the room and their gibberish was most startling to hear.

Old King Brady waited for no more.

The old detective, however, had but one thought.

The murderess must not escape. He slipped from his concealment and sought a way to the street door.

In the jabbering excitement of the Celestials he was not noticed. He managed to open the door and gain the street.

It was easy for Old King Brady to see that the end had come.

The reign of the queen of the yellow gang was at an end. She could never be reinstated in Chinatown.

Old King Brady turned his footsteps down Mott street.

Suddenly a dark figure glided by him. In an instant the old detective knew him.

It was Hi Lo Jak.

The laundryman was chattering like a maniac. The old detective made a grab for him.

But Hi Lo eluded him, and just then a great uproar arose in the street.

Old King Brady saw that they were near Hang Ho's place.

He saw shadowy forms dart into the place. He heard Hang Ho's yell for help.

He saw that Hi Lo Jak had also darted in with the Highbinders. Also he was given another surprise.

He saw Harry enter the place.

This was enough.

It was just at the moment that Harry had felled the Highbinder with his club that Old King Brady appeared on the scene.

"Harry!" cried the old detective. "You here? What's up?"

"Hello, Governor!" cried Harry, eagerly. "You've come just in time. Come on! We'll clean these demons out."

With Old King Brady to assist and bluecoats already at the door, the battle was a brief one.

The Highbinders beat a retreat. But four of them were captured.

Old King Brady was disappointed that Hi Lo Jak was not among this number.

"Well, it's all right!" cried Harry. "We saved Hang Ho, the only honest Chinaman in New York."

"That's right!"

"But—Governor, where on earth did you come from?"

"From Hi Lo Jak's place."

"The deuce! I went up there, but it was closed up."

"Well, I guess it's closed up now for good."

"What do you mean?"

"The gang is broken up."

"How is that?"

"The leader has skipped out."

Old King Brady then described his adventures in the opium den. Harry listened with wonderment.

"So she murdered her Chinese husband," he cried. "She is the deepest and most dangerous woman I ever knew."

"Well, I should say so. She certainly is a hummer. And now, what have you learned?"

"One important fact."

"What?"

"Justus Clarke is alive."

"Whew!" whistled Old King Brady. "Then Varoni will never get his money."

The two detectives now discussed the situation pro and con. They arrived at several conclusions.

They knew Varoni could not leave without having seen his lawyer. Therefore they determined to wait until the next day, visit his lawyer, and entrap Varoni.

Once they had him in hand it would be in order to trap Myrtella by using him as a decoy.

In the interim they would seek rest.

They did not go home.

Instead, they went back to the little Park Row office and made up beds on the floor. Then they slept soundly.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CAGING THE BIRDS—THE END.

At an early hour the next morning the Bradys were astir.

"I have an impression that today's work will end the case, Harry," said Old King Brady.

"So do I."

The Bradys now made their way into Nassau street. It was here that the lawyer employed by Varoni had his office.

They found the number, ascended the stairs, and entered the door. A spare-looking, brisk little old man sat at a desk. He looked up critically at the two detectives.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, curtly. "What can I do for you?"

"Are you Mr. Worden?"

"Yes."

"You are counsel for Luigi Varoni, are you not?"

"I was retained by him. I am not so any longer."

"Ah! you adjusted a little matter of inheritance for him, did you not?"

"I may have," said the lawyer, cautiously.

"Oh, you have nothing to fear. We are detectives. You know Varoni is a spendthrift and Justus Clarke was long ago appointed a guardian. The terms of the guardianship expire in a year. Now Varoni has been trying to get his money. Mr. Clarke was reported dead. He has, however, come to life.

"Now we want to know if Varoni is expected here today to see you. We understand you are to secure the money for him."

"You are too late," replied Warden. "He has got his money."

"Indeed!"

"I found a banker yesterday who purchased his claim on Clarke for a profit of ten thousand dollars."

"That is, he was paid fifty thousand dollars."

"About that."

"You cannot tell us where we may find Mr. Varoni?"

"No. I understand he is going back to Italy," replied the lawyer.

"Good-day."

The Bradys took a hasty departure. There was one hope left.

Myrtella was to meet Varoni at the corner of Mott and Park streets at eight o'clock that night.

It would be in order to be on hand. In the meanwhile the Bradys, in disguise, proceeded to do up Chinatown.

Hang Ho's place was open as usual. But armed men were at the door.

The little tea merchant met the Bradys cheerfully.

"Hang Ho," said Old King Brady. "We want to get hold of every one of this yellow gang. Where is the most likely place to look for them?"

The merchant was thoughtful.

Finally he said:

"Mebbe findee some in Hi Ko's shop in Doyers street."

The detectives leisurely sauntered around into Doyers street. This is a notorious haunt of opium fiends.

Hi Ko was one of the most slippery and clever of the joint keepers.

The Bradys knew that it was risky for them to enter the place. But they were disposed to do so, and a real streak of luck rewarded them.

Out of the doorway glided two Celestials. In an instant the Bradys knew them.

One was Wun Gu. The other was Kee Lo.

The two Chinese crooks turned into Pell street and went towards the Bowery. The detectives were elated.

They closed in behind them.

Just at the corner stood a policeman. Old King Brady stepped up and showed his badge.

"Arrest those two chaps," he said. "I'll answer for it."

The officer put a hand on Wun Gu's shoulder. The dwarf turned and made a lunge at him with a knife.

That would have been the finish of the officer, but for Old King Brady.

The old detective struck the weapon from Wun Gu's hand. Then followed a terrific struggle.

But in the end Wun Gu and Kee Lo were handcuffed.

A patrol was called and the two crooks driven away to the police station. In the next hour the Bradys got five more of the gang.

When evening came Chinatown was in a pacified condition. To a large degree the disturbing element was gone.

The Bradys clung to the hope that Varoni and Myrtella would keep the appointment that evening.

They went to the office to wait for the time to come.

As they entered Old King Brady saw a package of rice paper which had been thrust under the door.

Astounded, he picked it up.

It was covered with Chinese laundry prices.

It was utterly useless for the Bradys to attempt to translate the stuff. But a thought came to Harry.

"There's old Professor Parton over in Vesey street," he said. "He can make out any kind of language, Sanscrit, Runic, and of course Chinese. Let's go over and see him."

The Bradys did so. The famous old linguist put on his glasses and quickly read the Chinese letter.

"The sense of it is this," he said. "Hi Lo Jak wishes to inform Old King Brady that Varoni and the woman are to sail on the Italian steamer Lucca at five o'clock."

The Bradys were dumfounded. They studied over the matter for some moments. Then Old King Brady said:

"Harry, it's a straight tip."

"What are your reasons?"

"Well, we know Hi Lo Jak was the most powerful of the yellow gang's leaders."

"So he was."

"But the action of Myrtella must have incurred his enmity. He has taken this method to win revenge."

"Well, that is reasonable."

"I believe so. You see Li Hun was an own brother of Hi Lo Jak."

"That's enough!" cried Harry. "I am convinced. We must reach that steamer before she sails!"

The detectives sped away. When they reached the wharf the Lucca's whistle was blowing for all aboard.

The detectives reached the gang-plank. On one side were a heap of bales and boxes of merchandise.

They stood by this. A man and woman alighted hastily from a cab and approached the plank.

The man was Varoni. The woman was deeply veiled.

The detectives waited for them to approach. They felt sure of their prey.

The two fugitives were now about to set foot on the plank. Old King Brady stepped before them.

"You are under arrest," he said.

A stifled cry escaped the woman. Her right hand went up.

Crack!

The bullet seared Old King Brady's cheek. He reeled back.

Harry was busy slipping the handcuffs on Varoni.

He turned with horror, thinking that Old King Brady was wounded. But the old detective regained his balance.

The woman, with a scream of defiance, rushed to the cover of the packing cases on the wharf.

Old King Brady started after her. But before he could reach her a thrilling tragedy occurred.

The woman came to a sudden stop and threw up her veil. She tried to use her pistol, but was not quick enough.

From behind the packing cases darted a yellow figure.

A shrill cry of hatred and triumph went up as the Mongolian sprang upon the woman.

Twice he buried a dagger in her breast. Then he hurled her from him and stood with exultant features over her.

Gasping in death, Myrtella Haines, the murderess, grovelled on the wharf. It was an awful ending of her dark career.

Hi Lo Jak turned to the Bradys as they came up.

"Me give up! No fightee!" he said. "Killee bad woman. She makee all trouble for Chineeman!"

The Bradys were bound to admit that this was the truth. Varoni and Hi Lo Jak were taken to the Tombs.

Myrtella Haines lived the day out, dying in awful agony. She made a full and absolute confession.

Hi Lo Jak, of course, died in the electric chair.

Varoni was imprisoned for a time. Upon his release he left the country.

The yellow gang passed out of existence. For a time Chinatown was quiet after this chastening process.

The Bradys had fought the case to a finish and came in for much credit. But although other cases soon claimed their best efforts, none were better known than the case of the Bradys and Hi Lo Jak.

#### THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE TEXAS RANGERS; OR, ROUNDING UP THE GREEN GOODS FAKIRS," which will be the next number (247) of "Secret Service."

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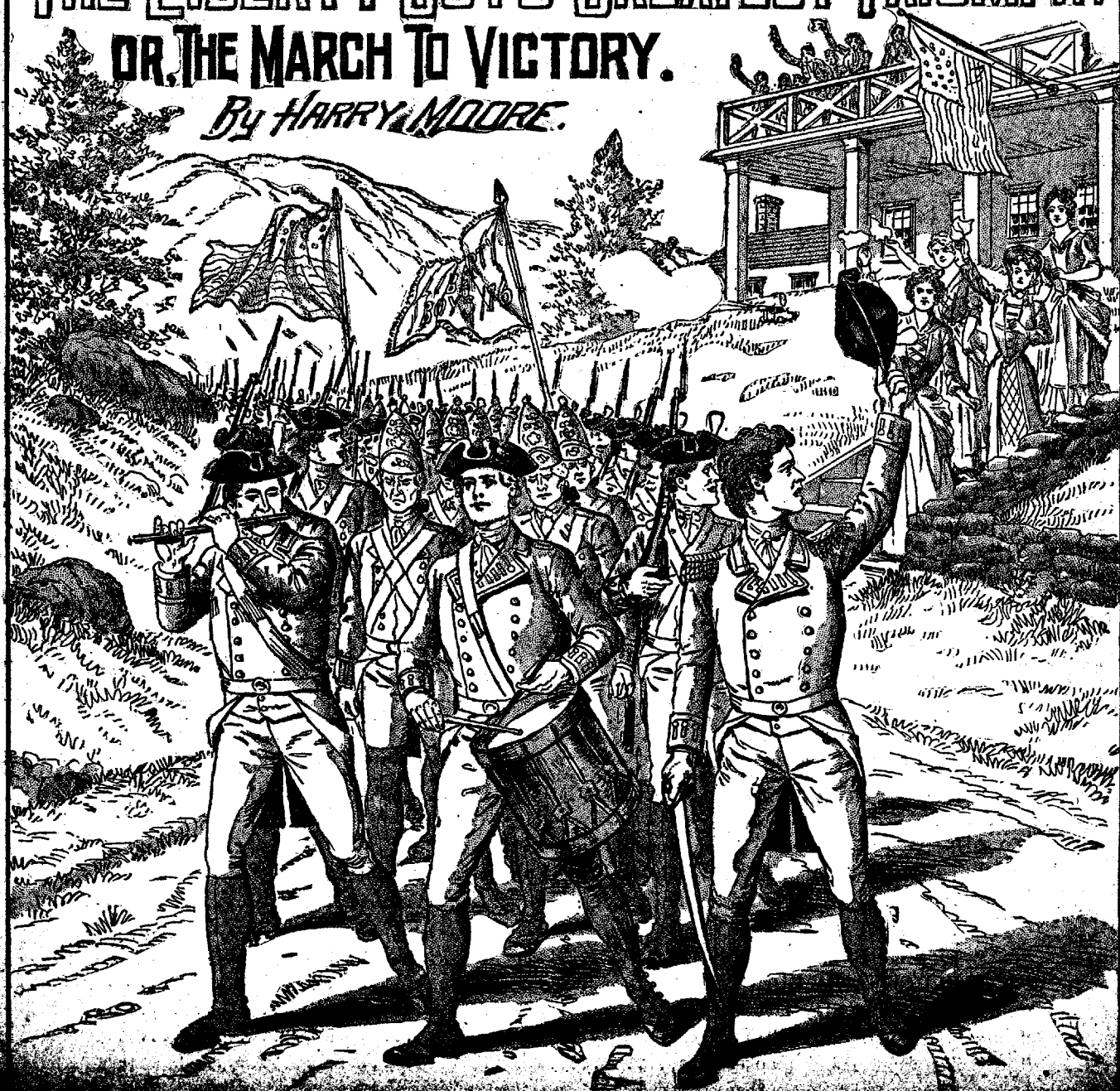
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