

# SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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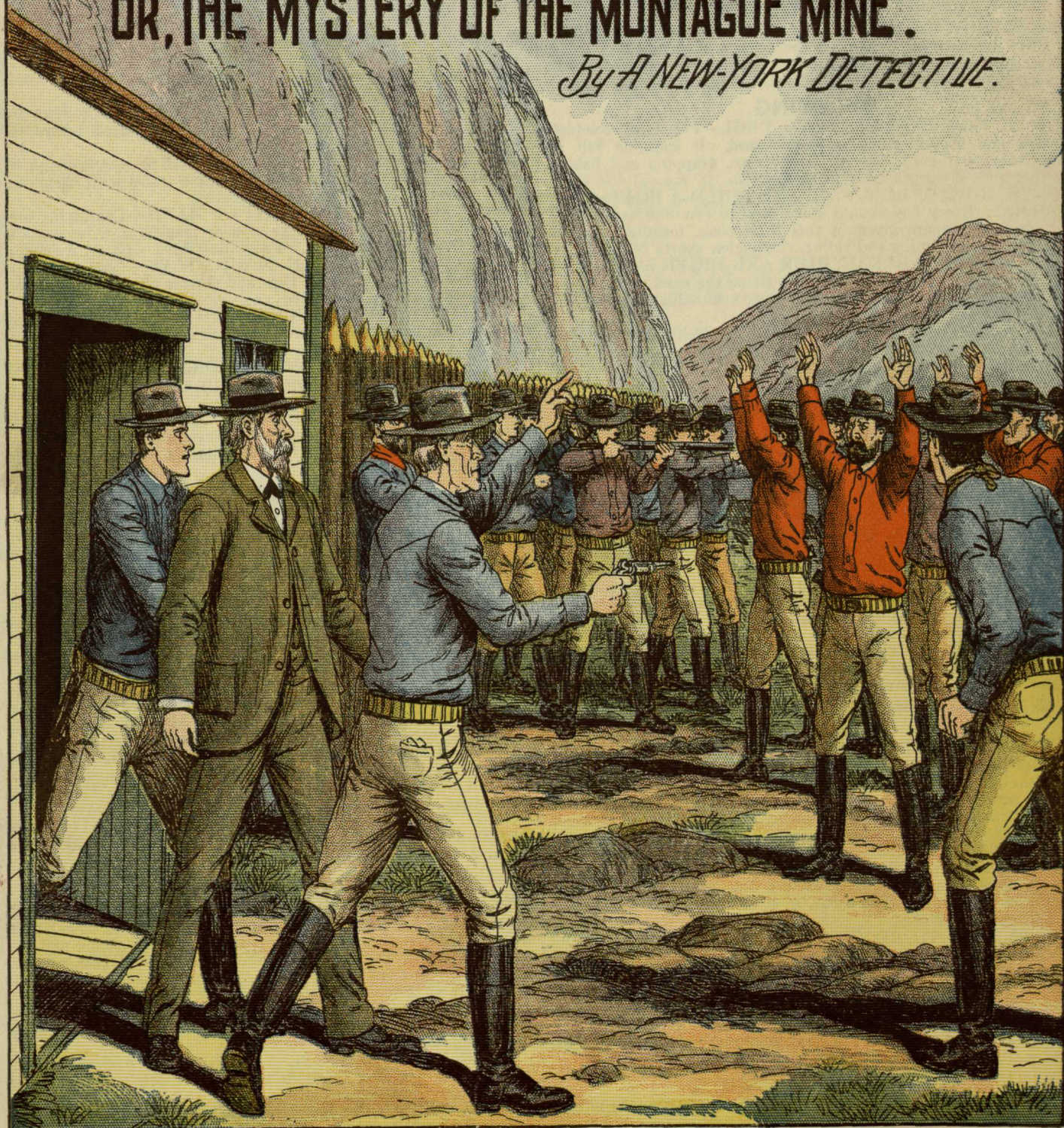
No. 313.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 20, 1905.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADYS AND THE COPPER KING; OR, THE MYSTERY OF THE MONTAGUE MINE.

*By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.*



Colonel Barron came out in response to the call. So did the Bradys. So, also, ten miners—out of the corral. In an instant the gang was covered with rifles and revolvers.

"It is our day, boys!" cried old King Brady.



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# The Bradys and the Copper King

OR,

## The Mystery of the Montague Mine.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### BUYING A SPY.

The sun was just setting over the rugged peaks of the Rattlesnake range, and the yellow, poisonous smoke from the copper smelting furnaces of the great Montague mill were tinged red by its dying light as they rose heavenward in a straight column, for there was not a breath of air stirring, and the smoke from the tall chimney went up—up—up until it lost itself in space far above.

In the distance, where the many buildings of the Montague mine could be seen, men were crowding out, some hurrying toward the group of frame shanties which constituted the "town" of Montague, others, with less haste, filing toward the big boarding-house which sheltered the unmarried workers in the mine.

Between these two groups a young fellow, apparently but little over twenty, walked toward the mine office with quick stride and the air of a man who was going somewhere and for some definite purpose.

As he drew nearer to the small two-story frame building a man carrying a rifle over his shoulder stepped in front of him and commanded a halt.

"Who is it you want to see?" he asked, looking the young fellow over from head to foot.

And truly the youth was not an attractive proposition.

His clothes were old and worn, and had not even in their best days been of much worth.

His toes were out of his shoes, and his hat looked as though he had slept in it more than once.

In short, it was no wonder the watchman stopped him—there were several armed watchmen always on duty at the Montague mine at that time—for truth told he looked very much like a tramp.

"I want to see Mr. McCoy, if it ain't too late," replied the young fellow, civilly.

"What for?"

"I wanted to ask him for a job."

"He is just getting ready to go home. I don't think he will see you."

"Is there any objection to me trying it on?"

"It's after hours. We don't allow strangers at the mine after six o'clock."

"Say, boss," said the young man, confidentially, "I haven't a cent to my name, and don't know where I could stop to-night. You see, I beat my way on the train from Crystal Springs, and we were late getting in. If I could get the promise of a job from Mr. McCoy I suppose somebody would take me in. It's going to be a cold night, and I might freeze to death if I slept outside."

The watchman seemed moved to a certain extent.

"Did you ever work in a copper mine before?" he asked.

"Yes; at the Anaconda, two years; but it is a year since I was laid off, and I've been up against the toughest kind of luck ever since."

"In what way?"

"In every way. Of course, it was all my own fault."

"Too much booze?"

"That was the beginning of it, but I'm on the water wagon now, and mean to stick there if I can."

"I shall get the call-down for letting you pass, surest thing," said the guard, "but you can go on."

"Thank you," replied the young man gratefully, and he hurried on toward the office.

A light burned in the windows, for the November day was now coming close to its end.

There were several young men inside, working on the books at high desks.

In an interior office a tall, pompous looking person could

be seen seated at an elegant roll-top desk, talking with a rough-looking man.

All this the young man took in at a glance, for he did not pause, but ascending the steps, walked boldly into the office, asking over the little counter if he could see Mr. McCoy.

"He is engaged now. I don't think so," replied the clerk addressed.

"I can wait until he is at liberty," was the reply.

"He will be going then. What did you want?"

"Work."

"I don't think we want any hands."

"Let me ask him. I am very hard up."

"You look it. Have you ever worked in a copper mine before?"

"I worked two years at the Anaconda."

"If that is the case perhaps Mr. McCoy might want to use you. I'll ask."

"Thank you ever so much."

"Stay here," said the clerk, and he stepped into the adjoining room.

"He will see you," he said, coming out a moment later.

"You can walk right in."

As the young man entered the private office the roughly dressed man passed.

This made it certain that his pompous companion was Mr. William McCoy, the superintendent of the Montague, one of the largest individual copper mines in Montana, and which as yet had escaped the clutches of the great Wall street syndicate known as the Copper Trust.

Certainly Mr. McCoy was about as repellant a person as one could expect to meet.

"Well?" he said, icily, as hat in hand the young man stood before him.

"I wanted to ask you if you could give me work, sir," was the reply.

"How did you pass the guard?"

"I watched my chance, sir, and slipped past."

"It is against the rules for strangers to come here at this hour. I am the mayor of this town. I ought to have you arrested. Every one knows my rule."

"I am a stranger in Montague, sir. I didn't know."

"Where are you from?"

"I belong in Iowa. I have been in Montana for the past three years."

"Ever worked in a copper mine before?"

"Yes, sir. Two years in the Anaconda."

"What at?"

"I was a striker; I worked in the ore house, and part of the time I drove a team."

"Why did you leave?"

"I was discharged."

"What is your name?"

"Albert Packer."

"Where have you been since you left?"

"Knocking around."

"You have, hey? We will see about that."

Mr. McCoy opened a drawer in his desk, and taking out a little memorandum book consulted it.

"Shut the door," he said, putting the book away.

The young man obeyed.

The door which he closed led out into the open office.

At the same time Mr. McCoy arose and shut another door, which led in behind the railing where the clerks were.

The young man returned the steady gaze which the superintendent now fixed upon him with troubled countenance.

"Packer," said Mr. McCoy, after a minute of silence, "you were discharged from the Anaconda for stealing. You went to the penitentiary for two years."

The young man assumed a defiant air.

"So you have got a black list," he said. "All right. I'll get! I might have known."

"Wait!"

"What's the good?"

"Wait, I say! How did you get out of prison? It is only a year, and you got two."

"I have some friends yet. I was pardoned by the Governor."

"You were, eh?"

"I was."

"And yet your friends would not help you once you were out?"

"I wouldn't ask 'em. But say, boss, it is no use for me to talk any longer. You don't want me now. Let me go."

"Wait!"

"All right, if you say so."

"We superintendents all keep a black list. You will not get work at any copper mine."

"It begins to look so."

"Nor anywhere else around here."

"There's other business. I won't starve."

"You look as though you had been starving lately."

"I've come pretty near to it, Mr. McCoy."

"How would you like to quit the business and try it on Easy street for a while?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"You hear what I say, and you understand English."

"But how?"

"How much did you expect to get a day here?"

"I'd take a dollar a day if I couldn't get any more."

"You could not live for that."

"Yes, I could."

"But you could live better for ten."

"Sir!"

"I say again you understand English. You also understand what it is to be up against hard luck; but you don't seem to be able to comprehend that your luck may take a turn."

"Do you mean to say that you have work for me to do for which you are willing to pay me ten dollars a day?"

"Yes."

The young man's eyes glistened.

"What kind of work is it?" he asked.

"You know."

"No, I don't."

"I say you do."

"You want to make me a spy on someone."

"Of course. I'll tell you this much—you serve me faithfully for a few weeks, and you get your ten a day, and you may also get a great deal more after that. Are you game to try such a job?"

"I am."

"Understand this is a case where your past record does not stand against you. It is on account of your record that I am giving you the offer."

"All right."

"You accept?"

"I'd be a fool if I wouldn't."

"Now, mind you, Packer, I am a man who stands no nonsense. If you go back on me by so much as a word or a hint you might as well arrange for your funeral before you give that hint or speak the word."

"Mr. McCoy, I'll be true to you; don't you fear."

"All right. I'm going to try you. I tell you right now, and it will be useless for you to deny it, you are not what you seem!"

"S-sir!"

"You are an educated man."

"I admit it."

"Nothing but dissipation and criminal practices have brought you down to what you are."

"I don't deny it."

"Right. To-morrow you go on the payroll as assistant foreman in the ore-house."

"But my clothes."

"Here are fifty dollars. Get down into the town and fit yourself out proper."

"You are too good, sir."

"Bah! You know that what I am doing is not for your sake. Keep your remarks to yourself. Now be off."

"No special instructions, sir?"

"Not to-night. I am done now. Good-night."

And fifty dollars richer, Albert Packer left the office of the Montague mine.

As he passed out a tall, elderly man of striking appearance came toward the door.

Neither gave the other more than a glance, but as they passed the elder man said in a voice scarcely audible:

"Well?"

"I'm engaged."

It was Albert Packer who made the reply, and having made it he hurried down the hill toward the town.

"Hello!" called the guard as he went striding along, "did you get a job?"

"A better one than I dared to hope for," was the reply.

"I go to work in the ore-house as assistant foreman to-morrow."

"The deuce you do!"

"Yes. I found Mr. McCoy a splendid man."

"He's a bird!"

So said the guard.

But what did he mean?

There are black birds, and white birds, and likewise geese.

"He's a bird!"

The remark was certainly not a very definite one.

"He's a bird!"

Well, the guard might have meant "any old thing."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE MONTAGUE MINE.

Albert Packer kept on his way until he came to the shanties which, as we have mentioned before, constituted the town of Montague.

There was only one decently constructed building among them, and that was the Banner House.

The railroad did not enter Montague.

At a place called the Junction, two miles below, passengers were obliged to leave the train if they wanted to visit the mine, although a freight switch ran directly up to it.

This was one of the peculiar notions of Col. Jas. A. Barron, the great Montana Copper King, and the principal owner of the Montague mine.

He did not wish his men to be too near the railroad station, lest they should be seized with a sudden notion to depart.

Moreover, he preferred to have such visitors who might come among them for the purpose of stirring them up on questions of wages and discipline more immediately under the eye of his superintendent, who each year was invariably elevated to mayor of the little town.

Young Packer avoided the hotel, and walking the length of the main street, seemed to size up each saloon.

There were three of these, and each appeared to be also a restaurant.

In addition there was but one store, which although but a single story high, covered a great deal of ground, and carried a large stock of goods of every description.

This was the company's store.

It was either trade here or nowhere with the miners.

The cost of their purchases was deducted from their wages.

The result was as always in such cases.

They were charged three prices for everything, and thus were always poor.

"This is a one-man town," muttered young Packer. "I pity these poor fellows; it would be almost better if—but never mind! It is not my business. All I have on hand just now is to find a place to eat and sleep."

He turned and started back.

A moment later the rattle of wheels was heard behind him, and a handsome double open-top road wagon, driven by a stylishly dressed young woman flew past, and drew up in front of the hotel.

"That must be the girl," thought Packer. "She's a beauty, all right. Well, we shall see."

He turned into the Star, the largest of the saloons.

It was fitted up in the usual way.

A bar in front, a restaurant at one side, and a stage in the rear where performances were on every evening.

No open gambling was allowed at Montague, so this usual adjunct to such places was cut out.

The bar was well crowded with miners, some drinking, but more talking.

The young man joined the group, and calling for a glass of soda water, stood listening to the talk.

It was all on one subject.

The drinkers were discussing the disappearance of Colonel Barron, the Copper King.

This was known in Montana as the Mystery of the Montague Mine.

The disappearance had taken place six weeks before.

The facts concerning it may as well be briefly stated.

Colonel Jas. A. Barron was no kid-glove miner.

He was, on the contrary, an old prospector, a practical man who understood every detail of his business, except the technicalities of the smelting of the copper ore, which only a thorough chemical education can give.

Col. Barron was also a worker, and in former days was always to be found with his coat off, bossing his own men, ready and able to do whatever they did or refused to do.

He was noted as a hard but just master, and was both respected and feared.

Such were Col. Barron's methods of doing business, until he began to grow rich.

It was three years before the opening of our story when he had accumulated his first million that the change came.

He then removed to Helena, built a fine house, and put on style.

But even then he spent most of his time at the Montague, although he had now hired Mr. McCoy as superintendent, and was supposed to have given him entire charge.

Then the Copper Trust came along, and every effort was made to force Col. Barron to join it, but he persistently refused.

It now became necessary for him to watch the financial end of his business more closely, and to see that the stock of the mine was not gobbled up by Wall street sharks.

So the Helena house was abandoned, and the Barrons removed to New York, where the colonel became a prominent figure on Wall street, and gained the name of the Copper King.

At every turn he headed off the trust.

Millions rolled in, and most of his time was devoted to speculations, visits to the mine becoming few and far between.

The last of these visits had been made six weeks before the opening of our story.

On that occasion certain new machinery was being introduced at the mill, and Col. Barron jumped in to work in his old way.

For two days he toiled with the men, and on the evening of the second, after a protracted conversation with Mr. McCoy he started in the dark to walk to the Banner House, where a suite of rooms was always kept in readiness for him.

But Col. Barron never reached the Banner House.

No one could be found who had seen him from the moment he left the mine office except the guard at the foot of the hill, with whom he stopped and exchanged a few pleasant words.

From the foot of the hill over to the Montague was not over three-quarters of a mile, and Col. Barron having laid out the road himself knew it perfectly.

For days following a persistent search was made for him under the guidance of Superintendent McCoy.

It all went for nothing, however.

Whether the Copper King wandered away into the mountains or whether he was killed by his enemies, of which he had his share, was never learned.

The theory of the miners was that he had been spirited away by order of the Copper Trust.

Such was the mystery of the Montague mine.

And it was to the discussion of this subject that Albert Packer listened now.

The talk among these men was all in favor of the trust spiriting-away theory.

Under their breath they also discussed Superintendent McCoy.

Nobody suggested that the superintendent was a bird.

Had anyone done so it would have been to describe him as a very bad sort of bird, it would seem.

All seemed to be against the man.

If Superintendent McCoy possessed even one friend in this crowd he certainly failed to raise his voice.

Young Packer, after listening to the talk for fifteen minutes or so, went in to supper.

This over, he spoke to the proprietor about a room.

"You can have one," was the reply. "Pay in advance."

"I can do that."

"A dollar a night."

"I want it by the week."

"Two to four a week."

"The two kind will suit me."

The landlord led the way through a door on the left.

Here the long building which stood next to the Star was entirely taken up by little rooms forming a double row, and running from one end of the enclosure to the other.

The rooms in front were large, those in the rear small.

The partitions extended almost up to the ceiling, the top serving as a ventilator, there being no windows in the smaller rooms.

"I think I will take one of the large rooms," said Packer, producing two dollars additional.

The landlord seemed surprised, but said nothing, assigning his guest to a front room.

But Packer did not take possession then.

He went out on the street, and calling at the company's store, purchased a suit of clothes and other things.

These he put on, leaving his old clothes behind him, and again started for the Star, walking slowly, and closely scanning the face of each man he passed.

Suddenly there loomed up in the distance the same tall, striking-looking old man whom he had seen at the mine.

There were three big electric lights strung across the main street of Montague, so there was no chance of mistake.

Again, as they passed, the two exchanged words, although they scarcely looked at each other.

Packer said:

"It's the Star, third window on the alley."

The old man said:

"All right."

This in a whisper on both sides, and both passed on.

"Hello," said the landlord, when Packer asked for his key. "Looks as though we had struck luck."

"That was done before I came here," was the reply. "I go to work to-morrow at the Montague."

"Good!" said the landlord. "I suppose you will be shifting to the boarding-house then."

"No," replied Packer, "for the present I shall stop right here."

Young Packer then went to his room, not even glancing in at the music-hall, where a young fellow, blacked up, was playing the banjo and singing a comic song.

Here he locked himself in, having first unfastened the window which opened on the alley.

He then put his light out, and seating himself upon the bed, waited for a full hour alone in the dark.

"Will he never come?" he kept saying to himself. "What can be keeping him?"

This question he had asked for perhaps the twentieth time when there came a low rap on the window on the outside.

He immediately raised it, and the old man to whom he had spoken on Main street and at the mine climbed in.

"You are here at last, Governor?" Packer whispered.

"At last. I was delayed at the hotel. How loud is it safe to talk? I see it is all open above."

"Not above the lowest whisper."

"Right. So you got there?"

"Yes."

"In what capacity?"

"A paid spy!"

"Ha!"

"Yes. He gave me fifty dollars to fit myself out with, and promised me ten a day while it lasted."

"And the job?"

"Assistant foreman in the ore-house."

"Oh, indeed! I am foreman."

"Good enough! Then my work will be to spy on you."

"It don't surprise me, Harry," replied the old gentleman. "Of course I am suspected. That was understood. It has worked out just as I planned it."

"Exactly. It was a mighty slick move for you to make me take the name of this young Packer, who was pardoned out of the penitentiary."

"I knew he had the black list. I knew also that there was no one he would be so likely to take up with as an ex-convict."

"You were dead right. All is working well. Now, what have you learned?"

"One point of grave importance."

"Yes?"

"Yes. Since I have been at the Montague mine McCoy has made two midnight trips into the mountains."

"The deuce he has! Alone?"

"No; he has two always with him. There is another trip set down for to-night."

"How did you learn that?"

"By watching and listening. It would take too long to explain in detail."

"And what do you propose?"

"We propose to follow."

"You say we. Do you mean you and I?"

"The three of us."

"Ah! The girl goes, too."

"Yes."

"Is she good for it?"

"For anything she undertakes, I fancy."

"When do we start?"

"Each time before he has started at ten o'clock."

"You have already followed him?"

"No; not yet. To-night will be the first."

"All right. I am ready. What am I to do?"

"I will call for you in passing. You will get the signal on the window. Then slide out."

"Right. I shall be ready."

"See that you are."

"Have you formed any theory as yet, Governor?"

"No. The matter is still as much of a mystery as when I took hold two weeks ago."

"The miners all seem to think that our Copper King has been spirited away by order of the trust."

"The trust gets the blame for everything, of course."

"Nevertheless, the theory may be correct."

"Indeed, it may. I am not saying that it isn't."

"If it is true then the man has probably been murdered before this."

"It is useless to theorize, Harry. The only discovery I have made is that this man McCoy goes alone into the mountains at night. Why? It is certainly a very peculiar proceeding. We want to find out what it means."

"We must. All the same it will spoil my usefulness if I am discovered or even suspected of following you to-night."

"I shall have your disguise ready."

"Do you think McCoy suspects you of being a detective?"

"I am certain that he does, and the fact of his engaging you as a spy proves it."

"Did he make any objection to engaging you?"

"None at all. How could he? The letter which I brought with me from the board of directors was peremptory. It ordered him to make me foreman of the ore-house, and he did it. There was no other course for him to pursue."

"And he has treated you civilly?"

"Very. He is a deep man, but whether or not he is a rascal remains to be proved. Now, then, Harry, I must leave you. At a quarter to ten o'clock I will tap on the window. Be ready. We will jump right in on this case, and show Miss Barron what the Bradys can do."

Having said this the old gentleman crawled out of the window and departed.

And were these the Bradys, the most famous detectives in the United States?

No one else!

The old gentleman was none other than Old King Brady.

"Albert Packer" was Young King Brady, his partner and pupil.

Many are the mysteries these renowned detectives have solved, many the hidden secrets they have unearthed.

Engaged by Linda Barron, the daughter of the missing Copper King, to assist her in learning her father's fate, it remained to be seen what the Bradys would do in the matter of the mystery of the Montague mine.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE BRADYS ON THE SHADOW.

Harry sat in the dark waiting.

He did not even dare to smoke, for fear the fact of his being awake would be detected.

But no one came near him, for there are few miners who retire as early as ten o'clock.

At a quarter to ten the tap came on the window.

Young King Brady immediately opened it and crawled out.

The old detective had with him a few articles of dress done up in a bundle which were to be used by Harry in making his disguise.

As for Old King Brady himself, he had assumed an entirely different appearance.

Instead of looking like a mine foreman now, he might have been mistaken for a rough old prospector.

Usually the Bradys wear clothes which are so constructed that they are capable of assuming many different forms.

Indeed, the old blue coat with brass buttons worn by the old detective, has become historical.

So has the big white felt hat, the high-pointed stand-up collar, the old-fashioned stock, and the rest of his quaint costume.

All these things Old King Brady now had upon him, and yet not one was in evidence.

Harry, on the contrary, had not worn his usual clothes,

as it was thought best that he should enter upon his work as nearly as possible in the garb of a genuine tramp.

"You might as well make your change right here in the alley," said Old King Brady. "That is if you can do it in the dark."

"Just as well as not, Governor," was the reply.

"Then jump right in and do it."

"O. K. I'll be ready in three minutes."

He was ready in two, and the detectives walked through the alley, striking across the barren plain toward the rising ground north of the Montague mine.

The moon had now risen, but the night was overcast, and only occasional glimpses were seen of it through the moving clouds.

It was a desolate scene.

Directly in front of them, not a mile away, rose the foothills of this particular Rattlesnake range—there are many ranges bearing this name in the Far West.

All over the plain were dead trees, and the grass was equally dead and brown.

This arises from the poisonous fumes of the copper smelters which kill off all vegetable growth in their neighborhood.

It is not a pleasant thing to live near a copper mine.

"And where is Miss Barron?" Harry asked before they had gone far.

"She is to meet us at the hut," was the reply.

"And the hut is?"

"Over there by the foothills."

"And McCoy? I understand he lives at the Banner House."

"He does, but he is not always there. Sometimes he sleeps in rooms over the office, which he keeps for his own use. He did not come in to supper to-night, so I suppose he is still at the mine."

"Or at the hut?"

"He was to be there at half-past ten."

"I thought you said ten."

"I said, or meant to say, that we would have to start at about ten."

"All right. We had better hustle, for we want to get in there ahead of him, of course."

"Leave all that to me, Harry. It will come out O. K."

"Correct! Shall I like this girl?"

"You will be charmed with her. Without being mannish in the least she has all the courage and pluck of a man. You see, her mother died when she was a mere baby, and she was the only child. Instead of putting her out to be cared for by relatives or others, Col. Barron took care of her himself. She is devoted to her father, and is in dead earnest in this business. Look back. Do you see anybody following us?"

"I can't see a soul."

"Nor can I. Come, let us run for it. As you say, we can't get to the hut too soon."

The Bradys are good sprinters in spite of the old detective's advancing years.



In a few minutes they had gained an old stone hut of the sort so common in the northerly portion of the Far West.

Built years before by some trapper or sheep-raiser, it had long since been abandoned, the thatched roof had fallen in, the door and window sashes were gone, and the whole appearance of the place was lonely and desolate to a degree.

And yet as the Bradys approached, a young man armed with a rifle suddenly appeared in the doorway.

"Confound it! Discovered!" muttered Old King Brady, subsiding into a walk.

"Who can it be?" asked Harry.

"Give it up! One of McCoy's men, I suppose."

"Shall we turn back?"

"It is too late now. We must go forward and make some excuse."

They advanced slowly, expecting at every moment to be challenged, but they were not.

The young man stood motionless, grasping his rifle in such a manner that he could put it to instant use.

"Good-evening, partner!" called Old King Brady. "My son and I have got turned around. Can you direct us to the Montague mine?"

"The lights on your left ought to show you where the mine is," was the reply. "Considering your hurry just now, I should have thought that you were making for this hut instead of the mine."

Old King Brady started at the sound of the voice.

"What!" he exclaimed, clapping on a pair of eye-glasses and peering forward, "is it you?"

"No one else, Mr. B."

"Ha! You thought it best to dress so?"

"Much the best. You yourself suggested it."

"I said that it was a pity you were not a man."

"Exactly; and so I thought I would make myself as near like one as I could. How do you think I have made out?"

"The deception is perfect. Only thing is whether you aroused suspicions at the hotel."

"Not at all. I climbed out of the window of my room and dropped from the roof of the extension which is directly under it. No one saw me leave. But introduce me to your partner, Mr. B. This is Young King Brady, I suppose."

"It is. Harry, this is Miss Barron in disguise."

The girl extended her hand, which Harry took.

"You are made up well, Miss Barron," he said.

"Glad to hear you say so," replied the girl. "But let me suggest that my name shall not be mentioned among us. We can't tell what spies may be lurking around. My name is Linda. Call me Linn—it is what my poor father always called me, and it is a man's name."

"Have it as you will," replied Old King Brady. "And now to business. Have you seen anything of McCoy?"

"Not yet."

"How long have you been here?"

"Ten minutes."

"It is twenty minutes past ten. He may not come to the hut, after all."

"I thought you overheard him make the appointment here?"

"And so I did; but he may have changed his programme. The nearer way to the range lies on the other side of the creek."

"And yet it would hardly be safe for us to risk going there on an uncertainty."

"That is so. I will go toward the creek and see if I can detect a moving light. He carried a lantern on his previous trip, and may do so again."

Old King Brady hurried away, leaving the young people alone.

Naturally Harry felt a bit bashful in the presence of the millionaire's daughter.

For some minutes nothing was said.

"Well, Harry, and what theory have you formed?" Linn, as we shall call her, suddenly asked. "You see, I am bound to get acquainted with you. I call you by the name Old King Brady always uses when he speaks of you."

"I have hardly had time to form an opinion," replied Young King Brady. "You see, I have only just arrived."

"It is a strange case. I can imagine no reason for my father's disappearance unless he has been made way with by the Copper Trust."

"That seems to be the general impression in the town."

"So Mr. Brady says. My father feared the agents of these people. He would not sell out to them, and they have sworn to crush him, yet I cannot believe they would dare to take his life."

"Old King Brady's suspicions are all in the direction of Mr. McCoy."

"I know they are. Yet my father had great confidence in Mr. McCoy."

"He believed him to be an honest man?"

"He trusted him implicitly."

"And yet——"

"Well, why do you hesitate?"

"If you side with Mr. McCoy perhaps you might not like to hear what I was about to say."

"I side with nobody. I am looking for my father, Harry. I mean to solve the mystery, too. I shall find him dead or alive."

"I was about to say, Miss——"

"Linn!"

"I was about to say that McCoy has bribed me to become a spy on Old King Brady."

"He has?"

"Yes."

"Still that counts for nothing. He has no idea that Old King Brady is working for me."

"Can you be sure of that?"

"If he has it can only be guesswork. I have never told a soul."

"Ah! Well, he suspects him of being a detective."

"Employed by the trust, perhaps."

"It may be so—but look!"

"Old King Brady has stopped. He is throwing up his arms."

"It is a signal. We are to come on."

"Then let us hurry. He may have discovered something."

They left the hut now and hurried across the plain.

The moon had obligingly come out for a minute, which enabled them to see the old detective.

With equal obligingness it now went under a cloud again, and by the time they joined the old detective it was dark enough.

He stood near the bank of a little creek which ran out of the foothills looking in the direction of the Montague mine.

"There's your light, Harry," he said quietly. "I guess there is no doubt that our man is on the move."

"And not coming to the hut?"

"So it would seem from the direction he is taking."

"We must cross the creek and follow."

"And so run the risk of following someone else. Wait!"

"What do you propose to do, Mr. B.?" asked Linn.

"You see those clouds? They are on the move. The moon will be out in a minute, and I have something here which will help us out."

Old King Brady produced a powerful night-glass which he always carries.

The two minutes of waiting which followed seemed like an hour.

Suddenly the moon shot out from behind the clouds.

It was only for an instant, but in that instant Old King Brady had his glass up and ready for business.

"It is McCoy," he announced. "He has two with him. They are steering directly for the range, and for some reason have cut the hut out."

"Then we follow?" queried Harry.

"Yes, but wait till the moon goes behind that cloud."

"It has gone now."

"Right, and we will go too."

Old King Brady sprang across the narrow creek as he spoke.

"Can you do it, miss?" Harry asked.

"Linn!" said the girl.

"Can you do it?"

"Say Linn—don't be bashful."

"Can you do it, Linn?"

"Yes, with a running jump."

"You don't want help?"

"No."

Linn took the jump and landed safely on the other side of the creek.

Harry was at her side in an instant.

"Let us keep close together," said Old King Brady. "This is a poor place for shadowing."

"We are all right if the moon will only behave herself," replied Linn. "Anyhow, it will be all right in ten minutes, for he will be among the foothills then."

Now, the foothills which lie below this section of the Rattlesnake range were of rather peculiar construction.

They rose to a height of about a hundred feet, and were rounded off on their tops like so many haystacks.

Between each were deep depressions, all leading into a deeper valley beyond, which extended for miles between the foothills and the true range.

Was Superintendent McCoy going through to the mountains?

Hardly.

It was two miles good through the foot-hills, and three across the valley.

To do a ten-mile tramp over that rough road would take him too long.

Yet such might be his intention for all that, and the Bradys and Linda Barron, now on the shadow, followed, prepared to put in one night or ten—anything to bring about a solution of the mystery of the Montague mine.

## CHAPTER IV.

### TROUBLE IN THE GORGE.

"They have gone!"

"Yes, in between the hills."

"Probably after all they intend putting it through to the range."

It was Harry who spoke, and Old King Brady answered.

Superintendent McCoy and his two companions, whom the old detective had already recognized as men employed in the ore-house, and under his direction for the past two weeks, had just vanished up the narrow path leading in between two foot-hills.

The way was most rugged.

On either side the slaty rock rose abruptly, while great masses of it, broken off by some convulsion of nature, lay heaped up in the gorge.

Canyon this opening could not be called, for a canyon is generally conceded to be a break caused by the action of water, while this looked as though some tremendous earthquake had split the hill in two and made a lot of splinters in so doing.

Among this mass of broken rock a regiment could easily have hidden themselves.

Old King Brady gave a sigh of despair.

"We are up against it now," he remarked. "Pity we could not have worked up a little nearer to them."

"It is no use thinking about that now," said Harry. "They have given us the slip."

"Then we must slip after them," put in Linn. "The more obstacles there are thrown in our way the more determined I am to go ahead."

"You are right," said Old King Brady. "And we on our side have no idea of holding back. You are the right sort for such work as this. If you will pardon an old

man's remark, you would make a good wife for a poor man. If he could not make success for himself you would make it for him."

Linn laughed shortly.

"As it happens I am already engaged to be married to a rich man," she said. "Sometimes he thinks I have got altogether too much get aheaditiveness about me. I have to be doing something—that's all."

"In that case my remark falls flat," said Old King Brady.

"Not at all. I appreciate it for what it is worth. You may as well know all about me, Mr. Brady. I am out on a dangerous errand as well as yourself. There is no knowing how it may all end. If anything happens to me you want to notify Arthur Benners, of Helena. He is the gentleman to whom I am engaged."

"I shan't forget," replied the old detective. "He is a friend of your father's, of course?"

"He is my father's agent in Helena. He has been with him ever since he was a boy."

"Is he the gentleman who came up here and assisted in the first search which was made for your father?"

"Yes. He would have stayed longer, but business demanded his return to Helena."

"I have asked you several questions. May I ask one more?"

"As many as you like."

"Did you tell Arthur Benners that you had engaged the Bradys to help you out on this business?"

"Mr. Brady, I told you in New York that I had mentioned that matter to no one, and should not mention it. Is not that enough?"

"It is. Pardon me. But here we are at the entrance to the gorge. It seems to me simply impossible that we can go ahead without a light."

"There's a light!" exclaimed Harry.

The glimmer of a lantern could just be discerned at some distance ahead of them.

"They are there," said the old detective. "What can we do about these terrible stones?"

Once more the moon played the friend.

Out it came from behind its cloud, and lit the way before them.

And this time it seemed disposed to remain out for a while.

The Bradys and their companion at once started in to improve the opportunity.

"Don't wait for me," said Linn. "You go on ahead. I'll take care of myself the best I can."

"If you only could," replied the old detective.

"I can. Rely upon it."

"Then look out for yourself. Here goes!"

The Bradys went scrambling over the rough stones, making excellent time, considering the circumstances.

Meanwhile the light remained stationary ahead of them.

"If I thought it was going to stop that way I'd hang back for the girl," said Harry.

"No, no! Let us push forward," replied the old detec-

tive. "I opposed her coming in the first place, but she would do it. And this man's clothes business. She is a little too strenuous for me."

"But she is all right?"

"She may be. Who can tell. Before now we have been engaged on cases by the very criminals themselves as a bluff. Not that I am intimating anything in this case, but—ha! What now?"

A rifle shot rang out.

The Bradys halted.

"A signal!" said Harry.

"The shot certainly did not come this way," replied the old detective. "I thought at first that they were firing at us."

"Shall we push forward?"

"We ought never to have halted. We want to find out what is going on where that light is, and mighty quick, too."

They came in a few moments to a point where they could do this.

So rapid had been their movements that they had left Linn well behind, for the scramble over the loose rock was very difficult for a girl.

They could now see Mr. McCoy and the two miners distinctly.

All three were sitting on the rocks, apparently waiting for someone.

McCoy had lighted a cigar, and his companions were smoking pipes.

"They are taking it easy, at all events," whispered Harry.

"Hush! Not a word!" breathed Old King Brady. "Confound that girl! I wish she wouldn't make so much noise!"

But the superintendent and his companions did not seem to hear.

The Bradys continued to watch them for some ten minutes after Linn came up and joined them, but the men made no move.

At length McCoy got up and raising his rifle fired into the air.

It was manifestly a signal, for he then sat down again, and resumed waiting as before.

It was slow business, but the Bradys are used to that.

At last Harry suggested that he creep up nearer and try to hear what was being said, for they were talking together now.

"Go!" said the old detective, "but on your life make no noise."

Young King Brady advanced accordingly.

He had not covered more than half the distance when suddenly a large stone slipped from under his foot and fell with a resounding crash.

McCoy and his men were on their feet in an instant.

"Who is there?" the superintendent called out.

He was about to start forward to ascertain when a shot rang out behind him, and all three turned.

Old King Brady and Linn saw two Indians suddenly come into view.



Both were armed with rifles, and behind them was a white man who also carried one.

"Oh, my!" gasped Linn, throwing up her hands.

"What's the matter?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Nothing—everything—I can't tell you! I must go!" exclaimed the girl, excitedly.

"Go nothing! You stay right here."

So Old King Brady thought then, but he changed his mind on the instant.

McCoy said something to the white man, and he with the Indians started down the gorge on the run, followed by the superintendent and his two men.

"Heavens! We are in for it!" said Old King Brady.

"The boy has spoiled the pie now."

And Harry was on the run, too!

The intentions of the six men were too evidently hostile to make it safe to stay where he was.

Linn did not wait for the others to follow, but went bounding back over the rocks like a deer.

"Halt, or I fire!" shouted the white man.

Then in an instant the shot came whizzing past Harry's head.

Old King Brady stopped and waited.

Harry had dodged down, and was now scrambling over the rocks almost on all fours.

"We go together!" thought Old King Brady

He drew his revolver and waited.

Just then there was a crash and a piercing cry rang out from Linn.

It was trouble all around.

The white man did not fire again, but pushed forward.

Old King Brady could easily have shot him, but it was no part of his purpose to do that.

Suddenly the man paused and shouted:

"Back, all of you! It is nothing but a piece of rock which has fallen down from above.

"How can he be so deceived?" thought Old King Brady, as he ducked down out of sight.

The light of the lantern carried by one of McCoy's men was but dim, to be sure, and being in front of them Old King Brady could well imagine that he himself might not have been seen, but still he could not understand how the man, who was well in advance of the others, could have missed seeing Harry.

But such appeared to be the case, for now he turned and rejoined his companions.

Harry in the meantime had also crouched out of sight, and was waiting for matters to quiet down.

And the Bradys watched the light.

It moved on up the gorge, and in a moment vanished.

All this time nothing more had been heard of Linn.

Now Harry came crawling up and rejoined his chief.

"This is a queer start!" he whispered. "What's the matter with the girl?"

"Don't know. We must instantly find out, though."

"They must have seen us, Governor."

"Whether they saw us or not, they must surely have heard her cry. I can't understand why they went back."

"The game is spoiled, at all events."

"Yes; they are too many for us, and anyhow we must look to the girl. She knew that man, Harry. She was scared to death when she saw him. What did he look like to you?"

"I didn't get a good look at him. Did you?"

"No; I couldn't make him out at that distance. He wore a hunting jacket and a hat something after the style of that everlasting old white affair of yours."

"Yes, I saw that. We are up against something new in the mystery line, that is certain; but just what it is will have to develop later, for I don't think we are going to find out to-night."

While this conversation proceeded the Bradys were moving forward, and now in a moment they came upon Linn.

At first sight they thought the unfortunate girl was dead.

She lay all in a heap with a big slab of stone over her body.

Evidently she had slipped, and the stone fell upon her at the time she gave the cry.

Old King Brady produced the little electric dark lantern which he always carries, and with Harry's help removed the stone.

"She's a dead one!" muttered Harry. "She must have struck her head on these stones."

"Probably. I think, though, she is only stunned. Here, help me lift her up. So. Now, then, I'll hold her like this and do you bathe her forehead with whisky. The flask is in my left hip pocket; you will have to get it for yourself."

It was a good ten minutes before poor Linn was restored to consciousness again, and it required vigorous work to bring her to.

Her first words were "Where is he?"

"There is no one here but ourselves, miss," said Old King Brady. "Those whom we saw have gone on up the gorge. Tell me about yourself. Are you much hurt?"

"I slipped and a stone fell on me."

"Yes."

"I'm afraid I have sprained my ankle. I struck my head a terrible blow as I fell."

"You certainly did. It is cut and is swelling badly. Try to stand. Let us see what you can do."

But Linn could do next to nothing.

She screamed with pain as she attempted to get upon her feet, and sank down again upon the rocks.

"Oh, Mr. Brady, I've spoiled it all!" she moaned. "I can't move! What shall I do?"

"You will try it again in a minute," replied the old detective, soothingly.

"Go on! Leave me. If there is anything to be done to help my poor father you must not think of me."

"We must not think of leaving you."

"Oh, why did I come?" moaned Linn. "Women are out of place in such business as this. It was all a mistake."

"It is no use regretting now," said Old King Brady. "What we want to do is to get you back to the hotel."

"You can never do it."

"We must. Take your time. Pull yourself together and we will try again."

"Where did he go?" asked Linn after a minute.

"You mean the man whose sudden appearance frightened you so, I suppose. He went back with the rest."

"But why was he here with those Indians and Mr. McCoy? Why? Why?"

"That is something we still have to find out," replied the old detective gravely. "I suppose you will tell us who he was after awhile."

"Perhaps I was mistaken, but I thought——"

"Well?"

"Mr. Brady, I must have been mistaken."

"Very likely, but you have not told us who you mistook him for yet."

"I know it couldn't have been," said Linn, with a sigh. "Of course I was mistaken, but I thought he was Arthur Benners, the gentleman to whom I am engaged."

## CHAPTER V.

### ARTHUR BENNERS.

"Now, throw your arm about my neck, miss, and put the other around Harry. We will lift you up and carry you so."

The Bradys had come down to business at last.

To remain longer where they were was not to be thought of.

The only thing to do was to get Linda Barron back to the hotel.

They raised her between them and started.

It was hard while they remained in the gorge, but somewhat easier after they got out on the open plain.

Still they could only carry her a little way at a time, for Linn, although by no means a large person, was still of pretty good weight.

The exertion soon started Old King Brady puffing, and when he set the girl down for the third time it began to look as though he would not be able to carry her further.

It was then that Harry caught the sound of hoofs, and in a minute they saw a light coming toward them.

"We are up against something, Governor!" he exclaimed. "What is to be done now?"

"Nothing except to wait and see who it is," replied Old King Brady. "This seems to be a night of troubles, but after all, if this newcomer proves friendly his horse is just what we want."

So, instead of putting out their lantern the old detective waved it.

The stranger appeared to comprehend the signal, for he put his horse on the gallop and came dashing up to where they were.

Linn gave a gasping cry as she caught sight of him.

"That is Arthur, Mr. Brady!" she exclaimed.

"That's not the man we saw before," declared Harry.

In appearance the rider was certainly somewhat different.

Instead of a shooting jacket and big white cowboy hat, he wore a cap and a short overcoat with the collar turned up about his neck. Moreover, he came from the opposite direction.

"For heaven sake don't tell him who I am unless you have to," breathed Linn.

"All right," replied Old King Brady. "If he don't tumble he will never learn your secret from us."

"Good-evening, gentlemen. Is anything the matter here?" the man asked.

"My friend has sprained his ankle," replied Old King Brady. "If you are disposed to help us, sir, you have come along just in time."

Meanwhile Linn had pulled the slouch hat she wore down over her eyes which partly concealed her face.

Young Benners looked the group over curiously as he replied in a frank, hearty way:

"Come, now, that's too bad. How did it happen?"

"He stepped on a stone which turned under him," replied the old detective.

"Indeed! But what are you all doing away over here at this hour of the night?"

"When it comes to that we might ask you the same thing," replied the old detective. "Still we have no reason for secrecy. We started out for a walk and we walked this way, that is all."

"And my case is just the same," said young Benners, with a laugh. "I started out for a ride and I rode this way. Can we get your friend on the horse? It is at your service. Where do you live?"

"I'm stopping at the Banner House with my young friend here," replied Old King Brady, wondering how on earth he was ever going to get Linn into the hotel without attracting the attention of everyone. "This young man is staying at the Star."

"Indeed. I am stopping at the Banner House, too. My name is Benners. I am connected with the Montague mine."

"It is the same with me. I am the foreman of the ore-house."

"Yes? Odd that we should have met here."

"If you are going to help us, Mr. Benners, suppose we get about it. This young man is suffering terribly. By the way, my name is Rowley. You might as well know."

Benners made no reply, but dismounting held the horse while Old King Brady and Harry lifted Linn into the saddle, where she was able to hold her own well enough.

"Comfortable?" demanded Benners.

"Yes," replied Linn in a voice so low that it could scarcely be heard.

It seemed to convey no suspicion to Benners' mind, for he said nothing.

"Walk along by the horse, young fellow. I'll talk with Mr. Rowly," he added to Harry after a moment.

This arrangement suited everybody.

Linn had formed her own plans and Old King Brady was only too anxious for a chance to talk with the friendly Mr. Benners.

In spite of the change in his appearance, and the fact that he approached them from the direction opposite to the foothills, Old King Brady could not doubt that he was the man they had seen in the gorge.

"I might be mistaken and so might Harry," he said to himself, "but for a bright girl like that to mistake her lover is not to be thought of."

"I have no doubt you are wondering what brought me out here to-night, Mr. Rowley," said Benners, as they walked along behind the horse.

"My dear friend, I'm too old a man to indulge in much curiosity," replied Old King Brady. "I feel too much obliged to you for your help to pry into your affairs."

"I know," said Benners, "but at the same time there is no mystery about me. I am Colonel Barron's Helena representative. I got in here on the late train this evening, and not finding Mr. McCoy at the Banner House I rode out to the mine. There the watchman told me that McCoy and two men had gone coon-hunting over in the foothills. I was on my way there to see if I could find him—that is all. I suppose you haven't seen anything of the party?"

"I saw three men with a lantern going toward the foothills awhile ago."

"Did you? No doubt that was McCoy. Well, we will cut it out for to-night, and I'll see him in the morning. I have heard about you, Mr. Rowley. You are the party Colonel Barron engaged before he came West for the last time."

"I am."

"How are you making out at the mine?"

"Very well, thank you."

"Does McCoy treat you all right?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"He was rather jealous of your coming."

"He has not shown any such spirit. I find him a very nice man. By the way, has anything been heard of Colonel Barron?"

"Not a word. The mystery is as black as ever. In fact, I came up here to consult with his daughter, who I understand is stopping at the Banner House. It is high time another search was started. It won't do to drop the matter so."

"I did not have the pleasure of Colonel Barron's acquaintance," replied Old King Brady, "but I have heard him spoken of as a very fine man."

"Do you hear the men at the mine talking much about him?"

"Oh, yes."

"Get any hint as to what became of him?"

"Not at all. I'm sure none of them know."

"What seems to be the general opinion?"

"That he was carried off by the order of the Copper Trust because he wouldn't join."

"That's mere nonsense."

"Why so?"

"Why so! Because he was just arranging to join the trust when he disappeared."

"Indeed. Well, the men up at the mine don't know that, and what is more, it would be hard work to make them believe it."

"It is so, all right. I had it from Colonel Barron's own lips. By the way, Mr. Rowley, did it ever occur to you that McCoy may have had something to do with the colonel's disappearance?"

"I could never believe that. He seems a fine gentleman."

"And that is what he is. Well, as I said before, something has to be done. I am thinking seriously of sending to New York to engage detectives to take the matter up."

"Why to New York? I don't know that New York detectives are particularly bright propositions."

"I refer to the Bradys."

"Seems to me I have heard of them. They operate mostly in the West, do they not?"

"Yes; but they belong in New York. They have been very successful. I think I shall engage them if I am not able to get some intelligence of Colonel Barron in a very few days."

"Does he suspect? Is he sincere? It can't be possible. He is surely the same man we saw in the gorge," the old detective said to himself.

Be that as it might, one thing was pretty certain—Arthur Benners did not suspect Linn.

Everything went to prove that, especially his way of acting at the end of this strange journey.

They were now close in upon Montague, and Harry suddenly called out:

"Boss, Joe doesn't want to go to the Banner House; he is going with me to the Star."

"All right," said Old King Brady quietly.

"He'll need someone to sit up with him," added Harry, "and I can do it better there; and beside, he won't have to be carried upstairs."

"Suit yourself," said Old King Brady. "I think he ought to have the doctor, though, and I'll send him along."

"Who are they?" asked Benners carelessly.

"Albert Packer, a young man from the Anaconda, who has just been engaged by Mr. McCoy as my assistant; the other is Joe Brown. He is a stranger to me. I met him for the first time to-night. I don't know what his business is."

"If he suspects her now will be the time he is going to show it," thought the detective.

But Benners gave him no reason to believe that he did suspect.

When they arrived at the Star Harry hurried into the saloon and engaged a room for "Joe Brown."

"Why, I thought you had gone to bed," said the landlord.

"Not at all. Didn't you see me go out?" replied Harry.

"I was off for a walk with a friend. He has managed to



sprain his ankle. I want a room for him here, where I can look after him during the night."

He got the room without question, and supported by Harry and Old King Brady Linn hobbled in.

Arthur Benners did not appear to suspect even when he saw the girl under the electric light, for Linn kept her hat well down over her eyes.

Bidding them good-night, he mounted the horse and rode off in the direction of the Banner House.

Once in the room Old King Brady removed the girl's shoe and stocking, and tied a wet compress around her foot.

The sprain was a bad one, however, and it seemed likely that poor Linn was destined to be confined many days.

"Oh, Mr. Brady, what shall I do?" she moaned. "It will get out that I have disappeared now. The whole town will be talking about it."

"Let them talk," replied Old King Brady. "You stop right here and I will see that you are properly cared for. I am rather curious to see how Mr. Arthur Benners will take your disappearance."

"He must never know the truth."

"All right. He won't know from me."

"Mr. Brady, you surely don't suspect——"

"That Arthur Benners is mixed up with your father's disappearance? I can't say. One thing is certain, though."

"What is that?"

"He was the man who chased us in the gorge."

"It cannot be!" cried Linn. "Didn't you see how differently he was dressed? Besides, he came up to us from the other way."

"What do you say, Harry?" asked the old detective.

"There is only one thing to say," replied Young King Brady. "Arthur Benners was that man."

Linn, who was lying on the bed, turned her face over upon the pillow and burst into tears.

"It can't be!" she moaned, "and yet—oh, if Arthur has killed my poor father I believe I could kill him with my own hand!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### MORE DISAPPEARANCES.

It was a week before Linda Barron was able to walk again, and during that time the greatest excitement prevailed at the Montague mine.

There were more mysterious disappearances.

First the whole community was thrown into a fever by the disappearance of Linda from the Banner house.

This, of course, the Bradys could have explained, but they were unable to account for the rest of it.

Mr. McCoy was now missing.

With him had vanished two of the ore-handlers, Jack Price and Bill Tooty by name.

They were known to have passed the guard at about ten

o'clock in the evening, presumably on their way to Montague.

They never reached the town, and all trace of them appeared to have been lost from the moment they went out of sight of the guard.

Thus, under precisely similar circumstances four had now disappeared.

It was all blamed to the Copper Trust.

Men moved from the mine to Montague at night in gangs—they were afraid to go alone.

It was considered very fortunate that Mr. Benners happened to be up from Helena at the time.

He immediately took charge of the mine and of the search which followed for the missing ones.

The young man showed the greatest excitement over the matter, and no wonder, since he was engaged to the missing girl.

The mine and the mill were both shut down for two days, and parties of armed men scoured the foothills and even penetrated into the fastnesses of the Rattlesnake range.

The Bradys were with them.

Old King Brady personally conducted one of the search parties, and that was the time he and Harry were able to visit the gorge by daylight and penetrate to its end.

It opened into the valley, as has been said, and no trace of the missing ones could be discovered at any point.

Benners telegraphed to New York for the Bradys to come out and lend their aid.

In answer he received word that the Bradys were already West, attending to a case.

This he told Old King Brady himself, and expressed his deep regret.

Altogether it was a week of great excitement, and if a man hailing from Wall street had turned up at Montague during that week it would have fared badly with him.

Chances are he would have been dragged out of the Banner House as soon as he registered his name, and hung to the nearest tree.

During this week the Bradys worked side by side in the ore-house.

After the third day two detectives from Chicago came and took hold of the case, but they gave it up by the end of the week.

The miners and millmen were ordered back to their work.

Arthur Benners came daily to the office and gave directions, spending most of his time at the mill, superintending the placing of the new machinery.

The young man looked troubled and worried half to death.

Several times he came to Old King Brady and spoke of how terribly he felt over the disappearance of Miss Barron, but he never once asked after lame Joe Brown, nor did anyone come to disturb Linda in her retreat at the Star.

When Sunday came all Montague took to the hills and joined in the search for the girl.

The Bradys were out also, but alone.

This time they went clear through the gorge, and into the broad valley beyond.

It was their third visit there, and they felt little hope that anything would come of it.

"If we could only catch that trail," said Harry, as they strolled along the line of the hills on the valley side.

"Impossible now," replied the old detective, "the ground has been too thoroughly beaten up by the crowds who have been through here."

"Don't you think it would be well enough to give out what we saw that night? It might lead to some discovery."

"It would lead to our being fired and then what? Remember we are working for Linda Barron, and not the Montague Mining Co."

"Do you still suspect Benners of being in it?"

"How can I help it after what we saw?"

"He seems a very nice young man."

"He is either that or an accomplished hypocrite, of course."

"He certainly is worried about his girl."

"No doubt of that. He isn't half bright, or he would have tumbled before this."

"Do you think he suspects us?"

"I am sure of it. His eyes is always on me. Still, he may not guess that I am Old King Brady for all that."

"How do you suppose he got back on the plain before we left the gorge?"

"That's what puzzles me, Harry. He could not have gone over the hill, that's certain, and the next gorge either way is a mile distant."

"If his horse was on the inside here he might have done it in the time."

"It is possible; but both gorges are very rough, and it would have been terrible riding in the dark."

"My theory is that he went over the hill and that his horse was hobbled somewhere on the other side."

"But look at these cliffs! To be sure, they are not over a hundred and fifty feet high, but just the same they are straight up and down."

"I know; still, they are not so steep on the other side. A man could easily run down there; it would not be so difficult once he got to the top."

"Theory, all theory," said Old King Brady, stopping to light a cigar.

As he did so Harry gave a bound forward, and picking up a stone, threw it toward the rocks.

"What now?" demanded Old King Brady. "Have you struck a clew?"

"I've struck a rabbit, I think!" shouted Harry. "Didn't you see him run in among the rocks there?"

"And why stone him?" replied the old detective. "The poor creature has a right to his life."

But Harry was out of hearing of anything short of a shout by this time, and he ran on.

Old King Brady strolled along, watching him.

All at once Harry seemed to vanish into the face of the cliff.

"Where in thunder did the boy go?" Old King Brady asked himself as he quickened his steps.

He had not taken many of them before Harry reappeared.

"Say, Governor! I've solved the problem!" he shouted.

"What do you mean—that you have killed the rabbit?"

"Rabbit nothing! I don't know what possessed me to stone him. I've found out how Benners got through those hills."

"The deuce you have!"

"Yes; come and see."

Old King Brady hurried to the spot.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed. "An overlapping rock. Chance to slide in behind it—well, what is inside?"

"Get inside and see."

It was all Old King Brady could do to crowd through the narrow opening, but once through the case was plain.

Here was a well-defined path leading up to the top of the hill, and most effectually hidden by the tall cliff which stood guard in front.

"What a singular formation!" said the old detective. "I never saw anything just like it. That rock forms a perfect screen to this path."

"That's what it does. Shall we follow the path over the hill?"

"By all means. I'd like to bet our Chicago friends have not found it."

"Trust them to do the stupid act. I sized them up as a pair of chumps at the start."

"Perhaps not so bad. Don't throw mud at the opposition, Harry. Now to get over this hill and see what we find."

They found nothing to favor their theory until they were entirely over the hill, but down at its foot on the other side an important discovery was made.

Here near a certain tree indisputable proof that a horse had been hitched there was found.

"So you see, Governor," said Harry, "that we now know, thanks to the rabbit, that Benners could have done it."

"Not a doubt about it. It would not have taken him more than twenty minutes and we remained a good half hour in the gorge."

"And to dash over the plain and come up in front of us would have been easy enough."

"Of course. The discovery is important, but it is a question if it will lead to anything. We felt certain that Benners did that very thing before."

"Shall we get back to the valley?"

"Perhaps we had better. Now that we have got our hand in something else may be learned."

The Bradys retraced their steps over the hill almost in silence.

Harry was in the lead, and he was just about to pass out from behind the sheltering cliff, and, indeed, had gone far enough to look into the valley, when he suddenly drew back.

"Hush!" he whispered. "Don't move an inch!"

"What now?" demanded the old detective.

"Benners is coming with another man!"

"Heavens! If they are coming in here we are trapped."

"That's what. Perhaps we had better dust over the hill."

"Hold on, Harry."

"Well?"

"I won't run from them—I'll be hanged if I will! Let him find us here and make the most of it. Sooner or later we have to show our hand."

"So I say. Let us light up and sit down here."

"No, no! Not a light. The smell of the smoke may betray us. We will stay where we are and see what luck comes our way."

The decision was a wise one.

Luck had a whole lot in store for a couple of sharp, listening detectives just then, for where should Mr. Benners and his companion take it into their heads to halt but against the rocks just beyond the opening.

Here Benners handed the man with him a cigar, and they began to talk.

"It was foolish for you to come so far, Jack," was his first remark. "People are wandering about the foothills everywhere looking for McCoy and the old man."

"I know, but you didn't show up, boss."

"I am late, I know, but all the same you might have waited."

"There doesn't seem to be anyone in sight. I reckon it is safe enough!"

"Hope so. We can stand here till we see someone coming, then we can dodge in behind the rocks. How is everything up there?"

"Quiet."

"Did McCoy put up much of a kick when he found the tables had been turned on him?"

"Much of a kick! I should say he did! It was three men's job to comb him down. All the same we did it."

"I suppose you find it necessary to hold him a close prisoner?"

"Sure."

"We will change all that as soon as I have a chance to get up there. I will make him sign a written confession stating that he is responsible for the old man's disappearance. Then we will have him foul."

"And you mean to set him free after that?"

"I do."

"It will be running a big risk. Mac is a bad one. I vow I believe he'll put a knife into you."

"No, he won't," said Benners, with a short laugh. "I'll fix him. Now about the old man. Has he sent me any word?"

"No."

"He is just as stubborn as ever?"

"He says nothing. Just sits there and smokes his pipe. Looks mighty determined, boss."

"I'll break his determination."

"I tell you it will be a bad job if he ever gets loose. I

know the old man better nor you do, if you will allow me to say so. He'll make the feathers fly."

"Not when his wings are clipped, Jack Price."

The man gave a grunt, but made no other answer.

"So this is Jack Price," thought Old King Brady. "One of the missing ones comes to light and brings word of the others. Come, this is great!"

There was silence for a few minutes, then Benners spoke again.

"Jack," he said, "you get back and tell the old man that if he don't send me word that he is ready to yield by midnight to-morrow the mill will be dynamited, and every dollar's worth of machinery ruined."

"All right," replied Jack shortly.

"Now, one thing more before we part, has anything been seen of Miss Barron?"

"No, boss. I did just as you ordered. The sharpest kind of a watch has been kept, but she has not shown up."

"And yet I am certain that the girl has taken to the hills and has started in to search for her father on her own account."

"It may be, boss, but all the same she has not shown up."

"It is too bad—too bad! Ten to one she has lost her way in the mountains and has perished! Poor Linda! I meant to have married that girl, Jack, but with me it's business first every time. Now get back and look sharp. Just as soon as this problem is worked out to a finish and I am in full charge you are to be superintendent of the Montague mine."

But Jack Price was not quite ready to go, it seemed.

"Say, boss," he replied, "we may as well come to an understanding right now."

"An understanding—what do you mean?" demanded Benners fiercely. "I thought we had already reached that."

"Not by a jugful!"

"What do you want?"

"More than you'll give me, perhaps."

"Spit it out. I want to bring this interview to an end, someone is liable to catch on to us."

"Well then, boss, I don't want to be superintendent of the Montague mine. I'm sick of the mining business, and want to quit. I'll take mine out in cash."

"The deuce you will!"

"Yes."

"Suppose—but never mind. How much do you want?"

"You had better make me an offer."

"Jack Price, do you mean to go back on me after all that we have done together?"

"No, boss, no. It hain't that, but after it is all over I propose to quit this country for good and all."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just this, boss. I mean that you mean to kill Boss Barron in the end. You don't never intend that he shall get out of it alive."

"Jack Price," roared Benners, "you're a fool. Go on about your business and leave me to attend to mine. Just



remember that I am the whole thing, and you are nobody. Now get."

They separated then.

The Bradys heard no reply from Price.

Peering out a minute later they could see the pair walking along the valley in opposite directions.

"At last we are on to it," breathed Old King Brady.

"Harry, are you game to shadow that man?"

"There were two, Governor."

"I mean Price."

"Sure I am."

"Then get a move on. Leave Benners to me."

A moment later and the Bradys parted.

They had made a great discovery.

Although their work was but just begun, the mystery of the Montague mine was a mystery no more.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OLD KING BRADY PLOTS AND SCHEMES.

Old King Brady fully realized that he had despatched his partner on a dangerous mission.

Nothing would have induced him to let Harry undertake it alone had he not felt the absolute necessity of keeping a close watch on Arthur Benners.

The Montague mill was one of the largest in Montana outside of the Anaconda district.

Its value was enormous, and to an outsider the idea of its being deliberately wrecked by the man who was engaged to marry the daughter of its principal owner would seem absurd.

But Old King Brady was well aware that the overproduction of copper had for a long time been a serious problem with those interested in copper mines.

He also knew that Colonel Barron, through his shrewdness and detailed knowledge of the business, had been able to produce copper at a much less cost even than the trust itself.

By what means this had been accomplished was a secret known to very few.

According to Linda only her father and Mr. McCoy knew it, but Old King Brady felt certain that there must be someone at the mill who was equally well posted.

Thus far the old detective had not even visited the mill, which stood remote from the Montague mine.

Having watched Harry's departure, Old King Brady climbed over the hill again and came out upon the plain just in time to see Arthur Benners emerge from the gorge.

The old detective, with his hands folded behind him, wandered on, not even turning his eyes in the direction of the man whom he now knew to be the head and front of this mysterious affair.

"If he wants to tackle me let him come up of his own

accord," he said to himself. "He sees me, of course. I am curious to know what he will do."

But Benners did not come up with him.

After a while Old King Brady looked around and saw that the man was striking off toward Montague, while he himself had been walking in the direction of the mine.

Since Benners' arrival he had been sleeping in the rooms over the mine office, having given up the Banner House after the first night.

"If he should by any means catch on to the secret of the girl it is bound to make trouble," thought the old detective. "She ought to be removed at once, and she is able to go anywhere now. But how to get her out of there unobserved! It is not so easy. She is well known in Montague, and everyone is not so stupid as Mr. Arthur Benners. I must think it over and decide what to do."

Old King Brady returned to the mine and sat until sundown in his room in the big boarding-house, pondering over the problem.

"Even if we succeed in rescuing the Copper King this case won't be complete until we know just what he is driving at," he said to himself again and again.

At last he came to a decision, and as soon as supper was over the old detective started for Montague.

Before this Benners had returned to the mine. Old King Brady saw him enter the office before he set out for the town.

The old detective hurried to the Star, where up to now Linn had kept her room.

If the proprietor of the place had any suspicions concerning the girl he had been careful not to show them.

He had been well paid for Linn's entertainment, and that went a long way.

Before going to the girl's room Old King Brady went into the music hall, where a "sacred" concert was in progress, and made a careful survey of the audience.

Over in one corner, with his head against the wall, sat an elderly man with a scrubby, gray beard, who in spite of the strident singing of the young soubrette who at that time occupied the stage, seemed to be sound asleep.

"He is there," muttered the old detective. "Now, if he will only stay there. But I can't do anything about it until I have had my talk with Linn, and that is going to be rather a stormy one, if I don't mistake."

"Come in!" called Linn, when the detective knocked on the door.

She was seated in a big rocking-chair, with her foot upon another chair, when the detective entered.

She certainly looked her part; anyone would have taken her for a handsome young fellow, for Linn had done a brave act on the very next morning after her arrival at the Star.

She had sacrificed her beautiful hair.

With her own hands she had cut it off, and when Old King Brady looked in that evening she got him to trim it up for her, and carry away the long hair in his pocket.

How many girls would have consented to such a sacrifice?

But Linn declared that she was ready to do anything to help along, and there was no denying that if she had retained her hair her sex would have been discovered.

"Sit down, Mr. Brady," she exclaimed, as soon as the detective had closed the door. "I thought you were never coming. Well, is there any news?"

"Lots!" replied Old King Brady. "First prepare yourself for the best of all news. Your father still lives!"

Linn shed tears, and begged to know more.

Old King Brady expected all kinds of tantrums when he began his story.

Never was he more deceived.

Linn gave a start when he mentioned Arthur Benners' name, but not a word did she say until he had told her all that had occurred.

"So Arthur is the traitor!" she exclaimed. "Well, I now say that I am not surprised. I have secretly suspected him ever since that night in the gorge."

"There is no doubt that he is at the bottom of it all," replied the detective. "I am glad to see you take it so coolly. I was afraid—"

"That I would not believe you—that I would go into hysterics, throw fits, and all that sort of thing. No, no! I'm not that kind. From this moment forward I can only regard Arthur Benners as my worst enemy. Now, no more of this! Tell me what is to be done?"

"I have already told you that Harry has started to shadow the man Price. Regarding your father, nothing can be done until he returns and reports. But there is something you can do in the meantime."

"Well?"

"A watch must be set on the mill."

"Can you attend to that?"

"Not without exciting suspicion. I should have to throw up my job. I want to watch Benners now."

"And he needs it. Do you want me to undertake it? I can walk now. I am ready to leave here any time you say the word."

"That is exactly what I want."

"But how can it be done?"

"Let me explain. Yesterday evening I asked you what one man you regarded as most likely to be absolutely loyal to your father."

"And I told you old Peter Farley was that man. He has been associated with my father since the days when they used to go prospecting together. His heart is about broken over father's disappearance. There is nothing he would not do to help us in this work."

"So you have told me. Now, Peter Farley is here tonight. I say let us bring him in and tell him all. The old house formerly occupied by your father is close to the mill, and is now in his care. There you could hide yourself, and with Peter's help could keep a watch on the mill for a night or two. There is no telling to what good results it might lead."

Linn never hesitated an instant.

"I'll do it, Mr. Brady!" she said. "Thank heaven, I can

do something. I know the house well. There won't be the least difficulty in hiding myself, as I will show you after we get there."

"A secret room?"

"What amounts to the same thing. My father changed the direction of one of the halls, which cut off a corner of the building. To this there is a secret door, and he used the little room inside for a place where he could be absolutely undisturbed. Arthur knows nothing of its existence."

"The very thing. Shall I call Farley in?"

"I wish you would. I am certain that we can trust him."

"I'll attend to it now," said Old King Brady, and he went out into the music hall.

The old man in the corner was still asleep, with his head against the wall. He awoke with a start when the old detective, sitting down beside him, laid his hand upon his arm.

"Hello, Mr. Rowley!" he exclaimed. "What brings you here? Say, let's come and have a drink."

"Hold on, Peter. You have had enough to drink tonight," replied Old King Brady. "It's time to quit and begin work for the boss."

"I don't know but one boss, and that's Jim Barron," growled the old man. "As for this new snoozer what's come among us, I——"

"Well?"

"Reckon I had better not say what I was going to. What a feller don't say can't be repeated, and I don't know you so very well."

"You were going to say that you thought that Arthur Benners knew more about Colonel Barron's disappearance than he would care to own."

"Well, I have thought that; all the same, I don't say it."

"Look here, Peter."

"Well?"

"I say it, and I know it."

"What!"

"Hush! Not so loud. I am sure you are a true friend of Colonel Barron's."

"The best he ever had. Jim Barron is my old side partner. He never went back onto me. He would have made a rich man of me only for the drink."

"Right! And you are willing to work to save him?"

"Save him! He is dead! He must be."

"He is not dead. I know it."

"You!"

"Yes, Peter. Who do you think I am?"

"Boss Rowley, of the ore-house."

"Not at all. I am a detective employed by Linda Barron to find her father."

"Gee! Is that so?"

"It is a fact."

"And you know where the boss is?"

"No, I don't; but I soon shall, and with your help I shall be able to learn the full details of this infernal plot to wreck the Montague mine. Will you give me that help?"

"You bet I will; but you will have to prove what you say."

"Will you believe if you hear it from Linda Barron's own lips?"

"Linda! Why, she is gone, too!"

"Nothing of the sort. She is at the present moment under this very roof. Come, follow me, and I will prove it. She has sent me to ask your help."

"Then, by thunder, she shall have it!" cried the old miner. "I used to carry Linn in my arms when she was a baby. If she wants old Pete Farley's help she don't need to ask it twice."

"This is my man," thought Old King Brady, as Farley followed him from the music-hall to Linn's room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HARRY FINDS THE SECRET HOLD-OUT.

Old King Brady's work that night was easy compared with Harry's.

The shadowing of a shrewd criminal in an open valley in the daylight must of necessity be a difficult task.

Harry got along all right while Jack Price kept in against the foothills.

Here the projecting rocks offered many hiding places, and it was by no means so difficult to jump from one to the other, but when at last he struck across the valley, then the troublesome part came in.

Young King Brady had to wait until Price struck the fringe of trees which bordered Black creek, and that was nearly half a mile away.

To strike across the open then was his only course, and he did it in fear and trembling, momentarily expecting a shot.

None came.

Young King Brady, to his intense chagrin, found that he had lost his man, however.

No trace of Jack Price was now to be seen.

Harry stood for awhile taking in his surroundings and trying to arrive at some conclusion as to what would be the best way to go to work.

There was no chance of discovering a trail, for the bank of the creek was rough and stony.

The water, though shallow, was still deep enough to float a boat.

Jack Price might have gone up or he might have gone down; again, it was equally possible that he might have crossed the creek, something easily done.

This point had to be settled first of all.

Harry tried it up the creek first, walking a few hundred yards until he came to a place where there were not so many stones and the grass grew down close to the water's edge.

The moment he looked at the grass the young detective knew that he was going in the wrong direction.

There was no sign of the grass having been disturbed. Tall and straight it stood, brown from the heavy frost of those November days.

No one could have passed over it without leaving some trace of his passage behind.

Young King Brady now hurried back to his point of beginning.

Then he went in the opposite direction, to strike luck before he had gone three hundred yards.

It came in the shape of the stump of the cigar which Jack Price had been smoking.

There it lay on the shore, and Young King Brady knew that he was on the right trail.

He now hurried forward with all speed, keeping a sharp lookout on every side.

It was not long before he came to a place where a stick had been driven into the ground, close to the edge of the creek.

In the creek itself a short, upright pole stood, and there was another stick driven into the ground on the other side.

In ten seconds Young King Brady had his shoes and stockings off, and his trousers rolled up.

Wading the creek he struck fresh luck on the other side, for here there was a well-defined trail in the dry grass.

It was almost a path. Anyone could see at a glance that many persons had passed that way.

Perhaps this was the road, and perhaps it wasn't, but Harry decided to follow it just the same.

It lead him straight across the valley to the base of the mountains, just as he supposed it would.

Young King Brady was now up against the true Rattlesnake range.

The rise was steep, and the slope densely wooded. It would be the easiest sort of thing to lose oneself here, and night was now coming on.

Harry now paused long enough to make some changes of costume.

When he had finished it would not have been easy to identify him as Albert Packer.

He looked the rough miner all right, however. It would not have answered for him to assume any other character than that.

The trail left him at the foot of the mountains.

At first sight Young King Brady thought that Price must have plunged directly into the woods.

Still, the way was so rough and the trees so thick that he could not bring himself to believe that this could be.

"Price can't know the way so very well," he thought. "He has been working at the Montague until a week ago. There must be something to guide him."

He stood still for a long time, looking up and down along the base of the range.

It was so difficult to decide which way to choose.

"I must find it," he said to himself again and again. "I'll be hanged if I am going back to the Governor to report failure. Something has to be done."

Suddenly a dazzling light flashed in his eyes.



What had caused it?

Harry was looking up the valley then.

"It was either a bit of looking-glass or a piece of tin," he said to himself. "That's my road. I'll chase up there before the sun gets off that thing. Here goes."

He went on the run, for the sun was fast descending.

To try the ascent of the mountain in the dark without something to guide him Young King Brady had no intention of doing.

He soon arrived at the glittering object, which proved to be nothing else than a full can of lard lying in the grass.

But this was a clew.

Evidently provisions had gone that way, and the lard can had fallen out of somebody's basket.

A moment's investigation was enough to show Harry a blazed tree at the foot of the mountain.

The bushes grew thick around it, but there was evidence in the shape of broken twigs that they had been frequently parted.

Harry pushed through them, and found a well-defined path leading up the slope.

"This is my road," he thought. "Shall I try it?"

He examined his revolver, tightened the belt which he wore, and made the start, anxious to get somewhere before the sun went down.

The climb was a steep one, but nothing like what it would have been at the place where he first struck the range.

It grew darker and darker, and still there was no break in the woods.

Harry could now scarcely distinguish the path, and he began to have serious thoughts.

"I shall have to put in the night here, that is certain," he said to himself. "It might as well be in one place as another, as long as I don't lose myself; but I am not going a step farther than I can follow the path without something for a guide."

A hundred yards further and he got his guide.

Now he came out into the open, and found himself standing upon a narrow ridge which ran far a great distance.

Back of this was the second rise, not forty feet away.

Far along on the line of the ridge he could distinguish a moving light.

"That's Price, surest thing!" thought Young King Brady. "He has got a dark lantern. Nothing else would flash on the rocks like that. I'm not so far off the track, after all."

He hurried on.

Now that he had the light there was no excuse for going back.

And he continued to see it for upwards of a mile, when it suddenly moved in toward the rise of the range and disappeared.

It was now night and no mistake, but having come this far there was nothing for it but to face a night in the mountains.

Harry felt that he would never be able to find the path.

So he pushed on, going close to the base of the rise.

He had now produced his own dark lantern, a light folding affair with an electric attachment controlled by a tiny battery.

The light could be shut off on the instant; without its aid he could hardly have found the way.

It was now about time if ever that Young King Brady should have some reward for his exertions, and he got it.

Suddenly he came upon a break in the high black cliffs which here formed the second rise of the range.

It was narrow enough, but its location was just about where Young King Brady calculated the light must have disappeared.

He passed in between towering cliffs, and before he had advanced a hundred yards came in upon one of those wonderful formations so common in the Far West.

It was what is termed a "sink."

It was just as though some mighty giant had taken a huge gauge and cut out a mass of rock in the mountain side.

The break was crescent-shaped, and covered a space of some forty acres.

The cliffs which bounded it rose straight up to an enormous height.

And now, as he stood there looking, Young King Brady knew that he had come to the end of his journey, for in the midst of the sink stood a group of four frame shanties, and from the windows of two of them light came streaming, while the music of a banjo could be distinctly heard.

"So this is their holdout," thought Harry. "Well, it's great. It may prove easier to get in than to get out, however. There ought to be a guard here. I must go almighty slow."

He had cut off his lantern the moment he saw the light.

No guard could be seen, of course, and even after the detective had made various slight noises none was heard.

He now ventured to push forward toward the huts.

Harry had not gone ten steps when to his horror he suddenly saw an Indian spring out from behind a projection in the rocks.

He carried a rifle which he leveled at Harry, with a command to halt.

Young King Brady's heart was in his mouth, so to speak.

"I'm done for!" he thought, but he did not throw up his hands.

"Hold on thar! Who be you?" demanded the Indian.

He spoke thickly, like a man who had been drinking.

As he came toward Young King Brady he reeled terribly.

"Drunk, by thunder!" thought Harry. "I ought to be good for this fellow if I could get half a show."

He stood motionless and silent. Something seemed to impel him to do so.

"Who are you?" called the fellow, halting.

Still no answer.

"Great Scott! I've got 'em again!" yelled the Indian. "It's a ghost!"

He turned and staggered in the other direction.

"That fellow is no Indian," thought Young King Brady. He did not dare to move.

Suddenly the fellow wheeled around and levelling his rifle pulled the trigger.

Harry was standing for that.

"He can never hit me, drunk as he is," he had said to himself.

But to be hit needs a bullet.

None came.

Probably the fellow had forgotten to put in his cartridges.

"Bewitched!" he cried, and down went the rifle.

Something in the movement of throwing it caused the drunken guard to lose his balance, and pitch forward on the ground.

This was Young King Brady's chance, and he took it.

With one quick spring he was upon the man.

"Make a move and you're a dead one!" he hissed, pressing the cold muzzle of his revolver against the fellow's forehead.

"Let up on me! For heaven sake let up on me!" groaned the drunkard.

But Harry had his searching to do and he did it.

He took away a revolver and a long knife, and throwing the rifle over toward the rocks he arose.

"You can get up now," he said, "if you can."

The drunkard got as far as to rise to a sitting position—he was not able to get on his feet.

It was just at this moment that the moon came into view over the cliffs.

"You are no Indian," said Harry. "You are a white man in disguise."

"That's what I am," muttered the man thickly, "and I know who you are, too, in spite of your disguise."

"You do, eh?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well?"

"You are Young King Brady the detective. I told them we should see you here!"

## CHAPTER IX.

### OLD KING BRADY GETS TO THE BOTTOM OF THE PLOT AGAINST THE COPPER KING.

Harry had got himself right into business now, and we shall have to leave him to make the most of it while we return to Old King Brady and Linn.

The bringing of old Peter Farley into the race promised to prove a bright idea.

The old man was bright and intelligent, in spite of the fact that he loaded up with whisky every night of his life.

The fact was Farley could drink a barrel and not show it in any other way than by falling asleep wherever he happened to be.

The old miner recognized Linn at once, and was so heartily welcomed by the girl that he shed maudlin tears.

Old King Brady gave them a few minutes to talk over old times, and then started in to talk business.

To detail all that was said is needless, for the discussion was a long one.

What came of it afterwards is more to the point, and of that we shall proceed to tell.

Linn left the Star that night, in company with old Pete.

Old King Brady, who went out ahead, watched the pair from a distance, and saw them go into the old Barron house near the big copper mill.

This house was quite a mansion in its way.

It had been built before the mill was established, in the days when Colonel Barron used to ship his ore to Helena.

When the mill came to be built the fumes made it an undesirable place of residence, and it was abandoned.

For some reason—perhaps it was sentiment—Colonel Barron allowed it to remain just as he had left it, placing the faithful Farley in charge.

As soon as Linn and the miner were safely inside the house Old King Brady sneaked over to the place, and was admitted by Farley through the back door.

He remained inside for an hour, and then returned to the mine.

There was no trouble in passing the guard, for Old King Brady was a guard himself.

He was supposed to sleep in the ore-house, although he also kept a room in the big boarding-house, where he took his meals.

It was while he was passing the office that the door suddenly opened and Arthur Benners looked out.

"Is that you, Rowley?" he called.

"Heavens! He is on to me!" thought the old detective. "Well, I have been prepared for this."

"Yes, sir," he replied meekly enough. "Did you want to see me?"

"Yes, come in here."

Old King Brady went into the office.

His disguise was nothing more than the rough miner's clothes which he wore.

He had expected the case to be a long one, as it had proved, and he felt that any change of facial appearance would merely get him into trouble. It looked as though he was going to have the trouble now.

Mr. Benners was smoking, and as the old detective entered he offered him a cigar.

"Rowley," he said, leaning back against the railing "what were you doing up among the foothills this afternoon?"

"Why, sir, the same as everyone else," replied Old King Brady. "Looking around to see if I couldn't find out something about Mr. McCoy and the young lady. I'm not a rich man, Mr. Benners. I shouldn't mind at all getting that reward you offered."

"And did you find out anything?"

"Nothing at all."

"What do you suppose ever became of them?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir. How can I tell? You have a better chance to judge than me."

"How do you make that out?"

"Because of your education, sir. I'm only a poor, ignorant man."

"But in spite of that you had pull enough to get a good position here and came all the way from New York to take it."

"That, sir, was through the kindness of Miss Barron. I did some work for her father, and she was good enough to get me the job."

"Rowley," said Benners, leaning over the rail and taking an illustrated paper off the desk, "here in this old paper is the picture of a man who looks very much like you."

It was a bad portrait of Old King Brady himself.

This, of course, was what he expected to see.

"Ah! That is the picture of the New York detective you was speaking to me about?" he remarked.

"Exactly. He looks just like you," said Benners.

Old King Brady put on his glasses and looked at the picture.

"It seems to me that it would require a good bit of imagination to trace out any likeness between this man and myself," he said quietly.

"I don't see it so."

"No?"

"No, sir."

"Well, everyone to his opinion. What has this detective been doing? Do you want me to read the article?"

"No; it isn't necessary."

Old King Brady laid the paper down and a moment of strained silence followed.

"Did you want anything more of me, Mr. Benners?" the detective asked.

"Nothing more to-night. I shall want you in the morning, though."

"Very well, sir; in the morning I will be on hand. Good-night."

"Good-night," replied Benners, and then, just as Old King Brady got to the door he called out in a confidential tone:

"Oh, Mr. Rowley, just one minute, please."

"Well?" said Old King Brady, halting.

"How much are you getting now?"

"My pay is four dollars a day, sir."

"That was what I was thinking. How would you like to have it raised to fifty dollars a day for a while?"

"You are joking with me, Mr. Benners."

"Not at all. I am quite in earnest. Even if you don't look like the old man in the picture, I am satisfied that you could act like him if you chose; in short, that you could do the detective act just as well as he. Since you take so much interest in that sort of business, suppose you go into it for the present. We'll see about it in the morning. If anybody can find Miss Barron I believe you are the man."

Having said this Benners went into Mr. McCoy's private office, and Old King Brady pursued his way to the ore-house, pondering upon what he had heard.

"He can't just make me out," he said to himself. "That's what's the matter. He thinks I am Old King Brady; indeed, he felt quite sure of it when he called me in, but he feels less sure now."

Old King Brady went to the ore-house, turned on his light, and prepared to begin his watch in the little room near the door.

He was not expected to stay up all night.

There was a good dynamo at the Montague, and the premises were lit by electricity, like most modern mines of any size.

Every door and window in the ore-house was wired so that if any attempt was made to force an entrance a bell would ring in the foreman's room, while a dropping number on a signal board would show at just which door or window the attempt was being made.

Old King Brady locked the door, and sat down to finish his cigar.

Out of his window he could watch the door of the little office building, and his eyes were never once removed from it during the next half hour.

At the end of that time a light was still burning inside, and no one came out.

Now there came a low tap on the door of the ore-house.

Old King Brady rose and shot the bolt.

"In quick!" he whispered.

A stout young fellow came gliding into the room.

"You are from Pete Farley?" demanded the old detective.

"I am, sir. He told me to report to you."

"How did you get past the guard?"

"I watched my chance, sir. I work at the mill. I know pretty much how them fellers pace their beat."

"All right. Stand back a little, so you can't be seen by anyone watching outside. Now, what you want to do is this, put out the light as soon as I leave here, and lie down on that bed. You have pins to push in this watchman's clock twice, at twelve and at three; the alarm will wake you. It is supposed that you make the round of the building then, but you needn't do it. In case of an attack on the building a bell will ring, and a number drop on this board. Here is your rifle, and here is a revolver. No one is allowed here after ten o'clock under any pretext. You are to shoot to kill."

"I understand, sir. And you will be back when?"

"Before daylight. If I don't show up at sunrise you sneak and leave the place alone. Attend to these directions faithfully, and you will be well paid."

A little later Old King Brady left the ore-house, and took up his station at a point where he could watch the office windows without being seen.

Benners was there, writing at Mr. McCoy's desk.

It was eleven o'clock before he turned his light out.

Question was now did he intend to go to bed, or was there other business on hand.

The latter proved to be the case.

In a moment Benners let himself out of the building and struck off down the hill.

Old King Brady stole after him.

The detective was now prepared for business.

He had been watching the movements of the watchman, and he felt sure that he could slip out.

And so it proved.

The watchman came forward to meet Benners, and as he did so Old King Brady glided past the carelessly guarded line in the darkness.

He was dressed in black from head to foot—he had taken care of that before leaving the mill.

He even went so far as to throw a black cloth over his face in which holes were cut for the eyes, and thus he passed unseen and struck off toward the old Barron house looking behind him repeatedly to see when Benners was about.

The man came rapidly on down the hill after he had finished his talk with the watchman.

A few blasted trees stood ahead of him, and the old detective lost no time in gaining the shelter of one.

"He's not going to the mill. Where the deuce is he heading for?" he asked himself. "As sure as I live it's the Barron house. Can it be that he and those he is plotting with hold their meetings there?"

And as Old King Brady continued to think about it nothing seemed more probable.

"They could do it easy enough, and Farley never know, since he is drunk every night," he said to himself.

The old detective chuckled then, and added mentally:

"How admirably all this fits in with my plan!"

He continued to watch, and saw Benners pass around the corner of the deserted house and disappear.

The detective then started.

He had not gone ten yards when he saw a man come away from the mill and start to cross the open space between it and the Barron house.

"There's his confederate," he said to himself. "They meet at the house, that's certain; but I must not be seen."

He dropped to the ground, and crouched there until the man had passed around the corner of the house.

Then with better speed than one might have expected of a man of his age, Old King Brady made a dash for the front door.

Had he been seen?

It was impossible to tell.

The detective gave three smart raps, first two and then one.

Instantly the door was unlocked, and Linn's face peered out.

"Is that you, Mr. B.?"

"Yes."

"Come in, quick! Farley is asleep; he tried to keep awake, poor fellow, but his lead was too heavy. I think that someone has broken into the house by the back basement door."

"I don't think—I know it is so."

"Oh, Mr. Brady, is it Arthur?"

"No one else! Arthur and another man."

"What shall we do?"

"Wait! He has no idea that you are in this house. He counts upon Farley's drunken sleep and thinks he has picked out a perfectly safe meeting place. We can take him unawares if you are game for your part."

"I am! I must be! Oh, to think that I should once have loved that villain!"

"We don't know just how much of a villain he is yet, but now is our time to find out, and the sooner we go at it the better. Where is Farley?"

"He has a bed in the parlor. He is lying asleep upon it now."

"The secret room is ready?"

"All ready."

"And your clothes? You want to appear in your own character now."

"I have found clothes enough in the room I formerly occupied. You must know that after my mother's death father just closed up this house as it stood. Very few of our things were ever moved. The only trouble is about showing a light."

"That must not be. Don't you know your way about in the dark?"

"Perfectly. I have been going about in the dark since I heard those sounds downstairs a few minutes ago."

"Get back into the room and make your change. I'll investigate. How are you making out with your foot?"

"Much better than I expected. I am able to walk. You needn't worry about me."

"Right. Get to the room quick. The moon will be up over the mountains in a few minutes, and that will give us light enough. Now I am going downstairs."

"But you don't know the way?"

"Certainly not. I can find it, though. Be off."

Linn started up the stairs, and Old King Brady, producing a little electric dark lantern which was the duplicate of Harry's, turned on the light so that a single ray shot along the hall.

The detective advanced, opening the door of the back parlor and locating Farley.

"I'll spoil your sleep in a moment, my friend," he said to himself, "but for the present I shall have to go it alone!"

He had now located the basement stairs, and he stole down with every caution.

The Barron mansion being built on the side of the hill, was a story lower here than in front.

No light was to be seen, nor did Old King Brady expect it, but as he listened the hum of voices reached his ear.

It was easy to locate them as coming from a room on the left.

Shutting off his own light entirely, Old King Brady crept forward with all the caution of a cat, and clapped his ear to the keyhole.

He had made no mistake.



Benners was talking inside.

"Why do you hesitate?" he was saying. "I tell you there are millions in it. With the mill out of business the Copper Trust will pay more for the Montague than if it is running. Their object is to wreck the mine and cut it off as a copper producing property."

"But you have given me no assurance that you are really acting for the Copper Trust yet," a voice replied.

"Jim, that I can't give you. How many times do you want me to explain the situation? I don't know the trust and the trust don't know me, but I am next to a man who can deal with them, and the deal is a dead open and shut thing. I am named executor of old Barron's will. He will never return. I shall have the handling of all. Come now, no backing and filling. You dynamite the mill and it means a million just as soon as I can put my deal through."

"At last!" thought Old King Brady. "Now I am at the bottom of this plot against the Copper King."

## CHAPTER X.

### HARRY CAPTURES THE COPPER KING.

The pronouncing of his own name by the "Indian" came to Young King Brady as a complete surprise.

How could it be possible that this fellow should know him?

Harry was certain as he looked into the fellow's face, all daubed with red paint to help carry out the disguise, that he had seen him neither at Montague nor at the mine.

"How do you figure that out?" he asked.

"I know yer—that's all. Look at me! Don't you remember Gus Wren?"

"Gus Wren! Not the Gus Wren we caught in the raid on Sing Yet's opium joint on Mott street a year ago, when we were working on the case of Mrs. Singer, who had deserted her millionaire husband when he had taken to hop-smoking in the joints!"

"That's me. I see you remember, Harry. I helped you and old man Brady get evidence dat time. Youse seen me cleared and give me a good big stake. And say, I hain't got a ting against youse."

Here was Bowery dialect being spoken among Montana mountains.

It gave Young King Brady quite a "home sweet home" feeling.

He remembered the fellow perfectly now.

Secretly Harry was immensely elated.

He felt that he had struck an ally.

"Homesick for New York, of course," he said to himself. "He jumps at me as though I was his best friend."

"Why, how are you?" he exclaimed, extending his hand. "I didn't know you in those togs, but I do now. Whatever brought you away out here?"

"De very dough dat you and Old King Brady give me.

I shook de hop for good. Give you my word I hain't smoked in two years, only once in a while, when I've been down to Helena, and dat don't count. Knowed you'd butt in on dis business. I told de boss so from de first."

It was a case which required careful handling, but Young King Brady was sure of his man.

He backed against the rocks, helping Gus to a place where he could rest his weary limbs; for once he got sat down the "Indian" did not seem disposed to do guard duty very vigorously.

Gus wanted to talk. What was more, he wanted to talk New York, and in this Young King Brady humored him, and gave him his fill.

The fellow was drunker in his legs than he was in his head.

Not a word about the business in hand did Harry say until he had answered every question Gus Wren had to put.

Wren came around to himself in the end.

"But say, Harry," he suddenly broke out, "what are you doing up here?"

"You've guessed it, Gus."

"Is de old man wid yer? Are youse guys working on de case of de Copper King?"

"Sure."

"And you shadowed Jack Price back in here?"

"Of course."

"What do you know?"

"Lots."

"Where's de old man?"

"Working the Montague end of the business. He has got Arthur Benners dead to rights."

"I dunno who you mean. I suppose it's de other guy what's staking de gang. I tought Boss McCoy was de man. It was him what hired me. But say, dey have tied him up now, and dis here Jack Price seems to be de boss. Blamed if I like it overmuch. I don't wanter do time here in Montana—it's too blamed cold. I s'pose now de Bradys has took hold dat's what it will come to. Say, Harry, what do yer tink?"

"There isn't the least doubt about it, Gus. You had better get in out of the rain. Even if I am captured to-night—even if I was killed—it would be all the same. Old King Brady is bound to down this gang in the end. Now is your time to get aboard the band wagon. We shall want a State's-evidence man, and to-night the job is yours for the asking."

"Anything more?" inquired Gus, slyly.

"Yes; if you will put Colonel Barron into my hands to-night and tell me what you know, and agree to tell the same story on the witness stand later, you get a thousand sure—Bradys' guarantee, mind you—and as much more as the Copper King will stand for. There ought to be something coming from him, too."

"Blame it all, Harry, it's a go. I want to get home. Dis seems to be a chance. I won't be touched if I go back to New York, will I?"

"Not on any charge the Bradys have against you, surely. Think it over, Gus, and decide quick."

"Suppose it's no?"

"Then I leave. I have found out all I want to know here."

"I could holler for help, Harry."

"You are drunk, and I could put you out of business."

"Would you do dat?"

"Gus, the Bradys don't stand for failure—you know that very well."

"All right. Let her go! I'm on your side, Harry. Now what?"

Young King Brady had won out, as he knew very well would be the case from the first moment he identified Gus Wren.

"We want to get down to business just as quick as ever we can," he said. "Tell me, is Colonel Barron here?"

"Yair. In dat hut what's dark."

"Tied up a prisoner?"

"Tied up at night. Dey leave him loose in de daytime."

"And McCoy?"

"He's dere, too."

"How many others?"

"Dere's five of us, outside of Jack Price and dat other guy what come in wid McCoy. Bill Tooley is his name."

"Seven altogether."

"Yes."

"Now about the plot. What do you know?"

"Not a blamed ting. All I know is dat I was getting two a day handling ore, and Boss McCoy sends for me and asks didn't I want to make it six, and den he springs dis ting upon me. I agreed, of course."

"Who caught the Copper King that night?"

"Well, I was one."

"And the other?"

"Now, no matter about dat, Harry. It's one ting to turn informer on de head guys of a gang like dis, and anoder to give your side-partner away."

"Right! Cut it out! Was McCoy surprised when they brought him in?"

"He come in himself. Price and Tooley turned onto him afterwards. You orter seen him. Talk about taking it hard! Well, he did."

"What are they holding him for?"

"Well, I can't make out. It seems like as if some other guy was over him in de hull business, and has got afraid dat Boss McCoy would go back onto him. Dat's about de size of it near as I can tell."

"Have a smoke, Gus, and let us think," said Harry, after a little.

And it was while their cigars were going that the arrangements were made.

It was then between nine and ten o'clock, and Gus Wren was to be relieved at midnight.

He had managed to steal some whisky from Price's stores, but the effects were now rapidly wearing away.

Whatever was to be done had to be done promptly, and

Harry determined upon an attempt to rescue the Copper King.

Wren was willing to lend a hand, but he wanted to include McCoy in the rescue.

This Harry firmly opposed.

"It cannot be and it shall not be," he declared. "Let the man take the consequences of his own doings. If he escapes later then let him go. I can't handle him, and I am not going to try. What I am out for is to rescue Colonel Barron. The arrests must come later—that's all."

Gus Wren did not hold out long.

"All right. Have it yer own way, blame it," he said at last. "De boss will put up a kick, dough, surest ting, and like enough he'll kick us all into de soup."

"No, he won't," replied Harry. "Leave that to me. Let us start right now."

Up here on the mountain the night was decidedly chilly, and there was little chance of any of the men coming outside of the hut.

Guided by Gus, Young King Brady crept up to the first of the lighted huts, and peered in at the window.

Here he saw Price, Tooley, and the others deep in a game of poker.

They seemed fully occupied, and the chance of interference seemed small.

In the other hut where the light burned there was nobody. Gus said that some of the men slept there.

The dark hut was next in order.

It was beautifully located for the business, for the unoccupied lighted hut shielded it from the one in which the poker game was in progress.

Harry ventured to produce his dark lantern as he drew near the door.

He had given Gus full instructions as to how to proceed—it was all arranged.

Suddenly Young King Brady pushed open the door and stepped inside, leaving Gus on guard without.

There were four bunks against the wall of this hut, and two of them were occupied by men who were bound hand and foot.

Young King Brady flashed his dark lantern upon the mine superintendent. He paid no attention to the Copper King, whom he assumed that the elderly man in the other bunk must be.

"Good-evening, Mr. McCoy!" he said. "I hope I see you well?"

The superintendent stared.

"Come, you're a new one!" he growled. "Who are you? What brings you here? If you have come to help me out of this mess then you are making no mistake, young man, for I will pay you well."

"You have hit it! Look at me! You ought to know me, although I have changed my appearance somewhat."

"I don't know you just the same."

"Packer! The man you hired as a spy!"

"Ah!"

"Otherwise Young King Brady, the detective!"

"Thunder—no!"

"Yes. Do you want to go free?"

"I certainly do."

"Then name the man who is at the bottom of this plot against Colonel Barron. You might as well yield. The Bradys have got the case. They never fail. The end of this business is in sight."

"And even if it wasn't I would name him!" cried McCoy fiercely. "He has gone back on me, scoundrel that he is. Arthur Benners is the man."

"What!" cried the man from the other bunk. "Mac, you are lying. It is yourself, you scoundrel! Arthur is not in this deal!"

"He's the head and front of it, and that's what. I'll prove my words. Colonel Barron, I—what is this?"

Suddenly Gus Wren popped in.

The instant he showed himself Young King Brady pounced upon the superintendent, and clapped a heavy hand over his mouth.

"Gag him, Gus!" he whispered. "Now, be quick! Silence, Colonel Barron! There has been too much talking here!"

Gus had come in ready for business, and he lost not an instant in cramming a handkerchief into McCoy's mouth. Harry flew to the side of the Copper King.

"Up, colonel!" he exclaimed. "I am here to save you. Don't make a sound! Follow me!"

"Do we leave that scoundrel here?" gasped the colonel. "He ought to be arrested. He lies when he tries to put it up to Arthur Benners. He himself is at the bottom of all this."

"He stays where he is," replied Harry. "We have all we can do to take care of you, colonel. Now come!"

The colonel was on his feet by this time, and paused only to take his hat from a peg.

If looks could have killed then McCoy's fierce glances would have slain them all on the spot.

"On the run!" breathed Harry, once they were outside, and a dash began for the opening which was to lead them out of the sink.

They had not half covered the distance when Young King Brady knew that his plans had miscarried.

In some way McCoy must have managed to dispose of the gag, for now a wild cry rang out:

"Price! Tooley! Hey, boys! Hey! Wake up there! Detectives. They have carried off your Copper King!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### OLD KING BRADY BAGS BENNERS.

Old King Brady listened at the door in the basement of the old Barron mansion for fully twenty minutes.

In that time he heard enough to show him that Arthur Benners was at heart a desperate criminal, a man who would stick at nothing to gain his ends.

Whether he really was a paid agent of the Copper Trust or not the detective could only conjecture, for although in his conversation with the man Jim Benners denied this, Old King Brady was more than half inclined to believe that such was actually the case.

The plan to dynamite the mill was not discussed in detail.

Once "Jim" consented to go in for it, which he did after a little, Benners drew back and promised to meet him again next night, when the full details were to be arranged.

This was the time Old King Brady drew back, too.

He pulled away and went upstairs.

Here he found Linn in the main hall, waiting for him in the dark.

Joe Brown had gone out of business now, and Linda Barron in the dress proper to her sex had taken his place.

"Well! It was he?" she exclaimed in a whisper. "Arthur is here?"

"He is in the room on the left, plotting with a man he calls Jim."

"Jim Thomas, a foreman in the mill, most likely. What is the word?"

"The word is that they propose to dynamite the mill."

"When?"

"Time not stated; details to be arranged to-morrow night."

"Anything said about my father?"

"Only in a general way. It is certain that he lives, to judge from their talk, but then we knew that before."

"Yes. And now, Mr. Brady, what do you propose to do?"

"My wish is to capture Benners, and I think it can be done with your help."

"You want me to play ghost. You think he will follow me. You want me to lead him into the secret room?"

"Yes; as I said before."

"Very well. I am ready to undertake it; but Jim Thomas! What about him?"

"If he remains behind Farley will have to look out for him. Benners came alone, and I am in hopes that he may wait to go out alone. We must be quick. I judge they are nearly through their talk."

"I am ready any moment, Mr. B."

"You won't weaken?"

"Not I."

"Your love for this man is all gone?"

"On the contrary, it has turned to hate, and I am nursing it all right here in my breast."

"You'll do. Now, listen while I give you my instructions."

Old King Brady talked rapidly, listening for any sound from below as he spoke.

"All right, and I am ready!" declared Linn when he was through.

Old King Brady then woke up Farley.

The old fellow came back to life easily.

"Oh, you are here?" he gasped. "Say, I must have dropped off for a moment."

"You have been sleeping for an hour or more. Wake up, now! The time has come!"

"I am wide awake, Mr. Brady."

"Good. Benners is below, and with him a man whom we believe to be Jim Thomas, a foreman at the mill."

"Wouldn't wonder a bit. Jim Thomas is a rascal."

"We want to capture Benners, Pete. Now, listen to my plan."

Farley took the retails of the old detective's scheme in readily enough.

The time had now come to act.

Farley and Linn were just about to start downstairs, when a movement was heard below, then in an instant someone closed a door.

"Hush! Wait!" breathed Old King Brady.

In a moment they heard footsteps again, and knew that while one had gone the other had remained behind.

"So much the better!" breathed Old King Brady. "Slide into the parlor, Pete, and keep behind him, as I told you. I'm off upstairs. Now, then, Linn, do your part and all will be well!"

A moment later and a low wailing cry rang out through the old house.

It was ghostly enough in all conscience.

Old King Brady, leaning over the bannisters on the upper floor, listened with intense interest.

"Will it fail?" he asked himself. "Suppose the scoundrel proves to be also a coward? Suppose he turns tail and runs?"

Then in an instant Arthur Benners proved himself to be a different sort.

Footsteps were heard on the lower stairs.

"Who is there?" a voice called.

"Arthur! Arthur! Come to me, Arthur!" a woman's voice, low and plaintive, replied.

"Linn is doing her part to the queen's taste," thought the old detective.

"Who spoke?" he heard Benners call.

Then he knew that he had ventured up the basement stairs.

"He must be mighty confident that Farley is sound asleep," thought Old King Brady. "But then I suppose he knows the old man's habits, and has been here many times before."

A light flashed in the hall then.

Benners had a dark lantern, too, it seemed, so Linn did not have to use the one Old King Brady had given her.

"Arthur! Oh, Arthur! How could you?" the girl wailed.

Benners must have seen her by this time, for he made a quick spring forward.

Linn turned and fled up the stairs.

She was in her stocking-feet and her tread was absolutely noiseless.

"Great heavens! What is this!" Benners was heard to exclaim.

"He'll never come! He'll never dare!" breathed Linn, as she came up to Old King Brady.

"Call him again," said the detective. "He has more sand in him than I gave him credit for. He'll come!"

"Arthur! Come to me, Arthur!" called Linn.

"By heavens, I will come! Ghost or no ghost, I will meet you face to face!" they heard Benners exclaim.

The door of the secret room in the tower which occupied this angle of the house stood open, and Old King Brady darted inside.

Linn took her place in the doorway.

She made no sound, not even breathing heavily; the girl was an accomplished actress, it would seem.

Benners bounded up the stairs and flashed his dark-lantern upon her.

"Linn!" he gasped. "Oh, Linn! Is it really you? Are you—are you alive?"

"Arthur! Follow me!"

Linn held out her hands and backed in through the secret door.

And he followed—followed, believing her to be the spirit of the girl he loved better than anyone but himself.

Instantly he had crossed the threshold. Linn pressed the secret spring and the door closed upon him.

Then Benners knew that he had been trapped, for out of the shadows stepped Old King Brady, now in his well-known dress, the old blue coat, the big white hat and all the rest of it were there!

"Good-evening, Mr. Benners!" he exclaimed, at the same time covering the scoundrel with his revolver. "Put down that lantern, please. You can set it on the table. Miss Barron and I have something to say to you!"

Benners placed the lantern on the table, fixing upon Linn a look of intense hatred.

"I'll never forgive you for this!" he hissed. "I did love you, Linn Barron! You may not believe it, but I did."

"Love!" cried Linn, "and you talk of love! You, the man who entrapped my poor father, who meant to kill him. Pah!"

Benners made a move toward the girl.

"Hold!" cried Old King Brady. "Your life hangs by a thread, Arthur Benners. Obey me implicitly, or I'll shoot you like a dog. Linn, open the door and let Farley in!"

Linn obeyed.

Pete came in with another revolver.

Benners viewed him as he aimed it with a sarcastic smile.

"Well, I seem to have walked into a pretty trap, all right," he said, with a degree of coolness which showed the boldness of the man. "Of course, you are Old King Brady, alias Rowley. I suspected it from the first. Pity I didn't shoot you when I had the chance to-night."

"The chance you did not have," replied the old detective. "I think I am quicker on the draw than you are, Benners. I was ready for you every instant of our talk."

"And what do you mean to do with me?"



"That depends upon yourself. I propose to secure you first. You'll get your deserts, never fear."

"Bah! You know nothing of my business, old man!"

"More than you think for. Every word you spoke to Jack Price this afternoon was overheard by me. Same with your interesting conversation with Jim Thomas just now."

Benners subsided.

Probably he felt that there had been too much talking done already.

At all events, after that his remarks were few and far between.

While Farley kept him covered, Old King Brady securely tied his hands behind him, but first the fellow was thoroughly searched and two revolvers and a knife taken away.

Leaving him in care of Farley for the moment, Old King Brady called him out into the hall.

"It will soon be daybreak," he said, "and I think my plan is to take this man through the gorge and into the valley of the Rattlesnake range. I shall not say a word about your father until we reach the point where he and Price had their talk; there I will stop and try to force him to tell where Colonel Barron is. He will then know that I must have overheard his conversation and very likely can be made to confess."

"I leave it all to you, Mr. Brady," was Linn's reply.

"Shall you be afraid to stay here alone? I shall want to take Farley along."

"What's the matter with me going, too?"

"Oh, you had better not. You have been on your feet enough for one night."

"It won't hurt me a bit. I must go. I am determined to see this thing through."

To this Old King Brady objected, but in the end Linn had her way.

It was two o'clock when they started.

Old King Brady was rather doubtful about the way, but Farley, who provided a good stable-lantern assured him that he could easily find it.

And it proved so.

The old man led them unerringly to the gorge.

Benners offered some objections at the start, but he soon gave that up and resumed his attitude of sulky silence.

Farley led them over the foothills, which was the easiest way.

At length they reached the place where Harry had started in to chase the rabbit, and Old King Brady called a halt.

"Now, then, Brother Benners, your time has come," said the detective. "Tell us what you have done with Colonel Barron. That he lives and is a prisoner in your hands we know, for my partner and I, standing behind that cliff, heard it from your own lips."

"You did, hey?" retorted Benners. "Perhaps I'm not disputing you, but it is all about the business you will ever hear from me."

"Don't say it, Arthur," put in Linn. "You tell, and I have no doubt father will be merciful to you."

"No."

"Just think, he took you a poor boy and educated you. Everything you have is due to his kindness. How could you treat him so?"

Benners was silent.

"Ingratitude! Black ingratitude," said Old King Brady. "I tell you, Miss Barron, there is nothing to be expected from such a wretch. Let us remain here until daylight, and by that time I have no doubt my partner will return with news of the Copper King."

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

"Hully gee! Deyse onto us!" gasped Gus, as Mr. McCoy's cry rang through the sink.

"Run! Run for your life, Mr. Barron!" Young King Brady exclaimed. "Once we are through the break I am sure we can find some place to hide."

"I don't know about that," panted Colonel Barron. "I'm an old man. I'm afraid my strength won't hold out."

"But there seems no other way. You don't know any, do you? This place is strange to me."

"There is no hiding-place here. Run! Don't make me talk. I shall lose my wind."

By this time lights were flashing behind them; everybody seemed to be on the move.

But it would seem that Jack Price, or whoever was bossing the business, had no confidence in McCoy, for all ran to the other hut first.

This gave Harry his advantage.

They succeeded in gaining the narrow passage which led out of the sink before the chase began.

Here for an instant Harry paused and looked back.

"They are coming full tilt," he said. "We can never hope to outdistance them. We must try to find some place to hide."

"Out on the ridge!" panted Colonel Barron. "Only get me there. I know!"

There was no further talk.

All three buckled down to it and ran for all they were worth.

Before they emerged from the passage they could hear their pursuers enter it at the other end.

But they managed to hold their own, and in a few minutes came out on the ridge.

"Light!" gasped the Copper King. "That lantern! Quick!"

Harry flashed his lantern and Colonel Barron staggered forward to a point where the bushes grew thick at the base of the cliffs.

Here he parted the bushes and motioned the others in.

Evidently the colonel knew the place, for here there was a pile of quartz which had been blasted out of the rocks, leaving a hole extending in for ten feet or more.

"We stop here, for I can go no further," panted the Copper King. "I don't think any of those fellows can know the place. If they do we are lost."

"Not quite," replied Harry, as they crawled in under the cliffs. "I have a couple of good revolvers. If it comes to a pinch we can put up a fight, I suppose."

"Gimme one of them and you'll see what kind of a fight I kin put up," said Gus.

"Don't trust him," groaned Colonel Barron. "He is one of those who captured me."

"If he was against you before he is for you now," replied Harry. "I know this man, Colonel. He will not go back on me."

"Dat's what I won't," growled Gus, as he took revolver. "You needn't be afraid of me, Don. Harry and me is old chums."

They stopped talking then, for they could hear their pursuers on the ridge.

"Blame it all! Where are they?" Price sung out.

"Don't see nothing of them," replied another voice, which Gus whispered to Harry belonged to Bill Tooley.

"They can't have run on," said Price. "Old man Barron might be good for a dash through the gorge, but not for no more. They must be hiding somewhere here."

A search then followed, which Harry felt almost certain would end in discovery.

But it did not.

Once they even parted the bushes, but none of them seemed to know about the cave.

For half an hour and over the search was continued, but nothing came of it.

That was the time when Gus Wren heard all sorts of things said about him.

Price declared that he would shoot him at sight; as for Harry, they did not seem able to make out who he was, and there was considerable discussion about it.

At last they gave it up and all halted just beyond the bushes and began to talk.

"Come, this is a bad business," remarked Price. "If the old man succeeds in getting down to Montague, and it begins to look as if he might, we shall all be in the soup."

"That's what's the matter," replied Tooley. "I said from the first it was a big mistake to go against Boss McCoy. He was managing the thing all right. He's a slick one, he is."

In this sentiment the others joined.

Each one had some remark to make, and it was evident that Benners was anything but popular with these men.

"I tell you what it is, fellers," said Price, at last, "let's get Boss McCoy and bring him here. It was he who helped the old man start the mine there in the sink. He knows this place as we don't, and you must remember the old man knows it, too. If there is any hiding-hole about here Mac can find it. It has come to the point where we have just got to stand in with him now."

"I agree to that," replied Tooley. "Benners hasn't

come up to the scratch, nohow. I've a blame good mind to turn on him. I believe we could make more by giving him away to the old man than by holding the old man for his benefit, yes I do."

"It's too late to think of that now," replied Price. "For my part, I am disgusted with the hull business. For two pins I'd throw up the contract and light out."

"Not now," snarled Tooley. "Somebody's got to pay for the trouble we have been at. But come on, boys, we will see what Boss McCoy has got to say."

All started then, and soon their footsteps had died away.

"Safe for the moment," whispered Colonel Barron.

"Boys, we must get on the move. McCoy knows of the existence of this cave. If he is disposed to do it, he can lead them straight here."

"If we could only get down into the valley," said Harry, "but I don't suppose we could ever find the path in the dark."

"I think I can," said Colonel Barron, "I know the place thoroughly. All I want is light."

They started then, and in a few minutes the moon obligingly came out from behind the clouds, making their way plain.

It was but a comparatively short distance to the path, and in a little while they found themselves scrambling down the mountain.

By the time they reached the valley Colonel Barron found himself very much exhausted.

"It is no use, boys," he said. "I can go no further. Follow me and I will take you to my old corral, where we can hide for awhile, at least."

"You seem to know this place like a book," remarked Young King Brady.

"I ought to," was the reply. "Perhaps you are not aware that all this land belongs to me."

Harry admitted his ignorance.

"It is all mine," said the Copper King, "and it is as rich in minerals as any tract in Montana. I know a dozen copper leads in these mountains, each one of them as good as the Montague. Some of these days it may pay to work them. But here we are. Now let me rest, and while I am doing it you can tell me all about this business. From what we overheard up there it would seem that you are right, and that there could be no doubt that Arthur Benners was at the bottom of this business; and yet I can't understand why he should turn against me. I have been more than a father to him. He never received anything but kindness at my hands."

They were walking in the opposite direction from Montague now, and in a minute they came upon a small hut built up against the cliffs.

Alongside was an old-fashioned corral built of high wooden palings, in the style which was universal before barbed wire came into use.

"Here we are," said the Copper King. "This is my old home. I built this hut when I first came to Montana years ago. It was here that I brought my wife when I

first married her—poor soul, she is long since dead. Here——”

“Hush!” breathed Harry, “don’t you see?” Someone in there! A light!”

“Surest thing you know,” said Gus. “Say, we’re up against it. Ah! Look dere! Blame it all, it’s a gal!”

“Linn! My daughter!” cried Colonel Barron, rushing forward.

In an instant the girl was locked in her father’s arms.

“And the Governor!” exclaimed Harry. “Always turns up at the right time!”

For Old King Brady had come out of the hut then.

“Well, well!” he exclaimed, “and who have we here?”

“My father, Mr. Brady!” cried Linn. “Pa, this is Old King Brady, the detective. He has worked so hard to help me, and—oh, how can I tell you! Arthur is at the bottom of all this.”

“I know,” replied Colonel Barron, as he shook hands with Old King Brady. “I think I know all. Just wait till I come up with that scoundrel and——”

“And there need be no waiting,” broke in Old King Brady. “Arthur Benners is here.”

“Here!”

“Yes. Ah, here comes Farley!”

The miner came tumbling out of the hut then.

“And is it the boss!” he cried. “Oh, Mr. Barron, and is it yerself, sir? Dear, dear! Such goings on never was since the days I fust took wurruk wid you here in dis very house.”

“Then you are not one of my enemies, Pete,” said the Copper King, shaking hands vigorously.

Old King Brady recognized Gus instantly, and after Harry had told his story, he said:

“Gus Wren, you have done me a great service, and I shall see to it that you are well paid. You can, however, do me a greater one still if you will. What do you say to trying? Come, now, you had better square yourself with the Copper King while you can.”

“What is it?” asked Gus.

“Get back to the mountain. Bring those men here at daylight. Tell them any old yarn, only entice them to this hut.”

“I’ll do it,” said Gus. “I’ll make out that I was forced into this.”

He was off in a minute, and five minutes later Farley was on the run toward Montague for help.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a lucky thing that Linn thought of coming in to the hut.

No headway had been made in the effort to force a confession from Benners, and Old King Brady felt the necessity of tying up somewhere for the night.

So they came on to the hut with the fortunate result already related, and now that morning was dawning all hands stood about the door watching the mountain trail.

“There they come!” exclaimed Harry, at last. “I see them!”

“Stand where you are, Colonel Barron,” said Old King Brady, as he and Harry stepped inside. “This is the trap, you are the bait. Let them see you, but don’t let them know that you see them. We shall have them foul, now, in a few minutes’ time.”

It was Jack Price, Bill Tooley and the others, and Mr. McCoy was with them, Gus Wren being in the lead.

Apparently Old King Brady’s ruse was working well, for as soon as Price caught sight of the Copper King they set up a shout and came forward on the run.

“He went in there! I seen him!” cried Price, as they came up. “Come out of there, Barron! We’ve got you! You can’t escape us now!”

Colonel Barron came out in response to the call.

So did the Bradys.

So also ten miners—out of the corral.

In an instant the gang was covered with rifles and revolvers.

“It is our day, boys!” cried Old King Brady. “For you there is nothing left but to throw up your hands!”

\* \* \* \* \*

The case was closed. The Copper King was restored to his own and the mystery of the Montague mine explained. Once more the Bradys had won out and subsequent happenings may be disposed of in very few words.

Captured by the Bradys and the men brought up from Montague by Pete Farley, McCoy, Price and the rest were taken to town and jailed.

McCoy made a full confession involving Benners and the man Jim Thomas, arrested at the mill, did the same.

Colonel Barron showed no mercy to anyone but Gus Wren, to whom he gave fifteen hundred dollars, and Gus jumped to New York forthwith.

As for Benners, McCoy & Co., they landed in the penitentiary.

The representatives of the Copper Trust denied all knowledge of the affair.

Colonel Barron handsomely rewarded the Bradys for their services, and he and Linn returned to New York under their escort.

The Montague mine is still an independent concern, and is paying handsomely.

And such was the very satisfactory ending of the case of The Bradys and the Copper King.

## THE END.

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