

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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No. 360.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 15, 1905.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS CHINESE RAID; OR, AFTER THE MAN HUNTERS OF MONTANA.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



"Look! Look!" cried Men Fun, throwing up his hands. The trap door was rising. Then it flew up with a bang. It was Old King Brady, Harry and the Secret Service man. Wing Dock raised his sword.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BRADYS TAKE A CHINESE CASE.

The Bradys sat in the Blackfoot station one cold December afternoon waiting for a train.

They had just completed a case for which they had been hired by a mining company.

A certain noted tough was then on his way to the penitentiary, while the detectives, having finished their work, were about to start for home via the Great Northern Railroad.

So cold and windy was the day that none of the usual loungers about the station had put in an appearance, and even the agent was missing, although the weather probably had no effect on him.

Thus there was no one to stare at the detectives, as is usually the case, owing to the peculiarity of Old King Brady's dress.

As is well known, the old detective invariably appears in public, when not in disguise, attired in a blue coat of ancient cut which carries a double row of brass buttons down its face.

Then there is the big white felt hat with its broad brim, which may be styled Old King Brady's trademark, so to speak.

Nor must we forget the old-fashioned "stock" and high, standing, pointed collar.

All these things put together combine to make Old King Brady a marked man.

As for Young King Brady, his partner, on this particular night he was dressed in a good, substantial business suit, with such an overcoat as one is liable to require in the Northwest, and that is a heavy one.

As we have mentioned before, the Bradys were waiting for the east-bound train, but this was not due for an hour yet, and it was written in the book of fate that the detectives should not take it at all.

"I wish that fellow would come," remarked Young King Brady, looking for the twentieth time at the closed window of the ticket office.

"Oh, he'll be along pretty soon, I daresay, Harry," replied the old detective. "Don't distress yourself, my boy."

"I can't say that I am distressing myself, but I do want to get settled down in the train."

"Naturally; and it is the same here, since we are both pretty well tired out. We shall get rested up before we reach St. Paul."

"I hope there is no slip about getting that fellow into the penitentiary."

"Oh, I guess he's booked all right. It would take a pretty strong pull to save him now after the crimes he has committed, and as for his gang——"

Right here the door opened and a young man with a decided Chinese cast of countenance entered the waiting-room.

This person was dressed in the latest style.

His hair was worn in American fashion and he was minus a pigtail.

A fine diamond glittered in his scarf and another from a ring on the third finger of his left hand.

Anyone familiar with the race could see that he was a Chinese halfbreed, and he was a rich one at that.

It has been said that no Chinaman ever approaches his subject direct.

This man did not.

He had entered the station for no other purpose than to interview the Bradys, as the event showed.

But instead of walking directly up to them, he first went to the ticket office and stared at the closed window.

Then he walked across the room and consulted the timetable.

This done, he looked at the clock, comparing it with a big gold watch which he drew from his pocket.

All this accomplished, he appeared to suddenly discover the presence of the Bradys, and walked over to where they sat.

"How do," he said. "You are Mr. Old King Brady—yes?"

"That's who I am," replied the old detective, not at all surprised at the recognition, for their presence at Blackfoot was known to everyone in the little town.

"My name is Charley Chow," replied the fellow, and he produced an engraved card which read:

Mr. Charles Chow,
308 Dupont St.

Evidently Mr. Chow was a San Francisco proposition. The Bradys began to wonder what was coming next.

Charley Chow then sat down and, producing a fine Russia leather pocketbook, drew out a letter, which the old detective saw was addressed to himself.

"This just come," said Charley Chow. "I was so afraid you would go away. As quick as I get it I come here."

Old King Brady opened the letter, which proved to be from no less a person than the mayor of San Francisco, whom he happened to know.

It read as follows:

"Dear Mr. Brady—I have been asked to use my influence to induce you to take up a case for some of my Chinese friends. If you can accommodate them I shall be very glad. The matter is one of considerable importance, they tell me. You may believe Mr. Chow implicitly. He has promised to put everything to you straight, and I have no doubt he will. As for the pay, it is sure, and these people will be liberal. I believe they have been greatly wronged; but, of course, my name must not figure in the matter if the case should get in the papers. I trust you for that.

"Oblige Chow if you can, for by doing so you will be obliging,

"Yours very truly,
"____ _ _ _."

We prefer not to give the name of the mayor.

This matter occurred some few years ago, and the man has since retired to private life.

Old King Brady, having read the letter, passed it over to Harry.

Charley Chow watched the faces of both the detectives, but did not speak.

"Well, Chow, what is it you want of us?" Old King Brady asked.

"I am at the Hemlock Hill mine," replied Charley. "It is thirty miles north from here. I want you to ride with me there to-night."

"But we are just starting for New York."

"I know; so I hurry and write to Frisco to get that letter when I first heard you were around here."

"So? Well, what is the case?"

"Mr. Brady, we have a very rich gold mine up there. We are away off by ourselves. We interfere with nobody, but we find it so hard to do the work. You see, no white man will work for us, so we get Chinamen. There is a gang who all the time kidnap our men and run them to the Canada line. There they give them up to the detectives who watch the line to keep my people out. They get ten dollars a head for them, and the detective say they new Chinamen trying to get into the country. You see, they get twenty-five dollars a head for all they catch. Five times we lost almost all our men, and the poor fellows they are put in jail and then chased over the line into Canada, where they have no friends and cannot make a living. A whole lot of them are American born, and leave their friends behind them in Frisco. It is a shame. They take away their papers and they never can come into the country again. I say yes, it is a shame."

Charley Chow as he talked was working himself up into quite a pitch of excitement.

"I should say it was a shame if it is as you tell it," re-

plied the old detective, who has had much to do with Chinamen and does not dislike them as a race.

"You will help us?" demanded Charley Chow.

"How long since these man hunters raided your mine?" Old King Brady asked.

"The last was a month ago, Mr. Brady. We have been closed ever since. We dare not open, for so we bring in more men they will steal them, too."

"I see. How many persons are at your mine now?"

"The committee is there; they are three. I am four. We have nine others; we hardly dare to show ourselves outside, only me."

"You are part American?"

"My mother was Irish woman."

"I see. They would hardly dare to touch you. But this committee—what do you mean when you call these three men so?"

"They represent the stockholders, Mr. Brady. There is Hip Lee, of New York; See Yup, of Boston, and Han Kow, of Frisco. They came to the mine to see what could be done. They are all rich men, and now they are afraid to go away for fear they may be caught by these fellers and run out of the country."

"So? I should say they were rich men. I happen to know of all three of them. Hip Lee is good for a million any day in the week."

"Yes, he tell me you know him. He say you come for him anyhow, but Han Kow he think we better get that letter from the mayor. You will go?"

"What do you think, Harry?" inquired Old King Brady, "shall we try to help these Chinks?"

"I'm willing," was the reply.

"I give you a thousand dollars now to start with," said Charley Chow, pulling out a big roll of bills.

"Put up your money," replied Old King Brady. "We treat you Chinamen just as we treat anyone else. We know you are good for the money; you can pay when we are through the job. How do we get to this Hemlock Hill mine?"

"I have a wagon. I drive you out."

"All right. We will go."

Charley Chow was simply delighted.

"I thank you," he said. "So you can help us you will never be sorry you go."

"You are not afraid of being caught, Charley?" Harry said.

"They don't dare," was the reply. "I started the Hemlock Hill mine three years ago. Everybody know me around here. So they try to kidnap me I shoot them, that's all."

And so it happened that, instead of starting for New York that night, the Bradys soon found themselves seated in an easy surrey drawn by a fine team of horses and on their way to a Chinese mining camp.

The situation described by Charley Chow is not a unique one, by any means.

As everyone who has traveled in the byways of the far

West knows, the Chinese are great miners, and in spite of the fact that they are forced to work under every disadvantage, make good money out of the business.

As a rule, the Chinese keep well inside the northern border, for kidnapping is going on all the time.

Charley Chow explained that the title to the Hemlock Hill mine was held in his name.

The property had been abandoned by its original owners and he had "relocated" it, as it is called.

This, as he was a native-born American, he had a perfect legal right to do.

But the roughs and scum of the far West do not recognize that even native-born Chinamen have any rights.

In the cities and larger towns they are seldom molested, but up around the Canadian border it is a very different thing.

Charley Chow had finished telling all he knew about the kidnapping before they had covered the first five miles.

The main point he was ignorant of.

The raids on the Hemlock Hill mine had all been made by masked men.

Who the leader of the lawless band which had perpetrated these outrages was, Charley could not tell.

They had been driving along a level road while this conversation was going on.

There was no snow upon the ground as yet, and the frozen earth was as hard as a floor.

Now they began to ascend the foothills of one of those isolated ranges of mountains which are scattered along the northern border.

Charley Chow called them the Silverstone Mountains, but Young King Brady could not find them set down under that name on his map.

Indeed, there was no range noted on the map between Blackfoot and the Canadian border.

Hemlock Hill mine, according to Charley Chow, was located in the deep valley between the range and the foothills.

Here the ascent was rocky, and progress was slow.

Charley, who had shown himself a splendid driver, seemed to find all he wanted to do to take care of his horses.

And thus the Bradys, who occupied the back seat, were left to their own reflections.

It seemed strange that, instead of being whirled along in their Pullman, they should have suddenly jumped in to handle a Chinese case.

CHAPTER II.

THE NIGHT ALARM.

The Bradys rode on far into the night.

Being well bundled up, they did not feel the cold in

that dry mountain air, although the temperature must have been below zero.

Charley Chow did very little talking after Old King Brady ceased to question him.

Indeed, Chinamen, as a rule, never do talk much.

Watch two or more of them traveling together and you will observe how rarely one speaks to his companion.

The Bradys fell in with this style themselves, and very little was said.

Long before this they had descended into the valley between the Silverstone range and its foothills, and their direction had since been northwest.

Old King Brady, who in a general way is familiar with all this part of the country, saw that they must be drawing nearer to the Canadian border with every mile they made.

At last the valley began to widen out, and the moon having risen a short time before, the detectives caught sight of an isolated hill thickly covered with dark growth trees.

"Hemlock Hill?" he asked of Charley Chow.

"Yair," replied the Chinaman. "We most there now."

"How did you ever come to locate a mine in such an out-of-the-way place?"

"Oh, a feller in Frisco told me all about it," was the reply. "When I come here I know what I can find."

"And people call the Chinks slow," whispered Harry.

"They are as shrewd a people as the world can produce," was the reply. "We Americans persist in judging the whole race by a handful of laborers, that's all."

The shrewdness of the Chinese was soon illustrated.

As they drew near the hill a light was seen among the trees alongside the road on their left.

Suddenly a Chinaman sprang out into the road waving a lantern.

The Bradys saw that he was just out of rifle range.

Suddenly he raised his lantern and lowered it three separate times.

Charley Chow put his fingers into his mouth and gave a shrill whistle.

The man then turned and, plunging in among the trees, disappeared.

"What's all that, Charley?" Harry asked.

"He the guard," was the reply. "Since last time we keep a man here. He got electric signal. They know now at mine we come."

Charley's English was almost perfect.

He spoke with scarcely a trace of accent. His only fault was leaving out words.

"That's a good idea," said Old King Brady. "It is a pity you didn't try it sooner. You give him a house this cold weather, I suppose?"

"Yair. He got a little hut. Three men they take turns all night."

They rattled on and soon came in sight of a group of frame shacks on the side of the isolated hill.

Here Charley rounded up the horses before the largest building.

Two Chinamen came out to receive them.

Both were armed with rifles, and Harry did not fail to notice their scared looks.

Charley spoke to them in Chinese and they took charge of the horses.

Meanwhile the Bradys, who had alighted, found themselves received in royal style.

The door of the long frame building flew open and there stood the "committee."

See Yup, of Boston, and Hip Lee, of New York, were well known to the old detective.

Han Kow, of San Francisco, he knew by reputation to be a very rich man.

"Hello, Blady!" cried Hip Lee. "Dlis long way ffrom Mott stleet. Me so glad you come."

"Hello! Hello!" chimed in See Yup, coming out and wanting to shake hands.

"Me likee better so you come to Hallison avner by Boston, but allee samee good chop suey! Oh, yair, you get plenty eat."

Han Kow did not speak very good English, but he shook hands and grinned and was as cordial as a Chinaman can be to an American, which is not saying very much, and no wonder, seeing how they have been treated in this country of late.

When See Yup said chop suey he evidently meant it as only a type of good things to come.

When Charley Chow came in and did a little talking in Chinese the "committee" were all smiles.

"I know blame well you takee my case. I tellee Charley dlat!" cried Hip Lee. "So I send for you den so you come."

And this, in fact, was true.

Hip Lee was the nephew of the famous Tom Lee, mayor of New York's Chinese colony.

Many times has this noted character assisted the Bradys in their work.

Whether they would have come all the way from New York to take a case for Hip Lee is a question, but being in Montana such a request could hardly have been refused.

And now the Bradys were treated like royal guests.

It was now eleven o'clock at night, but a dinner stood ready somewhere which was simply perfect when served.

As everybody knows, the Chinese are among the best cooks in the world when they care to spread themselves.

The Bradys were ushered into a long dining-room and their Chinese friend sat down at the table with them, dinner immediately being served.

The chop suey was there all right, and so were the sharks' fins, the edible birdsnests, and a long line of expensive Chinese luxuries as well.

The finest wines were there, too, and champagne of expensive brands.

Instead of being a dinner, it was, in short, a feast.

The Bradys, being well used to Chinese cookery, thoroughly enjoyed the meal, but went very light on the wines. Choice cigars and tea in tiny cups was the wind-up, and

until somewhere after midnight these came on the board not a word was said about business.

Then when Old King Brady broached the subject Hip Lee told the whole story.

Beyond the outline given by Charley Chow, there was nothing told of sufficient importance to be gone into here.

The long and short of the whole matter was that the Hemlock Hill mine had been five times raided and its workmen carried off.

Besides this, all the gold ore which the marauders could comfortably carry had been taken.

As matters stood, these unfortunate Chinamen simply did not dare to work their mine.

Hip Lee informed the Bradys that he had no expectation of getting his men back through their efforts.

He appreciated the difficulty of such an undertaking and did not ask it of them.

What they wanted was precisely what many a rich mining company had received at the hands of the Bradys, that they should round up this gang of man hunters so that they could be left to work their mine in peace.

It was one o'clock before the party broke up, and the Bradys were conducted to a warm, comfortable room with a big double bed, where the Chinks left them to finish out the night.

"Governor," remarked Harry, just as he was getting into bed, "do you know I think we made one big mistake to-night?"

"By riding out of Blackfoot with Charley Chow in plain sight. That is what you mean, I suppose?" was the old detective's reply.

"That is what I mean."

"Well, I thought of that, Harry, but at the same time I just made up my mind to let it go so."

"But why? We have made some enemies up in northern Montana this trip, and every man jack in Blackfoot probably stands ready to do these Chinks."

"I want to make this a quick case, Harry. Of course, we could have slid quietly out of town and let Charley Chow pick us up on the road, but if we had done that we might have mused around a week or two with nothing doing, whereas now these man hunters may even make a move to-night."

"Hardly probable. For the last twenty miles I did not see even the sign of a house. This is about as lonely a spot as we ever struck in on."

"We shall see. Go to sleep, Harry, and don't fret."

"Aren't you coming to bed?"

"By and by. I'm going to smoke another cigar first."

Used to his partner's erratic ways, Young King Brady was soon asleep.

But the old detective had no intention of sleeping that night.

Why?

If anyone had asked him he could not have told.

Frequently Old King Brady is seized with such notions, and he usually yields to them.

For this reason Old King Brady was determined that his partner should have his sleep.

From the room in which they were there was a door opening directly into the mine yard.

After Harry was asleep Old King Brady, extinguishing the light, opened this door and stepped out.

He had resolved to take a night view of the mine, and alone.

It was not to go that way, however.

He had not taken ten steps when a young Chinaman carrying a lantern and well bundled up against the cold came tumbling out of a little shack.

"Hello!" he cried. "What want?"

"Nothing, John. Just out for an airing," the old detective answered.

"They are certainly well guarded here," he thought

"You no can sleep?" said the Chink.

"No. Are you on guard?"

"Yair. Me lookee out for dem fellers. Mebbe dley come again."

"Why didn't they catch you, John, when they were here the last time?"

"Me lun away."

"You did not see their faces?"

"No siree! Dley wear black maskee—yair. Dley ketchee me dley lun me to Canada. Me no want."

"Which way do they come in, same way we came along with Charley Chow?"

"One time dley comee dlat vay, one time dley come odder vay. Me no know."

"What town lies that way?"

Old King Brady pointed in the direction opposite to which they had come.

But the Chinaman had no answer to make. All he could tell was that Canada lay in that direction.

He also informed the detective that he was a newcomer in the camp and had only been present at the last raid.

"I'm going to walk along that way," said Old King Brady, as he lit a cigar.

"You gittee lost," said the Chink.

"Oh, no. I shall not go far."

"Me comee, too."

"No; you stay where you are, John. I had rather go alone."

But the Chinaman was stubborn and insisted upon going.

Seeing that it was of no use to argue, Old King Brady yielded.

They accordingly pushed on past the hill and entered the broader valley beyond.

And now all at once the clatter of hoofs was heard on the other side of the hill.

"What's all that?" cried Old King Brady, suddenly halting.

"Dley comee! Dley comee 'gain!" gasped the Chink. "Dley hide behind de hill."

"Back! Back!" cried the old detective. "We must warn them!"

But the Chink was not backing just then.

All he was thinking about was his personal safety.

Without another word he broke away from Old King Brady, and, darting in among the trees, ran up the hill.

Seeing what kind of a person he had to deal with, Old King Brady drew his revolver and started back toward the mine.

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY OF HEMLOCK HILL.

Old King Brady felt that he now knew the reason of his restlessness.

He was only sorry that he had not remained at the mine to give the alarm.

The sound of the horses was no longer heard, once he got abreast of the hill.

Considering his age, Old King Brady is a pretty good runner, and on this occasion he got over the ground in lively style.

He felt little hope of being first at the mine, but if he had known the lay of the land better he would not have worried on that score.

It was three times the distance on the other side of Hemlock Hill.

Thus when Old King Brady gained the door of his room there was no enemy in sight, but he could now hear the clatter of horses in the distance again.

He bounded in, and, bolting the door, shook Harry by the shoulder.

"Up! Up!" he cried. "The man hunters or someone else are upon us."

Harry sprang up on the instant.

"Gee whiz, Governor!" he exclaimed, "has business already begun?"

"That's what it looks like. Tumble into your clothes, quick! I must wake up these Chinks."

Hurrying out into the passage, Old King Brady adopted a most effectual method of arousing the house.

Here there was a Chinese gong attached to a frame.

Seizing the stuffed mallet which hung on a nail behind it, Old King Brady beat the gong for all he was worth.

In a twinkling Charley Chow, in his shirt-tail, came tumbling out of a door near by.

"What matter?" he cried.

"Men on horses coming!" shouted Old King Brady. "Have you guns?"

"In there!" replied Charley, pointing to another door.

"I'll get them. Wake up your committee. Where are the men you spoke of?"

"They don't get them," said Charley; "they all hide up the hill, but they get gold, maybe, perhaps."

He ran along the corridor pounding on doors.

Old King Brady flung open the door Charley had indicated and found a closet containing half a dozen rifles and some ammunition.

Seizing two of these and some cartridges, he returned to Harry, who by this time was almost dressed.

"Seems to me you are making a deuce of a noise, Governor," exclaimed Harry. "I don't hear a sound outside."

"They must have halted somewhere, then. There was a mounted band coming fast enough."

Old King Brady opened the door and listened.

Not a sound could he hear.

Of course, the mounted men should have been in sight by this time.

Why, then, did they not appear?

Hearing footsteps in the corridor behind him, Old King Brady shut and bolted the door again.

Charley Chow was hurrying back, and alone.

The instant Old King Brady caught sight of the fellow's face by the light of the hall lamp, which Harry had started going, he saw that Charley had experienced a fright.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"Gone! All gone!" replied Chow, mildly.

"Who has gone?"

"The committee! Come!"

"Get a gun! There may be some trap in this. You wear big diamonds, Chow. You are none too safe."

"I'm no good with rifle. I have this!"

Chow pulled out a huge navy revolver.

"The son of a seacock what touches my diamonds gets this in the head!" he cried.

"You stay here, Harry, and listen," said Old King Brady.

He whipped out his dark-lantern and, shouldering one of his rifles, started after Charley Chow.

The Chink led him to a large room handsomely furnished in the Chinese style.

Here were three bamboo beds standing in a row.

The beds were vacant and tumbled up.

Evidently they had been slept in and equally plain was it that they had been vacated in a hurry.

"Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow slept here?" demanded the detective.

"Yair."

"Even their clothes are gone!"

"The man hunters get them. See, the door open here."

Charley referred to the door at the end of the corridor, through which below zero air was pouring in.

But Old King Brady was taking in the door of the room.

That had been opened with a key, which was still in the lock and on the outside.

"There has been treachery here," he thought.

And so it proved.

No need to go into every detail.

Old King Brady's quick hustle with Charley Chow revealed the following facts:

Out of the nine Chinamen at the mine, besides Charley Chow and the "committee," every one had vanished, including the cook, unless, indeed, the two guards proved to be exceptions.

The committee had likewise disappeared.

The back door of the house opened against the hillside, the trees coming down close to the building.

Thus it would be an easy matter to run prisoners out of sight.

Meanwhile nothing more had been heard of the horsemen.

Charley Chow was wild at first, but he soon cooled down. "Put-up job! Put-up job!" he kept saying.

The Bradys hurried him around on the other side of the hill.

Here nothing could be seen of the enemy.

"What about the guard up the valley?" demanded Old King Brady. "Then there is that other fellow who was watching here."

He had already explained to Charley how this man, whose name was Gim Look, had run off into the woods.

"I bring them both so they are here," said Charley.

He brought out a rifle and fired three shots.

In a moment a Chink came running down the valley.

A little later Gim Look sneaked up.

Charley talked to the pair in Chinese.

Both declared that they had seen no one.

Gim Look said that he had continued to hear the horses for a few moments and then the sounds died away.

The buildings of the mine were hastily searched, but no one was found.

"We must try and trace them up the hill, for that is the way they seem to have gone," said Old King Brady. "You have been up there, I suppose, Chow?"

To his surprise he found that Charley Chow had never ascended the isolated hill.

Old King Brady pressed him for the reason of this, and anyone but himself would have been surprised at the explanation given.

It appeared that some Chinese fortune teller had prophesied that Charley Chow would meet his death while climbing a hill covered with woods situated behind a gold mine.

As everybody knows, the Chinese are the most superstitious people on earth.

Dead in earnest though he was to solve this midnight mystery, the Bradys could not induce Charley Chow to climb the hill.

And as neither of the other Chinamen would consent to venture into the woods at night, it was up to the Bradys to go alone or postpone all action until morning.

The discussion took place in the dining-room.

After considerable talk Old King Brady turned to Charley Chow and said:

"How long have these missing men been with you here?"

"One week," replied Charley, looking rather surprised at the question.

"Ha! You did not tell me that! Only a week! Did you know nothing about them?"

"No. I never saw any of them before."

"So? And what do you mean to do, now that all your men are gone?"

"Oh, more come."

"You are expecting more men, then?"

"Yair."

"When?"

"Perhaps to-morrow."

"So?"

"But, Brady, we must rescue the committee. What will happen to me if such men as Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow are lost? It is all my fault, the people will say. If I go to New York, to Boston or to Frisco they will kill me. It is a bad job."

"We shall find them if they are to be found," replied Old King Brady. "Now you three stay here on guard and Harry and I will see what discoveries we can make on the hill."

So the Bradys bundled up and, leaving the house by the back door, started on their tour of discovery.

"Come back, quick!" Charley Chow called after them.

Then slamming the door they heard him lock it behind him.

"There's a frightened Chink for you," remarked Old King Brady, as they started up the hill.

"I should say so," was the reply. "Governor, what does all this mean?"

"Want my opinion now offhand, Harry?"

"Yes, of course. Shouldn't have asked for it otherwise."

"I think there has been more than one kind of business carried on at this mine."

"So?"

"Yes."

"A little Chink smuggling on the side, you mean?"

"Such is my idea. Yet, of course, I cannot tell."

"Would such men as Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow engage in that sort of business?"

"Why, of course they would; so would you if you were a Chinaman."

"Just the same, Charley Chow is immensely cut up over their disappearance."

"Oh, there is no doubt about that. It is possible that these three men know nothing about the side line."

"Generally in these Chinese mines they have a white superintendent, do they not?"

"Yes, they do as a rule, and I never knew one without a white assayer. The fact that there is neither here is certainly suspicious enough. Look, Harry! Here's how they went!"

Suddenly pausing, Old King Brady flashed his lantern upon the frozen ground.

Here lay a Chinese shoe.

It was a gold embroidered affair, and pink instead of blue, as these shoes usually are.

"See Yup had that on!" cried Harry.

"Exactly. It proves that he was a prisoner when he passed this way."

"He was being hurried forward, all right."

"Yes, and he cut his foot on that stone. See the blood?"

The Bradys had struck a real clew now.

It led them straight up the side of Hemlock Hill, whose height was perhaps five hundred feet.

But the detectives did not get to the top.

Before they had gone fifty yards they suddenly came upon a deep ravine which led down into the hill, so to speak. Here again they found traces of See Yup's bleeding foot.

Down to the bottom of the ravine the trail led them and thence in a southwesterly direction through the ravine.

"This will bring us out into the valley in a minute or so," said Harry.

"Sure it will," replied Old King Brady.

"I think the mystery is pretty well explained."

"Explained in part."

"We see now how the committee was carried off, but it is strictly an inside job."

"I think so. Charley Chow's Chinks were at the bottom of it."

They came out into the valley after a few minutes.

The way out of the ravine was so narrow and so choked up with bushes that it would have been easy to pass it, yet mounted men could just as easily have forced their way in.

"They came around the hill as far as here," said Harry.

"Yes, and met the Chink who had swiped the committee," Old King Brady replied. "It's all plain enough, my boy."

"If Charley Chow would only come out flat-footed and tell all he knows we might get a move on which would do some good."

"We have got to push the case through now, Harry. It won't bring us fame, but it surely will bring us fortune. Those three rich Chinks will pay big money for rescue if they are being held for ransom, as I strongly suspect is the case."

"It is all a put-up job in your estimation, then?"

"Yes, it is."

"It can't have had anything to do with us, Governor."

"I hardly think so, Harry, and yet such might be the case. The intention may have been to swipe us, too."

They walked back on the righthand side of the hill until they came to the house.

Here in the valley traces of the mounted band were plain enough.

Old King Brady, who is as expert as any man living in following up such traces, announced that the party had gone up the valley, and that they must have been at least twenty strong."

"Which means twenty-eight or thirty horses, if they had led ones for the Chinamen."

"Exactly. They may have swiped some of the mine horses, though."

Thus talking, they returned to the house, where they found Charley on his knees shaking joss-sticks in front of an ugly little idol.

He was trying his luck to find out if Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow would be rescued, so he said.

As for the Bradys, they spent the balance of the night discussing the mystery of Hemlock Hill.

CHAPTER IV.

OFF ON THE TRAIL WITH CHARLEY CHOW.

"For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, the Heathen Chinese is peculiar, which same I am bound to maintain."

Again and again Harry caught himself repeating Bret Harte's lines that night while he and Old King Brady were talking over their affairs.

They could make nothing out of Charley Chow.

That the man was laboring under great excitement was evident.

He produced a roll of bills containing ten thousand dollars and promised the whole to the Bradys if they would rescue the three Chinese millionaires.

This seemed to show that he had nothing to do with the matter of their disappearance, and yet when Old King Brady urged him to hitch up his team and start with them on the trail he refused to leave the mine.

"We must get them back. We must get them back," he kept saying.

And then he would add:

"No, no! I can't go away from here."

Old King Brady let him alone until Chow was able to grasp the point he was trying to make.

This was that he must put himself absolutely in their hands.

Charley Chow came off his perch shortly after day-break.

Old King Brady had been out inspecting the mine, which consisted of a single tunnel driven some fifty feet into the side of the hill.

He found here a rich gold vein, which had been worked only in the crudest manner.

Charley Chow admitted that no attempt had been made to smelt or crush the ore, but all had been shipped to Helena and sold on assay value, which meant, of course, a very considerable loss.

Satisfied now that the real business of the place was smuggling Chinamen, Old King Brady, immediately after eating the hastily cooked breakfast prepared by Gim Look, put the matter up to Chow.

"Look here, Charley," he said, "we have got to settle this one way or the other. These men that you expect are not miners; they are just from China and are to be smuggled in over the line, isn't that so?"

Charley suddenly lost his English.

"Me no sabe!" he gasped.

"Come, now; come now!" cried Old King Brady. "You may as well own up. We are not going to butt in on that end of your business, man."

At last Charley acknowledged the corn.

The way was open now, and Old King Brady jumped right into the break.

"Are you a Hip Sing Tong man?" he demanded.

This meant was he what is generally known as a High-binder.

Charley repudiated the suggestion.

"Then you are an On Leong man?" came the question fired shortly after the first.

Charley admitted that he was.

Old King Brady knew that the Lees of New York were all of the On Leong clan, and he now said as much.

Were Han Kow and See Yup also of the clan? he asked.

Charley admitted that they were.

"Then it is all plain enough," said Old King Brady. "You On Leongs have been running one smuggling shop up here and the Hip Sings are running another somewhere else. They have run some of their men in on you and they have fooled you, that's all."

Charley admitted this.

"Now see how much time you have lost by your infernal caution," said Old King Brady. "You want us to rescue these men, and yet you hold back information which would help to bring the rescue about. Have you any idea where this Hip Sing hold-out is?"

Charley picked up his little idol and, pressing it to his heart, swore that he had not.

"And these masked man hunters, are they all a fake?" Old King Brady suddenly asked. "Were we brought in here to help you find out this Hip Sing smuggling shop and break it up?"

Again Charley swore by his idol that this was not so.

"All right," said Old King Brady then, "now you are willing to do just as I say?"

This Charley had promised some time before, and he repeated it.

"Hitch up your team and go along with Harry," the detective then said. "He will look up the trail, and when you have located your men you will return. In the meantime I will stay here and receive your new batch of Chinks. I'll agree to keep them safe, too."

And so it was decided, but even after that Old King Brady was by no means sure that Charley Chow had told him the whole truth.

"To think of a Chinaman loaded down with money and diamonds going off on such a mission," he said to himself. "They are a strange race."

He had suggested to Charley that he had better leave

his wealth behind him, but the Chink was up in the air in a moment and swore that no one would ever dare to attack him.

So he rode off behind his fine team with Harry, leaving Old King Brady and the two Chinamen the only inhabitants at Hemlock Hill mine.

Charley Chow was proud of his horses and proud of himself.

He had put several bottles of champagne into the wagon-box, a couple of bottles of whisky also, and a box of fine cigars.

As they rode along in the crisp morning air—the temperature had risen somewhat—he entertained Harry with stories of his wealth, his fine house in Frisco and how all the girls would fall in love with him wherever he went.

Harry listened and said but little.

He was busy watching his trail.

It was as plainly marked as the trail of some twenty-odd horses is bound to be.

"How far have you been this way?" Harry asked.

"Only to the end of the valley," said Charley.

"This way don't lead to Canada then?"

"No; they say you can go so by passing around the range. I never tried it, so I don't know."

Five miles was covered by nine o'clock.

This brought them to the end of the range; the foothills had disappeared some time before.

On the other side of the mountain they struck a plain covered with a dense forest of hemlock and spruce.

Harry's pocket map showed that this forest must end in Canada.

It seemed to be an ideal place for smugglers, man hunters or, indeed, anything else in that line.

Into the forest the trail led.

"I don't want to go in there," said Charley Chow.

"To go in as we are would be to risk our lives, of course," said Harry. "If we could only leave our team somewhere and both go in disguise, you as a pigtailed Chink instead of the gentleman you are, and I as the same thing, we might learn a whole lot, and like enough find your three friends."

Charley, who had reined in, sat pondering for a good ten minutes before he spoke.

Harry let him alone.

He knew that the Chinese nature requires time to think about everything it is really interested in.

At last Charley broke out with the oracular exclamation:

"Well, all right. So we have to go!"

"Go where?" asked Harry. "I've almost gone to sleep waiting for you to say something."

"Go into those woods like you say."

"What are we going to do with our team? Where are we going to get our disguises? Of course, we shall have to go back to the mine first and start out again."

Harry said it, but he did not believe it. He felt sure

that Charley knew more about that same dark forest than he was willing to let on.

"No; we don't have to go back," said Charley, giving his horses the word to start.

Then with a silly chuckle he added:

"I know a girl. She fix us out all right."

"Oh, you do, do you?" laughed Harry. "So you are going to drop a girl into this thing, are you? Ten to one she will spoil it all."

"No, no!" replied Charley. "She nice girl. We going to get married some day. You leave all to me."

As there was nothing else to do, for Old King Brady had so directed, Harry lit a cigar and sat back to await results.

Charley Chow drove rapidly over the sandy plain to the west, keeping pretty close to the forest line.

There was no regular road here, but there were wheel tracks enough to show that somebody was in the habit of going back and forth.

Harry kept an eye out for forest trails, but saw none.

Where the trail they had followed entered among the trees it was no more open than anywhere else that he could see.

As Harry was well aware, this section of the country was practically a wilderness and very little known.

At last, after some four miles had been covered, Charley hauled in at a place where two or three trees had been felled, their trunks being piled up in front of a clump of bushes which cut off the view into the woods.

This might have deceived some, but not Old King Brady, who saw the wheel tracks.

It was a secret entrance to the forest.

Charley jumped down and, picking up the small tree-trunks with a greater display of strength than Harry supposed him to possess, slung them around out of the way.

"Drive in," he called to Harry. "You want to bend your head down or the bushes will knock your hat off."

The bushes proved to be but a shallow barrier.

In a moment Young King Brady came into a well-defined wood road.

"Look here!" cried Charley, as he climbed in again, "you will swear never to tell on me?"

"Don't fret. I shan't give you away. You have told us enough already. Don't expect me to keep swearing every five minutes to keep your secrets."

"All right," said Charley. "Now you see my girl. She the most beautiful girl in Montana. Oh, yair! Some day she marry me. Then I take her to Frisco and we live in style."

Opinions about female beauty differ a lot.

When Harry came to be introduced to Miss Sallie Loper about twenty minutes later, he found her red-headed, buck-toothed and fully ten years Charley's senior.

Sallie Loper lived in a log cabin right in the forest.

Jake Loper, her father, who appeared at the door with his rifle when the team came rattling up, was a typical

old trapper, one of a style of Western pioneers which is rapidly passing away.

"Hello, Chow! What the deuce brings you hyar?" he called as they drove up.

Then it was:

"Sal! Oh, Sal! Chow's come!"

Enter the "most beautiful girl in Montana."

Harry had all he could do to smother his 'ugh.

Charley jumped out and gave his girl a bear-like hug and a resounding smack on the lips, for which he got a light slap in the face.

"Get away, you ugly thing!" cried Sal. "What you brought me this time—say?"

Harry saw a diamond ring passed over to the girl.

It was a small stone, but genuine.

Evidently Charley was desperately in love.

Harry was now introduced as Young King Brady and Charley reeled off the story of the night's mishaps.

"Where do you s'pose they took them to?" he asked, looking at Jake.

"I know," was the brief reply.

"You will take us there?"

"Yaas, if you pay for it," drawled Jake.

"Don't I always pay?" cried the Chinaman, trying to appear offended.

"You bet," said Jake, "and you allus will."

"Ha, ha, ha!" screamed Sal. "Charley, don't you be a fool. You don't s'pose we are going to work for you for nuffin, say?"

Harry stepped in now.

Time was too precious to be wasted in this way.

"Look here, Jake," he said. "I'm running this business, and I'm paymaster, too. We can get along without your help first rate. Twenty dollars is all you'll get if you guide us to the place you have in mind. You can take it or leave it—see?"

"I hain't talking to you," growled Jake. "I'm doing business with Mr. Chow."

But Charley came to the rescue nobly.

"No, Jake," he said. "Mr. Brady is boss this time. I haven't anything to say."

"Put up the team for us," said Harry, "and while you are doing it you can think over my offer. It will be a case of take it or leave it—see?"

Jake led the horses away, growling and muttering to himself.

Charley in the meantime had gone into the hut with Sal.

"Come, this is slow business," thought Young King Brady. "What in the world am I to do to hurry matters along?"

CHAPTER V.

OLD KING BRADY'S BIG BLUFF.

Before Charley Chow left the Hemlock Hill mine he called Old King Brady aside and said:

"If the men come some white man will be with them, and I can't tell who, but whoever it is give him this paper and it will be all right."

Then he put into the old detective's hand a torn slip of red paper with Chinese characters on it, laundry style.

This Old King Brady had occasion to use along about three o'clock.

Up to that time there had been strictly nothing doing, but now Tom Fung, the guard at the eastern end of the mine, came hurrying into the house, where Old King Brady sat reading.

"Dley come, boss!" he cried.

"Who come?" demanded the detective, putting away his newspaper.

"Chinamen. Dlese new men comee work in de mine."

"Oh," said Old King Brady. "I understand. Well, let them come right along."

"Nothing to say?" demanded Fung, doubtfully.

"Nothing to say, except what I just now said. Let them come right along."

Fung stood back up the valley.

Looking in that direction Old King Brady saw a pair of big mining wagons loaded down with Chinese.

Fung had halted them, it appeared, but now they came on.

There were forty Chinamen altogether, twenty to each wagon, ten seated on a side.

Both the drivers were whites, and that the others were smuggled Chinks was evident enough.

The middle of the wagon was piled high with boxes and bundles of the usual strange Chinese patterns.

As the wagons drove up there was a tremendous chattering amongst the occupants.

The driver of the foremost wagon was a long-legged young fellow who looked half scared out of his wits as Old King Brady appeared at the door.

"Gee whiz! What am I up against?" he exclaimed. "I know you."

"Well," replied Old King Brady, "who am I then?"

"That ar' New York detective, Old King Brady."

"Right; but if you expect to get into trouble on that account you need have no fear. Cast your eye over this."

Old King Brady produced his red laundry ticket.

"That's all straight so far as it goes," said the driver, fitting the torn paper to another similar piece and finding that the two matched, "but whar's Mr. Chow?"

"He has gone away. He has left me in charge."

"Gee! That's something like leaving an old Tom cat to look after a nest of fine, fat young birds, isn't it?"

"Not in this case. Listen. There has been another raid here."

"Gee! Them man hunters? Say, they didn't get Charley Chow, I hope."

"No; he's all right."

"Them three rich Chinks what was stopping hyar, what about them?"

"Well, they were captured. I'm working for Chow. He

told me to say to you to go right ahead just as you would if he was here. Do it. I shan't interfere with you."

"That's all right, but I've only seen one Chink around hyar so far. Oh, thar comes another. It's Gim Look!"

"The Chinamen are all gone except Gim Look and his partner, Tom Fung."

"Caught by them man hunters?"

"Yes."

"Too blame bad."

"It does seem hard to lose a fine batch of Chinamen after you have had all the trouble and risk of running them over the line."

"Don't it? But say, I hope you don't go to buttin in on my end of the business, old man."

"I have told you once that I have nothing to do with your end of the business."

"Waal, I dunno."

"What's your name?"

"Waal, I reckon it's Lon Toomey, and I hain't ashamed of it, nuther."

"Go right ahead with your work, Toomey, and if you want any help call on me."

Old King Brady now returned to the little room where he had been sitting reading by the fire.

He felt that he had made a discovery.

Lon Toomey's face was a poor one for keeping secrets; at least so the shrewd old detective thought.

"This man and his partner have been playing a double game as sure as fate," he said to himself. "He was terribly taken aback when he saw me. Now to see what is to be his next move."

With this idea in mind another might have gone out and tried to get next to the two drivers.

But Old King Brady knew human nature better.

If they are loyal to the Chinamen who are paying them they will leave me alone," he said to himself. "If, on the other hand, they are playing the double game, and I think they are, they will come butting in here in a very few minutes now."

He was right.

The wagons were unloaded, the Chinamen and their belongings being disposed of in a big barrack of a house nearer the mine.

Half an hour later every man jack of the newcomers was busy at something either in the mine or on the outside under the direction of Gim Look.

They had changed their Chinese costumes for ordinary working clothes also; these, of course, Gim Look must have had on hand.

Given the sudden entrance of a bunch of secret service men now, it would be a hard matter to swear that these Chinks were new arrivals.

As for their papers, the smuggled ones are usually provided with false papers in Canada before attempting to cross the line.

All this Old King Brady watched from the windows of the main house.

Then he stirred the fire and settled down to read again, waiting for Lon Toomey.

In a few minutes a knock was heard at the door.

"Come in!" called Old King Brady, who had seen the man pass the window.

Lon came shuffling in.

"Say," he began, "I want to understand more about this hyar business. I'm not looking for trouble, neither is my partner. What's it all mean?"

More than ever this man, to Old King Brady's notion, seemed to give himself away.

"I'll risk it," he thought. "I have no time to make long talk. I'll throw him a bluff right now."

"It means that you fellows have played your double game once too often," he said, aloud. "You are killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Indeed, I guess it's already dead."

Lon Toomey gave a start.

His face paled, showing him up for the coward he really was.

"What do you know?" he demanded.

"A lot, and have more still to learn. You fellows are trying to sit on two stools at once, isn't that so?"

Lon seemed to swallow hard.

"Look here," he drawled. "I've heard a lot about you and your work, Mr. Brady. If any other feller had made that ar' remark to me he wouldn't be sitting thar staring at me now—see?"

"Oh, that be blowed!" laughed Old King Brady. "I'm not afraid of your big talk. For you to turn on me would be madness. A dozen would spring up where I went down. You had better find out how the case really stands before you make any more of that cheap talk."

"What do you mean?"

"That you better come in out of the rain."

"What!"

"That you had better get on the band wagon, if you like that better."

"I wist you'd explain yourself, old man."

"The explanation may be made in a very few words. You are working for two sets of Chinamen, that's all."

Toomey gave a gasp and dropped into a chair.

His face was white with fear or rage.

"It can't be that he is too afraid of me?" thought Old King Brady. "He's the kind to draw on me right now if that was so. What, then, ails the man?"

It came to him on the instant that Toomey believed himself to have been betrayed.

So he sat still awaiting developments.

"Who gave the snap away?" asked Toomey, after a moment.

"Never mind that."

"Somebody has given it away, all right."

"Well, as you see, how else would I know all this?"

"That's so."

"Now don't imagine that I am alone in all this, Toomey," said Old King Brady, earnestly. "There are

others behind me. You had better come over on our side and make a big stake rather than stick as you are, for I tell you, man, somebody is going to wind up in the penitentiary, that's sure."

"Somebody will wind up bored full of holes if I can find out who gave the snap away, that's sure."

"That's your business. Mine is to get back those three rich Chinks. Listen, Toomey, there will be a big reward coming. I'm holding the door open if you want to come in and get your share."

"Say, Brady?"

"Well?"

"Just one question."

"Out with it."

"Has my partner, Si Brown, anything to do with this?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Then all right. Just give me time to talk it over with him."

"Do so. Understand, it is known that you fellows have been running in Chinks for the On Leong Society and then raiding this mine masked and stealing them again, for which the Hip Sings have paid you. Of course, we know that you sell these men to the Secret Service Border Patrol for so much a head, in return for which they allow you to run in Hip Sings without interference. Isn't all this so?"

Lon Toomey twisted in his chair, but made no reply.

"Come out with it!" cried Old King Brady. "We are all alone here. You needn't be afraid to admit it—see?"

"It's true, then."

"As I thought. There's just one thing for you to do, Toomey. Come over on my side. Let us take these Chinks, raid the Hip Sing hold-out and get those three prisoners back."

"Brady, we'd be killed if we did it."

"You'll be jailed if you don't. Now come, man; don't look at me that way. If I don't turn up at Helena at a certain time there are those who will be after your whole outfit. It is simply useless to think of killing me."

"I guess you're about right," growled Lon. "Just wait here a few minutes while I talk it over with Si."

Lon Toomey went out then.

Old King Brady, throwing fresh wood on the fire, lit a cigar and sat down to smoke.

"So much for throwing a good bluff," he said to himself. "That fellow believes I know everything and, thanks to his credulity, I do know a good deal. We'll fall in with me, I'm sure."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE IN THE FOREST.

When there is love-making on hand business usually has to wait.

Young King Brady found it so that morning.

Jake came back in a few minutes, but Charley Chow remained inside the hut talking with Sal.

"Are you going to take up with my offer, Jake?" asked Harry.

"No, I'm not," growled the man.

"So? And why not?"

"'Cause I can get more money out of the Chink."

"You heard what he said."

"I don't care a blame about what he said. I know what he'll do."

Harry chafed in vain.

Twice he went to the door and called to Charley to come out, but it was no use, until after half an hour he came out of his own accord.

Chow had now changed his appearance.

His fine clothes and diamonds were gone and he was dressed like an ordinary Chinaman, with a false pigtail coiled under his hat.

Jake, who had gone into the hut some time before, came out after him.

"Are you ready to get down to business?" asked Young King Brady, impatiently.

"Yes, I am," replied Charley. "Me and Jake settled it. Now we go."

It was one of those cases where the only thing to do is to submit to the inevitable.

Harry saw that plain enough.

"We go now," said Jake.

"Hold on," put in Young King Brady, "I want to see you alone a few minutes, Chow."

"All right," said Charley. "Come ahead!"

"They walked away a short distance, Sal standing in the doorway grinning at them.

"What have you been doing, Chow?" asked Harry. "We came out to follow that trail. Have you left your diamonds and money with that girl?"

"Sure, Brady. She is my good friend."

"She and her father will rob you, surest thing."

"No."

"Have you ever done such a thing before?"

"Yair. They all right."

"Well, then, it is your own business, not mine."

"That's so. Jake will take us into the woods. He says he knows where the man hunters live."

"I don't doubt it. Why have you changed your clothes?"

"I often change clothes here."

"Oh, I see. When you go after your Chinese friends across the line."

"Yair. Jake make lots of money out of me. He's all right."

"Are we going among Chinamen then?"

"Some Chinamen, some white men—see?"

"I think I understand."

"I get you Chinese clothes, too, so you want them, Harry."

"No. I will go as I am. I thought I was running this business, but I see that I am not."

"That's all right. I can do better with Jake than you can."

"Let it go so. I'll go along and help all I can, but remember, I don't pretend to be bossing the job."

"All right! All right. Shall we go?"

"Yes, now."

They started five minutes later, Jake with a fine Winchester slung over his shoulder leading the way.

Harry was perplexed and a good deal disgusted.

He was not accustomed to have his authority taken away in this fashion, but when one comes to deal with the Chinese one never knows what to expect.

Jake led the way directly into the woods, following an overgrown path.

"You have been here before?" Harry asked Chow.

"Not here," was the reply.

"Where are we supposed to be going, anyhow?"

"Well, it's like this, Brady. There are other people doing business in these woods."

"What business, smuggling Chinks over the border?"

"Yair."

"Of course you are in the same business. You need not admit it—I know."

"Well?"

"All right. But these others, they are Highbinders?"

"Yair."

"As I supposed. Now we are getting at it. You don't know where their place is?"

"No. Jake knows. That is where he take us now."

"Does Jake work for the Highbinders and your crowd, too?"

"Oh, no; he only work for On Leong."

"That's your crowd?"

"Yair."

Young King Brady had about thrashed the subject dry.

The situation seemed plain enough.

"Old King Brady was right, then," Harry thought.

"Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow have probably been carried off by the Highbinders. We are doing the best we can, I suppose, if only we can trust this man Jake."

Harry was keen to notice the direction they were taking.

He saw that it was leading him toward the trail, providing it went straight into the forest.

Two miles were covered and then they came suddenly upon a wood road which ran southeast and northwest.

Here the trail was plainly marked.

Anybody could see that many mounted men had recently gone that way.

"Thar you be," said Jake, pointing to the hoofprints.

"Them will be the parties you are looking for, I reckon."

"You see!" cried Charley. "I told you Jake would bring us right. Come on, come on!"

"Not for mine, Chow," said Jake. "I agreed to show you the way, and that's all I shall do."

"You say you go with us and show us the place."

"No, Chow. I won't go," replied Jake, solemnly. "I stick to my contract. I play squar' with you. Follow that trail and two miles from here you will come to a house where Chinks sometimes live. Mebbe it's the place you want and mebbe it hain't. One thing sure, I shan't butt in."

"All right, all right!" replied Charley, evidently afraid to offend the father of his best girl.

"When you come back to my house you will find your diamonds and your money all safe, Chow, same as you always have done," continued Jake. "I go now. So-long."

"So-long!" cried Chow, and as Jake walked back into the woods he looked after him admiringly.

"He square man, Brady," he said.

"I hope so," replied Harry. "You say you have left money with him before?"

"Yair; lots of times."

"As much as you left this time?"

"No; not so much."

"So? And your diamonds, you have left those with him before?"

Charley put on a queer look.

"No; I don't leave diamonds with him before," he said.

"But it's all right."

"I am glad you are so sure."

"Course I'm sure. I fix it up with Sal. We get married now just as soon as we finish up this job."

Harry said nothing.

He knew that the average Chinaman is at once the most suspicious and most credulous of mortals.

"This is the time that pair mean to skin him," he said to himself; "but I don't suppose I could have done anything about it even if I had tried."

It was plain enough to him that Jake Soper was working for both sets of Chinese smugglers. He wondered how Charley Chow could be so blind.

They pushed on for fully two miles, coming in the end to a small clearing, in the midst of which, upon rising ground, stood a long, low log hut.

The place wore a deserted look.

Harry halted, and, holding Charley Chow back within the tree line, said:

"We must look out now. We don't want to get into trouble."

"No," replied the Chinaman; "we don't want to get into trouble. Yair, that's so."

"Have you ever been here before? Honest, now! You must tell me the whole truth, if I am going to help you."

"No; honest. I never was here before," replied Charley. "Yair; that so."

"That place looks as if there was nobody living in it, but we can soon find out. Let's watch for a few minutes now."

They watched for ten minutes without speaking a word.

Not a sound was heard. No one appeared in or about the hut.

The windows were concealed behind heavy wooden shutters; no smoke came from the chimney; in front was a pile of rubbish, ashes, empty vegetable cans, etc.

Young King Brady's eyes roamed in every direction, but nothing was seen to lead him to suppose that there was a human being anywhere about.

And yet the hoofmarks led into this clearing.

But where can they tie up their horses? I see no barn," he said to himself.

"I'll go ahead and have a nearer look," he said at last. "You had better stay here, Chow."

This was merely to test the Chinaman's courage.

"Oh, no, Brady. I not afraid," was the reply. "I go, too."

"Come on, then. We have got the trail, anyhow. It may lead us past this place."

When they entered the clearing they discovered that the trail, instead of striking across the open, led around the edge of the woods.

"That's odd," said Harry. "We must take it up later. Now I'm going for the house."

There was no well-defined path leading to the house.

The ground was strewn with dead hemlock boughs and there were stumps everywhere.

As the two picked their way over and around these obstructions side by side, they were suddenly treated to a surprise which brought matters to a crisis at once.

They were in the act of walking over a bunch of dead boughs and leaves within a hundred yards of the door, when suddenly there was a crash, and down they went, landing in a pit about twelve feet deep.

It was all so sudden that Harry almost lost his breath.

Charley Chow gave a yell and swore in Chinese.

"A man trap!" gasped Young King Brady. "Now we are in for it! Everything is going wrong to-day."

It certainly seemed so.

Harry expected to hear men rushing out upon them now, but there was not a sound.

"What can we do?" growled Charley.

"It's easy enough to get out," was the reply. "I can stand on your shoulders or you on mine. I think we can either one of us get a grip on the edge of this hole so."

Young King Brady thought so, but he was mistaken. The hole proved to be too deep.

"We are stuck then," growled Charley, as Harry jumped down off his shoulders.

"It looks so."

"What shall we do?"

"Wait a minute. There must have been some reason for digging this pit."

"Reason enough. So anybody come to house they tumble in it."

"That may not be all the reason. Wait a minute, Charley. There is something to be found here, perhaps."

Harry began carefully examining the side of the pit.

It was partly earth and partly stone.

It seemed as if the pit had been dug alongside of a ledge.

Harry went all over the stone with the greatest care and suddenly astonished Chow by turning up a secret passage.

Here embedded in the rock was an iron ring so artfully concealed that only a close examination revealed it.

Harry pulled this ring out of its hiding-place.

It was attached to a staple, and when he gave it a harder pull a sizeable section of the rock swung out with it, revealing a passage behind which led directly toward the house.

Here, lying in the passage, was a fifteen-foot ladder which, under the circumstances, was just the thing they wanted, or would have been a moment before. Young King Brady was not so anxious to use it now.

"What about this?" he exclaimed. "A way out of the house in case the detectives come, I suppose."

"That's it!" grinned Charley. "The Hip Sing no fools."

"Shall we follow this thing up, Charley? I think we had better."

"Yair; I say so."

"There can't be more than one or two in the house, anyway. If there were they would have been out after us before this. Come on."

Having made up his mind to risk the attempt, Harry went right at it.

Crawling into the passage with his little electric dark-lantern, Charley following him, he soon came to a wooden door set in the earth at a point where there had been a considerable opening hollowed out and where they could easily stand upright.

There was apparently no way of opening the door on this side; neither latch nor knob were to be seen.

This bore out the theory that the passage was intended as a means of quick and secret retreat from the house.

"Hold on," said Charley, as Young King Brady, from one of his secret pockets, produced a small burglar's jimmy, a sectional affair which he proceeded to fit together. "What you going to do?"

"To open this door."

"So they kill us if they catch us, Brady."

"We had better listen first. We must be under the house now."

They listened for a few moments, but not a sound could be heard.

"It's safe enough," said Harry. "There is no one there."

He proceeded then to apply the jimmy to the door.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD KING BRADY STARTS HIS RAID.

Old King Brady sat smoking for the best part of an hour before he saw Lon Toomey again.

By this time he was beginning to hope that Harry might soon return.

But no one had entered the valley since the coming of the Chinamen, and it was now getting well on toward one o'clock.

"I must be looking about for dinner," thought the old detective. "I suppose I can go out and stir those fellows up. Just the same I hate to. I would far rather have them come to me."

He knew that in a way his situation was a desperate one.

It had been an easy matter for one as shrewd as Old King Brady to see through this business and to identify as members of the man hunting gang the very men employed by Charley Chow and his people to run Chinamen in from Canada.

But this done here he was alone and at the mercy of two treacherous scoundrels who had only to raise the cry of "detective" to send the whole mob of these forty Chinamen down upon him.

"My life won't be worth a rush if they try it," thought Old King Brady.

But he had been prepared for this right along.

If any such attempt was made his intention was to make a beeline for the back door and lose himself on Hemlock Hill.

Rising now, Old King Brady walked to the end window of the long room and looked out upon the mine yard.

He could see the Chinamen moving about carrying baskets of ore and attending to other duties, but not a sign of Lon Toomey or his partner could he discover.

"Beautiful scheme, the running of this mine," thought Old King Brady. "For shrewd business methods commend me to a Chink."

"Here they take up with an abandoned mine," he added half aloud, "and as their real business is smuggling their countrymen, they get their labor for nothing. They make these fellows work for weeks and months together, no doubt, and never pay them a cent. No doubt it all ran beautifully till the Highbinders started in the business and bribed their white allies to turn man hunters and run back the very Chinks they have just run in."

And all this was quite true, as the old detective was afterward to learn.

"I must give it up," he now said. "I'll go out and see what's in the wind."

He had waited the limit and the reward of his patience was right at hand.

Just as he was buttoning his coat he saw Lon Toomey come into view.

He walked straight toward the long house, and in a moment was at the door.

When he entered he found Old King Brady reading the paper by the fire.

"I'm back again, boss," he said.

"I see you are," was the reply. "I thought you were never coming. Well, what's the word?"

"I've talked the matter over with my partner. We have

agreed that the best thing we can do is to stand in with you."

"Right. You are very wise. Now to business. I propose to capture this whole Highbinder outfit. Does that mean that I've got to capture your gang—excuse me, bunch—too?"

"Not necessarily. Perhaps yes. But how are you going at it?"

"I want you to lend me your forty Chinks."

"You can have them; but say, we can't stand for facing our bunch, as you call it. That would mean death to us, surest thing."

"I don't ask it of you. Tell me where to find the Highbinders and where I am to find these three kidnapped Chinks, which, I suppose, is the same place. Guide me there, if you will, and I'll do the rest."

"They have two hold-outs up in the woods close to the line. We'll guide you to the nearest. If they are not there you will have to push on about three miles to the other. I can't tell just where they are to-day."

"Right. Do as you say and meet me in Helena after it's all over and you get your cash."

"How much?"

"That depends upon what I get. I'll guarantee you a thousand apiece. If there is more in your share you can bank on it that you will get that, too."

"Well, we are going to go it," said Toomey, decidedly.

"We know the reputation of the Bradys. You are bound to get there in the end."

"Settled. One question more; these two Chinks who were left behind, they are not in with your gang?"

"No."

"Still another. You people mean to come down after this bunch of Chinks?"

"Yes. You see, I am giving it to you straight."

"When?"

"Not until to-morrow night."

"Then we have plenty of time to work in. I am going out now to see what I can do."

Old King Brady then left the house with Toomey and looked up Gim Look.

"I must wait for Harry and Charley Chow," he thought, "but they surely will return before dark. I'll sound this fellow first, though."

He found Gim Look in the kitchen attached to the long house, where two of the new arrivals were busy preparing dinner.

"Come here, Gim," he said. "I want to speak to you."

The Chinaman followed Old King Brady outside, Lon Toomey going off to join his partner.

"Charley Chow don't come back," said the old detective. "I don't know what keeps him. Suppose he don't come before dark? I shall think that the man hunters catch him then."

Gim Look's face showed his alarm.

"Mebbe dey come soon. Mebbe dey get catchee alleddy!" he cried.

"See here," said Old King Brady, "I know where these man hunters live. If Charley and my partner don't come back by three o'clock I will take these new Chinamen and these two men who brought them in and go look for them."

"So? Dlat be good."

"You can tell these men that the detectives are coming after them; that we must go and fight them. You think they will go?"

"Yair. Me can make dem go, so me talkee right."

"And you must go, too, Look."

"No, no! Me must stay and watch mine."

"Suppose the man hunters come? They will get you sure. Then I shall need someone to talk to these men."

"Dlat so. Den I go."

"You talk to them. Make them understand."

Gim Look promised.

Old King Brady joined Lon Toomey and Si Brown then.

He found the latter to be a particularly stupid fellow, who was entirely under the influence of his side partner.

From Toomey he heard that the gang of man hunters only numbered twenty-five, and other important points were learned.

One question Old King Brady did not ask, and that was the names of the gang, nor did Toomey tell.

It would have been useless to ask for such information, of course.

Dinner was served and the afternoon wore away.

Old King Brady was now beginning to be seriously concerned about Harry and Charley Chow, for it had been understood that they were to take no risks, and were to return before dark, in any event.

In the meantime Gim Look had worked the Chinaman up to the point where they were ready to do anything Old King Brady wished.

Lon and Si seemed perfectly sincere.

By four o'clock Lon stood ready to swear that Young King Brady and Charley Chow had been captured.

"It is only ten miles to the first hold-out," he said, "and even if they went on to the second they ought to have been back here long ago. If you are going you ought to go."

Old King Brady thought so, too.

Lon was getting very nervous. It seemed wisest to use him while he could.

"We'll make a start, anyhow," thought the old detective. "If Harry is on his way back we shall meet him. If not, we shall be ready to jump on these fellows soon after dark."

So the Chinamen were bundled into the big wagons again, chattering noisily among themselves.

What they really thought of the situation Old King Brady could only guess.

All he knew was that he was starting out on one of the strangest raids he had ever attempted.

Truth told, he felt very nervous about the whole business.

But it seemed better to make a move than to lie idle.

"If I hold off much longer these two fellows will change their minds and go back to their friends," Old King Brady said to himself, "and that will surely mean another raid on the mine."

As they advanced up the valley Old King Brady rode ahead, following the trail.

This was not quite so easy as it had been with Harry, for Charley Chow's wheel tracks were mixed up with it; but the old detective is an old hand at the bellows when it comes to this sort of business, and he traced the hoof-marks up to the forest line, where he was puzzled to find that the wheel tracks went off to the left.

"What about this?" he demanded, addressing Lon Toomey, when the first wagon load of Chinks came lumbering up.

"What's the trouble?" demanded Lon, reining in. "Our way lies through the woods. It's a blind trail. This is as far as the wagons can go."

"How far to the hut you told me about?"

"A little over three miles."

"The wagon trail goes to the left. See, that is the way Charley Chow and my partner must have gone."

"I don't know anything about that," replied Lon. "The only person living in that direction is an old trapper named Jake Soper, who lives alone in the woods with his daughter. They may have gone there."

"Dlat it," put in Gim Look. "Charley him mally Jake Soper gal some dlay."

"That's where they went, then," said Old King Brady, puzzled to know what he ought to do.

"This is the worst case ever," he thought. Upon my word, I'm all twisted. What on earth shall I ever do with all these Chinks if I get on the wrong trail?"

But it remained for Lon Toomey to put the finishing touch to the old detective's perplexity.

"This is as far as me and my partner can go, Cap," he said. "It's getting dark. We have to get to Blackfoot with the wagons by morning. We propose to leave them there and jump to Helena. Our job is done when we show you the trail inside the tree line here."

Old King Brady raised no objection.

He proposed to keep faith with these men, for it was evident that they meant to do as much by him.

So he dismounted and Toomey led him through the bushes, showing him how the underbrush had never been cut away, and that once inside this seeming barrier there was a wood road leading on into the forest.

While this was going on the Chinks, who had been ordered out of the wagon by Gim Look, stood huddled together talking and gesticulating.

They were an excited lot, and when Old King Brady came back he felt as he looked them over that he had a big contract on his hands.

"We go now," said Lon. "Wish you good luck. We've played fair with you, old man. Look out you do the same with us."

"Rely upon it," answered Old King Brady. "I will meet you in Helena if I live."

But it was with many misgivings that he saw the wagons disappear in the fading light.

"If I only had Harry and Charley Chow to help me it would be easy enough," he said to himself; "but if I don't find them what in the world am I to do with all these Chinks?"

CHAPTER VIII.

SÁL MAKES THINGS LIVELY FOR CHARLEY CHOW.

Young King Brady, inserting the jimmy in the crack of the door, with no little difficulty pried it open, tearing away the woodwork around the lock.

Here were stairs leading up to a trapdoor overhead.

Harry climbed to the top and listened under the trap. For a moment all was still, and then he suddenly heard someone speak.

The words were a jumble of sound.

"Chinese talk, sure," thought Harry.

He backed down the stairs to the door, where Charley stood waiting with the lantern.

"There is someone up there," he whispered. "I think they are your people, Chow."

"Hello! Yair! Say, what we do? Mebbe they Highbinders," was the reply.

"Crawl up there and listen. We don't want to make any mistake, now."

Charley went up the stairs and listened for some moments under the trap.

Then he came noiselessly down again and whispered:

"Say, Brady, they Chinamen, all right. I can't tell what they say, though."

"It's hard to know what to do. Is the trap fastened down?"

"I did not try it. That belongs to you."

"It does, and I ought to have done it. I'll do it now."

Harry went upstairs again and gently put his shoulder against the trap.

It was fastened, all right. Harry was able to determine that two bolts held it down.

Again he listened.

Two voices were talking in Chinese, but heard through the boards they had a muffled sound.

"It may cost us our lives if I attempt to force this trapdoor," thought Harry. "I must try some other plan."

He returned to Charley Chow again and said:

"We must go back. We'll go up to the house and see what discoveries we can make on the outside."

They retreated to the pit then, and, placing the ladder, climbed up to the clearing.

Here everything still wore the same air of desertion.

"We ought to be getting back," said Harry. "I prom-

ised Old King Brady that I would return before three o'clock if I possibly could."

"You can't go till we find out who is in that house," said Charley.

"I don't intend to. We won't go till we are through our work, that's sure."

"I want to get back as bad as you. I am expecting a lot of new men to come and work in the mine, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know," thought Harry, "but he made no answer.

Drawing his revolver, he now started for the house, Charley Chow trotting on behind.

It seemed quite certain that the place was unguarded.

They reached the house, tried the doors front and rear and even attempted to force open the heavy wooden shutters which concealed the windows.

Everything was as tight as a drum, and, although they made considerable noise, no sound reached them from within.

"Chances are the fellows we heard talking are tied up as prisoners," said Harry, as he and the Chinaman stood discussing this.

Charley thought so, too, and it was decided to break in.

Harry chose one of the back windows.

His jimmy readily turned the trick and the shutter flew back.

The window-sash inside was not fastened down, and in a moment they stood in the kitchen.

There was no one to be seen, but the sound of heavy breathing could be heard from the adjoining room.

Harry peered through the door, Charley looking over his shoulder.

Here, lying on the floor half dressed, with an opium layout between them, were two Chinamen, both sound asleep.

"Know them, Charley?" breathed Young King Brady.

Charley tiptoed into the room and had a look at their faces.

He then came back into the kitchen and, closing the door, whispered in great excitement:

"Sure I know them, Brady. How can it be they are here?"

"Well, who are they?"

"Highbinders from Frisco. Wing Dock, Men Fun their names! Someone play me false. How can they be here?"

Charley was evidently sincere.

He told Harry then that these men were prominent in the Highbinders' society in San Francisco.

He added that he had never known of the existence of this hidden house, nor that the Highbinders were working along that part of the Montana border.

His excitement kept increasing.

"I see all now," he said again and again. "These man hunters work for the Highbinders; they steal my people and get pay from two sides, from the Highbinders and from the border detectives. Yes, yes!"

"Come on! The prisoners are here, no doubt," said Harry. "Now we must get to work."

There were no other rooms on that floor, and those on the floor above were all unoccupied.

Harry, upon their return to the kitchen, started to look for a trapdoor.

He found it in a minute under a square of oilcloth which lay spread out underneath the table.

It was fastened down by a counter-sunk bolt on their side, and in a minute they had it up.

A ladder led down into a cellar below.

"Anyone down there?" called Charley.

"Yes, yes! Help! Help!"

Two voices then shouted in English and, besides, there was a gabble of Chinese.

Young King Brady, to his infinite satisfaction, knew that at last he had accomplished his purpose, and that the lost ones were found.

And so it proved.

Climbing down the ladder he found Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow lying bound upon the earth floor of a small cellar.

Such a babble of Chinese as followed Harry never heard.

All four Chinamen seemed determined to talk at once, and all hands seemed to have forgotten their English.

Harry contented himself with helping Charley to cut the prisoners free, and then stood aside until they had talked themselves out.

Hip Lee was the first to recover his English.

He came up to Harry and shook hands.

"Good boy, Blady!" he exclaimed. "You sabe my life. Me pay you big money for dis."

"Settle your bills with Old King Brady," replied Harry. "What we want now is to get out of here."

"Yes, yes! We go now."

Hip Lee started for the ladder.

"We better go the other way—yes?" Charley asked.

"Decidedly," replied Harry, "but I'll close up things first. It may be some time before they wake up and get onto the fact that we have been here, and the longer we can stave the discovery off the better."

He went up to the kitchen, and, securing the shutter on the inside, put the oilcloth in place and the table over it.

Then raising the trapdoor carefully so as not to disturb the oilcloth, he crawled under it and, dropping it into place, returned to the cellar.

The trapdoor in the cellar floor was then opened and they descended to the secret passage and so gained the clearing by way of the pit.

"Here we are, safe at last!" exclaimed Harry. "Now to get back as quick as possible to Hemlock Hill mine."

"We must go for my horses," said Charley. "We go to Soper's first."

It seemed necessary, and Young King Brady made no objection, but something seemed to tell him that the best

way was to follow the man hunters' trail directly out of the forest.

They hurried back now by the way they had come.

Harry got hold of Hip Lee and tried to learn what had happened the night before.

The Chinaman's story was a muddled one.

It appeared, however, that the three had been attacked by Charley Chow's men while they slept.

They were blindfolded and dragged out of their beds.

After being hurried along in the cold over a rough road they were tied to horses and wound up in the hut, where the bandages about their eyes were removed.

As for the rest, Harry could not get much out of Hip Lee, except that their captors were Highbinders and had sent a man to Helena to post letters to the friends of all three prisoners demanding "big money," as he called it, for their release.

Having learned this much, Harry stopped his questioning, for Hip Lee seemed to fight shy of it; knowing that he was liable to arrest for smuggling Chinamen, he was evidently afraid to commit himself.

"If I can only get this bunch of Chinks safe back to the Governor it's all I ask," Harry said to himself.

He did not butt in again, but followed in the rear, Charley leading the way back to the hut.

One never can tell about a Chinaman.

Charley piloted them through to Soper's as easily as if he had been traveling the road for years.

Perhaps this was simply due to the great powers of observation which the Chinese as a rule possess, or perhaps he lied when he said that he had never been to the Highbinders' hut before.

Whichever it was Harry never knew, but in due time they turned up at Soper's hut.

Sal came out to greet them, but Jake was not in evidence.

"What! What! So you are back?" cried the girl; "and you rescued your friends! Good for you!"

But although she said this in a hearty sort of way, Harry could not believe she was sincere.

Charley Chow was in full feather now and began boasting.

"Of course I win out!" he cried. "Why not? I know my business. Where is your father, Sal?"

"He's gone up in the woods to look for a deer," was the reply.

"Well, I want my team."

"Get it yourself, then. I hain't a-harnessing horses for you."

"Oh, you're a daisy," said Charley. "I like my gal to be independent—yes! Brady, do you mind getting the horses harnessed while I change my clothes. It will save time, so."

Harry assented and started for the barn.

"Come on in," said Sal, holding the door wide open and beckoning to the three rich Chinks. "Come in and have a drink. Pop's got some fine whisky. I'll trot it out."

Harry left them to settle it among themselves and went around to the little barn in the rear of the cabin.

It was a crazy structure right in the woods.

Charley Chow's fine four-seated wagon stood in the yard and Harry found the horses safe inside.

He was just about to untie one of them when loud cries were heard in the direction of the house.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Revolvers were popping.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" Sal's voice was screaming. "Take him! Take him! That's Charley Chow! The fat Chink with the pug nose! As though I would marry such a looking thing as him!"

"Betrayed!" thought Harry. "I just knew how it would be!"

At the same instant he heard Jake Soper's voice outside the barndoor, which had blown to.

"The detective is in hyar!" Jake was saying. "This way, boys!"

Many footsteps were heard outside.

"It's little Brady. I'll toast him on the end of a pitchfork if I can once get hold of him," a harsh voice cried.

"Look out! He may shoot. He's armed, of course!" exclaimed another.

"Open that door! Come out of there, Brady, by the order of the committee!" a harsher voice roared out.

"I'm up against the man hunters now for fair!" thought Harry. "Is there no escape?"

Apparently there was no way out of the barn, except through the door.

Harry drew his revolver and stepped back into the cover of a stall.

"The first man who opens that door gets his dose," he said to himself. "This is what comes of trusting that girl. I knew well enough she would throw Charley down in the end!"

CHAPTER IX.

YOUNG KING BRADY FINDS HIMSELF ALL AT SEA.

Things were just as serious outside the barn as Harry had imagined.

Jake Soper and his daughter had indeed betrayed Charley Chow.

But this was merely because it came handy to do so.

This pair would have betrayed each other if either one could have been shown that it would be to his or her advantage so to do.

Sal had been playing fast and loose with Charley Chow for some time, working him for what she could get out of him in the way of presents.

If Charley had returned sooner it might have been all right, but as it was someone else had cut in ahead of him, and now all four Chinaman had fallen into the hands of

the gang of man hunters which had of late been making things so lively at Hemlock Hill mine.

Young King Brady guessed all this, and he stood at his wit's ends to know what to do.

"I'll have to jump some kind of a surprise on this bunch if I hope to escape," he said to himself, as he waited in the stall.

Just then the barndoor opened slightly and Jake Soper's ugly face appeared.

Bang!

Harry let fly.

He did not care to kill Jack offhand, so he sent the bullet whizzing over the rascal's head.

"Jumping jack-rabbits! He's in thar, all right!" gasped Jake.

Bang! went the barndoor.

"Now is my time," thought Harry.

The stairs leading to the loft were near and he shot up to the floor above.

Here there was a shuttered window in front, but no other way out.

Harry, dropping on his knees, pushed the shutter slightly open and peered down.

The yard was well crowded with a rough-looking gang. There were as many as twenty-five or thirty of them.

They were unmasked and looked like the ordinary run of border toughs.

Those near the barn were three in number, Jake Soper making four.

They had drawn to one side out of range of the door and were consulting together.

Over by the house Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow were being tied up, while several toughs stood around covering them with revolvers.

Charley Chow was already tied up and Sal was screaming:

"He lies when he says he gave me his diamonds to take care of! He never brought them here!" she cried.

This she repeated several times in a voice so shrill that it reached the barn.

Charley Chow seemed to be talking, too, but Harry could not hear what he was saying.

All at once a big, burly fellow who stood apart from the rest walked up behind Sal and caught her by the back hair.

"You'll tell whar them ar' diamonds be or go home with the man hunters, Sal Soper. That's so!" he shouted.

"Ow! Ouch! Help! Paw! Paw! He's a-killin' me!" shrieked Sal.

Jake made a rush for his screaming daughter, and at the same instant Harry, seeing that the attention of the others was drawn away from the barn, flung open the shutter and sprang out.

He was seen, of course, and the shots came flying after him as he dashed into the woods.

Gaining cover, he ran for all he was worth.

But he was not to be allowed to depart in peace.

The three men came after him shouting and calling to him to stop.

Several times they fired; one shot narrowly missed Harry's head.

He had not struck in on the trail by which they had come from the hidden house, but he expected to strike it later.

And right here he failed.

Soon the sounds made by his pursuers began to die away behind him.

Harry ran on, making as little noise as possible.

The woods grow more open as he advanced, underbrush disappearing but the trees growing very close together.

Into this wilderness Harry penetrated until he ceased to hear the men behind him.

Then producing his compass, he struck off to the south-east.

"This way ought to bring me out on the plain somewhere near the Hemlock Hill trail," he thought.

He pushed on, feeling certain that he was following somewhere near a straight line.

But everyone knows how easy it is to be deceived in that respect in a forest in the fading light.

Harry had learned the lesson before, but he learned it again now, for as darkness began to settle down upon him he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was not getting anywhere in particular.

He had allowed himself to forget his usual caution in the chagrin of his defeat.

"Will these infernal woods never come to an end?" he muttered. "I suppose I am going right, but——"

He drew his dark-lantern and consulted his compass. Then he knew how completely turned about he had become.

Instead of traveling in a southeasterly direction he was going almost due north, toward the Canada line.

"Come, come! This won't do! I'm stuck for fair!" he exclaimed aloud. "How long have I been going so, I wonder?"

He had been so lost in thought that he had scarcely realized the passage of time.

Consulting his watch now, he found that it was a good hour and a half since he left the barn.

"I'm away out of my course!" he muttered. "I think I stand a pretty fair show of putting in the night here in the woods, unless—heavens! What's that!"

It had grown much warmer and the wind was rising.

Now with the wind came strange sounds.

It seemed to Harry as if he could hear a hundred voices all talking at once, but far in the distance.

Then one particularly loud voice raised a shout and all was still.

"What can it mean? That mounted gang can hardly be near me?" thought Young King Brady. "I should have heard the noise of their horses if it was so."

He stood listening.

Queer sensations were taking hold of him.

Suddenly the sounds came again.

It was just a babel of voices all calling out in chorus.

As they died away, close behind Young King Brady came another cry as full of meaning as these were meaningless:

"Help! Help! Help! I'm lost! Help!"

It is wonderful how nervous a person can get when alone in the forest at night.

This appeal came so suddenly that Harry almost jumped in his tracks.

Of course, he recovered himself on the instant.

"So I am not the only one. There are others!" he said to himself.

"Hello! Hello there!" he shouted. "This way for another lost lamb. Hello—hello—hello!"

There was silence for a moment and then the voice called out:

"Friend, who are you?"

"Same to you, neighbor," replied Harry. "The question is, are you my friend or are you one who is going to do me if I try to help you out of your trouble?"

"You need have no fears of me," came the reply. "Even if you are one of Ike Burns' gang of man hunters I'll stand pat and say nothing if you will only show me the way out of these infernal woods."

"Names go!" answered Harry, hearing the man moving toward him.

"Well, then, I'm Jack Downey, of the Border Patrol. Look out now! I am heavily armed, and, although I'm not looking for trouble, I can make it if you go back on me!"

"No trouble coming here, officer!" shouted Harry. "We are in the same line of business."

"What! What!" came the answer. "Are you one of Captain Twitchell's men?"

"No. My name is Brady."

"Not Old King Brady?"

"Young ditto!"

"Good enough!"

The answer was accompanied by a laugh.

The man had been working his way in Harry's direction while this conversation was in progress and Young King Brady had been doing the same.

Now Harry flashed his dark-lantern.

"Oh, come, that is better!" was shouted.

They met in a minute.

Jack Downey proved to be a big, powerfully-built fellow with a heavy black beard.

He scanned Harry's face narrowly as he came up.

"Yes, you certainly do look like the pictures I have seen of the younger Brady," he remarked.

"I am the man."

"May I ask what you are doing here?"

"Same to you, Downey. This seems to be a dangerous kind of a country up around here. One can't be too much on their guard."

"Well, that's so."

"Suppose you show me your shield."

"Here you are."

"And here is mine. Now we should be mutually satisfied."

The two detectives shook hands.

"You talk about being lost, then so am I," said Harry; "but before we go any further in this business tell me if you heard those cries over there."

"I certainly did."

"What do you make of them?"

"I make a lot of Chinks out of them. Somebody is running a big bunch over the border."

"So? Are we near the border now?"

"I don't know where we are now, but as nearly as I can make out we ought to be about eight miles down in Montana. We want to get out of this."

"I do," said Harry.

He was thinking how much, or rather how little, of his business he ought to tell.

"I'll go strictly by the card," he said to himself. "I won't say a word about the smuggling end of Charley Chow's business, for it is none of mine."

So he quietly told how the Bradys had been hired by the Chinese miners at Hemlock Hill and how Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow had been carried off.

He told of the rescue and recapture, too. In fact, the only thing he omitted were the details which would have involved the Hemlock Hill Chinamen in man smuggling.

Downey listened without comment.

Then he broke out with:

"By thunder, I think you have solved a problem which has been puzzling us all!"

"How so?"

"This hidden house. We knew that there must be such a place somewhere, but we never could put our finger on it. I started out from our camp this morning to search for such a place. We are a new bunch of detectives, Brady. The old lot were grafting to beat the band, bleeding the Chink smugglers right and left, so we took their places. That's how I came to get twisted. I am used to the woods, all right, but not to the woods around here. Only for meeting you I should be in a sweet fix."

"Do you know this man Jake Soper?"

"Don't know him, but we have heard of him. He is a marked character. We have every reason to believe that he has been mixed up with the Chink smugglers this long time. You have had a narrow escape."

"And Charley Chow, do you know him?"

"Same with him. We have all heard of the man. I don't know him. Ike Burns' gang has been raising the deuce with his business. You see, they not only run in Chinamen, but they have been making a business of capturing them and handing them over to the Border Patrol. Of course, that's played out now, since Captain Twitchell took hold."

Harry wondered if it was, remembering what Charley Chow had told him of recent raids.

While this conversation had been going on he and Jack Downey had not been standing idle.

Harry had set his compass afresh and they had pushed on to the southeast.

Until now the voices had not made themselves heard again.

Just as Harry had begun to question the secret service man further about the new patrol, loud shouts were suddenly heard at no great distance away, a volley of rifle-shots instantly following.

Jack Downey stopped short.

"Say, they are at it!" he breathed. "They must be the man hunters up against our men!"

CHAPTER X.

OLD KING BRADY'S CHINESE RAIDERS.

As we know, Old King Brady was very far from finding Harry on his way back when Lon Toomey and his partner left him at the beginning of the forest trail.

As darkness would soon be upon them the old detective determined to push on to the first hold-out.

He had already questioned Gim Look closely, and he had no doubt that such a place really existed.

"If we can reach it before it is actually dark and make a stand there it is about all we can hope for," he said to himself.

So Gim Look was again called on to help, and the forty Chinamen were lined up in double file.

Look made a little speech to them and then the march began, Old King Brady, mounted, riding in advance.

The great difficulty was in keeping the Chinamen quiet.

As the shades of night began to gather over the forest they grew nervous, and no wonder, under the circumstances.

Not a word could one of them speak, according to Gim Look.

Twice they halted and set up a great outcry.

Old King Brady, turning on them, sternly ordered them to follow if they valued their lives.

Gim Look, translating, the strange procession moved on again.

Now, these were the voices which Harry and Jack Downey heard.

They were but a short distance away from the trail on the west, but a good deal to the north of Old King Brady's Chinese raiders.

When Harry again set his compass and started southeast they were drawing nearer to the band at every step.

But all unknown to himself, Harry was north of the cross-trail over from Jake Soper's, and had been from the start.

Along that trail was moving Ike Burns and his man hunters with their prisoners.

These were the men who had turned up at Soper's.

For some time Jake had been playing fast and loose with this man Burns, who was out for revenge now.

Harry did not stop to see the finish of the affair, but it ended in Sal giving up the diamonds and Charley Chow's roll.

The girl was then turned adrift, but Jake was captured and marched away a prisoner with the four Chinamen.

And it was this interesting band which was now moving along the cross-trail, all unconscious of the presence of Old King Brady and his Chinese raiders on the other trail, which was soon to intersect with them.

They were a tough gang, and, having tapped Jake Soper's store of whisky, which was no small one, all were pretty well charged with firewater.

They were mounted and came along talking boisterously and laughing at their own jokes.

The wind was with them, and the noise they made was blown out of the hearing of Harry and Jack Downey, but it reached Old King Brady's ears in time for him to prepare himself for what was to come.

This happened just as the old detective struck the cross-trail.

He halted instantly, and, calling to Gim Look, told him to halt his men, which was done.

"You hear them?" said the old detective.

"Yes, boss. Me hear."

"They are speaking English. Look!"

"Yes, boss!"

"Listen! They are half drunk. Go among the men. Tell them to be ready. I suppose they are all armed."

"Evelly man have him levolver, boss."

"Tell them to be careful how they use them, and not to shoot at all till we give the word."

Gim Look translated.

And Old King Brady knew enough of the Chinese character to feel certain that his commands would be obeyed implicitly unless the Chinks were seized with panic.

And now as the detective listened, words came to him on the wind.

He knew that the approaching gang were indeed the man hunters.

He caught words which told him that they had prisoners with them, and that one of them was Charley Chow.

It took Old King Brady but a moment to decide on his course of action.

"We must not give these fellows a ghost of a show," he thought. "The first thing is to dismount them; that is the surest way to see that their prisoners are left behind when they go on the run."

He accordingly ordered Gim Look to spread the Chinamen out behind the trees along the cross-trail.

It was quickly and noiselessly done.

On came the man hunters.

Old King Brady moved his horse to the middle of the cross-trail and sat waiting.

"Hello! Who in thunder are you?" cried the big man

who had attacked Sal Soper and who was now the first to come in sight.

"Good-evening, friend," called Old King Brady. "I have lost my way in the woods. Can you direct me to a house which ought to be near here where some Chinamen live?"

Ike Burns, for the big man was none other than the leader of this notorious band, clapped spurs to his horse and rode forward.

"I know you!" he shouted. "You are Old King Brady. You don't butt in on my biz, old man!"

Something like this Old King Brady had expected.

Instantly he threw up his revolver and fired at the horse, aiming directly between the eyes.

At the same moment he shouted the Chinese word for "fire," which he had taken care to obtain from Gim Look.

This started the battle.

Ike Burns' horse fell dead in his tracks, the head man hunter sprawling on the ground.

Out rushed the Chinamen, opening fire on the horses and some taking the man hunters for their targets, no doubt.

Such a howling and yelling Harry had never heard.

Fire was returned by the man hunters, but they only got in one round.

Nearly every horse went down.

Several men were severely wounded on both sides.

As for the rest, the gang showed themselves utter cowards, for they took to the woods, scattering in all directions, while the few horses which escaped went dashing up the long trail.

The Chinamen, mad with excitement, pursued them among the trees.

It seemed as if every man jack among them fancied that his fate depended upon chasing off this band.

As for Old King Brady, he met with trouble of his own at the start.

Tit for tat was the way it went.

Somebody shot the detective's horse and sent the old man rolling on the grass.

As the man hunters flew past him a dozen shots were aimed his way.

Unharmed, save for a good shaking up, Old King Brady managed to crawl in among the trees, where Harry and Jack Downey came upon him a few minutes later on.

"Great Scott, Governor! Are you responsible for all this!" Young King Brady exclaimed, for both he and Downey had supposed that the Border Patrol had been attacked by a lot of smuggled Chinese.

"Harry! You, my boy!" gasped the old detective. "Well, well! I've started this Chinese raid going, and now the question is how to stop my raiders. They will run clean over the border if something isn't done. Come! Help me now! Quick!"

It was no time for explanations.

The Bradys jumped out upon the battlefield.

Grim Look was the person wanted.

But this Chink had proved himself a good one to look out for No. 1 on a former occasion, so it was not surprising to find that he had disappeared now.

Worse still, the two horses upon which the prisoners had been tied were among the few which escaped.

Hip Lee and See Yup had gone by on one horse, while Han Kow and Jake Soper went on another.

Harry had seen this much, and he hurried to tell it.

Before Old King Brady had time to reply they came upon Charley Chow pinned down by his horse, which was stone dead.

Charley seemed to have forgotten his English. He was calling out in Chinese most vigorously:

"Brace up, here! Get hold of this horse! Altogether now!" Old King Brady cried.

They lifted the horse between them and succeeded in setting Charley free.

The halfbreed's worst wound seemed to be in his feelings.

He had not a scratch on him, nor was his leg even crushed, as it might well have been.

Recovering his English now, he began raving about his girl throwing him down, about his lost diamonds, his ten-thousand-dollar roll, etc.

Altogether he acted like a man who had gone insane.

"Stop all that talk!" broke in Old King Brady. "We want to get those Chinks together again. They will get lost in the woods. I don't know what to do."

The Chinamen could be heard crashing about among the trees, shouting to each other, waking the echoes of the night with their queer cries.

"Where did you pick up such a mob, Mr. Brady?" demanded the secret service man whom Harry had introduced to the old detective.

"They are workmen at the Hemlock Hill mine," was the reply.

"Oh, are they?" retorted Jack Downey, grimly. "There will be a lot of explanation required when we get down to it."

Old King Brady said nothing.

With the affairs of the Border Patrol he felt that he had no concern.

"Yair. They my men. I get them from Helena!" cried Charley, when Harry whispered to him who Jack Downey was.

"All right," said Downey. "We won't talk about that now. Get your force together if you can, Mr. Brady; first thing we know that gang will be coming back."

"I get 'em!" said Charley. "We must get 'em. They wander over into Canada if we don't bring them back."

He began to shout in Chinese.

Again and again he repeated the call.

In a moment there began to be results.

First to come in on the trail out of the woods was Gim Look, and several others followed him, but it was nearly half an hour before all the Chinamen came back.

No one had been killed by the random shots sent flying

in the darkness, it seemed, but several had been slightly wounded.

Old King Brady, leaving Charley to talk to his Chinks and bring them into some sort of order, took Harry and Jack Downey to one side.

"We want to have an understanding about this business," he said. "There must be no working at cross purposes. For my part, Mr. Downey, I will tell you just exactly where we stand."

Old King Brady then made a frank statement of his position.

Harry told what had happened to himself and Charley Chow.

Downey listened attentively to all this, and when they had finished he said:

"Now, gentlemen, as far as I am concerned, I don't want to interfere with you, and at the same time I don't want you to interfere with me. I was sent out by my chief to try to locate the hold-out of these man hunters if I could. Incidentally I was to arrest two notorious members of the Highbinders who have been bribing the men of the Border Patrol who have just been discharged. I guess I have located them, thanks to Harry here. Their names are Wing Dock and Men Fun!"

"And if you succeed in getting them and we turn up both hold-outs of this gang of man hunters you will be satisfied?" Old King Brady asked.

"That's right. I shan't say a word about these Chinks. It is none of my business. I didn't see them cross the border, if they did cross it."

"Same here," said Old King Brady. "That's a bargain, is it?"

"You may consider it so."

They shook hands on it and Harry went to explain the situation to Charley Chow, who had been anxiously watching them while they talked.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRADYS' ROUND-UP AT THE HIGHBINDERS' HUT.

It had been determined to push directly on to the log-house in the clearing and see what could be done toward helping Jack Downey out by capturing Wing Dock and Men Fun if they still remained there.

Not since the return of the Chinamen had a sound been heard to indicate that the man hunters had remained in the neighborhood.

"We ought to be able to finish this business up to-night if the second hold-out is not too far away," remarked Old King Brady. "We have got a big force of men here and they seem to be no cowards. We will push forward now."

The Chinks were then brought into line and the Bradys led the march along the trail.

Harry rode double with the old detective, the others following on foot, the Chinamen bringing up the rear.

"This is the queerest old raid we ever engaged in, Governor," remarked Harry, as they rode along.

"It certainly is," was the reply; "but you take my word for it, we are going to find it a very profitable one if we succeed in getting back the prisoners."

"It was a bad break of mine, letting them get away from me."

"I don't see how you could possibly have avoided it. You had no means of knowing that this man Burns and his gang of man hunters were to turn up at Soper's hut. When you found yourself up against them you could only do what you did."

"They would have killed me if they hadn't."

"I appreciate that. What do you think is the reason they captured this man Soper? After robbing his daughter of the money and diamonds she stole from Charley Chow it seems to me the quickest way would have been to put a bullet into him if they wanted to keep his tongue still."

"I haven't the least idea, Governor. When they were hunting me in the barn they seemed to be good friends enough."

They continued to talk until they came to the clearing.

There stood the log house, dark and gloomy, as Harry had seen it first.

At least it appeared to be dark as they looked at it from the distance, but when they drew nearer they could see light behind the heavy shutters streaming through the cracks here and there.

"There's someone in there," said Harry.

"We will dismount and try to see what we can turn up before we jump in on them," said the old detective.

Word was passed to the Chinamen to halt.

Jack Downey now joined them.

"Is that the place?" he asked.

"That's the place," replied Harry.

"So? Well, I have made one discovery, at all events. What's the programme?"

"First of all to see what trails we have here," replied Old King Brady. "Chow, pass the word to your people to remain absolutely silent."

Old King Brady now produced his dark-lantern and moved here and there over the ground.

"There is a fresh trail here. This is the way they came," he said, at last. "Here they divided also. The main bunch kept on north, following the edge of the clearing, others went to the house."

"There may be a big gang of them in there, in that case," said Downey.

"It is possible; Harry, you have covered this ground before. Get up there and reconnoiter. We will wait."

Harry was gone about ten minutes.

When he returned he announced that there were no horses in the barn behind the house.

"That seems to settle it," said Old King Brady. "Prob-

ably everything remains about as it was. There may be one or two of them stopping here, however."

The old detective thought for a minute, and then directing that no move should be made until his return, he mounted his horse and rode off along the trail which followed the wood line.

It soon took him out of the path and into a partially overgrown wood road.

This, before he followed it a quarter of a mile, brought him out on the shore of a shallow lake, which extended off in the darkness as far as he could see.

The trail ended abruptly at the lake.

These people must have a big flatboat of some sort for carrying their horses," thought Old King Brady. "Chances are their real hold-out is in some place entirely inaccessible. Lon Toomey never said a word about this lake. I see his game. He thought we could not get any further. He means to betray us, I'm afraid. Probably he had no objection to my bringing this bunch of Chinamen up here for the very good reason that the man hunters intended to do the same thing sooner or later, in any case."

For some time Old King Brady sat upon his horse pondering over the situation.

"Speed is what is needed to checkmate the plans of these fellows," he said to himself. "My raiders have given them one twist, and they will scarcely expect to see anything more of us before morning. If only I knew which side of the lake their hold-out was on."

But there was no way of determining, and the old detective now turned back.

He found everything quiet at the clearing.

When he asked Harry if he had seen or heard anything the reply was no.

"We will tackle the house now," said Old King Brady.

"Do we break in, or what?"

"We will surround it with Chinks, then you and I and Mr. Downey will go in by the secret passage."

"That will be as good a way as any, I think."

"It will be a sure way to prevent anyone from escaping out of the house."

Charley Chow was called in consultation and Old King Brady explained his plan.

Then Charley spread the Chinks all around the house. They moved as softly as so many mice.

The Bradys and Jack Downey watched all the while, but no one appeared at the door of the hut.

"Time for us to get on the move now, brother Downey," said the old detective.

"Right," replied Jack. "I'm ready."

They pushed on to the pit.

The ladder was still in place.

"They never tumbled to the way we got our prisoners," said Harry. "No one has been here since we left."

"Probably they thought you broke in by the window, as you did, and that you took your prisoners out by the same way," the old detective replied.

"But come on!" he added. "We want to push things through."

Harry was wondering if anybody had shot the bolt of the upper trapdoor as they stole on through the secret passage.

They gained the little room at the foot of the ladder and then stood listening.

Several voices were talking in the room above.

"That's Chink talk, all right," said Jack Downey, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Of course it is," replied Harry. "We missed it in not bringing Charley Chow along."

"Listen!" said Old King Brady. "We don't talk here."

They listened for several minutes.

The murmur of voices speaking with the rising and falling inflection peculiar to the Chinese continued all the while.

"There are only Chinamen there," breathed Old King Brady, "but these Highbinders are desperate fellows."

"What do you propose?" demanded Downey.

"Follow me," replied Old King Brady. "Get your revolvers out and ready."

He stole up the secret stairs and pushed lightly upon the trapdoor.

To Harry's intense satisfaction it moved easily.

Old King Brady had cut off his dark-lantern as he laid his hand upon the trap.

The room above was well lighted.

Harry, peering out through the narrow opening, saw four Chinamen seated at a table over in one corner.

Their backs were toward the trap, and they were gabbling away vigorously in their own tongue.

Harry was able to get a side look at two of them.

One of these was Men Fun, the other Wing Dock.

The latter held in his hand an old sword with its point resting on the floor.

So engaged in this observation was Harry that he failed to see what Old King Brady caught at first glance.

This was a man lying face downward on the floor.

His hands were tied behind him and his legs locked together at the ankles, with a big stone tied to his heels.

Cautiously Old King Brady lowered the trapdoor to its place.

"Are either of those your opium fiends, Harry?" he whispered.

"Both are there," replied Young King Brady.

"The fellow with the sword is one of them?"

"He is Wing Dock. Men Fun is the one sitting next to him."

"Them's the two fellers I want," whispered Downey.

"They are four to us three," said Old King Brady, "but we ought to be good for them. Now then, boys!"

Just then a movement was heard overhead.

The Chinamen were running about.

They had heard the trapdoor drop, but they did not realize what the noise meant at first.

Luckily the table had been moved away from above the

trap or the Bradys could not have accomplished their purpose so easily.

"Look! Look!" cried Men Fun, throwing up his hands.

The trapdoor was rising.

Then it flew up with a bang.

It was Old King Brady, Harry and the secret service man.

Wing Dock raised his sword.

But he quickly lowered it again, for three revolvers covered the Highbinders.

"You'll surrender!" shouted the old detective, springing into the room. "No monkey business now or we shoot, and when we do we shall shoot to kill!"

The Chinamen, babbling in their own tongue, retreated to a corner.

"Throw down that sword!" cried Old King Brady.

"Throw it forward toward me. Careful, now, it don't hit me, or you are a dead man!"

Wing Dock scowlingly obeyed.

"Who you? Why you come here?" growled Men Fun.

The detectives displayed their shields.

"You see now where you stand, you men!" cried Old King Brady. "Open that door behind you. Don't you run out, now, unless you want to die!"

Wing Dock tremblingly obeyed.

As the door flew back Old King Brady gave a shout.

It was the signal already determined upon.

In through the door Charley Chow and a dozen Chinks came crowding.

"Highbinders! Highbinders!" roared Charley, pulling out his revolver.

He would have shot Wing Dock to a certainty if Old King Brady had not interfered.

But the old detective's orders were obeyed, and the four Chinamen were made prisoners.

Jack Downey handcuffed Men Fun and Wing Dock together.

The secret service man was triumphant.

"This will earn me promotion, all right," he cried.

"And now to see who this dead man is," said Harry.

He kneeled down and turned over the body upon the floor.

Dead the man surely was. He had been stabbed with the sword.

It was Jake Soper's face which was turned toward them now.

"Ah, ha, you thief! You would rob me, would you?" roared Charley.

Evidently the young halfbreed had changed his sentiments.

He no longer had any respect for the father of his best girl.

"Soper, I suppose," said Old King Brady.

"That's the man," replied Harry.

"So?" said the old detective. "Then it's a case of murder. I think we have these Highbinders where we want them now. Tie the other two together, boys, and then tie

them two and two with a three-foot rope between. We will send them back to Hemlock Hill mine."

The Bradys had taken a fresh start on their raid.

So far it seemed as if they were bound to meet with success.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Old King Brady bundled his Chinese captives off for the mine without a moment's unnecessary delay.

Gim Look and five of the newly-arrived Chinese acted as escort.

The old detective first questioned Men Fun and Wing Dock about the dead man.

It was as he expected, however.

He could not get either of them to admit that he knew anything about Soper's death.

It was the same with the other two Chinks captured in the house.

Chinamen are but little given to confession.

Still, the case seemed plain enough to Old King Brady.

As he read the riddle, Ike Burns had simply hired Wing Dock to kill Soper for reasons of his own.

After the prisoners had departed the Bradys found the place outside the hut where the deed had been done, as the bloodstains on the grass plainly showed.

It was clear that the intention had been to throw the dead man's body in the lake as soon as daylight came.

They left Soper where he lay, and now a council of war was held.

"Everything depends upon our jumping on these wretches suddenly," declared Old King Brady. "Let us get to the end of the trail as soon as possible and take our entire force with us. Once this is done perhaps we shall find the way open for the next step."

"Don't you think it is possible that they may have boats hidden somewhere there in the woods?" suggested Harry.

"The very thing I do think possible," was the reply, and I am going to put in a thorough search before we give up on that point."

"I think we find them," said Charley Chow. "I see all now. Men Fun and Wing Dock they work with these man hunters and against me right along."

"Get your men together. We will go there now," said Old King Brady, and they marched the Chinamen up to the lake.

Here Old King Brady took one side of the shore and Harry the other; and, lanterns in hand, they pushed on through the woods at the water's edge.

Their search was rewarded on both sides, for they promptly found a good, big flat-bottomed boat apiece, and these were pulled down to the point on the lake where the trail ended.

"Good for you!" cried Jack Downey. "Now we are

fixed. Nothing to prevent us from exploring the whole lake before sunrise."

"That depends somewhat upon its size," replied the old detective.

"It can't be so very large. The Canada line is only five or six miles from here, and I have patrolled it for twenty miles on either side of this. I never saw or heard of any lake."

"We shall soon know where we are at now," replied the old detective. "How many will one of these boats carry, think?"

Downey thought six, but seven were crowded in, fourteen starting away from the landing-place altogether.

Charley Chow having explained to the Chinamen that there were more people to be captured or they would surely be turned back over the border, they went readily enough.

Harry and Jack Downey took out five and Old King Brady and Charley Chow as many more.

The others were instructed to keep in hiding at the landing-place, and under no circumstances to show themselves unless a certain signal was given.

It was a beautiful night.

All signs of the storm which appeared to be brewing had now disappeared, and now the moon shone brightly on a cloudless sky.

"We want to keep well out in the middle of the lake and try to locate this hold-out by the lights if we can," said Old King Brady. "The closer we keep together the better, and we don't want to make too much haste, or we shall be sure to overlook the very point we are trying to make."

Before starting, Harry had muffled all oars by tying about the rowlocks pieces of old bagging which had been found in one of the boats.

Thus their advance was noiseless.

Soon they had covered some two miles, and now the end of the lake could be seen in the distance.

Beyond lay a dense growth of hemlock and spruce, which Jack Downey informed Harry extended for miles, passing far over into Canada.

It was through this forest that most of the Chinese were smuggled into Montana, the secret service man declared.

"We will halt here," called Old King Brady. "Let us rest on our oars and look for the light."

They were a long time finding it.

All the way up the lake the Bradys had been watching, and now they put in as much as twenty minutes studying the shore line on both sides of the lake.

Fortunately the width was not over half a mile, and both shores were thus easily scanned.

At last Charley Chow called out that he saw it and pointed to the west.

"Very small," he said. "I see it, though."

"It must be very small," replied Old King Brady, "for I can see no light."

"It's there. You see that big rock standing in the water close to the shore?"

"Yes, I see that."

"Very well. Follow it with your eye back among the trees."

"I see it now. The light is there."

Old King Brady motioned for Harry to pull in closer.

Young King Brady did so, and he and Downey declared that they could both see the light when it was pointed out to them.

"Come, we are closing in," said Old King Brady. "Let us see how the time is holding out."

He consulted his watch and found that it was just two o'clock.

"It could not be better," he declared. "Charley, you say they took a lot of Jake Soper's whisky along with them?"

"Three big jugs full," replied Charley. "They drink a lot before they start, too. All pretty drunk, boss."

"Then the chances are that every man jack of them is dead drunk and asleep by this time. I believe we are going to have a walk-over."

"Which is deserved, after all the trouble we have had," replied Harry. "Do we start now?"

"Right now," replied Old King Brady, throwing out his oars.

They pulled noiselessly over to the big rock.

No sooner had they reached it than it was discovered that there was a deep cave behind the rock.

At the head of this cave a bright light burned steadily.

It seemed pretty certain that they had succeeded in locating the second hold-out of the man hunting gang.

Noiselessly they pulled up the cove, and as they neared the end two big flat-bottomed scows of rude workmanship were discovered.

They had been run up on a shelving beach, and all about on the sand were hoofmarks.

"This is all as it should be," declared Old King Brady. "They are here all right, I guess. Wait for a moment and see if they get onto our presence. We can't be too careful. It would be a shame to spoil everything now."

They waited in grim silence, every ear on the alert, but not a sound could be heard.

"Now then, Harry, you're the lightest afoot; get ashore and see how the land lies up at that house," the old detective said.

Harry lost no time.

A well-defined path led up to the hut, which was a log affair and unusually large.

Directly behind it rose a rocky hill about a hundred feet high, and on the other two sides was the forest, here so dense that a man would have found it difficult to penetrate it even on foot.

There could be no doubt that this was the place they sought.

Harry stole along the path, revolver in hand, keeping a sharp lookout.

As he drew near the hut he perceived that the light

came from a small hand-lamp which stood on a table placed in the open doorway.

"A decoy, as sure as fate," he said to himself. "This was intended for us, beyond a doubt."

He paused and waited.

Not a sound could he hear, save the sighing of the wind through the hemlock boughs.

What to do he did not know.

He peered beyond the light as well as he could, but there was nothing to be seen, of course, for the dazzle of the lamp prevented a view of the interior of the hut.

Now as he turned his eyes away and sought the ground he saw a man alongside the door lying all in a heap, with a rifle within reach of his hand.

"Good enough!" muttered Harry, with a satisfied chuckle. "I see how the cat jumps now. That fellow was left on guard to give warning in case anyone came. He was probably as full as a goat, same as all the rest of them. He's keeled over, and so much the better for us."

He now walked boldly up to the hut, picked up the rifle and looked in.

He could see nobody inside.

The hut was meanly furnished. There was a barn behind it built against the hill.

Harry walked all around the place, and then returning to the door, he moved the table away and stepped in.

A moment told the story.

The hut was deserted.

Young King Brady moved from room to room, but could discover nobody.

He even went up into the loft above, but it was the same there.

Next he examined the barn, which was quite a large affair built of logs.

Here he found twenty horses, but no trace of a human being.

This point proved, Harry slipped back to where the sleeping man lay, and, gagging him with his handkerchief, tied his hands and feet securely.

This done, he chased back to the boats with his report.

Old King Brady was delighted.

"Come, this is as it should be!" he exclaimed. "No doubt they have got some cave in the hill. We can find them, I guess."

He ordered a landing then, and the boats were drawn well up on the beach.

In Indian file the whole party marched up to the house.

The man was as Harry had left him.

His breath smelled horribly of whisky, and Jack Downey found an empty bottle in the bushes near by.

"He's dead drunk, all right," declared the secret service man. "If we wake him up and clap a revolver at his head no doubt he would tell us what we want to know blame quick."

"We will try it for ourselves first," said Old King Brady. "Somewhere there must be a secret door or trap,

same as in the other hut. That is what we want to find now."

They tackled the house first and made the search thorough.

"Nothing doing!" exclaimed Downey, when at last they gave it up. "Suppose we try the barn?"

"That's next on the programme, of course," replied Old King Brady, "and I think we are going to succeed, too; for, unless it was to conceal the entrance to some cave, I can't imagine why these fellows should build the barn right against the rocks."

"Not when they had plenty of space on both sides," replied Downey. "I believe you are right."

But again the Bradys were balked.

The back of the barn was thoroughly searched and the wall sounded.

It seemed solid enough everywhere except in one place.

At the back of the third stall there certainly was a hollow sound returned when the old detective struck lightly upon it.

"It may be there," declared Old King Brady, "but if it is I see no way of proving it except to chop the boards down."

"That would mean fight."

"If the man hunters are behind that wall it certainly would; that is, providing they are sober enough to do any fighting, which I very much doubt."

"We had better wake up that fellow outside," said Harry. "When he sees what a mob he is up against I don't think he will try to hold out against us very long."

"Proposition accepted," replied Old King Brady. "Take one of these pails and go and get a bucket of water. We'll soon sober him up."

They returned to the house.

Old King Brady made the Chinamen form a ring around the sleeper, he and Downey, with Charley Chow, standing in the middle with drawn revolvers. His gag was removed.

In a moment Harry entered with his water bucket and dashed the contents in the fellow's face.

The man awoke with a yell of terror.

"Great guns! What's this?" he gasped.

"You see the great guns and the big bullets are yours, unless you lead us to the hold-out of Ike Burns' gang!" said Old King Brady, sternly. "Quick, now! I give you one minute to decide."

"Oh, that's all right. I know when I am cornered," growled the man. "They are in the cave behind the barn."

Harry cut his feet loose and, with Downey's help, lifted the fellow up.

He needed no urging. Staggering to the barn, he touched a spring in the woodwork behind the stall and a secret door flew back.

Here was disclosed a sizeable cave, here lay the man

hunters drunk and asleep sprawled out around a dying fire.

Over in one corner were the three Chinamen, Hip Lee, See Yup and Han Kow, tied up as prisoners.

But Lon Toomey and his partner, Si Brown, were not there.

It was a bloodless victory.

The Bradys simply tied up their men and sat around till they could get them awake.

The rich Chinamen were most profuse in their gratitude.

Morning came at last, and it found one of the big scows loaded down with the man hunters.

They were marched to Hemlock Hill mine and later, through the help of Jack Downey, turned over to the Border Patrol.

True to his promise, Downey said nothing about the Chinamen who were busily working in the mine when the patrol came.

Wing Dock, Men Fun and the two Chinamen with them were turned over prisoners with the rest.

And thus ended the Bradys' Chinese Raid.

Charley Chow never saw Sal again, but he found his fancy team all right at Soper's, and his diamonds and money were recovered from Ike Burns.

The Bradys escorted the three rich Chinks to Helena, where they received three thousand dollars apiece for their services, the Chinamen paying Toomey and Brown, who duly turned up, one thousand dollars each as well.

Then it was back to New York for the Bradys.

Later they learned that Wing Dock was hung for Soper's murder.

Ike Burns and his gang got five years each in the penitentiary.

That Ike ordered Soper's murder was generally believed, but it could not be proved.

Hemlock Hill mine is still being worked by Charley Chow, but the wily halfbreed now attends strictly to business.

He has smuggled in no more of his countrymen since The Bradys' Chinese Raid.

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