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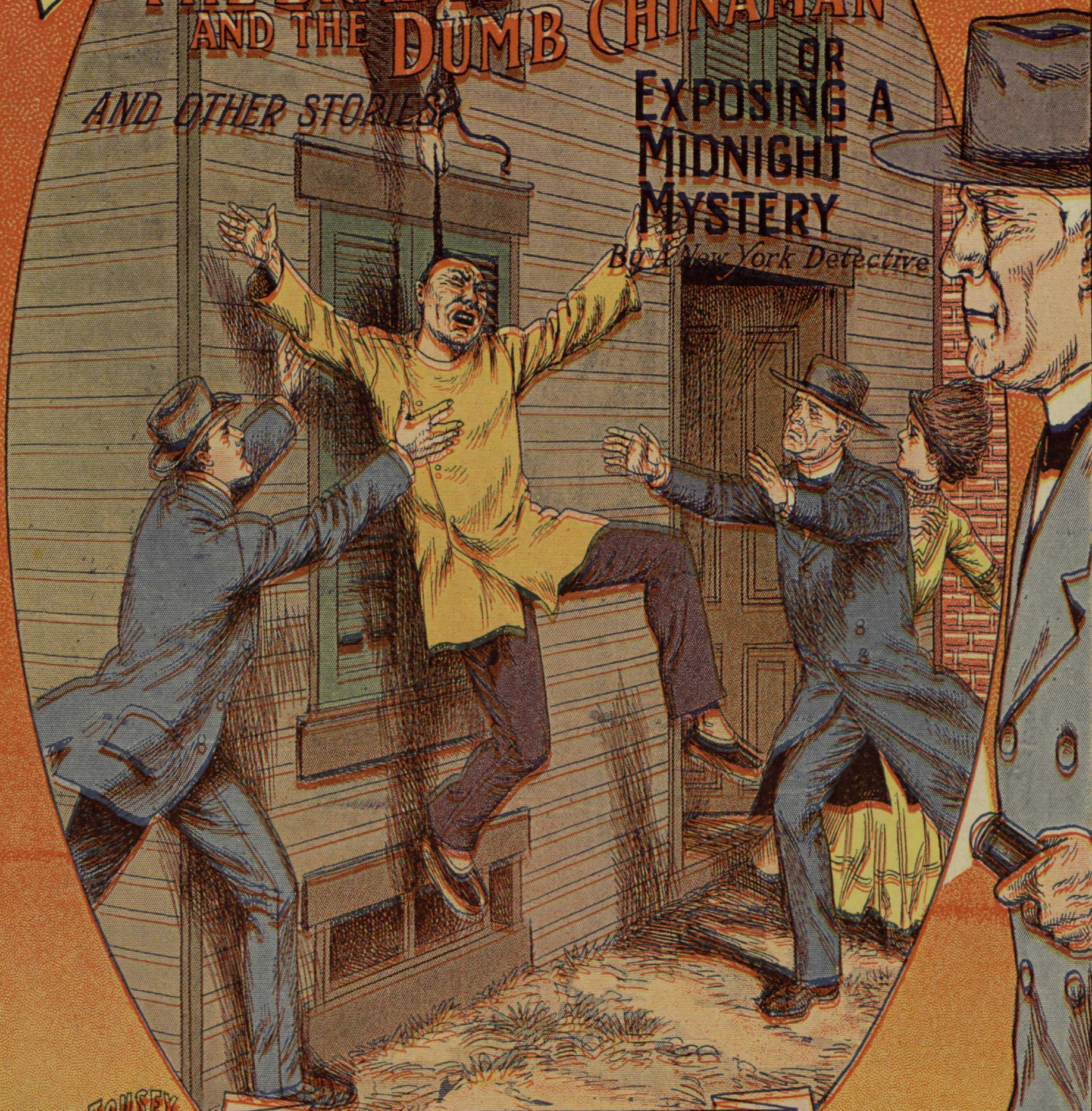
SECRET SERVICE.

THE BRADYS AND THE DUMB CHINAMAN

AND OTHER STORIES

OR EXPOSING A MIDNIGHT MYSTERY

By *New York Detective*



FRANK TOUSEY
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For the unfortunate Chinaman the situation was terrible. There he was hanging by the pigtail. He threw up his hands wildly. Old King Brady and Harry pressed forward to relieve him from his painful position. Just then he was pulled upward.

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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NEW YORK, MARCH 15, 1912.

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THE BRADYS AND THE DUMB CHINAMAN

OR,

EXPOSING A MIDNIGHT MYSTERY

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF MRS. ANDERSON.

If ever a boy worshipped his mother it was Arthur Anderson, aged eighteen, who in a way may be called the hero of this tale.

Arthur was senior office boy in the employ of one of the most noted lawyers in New York, said lawyer being attorney for the most noted detective in New York, if not in America. Need one say that said detective was Old King Brady, chief of the Brady Detective Bureau of Union Square; but of this more later on.

One cold day in early March, 19—, Arthur was kept late at the office. It was seven o'clock before the lawyer finally left and the boy thought he was going to be allowed to go home.

Not yet!

At the attorney was passing out he handed Arthur a large envelope, which was carefully sealed.

"Do you happen to know Chinatown, Arthur?" he asked. "I suppose of course you do; most boys have curiosity enough to look it up."

"I know where it is," replied Arthur, "but I was never there."

"Well, then I must ask you to go there to-night, late as it is. You will perceive that this envelope is addressed to is the Chinaman you have seen come here with Old King Mr. Wing Lee, No. — Mott street, third floor rear. He Brady. You will know him, of course?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. Give him this packet and look out you give it to no one else. If you don't find him in, take the packet to Old King Brady's house on Washington Square and give it to him. It is essential that it should be delivered to one or the other to-night—mind you, when I say to-night, I mean it. To-morrow morning won't do, so I must ask you to keep it up if it takes till midnight. Do you understand?"

"I'll attend to it, sir," replied Arthur, whereupon the

lawyer handed him a dollar and told him to get himself a good supper, and went his way.

There was nothing particularly surprising to Arthur that this prominent Broadway attorney should send him on an errand to Chinatown.

Through his connection with the world-famous detective the lawyer had business with all sorts of queer people.

What bothered Arthur was that his mother had not been well of late and was very much depressed in spirits.

This troubled the boy and he felt very anxious about her.

As any time before midnight would do for the delivery of the packet, Arthur resolved to go home and get his supper.

He was short of money too, and he felt that by this arrangement he would be a dollar to the good.

Arthur's mother lived on Orange street, in the old part of Brooklyn, but a moment's walk from the bridge.

Here she had the second floor of a small, old fashioned frame house.

Mrs. Anderson was a widow as Arthur believed, though sometimes he did not feel quite sure.

There was some mystery about his father.

Mrs. Anderson never spoke of him, and in reply to any question which Arthur had ever put on the subject, she would always say:

"Please don't talk about him. I cannot bear it," or words to that effect.

As for the boy himself, he had no recollection of his father, nor had he any acquaintance with any relative on either side.

As for Mrs. Anderson, we may add that she was a comparatively young woman, being only thirty-five, as she claimed. She was also well preserved and very attractive. At the same time she was very domestic in her habits and seldom went out, nor had she many friends.

Acting on his determination, instead of going directly to Chinatown, Arthur went home, and letting himself in with his latch key as usual, hurried upstairs.

To his surprise he found all the doors locked and when he rapped no answer was returned.

To find his mother out when he came home from work was something Arthur could not remember ever to have occurred before.

"Strange!" he thought. "Can anything have happened?"

And then came the more terrible thought, could his mother have died suddenly?

"But no; that was impossible. Surely Mrs. Markham, the lady down stairs, would have let him know.

He hurried down stairs and knocked on Mrs. Markham's door.

The lady herself responded. A stout, comfortable looking motherly soul she was, too.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Arthur?" she said. "Your mother has gone out. She left the key with me. I'll get it."

"Where has she gone?" asked Arthur.

"I'm sure I don't know. She did not say."

"Did she say where she was going and when she would be back?"

"No, she didn't. A messenger boy brought a letter here about five o'clock. I opened the door for him and sent him up stairs. About half an hour afterward your mother came down and brought me the key. I don't imagine she expected to be gone so long or she would have said something about it."

And Mrs. Markham having given him the key, Arthur went up stairs and let himself in.

He was surprised at the condition in which he found things.

The fire was out, there were cooking pots on the stove with the water in them all boiled away and their contents burned and spoiled.

When he went into his mother's room Arthur found her ordinary clothes in a heap on the floor.

Drawers had hastily been opened and left open.

This confusion was totally unlike Mrs. Anderson, who was very orderly and methodical in her habits.

In short, there was everything to indicate that Arthur's mother, upon receiving the letter, had simply dropped everything, dressed for the street with all possible haste, and departed.

Arthur did not like it. He could not account for it. He was sure his mother was in no condition to go out on such a cold, blustery night.

"Where on earth can she have gone?" he asked himself again and again, as he got together the best he could in the way of a cold supper and sat down to eat.

And it worried him not a little to think that he was obliged to go out without waiting for his mother's return.

Supper over, Arthur wrote a note stating where he was going and that he might not be back till very late, and having so placed it that his mother would be sure to find it, he locked up and went down to Mrs. Markham with the key.

Now, Mrs. Markham was a dressmaker and she had a telephone, so Arthur explaining that he was liable to be out late and that he was very anxious about his mother, asked her how late she was going to be up, so that he might telephone later in the evening if he was detained, and learn if his mother had returned.

"Oh, I shall be up late enough," replied Mrs. Markham. "I have a dress to finish. It will be after midnight before I get to bed."

"Did my mother seem to be worried?" asked Arthur, who looked worried enough himself.

"She certainly appeared excited," replied Mrs. Markham. "I wanted to ask her if there was anything the matter, but I didn't like to for she never has told me anything about her affairs."

"You know as much about them as I do, then," sighed Arthur. "I can't imagine where she has gone."

"And you are worried to death about it, you poor boy. I can see that. Never mind. It will all come out right. Have you any message to leave for your mother in case she comes in after you have gone?"

"I have written to her, but I may as well tell you, Mrs. Markham, that I am going to Chinatown to deliver some papers for my boss. My orders are to wait around until midnight before I give up in case I don't find the party in."

"Chinatown is a bad place they say. You want to look out for yourself, Arthur," Mrs. Markham said, and the boy departed, devoutly wishing that he was leaving his mother safely behind him.

Reaching Mott street, Arthur had no difficulty in locating the house in which Wing Kee lived.

Chinatown seemed peaceful enough that night.

It was too cold and blustery to attract many persons to the street, and such Chinamen as Arthur saw went hurrying along with their hands in their wide sleeves, if they happened to wear native dress, but as he entered the house—it was one of the more modern tenements—he found quite a group of them gathered in the hall.

They eyed him sharply, but no one spoke to him.

Arthur wondered what they were all doing there.

He went up to the proper floor and finding what he judged to be the right door, knocked.

A stout Irish woman with a Chinese baby in her arms opened the door.

The room within was neatly furnished in American style.

"Does Mr. Wing Lee live here?" asked Arthur, glad enough to find some one to whom he could talk.

"Yes, he does," replied the woman, "but he isn't in just now. What did you want to see him for?"

"I have some papers to give him," replied Arthur. "I came from Mr. ———."

"You can give them to me," replied the woman, "I am his wife."

"No, I can't do that," answered Arthur. "My orders are to give them to no one but Wing Lee. When will he be in?"

"I don't know," replied the woman. "It may be that he won't be in before midnight."

"But he will certainly be in then?"

"Yes. He expected to when he went away."

"Can I see him if I come then? It is very important."

"Yes," said the woman, "I will tell him to wait up."

Arthur then went away.

He had frequently had occasion to go to Old King Brady's house on Washington Square, and he now started to walk to it by way of the Bowery and Fourth street.

Passing a telephone pay station he went in and called up

Mrs. Markham, but it was only to learn that his mother had not yet come in.

"I'm going to be late," said Arthur, "tell her not to worry if she comes in."

Reaching Old King Brady's house Arthur's ring was answered by Julius, the colored man who is the only servant Old and Young King Brady keep to look after their domestic wants.

"De boss am out," he said, "and I don't know when he'll be home. You nebber can tell."

Again Arthur found himself balked.

It was now about ten o'clock and there seemed no better way than to wait until midnight and then keep his appointment with Wing Lee.

Anxious to get inside out of the cold, Arthur walked to Union Square and sat for over an hour in a moving picture show, after which he proceeded to Chinatown again, stopping to telephone once more on the way.

It was then half past eleven and the boy's heart sank when he heard Mrs. Markham's voice at the other end of the wire telling him that his mother had not yet returned.

"There must be something wrong," said Arthur. "I never knew her to stay out so late before."

Mrs. Markham tried to cheer him up, but it was no use. Arthur walked on to Chinatown, a much troubled boy.

It was ten minutes to twelve when he knocked on Wing Lee's door.

The woman responded this time minus the baby.

"He has not come yet," she said, "but he is liable to come any minute now. Won't you come in and wait?"

The room was very hot and moreover had a peculiar smell.

Arthur therefore replied that he would wait in the hall and the woman closed the door.

Walking to the end of the hall, only a few steps away, Arthur stood looking out of the window.

The house was a deep one, occupying the entire lot.

Thus he could look right in upon the rear of the old lanes on Pell street.

Many of the windows were still lighted up, and in some cases where there were no shades, Arthur could see Chinamen moving about.

There was one window directly opposite to where he stood which was dark.

It seemed to attract the boy for some reason.

Suddenly—it must have been past midnight—a light streamed up behind this window—it had no shade.

A second later Arthur saw a woman in the room running towards the window.

She threw up the lower sash, and to the boy's utter amazement he perceived that it was his mother.

She was bareheaded and seemed terribly excited.

Arthur thought she was preparing to jump out. He tried to raise the window at which he stood, but it seemed to be nailed.

Now all this was a matter of seconds.

Suddenly a Chinaman in native dress appeared in the line of the light. In his hand he held a long knife.

Seizing Mrs. Anderson by the hair he dragged her away from the window. Arthur could hear her give a piercing scream.

Then the light was suddenly extinguished and he could see no more.

"Mother!" cried the frightened boy, and he turned and started for the stairs.

CHAPTER II.

A VAIN SEARCH.

When Arthur cried "Mother," he fairly shouted the word.

When he reached the head of the stairs it was to find his way blocked by two men who were coming up.

One was a good looking young fellow in his twenties, while the other was an elderly gentleman of striking appearance and peculiar dress.

He wore a long, blue coat with brass buttons, an old fashioned stock and stand-up collar and a big, white felt hat with an unusually broad brim.

This, we need scarcely say, was none other than Old King Brady, his companion being Young King Brady, his partner.

"What's the matter, boy?" demanded the old detective, who had heard Arthur's cry.

"My mother! A Chinaman is killing her in a house in the next block! I saw it all out of the window! Let me go to her! Let me get down stairs!" Arthur cried.

He was wild with excitement and the Bradys barred the way. "Wait! Keep cool!" said Old King Brady. "You can do nothing. You are Mr. —'s boy, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Sent here to see Wing Lee with papers?"

"Yes, yes! Please let me go, Mr. Brady!"

"Wait! Whatever was going to happen when you looked out that window has already happened. Wing Lee won't be home to-night. We came here to tell his wife. Give me the papers and as soon as I have told Mrs. Lee we'll go with you to that house and see what has happened and what can be done."

Not only because he knew the boy, but because his long friendship and close relations with his employer, Old King Brady felt that it was incumbent upon him to take the matter up.

Mrs. Lee promptly opened the door.

She appeared to know the old detective, and he, having delivered his message, drew Arthur to the window and made him point out the window at which he had seen his mother.

Poor Arthur was trembling all over. He felt faint too.

Though he resented the delay, he felt thankful that he was going to have the Bradys' help.

"You see," explained the old detective, "if you had gone around there on Pell street unprepared you would not have been able to tell which house it was. Now we count from that taller one. Third house towards the Bowery. Now we go with all possible speed. Tell me exactly what you saw."

They started down stairs, Arthur explaining as they went.

"Is your mother in the habit of coming to Chinatown?" inquired Old King Brady.

"No, indeed!" cried Arthur. "I don't believe she ever knew where it was. We live in Brooklyn. She never goes over to New York. She hardly ever goes out. When I

got home this evening I found her out, though, and up to half past eleven she had not come in, as I learned over the telephone. It is dreadful! Just dreadful. I can't imagine what ever brought her over here."

"And your father?" the old detective continued to question as they passed out of the house on to Mott street.

"My father is dead long ago, Mr. Brady," the boy replied.

Old King Brady questioned him no further.

Secretly he had formed his own opinion.

"Probably the woman has been addicted to the use of morphine and the boy don't know it," he said to himself. "From that to opium smoking is but a step. Likely she resolved to try it in Chinatown to-night and has fallen into trouble."

They turned into Pell street.

"Look here, Governor," said Young King Brady, "that's the house where the secret cellar used to be. Don't you see?"

"I noticed it is, Harry," was the reply. "But you know the police tried to have those closed up after the discovery of them two years ago."

"Perhaps they did, and perhaps they didn't."

"Very true, there is no telling. But here we are. That window will be on the third floor. Courage, my boy. It may not be as you fear. If your mother is in this house we will have her out of it in short order."

"If she is alive," groaned Arthur.

"Hope for the best. Chinamen are not quite so black as they are painted. Not all of them, at least. Now, take that man Wing Lee, whom you must have seen at the office. I don't know that I ever met a kinder hearted or more reliable person."

"Are you sure it was your mother you saw?" Harry asked.

"Indeed I am," replied Arthur. "Wouldn't I know my own mother?"

"I don't think you quite understand me. You see you were worrying about your mother's absence. When we are worried that way one is liable to make mistakes."

"The light was too bright for me to be deceived," declared Arthur. "The woman I saw was positively my mother."

"This will be the room," said Old King Brady, for they had now reached the top of the stairs.

He knocked on the door.

There was no answer.

Then trying the door and finding it unfastened, they walked into the room.

"Vacant!" exclaimed Harry.

It was indeed so.

The room was bare of furniture.

So was the one in front and the dark room between.

"We have got the wrong place," exclaimed Arthur.

"No, we haven't," replied the old detective. "It is the right place. I exercised too much care to admit of a mistake. This is certainly very strange, but let us see if there is anybody living on this floor."

They passed out into the hall.

There were still two rooms which they had not examined, the front and rear hall bedroom as they had been in

the old days when the house was occupied by a private family.

Old King Brady tried the door of the front one. It yielded, and again he found himself looking into a vacant room.

But when he came to the rear room he found the door locked.

He rapped again and again, but got no answer.

Then producing skeleton keys, he proceeded to open the door.

The room was furnished with a narrow bed, chair, table and so on.

Here lay a Chinaman apparently sound asleep.

"That's the man who had the knife!" whispered Arthur, greatly excited.

"You cannot possibly tell," replied the old detective. "See, here are his clothes; Chinese. Even I with all my experience would not want to swear to a Chinaman thus dressed seen under the exciting circumstances you have described."

"But we will wake the fellow up," he added, "and see what he has to say for himself."

He shook the sleeper by the shoulder.

The man started up uttering a peculiar animal-like cry and sat blinking at the Bradys and Arthur, but did not speak.

Old King Brady, who had been using an electric flashlight, now turned it on his detective's shield.

"What's your name, John?" he demanded.

There was no answer.

The Chinaman shook his head, pointed to his ears, and then to his lips.

"Deaf and dumb, or wants to make us believe it, anyway," said Harry.

In short, they could get nothing out of the Chinaman.

From the peculiar noises he made and from the fact that he had not heard their loud knocking, Old King Brady came to the conclusion that he actually was deaf and dumb.

At last they had to give it up.

Arthur was in despair.

"What shall I ever do?" he said. "I can't go home and leave my mother here."

"We'll search the house at all events," said Old King Brady. "That done and without success nothing remains but for you to go quietly home. Very probably you will find your mother there."

But the Bradys did not attempt to search the house unaided.

They might have done so, but the old detective thought it better to have the assistance of the police.

He accordingly went around to the Elizabeth street station, and there explaining the situation to the sergeant, got two policemen, with whom they returned to Pell street.

The entire house was now searched from top to bottom, but with no success.

The Chinese they encountered, used to these intrusions, did not particularly resent it.

Even the grocery on the ground floor was searched.

They then went into the cellar, where they found the

trap door leading to the sub or secret cellar, to which Harry had alluded, nailed down.

One of the policemen who had been a long time in the precinct assured Old King Brady that the secret passage had been bricked up by the landlord by order of the police.

"Arthur," said the old detective when at last they got out on to Pell street, "I don't see that I can do anything further for you, my boy. The best thing you can do is to go home and let us hope that you will find that you have been mistaken after all."

"That's a singular piece of business," remarked Harry after the boy had left them.

"Isn't it?" replied the old detective. "I hardly know what to make of it."

"What do you know about the boy, anyway?"

"Nothing except that Mr. ——— thinks well of him. He told me not long ago that if he continued to do as well as he had been doing he intended to help him through the New York Law School."

The Bradys returned home and, to tell the truth, thought little of the matter during the next few days, such queer experiences being sufficiently common with them, and they having business enough of their own to think about.

On the morning of the third day, however, Old King Brady was called up by the lawyer, who said to him over the telephone:

"Look here, Brady, I wish you would try and help out that office boy of mine. He's a good lad, and as matters are with him now his usefulness has departed. Really, I begin to fear that the poor fellow will go insane."

"What!" called the old detective; "hasn't his mother turned up yet?"

"No, she hasn't. The affair appears to be a complete mystery. I have told him to take a week's vacation and try to pull himself together. I understand he has been haunting Chinatown nights, which won't do at all. I told him last night that he had better call on you this morning. I'll pay the bill."

"Let him call," said Old King Brady. "There'll be no bill, but tell me, do you know anything about his mother?"

"No, I don't, and I don't think he does, either," was the reply, and here the conversation ended.

Half an hour later Arthur walked into the office.

"So your mother has not turned up yet, Arthur?" Old King Brady said.

"No, sir. I never expect to see her alive again," replied Arthur, sadly.

He looked hollow-eyed and worn, and he felt as badly as he looked.

The poor boy had scarcely slept three hours since his mother's disappearance.

"And you still feel sure you saw her that night?" the old detective asked.

"I know it," was the firm reply. "I could not make a mistake."

"Have you learned anything which furnishes a reason for her disappearance?"

"Nothing, sir. Nothing at all."

"Well, my boy, we must try to help you, but I am very

busy to-day, so for the present I am going to turn you over to our Miss Alice Montgomery. She knows all about the Chinese, and even speaks and reads their language. She is also quite as good a detective as I am. Walk through to the front office; she will talk to you, and let us hope that something may come of it."

CHAPTER III.

HAS ALICE CAUGHT A CLEW?

Old King Brady did not in the least exaggerate the detective skill of his able partner, Alice Montgomery.

Probably she has no equal as a female detective.

This case concerning a woman, the old detective felt that Alice might be able to draw points from the boy which he would miss.

He had informed her of his intention, so when Arthur entered her office Alice was prepared for his coming.

"Sit down, Arthur, and answer my questions," she said.

"We want to get at the bottom of this business if we can. First of all, how old are you?"

"Eighteen my last birthday, miss," Arthur replied.

"And your mother. What is her age?"

"She is between thirty-five and thirty-six."

"She must have married very young to have a son as old as you."

"She did. She was between sixteen and seventeen when she married."

"What was her maiden name?"

"I don't know."

"Indeed! Have you brothers and sisters?"

"No; I am the only child."

"Has your mother never spoken of her family or relatives?"

"No; she never would talk of them."

"And your father? What do you know of him?"

"Why, to tell the truth, miss——"

"That is just what I want you to do. It is essential that you should tell the exact truth. Conceal nothing. What do you know of your father?"

"Nothing."

"What! Nothing? Actually nothing?"

"Nothing. My mother never would talk of him. I always supposed that he was dead. I don't know now that he is not, but since you ask me to be accurate, I must tell you that I really don't know."

"You have no recollection of your father, I judge?"

"No, miss."

"Where were you born—do you know that?"

"Yes. I was born in California—San Francisco."

"How long have you lived East?"

"Ever since I can remember we have lived in Brooklyn."

"On what have you lived? Has your mother property? Of course, it is only recently that you have been able to help financially."

Arthur looked much troubled.

"I suppose you will think that we are queer people," he said, "but I don't know that either. My mother must have money, but I don't know where she gets it. Of course we are not rich, but she never seemed to lack for money."

"Has she been in the habit of going out much?"

"She scarcely ever went out, that is what made it seem so strange that——"

"That she should go out the other night in the way she did. What visitors does she—has she been in the habit of receiving?"

"Why, very few. Scarcely anybody ever came but Mrs. Smith, and I haven't seen her in a year."

"And who is this Mrs. Smith? An intimate friend?"

"Why, no. She can't be that. She is a very stylish lady. When she came to our house she always wore her veil down. I am not in the least acquainted with her. Mother always sent me away when she called on her."

"Indeed! And they had private talks?"

"Yes."

"Behind locked doors?"

"Yes, mother always locked the door when she wanted to talk with Mrs. Smith."

"And the woman came and went without ever speaking to you?"

"Only when I let her in and she asked for mother. I never held any conversation with her. I never even saw her face."

"Well, Arthur, you will have to admit that the mystery surrounding your mother did not begin on the night of her disappearance."

"Yes, miss. I see that now, but I never thought of it that way before."

"Exactly. You took things as you found them. Evidently there has been some deep mystery in your mother's life for years, and unless you are mistaken in thinking that you saw her——"

"I am not mistaken, miss, I assure you."

"I am inclined to believe you. I was going to add that it was this mystery, whatever it may be, that took your mother to Chinatown that night. Tell me, was she accustomed to use morphine?"

"I am sure she never did, miss. It would have made her dopy, and I should certainly have noticed it."

"It is hard to understand how you could have failed to do so. You have no idea where this Mrs. Smith lives?"

"No."

"Did your mother receive many letters?"

"Very few."

"Did she show you those she did receive?"

"Sometimes she did and sometimes she didn't."

"Were any of those she did not show you addressed in a man's handwriting, do you know?"

"No, I don't, but I do remember that long ago she used to get letters sometimes which made her cry, and that she always burned them as soon as she had read them."

"And these letters have not come lately?"

"Well, I can't answer that question and be exact. You see for the last two years I have been at work and, of course, away all day."

"But these letters continued to come up to the time you went to work?"

"Yes; as near as I can remember they did."

"Did you pay board?"

"Yes, miss. Four dollars a week."

"Did your mother seem to need this money?"

"Yes; she told me it was a great help to her."

"Did you ever hear her speak of having anything to do with the Chinese?"

"No; I never did. Never once."

"Have you been all over her things to see if you could find anything to account for her disappearance?"

"No; I haven't disturbed anything."

"Whereabouts in Brooklyn do you live?"

"Orange street, near Henry."

"Is there any reason why you can't go with me to the house now and let me search your mother's things?"

"No; I don't know of any except that I don't like to disturb her things or pry into her private affairs."

"The situation demands that you should do so. Indeed, you ought to have done so sooner. Wait till I return."

Alice went into Old King Brady's office then, where he sat talking with Harry.

"Why, this is a mystery for fair," she said. "That boy knows nothing whatever about his mother. She appears to have made a mystery of herself to him all his life."

"Ah!" said the old detective. "The mystery did not begin in Chinatown the other night then?"

"Indeed no," replied Alice, and she went on to tell what she had drawn out of the boy."

"It is as you say," remarked Old King Brady. "The woman's effects should be promptly overhauled. Go ahead and do it, Alice, and the chances are you will come back knowing a whole lot more about the woman than you know now."

Alice accordingly went with Arthur to Brooklyn.

But it was only to meet with disappointment.

Together they carefully overhauled everything belonging to Mrs. Anderson.

Not a solitary letter could they find, nor was there a cent of money. No bank book was discovered. There was nothing to show from what source the vanished woman drew her income.

Such clothing as Alice found was of good quality, but there was neither evidence of extravagance nor that the woman had denied herself anything.

In short, Alice was bound to admit when she finally finished her work that instead of clearing up the mystery it had rather deepened, if anything.

"Now, Arthur, you stay here," she said. "I am going downstairs to have a talk with Mrs. Markham. She may know things about your mother that you don't."

"I don't believe she does, then," replied Arthur, "but you can try it on."

Alice found the dressmaker busy at her work.

"I can't help you a bit, Miss Montgomery," she said. "Mrs. Anderson was a good woman so far as I know, but she was always close mouthed to the last degree."

"She rented from you?" asked Alice.

"Yes."

"How long has she lived here?"

"Oh, it's nearly ten years."

"Where did she live before that, do you know?"

"She told me once that she lived at No. — Pacific street, near Fourth avenue."

Alice wrote down the number.

"Was she always prompt with her rent?" she asked.

"Reasonably so. Sometimes she fell behind, but she always made it up."

"Have you any idea where her money came from? Arthur and I have been making a thorough search. We can find neither money nor bank book nor anything else to indicate that the woman had property."

"She must have had. She did no work except to take care of her house. She paid by the month. Once every month she managed to slip away for a few hours. When she came back she always squared up accounts. I noticed that."

"You say slipped away. Do you mean by that she did not let her son know?"

"Just that. She would send him away somewhere. When he began to take notice she asked me to please not tell him she had been out."

"What reason did she give for this secrecy?"

"She told me she had the best of reasons, but she never said what they were."

"Arthur knows next to nothing about his mother."

"I am sure of it. Mrs. Anderson was a very secretive woman."

"He speaks of a veiled woman who has been in the habit of calling on his mother. A Mrs. Smith."

"Yes. There's another mystery for you. The woman always came here veiled. When she called Mrs. Anderson would always frame up an excuse to get the boy out of the way if she could. She would lock herself in with the woman and they had long talks."

"Friendly talks, think?"

"Indeed they were not. They used to quarrel terribly, but they always kept their voices down."

"Has the woman continued to call up to date?"

"No; she stopped off about a year ago, and I haven't seen her since. But what do you think, Miss Montgomery? Is Mrs. Anderson dead? It is a terrible story what Arthur told. What he saw that night in Chinatown I mean."

"I'm sure I have no idea," replied Alice. "Our office has taken up the matter, and we shall do our best to expose the mystery. By the way, do you think Mrs. Anderson used morphine?"

"No; I have no reason for thinking so."

"One question more and that will probably be the last. Did any Chinaman ever call here?"

"Never to my knowledge."

Alice thanked Mrs. Markham for her attention and returned upstairs.

"Arthur," she said, "I am going to write a note to Old King Brady which you will deliver to him. In it I shall recommend that you go and stay for a few days, more or less, as the case may be, at the rooms of Wing Lee, on Mott street, where you went with the papers, you know. There I want you to watch the window where you saw your mother and see if anything comes of it. You are not to wear yourself out, but to watch for an hour or so at a time, then take it up again. If Old King Brady favors the plan I shall probably look in on you this evening. I will also write a letter of introduction to Wing Lee so that he may understand the case."

"Perhaps he may have seen something in that house," said Arthur.

"No; he knows nothing about the matter. Old King Brady asked him," Alice replied.

She sat down, and with her fountain pen wrote a note to Old King Brady.

Then on another piece of paper she began writing to Wing Lee.

Arthur watched her curiously.

"Is that Chinese you are writing?" he asked.

"It is," replied Alice.

"How did you ever come to learn it?"

"I learned it years ago in China, where I was born."

"Can you write is just as well as you write English?"

"Not just as well, but any Chinaman can understand it."

She finished the letter and, giving it to Arthur, told him to use it or not, as Old King Brady might direct.

They then left the house and Alice separated from the boy without telling him where she was going.

Where she did go was to No. — Pacific street, near Fourth avenue.

This is another old-fashioned section of Brooklyn and was once occupied by well-to-do people who, for the most part, owned their own houses. It is now a neighborhood given over to lodging houses, boarding houses and the like, but still of rather a superior sort.

By asking a group of children who were playing on the sidewalk, Alice learned that a Mrs. Kendall lived at the number in question, so when the servant answered her ring she inquired for that lady, and having been shown into a shabby parlor, Mrs. Kendall presently put in an appearance.

She was an elderly woman, and evidently a person of intelligence.

Handing her card to the woman, Alice said:

"I wish to make some inquiries about a Mrs. Anderson who formerly lived here. Possibly it was before your time?"

"No," replied Mrs. Kendall, "I remember Mrs. Anderson very well. I own this house. I have lived here for many years. About fifteen years ago she hired my top floor and lived here for several years, but I haven't seen her this long time. I don't know whether she is alive or dead."

"That is just what I am trying to find out in the interest of her son."

"What, little Arthur? I remember him well. He must be quite a young man by this time."

Alice then went on to tell the whole story.

"You will see, Mrs. Kendall," she went on to say, "that before we can do anything it is necessary to get some clew to this woman's past. Her son knows absolutely nothing. We have no point to begin on. So I called on you."

"You don't surprise me," replied Mrs. Kendall, "but I fear I can't help you much. The woman was very secretive and never gave away anything about her past. She came to me direct from San Francisco. I had advertised a floor to let. She saw the advertisement and answered it in person. The rooms suited her, and she started housekeeping here. She gave her name as Anderson and said that she was a widow. Arthur was with her, of course; about four years old, I should say. I don't think her name was An-

erson, however, for when she first arrived her trunks were marked Armour."

"That's a point gained," replied Alice, and she added:

"Did she appear to have money in those days?"

"Enough for her wants, wherever she got it. She certainly did not work for it."

"Did she receive many callers?"

"Only a few of the people in the neighborhood who tried to cultivate her acquaintance, but she was cold and distant to them, and they soon stopped coming."

Alice then spoke of the veiled Mrs. Smith, but Mrs. Kendall knew nothing of her.

"I remember one strange thing that happened, though," she went on to say. "One day a Chinaman called on her. He was well dressed in American style and wore diamonds. She received him in her rooms and he stayed a long time. They got to having loud words, and I grew frightened and knocked on the door, asking if there was anything the matter. She assured me that it was all right, and the man soon left. Next day she gave me notice and moved right away without saying where she was going. I haven't seen her since."

"A very important point," said Alice. "It proves that Mrs. Anderson had to do with the Chinese as much as ten years ago. You didn't hear what they were saying, I suppose?"

"Not much. I am not the kind to listen or to pry into other people's business. I heard her say: 'Never! never!' She fairly screamed it. His answer I couldn't get, for it was in broken English, but he seemed to be angry. That is really all I know."

Alice pressed her further, but learned nothing, and at last she left and returned to the office.

Old King Brady was in, and he informed her that he had adopted her suggestion and had sent Arthur to Wing Lee's.

Alice told her story then.

"Armour," said the old detective. "Let me see! Let me think!"

He thought for a few moments, and then ringing his bell he ordered the clerk, who appeared in answer, to bring him Volume VIII. of the criminal register.

Now this criminal register of Old King Brady's is an immense scrap book in many large volumes.

In it he has pasted newspaper clippings and portraits of hundreds of criminals, the clippings relating to their doings. The whole he keeps carefully indexed and up-to-date, so its immense value to him in his business will be readily perceived.

"Do you think you have caught a clew?" asked Alice.

"The name Armour certainly occurs here, and I think it is in this volume," replied the old detective, turning to the index.

"Yes, here it is," he added. "Let me read. I think you have caught a clew."

CHAPTER IV.

ARTHUR'S ADVENTURE IN CHINATOWN.

Arthur did not much relish the plan of taking up his quarters at Wing Lee's.

Although Old King Brady did not take the trouble to tell him this Chinaman was actually a Secret Service detective whom Old King Brady at that time was associated with in a matter of opium smuggling which was now about completed.

It was not a case which the Bradys intended to close.

They had simply been obtaining evidence to be made use of by the Government when they got ready.

No one in Chinatown suspected Wing Lee's association with the Secret Service Bureau and, of course, it was not desirable that any one should.

The Chinaman, who was a very much Americanized proposition, was in, and when he read Alice's letter he was very civil to Arthur and showed him a small room which he told him he could occupy.

The room, which overlooked the rear of the Pell street houses, was Mrs. Lee's kitchen and living room, but she raised no objection, telling Arthur he could sit by the window as much as he pleased.

"I have inquired about that dumb Chinaman," said Wing Lee. "I think you must be mistaken in thinking that he was the man you saw attack your mother. He is a harmless fellow and not full witted they tell me. His name is Woo Yet. He is employed by the grocer downstairs to go back and forth between Chinatown and the Chinese vegetable gardens over in Astoria with a basket in which he brings over the fresh vegetables they raise under glass at this season. I spoke to a friend of mine about him, and he says he wouldn't hurt a fly."

"I suppose I can't be sure," said Arthur, "but when I saw him I thought he was the man."

Wing Lee now went away, and in the afternoon his white wife went out, too, taking her baby with her.

She told Arthur that she was going to her mother's and would not be back until night, so the watching boy had the kitchen all to himself.

Time dragged heavily. It was certainly the slowest work Arthur had ever undertaken.

He saw many queer things as he sat there gazing out of his window and into those of the Chinese neighbors, but behind the window where he had seen his mother attacked he saw nothing at all.

The day began to close in. It was necessary to eat, and Arthur was just beginning to think of supper when behind the window which he had been watching he saw that which brought him up standing in a hurry.

For suddenly a face was pressed against the pane; a woman's face. She was looking directly at him.

Was it his mother?

Arthur thought so, and his heart gave a great bound.

She was very differently dressed from her usual style, however. Much finer.

Her face assumed a puzzled look for a moment.

She stared steadily at Arthur, and then raising her hand, she beckoned to him.

It was enough!

Arthur was certain that it was his mother, yet all this was seen in a fading light.

Discarding all thought of danger, he hurriedly left the room and went around on to Pell street, entering at the door which he had now become familiar with, for each

night since his mother's disappearance he had visited Chinatown, wandering about until a late hour in the vain hope that he might see her.

Thus he entered unhesitatingly and ascended to the top floor, where he opened the door of the room he had visited in company with the Bradys.

It was vacant, as he had seen it last.

There was nobody in it, much to his disappointment, and the boy stood perplexed enough.

Then it occurred to him to go through to the dark room and the front room beyond it, which he did.

There was no one there, either, and Arthur began to wonder if his imagination had been playing tricks on him when he heard his name called from the back room in a woman's voice:

"Arthur! Arthur Anderson!" the voice said. "Come here!"

It was not his mother's voice nor her way of addressing him, of course. Still it sounded like her voice, too.

Arthur hurried through to the back room again, his heart beating wildly.

There in the middle of the floor stood a woman richly dressed, with her face concealed behind a thick, brown veil.

"How do you do, Arthur?" she said. "You are looking for your mother, I suppose?"

"Yes, I am!" cried Arthur. "You are Mrs. Smith!"

"Yes, I am your mother's old friend, Mrs. Smith," replied the woman. "You have often seen me at the house, you know. What were you doing in that room?"

"Watching. Hoping that I might see mother."

"And why here, may I ask? What possible reason had you for believing that your mother might be in Chinatown—in this room?"

"Because I saw her here on the night she disappeared."

"You—saw her!" said Mrs. Smith slowly and in a tone of genuine surprise.

"Yes, I saw her. Tell me, is she still alive?"

"She is alive and well."

"Thank God! Where is she? Why don't she come home?"

"She can best explain that herself, I fancy."

"Can I see her then? Is she here?"

"She is not here, but it is quite possible that I can take you to where she is if you are willing to go with me."

"Where to?"

"That I cannot tell you, nor can I promise to take you to your mother, but I saw you watching at the window, and I guessed what it meant. So I told your mother, and she beckoned to you to come here. Are you willing to go with me, not knowing where?"

Arthur hesitated.

"You don't trust me," said the veiled woman, "and yet, my boy, you have known me for a long time."

"I don't know how you can say that," replied Arthur. "As a matter of fact, I don't know you at all. I have never even seen your face."

"That is true, and I have special reasons for not wishing to show my face to you now, but you must know that your mother was here a few moments ago, for you saw her beckon to you to come here."

"That was my mother then?"

"Certainly. Did you think it was I?"

"As far as I could see the dress it looked like the one you are wearing now."

"I doubt if you could tell in this light. However, it was your mother you saw, and I stood behind her. She asked me to come here and meet you now."

"Why didn't she stay here and wait for me?"

"That she could not do for reasons I am not at liberty to explain."

"Then she is not in this house?"

"No. She has gone, and you can only see her in the place I refer to. Even that I am not certain of. I shall have to consult others, but I want your consent to go with me first."

"I will go!" cried Arthur, desperately. "It may be that you intend to get me into trouble, Mrs. Smith, but I'll take my chances on that. Wherever my mother is that is where I want to go."

"Well said," replied the veiled woman, "and now let me assure you that I have no desire to get you into trouble. Far from it. Remain here until my return and I will see what can be done, but first I want your assurance that there are no detectives watching this house."

"There are none that I know of," replied Arthur, glad that he was able to say so with truth.

"Turn your back," ordered Mrs. Smith then.

Arthur did so.

"Don't look around until I tell you to if you want ever to see your mother alive again," added Mrs. Smith.

Arthur waited.

This was not at all the way that Alice and Old King Brady had anticipated affairs would go.

He wondered whether he was doing right or wrong in accepting this singular invitation offhand.

But the thought of seeing his mother and solving the mystery overpowered all other considerations.

Yet it seemed strange that if it had been his mother who had beckoned to him, she could not have waited long enough for him to get there.

But then it was all so strange that there seemed little use in speculating on the matter at all.

The wait seemed interminable, and yet it could not have been over five minutes before Mrs. Smith spoke again.

"You may look around now, Arthur," she said.

He turned and saw that she was not alone.

There was a Chinaman in native dress with her.

Arthur instantly recognized the dumb man whom Old King Brady had aroused from his sleep.

He eyed the boy curiously and then began talking with his fingers with Mrs. Smith, who answered him in the same way with great rapidity.

"Arthur," she then said, "you will have to let this Chinaman blindfold you. Later we shall go for a long ride, during which you will have to be blindfolded again at least for part of the way."

"What is that for?" demanded Arthur.

"Don't ask questions. That is my place. I am going to ask one now. How well do you know the upper East Side?"

"I don't know it at all about Forty-second street."

"Very well. Now Woo Yet will blindfold you. It will be necessary for you to do just as I tell you if you expect to see your mother, but first I want to know more about this business."

"What business?"

"How you came to be at that window. Woo Yet tells me that a Chinaman named Wing Lee lives in those rooms."

"That's right."

"Well, what took you there?"

"The man is a client of my boss. On the night mother disappeared I was sent to deliver papers to him. I saw my mother in this room through the window."

Mrs. Smith gave a violent start.

"Speak! What did you see?" she cried.

"I saw him chasing my mother with a knife."

"Oh!"

"Oh, yes; I saw that. Can you wonder I have been worried, Mrs. Smith?"

"Then it was you who came here with the Brady detectives?"

It looked as if the cat was liable to get out of the bag. Arthur felt that he must be on his guard.

"Yes, it was I," he replied.

"How did that happen?"

"I met them in that house. I told them what I had seen. They offered to help me find my mother; they failed."

"Have you been here with them since?" demanded Mrs. Smith quickly.

"No, not since."

"How came you in Wing Lee's then?"

"I thought I might see my mother if I watched at that window, so I went there and asked him to let me watch, and he did."

"And that is all there is to it?"

"That is all there is to it."

"Very well. I shall have to accept your explanation, but if you have deceived me you will deeply regret it."

"I have not deceived you, Mrs. Smith. I have told you the exact truth."

The veiled woman turned to the dumb Chinaman and spoke with her fingers.

Again he answered but briefly, and then producing a large red handkerchief he made signs to Arthur that he was going to blindfold him, to which the boy submitted.

The Chinaman then took him by the hand and he was led forward a few steps after being turned around three times.

The next he knew Arthur was descending stairs very much narrower than the ones he had come up.

The stairs appeared to be very long, and the end reached at last, the dumb Chinaman led Arthur along a corridor and then to the right, where they stopped and the handkerchief was removed.

Arthur now found himself in a large room well furnished in Chinese style.

There were no windows; the walls were hung with rich drapery, there was an expensive rug on the floor.

In a Morris chair which stood beside a table upon which a handsome lamp burned sat a Chinaman of about forty

years of age clothed in expensive native dress smoking a large bamboo stemmed pipe.

The dumb man bowed low and retired.

The veiled woman approached the table and, pointing to Arthur, said:

"This is the boy."

The Chinaman looked Arthur over curiously and then spoke to the woman in Chinese.

They held quite an extended conversation in that language, which Mrs. Smith appeared to speak fluently.

At last she turned to Arthur and said:

"Well, Arthur, it is settled. You are to go with me to where your mother has gone ahead of us, and I want to say to you right now that if you do as you are told the result will bring nothing but good to you both. If on the contrary you have deceived me, and the Brady detectives have anything to do with your presence here, you will do well to tell me now, for there is still time for you to pull out, whereas if you go where I am proposing to take you, and then we learn that we have been deceived, I will not answer for your life."

CHAPTER V.

TRAPPED UNDERGROUND.

From his criminal register, Volume VIII., Old King Brady read as follows:

"Joseph Anderson Armour, burglar, expert safe blower and all-around crook, San Quentin, 20 years, 1890, for blowing the vault of the Miners' Bank, San Francisco, on which occasion he got upwards of a hundred thousand in cash, which was never recovered. On this job he must have had confederates, but who they were was never discovered. The man was suspected owing to the skill with which the work was done. He was recognized by Detective Dolan in San Diego, where he was about to pass over into Mexico. After a time in jail he confessed and received the above sentence, but he absolutely refused to account for the stolen money. It is believed that his wife, who was a young and beautiful woman, got away with it. She was allowed to see him alone on the night of his arrest. Next day she disappeared, taking her little boy with her. Every effort was made to trace her, but in vain. She was Grace, daughter of George Harvey, a San Francisco mining broker of considerable wealth and social standing. Both she and her sister Ella married out of their class, the sister's husband being King Foong, alias "the King of Clubs," the notorious Chinese highbinder, gambler, opium smuggler and crook. Mr. Harvey cast both the girls off, and it is not believed that he has any present knowledge of either of them. Armour's aliases are "Big Andy," "Dr. Ferguson" and "Gentleman Joe."

"There you are," said Old King Brady, triumphantly. "Alice, how does that fit?"

"It looks as if it might be made to fit pretty well," replied Alice. "It was in 1890, according to Mrs. Kendall, that Mrs. Anderson turned up in Brooklyn with trunks marked Armour and a little boy."

"And her first name?"

"The boy says it is Sarah."

"She may have changed it. I strongly suspect she is this man's wife."

"But the money? She never put on any style or ran into any extravagance."

"Oh, there are a thousand ways of accounting for that. The strongest evidence is that her sister married a Chinaman."

"Did you ever hear of this King Foong?"

"No; but then this entry was made fifteen years ago, being condensed from the accounts in the San Francisco papers. King Foong may be long since dead."

"Granting that you are right, why would Mrs. Armour suddenly rush off to Chinatown on the receipt of a letter?"

"Dear me, Alice, I can imagine a dozen reasons, all equally good. But one's enough if the woman loved her husband. Suppose her sister to be living in Chinatown, as she well may be; suppose she writes that this woman's husband has come out of prison and is then in New York, hiding in Chinatown? Is not that enough to take her there flying?"

"Yes, if she loved him."

"Exactly. Indeed, he may have written her himself, but that is hardly probable, considering what the boy saw. More likely that the woman has this stolen money nearly intact and that Chinamen are after it or that they think she has it."

"They must have known it all along then. Remember, a Chinaman called on her at Mrs. Kendall's."

"Right, and on that occasion she was heard to say 'Never! never! Never what? Never give up the money to any one but her husband, perhaps.'"

"And the veiled Mrs. Smith may be her sister."

"Exactly. Who can tell?"

"Well, we have figured out a neat little theory to account for the whole business," said Alice; "the next thing is to prove it."

"It would account for the boy being kept in ignorance of his father at all events," Old King Brady replied.

"What's all this you have discovered?" asked Harry, who entered just then.

Alice proceeded to explain.

"Is the Miners' Bank still in existence?" Harry asked.

"I don't remember to have heard of it."

"It is," replied Old King Brady. "It is not a large institution, but it is sound. I wonder what they will give to get back some of their stolen funds of long ago?"

"Why not wire them and ask?"

"Do it. We may as well make a bargain with them in advance."

Harry despatched the message, and the conversation then turned upon other matters.

Later in the day came an answer to Harry's despatch, which was worded:

"What will you give for the recovery of the cash stolen from your bank in 1890?"

The answer was simply:

"Twenty-five per cent. of all you may recover."

"That gives us something to work for," said Old King Brady. "But then it may not be at all as we think. Let us go down to Chinatown to-night, look in on the boy, and also look up this King Foong if anything can be learned about him. It is just possible that Wing Lee may know the man."

So following up this intention after supper, the Bradys and Alice started for Chinatown, reaching there about half-past eight.

They went directly to Wing Lee's and were admitted by the Chinese Secret Service man himself.

"Did that boy Miss Montgomery sent you come here, Wing?" Old King Brady asked.

"He did, but he is not here now," replied Wing Lee, who spoke as good English as Old King Brady himself.

"Where is he then?"

"I don't know. I was out all day, and my wife went to her mother's this afternoon with the baby. When she got back about six o'clock the boy was gone."

"Did he watch during the morning?"

"Yes, he did," replied Mrs. Lee. "I left him watching when I went away."

"He must have caught on to something," said Alice. "He was in deadly earnest when I parted from him."

"He seemed so when I talked with him at the office," replied Old King Brady. "I cautioned him to be very careful. Told him if he needed help to go to the Elizabeth street station, and I telephoned them to help him. Harry, suppose you run around there and see if they know anything about him. We will wait here until you return."

Harry departed, and after he had gone Old King Brady asked Wing Lee if he knew a Hip Sing Tong man named King Foong.

"No, I don't," replied Wing Lee.

"Otherwise known as the King of Clubs?"

"Yes, yes. I know now who you mean. A San Francisco crook."

"Exactly. Flourished fifteen years ago."

"He dates back a little before my time. He broke into a bank out there long ago and disappeared. A man in San Francisco was telling me about him some years ago. They say he was the slickest ever. This fellow told me he thought he was dead."

"What bank was it?"

"Chinese. Woo Bing Gong & Co., on Dupont street."

"How long ago was this?"

Wing Lee thought it was in the late 80's, which, of course, placed it before the robbery of the Miners' Bank. Soon Harry came back with word that they had seen nothing of Arthur at the Elizabeth street station.

"Looks as if the boy might have got himself into trouble," remarked Alice.

"You can't tell anything about it," replied the old detective. "He may have given it up and gone home."

They pulled out then.

Wing Lee did not offer to help them find out more about King Foong, and Old King Brady did not care to ask that favor of him.

They now called on several Chinamen whom they knew, but with no success.

It was evident that under the name of King Foong the California crook was not known in New York's Chinatown.

As they were passing the Pell street house where they met the dumb Chinaman, Harry suggested that they look in on him again and see if Alice could talk with him.

Alice was doubtful, but she was ready to try, so they went upstairs to his room.

His door was locked, but once more Old King Brady opened it with a skeleton key.

The dumb man was not there, however.

Alice made a hasty examination of his things, but it resulted in nothing.

They then locked the door again and passed into the main back room.

"Is this the room where he thought he saw his mother?" asked Alice.

"It is," replied Harry.

Alice stood looking around while the Bradys passed into the front room.

They came right back, reporting no one there.

"You made a thorough search here, I suppose?" asked Alice.

"We thought we did," replied the old detective quickly, "but for some reason we did not discover that secret panel. Did you open it, Alice?"

"No; it is just as I found it. I noticed it just as you passed into the other room."

The panel in question was a long, narrow slit close up against the chimney breast.

It was a sliding affair and had been closed all but the fraction of an inch.

When Old King Brady pushed it aside he found that it closed automatically by means of a weight.

A piece of mortar had fallen from the chimney into the groove in which the panel operated, which prevented it from going quite to.

Behind this panel was an exceedingly narrow flight of stairs going down behind the chimney.

"Here's a discovery!" exclaimed Harry. "Strange we didn't catch onto it before, governor. It is certainly plain enough."

"Plain enough now we come to see it open," replied the old detective, "but secret enough to have escaped us when we were here before. Question is where do these stairs lead to?"

The bricked-up underground rooms, perhaps."

"It strikes me so. Given one of those rat holes, and John Chinaman is bound to get into it. We are all armed. Suppose we investigate?"

"I second the motion," assented Harry, "but let us make sure we are going to be able to get out again first."

Old King Brady examined the workings of the panel carefully.

"Simple," he said, "and no danger unless somebody nails us in. Don't you think you better let me go down there alone?"

"Not on any account," protested Alice.

"How can you think of it?" added Harry. "We all of us go or no one goes, I say."

"We must be very careful," said Old King Brady. "Not an unnecessary sound now."

They descended on tiptoe and reached a corridor.

"It is the same old place," breathed Old King Brady, "but it is as dark as a pocket. I don't believe there is any one here."

They listened for several minutes, but could not hear a sound.

"Let's get next to the big room where the secret joss house was," whispered Harry.

It was familiar ground for the Bradys, who had several years before trapped a desperate bunch of Chinese crooks in this very place.

They crept along the corridor until they reached an iron door.

It stood wide open, and behind it was a shorter corridor, from which opened a wooden door, now closed.

"There you are," whispered Harry.

He got down on his knees and listened at the key-hole.

"I don't hear a sound," he presently breathed.

"I'm going to tackle it," said Old King Brady.

He got out his skeleton keys, and in a moment had the door open.

The room into which they entered was the one to which Arthur was taken earlier in the evening by the dumb Chinaman and the veiled Mrs. Smith.

The Bradys and Alice looked around at its elegant furnishings with considerable surprise.

"Somebody has got money to spend," remarked Harry.

"Indeed and it looks that way," replied Old King Brady, closing the door.

"Quick, Alice," he added. "Look around here and see if you can catch on to the name of the person or persons who hold out here."

There were several books on the table, all in Chinese, and without bindings in the usual style.

Alice picked up one of these.

"Here's something written on the flyleaf," she said.

"Let us see. 'To my king.' Written by a woman, I should say."

"King," said the old detective. "Suggests King Foong."

"It isn't the same word," replied Alice; "it is the word which means a king."

"What's the book about?" asked Harry.

"Professes to be a history of China," replied Alice.

She examined the others, but none of them had anything written on the flyleaves.

Meanwhile Old King Brady had opened an inner door. It proved to connect with an elaborately furnished bedroom.

Evidently the room was occupied in part, at least, by a woman.

Her picture hung on the wall, an enlarged framed photograph.

Beside it was the framed photograph of a Chinaman, but the woman was white and decidedly good looking.

"This fellow has a white wife evidently," said Harry.

Alice was staring at the picture.

"What about it?" asked Old King Brady.

"Only that it is the very duplicate of a picture of that boy's mother which I saw hanging in his bedroom over in Brooklyn," Alice replied.

"Further evidence of the truth of our theory," said Old King Brady, adding: "Well, I don't know that we can do anything more here."

They passed back into the other room and were just

about about to leave it when light footsteps were heard in the corridor.

"Trouble!" breathed Old King Brady, and he drew his revolver.

At the same instant the door opened and a well-dressed Chinaman looked in.

He gave a sharp exclamation and immediately shut the door.

They could hear him running now.

"Let him go," said the old detective, "and we will go, too. We will report this discovery at the station and let the police act as they choose. I don't want to get into a mix-up to-night."

They passed out, all holding their revolvers in readiness.

Gaining the stairs, they could hear some one running up who had almost gained the top.

"Hurry, hurry!" cried Harry; "next thing they will be nailing up that door on us."

They were still on the stairs when a loud hammering was heard.

"There! What did I tell you!" exclaimed Harry. "As sure as fate they are nailing up that door!"

CHAPTER VI.

ARTHUR FINDS HIS MOTHER.

In answer to the veiled woman's threat Arthur again assured her that he had no intention of doing otherwise than he was told, and that he was quite alone in Chinatown.

It seemed to satisfy her, and she told him to sit down and wait, then departing.

The Chinaman in the Morris chair now resumed his reading, paying no attention to Arthur.

After awhile the dumb man came in and motioned to the other Chinaman, who began talking with his fingers.

"Boy," he said presently, "all is ready. Woo Yet will blindfold you again. Now let me tell you something before you start on this expedition. If you do as you are told and try to help us, it is going to mean big money for you."

"I don't care anything about that," replied Arthur. "What I want is to get my mother back."

"You will get that, too," replied the Chinaman, and Woo Yet proceeded to blindfold him.

Arthur was then led out of the room and through a long passage.

He did not ascend the narrow stairs again, but finally went up a shorter flight, and here the handkerchief was removed.

He now found himself in a cellar, out of which Woo Yet led him into a shallow back yard.

They passed through a hallway and came out on Pell street.

Arthur saw that it was not the house where they had gone in, but one lower down. An old style hack stood at the door.

Woo Yet opened the door, and Mrs. Smith, still veiled, looked out.

There was also a Chinaman in native dress in the hack.

He was an ugly looking brute, his face being terribly scarred.

"Get in, Arthur," said Mrs. Smith. "Now we go."

And then a ride which seemed to Arthur interminable began.

Their way lay up Second avenue under the elevated railroad.

Not a word was spoken to the boy, although Mrs. Smith and the Chinaman occasionally spoke in Chinese.

After they crossed Forty-second street the woman told Arthur that it would be necessary to blindfold him again, which was done, and then the Chinaman pulled down the shade on his side.

And still the ride continued. At last they ran on to a bridge.

Arthur judged that it must be the Queensboro Bridge, of which he had heard, but had never seen, strange as it may seem.

To the Brooklyn boy this section of Greater New York was like a foreign land.

But he had studied the city map, and he knew its geography, so when they ran off the bridge and turned to the left he knew that they were heading towards Astoria.

And still the old hack ran on and on until poor Arthur began to think they were bound for the end of the world.

"Are we never going to get there, Mrs. Smith?" he asked at last.

"We are almost there now," was the reply.

"And then I shall see mother?"

"And then you will see your mother."

Presently the cab stopped and the Chinaman got out. Then it moved on again for a short distance and stopped once more.

"This is the end of our journey," said Mrs. Smith. "You may take off the handkerchief now, Arthur."

He did so, and to his surprise he saw by the light of the carriage lamps that the woman was no longer veiled.

And with this came another discovery.

Her resemblance to his mother was wonderful, startling to a degree.

She laughed to see him stare at her.

"Well," she said, "what is the matter with you, Arthur? What are you looking at me so hard for? Do you think I am your mother?"

"You can't be!" cried Arthur, "but you do look just like her."

"And why shouldn't I, seeing that your mother is my twin sister, and I am your aunt?"

"Is that really so?"

"Of course it's so. Do you find it hard to believe?"

Arthur was silent.

Truth was he did not want to believe it, and yet he could not doubt that the relationship claimed by this singular woman existed.

"Get out and help me out like a gentleman," she said.

Arthur obeyed, and found himself standing in front of a large, old-fashioned mansion.

It stood well back from a road which was cut off by an iron fence. There were many fine old trees growing on a broad lawn.

The house was quite dark, however, and the place wore a gloomy air which got upon Arthur's nerves.

The Chinaman was nowhere to be seen.

Mrs. Smith paid the driver and the hack went away.

They ascended to the broad piazza, and Mrs. Smith opened the door with a latch-key.

"Come in," she said. "We will have a light here presently. Have you a match or shall I have to go for one?"

Arthur had one, and he struck it, lighting a small lamp which stood on a table.

The hall looked very bare. There was an old tattered carpet on the floor. The stairs were bare. Through an open door Arthur looked into a large room where there was much old-fashioned furniture and a few pictures hanging on the walls.

It looked very dusty and badly kept. A mouldy smell pervaded the place.

They stood waiting in silence until Arthur's patience was exhausted.

"What are we waiting for?" he asked. "If my mother is here why can't I see her now?"

"Patience," said Mrs. Smith. "It won't be long now. Come here. I'll show you something."

She picked up the lamp and led the way into the parlor, throwing the light upon a crayon portrait of a young man which hung over the mantelpiece.

"Do you see any resemblance there to any one you know?" she asked.

"I don't know as I do," replied Arthur.

"Turn around and look there between the windows," said the woman.

There was a large mirror hanging between the windows, and Arthur now found himself looking at his own reflection.

"Well?" said Mrs. Smith.

"Do you mean that the picture looks like me?"

"Don't it, then?"

"It does look something like me, I suppose. Who is it?"

"Your father."

"My father!"

"How dare you!" cried a voice behind them. "How dare you bring my boy here? How dare you break the silence of years, you wicked woman! You shall make nothing by this!"

It was Arthur's mother, and the boy was clasped in her arms before she had finished this speech.

She kissed him affectionately, but seemed terribly angry.

"So you have shown your face to him!" she continued.

"You have shown your face in spite of your promise. I suppose you have told him who you are, too, and all about his father! But it will not aid you in your purpose. It——"

"Silence, Grace!" cried Mrs. Smith. "Don't be a fool and jump at conclusions. I have told him who I am and there is no good reason why I shouldn't, but I have told him no more. As for my face, he has seen it twice before. Once on the night of your disappearance when that crazy idiot, Woo Yet, tried to cut my throat in his rage, for which he will pay the penalty this very night, and again to-night by accident. But enough of this. I——"

"Yes, enough, and more than enough!" cried Mrs. Anderson. "I don't want to hear a word of your Chinese

pals. I don't care whether they live or die. If you are wise let me go away from this house with my boy!"

She was almost in hysterics now and stood trembling from head to foot.

"And why should you not go away if you want to, mother?" cried Arthur. "Whose house is this? Why do you have to stay here against your will?"

She seized him by the arm and turned him around.

Outside in the hall stood the scar-faced Chinaman and another, both armed with revolvers.

"There is my answer!" she screamed. "This is the work of that she-fiend, your aunt!"

"Grace, calm down," said Mrs. Smith, coolly. "I have brought Arthur here in the hope that it will bring you to your senses, for I tell you, sister, it has to be. As soon as he disposes of Woo Yet, which he intends to do to-night, King will come here, and then unless you give up he will dispose of Arthur before your eyes."

"Wretch!" shrieked Mrs. Anderson. "Base wretch! Have you no mercy? Is not the boy your own flesh and blood as well as mine?"

She made a rush for her sister, and then with a wild cry fell to the floor and lay kicking and screaming.

"Get her quiet if you can, Arthur," said Mrs. Smith, coolly. "I will see you later. Don't hope to escape, though. This house is closely guarded by those who will not hesitate to shoot you if you attempt it. Try to persuade your mother to do as we wish. Then you shall both go free."

She left the room then, and Arthur heard her lock the door.

Thankful that his aunt had left the lamp behind her, Arthur devoted himself to his mother, and at last got her quiet.

"What does all this mean?" he then asked.

She was sitting in an old-fashioned rocking-chair with her face buried in her hands.

"Don't ask me, Arthur," she murmured. "I cannot, no, I will not, tell you, and wicked as that woman is I don't think she will break her solemn promise and tell you, either."

"Does it concern my father?" urged Arthur.

"Yes, it does."

"Tell me, mother, is he alive?"

She hesitated.

"Mother, I am no longer a child," said Arthur, firmly.

"I have a right to know what all this means. I ask you again, and I want an answer. Is my father alive?"

"He is," murmured the unfortunate woman in a troubled tone.

"Then where is he? Why have I never seen him? Are you separated from him? Have you been divorced?"

"Neither, my son," she murmured, adding: "Ask me no more. Oh, Arthur, spare me! You don't know how I have suffered!"

"But I must rest my nerves," she added. "There is but one way. I must sleep."

Now, in one respect Mrs. Anderson had always been a very peculiar woman, and Arthur knew just what she meant.

She was, in short, one of those rare persons who can command sleep at will.

Arthur never remembered the time when his mother could not throw herself on bed or lounge and go right to sleep, whether it was day or night, and no matter how much noise was going on around her.

"That's right, mother," he said, soothingly. "One of your short sleeps will do you good. Lie right down, and I will wait and watch."

She stretched herself upon a large, old-fashioned hair-cloth sofa, and in a moment her regular breathing told Arthur that she slept.

"She must be made to tell me," he thought. "I have a right to know. This mystery began at midnight on the day she disappeared. The truth must and shall be exposed."

He paced the floor uneasily.

At the end of the room were folding doors. Two windows opened on the piazza, protected by inside blinds.

Arthur tried to pull open the blinds, but they were nailed fast.

He then went to the folding doors and tried to open them.

They yielded readily.

The back parlor lay beyond.

It was not furnished like the front, but as a bedroom.

The bed was large and old-fashioned.

There was something upon it covered with a sheet.

A sense of horror seized the boy.

"What was the thing under the sheet?" he asked himself.

Resolved to know, Arthur caught up the lamp and advanced into the other room.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESCUE OF THE DUMB CHINAMAN.

"We don't stand for this!" cried Old King Brady. "There is nothing to that panel. It is the flimsiest sort of an affair. We can easily kick it down, Harry. Come on!"

The hammering had now ceased.

But it had given place to other sounds even more startling.

Suddenly there was a loud cry, then the voice of some one falling.

The sounds continued as the detectives hurried upstairs.

"Some one fighting!" cried Harry.

"Sounds like two against one," said Old King Brady, and having gained the top of the stairs now, he raised his foot and gave the panel a violent kick.

It resisted the first attack, but the old detective split it in two pieces at the second kick, thus clearing the way into the vacant room.

But it was not altogether vacant now.

Three Chinamen were fighting savagely, two having set upon one, as Old King Brady had said, but a glance showed the detectives that neither of the three was the man who had looked in on them in the secret room below, while Old King Brady and Harry saw that the one struggling with the other two was the dumb Chinaman.

At the very instant the detectives came through the

wrecked panel they got him down, and one of the pair had drawn a revolver.

But the sight of the Bradys with their revolvers deterred him, and the pair ran out of the room and could be heard chasing downstairs.

Meanwhile, the dumb Chinaman, half stunned by his fall, remained on the floor.

"The dumb man!" cried Harry.

"Surely," said Old King Brady. "Try your hand on him, Alice. Tell him to get up and that we won't hurt him."

"I'm afraid I can't do much," said Alice. "I haven't the faintest idea how to talk Chinese with my fingers."

But she can do the deaf and dumb act in English well enough, and so can Harry, who now suggested that possibly the dumb Chinaman had been taught English in some California institution for the deaf and dumb.

Woo Yet had now got upon his feet. His face was all out and bleeding. He looked at the detectives in a dazed way.

"What's the matter?" demanded Alice with her fingers.

It was as Harry had suggested.

"They were trying to murder me," he instantly replied.

"Who were they?" asked Alice.

"I don't know them. I never saw them before," was the answer.

There was a hammer lying on the floor.

Alice pointed to it and asked Woo Yet if it was he who had nailed up the panel.

He replied that it was not. That he had heard the hammering and came out of his room to see what was going on when the two men suddenly rushed out of the dark room and attacked him.

Alice pressed him further, but he denied all knowledge of the secret panel and of the room below.

"It's no use," said Alice at last. "Of course he knows all about it, but I don't see how we are going to make him tell."

"We can't, of course," said Old King Brady. "Ask him about Arthur. Ask him first if he remembers me."

Alice worked her fingers and the dummy did the same.

"Yes, he does," she said. "He remembers Arthur, too, he says. He declares he has not seen him since that night."

"I believe he lies by the look on his face."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"I think we better go," said Harry.

Old King Brady thought so too, and they went down on to Pell street.

The dumb Chinaman followed them down the first flight and the last they saw of him he was going into the hall bedroom on the second floor, while his own hall bedroom was on the third or top floor of the old huse, it will be remembered.

"I wonder if he has made a mistake and got the wrong room," remarked Harry as he looked back.

When they got out on Pell street Old King Brady suddenly turned back before they had gone half way to the Bowery.

"I've got a notion that I want to look into that cellar

again," he said. "I don't believe that trap-door is nailed down. It's a fake."

"Are you going to report at Elizabeth street?" demanded Harry.

"I don't know. What do you think?"

"They ought to be told that the place has opened up again."

I guess that's so. Well, we will report, but let us have a look at the cellar first."

They returned to the house and passed through the hall into the back yard.

Here the electric lights on the elevated railroad station at Chatham Square and others made it almost as bright as day.

They went into the cellar, and once more Old King Brady examined the trap-door which had formerly communicated with the underground passages and rooms.

If there was any fake about its fastenings he could not find it out. It all seemed to be perfectly secure.

They were standing there talking about it when suddenly a cry of agony broke upon their ears.

"For heaven sake, what is that?" exclaimed Harry.

"Sounds as if somebody was being murdered," added Alice.

"Indeed it does," replied the old detective, and they all hurried up the steps into the back yard.

The sight which met their gaze was a strange one.

There suspended in the air against the side of the house was the Bradys' dummy.

For the unfortunate Chinaman the situation was terrible.

There he was hanging by the pigtail. He threw up his hands wildly.

Old King Brady and Harry pressed forward to relieve him from his painful position.

Just then he was pulled upward by a pair of hands which projected from beneath the half-closed blinds in the window above which, as the Bradys figured it out, was the room into which they had seen him go.

Harry caught him by one leg and Old King Brady by the other, giving them a quick jerk, hoping to force the hands to let go their hold.

The poor wretch gave a wild yell, but just the same that yank did the business.

For the dumb Chinaman's queue was not all his natural hair.

According to the custom of his race it had silk braided in with it to lengthen it out.

Thus the pigtail parted at the point where silk and hair joined, and the dummy fell sprawling on the ground.

Instantly the hands vanished and the blinds were closed.

But if those particular blinds were closed, others opened in all directions.

Windows went up and yellow heads and white heads looked out upon that back yard.

The yells of the dumb Chinaman had aroused the entire neighborhood.

No one "butted in" on the Bradys, however.

The unfortunate fellow appeared to be worse used up than ever now.

Harry helped him up, and he clung to him, moaning in a peculiar way.

"What shall we do with him?" said Old King Brady. "They will surely murder the poor wretch if we leave him here."

Evidently the dummy was of the same opinion, for he now turned to Alice and began using his fingers with great rapidity.

"What's he saying?" demanded the old detective.

"He says if you will take him away from here he will tell you all you want to know," replied Alice. "He is afraid they will murder him."

"Faith and I believe they will," said the old detective. "Tell him to come along."

They hurried him out on to Pell street and through to Chatham Square.

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Harry.

"Take him home," replied Old King Brady. "I don't know what else to do with him. Perhaps we will keep him all night and perhaps we won't. We will see."

It was now about ten o'clock.

Hailing one of the old night-hawk cabs which still stand on Chatham Square, the Bradys bundled the dumb Chinaman into it and got in themselves.

It was the wisest thing they ever did, for no sooner was the cab started than he began to talk with his fingers to Alice.

His talk was in fairly good English, too.

Harry, who was able to follow it, translated to Old King Brady as the conversation proceeded.

"He says that the man who nailed us in is King Foong. That the boy we wanted was captured to-night by Mrs. Foong. She is a white woman. They mean to kill him. They have captured the boy's mother, too. They are holding her a prisoner in an old house over in Astoria. There is a dead man there. He doesn't know who he is nor what it is all about. He says they are a bad bunch, and they mean to kill Mrs. Anderson, too. Hello! Now he says that Mrs. Anderson is Mrs. Foong's sister. Ask him about what the boy saw that night, Alice."

Alice wiggled her fingers and Harry reported.

"He says it wasn't Mrs. Anderson the boy saw, but her sister, Mrs. Foong," continued Harry; "that it was he who ran at her with the knife. She made him mad and he lost his temper. He didn't mean to hurt her, he claims, but only to scare her. He says the woman and her husband pretended to forgive him, but it was for doing this that they tried to kill him to-night. He says King Foong hired those men to do him up."

"All mighty interesting and bears out our theory," said Old King Brady. "Did you ask him how it happened that he was hung up there, Alice?"

"No," replied Alice. "I didn't, but I will."

Still she talked and Harry translated.

"He says he went into that room expecting to find a friend, but the man turned on him, and the same two who had attacked him coming in, he started to jump out of the window. They caught him by the pigtail and let him hang."

"This is great," said Old King Brady. "Ask him if he will show us where this house in Astoria is."

Alice did so, and the dummy assured her that he would. He said that Mrs. Foong was there alone with Arthur and her sister so far as he knew, but he warned her that there might be others with her.

Asked if King Foong intended to go there that night, he replied that he did not know certainly, but he didn't think so."

All through this talk the dumb Chinaman kept a face as stolid as a block of wood.

Perhaps this was why Wing Lee thought the man half witted.

Alice did not find him so at all.

"We ought to go, I suppose," said Old King Brady. "I feel in a measure responsible for that boy."

"Yes," assented Alice. "We certainly ought to go, but we shall never get there if we stick to this old hack."

"Ask him how far this house is from the end of the Queensboro Bridge," said Old King Brady.

Woo Yet reported it a long way. It was on the Shore road far beyond Hell Gate," he declared.

"We must go in our car," said Harry.

So they let the hack take them home, and Harry telephoned the garage where they keep their car to send it around, with a chauffeur.

Meanwhile Woo Yet was allowed to wash the blood off his face and clean up generally.

Shortly after eleven they started.

It proved to be the first time the dumb Chinaman had ever been in an automobile, and he grew quite excited over it at first.

Alice questioned him further and drew out the following additional facts:

That King Foong was quite rich. That he had been living in New York for a number of years under the name of Moo Wow. That he had recently taken to dealing in smuggled opium, and that was why he located in the underground rooms. That he, Woo Yet, happened to see Mrs. Anderson going into the Astoria house, and reported it to her sister. That this was the beginning of it all.

But what the plot against the Andersons was all about the dumb Chinaman again declared he did not know.

He said further that he was in the habit of going back and forth between Chinatown and the Chinese vegetable gardens at Astoria daily, and that was how he came to see Mrs. Anderson.

As for the dead man he heard was in the house, he supposed, but did not positively know, that he was a very old man whom he had often seen working in the garden behind the house during a number of years, and that he supposed him to be the owner of the place.

He stated further that he had never seen any one else about the place at any time.

The Bradys' car made short work of the distance, and soon after midnight the detectives found themselves running along the once famous Shore road at Astoria.

In the old days when the fine mansions were in their prime and the gardens kept up, there was no prettier spot on earth.

But the Shore road saw its best days long ago, and it now presents but a shadow of its former glory.

Away down at the end Woo Yet pointed out the house.

It was a grand old frame mansion standing in extensive grounds well back from the road.

"I should like to know something about the place before we tackle it," said Old King Brady, "but as I don't suppose we are liable to strike any one we can inquire of at this late hour, we may as well take the bull by the horns and go at it boldly."

They accordingly left the car at the gate and walked up the broad tree-lined avenue.

Woo Yet seemed very nervous.

"Tell him not to let that bad woman get me," he said to Alice with his fingers.

"He can stay back if he wants to," said Old King Brady when Alice translated this.

Woo Yet was sure he preferred to do so, so he returned to the car, while the Bradys and Alice ascended the steps. Harry rang the bell.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARTHUR HEARS THE STORY OF THE PAST.

As Arthur approached the bed his sense of horror increased.

There was a strange odor in the room as if some sort of chemical had been spilled.

He stood for a moment looking down upon the sheet, uncertain whether to proceed further with his investigations or not.

There was a human being there, of course, and Arthur could not doubt that he or she was dead.

At last he mustered up courage to lift the sheet, and he saw lying on its back the corpse of a man evidently far advanced in years.

Clearly the old man had been dead some time.

Arthur dropped the sheet in a hurry.

He tried the windows here, but found them nailed, while the door leading into the hall was locked.

Just as he turned he saw his mother coming into the room.

"I am better now," she said. "I have had my sleep, and my nerves are quiet. Arthur, my dear son, what ever possessed you to come in here?"

"I was trying to find some way to escape," stammered Arthur.

"And instead you have found something else."

"Yes. Who is that man, mother?"

"He is your grandfather, my boy."

"Not your father?"

"Oh, no. Whether my father is alive or dead, I have no idea. This is your father's father."

"When did he die?"

"The night I disappeared. He died in my arms. It was because they sent me a letter telling me that he was dying that I hurried away as I did."

"But why did you go to Chinatown, mother?"

"I to Chinatown? I was never there in my life, Arthur. It must have been your aunt you saw. Tell me all about it. I am calm now and can bear anything."

Arthur told his story.

"You poor boy, how you must have suffered," his mother said. "I wish that Chinaman, whoever he was, had killed her! Oh, I wish he had!"

"Do you hate your sister so, mother?"

"I do, indeed. She is a wicked woman. That Chinaman you saw in the underground room is her husband. She married him years ago in San Francisco. He is a very bad man, my son, and I fear the worst for both of us."

"What did my grandfather die of?"

"Just old age. He was very eccentric. A number of years ago he bought this fine old place with—with his money, and he has lived here alone ever since. I am the only person he ever permitted to cross the threshold."

"Why did you never take me to see him?"

"He was not a good man, Arthur. In his younger days he was a very bad one, although he has been living here quietly and respectably enough in his declining years. There were excellent reasons why I did not want you to know him."

"What is it my aunt wants you to do?" asked Arthur abruptly.

"I cannot tell you, my son. I must not—I will not."

"But, mother, I am almost a man. If this terrible secret concerns my father I ought to be told. I have a right to know the truth."

"Hush, my son! I cannot tell you now at all events. Oh, if there was only some way in which we could make our escape. Then my course would be plain. Hark! What is that pounding underneath us? Don't you hear?"

Arthur could scarcely have helped hearing.

Heavy blows were being struck underneath the floor, but not on it, so it would seem.

"They must be doing something in the cellar," said Arthur.

"Ah! And I can easily guess why," said his mother.

"But it will not avail them, she added. "They are only wasting their time."

Not quite as much as she thought, as she was to learn later.

At last the pounding ceased.

"If we could only make our escape," said Mrs. Anderson again. "San you think of no way?"

"That's what I have been trying to think of," replied Arthur. "I can break the glass in this window and kick out the partings. It will make an awful noise, though."

"And would bring those terrible Chinamen in upon us instantly. No; that won't do. But listen, my son. Somewhere in this room there exists a secret panel which your grandfather had constructed for reasons of his own. He was in the act of telling me how to find it when he died. If we could only find it now it would aid us to escape."

"Where does it lead to?"

"That I don't certainly know, but I do know that it must connect with some secret way out of the house, for I know that is why he built it. Let us search for it, Arthur. We may succeed in finding it."

They examined the walls all around, but could find nothing.

"I am afraid we can't hope to succeed," sighed Mrs. Anderson. "Of course, if it was not too secret for a poor brain like mine to discover, it would have but badly served the old man's purpose. We may as well give up, my son."

"I hate awfully to give up," replied Arthur. "Might

not the opening be behind this bed? Suppose we move it out?"

But before Mrs. Anderson could reply their attention was called away from their purpose by the opening of the door in the other room, and Mrs. King Foong looked in upon them between the folding doors.

"Well, Grace, have you come to your senses yet?" she asked in a loud voice.

It made Arthur feel how little he really knew of his mother, for he had always understood her name to be Sarah.

"I am still of the same mind, Ella," replied Mrs. Anderson. "What that dead man told me is not for you and your husband to know, nor will it ever be."

"Stubborn fool! Go to your room. Leave Arthur here with me."

"See here!" flashed Arthur, "be civil to my mother whatever else you do. Be decently civil if you know how."

She shook her finger at him, but made no other answer. One of the armed Chinamen now stepped up behind her.

"You are to follow him instantly Grace," she said.

"I must go, Arthur," sighed Mrs. Anderson. "Perhaps they will let me see you again soon."

She left the room then, the Chinaman following her. Arthur heard them go upstairs. The scar-faced man remained until Mrs. Foong spoke to him in Chinese, when he left the room and shut the door.

Mrs. Foong closed the folding doors and, seating herself in the rocking-chair in the front parlor, said:

"Now, Arthur, we will have a friendly talk. Sit down. You have seen that dead man. Did your mother tell you who he was?"

"Yes, my grandfather."

"Exactly. Tell me, is there any chance that your mother will yield to my request?"

"I don't think there is. She says she won't at all events."

"If she persists it will make harsh measures necessary, and that is what I am extremely anxious to avoid, so I have made up my mind to tell you all, and then you, I am sure, will see the necessity of trying your best to persuade your mother to yield."

Arthur said nothing. He felt in a way that loyalty to his mother ought to make him refuse to listen.

"But then what good would it do?" he asked himself. His aunt would tell him anyway. Besides this, his curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and he also felt that it was his right to know all about his father.

"Your name is not Anderson, Arthur, Mrs. Foong began. "It is Armour. Your mother and I are twin sisters, as I told you. Our father, if he still lives, is Henry Harvey, formerly a mining broker in San Francisco. Our mother, for whom I am named, was Ella Grandin. She is long since dead.

"We were pleasure living girls, your mother and I, and we went much into San Francisco society, which was rather a mixed proposition in those days. Almost anything went. Even an educated Chinaman was received. My husband, whom you saw in that underground room, was such a person. He is California born and was educated in a Catholic college out there. I met him at the house of a

dear friend of mine, and I fell in love with him at first sight. Six months later I ran away and married him. I never saw my parents after that, nor would they have seen me if I had tried to make peace with them.

"Your mother did not do much better in the way of a match. At sixteen she met a stylish young man about eight years older than herself named Joseph Armour, and a year later, shortly after my disappearance, she eloped with him. My father had forbidden him the house long before. He had looked up his record and history. He found that he was the son of the then notorious Arthur Armour, a crook and an expert counterfeiter, then much wanted by the authorities. Joe himself was a professional burglar and had even then served two years in prison. And now seeing that I am telling her affairs, I'll tell mine, too. My husband proved to be no better than hers, for he also was at that time a professional crook, although he has since reformed and it is now many years since he pulled off a job. You are asking yourself if I have no shame in telling you all this, Arthur. I answer none whatever. I love my husband. He has been good to me. The world despises me because he happens to be a Chinaman. I in turn despise the world. I care nothing for its laws. If my King were to ask me to help him commit a burglary to-morrow I'd do it."

"But about my father," said Arthur, disgusted with this wild talk.

"I am coming back to him," replied his aunt. "Foong found out that a certain Chinese banker kept a large sum of money in his safe. The man's name was Woo Bing Gong. He wanted that money, but he was no safe blower. Your father was an expert in that line. As we were all very thick at that time, King got Joe to crack the safe for him. They made an \$80,000 haul and divided equally. The police got after King, but your father was not suspected. A year passed. The police don't remember long where only a despised Chink is concerned. King returned to San Francisco and got a job as night watchman in the Miners' Bank through forged recommendations. One night he let your father in, and together they blew the vault and got away with \$100,000. Joe was to divide with King, but instead he made for Mexico and never gave him a cent. They caught him in San Diego, and he went to San Quentin prison for twenty years."

"And he is there now?" questioned Arthur.

"Was last accounts," replied his aunt.

"And the stolen money?"

"I'm coming to that. Your mother had it in charge much against her will, for she did not like this sort of business ever. They allowed her to see your father alone on the night of his arrest, and he told her to make for New York and to take the money with her and give it to his father, who even then was living here under the assumed name of Berliner. He had given up business and had grown very eccentric and miserly. Your father's idea was that the old man should use the money to get him out of prison, but he never would make the least effort in that direction, and he persuaded your mother that it was better to leave him where he was. But he held on to the stolen cash all right, and to a lot more besides, I don't doubt. He allowed your mother so much to live on and

support you, but it was with the understanding that you were never to be brought near him or to know anything about your father. That's about all I know concerning that part of the business. At last he up and died, and before he died he told your mother where his money was hidden.

"Now up to this time we did not know, King and I, where old Armour lived nor the name he was living under. Naturally, we wanted our share of the swag, and again and again I called on your mother and tried to persuade her to tell me where her father-in-law could be found, but she always refused."

"That is why you called at our house," said Arthur.

"That is why," replied his aunt. "Your mother had made me promise never to tell you anything about your father, nor even to show my face to you, and I kept my word, as you know. One day very recently Woo Yet—that is the dumb Chinaman you saw—happened to see your mother coming out of this house. He thought she was I and tried to talk with her with his fingers. Of course, not knowing him, she would not pay any attention to him. He reported to my husband that I had been here, and then we knew that we had at last learned where to look for old man Armour."

"We made quick use of our discovery, Arthur. King got into the house one night with others. He made things hot for the old man, but he was stubborn and would not give up the secret nor any cash. Next day King and his pals still remaining in the house, your grandfather fell in some sort of fit. It looked as though he was going to die, and King sent for your mother. She came, and the old man died that night in her arms. Before he died he revealed the secret hiding-place of the money to your mother. That we know, and she don't deny it, but King came just too late to listen to his dying words. The man who was watching in his place did not understand English well enough to catch on."

"And you have held my mother a prisoner here ever since?" demanded Arthur.

"That's right, and now we have got you. Listen, Arthur. We only want our share. Half for us, half for you and your mother of all the cash that may turn up. It is only fair, but she won't listen. She has got the crazy notion in her head that it is her duty to make good to the Miners' Bank the money your father stole and so to get him out of prison. It must not be, it shall not be. Let your father finish out his sentence. He richly deserves it for having gone back on my husband. And now, Arthur, you know all, and it is up to you to bring your mother to her senses. If you don't——"

Just then the door opened, and in walked King Foong, who took the words out of her mouth.

"If you don't we shall kill you both," he added, "and that is all there is about it. I am determined to have my share of this money or to have my revenge."

"Oh, King, dear, I'm so glad you have come!" cried the woman, springing up. "I have just been telling Arthur the whole story, and say, King, we have made one discovery, and I believe it is a mighty important one, and may lead to more. If we can pull off the job ourselves and get away to Peru, as you propose, what more do we want?"

"Yes; if!" cried the Chinaman, "but it's a big if. Let me tell you something. The attack we planned on that dumb scoundrel Woo Yet has twice failed, and he has fallen into the hands of the Brady detectives. As sure as you and I are standing in this room, Ella, he will tell them all he knows!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESCUE OF MRS. ARMOUR.

As Harry rang the door-bell of the old mansion there came a heavy crash.

The piazza seemed to tremble. Then all was still.

"What in the world is that?" demanded Alice.

"Something has fallen, that is certain," said Old King Brady.

"It sounded as if it was inside the house," Harry added.

"Rather as if it was under the house," replied the old detective.

"Nobody seems to be coming to the door," said Alice, and she pulled the bell again.

Still there was no answer.

Inside the house all was as still as death now.

Trying the door and finding it securely fastened, the Bradys decided to try their luck at the back, which they did with no better success.

"We go in here if we have to break in," declared Old King Brady; "that's all there is about it."

There was a piazza in the rear also, and on each side of the door the windows came down to the level of its floor, themselves opening like doors.

Examining these and finding that they were nailed in place, Old King Brady kicked in two of the panes and then broke the parting, which gave them ample space to crawl through.

"Here we go," he said, "for better or for worse. Goodness knows what we shall find."

He crawled through and Harry followed.

Flashing their electric lights around, they discovered that they were in a large apartment, which was furnished as a dining-room in a scanty, old-fashioned style.

Opening from it in a side extension was a kitchen.

The fire was out in a small cook stove, and the room was in more or less disorder, dirty dishes being piled up on a table as if the persons using them had been too lazy to wash them. There was a small supply of provisions in a pantry. Here, as in the dining-room, dirt and disorder prevailed.

They passed into a larger room in front.

Here there was nothing but a few empty barrels and coal and kindling wood, yet this had evidently been intended for one of the best rooms in the house.

They crossed the wide hall and entered the front room on the other side.

This was the room in which Mrs. King Foong had told her story to Arthur.

At once the attention of Old King Brady was attracted to the crayon portrait over the mantelpiece.

"Look!" said the old detective. "Our theory now turns into a reality. Of course you both recognize that face?"

"Looks like the newspaper picture of Joe Armour in your scrap-book," said Alice.

"It does. I am sure it is his picture. I wish we knew the name of the old man who occupied this house."

"Woo Yet was not able to tell it with his fingers. He found difficulty with names, anyway, as most deaf and dumb people do," Alice replied.

Old King Brady went to the folding doors and flung them open.

At once he discovered the corpse on the bed.

He turned down the sheet and gazed upon the face.

The hair was long and white; the dead man had a long, white beard, too.

But the face was a very peculiar one, especially the nose, which was positively deformed, being turned sharply to the left.

Alice turned away, half faint.

"Dreadful!" she said. "What a fearful face! Positively it makes me sick."

But Old King Brady continued to look.

"Made a discovery?" asked Harry.

"I think so," was the reply. "It would be hard to forget that nose. I never saw its owner in life, but his picture will be found in my little rogues' gallery. I wish you would study the criminal register more than you do, Harry. You ought to know as much about these people as I do, for you won't always have me to fall back on."

"Easy said, but where is the time coming from?" replied Harry.

"You should take time; you really should."

"Who do you think the man is—or was, perhaps I might better say?"

"If he is the man I think he is, the upper half of his left little finger is missing," declared Old King Brady. "Now to prove my claim."

He turned the sheet over still further.

It was as he had said.

The upper half of the left little finger had been removed, and the skin had grown over the bone.

"That lets you out," said Harry. "Who is he then?"

"A man of many aliases. His true name is Anderson Armitage. He was an expert English banknote engraver at one time in the employ of the United States Government. He turned a counterfeiter fully thirty years ago and put out a large amount of queer, which was so well executed that the Government finally had to call in the entire issue which he so successfully imitated. He was never arrested. Once the Secret Service men almost had him, but he escaped them by leaping from a precipice forty feet high into the bed of a stream. Somewhere in West Virginia, if I remember rightly. They thought to find him dead down there, but when they came to look he had vanished. It has been believed for years that he was dead. Certainly it is many years since he has plied his trade."

"Armitage is very much like Armour," remarked Alice. "Can he be the father of the original of that crayon portrait?"

"I am quite ready to accept that," said Old King Brady. "But the dumb Chinaman is right. This man has been dead for several days, and yet no undertaker has touched him. There is mystery enough and some to spare in this house if we can only get at the bottom of it."

"No sign of anything having fallen as yet," remarked Harry.

"We seem to have the house to ourselves," replied Old King Brady. "Let us go down cellar and see if we can solve that end of the mystery."

The cellar door was located under the main stairs, and the Bradys having descended, found that it was a large one extending under the entire house.

Here were two old-fashioned hot air furnaces which looked as if they had not been used for years.

The mystery of the crash was at once explained.

A strip of about ten feet of the foundation wall on the north side appeared to have collapsed.

It had not fallen into the cellar, but upon itself, so to speak. Mixed with the stone was a mass of fresh earth, and there were some boards projecting from the pile which reached up to the wooden sill which spanned the break.

"This is a very singular state of affairs," remarked the old detective as he stood studying the situation. "I should say there must have been some opening here which was either arched over or supported by these boards. This fresh earth has tumbled in from outside the house, that's sure. Can it be that any one is buried beneath this pile?"

He called two or three times, but got no answer.

"Another mystery," he finally said, adding:

"Well, we may as well turn our attention to the upper part of the house."

The house was only two stories high. Ascending the main staircase, they found themselves in a bare, broad hall with several doors opening from it.

They looked into vacant rooms, and then passing on to the rear, came suddenly upon a Chinaman.

He was in no shape to offer any hindrance to their explorations, however.

He lay stretched upon the floor on his back in a deep sleep.

He was in American dress and his face was horribly scarred.

Beside him was an opium pipe, also the little lamp for cooking the pill and the rest of an opium layout.

"Dead to the world," said Harry.

"I have seen him before," said Old King Brady, "but I can't tell just where. Probably on Mott or Pell street. Looks to me as if he might have been put here to guard this closed door, and fell from grace and hit the hop."

He rapped smartly on the door, and immediately a woman's voice was heard inside demanding to know who was there.

"Mrs. Anderson, surest thing," breathed Alice.

"Are you a prisoner in there?" called Old King Brady.

"I am," was the agitated response. "Who are you?"

"A detective!"

"Thank heaven!"

"Are you Mrs. Anderson?"

"Yes, yes! Have you captured my sister and her Chinese husband?"

"We have captured no one, Mrs. Anderson. We have found no one in the house but a sleeping Chinaman outside this door. We came here to look for your son."

"Arthur! You must be the Old King Brady he told me about then."

"That is who I am, and there are others with me. One is a lady. One Miss Montgomery."

"Yes, yes! My son told me about her. I am in bed, sir. I will get up right away."

"I will come in to you," called Alice, "if we can get the door open."

"Oh, I'm so thankful you have come!" cried the unfortunate woman. "But what can they have done with my boy? It is my sister, Mr. Brady, my own sister. She is a wicked woman. She ought to be arrested. Her Chinese husband is a crook. They have held me a prisoner here for days."

Meanwhile, Old King Brady was feeling in the pockets of the sleeping Chink.

He took away a revolver and a knife, and finally found a key which fitted the door.

Alice opened it and slipped inside.

And through all this the scarred faced Chinaman slept on.

"We will finish our search and wait downstairs, Alice," Old King Brady called. "You and Mrs. Anderson better join us as-soon as you can."

Two of the other rooms proved to be partially furnished, the rest were entirely bare.

"Well, we seem to have scored one point, anyway," said Harry as they were descending the stairs.

"Yes," replied the old detective. "This seems likely to be a long job," he added. "Better go out to the gate and tell that unfortunate chauffeur to go back to the main street of Astoria, I forget its name for the moment, and put up at the hotel. We will rout him out when we want him. Bring the dummy in here. I suppose you can make him understand that there is nothing to fear."

"I can try, at least," replied Harry, and he proceeded to let himself out the front way.

He came back presently with Woo Yet and the chauffeur.

"What's the matter with running the car into the yard here, Mr. Brady?" asked the latter. "I am not anxious to go to a hotel at this hour. I would sooner stay here with you."

"Do it," replied the old detective. "We may need your help."

He then made Harry take the dumb Chinaman into the back parlor and show him the dead man.

Woo Yet declared that the old man had lived in the house for a number of years, ever since he had been going back and forth between Chinatown and the market gardens.

He did not know his name, he added, but he did know that Mrs. Foong considered him some relation to her sister.

He seemed horribly afraid of King Foong, and wanted to know if he was to be arrested if he came.

When Harry assured him that they certainly would arrest him he appeared to be satisfied.

After awhile Alice came downstairs with Mrs. Anderson.

"This lady has told me all, Mr. Brady," she said. "It is

just as you supposed. 'She is not Mrs. Anderson, but Mrs. Armour.'

"I changed my name on Arthur's account," said Mrs. Armour. "He is a good boy, Mr. Brady, and I have tried to bring him up respectably. Have you found him?"

"Not yet, ma'am," replied the old detective. "We haven't found any one."

"That dead man in there is your father-in-law, is he not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Real name Anderson Armitage?"

"I never knew it if it is so. I only knew him as Arthur Anderson Armour."

"He was once a noted counterfeiter?"

"Yes, sir. But he reformed long ago. He led quite the life of a hermit here. My sister is directly responsible for his death, as I have been explaining to Miss Montgomery. Still, he was over eighty years old."

"Let's have the whole story," said Old King Brady. "Then we shall know better how to act."

Mrs. Armour then went on to tell substantially what her sister had told Arthur.

She did not spare herself; on the contrary she blamed herself for not having turned the stolen money over to the authorities at once.

"But you see, Mr. Brady, I loved my husband in those days," she began to explain, when the old detective cut her short.

"No need of any apologies, ma'am," he said. "You did what most women would have done under the circumstances. Do you still love your husband?"

"I do not," she replied firmly. "He refused to answer my letters; he has not written to me for many years. I have no desire ever to see him again. All I ask is to be able to atone for his crime for his son's sake."

"Then you are prepared to tell where old Armitage hid his money?" asked Old King Brady.

"Certainly I am if you promise that the Miners' Bank shall receive what my husband stole."

"You have my promise."

"Very well then. I am ready to tell."

CHAPTER X.

DOOMED TO DEATH.

"What my father-in-law told me in his dying moments was simply this," began Mrs. Armour. "He said that he had deeply repented his past life, and that for many years he had lived honestly, but in fear of discovery by the detectives, and yet they never disturbed him."

"What name did he live under here?" broke in Old King Brady.

"Under the name of Berliner," replied Mrs. Armour. "He looked like a German, and he spoke the language fluently. To the people about here he was known as a German. Indeed, he would never speak English if he could avoid it."

"That goes a long way towards accounting for it," said Old King Brady. However, it has been believed by the Secret Service people that he died years ago, which is the real reason they did not trouble him. Go on."

"He went on to say," continued Mrs. Armour, "that he never could bring himself to destroy the counterfeit plates he had made, and that they with the money he had accumulated, and that which I brought from California, were hidden in the old tomb of the Menier family. They were the original owners of this property. The tomb, as I understand it, is on these grounds. He had reached this point when he suddenly switched off to another and began to speak of a secret way he had made of getting out of this house in case the detectives ever pounced on him. He had just begun to tell me where the entrance was when he died."

"Did he leave a will?" asked Old King Brady.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir," replied Mrs. Armour. "I had no chance to find out. I have been a prisoner ever since his death, and most of the time have been locked in my room, where you found me."

"Did he speak as if he had considerable money?"

"I so understood it. He didn't say how much. He did say, however, that he had no faith in banks, and that all he had left was in this tomb."

"Did he say where in the tomb?"

"No, he didn't get as far as that."

"What you tell me seems to make the whole thing easy," said Old King Brady, "but the puzzling part is to know what has become of King Foong and his wife and your son. Did you hear a great crash shortly before we came to you?"

"Yes, I did, indeed! I thought the whole house was coming down. What was it?"

"It seemed to have been due to the collapse of a piece of the foundation wall in the cellar."

"Is that so? Earlier in the evening Arthur and I heard a great pounding in the cellar. But you alarm me, Mr. Brady. Can it be possible that they were in the cellar at the time the wall fell, and are buried under it?"

"The same idea has occurred to me, and it is a matter that must be looked into. But it will take a long time to remove those stones. I hardly think it better be undertaken before daylight."

"But suppose Arthur is alive under there?"

"Mrs. Armour, do not deceive yourself. Nothing can be more certain than that no one is alive under the stones. I called three times, but got no reply."

She seemed greatly agitated.

"I am in your hands, Mr. Brady," she said after awhile. "You must do as you think best."

"Let us visit this tomb then while we have so good a chance," replied the old detective. "It is now considerably after midnight and we are not likely to be disturbed. Harry, I saw a lantern in the kitchen. Get it, please, and we will explore further."

When Harry returned with the lantern they all went out into the extensive garden back of the house.

It reached back a long way. There was a barn here and a carriage-house and other outbuildings.

Mrs. Armour not being able to give them any clew to the location of the tomb, they were obliged to search for it, and at last they found it at the extreme end of the lot.

It was a large mound of earth faced by two brownstone

pillars and a peaked cornice, upon which was carved the name "Menier."

Between the pillars was an iron door which was painted green.

Old King Brady saw that the paint was comparatively fresh.

Trying the door and finding it fast, the old detective got out his skeleton keys and went to work on the lock, which at length he succeeded in mastering, and the iron door was swung back.

The usual interior of a tomb presented itself.

There were six niches, and each contained its coffin box.

Like the freshly painted door, these boxes appeared to be comparatively new.

They were fastened with modern screw clamps.

"This is strange," the old detective said. "These boxes don't date back any great length of time. How long do you say it is, Mrs. Armour, that your father-in-law has been living in this house?"

"It is about twenty years," she replied.

"He must have put new boxes on old coffins then."

"If he kept his money in them, why not?" asked Alice.

"I don't know about that," replied Old King Brady. "There are two ways of looking at it. But let us investigate. Harry, take hold here."

The chauffeur had accompanied them, and he took hold with Harry.

They drew out one of the boxes.

"It's heavy enough to be full of gold," observed Harry.

The lid was then removed, and an old-fashioned coffin was revealed.

On the tarnished plate Old King Brady read:

"Eugene Menier," with the date of the man's birth and death, the former being 1783 and the latter in 1835.

The lid was screwed down and it took a long time to get it off with the aid of a little pocket screw-driver which the old detective happened to have.

The lid was then raised.

Within was a skull and some loose bones, also a number of bricks, which had made up the weight.

"We shall find no treasure in this tomb," declared the old detective, emphatically. "This is clearly a frame-up to bluff any one who might search for it. It is a pity, Mrs. Armour, that your respected father-in-law could not have lived to give you further details."

A larger screw-driver was now procured and each of the other boxes were examined.

Three of them contained coffins enclosing entire skeletons; the remaining two were filled with loose bones and bricks like the first.

There was no trace of hidden money discovered.

It was now three o'clock. They restored everything as they had found it and returned to the house.

When they came to look for the scar-faced Chinaman they found he had vanished, taking his opium layout with him.

Mrs. Armour was in despair over Arthur. She begged Old King Brady to get busy in the cellar, so they went there and began work on the stones.

As the old detective had predicted, it took a long time to remove them, and when they had been thrown out of the

way at last it was only to find a great mass of earth behind them, blocking further progress.

"There has certainly been a secret passage here," declared Old King Brady. "The roof has collapsed. Without a shovel we can't dig this earth out, and there is no telling how far back it may extend. I have my own theory about all this."

"What is it then?" demanded Harry. "Why not give it right out?"

"Alice, you remain in the house here with Mrs. Armour," said Old King Brady. "Harry and I and the chauffeur will go out on the grounds."

They started up the cellar stairs.

"Hello! Who shut this door?" cried Harry. "I distinctly remember leaving it open."

"We are trapped, I'm afraid," said Old King Brady, and he pushed ahead and tried the door.

"Bolted on the other side, top and bottom!" he exclaimed. "What stupidity! Why didn't we leave some one on the watch?"

He had no more than spoken when there came a loud pounding on the door.

"Hello!" shouted Harry.

"Want to come out?" a man's voice cried.

"Naturally."

"Well, then, you won't get out, let me tell you."

A chuckling laugh followed this speech. Then a woman's voice called:

"Grace, are you there?"

"Ella, you wretch! What have you done with Arthur?" Mrs. Armour screamed.

"Ah, I stir you up at last!" her sister replied. "No matter where he is. It is where you will never find him. You will never see him alive again."

"Tell her the rest," said the man's voice. "She may as well know all."

"Well, then, Grace, since King wishes it, I will tell you," added the woman. "We have got the old man's money, and there is a lot more of it than either you or I ever dreamed of. Now tell your detective friends, or I suppose they can hear for themselves. You may as well tell them also that we are getting ready to set the house afire. You didn't think I was quite as bad as that, did you, dearie? But it's true all the same. You don't know how bad I am. Bye bye, Grace. You would have done better if you had listened to me at the start. Then I meant to be fair with you, but as you wouldn't have it so, it has come to this."

They could hear the precious pair retreating through the hall.

They tried to force the door then, but it was of solid oak, and they might as well have tried to push over the house.

"Where's that dumb Chinaman?" demanded Old King Brady suddenly. "Do you know, I totally forgot him. I wonder what's the matter with me to-night?"

The last they had seen of Woo Yet was just as they finished moving the stone.

They now returned to the cellar and searched everywhere for the man, but with no success.

"I don't smell smoke," remarked Alice. "I don't hear

a sound, either. I'm inclined to think that after all it was just bluff about setting the house afire, and I don't believe they have got the money, either."

"I don't know anything about the money," said Mrs. Armour, "but I do know my sister, and I tell you, Miss Montgomery, she is wicked enough to do anything. If there is any earthly way of getting out of this cellar we want to find it, and we can't be too quick about it, either."

The cellar was not provided with windows, strange to say. Ventilation was had by two iron pipes, one on each side. There seemed to be absolutely no way of escape.

And now the prisoners began to realize that Mrs. Foong had carried out her threat.

Smoke began curling in around the door.

Listening at the keyhole they could hear the crackling of flames.

"Listen to me, Mr. Brady," said Mrs. Armour. "You will remember that I told you old Mr. Armour began to tell me about the secret passage out of the house which he made to use in case the detectives came down upon him. Is it not probable that it was by way of this cellar? Let us search for it. That may be our avenue of escape."

And search they did, but in vain.

Meanwhile, the smoke became more and more dense, until the entire cellar was filled with it.

As matters now stood, it looked as if the Bradys and their companions were doomed to speedy death.

CHAPTER XI.

LEFT TO DIE IN THE TOMB.

What had become of Arthur all this time?

Had the Foongs really secured the dead man's hidden money?

These are matters which demand our attention now, and we return to the time when Arthur's aunt announced to her husband that she had made a discovery which seemed likely to be of service to their schemes.

Of course King Foong asked what her discovery was, and she told him to follow her to the cellar.

"And you may as well come, too, Arthur," she said. "I have no secrets from my dear nephew."

He shrugged his shoulders and told Arthur to come along.

They descended into the cellar, Mrs. Foong having first procured a lantern.

"Hello!" cried King Foong, "you have knocked that partition down, I see."

"Exactly," she replied, "and I did it with my own hands. You see it is just as I told you. It concealed a secret passage."

"Yes, yes! But why did you knock those two posts away?"

"I had to."

"But the beam above came with them."

"It fell after I got the posts out."

"It supported the stone above. This wall is in danger of collapse."

"Oh, I don't think so, dear King."

"Have you explored the passages?"

"Not yet, dear. I waited for you to go with me," she replied.

"Give me the lantern and we will do it now, then," said the Chinaman. "Arthur, come along with us. You may as well see this thing through."

Knowing very well that this was equal to a command, Arthur followed behind them.

The passage was a very narrow one. It was boarded up on both sides and also overhead.

The passage proved to be quite a long one.

"This is carrying us away out under the garden," said King Foong. "I wonder where it is going to end?"

It ended before they had gone many feet further at the foot of four steps.

At the top of these steps was a trap-door.

It was not secured, and the Chinaman easily pushed it up.

"Why, this seems to be a tomb!" he exclaimed.

It was, and a very well built one.

It was much larger than the one the Bradys entered. It had twelve niches, whereas that one had only six.

In six of these were coffin boxes all seemingly very old.

The remaining six niches were empty.

"This is strange," said King Foong. "We haven't come in the direction of the tomb in the yard. Besides, that has a door, while this has none."

"Perhaps there are two tombs," said Mrs. Foong. "Look in those niches, dear. The treasure may be hidden in one of them."

He flashed the lantern into each of the vacant niches, but could find nothing.

"We must examine these boxes," he said. "The old fellow may have hidden his money in one of the coffins."

With Arthur's help he tried to pull one of them out, but it was too much for their united strength, the Chinaman being a man of slight build.

Even when his wife lent a hand they could not manage it, and it was the same with four of the others, but when they came to the fifth it proved to be much lighter, and they got it out and laid it on the floor.

"I believe we have hit it!" cried King Foong, excitedly. "This box can't contain a coffin and a corpse. Besides, Ella, it is much newer than the others. Don't you see?"

Arthur saw, and he believed that King Foong was right.

This box was secured by modern clamps, while the others had their lids screwed on.

King Foong easily opened it, and one glance was enough to show that here was a discovery of real value to this precious pair.

There were six large cash boxes in the coffin box; also several packages.

The boxes were not locked, and all contained money.

There were bills of every denomination. Thousands upon thousands of dollars were revealed as the Chinaman ran the contents of the cash boxes over.

Then he opened the packages. These all contained bills but one, and in that were engraved plates for printing bills.

"Oh, King!" cried his wife as these were revealed. "I'll bet you a big part of this money is bad. See, you have found the old man's counterfeit plates!"

"I don't care," replied King Foong. "Good or bad, I'll find a way to get rid of it, and——"

Suddenly a crash was heard in the distance.

"What in the world is that?" Mrs. Foong screamed.

"It's easy enough to tell what it is," replied her husband disgustedly. "That infernal wall at the other end of the passage has fallen. Ten to one we are fastened in here."

"Oh, how terrible that would be!" she gasped.

"Follow me!" cried the Chinaman, catching up the lantern. "Arthur, you keep close behind me. Ella, you come last."

They hurried back along the passage to find that King Foong was right, of course.

Their way was completely blocked by a mass of fallen earth.

"We can never get out here. We are at least six feet from the cellar," Foong declared.

He and his wife looked at each other in silent dismay.

"Whatever are we going to do?" the woman gasped.

"You're a fool," snapped King Foong. "Let's get back and see what we can find."

They returned to the tomb, and for a long time worked in vain over the problem.

"Kick down that brick wall!" cried Mrs. Foong. "I can't stand it. I am stifling."

The Chinaman raised his foot and gave the wall a violent kick. It trembled perceptibly.

"This can't be a true wall," he said. "I don't believe it is more than one brick thick. It may be a secret door."

He caught up the lantern and examined it all around. Then suddenly he set it down again and said something to his wife in Chinese.

She clapped her hands and took the revolver out of one of the empty niches in which she had laid it, instantly turning it on Arthur.

"Lie down!" ordered King Foong.

"What for?" gasped the boy. "What do you mean to do to me?"

"Lie down, Arthur, or I shall shoot you," ordered his aunt.

It had to be, and Arthur lay down on the floor, Mrs. Foong standing guard over him with the revolver.

The Chinaman now began emptying the box, and Arthur realized what was in the wind.

"That wall is a secret door, and he thinks he knows how to open it," he said to himself. "They are going to escape with the treasure and leave me behind them."

"Oh, aunt, what would you do?" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to put me in that box and leave me here to perish?"

"Don't we?" retorted the woman. "Now, as it happens, that is just exactly what we do mean to do. I don't want to kill my sister's child outright, but I don't propose that you shall live to tell what you have seen here in this tomb."

It seemed too terrible!

The box empty, Arthur was forced at the point of the revolver to lie down in it, and the lid was screwed down.

No attempt was made to restore the box to the niche.

For a few moments Arthur could hear them talking, then they seemed to go away.

But one of them returned again and again.

It was evident that they were carrying out the boxes and parcels.

At last, after one of these return trips, he heard what sounded like the slamming of a heavy door, and after that all was still.

Shut in that terrible box, Arthur had been left to die in the tomb.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Thicker and thicker grew the smoke, louder and louder the roar of the flames.

Mrs. Armour was on her knees in prayer. Harry and Alice, who are lovers, and practically engaged, stood hand in hand waiting for what was to come, but Old King Brady with his lantern still worked on, trying to find the secret way to the room above.

"I have it at last!" he cried. "This way, quick!"

They hurriedly joined him.

Away down at the rear of the cellar there was a projection in the wall. It looked like a supporting pillar, but from the first Old King Brady had suspected that here might lie what he sought.

In vain he had tried to find some secret spring connected with this pillar, and now at last he had succeeded.

The whole face of it stood open, and within was a ladder leading upward.

The old detective was first up it, and he pushed up a trap-door.

Instantly he saw that he was under the bed on which lay the corpse.

The smoke was so thick that he was almost stifled.

To move the bed was no light undertaking, for it was a big, clumsy affair.

Passing the lantern to Harry, he clutched the slats and, exerting all his strength, finally succeeded in getting it on the move, and the way was cleared.

"Out through that broken window, Alice! Quick!" cried the old detective.

Alice crawled through, Mrs. Armour following.

Then it was the chauffeur and Harry, Old King Brady insisting upon remaining until the last.

They were none too soon, either, for before the old detective left the room the flames had already eaten their way through the partition, and he had scarcely escaped when it fell in with a crash and the whole room was in flames.

They went around in front, and just then the firemen came, for a policeman had turned in an alarm.

Policemen came with them, and Old King Brady introducing himself, explained something of the situation.

They then retreated towards the barn and left the firemen to do their work.

They had scarcely gained their position when Mrs. Armour gave a scream.

"My sister!" she cried. "Oh, get her! Make her tell where Arthur is."

They all looked around and saw Mrs. Foong standing in the open doorway of the barn.

She looked wild-eyed and terrible.

"Grace!" she called. "Grace! Tell the Bradys to come here!"

All hands hurried to the barn.

"Arthur! Where is Arthur!" screamed Mrs. Armour. She paid no heed, but said:

"Mr. Brady, you are a man of experience. Come in here and tell me if my husband is dead."

Old King Brady stepped into the barn.

Here on the floor were six cash boxes and a number of packages.

Near them lay King Foong, his face bathed in blood.

"Whose work?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Woo Yet's," replied the woman in a hard voice. "He stabbed him twice. Once in the body and once in the cheek. He sprang out of the bushes upon us. You will find him dead out there. I shot him. I dragged my husband in here. He hasn't spoken since. I want to know if he is dead."

Old King Brady bent down over the wounded Chinaman and felt for his pulse.

"Yes, he is dead," he said.

Without a word Mrs. Foong drew a revolver from the folds of her dress and cocked it.

She pressed it against her breast and fired, falling a corpse at Young King Brady's feet.

"Well, this is a great clean-up," said Old King Brady.

They hid the boxes and packages in one of the stalls, piling loose hay over them.

This done, they went outside to look for Woo Yet.

They found the dumb Chinaman lying face downward near a clump of bushes.

He had been shot in the throat and was quite dead.

And now the police had to be told and more of the case explained.

"Look here," said Harry, suddenly, "all this has so got on my nerves that my wits must have gone wool gathering, and the governor's too, for that matter. I am just beginning to think straight. That money was found at the other end of the secret passage where the cave-in was, surest thing. Now the question is where does it end? Let's look around here and see if we can't find out."

They went on beyond the barn, following the direction of the passage.

They had not gone far before they saw ahead of them an ornamental summer-house which stood on top of a high mound of peculiar shape.

"That's what it is. Do you know that mound looks suspiciously like a tomb?" said Harry.

Just then they saw an old gentleman approaching from the opposite direction.

"A hot fire," he remarked.

"It is, indeed," replied Harry.

"Do you know how it came to catch?"

"I understand it was set afire."

"So? It must have been. Have they got old Mr. Berliner out, do you know?"

"He is dead."

"Dead! Burned to death. Terrible!"

"No; he has been dead for several days. Did you know him?"

"As well as any one did. He was a man who didn't want to know his neighbors."

"Oh! You live near here then?"

"In the next house. Lucky for me the wind is the other way."

"Then perhaps you can tell me why Mr. Berliner built his summer-house on top of this little hill?"

"Hill!" cried the old gentleman; "that's no hill. That is the original private tomb of the Menier family, who once owned this house. They are all dead long ago."

"Oh, Mr. Brady!" cried Mrs. Armour, "perhaps Arthur is shut up in the old tomb!"

Harry bounded up the steps and entered the summer-house, hoping to find a trap-door leading down into the tomb, but there was none.

"Which was the front?" he called out.

"Here where the steps are," replied the old gentleman. Harry hurried down and, seizing the steps, tore them away.

"Ah, I have it!" he cried.

For here imbedded in the face of the mound was a cement pipe big enough for a man to crawl through. It could easily have been reached by any one crawling under the steps.

"You have solved the mystery, I am sure," cried Alice.

"I soon will," answered Harry, and getting down he produced his electric flashlight and crawled into the pipe.

In the deepest anxiety they waited what seemed an age, and then some one was heard coming through the pipe.

"Arthur, thank goodness!" cried Alice as a head appeared.

Arthur it was, and the next moment he stood locked in his mother's arms.

This was the end of it all.

The Bradys managed to get the cash boxes and packages to the automobile unobserved later on.

It was necessary first to stop at the police station to explain, and then it was back to New York.

Over \$300,000 in good money was found. The remainder was counterfeit.

So the Miners' Bank got back their stolen cash after many years.

Twenty-five thousand dollars the Bradys kept as their share. Arthur and his mother took the rest, no relative of the dead counterfeiter turning up to protest. Arthur's father was not consulted. He died within a year.

Arthur is now a lawyer on his own account—just entering the field.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BRADYS' THOUSAND-MILE CHASE; OR, OUT FOR A BIG REWARD."

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SPECIAL NOTICE:—All back numbers of this weekly, except the following, are in print: 1 to 6, 9, 13, 42, 46, 47, 53, to 56, 63, 81. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d street, New York City, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

THE MYSTERY OF ERMA STRATFORD.

By Kit Clyde

"A most daring and successful bank robbery had been committed in Boston," said a celebrated detective, "and I was engaged on the case, but was baffled.

Although we, that is to say, my assistants and I, caught one of the band who had not a cent of money belonging to the bank in his possession, the others escaped to some foreign country, where it was impossible to locate them, although months were spent in the effort to do so.

In the fight that took place when we captured the one member of the band of bank robbers, who was called Jack Lee, he was shot.

The man was conveyed to a hospital, and upon examination the surgeon in charge at once pronounced his injury fatal.

When Jack Lee knew he must die, he sent for me.

I hastened to his bedside, thinking he was about to make a confession and reveal something of the whereabouts of the members of the burglars' band who had so neatly given us the slip.

Not so; Jack Lee was loyal unto death to his comrades in crime. His first words satisfied me of that.

"Don't for a moment suppose I have sent for you to squeal on my pals in the bank robbery, for I have not. Another matter troubles me. I assisted in a base imposition and a grievous wrong done a young girl, whose mother, now deceased, once took me into her house and cared for me when I was near death's door.

"The object I have in telling you all about the affair is to save the poor girl the misery she may experience unless she learns the truth.

"If I tell you the story will you relate my confession to the girl in question should you ever meet her?" said Lee.

I gave the required promise, and he went on:

"Burtram Secore, the leader of our band, married a young girl by the name of Erma Stratford a year ago in a New England village.

"The girl supposed the marriage was all right, but in truth it was a sham. I officiated as the clergyman, cleverly disguised, and another of the band acted as witness.

"I know that after her marriage to Secore, Erma Stratford led a miserable life, and that Secore induced her to commit a theft, for which she served a few months in prison, although she was, in intention, innocent, for Secore made her believe that the money she took from a certain man was his own, and that the man he was planning to rob had it in trust, and refused to pay it over.

"What has since become of Erma Stratford I know not, but here is a photograph of her that Secore dropped from his pocket one day, and which I promptly secured.

"If you should ever meet the wronged girl, tell her she is not the wife of Secore, and never was."

Thus concluded Lee.

At his request witnesses were called. His statement was taken down in writing, and he made oath to its truth.

Soon after this Lee died.

A month later the name of Burtram Secore appeared among the list of those who perished in the wreck of the

steamer Hannibal, bound from Liverpool to Sydney, Australia.

Some time elapsed, and the confession of Lee, the bank robber, had almost passed from my mind, when one day I chanced to come across the photograph of Erma Stratford that he had given me.

It chanced that I was just setting out to make a summer visit to a friend of mine in Ohio, and I carelessly placed the photograph of the wronged girl in my pocket.

The friend I was going to visit was one Winthrop Wayne, a young gentleman of means, who resided with his millionaire mother and his one sister, Mabel, in a fine old mansion in Indianapolis, Ind.

My friend Wayne had recently married, and upon my arrival I was presented to his wife, a young lady who had been in the family for some time as his sister's music teacher.

The moment I saw Winthrop Wayne's wife I started violently, and every one must have been startled by my agitation.

As for my friend's wife, she seemed terrified for a moment, but quickly recovered her presence of mind, as I also did, and received me courteously.

What was the cause of my agitation?

I will tell you.

The woman Winthrop Wayne had made his wife was Erma Stratford!

That night I reflected upon my discovery. Secore was dead, and he would never trouble the girl again. She was happily married, and her past was buried. I could see that no good could come of my revealing to her the confession of Jack Lee.

Yet, I had given my word to a dying man that I would do so, and I could not break that promise.

However, as I felt it would be unpleasant for the lady to know that I held her secret, and there was no urgent necessity to make good my promise to Lee, I determined to postpone the revelation until the eve of my departure for home.

There were two other gentlemen guests at Winthrop Wayne's house.

One was called Carrol Courtright, and he was from New York City.

The other's name was Malan Markley, and he was a friend whose acquaintance Winthrop Wayne had made recently in Chicago.

Winthrop Wayne's sister was a most charming girl, and had I been a bachelor I am sure I should have fallen in love with her; therefore, I was not at all surprised to see that both Carrol Courtright and Malan Markley were head over heels in love with pretty Mabel.

I was not long in making up my mind which of the two young men the lady preferred.

It was clear that Carrol Courtright had the "inside track," to use a figure of speech pertaining to the race courses.

I could see that Markley was terribly jealous.

I had been a guest at my friend's house for some weeks, when one evening, from the window of my room, I witnessed a surprising scene.

Mrs. Winthrop Wayne was walking upon the paved t--

race before the mansion, when Winthrop's mother came up the stairs from the street, accompanied by a middle-aged gentleman with English side-whiskers, who was an entire stranger to me.

"This is a gentleman who says he is an old friend of yours, my dear," said Mrs. Wayne, indicating the stranger with a gesture, and addressing her daughter.

"Ah, yes; you have changed since we last met. Will you not come in?" said Mrs. Winthrop Wayne, extending her hand.

"Thanks, yes," responded the stranger, pressing the tips of her slender fingers, and bowing most respectfully.

For more than an hour Mrs. Winthrop Wayne was closeted alone with the stranger in the parlor, and at the expiration of that time he went away.

The next day, at the village near by, to my surprise, I saw Malan Markley in close conversation with the stranger who called himself Ashton, and who had visited my friend's wife the previous evening.

I was standing behind the screen in a billiard room when the two paused in front of it.

"Do the job for me, Ashton. Place the brand of thief upon Carrol Courtright, and you shall have all the money I promised you. To-night Winthrop Wayne will bring home a magnificent set of diamonds that have just been reset, and which are the property of Mr. Winthrop Wayne's mother.

"You must contrive to get hold of those diamonds, and place them in Carrol Courtright's possession. Then when the loss is discovered, I will denounce him as the thief, for I can never win Mabel Wayne's love while she believes Carrol Courtright to be a man of honor. More, I know she loves him."

"Agreed. With the friendly help of Mrs. Winthrop Wayne, who will not dare to refuse to become my accomplice, all may be accomplished," said Ashton.

With this the precious pair of scoundrels sauntered to the bar, and I passed out into the street.

That there was a mystery about Ashton was now clear. I made up my mind to block his game.

That night Winthrop Wayne brought home his mother's diamonds and placed them in the drawer of a desk belonging to his wife in the library.

He locked the drawer and gave the key to his wife, saying:

"Keep the key until mother, who is absent, returns, and let no one know the contents of the drawer."

I was under the window and I saw and heard all.

Presently I heard someone coming down the walk from the street, and drawing back into the shrubbery, I saw a man come to the long French window which had just been my own post of observation.

He was the fellow Ashton.

He peered into the room and saw Mrs. Winthrop Wayne alone.

Then he opened the window and sprang into the room.

Mrs. Wayne uttered a stifled scream.

I whipped out my revolver, and, approaching the window, covered the scoundrel with my pistol, although I could not be seen from within the room.

"What do you want here, Burtram Secore?" demanded the lady, whose maiden name had been Erma Stratford.

"I want the diamonds in that desk, and I will have them. From yonder window"—pointing to one on the other side of the house—"I saw your husband, or the man who thinks he is your husband, give you the key to the drawer. Quick—get them!" said Secore.

"No, I will not assist in a robbery. You may kill me, but I will not steal!" cried the lady.

"You refuse to give me the key. Then I'll take it from you!" cried the wretch.

"Oh, don't do that. Leave this house, and forever, or I will call my husband."

"Your husband!—ha! ha! ha! I am your husband. Winthrop Wayne has no legal claim on you. If you call him, I will denounce you as a thief, as an impostor, as my wife, and as guilty of bigamy!"

"What terms would you offer?"

"I'll tell you. Give me the diamonds, and send me the money you promised me when I was here last night regularly each month, and I won't trouble you any more. Come—your answer—what do you say?"

"I cannot give you the diamonds. My husband placed them in my care. He trusted me with them, and I will not betray his confidence. For the last time I give you my final answer," said Mrs. Winthrop Wayne firmly.

"We shall see!" cried Secore.

He sprang at the lady, and a struggle for the possession of the key followed.

In the strife the lady tore a wig and false whiskers from the villain's face.

The man was indeed Burtram Secore, the leader of the bank robbers.

Secore became enraged at the heroic resistance of the lady.

"Blame you, I'll end this. I'll kill you!" he cried.

As he spoke he drew a dagger.

At the same moment I bounded into the room and, reaching his side, I brought the muzzle of my revolver in contact with his temple.

"Throw up your hands, or you are a dead man!" I ordered, and my order was obeyed. I snapped a pair of handcuffs on the wretch, and when, a moment later, the whole household, alarmed by the noise, rushed into the room, I only explained that a robber had entered and assailed Mrs. Wayne, and that I had arrived in time to save her.

I had whispered to Mrs. Wayne to make no explanation.

I also admonished my captive not to denounce the innocent lady to her husband, vowing if he did I'd blow his brains out.

He must have thought I would keep my word, for he was silent.

He was taken to prison.

Next day I told Mrs. Winthrop Wayne all, and when she knew she was not Secore's wife she was a happy woman.

To her husband she told the history of her life, keeping back nothing, and he was only too willing to forgive her silence at the time she became his wife.

Mabel became Carrol Courtright's wife, and he often tells how a detective thwarted a villain and "captured him at the pistol's point."

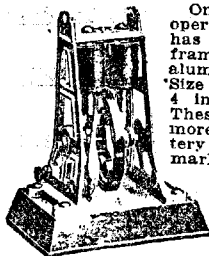


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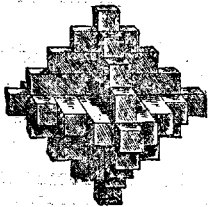
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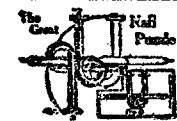
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Made of 2 metal nails linked together. Keeps folks guessing; easy to take them apart when you know how. Directions with every one. Price, 6c., postpaid.

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THE MAGIC NAIL.



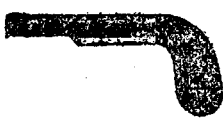
A common nail is given for examination, and then instantly shown pierced through the finger; and yet, when taken out, the finger is found to be perfectly uninjured, and the nail is again given to be examined. Nicely finished. Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid. J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK PUZZLE.



It consists of three horseshoes fastened together. Only a very clever person can take off the closed horseshoes from the two linked horseshoes. But it can be done in a moment when the secret is known. Price, by mail, 10c. each. H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.



Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/2 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

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Diamond rings or studs of half-inch and one inch in diameter are heard of in stories only. We have them imitated by prodigious sparkling stones which will deceive the glance of any spectator. Price by mail, postpaid, small size, 25c. each; large size, 35c. each. H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

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Two keys interlocked in such a manner it seems impossible to separate them, but when learned it is easily done. Price, 6c., postpaid.

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This little novelty creates a world of laughter. Its chief attractiveness is that it takes a few seconds before leaping high in the air, so that when set, very innocently along side of an unsuspecting person, he is suddenly startled by the wonderful activity of this frog. Price, 15c. each by mail postpaid. H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ALUMINUM DRINKING CUPS.



These handsome little cups are very handy in size, do not leak, and are Satin finished. When compressed, can be carried in the vest pocket. They hold a good quantity of liquid, and are very strong, light, yet durable. Price, 14c. each, postpaid.

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COMICAL FUNNY FACES.



This genuine laugh producer is made of nicely colored cardboard. A sharp, bent hook is at the back to attach it to the lapel of your coat. Hide one hand under the lapel and twitch the small, black thread. It will cause a red tongue to dart in and out of the mouth in the most comical manner imaginable at the word of command. It is very mystifying, and never fails to produce a hearty laugh. Price, 6c. each by mail.

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A beautiful and perfect cigar case, made of imitation alligator and sealskin leather; worth a quarter as a cigar case alone. It can be shown full of cigars and instantly handed to a person.

who, upon opening it, finds only an empty case. The box has a secret spring and a double case, and can be operated only by one in the secret. Full printed instructions sent with each case. Every smoker should have one. Price, 20c.; 2 for 35c. by mail, postpaid; one dozen by express, \$1.50. J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.

NORWEGIAN MOUSE.



A very large gray mouse, measuring 8 inches from tip of nose to end of tail. The body of mouse is hollow. Place your first finger in his body, and then by moving your finger up and down, the mouse appears to be running up your sleeve. Enter a room where there are ladies, with the mouse running up your sleeve, and you will see a rapid scattering of the fair sex. Many practical jokes can be perpetrated with this small rodent. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. mailed, postpaid.

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A NEW SQUIRT BADGE.



Great fun for the million! Wear it in your buttonhole and then press the bulb and watch the other fellow run. Price, 14c.

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THE ELK HEAD PUZZLE.



Just out, and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone. Made of silvered metal. Price, 12c.; 3 for 30c., sent by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MARBLE VASE.



A clever and puzzling effect, easy to do; the apparatus can be minutely examined. Effect: A marble can be made to pass from the hand into the closed vase, which a moment before was shown empty. This is a beautiful enameled turned wood vase. Price, 20c.

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The greatest sensation, just from Paris. A most wonderful effect of a smashing, breaking, falling pane of glass. It will electrify everybody. When you come home, slam the door shut and at the same time throw the discs to the floor. Every pane of glass in the house will at once seem to have been shattered. Price, by mail, postpaid, 35c., a set of six plates. H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

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A full blooded pair of fighting game cocks. These illlusion fighters have real feathers, yellow legs and fiery red combs, their movements when fighting are perfectly natural and lifelike, and the secret of their movements is known only to the operator, who can cause them to battle with each other as often and as long as desired. Independent of their fighting proclivities they make very pretty mantel ornaments. Price for the pair in a strong box, 10c.; 2 pairs for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

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THE PEG JUMPER.



A very effective pocket trick, easily to be performed by any one. A miniature paddle is shown. Central holes are drilled through it. A wooden peg is inside of the upper hole. Showing now both sides of the paddle, the performer causes, by simply breathing upon it, the peg to leave the upper hole, and appear in the middle one. Then it jumps to the lower hole, back to the middle one, and lastly to the upper hole. Both sides of the paddle are repeatedly shown. Price by mail, 15c. J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.

DEAD SHOT SQUIRT PISTOL.



If you shoot a man with this "gun" he will be too mad to accept the ancient excuse—"I didn't know it was loaded." It loads easily with a full charge of water, and taking aim, press the rubber bulb at the butt of the Pistol, when a small stream of water is squirted into his face. The best thing to do then is to pocke your gun and run. There are "loads of fun" in this wicked little joker, which looks like a real revolver, trigger, cock, chambers, barrel and all. Price only 7c.; 4 for 25c.; one dozen 60c. by mail postpaid. H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE HIDEOUS SPIDER.



Fun for everybody with one of these handsome brutes. His body is 3 inches long, beautifully enamelled green, with white ridges, yellow speckles, bulging eyes and a big red mouth. He is armed with six legs and two upright feelers, made of flexible spiral springs. A dark, invisible thread attached to his body lets you shake him in the air before your friends' eyes, when the legs wiggle in a most natural, lifelike manner. Guaranteed to make any lady howl and to scare the bravest hero on earth out of his boots. Price by mail, 10c. each.

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"Secret Service"

NEW YORK, MARCH 15, 1912.

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ITEMS WORTH READING

Authority has been given by the War Office for the leasing of certain ground near Washington for use as a training ground for officers of the United States Army in the use of flying machines. The first officers selected for instruction will be trained by the brothers Wright personally, and they in turn will teach others. A level tract of 163 acres almost free from trees has been chosen, so that the practice of beginners may be made at a height of twenty feet or less from the ground, eliminating as far as possible the danger of serious accident.

The War Department is greatly pleased with the result of the recent practice with heavy coast-defense guns at Fort Monroe. Five 12-inch and two 10-inch rifles were fired at a moving target thirty feet high by sixty feet long, which was towed past the fort at a speed of seven miles an hour. Twenty-four projectiles were fired in 2½ minutes, and eighteen hits were made. Since a modern battleship is from four hundred to five hundred feet in length and from twenty to twenty-eight feet in height, it is considered that, had the firing been at a battleship instead of the canvas target, every shot would have found the mark.

A story is told of a well known actor-manager when on tour last year. On the first night of his stay in a certain border town there were cries for a speech, and at last the genial actor stepped before the curtain. He thanked the audience for its gratifying demonstration, and let fall in conclusion some pleasant remarks about the beauties of the town, but the speech was received in frozen silence. When he got behind the curtain he remarked to the local manager that the good people of ——— seemed singularly unresponsive. "Yes," replied the manager, "you see, your speech was all right except in one particular. You kept mentioning the name of the town where you were playing last week."

Despite the utmost vigilance of our efficient secret service men, the making of counterfeit money in this country has not been wholly suppressed. Spurious coin and paper tokens occasionally get into circulation, and some of these are so well done as almost to defy detection by experts.

Among the latest samples of the counterfeiter's art is a \$10 bill, one of the cleverest imitations on record. A specimen of this issue was received and paid out by several banks, being regarded by all who handled it as genuine. In time it reached the sub-treasury at New York, and there the spuriousness at once became known. On first inspection the bill appears to be a real product of the Treasury Department, but when held up to the light the little particles of silk which in a genuine bill are curved and twisted in the paper are seen in the bogus bill to be straight and hard. A magnifying glass shows some very slight discrepancies between the face of the bill and that of a genuine one. Sub-treasury officials state that the bogus note was engraved by a master in the art, who may once have been employed in the Bureau of Engraving at Washington. Every person who receives a \$10 bill should apply to it at least the simple test above given of holding it up to the light and noting the condition of the silk threads. Though not certain proof, it tells much.

HAPPY MOMENTS

Photographer—Try to look pleasant, please. Short-tempered Sitter—You get on with the job. The photo is for some relative who want to come and stay a month with me.

Cowboy Editor—This has been a lucky day for me. Wife—Has some one been in to pay a subscription? Editor—Well, no, it wasn't as lucky as that; but I was shot at and missed.

"And did you really go to Rome?" asked a guest. "I really don't know, my dear," replied the hostess, just returned from her first trip abroad. "My husband always bought the tickets."

You think that woman has an exceptionally kindly and generous disposition?" "Unquestionably," replied Miss Cayenne. "She can read an entire column of society news clear through without once smiling cynically and saying 'Humph!'"

A native of the Emerald Isle, who was boss over a number of laborers, noticed one day while going his rounds some men working upon a scaffold. Thinking there were too many of them at the job, and at the same time wishing to show his authority, he cried out: "How many of yez are up there?" "Three," answered one of the navvies. "Thin, begorra, the half of yez come down at once!"

A Boston father the past summer sent his boy, Reginald, and his three sisters to visit a relative in Maine. Though it was understood the visit was to consume three weeks the stay lengthened to two months. "Well," asked the father, upon the return of his offspring, "was your Uncle William glad to see you?" "Was he?" reiterated the boy, as though surprised by the query. "Why, dad, he asked me why we didn't bring you, mother, the cook, the maid and the dog!"

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