

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVE S.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$3.00 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Fresh Tender.

No. 13.

NEW YORK, APRIL 21, 1899.

Price 5 Cents.

HOP LEE, THE CHINESE SLAVE DEALER; OR

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY AND THE OPIUM FIENDS.

A STORY OF SAN FRANCISCO.



"I'm going to rescue that poor girl from this den if I have to choke the life out of you two!"
hissed Old King Brady.

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Title: Hop Lee, the Chinese Slave dealer; or, Old and Young King Brady and the Opium Fiends

Date of first publication: 1899

Author: Francis Worcester Doughty (1850–1917)

Date first posted: Feb. 16, 2015

Date last updated: Feb. 16, 2015

Faded Page eBook #20150229

This eBook was produced by: David Edwards, Stephen Hutcheson & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpcanada.net>

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HOP LEE, THE CHINESE SLAVE DEALER;

—OR—

Old and Young King Brady and the Opium Fiends.



**A STORY OF SHREWD DETECTIVE WORK IN SAN
FRANCISCO.**



BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

“I’m going to rescue that poor girl from this den if I have to choke the life out of you two!” hissed Old King Brady.

CHAPTER I.

HOP LEE AND CAPTAIN BARNABAS.

Chinatown, San Francisco, is a strange place, and the visitor might easily fancy, as he traversed its narrow, intricate streets, that he had been suddenly transported to the native land of the Mongolians.

One afternoon, in the month of September, two men, who presented the utmost diversity in appearance, were going rapidly along Clay street in the heart of the Chinese quarter.

One of the pair who claims our attention was a tall and elegantly dressed American, whose regular features were lighted up by a pair of keen, bright eyes, and whose luxuriant black hair and large, sweeping mustache well accentuated the strange, unhealthy pallor of his complexion.

Diamonds glittered on his immaculate shirt front, and his well-brushed hat shone like a mirror. In his hand he carried a peculiar-looking cane, mounted with an ivory handle, whose beautiful carving indicated the work of some Chinese ivory carver.

The companion of this personage who presented all the outward appearance of wealth was a Chinaman of burly and evidently exceedingly muscular frame. He, too, was very richly dressed, but in the Chinese costume. His face was marked horribly by the scars of smallpox, and taken all in all, he was about as ugly a Mongolian as could be found in San Francisco's Chinatown, which is saying a good deal.

His well-oiled braid of long, black hair hung down his back over a silken blouse, and his ugly yellow visage was of course devoid of hair. The pair of small pig-like eyes with which he seemed to glance in every direction with a peculiar alertness, had in them an expression of cunning which the physiognomist would have taken as an indication of his character.

The oddly assorted pair would have attracted attention anywhere but in the Chinese quarter, for in other sections of San Francisco it would be an unusual thing to see a gentlemanly-looking American in company with, and evidently on extremely friendly and familiar terms with a Celestial.

But in Chinatown the appearance of the tall American in company with the burly, ill-favored Mongolian, seemed to be taken as a matter of course. And the pig-tailed, yellow-faced men on the street did not evince that show of suspicion and distrust toward this particular "Melican man" with which they regarded most strangers of his nationality.

Indeed, the Chinamen who were seated at the shop doors, or who lounged along the street, exchanged knowing winks as the oddly assorted companions passed them.

And glances of recognition which were cast upon the American as well as upon his Mongolian companion showed that the former was well known in Chinatown.

One of two Celestials who were lounging at the door of a fan-tan gambling den, which purported to be an innocent tobacco shop, exchanged a peculiar sign with the huge Mongolian who walked beside the American.

And when the pair had passed, the yellow rascal remarked to his friend, as a knowing grin expanded his large mouth:

“Hum! Cap Barnabas come to see Hop Lee. Big Melican man an’ great chief of Highbinders muchee friends, ’cause um both makee heap much money by opium trade.”

“Melican man muchee smart man, else Hop Lee no be friend,” replied the other Celestial.

Just then the chief of the dreaded Chinese secret order of assassins, and the man called Captain Barnabas entered an alley near the fan-tan den.

Following them one would have presently seen the pair gain admission to a large house on the alley, whose door was opened by a dwarf Chinaman with a hump between his shoulders.

Through a narrow hall Hop Lee led his companion, and they passed into an apartment at the rear of it. This room was luxuriously fitted up as an opium smoking saloon. Oriental draperies hung upon the walls, velvet carpets covered the floor, divans on which the smokers of the fatal but seductive Chinese drug reclined when they hit the pipe, were ranged along the walls.

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Hop Lee closed the door, and he and Captain Barnabas were alone.

“Now we can talk in safety; eh, Hop Lee?” said Captain Barnabas, becoming seated on one of the elegant divans.

“Yes, now we talk,” answered the Chinaman, in perfect English.

“But,” he added, indicating an opium pipe on a stand, “you can smoke while we talk.”

“No, Hop Lee, none of the dope for me to-day. The cursed stuff has taken too strong a hold on me already. I’m a slave of the dope, and I want it badly enough, but I’ve got to keep my head clear, you know why.”

“Yes, and you’re right, Cap Barnabas. Now, tell me all about why you told me on the street you had bad news for me.”

“I can do that easily. The fact is, to-day I saw two of the greatest Secret Service detectives of America on a street of San Francisco. I recognized those man-hunters, who were not in disguise. They are Old and Young King Brady.”

“I’ve heard of them,” said Hop Lee. “The Highbinders of New York have told me about them. Do you think they are after us?”

“Hop Lee,” answered the other, “I am almost sure that Old King Brady and his partner have come to San Francisco to do detective work in Chinatown.”

The Mongolian gave a quick start as he asked in anxious tones:

“How do you come to think that?”

“I followed the detectives to their hotel.”

“You found out something there?”

“Yes, I saw the two detectives in a private room. I spied upon them through the ventilator over the door.”

“What did you see?”

“The two officers were poring over a map of San Francisco’s Chinatown.”

“Ha! They were getting the lay of the land!”

“I believe so. But what assured me that they were after us, was because I saw Old King Brady point out the house in Chinatown, which used to be the receiving station of our band of opium smugglers and your gang of slavers.”

At that, Hop Lee exclaimed fiercely:

“Well, let them come to the old receiving house. Yes, let them come, and they will never leave the house alive! You know we were posted some time ago that the police had spotted the old den, so we shifted our quarters, but we have since made a pretense of using the old place, merely to fool the police.”

“Yes. But I saw something in the hand of Old King Brady besides the map of Chinatown.”

“What was it?”

“A photograph of a beautiful girl, whom we both know.”

Again Hop Lee started.

“You don’t mean Edna Morton, the American girl?” he exclaimed.

“Oh, but I do!”

“Then there’s cause for alarm.”

“Yes, for I believe Old and Young King Brady have come to San Francisco to search for that girl.”

“If they find her our scheme to get hold of the girl’s great fortune will fall through.”

“Of course. But I made a further discovery which seems to indicate that the two detectives have more than one motive for coming to San Francisco.”

“How so?”

“When they were looking at the map and the photograph I heard Old King Brady say: ‘Now we will go to see Clara Moore.’”

“Ha! The sister of Blake Moore, the San Francisco detective, who undertook to ferret out the slave dealers of Chinatown.”

“The same. Now, I ask you, Hop Lee, what can the Secret Service men want of Blake Moore’s sister, unless they mean to get from her all the facts about the death of that officer?”

“I think you are right. But to-day all the Chinamen of the Highbinders League shall be warned. My gang of slavers, too, shall be told to look out. Ha! The mysterious death shall be ready for the spies at the old receiving station!”

“I take it the Bradys will go there. It was a good idea of ours to make a show of using the house, though we know it has been marked by the police. Now, the old house will serve as a bait to decoy the detectives into our power.”

“That’s it; no white man, save yourself, knows the secret of the means of swift and certain death which the old retreat contains. The great American detectives cannot guard against it. They shall die in the old house. Ah, if they think to run Hop Lee, the great Chinese slave dealer, to earth, they will perish in the attempt.”

“Just as Blake Moore and two other detectives have perished, eh?”

“Yes, sure, silent, almost invisible is the means of doom which my band of slavers brought me from China.”

“But I warn you that the two King Bradys are men of extraordinary cunning and bravery. I am not known to them. But during a recent trip to New York they were pointed out to me by our agent in New York’s Chinatown, and I was informed that they had never yet failed to bring any case they took to a successful end.”

“All right, Cap Barnabas. But we are scheming for the millions of the Bonanza King’s daughter, and our great money making business of slave dealing and opium smuggling is imperiled. So you may be sure Hop Lee will prove too much for the detectives, assisted by you and all my gang. I am a king in Chinatown. All men fear me here, all will do my bidding,” answered the Chinese slave dealer, vauntingly.

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“Then let us make our preparations. I rather anticipate that Old King Brady and his partner will visit Chinatown to-night.”

“Come. We will go to the old house in which we used to keep smuggled dope, and which served as your slave mart before the

police got onto the place,” added Captain Barnabas.

“Yes, we’ll go there at once,” assented the Chinaman.

Captain Barnabas arose, and Hop Lee preceded him out of the room. They passed out of the opium joint and walked rapidly away.

* * * * *

At about the same hour Old King Brady and Harry Brady, his partner, were walking along K—— street. The two detectives were dressed much as usual. Old King Brady wore his favorite high-cut coat, old-fashioned stock, and wide hat. Harry was dressed in a similar way. Presently they paused at the door of a residence.

CHAPTER II.

A MYSTERY OF CHINATOWN.

The two King Bradys had come to San Francisco on a mission of friendship, for which they meant to accept no reward save the gratitude of the sister of an old friend.

The celebrated officers had now been in San Francisco for twenty-four hours. Shortly after their arrival they had called on the chief of police, who accorded them a friendly welcome.

And when a few remarks had been exchanged, Old King Brady said:

“At the request of Miss Clara Moore, the sister of my old friend, Blake Moore, the San Francisco detective, we have come to your city to try to ferret out the mystery of the officer’s death and bring his assassins to justice.”

“I shall be glad to render you all the assistance I can; but you know from the newspapers that my men have failed to get at the truth,” said the chief.

“I know; but you have some clews, I suppose?”

“We only know that Blake Moore had spotted a certain house in the Chinese quarter which was, he believed, the den of Mongolian slave dealers and opium smugglers. One night Moore went to that house disguised as a Chinaman. He was never seen alive again. Next day Moore failed to report. Then I raided the house to which I knew he had gone. Not a Chinaman

was found in it. The place had the appearance of having been hastily abandoned; but we found the dead body of Blake Moore in the Chinese den.”

“And the newspapers have informed me that there were no marks of violence on the body of my dead friend?” said Old King Brady.

“No, there were none. It seemed that Moore had died a natural death. But the circumstances were suspicious. Moore was in excellent health. His sister, Miss Clara, would have it that he was murdered in some mysterious way, so I had a post mortem made, and experts made tests for poison in the remains. The result was that they could find no trace of any known poison. But the dead man’s brain was found to be congested in a peculiar way. As no one could say this was the result of poison, the case has remained a mystery to this day.”

“I believe two other detectives were found dead on the streets of Chinatown not far from the house in which the remains of Moore were discovered?”

“Yes. Those men were found dead as you say before Moore met his untimely fate. They were working with him, seeking to ferret out the Chinese slave dealers. And strangely enough, no marks of violence were found upon either of them.”

“I am sure there is a criminal mystery in all this, and I mean to get at the secret of it. I do not doubt that Moore and the other two officers were really murdered by the Chinese.”

“I have always thought so,” assented the chief.

“You should know,” he continued, “that there is a regular traffic in slaves carried on by some Mongolian rascal in Chinatown. We have the proof that he is engaged in smuggling Chinese girls into this country, and that he sells them in this and other cities to the highest bidder.”

“Probably Moore thought he was on the trail of the Chinese slave dealer when he met his death,” answered Old King Brady.

“I am sure of that. Now, since I have promised to render you all the assistance in my power, I will give you this map of Chinatown,” said the chief.

With that he spread out the map alluded to, and pointing at a number marked with a red cross, he added:

“That is the house in which we found the dead body of your friend, Blake Moore. Now, if you mean to go there, I will provide you with a guide who knows Chinatown well.”

“Thank you for the map,” replied Old King Brady, as he put it in his pocket, “but at present I will not accept your offer of a guide. I suspect the cunning Chinese know the men who are familiar with their quarter of the city.”

“As you please, but as you mean to make investigations in that quarter, I take it that your coming at this time is most fortunate for me, if I can induce you to take a case which has just been placed in my hands.”

“What is it? If it will not interfere with my work to bring the murderer of Blake to justice, I may take hold of it.”

“The case is one that involves a great fortune, I suspect. Briefly stated, it is as follows: A number of years ago a man called Donald Morton deserted his wife and daughter here in San Francisco, and they lost all trace of him. The wife died a few years ago, and those who knew the daughter, whose name is Edna Morton, say she disappeared from her old haunts about three months ago.”

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The chief paused, and having consulted his case book for a moment, continued:

“It now comes out through his lawyers that Donald Morton died in Leadville recently, possessed of great wealth which he acquired in mine speculations. In Leadville Morton was called the Bonanza King. By will he left all his fortune to his daughter Edna, and his lawyers have advertised for her in vain.”

“I see,” said Old King Brady, “you want me to find the missing heiress?”

“Yes. There is a large reward offered for her discovery, and if she is not found her father’s fortune will go to the State, for it appears that he has no relatives save the girl Edna.”

“Well, what has my proposed investigation in Chinatown to do with the missing heiress?” asked the veteran detective.

“Simply this: My agents have found out that Edna Morton was last seen in Chinatown by a young man who knew her well. He saw the missing girl on the street in company with a gentlemanly-looking American. The pair entered an opium den. My informant was shocked, for he knew that Edna Morton bore the name of being a good and respectable girl.”

“Did your informant go into the den which he saw the girl enter?”

“He attempted to do so, but the Chinese proprietor refused to admit him.”

“Did you obtain a description of the girl’s companion?”

“Yes. He was a tall, dark-eyed and dark-haired man, with a long, flowing mustache of the same color, and he had the pale, dead-white complexion of an opium fiend. He was elegantly dressed, wore a silk hat and diamonds, and carried an ivory-handled cane.”

“Have you any suspicions regarding the identity of this man?”

“Not the slightest.”

“Have you a picture of the missing girl?”

“Yes. Here it is.”

“Thank you,” said the veteran, and he inspected the photograph.

“She is a beauty. Don’t you say so, Harry?” he added, handing the picture to his pupil and partner.

“Indeed she is,” replied the young officer, and he returned the photograph to his partner.

“Edna Morton was employed as a model in a fashionable cloak house at the time of her disappearance. Her employers and her associates both say she was a good, honest girl. So far as known

she had no favored suitor, and she told no one that she meant to go away. At the cloak house my men failed to find anyone who knew the man who was seen with the girl in Chinatown. But come, what do you say? Will you try to find the missing heiress?" said the chief.

Old King Brady drew a large plug of tobacco from his pocket. Having cut off a chew and placed it in his mouth, he turned to Harry, and asked:

"What's your opinion, my lad?"

"I don't presume to offer you advice, but since you ask for my views I will say that I think we may as well agree to try to find the heiress if she is in Chinatown, and the search for her will not interfere with our work to ferret out the secret of Blake Moore's death," answered Harry.

"Very well. We will do as Harry says," the elder officer remarked.

"By the way, please give me the name and address of the young man who saw Edna Morton in Chinatown," he added.

The chief complied with the request, and the detective made a memorandum in his notebook. Then he said:

"If you have nothing further of importance to make known we'll go."

"I know of nothing more that I can tell you which will serve you. Of course, it is not necessary to warn you that Chinatown is full of peril for strangers. The Mongolians are naturally suspicious,

and there are many desperate criminals among them. Then, too, San Francisco's Chinese quarters is the stronghold of the Mongolian murder league called the Highbinders."

"We have worked against the Highbinders in the Chinese quarter of New York City, and we know a good deal about the rascals and Chinese habits and customs. Harry is one of the best Chinese impersonators in the country, and we both understand the language of the Celestials to some extent, so we are well fitted to venture among them anywhere," answered Old King Brady.

A little later he and Harry were on the street.

And it was after this that Captain Barnabas spotted them and followed them to their hotel, as we have heard him relate to Hop Lee.

But now we return to the two detectives, as some hours subsequently they paused before the door of the residence on K —— street as already stated.

Ascending the steps accompanied by Harry, Old King Brady rang the bell.

Directly the door opened.

A handsome young girl appeared.

She was dressed in deep mourning and her fair face showed signs of grief.

"You see, my dear Miss Clara, we have come at last," said Old

King Brady, as the young lady shook hands with him and Harry, and welcomed them like the old and valued friends they were.

The sister of the unfortunate San Francisco officer ushered the detectives into the parlor, and a conversation immediately ensued.

“I received your letter which assured me that you would come, and I have been very impatient for your arrival. As I wrote you, I firmly believe my poor brother’s death was caused in some way by Chinese criminals, and I have vowed that the assassins shall be punished,” said Clara Moore.

Then at Old King Brady’s request she related all that she knew about her brother’s death.

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But from this the detectives gathered nothing new—nothing that the chief of police had not already told them.

After conversing with Miss Clara for an hour or so the two detectives left her.

But before they withdrew Old King Brady said:

“To-night Harry and I mean to go to the house in Chinatown in which poor Blake was found dead.”

CHAPTER III.

DR. RAYMOND AND THE DETECTIVES.

“Where now?” asked Harry, as he and his famous partner gained the street.

“I mean to see the man who has reported that he saw Edna Morton, the missing heiress, in Chinatown.”

“I thought you would want to call on him.”

Old King Brady produced his notebook.

Consulting it, he said:

“The name of the young man in question is Dr. Raymond.”

“I wonder if he is a practicing physician?”

“We shall soon see. Come, we’ll go to his address.”

Old King Brady and Harry walked away in the direction of Dr. Raymond’s home.

“It would seem from what Dr. Raymond told the chief that Edna Morton was the willing companion of the man she was with in Chinatown,” Harry remarked.

“Yes, and it also appears that she voluntarily went into the opium den with that man.”

“But if she is a good girl as the chief thinks, her conduct was strange.”

“So it was. I shall question Dr. Raymond closely.”

“Have you any vague suspicions regarding him?”

“I do not say that I have. But there is a possibility that he may really know more than he has told.”

“That the doctor knew the missing girl well, may be taken as an indication that he can tell us more about her character than the chief knows, it may be.”

“That’s my idea, Harry.”

“You will proceed cautiously with the doctor?”

“Certainly. I do not want him to suspect we have a shadow of suspicion against him; we must not alarm him.”

“No.”

“But I shall try to lead him to talk freely about the missing girl.”

“Then I think I had better let you do all the talking when we see the doctor.”

“You can join in the conversation if you wish. I know you are shrewd enough to cross-question anyone.”

Old King Brady looked at Harry kindly as he spoke.

Though the two detectives were not related, and it was only a coincident that their surnames happened to be the same, they were much attached to each other.

Indeed, from the day several years previously, when Harry came to Old King Brady, and asked him to train him in his arduous profession, the veteran had taken a great liking to the young man.

This feeling Harry fully reciprocated.

And the ties of friendship and mutual admiration were strengthened on both sides when, ere long, each saved the life of the other under circumstances of great danger.

At this date the two King Bradys had already made a reputation for themselves. They were known far and wide as the most successful detectives of modern times.

Harry was an exceedingly muscular young man, and though he was not as tall as Old King Brady he was powerfully built.

The young officer was an all round athlete, and in many a desperate fight with criminals he had given a good account of himself.

Indeed, Harry Brady like his veteran preceptor, seemed always to be fearless. And it was to their desperate bravery as well as cunning that the great detective team owed their wonderful success.

Continuing on the way toward the abode of Dr. Raymond, the officers conversed further.

Presently Old King Brady remarked:

“Before we go into Chinatown to-night we must see little Sing Ho, the Secret Service Chinaman.”

“Yes, I think he may be of service to us.”

“Little Sing Ho is a cunning Mongolian.”

“Yes. If he was not a master of duplicity he would not have been able to act as a Secret Service spy in San Francisco as long as he has done, without being suspected by the Celestials.”

“Sing Ho told me, when he was in New York recently, that even the city police of San Francisco did not know he was a secret government agent.”

“Then, evidently, the chief has not called on Sing Ho to help find out the mystery of the death of our friend, Blake Moore.”

“Of course not.”

“Sing Ho is perfectly trustworthy, is he not?”

“He is. At least such is the opinion of the Secret Service chief, and I have no reason to differ with him.”

“And Sing Ho is an Americanized Chinaman?”

“He is.”

No further conversation of importance ensued at this time.

And very soon the two detectives paused before a neat brick dwelling house, on the window of which they saw a sign which bore this inscription:

DR. RAYMOND.

The officers went to the door, and they were presently admitted by a bright-looking housemaid.

“Is the doctor in?” asked Old King Brady, blandly.

“Yes, sir. Please walk into the waiting room,” answered the maid.

Then she ushered the pair into a small, well-appointed room at the side of the hall.

When the maid had retired an inner door opened, and a frank-faced young man of possibly twenty-eight entered.

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“Dr. Raymond, I presume?” said Old King Brady, bowing.

“Yes, sir. What can I do for you?” was the doctor’s business-like rejoinder.

“My dear doctor, I have not called to see you professionally.”

“Indeed?” and an expression of surprise crossed the ingenuous countenance of the young man.

“Perhaps you have heard, doctor, that there is a large reward offered for the finding of Miss Edna Morton, who has been missing for some months.”

“Yes; the chief of police told me that.”

“Very well, doctor. Perhaps if you will help me I can help you. You are a young man and I presume half the great reward would be a welcome addition to your bank account,” said the veteran.

Dr. Raymond smiled.

“Certainly I need money, as I’m just starting in the practice of my profession and have to depend upon it for my living. But aside from that I should be very glad to find Miss Morton, for I am interested in her case. She was about the most interesting patient I ever had.”

“Then you treated Miss Morton professionally?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Let me assure you in the first place that I am not prompted by idle curiosity, but I would like to know for what malady you treated Miss Morton.”

“Tell me, sir, are you not a detective?”

“Frankly, I am, and so is my companion. As there is really no reason why I should not be perfectly frank with an honorable gentleman like yourself, I may as well introduce myself and my partner. I am James Brady, usually called Old King Brady. This young man is Harry Brady, known familiarly as Young King Brady.”

Dr. Raymond acknowledged the introduction.

“I am glad to meet you both,” said he. “And of course I now conclude you are employed to search for Miss Morton, so I will say at once that you are quite welcome to any information I can give you.”

“Thanks, doctor. Then I revert to my question. What was the nature of the illness for which you treated Miss Morton?”

“Nervous headache. Between ourselves, I will tell you that before Miss Morton came to me some physician had treated her for a nervous trouble, and under his advice she had taken morphine for a long time. In fact, she had become a confirmed opium eater without wishing to acquire the fatal habit. When she tried to break off the use of the drug she suffered greatly from headaches and depression. She came to me and asked me to cure her of the opium eating habit. I was treating her for that when she disappeared.”

“I am in the confidence of the chief of police,” replied Old King Brady.

“Then, no doubt, you have heard that I am supposed to be the only person among Miss Morton’s acquaintances who has seen her since she disappeared from her usual haunts.”

“Yes, you saw Miss Morton in Chinatown. At that time she was in company with a gentlemanly-looking American.”

“Exactly. The man with the young lady had the look of a drug-eater. I think he is one of the victims of opium. Miss Morton went into an opium smoking den with that man, and she went voluntarily. I believe he knew her failing, and that he tempted her to go into the place and satisfy her craving for the drug. I had

not yet cured her of the appetite for it, which she had innocently acquired.”

“Did you ever see her companion before or since you observed him with Miss Morton in Chinatown?”

“No, sir.”

“Can you tell me anything more about this matter?”

“I cannot.”

“Then I thank you for the information you have given me.”

“You are quite welcome. I sincerely hope you may find the missing girl.”

“Doctor, I perceive that you are a man of intelligence, and so it seems likely that you have formed some opinion as to the cause of the disappearance of your interesting lady patient. Am I not right?”

“Yes. And I do not mind telling you that I believe Miss Morton has been lured away by evilly disposed persons, for some object which I presume you can guess at. And I have little doubt that the persons implicated were aware that the young lady had contracted the opium habit, of which fact I presume they have taken advantage.”

“I think your view may be the correct one. But I will not further trespass upon your time now. Thanking you very much and assuring you of my confidence, I will now bid you good-day,” said Old King Brady.

“Good-day, doctor,” Harry said, cordially.

And when the physician had responded he politely attended his callers to the door.

When that portal had closed and the officers had descended the steps. Old King Brady said to Harry:

“What do you think of the doctor?”

“I think he’s an honest man.”

“So do I, and I rely on all that he told us,” assented the veteran.

Then he looked at his watch.

“Now, we’ll go to see little Sing Ho,” he remarked, as he closed the timepiece.

A little later the two officers entered an alley in a respectable but poor neighborhood, at no great distance from the southern confines of Chinatown.

They soon arrived at a small frame house, that was wedged in between two tall tenements, and whose time of construction evidently antedated the towering buildings by many years.

There was no bell at the door of this house.

But the portal was provided with a large, old-fashioned iron knocker.

Old King Brady seized hold of this and rapped thrice, then he

paused and knocked twice more.

A moment or so elapsed.

Then a wicket in the door, which was so cunningly concealed, that it would hardly have been detected by the keenest eyes, opened, and the yellow face of a Chinaman appeared in the small opening.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHINESE REVENUE SPY.

At first the face at the wicket assumed an expression of suspicion.

The oval eyes flashed upon Old King Brady and Harry in a searching glance.

Then a light of recognition appeared in those keen and glittering orbs.

“Ha! Old King Brady and Harry!” exclaimed the Americanized Mongolian.

And it was noticeable that there was no trace of the Chinese dialect in his speech.

Like Hop Lee, the Chinese slave dealer, Sing Ho spoke English well.

“Come in,” he added.

As the door opened the detectives entered.

Then, one following them would have seen that Sing Ho was a very small and cunning-looking Celestial.

He led the officers into a room at the side of the hall.

And Old King Brady said at once:

“Sing Ho, we have come to San Francisco to find out the truth about the death of Blake Moore.”

“Ha, then you will pipe in Chinatown?”

“Yes. Now tell me, Sing Ho, do you know or suspect anything about this case that the police are ignorant of?”

“No. I am a Secret Service spy in the pay of the United States Government. It’s my business to watch out for opium smugglers. I have had no time to devote to the case you speak of, but I knew about the opium receiving station in Chinatown, in which Blake Moore was found dead,” said Sing Ho.

He had been a Sunday-school Chinaman.

Some Christian people had taken him up, and had him educated.

“You knew about the storehouse of the opium ring, eh?” said the veteran.

“Yes, I had just found it out, when in some way Blake Moore discovered it. He spoiled my plan to have the den raided by the revenue men, by going there before I was quite ready for a close-in.”

“Well, Sing Ho, I want you to go with Harry and me to-night, to visit the house in which Blake Moore was found dead.”

“Why do you want to go there? The opium men no longer use the house as a place of storage for smuggled opium.”

“That matters not. I want to examine the house.”

“I cannot go with you!”

“Why not?”

And Old King Brady looked surprised.

“See here!” exclaimed Sing Ho, as his yellow face paled in alarm.

As he spoke he held up a piece of paper upon which some strange Chinese characters were traced in red ink.

“What’s that?” asked the veteran.

Sing Ho shuddered as he said:

“That is the death warning of the Highbinders.”

“How came you by it?”

“I found it.”

“Where?”

“On my door. When I opened it this morning the paper was nailed on my door.”

“That means you are spotted?”

“Yes.”

“At last the Highbinders have found you out?”

“It must be so.”

“Do you believe the assassins will try to murder you?”

Sing Ho showed deadly fear as he answered:

“Yes. They will kill me surely.”

“Do you know how they found out you were a Secret Service spy?”

“No. I cannot think how they learned the truth.”

“Well, Sing Ho, what do you mean to do?”

“I mean to leave San Francisco to-night.”

“That would be cowardly.”

“I tell you I dare not stay! The power of the Highbinders is mighty here.”

“Sing Ho, have you no ties that you hate to break, as you must if you flee.”

“No ties. But I am expecting the arrival of my sister from China every day.”

“Then stay and meet her.”

“I tell you I dare not.”

“Sing Ho, you know more about Chinatown than any man whom I can trust.”

“Yes. That’s so.”

“I’ll pay you well to stay and help me just for to-night.”

Sing Ho looked at the message of the Highbinders, and shuddered.

“I can’t do it,” he said.

“Five hundred dollars I offer you for one night’s work.”

“I would go with you for nothing, but I dare not,” answered Sing Ho.

At that moment there came a rap at the street door.

Old King Brady noticed that the rap was precisely like the one he had employed.

“A friend is there,” said Sing Ho.

He ran to the portal, but in a moment he re-entered the presence of the detectives.

Another Chinaman accompanied Sing Ho.

The two Celestials fell to talking excitedly, and as they jabbered away very fast, though as we are aware, Old King Brady and Harry had some understanding of their language they could not make out what the Chinamen said.

At length, Sing Ho threw up his hands in a gesture of despair.

“What how?” demanded Old King Brady.

“My sister Te-Lala!” exclaimed Sing Ho.

“What of her?”

“She is in San Francisco.”

“Go on. Tell me what your countryman has made known in full.”

“My sister arrived in Chinatown last night with some Chinese girls who were conducted by the men in the service of Hop Lee.”

“Who is Hop Lee?”

“The great Chinese slave dealer and chief of Highbinders.”

“Oh! And how did your sister fall into the hands of the slave dealer’s men?”

“I know not. My friend here cannot tell. A ship from China made this port last night; but I went to meet it, and I was told that no Chinese came by it. You know the law. No Chinese emigrants are admitted. I expected my sister would come by the underground route, as we call it, by way of the Canadian Pacific Line, from the coast. That we might no longer be separated, I was willing to smuggle my sister into the country. Now, I am punished. The slave dealer has her.”

“Help me and I’ll help you.” said Old King Brady.

“How do you mean?”

“Help me ferret out the truth about the death of Blake Moore,

and I'll help you rescue your sister."

For a moment Sing Ho hesitated.

The detectives saw that a struggle between love for his sister and fear of the Highbinders was going on in his mind.

Finally, he exclaimed:

"I will stay! I will help you, for I know if Old King Brady and his partner will help me, I shall rescue my sister from Hop Lee, the slave dealer."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Harry.

"Good!" said the elder officer.

"Now, Sing Ho, I want to question you," the latter added.

"Proceed," said the Chinaman.

"Do you happen to know an American gentleman who frequents Chinatown and who is an opium fiend?"

"I know a good many such."

"Do you know one who looks like this?"

Old King Brady went on and described the man whom Dr. Raymond had seen with Edna Morton in Chinatown.

"Yes, I know that man surely."

Old King Brady uttered an exclamation of gratification.

“Good! We’re getting on a bit,” said he to Harry.

“Yes, so I think,” the latter assented.

“What is the name of the man whom I described?” asked the veteran, turning to Sing Ho.

“Captain Barnabas.”

“What do you know about him?”

“I know he is an opium smuggler, and that he is in league with Hop Lee, the Chinese slave dealer.”

“Ha! I hope to strike Captain Barnabas’ trail soon,” said Old King Brady.

And Harry added:

“And I think Captain Barnabas may unwittingly lead us to the girl we seek.”

“I hope so.”

“But now, Sing Ho, go on and tell me all you know about Captain Barnabas.”

“I will. He is an opium fiend. He loves to hit the pipe. When he is in San Francisco he spends most of his time in Chinatown. When he is away I believe he is aboard a vessel which he owns, and which is an opium ship—a smuggler, you understand?”

“Is that all?”

“No. Captain Barnabas is a great friend of Hop Lee, and he has an elegant home somewhere in Chinatown. They say it is filled with beautiful Chinese girls, who are his slaves.”

“How did you learn all this?”

“Can you ask?”

“Of course, I suppose you found it all out while you were secretly spying in Chinatown as a revenue detective.”

“Yes.”

“Do you happen to have any clue to the location of Captain Barnabas’ mansion in Chinatown?”

“No, but I know where Hop Lee dwells.”

“Good!”

“Captain Barnabas frequently visits Hop Lee.”

“I see what you are thinking about.”

“I think we can yet find Captain Barnabas’ house by watching Hop Lee’s place.”

“Yes. And if Captain Barnabas comes there we will track him to his home when he leaves.”

“That’s it.”

“Well, Sing Ho, then it’s agreed that you will go with us to-

night?”

“Yes. But I’ll go in disguise.”

“Of course.”

“I’ll make up as a nigger.”

“All right. But I say, if you knew Captain Barnabas and Hop Lee were opium smugglers, why did you not cause their arrest?”

“Because I did not have anyone save myself to testify against them.”

“And you knew no court would accept the unsupported evidence of a Chinaman?”

“That’s it.”

“Well, Harry and I will meet you at the corner of W—— and H —— streets, at nine o’clock to-night.

“We shall be in disguise. But if you give us the secret sign of the Secret Service we shall know you.”

“All right. But something makes me feel afraid the Highbinders will spot me and kill me to-night,” answered Sing Ho, shuddering.

Soon after that the two detectives left him.

CHAPTER V. IN A HOUSE OF MYSTERY.

When Old King Brady and Harry left the house of the Chinese revenue spy they proceeded to their hotel.

When they were in the room of the veteran, Harry said:

“I have been thinking that it’s hardly likely that we shall make any discovery of importance in the house in which Blake Moore’s body was found.”

“You have that idea because the officers who have already searched the den have discovered no clew to the mystery in it?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Harry, I want to see the interior of that house for myself. I have a strong mental impression that something important may come of it.”

“Of course, I trust you may not be disappointed.”

“Since the Chinese know the police have spotted the house, we shall have to get into it secretly, or the chances are we may be set upon by the Mongolian assassins.”

“That’s so.”

“Sing Ho is right enough to fear the Highbinders.”

“He is indeed, for they are a desperate league of murderers.”

“Of course we shall go to Chinatown as Chinamen.”

“So I supposed.”

The officers continued to converse for some time, but we need not record their further remarks.

An hour or so after supper, Old King Brady said to Harry:

“It is time that we attended to our make-up.”

“Yes, let’s get into our disguises at once.”

“We’ll take them to the cheap lodging house down on P—— street. For as no Chinamen are allowed in this hostelry, it would not do for us to be seen going out of it.”

“Certainly not.”

A little later Old King Brady and Harry left the hotel.

Each carried a valise.

They went straight to the lodging house of which the elder officer had spoken.

There they secured a room.

And in half an hour they reappeared on the street, perfectly made up as Chinamen of the well to do class.

Old King Brady consulted his watch, and then he walked swiftly

in the direction of the trysting place where he had agreed to meet Sing Ho.

Harry walked at his partner's side.

He smiled as he looked at the latter, and presently he remarked:

“You look the genuine pigtail to the life.”

“So do you. We're a fine couple of yellow ducks. Ha! here comes a Chinaman. We may have a chance to test our disguises.”

A moment, and the disguised detectives came face to face with a genuine Mongolian.

He spoke to the officers in Chinese, merely saying:

“A fine night, my friends.”

Old King Brady promptly answered the greeting in Chinese, and the Chinaman passed on, evidently without a suspicion that the men to whom he had spoken were not what they seemed.

“That's a good test. The light under the street lamp here showed our faces plainly,” said Old King Brady, as they proceeded.

“Yes. I do not think it will be an easy matter for anyone to drop to the fact that we are in disguise,” Harry replied.

Nothing further of importance happened to the officers on the way to the corner which was their destination.

As soon as they arrived there they halted.

And both looked about for the Chinese spy of the revenue service.

But they saw no one near.

“It’s nine o’clock,” said Harry.

Old King Brady was about to reply, when he saw a dark figure coming across the street.

The street lamp near by presently enabled the two officers to make out that the approaching man was a negro.

A moment subsequently the colored man joined the detectives.

And at the same time he gave them a peculiar sign.

This was a secret signal of the Secret Service—the sign which Old King Brady had told Sing Ho to make when he came to meet them.

The officer answered the signal properly.

Then Sing Ho said:

“I didn’t come across the street as soon as I saw you stop here. You are so well made up that I thought you were real Chinamen. I would not know now that you are in disguise, had you not answered my sign.”

“Then, if your keen eyes cannot penetrate our make-up, we may

go into Chinatown pretty well assured that our real personality will not be suspected,” answered Old King Brady.

And Harry said:

“Sing Ho, you are as perfectly disguised as we are. I hardly think anyone will suspect you are not really a colored man.”

“I hope not. But I feel cold all over. I can’t get over the fear that the Highbinders may murder me to-night.”

“Have courage. To-night you are the comrade of Old and Young King Brady. If the Highbinders kill you, they will have to down Harry and I first. Eh, lad?” answered the veteran.

“That they will.”

“Now, come along.”

As Old King Brady spoke, he started forward.

The elder officer proceeded in the direction of Chinatown.

The disguised Chinaman fell in behind them, and walked at a distance of about ten paces in their rear. In this order the trio entered Chinatown.

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But when they were well within the boundary of the quarters occupied exclusively by the Mongolian populace, Sing Ho quickened his pace.

Suddenly he passed the two officers.

And without looking at them, he whispered:

“Follow. I’ll show a short cut to the house we’re bound for.”

A moment later Sing Ho dodged into a narrow alley.

After him proceeded the two officers.

For some time after that they followed the disguised Chinaman, and nothing occurred to make them think that the Celestials whom they passed had the least suspicion that they were not what they seemed to be.

Finally, Sing Ho paused. The place where he halted was in a dark and narrow street.

Looking about in the gloom, the detectives saw no one.

A little further on they saw a house which was taller than those near it.

Sing Ho glided close to the officers and whispered:

“The tall house yonder is the one we want.”

“There is no light in it,” said Old King Brady.

“No. I told you the opium men and the slave dealer no longer really used it, but occasionally they make a pretense of doing so. Evidently they want to keep the attention of the police fixed on that house, so that the officers will not search for their new storehouse and slave mart,” answered the disguised Chinaman.

“Well, I’ll scout up to the house. Wait here,” said Old King Brady.

Harry and Sing Ho assented.

The veteran glided away.

In a moment he disappeared in the gloom.

Harry and the Chinaman stood still and awaited his return. Ten minutes elapsed.

Then Old King Brady reappeared.

“Come on,” said he, “there is no one on the watch near the house.”

“I’ll show the way to the rear door,” proposed Sing Ho.

“All right. I’ll let you act as leader.”

As the veteran so assented the Chinaman glided away.

Following him, the officers presently entered a narrow passage, and having traversed it, they saw that they were in a small yard, and that the rear wall of the house which they meant to enter was before them.

Creeping up to the rear door the trio listened.

No sound from within reached them.

“Now I’ll open the door with a key which I have used for the

same purpose before this,” whispered the disguised Celestial.

A moment and he turned the key in the heavy lock that secured the portal and softly opened it. Still not a sound emanated from the house.

Though they well knew that hidden assassins might lurk within, after waiting for several moments the trio softly entered the house.

Old King Brady carried a small dark lantern in his pocket.

This he produced.

As he had lighted the lantern before he set out for Chinatown, in order to procure a light now he had only to draw the slide of his bull’s-eye.

This he did.

As the gloom was illuminated Old King Brady and his companion saw that they were alone in a large room of the house of deadly reputation.

“Do you know just where the dead body of Blake Moore was found in this house?” asked the elder officer of Sing Ho, in a whisper.

“Yes, the body was found in the room at the head of yonder flight of stairs.”

As the Chinaman spoke he indicated an open door.

Through this the others saw the beginning of a steep flight of stairs.

“I’ll steal up the stairs, and listen! I’ll give a low whistle if there is no one in the room above!” added Sing Ho.

“Very well. Make haste,” Old King Brady replied.

Sing Ho passed noiselessly up the stairs and immediately disappeared from the officers’ sight.

They waited for his signal.

Several moments elapsed.

“Sing Ho is taking a long time to find out if there is anyone in the room upstairs,” whispered Harry at length.

“That’s so. I don’t like the looks of this.”

“Nor do I.”

“Sing Ho may have been surprised by hidden foes.”

“Of course. Let’s go up cautiously, and try to find out what has happened to him.”

“All right, Harry.”

“Let me go first. If there is danger, I would rather the enemy should strike at me, before they reach you,” said Harry.

“You are a brave and noble lad, Harry.”

“Ah. There’s Sing Ho’s whistle?”

“Yes,” answered Old King Brady.

Just then a low whistle sounded from the head of the stairs.

The next moment Harry sprang up the flight with his partner’s lantern in one hand, and a revolver in the other. Old King Brady closely followed, and he, too, held his revolver ready for use.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SILENT DEATH—A MYSTERY OF CHINATOWN.

As Harry darted into a room at the head of the stairs a sound of shattered glass came to the hearing of Old King Brady.

Some object was hurled against the glass of the lantern in Harry's hand.

The slide was broken and the light was put out.

In the complete darkness Old King Brady reached Harry's side.

At the same instant a thrilling exclamation burst from Harry's lips.

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Almost at the same time Old King Brady felt a cold and clammy object strike against the side of his face, but it fell to the floor.

"Ugh!" gasped the elder officer, shuddering.

But just then Harry struck a match.

In an instant his lantern was lighted.

As the blaze illuminated the room the detectives glanced about quickly.

But they saw no one save Sing Ho.

The body of the Chinese revenue spy lay on the floor in the center of the room.

His face was turned to the floor.

“Sing Ho!” cried Harry.

Rushing to the side of the Chinaman who did not answer or move, Harry turned him on his back.

The Chinaman’s lower jaw had fallen.

His face was livid. His eyes were glazed.

Harry placed his hand on the Chinaman’s heart.

“He is dead!” he exclaimed.

Meanwhile Old King Brady had been directing searching glances about the room.

He saw there was no furniture in it.

The floor was bare.

In the wall was a small door set directly opposite the portal by which he had entered.

As Harry announced that Sing Ho was dead the elder officer sprang to the little door.

It was secured. He vainly tried to open it.

Going to Harry’s side Old King Brady said:

“Harry, there is a horrible mystery here.”

“Yes, there must be.”

“As the light was put out a cold, clammy thing struck my face.”

“I had a similar experience—a cold object struck my hand,” said Harry.

He held up his right hand.

“There is no mark on it,” said the other.

“Look at the left side of my face,” he added.

Harry did so, and said:

“There is not a trace of anything on your cheek.”

“All, see yonder! On the bare floor is a strange wet trail.”

Old King Brady pointed.

Harry then saw what the other indicated.

It was a wet mark that looked very strange.

“It certainly seems that some one has trailed a small wet rope, or rather, two of them, across the bare floor,” Harry said.

“Yes—and see, the wriggling, wet marks disappear at an open knot hole in the baseboard yonder.”

“That’s so.”

“What can it mean?”

“Wait a moment.”

Old King Brady crossed to the door through which they had come.

In an instant he had closed and secured it.

There was a bolt on the inside.

This the veteran drew.

Then he came back to Harry.

“Now we cannot easily be surprised,” he said.

“Let us examine Sing Ho,” proposed Harry.

“Yes. We must find out the cause of his death.”

“And if we do that, we shall have a clew to the mystery of this fatal room.”

“A room in which death comes suddenly and in an inexplicable way.”

“True. It was in this room that Blake Moore was found dead we know.”

Thus speaking, they began to carefully examine the body of the dead Chinaman.

As they did so all their faculties were on the alert.

But no sound reached them.

They soon saw that there was not a mark of any kind in the form of a wound on the exposed parts of the dead man's body.

"This is the greatest mystery I ever struck," said Old King Brady.

"I say the same."

"The appearance of the face of the dead tells he met a violent death."

"I think so."

"Ha! What's this?"

Harry bent down eagerly and looked at the yellow arm of the dead.

Just then Old King Brady had drawn up the sleeve of his blouse.

"There are two marks, like fresh pricks of a needle on his arm."

"And two drops of blood."

"Yes."

"Harry, those seemingly trivial wounds are the cause of Sing Ho's death."

"I verily believe so."

"But this discovery only increases the puzzle."

“That’s true.”

“I wonder if the cold objects that struck us dealt Sing Ho these wounds?”

“I suspect so.”

“That is my opinion.”

“Then there is one all important question.”

“Yes. It’s what were those cold and clammy objects.”

“Look at the marks on the floor again.”

“Yes, I see them. I note that the objects that made them evidently went through the knot hole.”

“Harry,” Old King Brady said, “I believe those objects were alive.”

“It would seem so.”

“Tell me what, living thing, wet with water, would leave such a trail?”

“Ha!” exclaimed Harry. “Nothing that I know would leave such traces except snakes!”

“I believe you have answered the important question.”

“Yes. It must be so.”

“We had a close call then.”

“Yes. For the objects that struck us were evidently snakes.”

“We may safely say that one of them bit poor Sing Ho.”

“And that the snake’s bite killed him?”

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“Certainly. The snake was evidently a poisonous reptile.”

“But I know of no snake whose bite is so instantly fatal.”

“Neither do I.”

“But we are dealing with Chinese assassins.”

“Yes, and it is quite probable that the snake whose poison killed Sing Ho came from China.”

“And it is possible that the deadly reptile may be unknown save to the Chinese.”

“Probably so. The Highbinders may have brought the deadly snakes from China.”

“The Mongolian assassins are quite capable of such a thing.”

“I know that, and it strikes me that we are in peril of these reptiles here.”

“The snakes were dropped upon us.”

“Look at the ceiling.”

The two detectives looked upwards.

“Ha, there is a slide in the ceiling!” Harry exclaimed.

“Yes, but it’s closed.”

“The slide was open when we entered here, I believe.”

“So do I. The Chinese assassins were at it, and they dropped the snake down on us.”

“What’s that?”

Harry sprang across the room and picked up an object on which his eyes had just fallen.

“A ball of lead,” he added, holding it up.

“That’s what shattered the lantern slide,” said Old King Brady.

“Yes, things are clearing up.”

“Look out!”

Old King Brady leaped aside.

At that instant Harry saw the slide in the ceiling open, and he caught a glimpse of a yellow face.

The slide closed as Old King Brady sprang aside.

As Harry uttered the warning, the elder officer was standing directly under the slide.

Old King Brady saw the Chinaman who closed it.

He came to Harry's side and whispered:

"The Chinese assassins are in the house. Come, let us go."

He led the way from the room as he spoke.

Harry followed.

Down the stairs they hastened.

"Further secret inspection here is out of the question for tonight," Old King Brady said, as they reached the foot of the flight.

Harry assented.

A moment later they were out of the house.

As they crossed the rear yard, Harry said:

"We have accomplished what we came for."

"I believe so. I now assume confidently that the death of Blake Moore was caused by the bite of a poisonous snake, which the Chinese assassins hurled upon him in that house."

"And probably the two other officers, who were found dead in Chinatown met their fate in the same way."

"Yes, I have no doubt of that!"

"Ha! There's a shadow there by the wall!" admonished Old King Brady.

They had gained the alley beside the yard.

The succeeding instant four powerful Chinamen sprang from the shadows of the wall.

The Mongolian thugs rushed at the disguised officers.

In their hands they carried murderous Chinese knives.

Old King Brady dealt the foremost Chinaman a kick in the stomach.

Harry laid out the next one with a sledge hammer blow from his fist.

Then the two officers closed in with the two remaining assassins.

As they did so they heard men coming from the house which they had just left.

“We’ve got to make short work here!” panted Old King Brady.

As he spoke he seized the knife arm of his assailant.

A yell of pain burst from the lips of the rascal.

Old King Brady had dislocated his elbow with a twist that made the Celestial drop his knife.

The fellow fled, and at the same time the remaining Chinaman caught a blow on the skull that dropped him.

Harry had made use of his clubbed revolver.

“Now discretion is the better part of valor,” said Old King Brady, as he darted away.

The young officer followed.

But they did not run far. Presently they entered a deep arched doorway.

All was darkness there.

As they crouched in the alley four Chinamen came along it from the direction of the house of mystery. They passed on without seeing the officers.

They were about to leave their hiding place when a ray of light flashed in the alley.

CHAPTER VII.

A CLEW TO THE SLAVE MART—THE OPIUM SHIP.

“That’s the light of a lantern,” said Harry, in a whisper.

“Yes—and see! Two men are coming from the direction of the house whence we fled.”

“Ha! one of them is an American—or at least, he is not a Chinaman.”

“That’s so.”

The two detectives drew back into the doorway.

The man with the lantern and his companion came on.

In a moment, as he saw the two men more distinctly, Harry whispered:

“The Chinaman who carries the lantern is the one who looked down through the ceiling.”

“Yes—I noted that his face was covered with smallpox scars.”

“Ah, here is a discovery! Surely the man with the Chinaman is the fellow whom Dr. Raymond saw in Chinatown with the missing heiress.”

“That’s so. He perfectly answers the description we have of that

man.”

As Old King Brady said this in a whisper the Chinaman with the lantern and his companion passed the officers’ hiding place.

And they heard the latter say:

“Hop Lee, I fear the detectives have given us the slip.”

“Maybe so, Cap Barnabas. But if so, we shall get them another time.”

This was all that the officers overheard.

When the Chinaman and his companion had passed out of sight Old King Brady said:

“We have spotted the Chinese slave dealer all right and also Captain Barnabas; I only wish we could trail them now.”

“But that we dare not undertake.”

“No. But we will hunt the two rascals down yet.”

A little later Old King Brady and Harry glided away.

In a few moments they gained a well lighted street.

They soon found themselves near the entrance of a Chinese theater.

It was now eleven o’clock.

The audience was pouring out of the Mongolian playhouse.

The detectives mingled with the throng, and proceeded with the Chinese in the direction in which they wished to go.

They were walking behind two Chinamen who wore silk blouses and had the appearance of rich merchants.

Suddenly they heard one of these Chinamen say to his companion:

“Moy Ye, do you mean to attend the slave sale to-morrow night?”

The Chinaman spoke in his native language.

But the detectives understood him.

“Yes, I mean to buy a slave girl. They say Hop Lee has one beauty among the lot that arrived yesterday,” answered the other Chinaman.

“The sale will be held at the new mart of Hop Lee, I understand?” said the first speaker.

“Yes. If you mean to be there, call at my store at eight and go with me.”

“I will. But if you mean to buy the handsome slave girl you will have to bid against Captain Barnabas. He always bids off the best of a lot.”

“I will bid against him, then; I am rich; Cap Barnabas will have to outbid the richest merchant in Chinatown if he gets the girl.”

“I wish you luck. If I were as rich as you are I would not let the American outbid me.”

“He is hand and glove with Hop Lee. In the opium business they are partners, but Hop does not mingle business with friendship. In the slave business the American has no interest. So Hop Lee will not favor Cap Barnabas at the sale.”

“I suppose not.”

After that the two Chinamen fell to discussing the price of goods in which they dealt, but they said nothing further of interest to Old King Brady and Harry.

But the elder officer whispered:

“Let’s follow those chaps.”

“All right.”

“I want to spot the store of Moy Ye.”

“I twig.”

“I mean to attend the slave sale.”

“Then you share the idea that has come to my mind, I fancy.”

“I think I may find poor Sing Ho’s sister at the slave mart.”

“That was my thought.”

“You know I promised Sing Ho that if he would help us I would

help him save his sister.”

“Yes, and you mean to keep that promise.”

“I do. Poor Sing Ho lost his life in our service; the least that I can do is to make good my pledge.”

They walked on after the two Chinamen.

At last the pair paused.

They were before a large Chinese tea and liquor store.

The Chinaman called Moy Ye bade his friend good-night at the door. Then he entered the store.

Having noticed the location well, the detectives passed on.

They soon got out of Chinatown.

An hour later they were at police headquarters.

There they told the sergeant who was on duty about the death of Sing Ho.

But they did not see fit to tell him the explanation of the death of the Chinaman.

They reserved that revelation for a future time.

It was Old and Young King Brady's method never to explain a mystery to the police, until they had absolute proof that they were right.

This customary precaution had won for them the name of never making an error.

The officers requested the police to remove the remains of Sing Ho from the house in Chinatown.

“Of course an inquest will be held on the morrow, and experts shall try to find out the cause of Sing Ho’s death,” said the sergeant.

Leaving the police station the officers went to the lodging house in which they had made their present disguises.

There they put on their ordinary clothing, and removed their facial make-up.

As soon as this was done they went to their hotel.

When they were in Old King Brady’s room, he said:

“I have a two-fold motive in attending the slave sale to-morrow night.”

“So I thought,” Harry rejoined.

“I hope not only to save Sing Ho’s sister, but to shadow Captain Barnabas.”

“You mean to follow him from the slave mart to his house?”

“Yes. From what the Chinese merchant said we can be certain that the fellow will attend the sale.”

“Yes. And I suppose you think we may find Edna Morton, the missing heiress, at Captain Barnabas’ house.”

“Certainly.”

“It seems to me likely that Captain Barnabas is after Edna Morton’s fortune.”

“No doubt you are right. Such was evidently the opinion of Dr. Raymond.”

“Now how would this Captain Barnabas seek to obtain the fortune of which the missing girl is the heiress?”

“It appears he could only hope to get hold of her money by making her his wife.”

“Yes, that’s the scoundrel’s plot, I think.”

“He may have already married the girl.”

“True; but even so, she is probably ignorant of his real character, and we must save her and her fortune.”

“Yes, and it may easily be that the girl is entirely ignorant of the fact that she is an heiress.”

“I had thought of that.”

So assented Old King Brady.

Not long afterward he and Harry separated for the night.

The following morning the detectives attended the inquest which was held over the remains of Sing Ho.

The result was that the coroner's jury rendered the verdict that Sing Ho died from some suddenly fatal brain trouble.

His brain was found to be terribly congested, just as was the brain of Blake Moore.

In this of course the officers found evidence to corroborate their opinion that in both cases, death was occasioned by the same cause.

Old King Brady and Harry left the scene of the inquest as soon as the verdict was rendered.

They did not care to do any piping in Chinatown by daylight at present.

And as it seemed they could accomplish nothing there until night, they concluded to call on Blake Moore's sister.

The young lady received them, and Old King Brady made known all that he and Harry had accomplished in Chinatown.

When Clara Moore understood that her brother had probably been killed by a poisonous snake, which the Chinese opium men had caused to bite him, she was overcome with horror.

But at length she regained her composure, and said:

"How will you ever bring the horrible crime home to the fiendish Chinamen?"

“That I cannot explicitly say now, but that Harry and I will ultimately convict the rascals I feel confident,” replied the elder officer.

Some further conversation ensued which is not essential to the present narrative.

And at the end of an hour the two detectives left the residence of Miss Moore.

They took a walk down to the water side and wandered along the docks, looking at the ships in the harbor, and looked over it in the direction of the entrance—the famous Golden Gate.

At some distance from the docks they saw a large steam vessel at anchor. And as they noted the men on its deck were all Chinamen they observed the vessel closely.

Presently they made out the name which was painted on the bow.

It was the Orient.

Leaving the dock the officers went to their hotel.

In the office they saw a couple of seafaring men who were talking to the clerk.

“I see a vessel is in port that we saw in Chinese waters a few weeks ago,” said one of the seafaring men. “And I mean to run foul the captain of that craft if I can, for I have a bone to pick with him, the rascal. You see he almost ran down my ship one night, and when he barely grazed our side he shouted to me, and

cursed and abused me shamefully when it was all his fault, for his ship showed no light. She was stealing out of port slyly, and I suspect she's an opium smuggler."

Old King Brady and Harry heard all this.

As the man whose remarks we have recorded was leaving the office, the elder officer accosted him.

"I heard what you said just now. I wonder if the vessel that served you such a rascally trick in Chinese waters is called the Orient?" he said.

"It was. I flashed my search light on her, and so read the name. Do you know the captain? Since I landed to-day I've found out that he is called Captain Barnabas," answered the sea captain.

"I do not know the man personally. But if you remain in port for some little time, no doubt you'll come across him," answered Old King Brady.

Then he turned away.

Of course he had found out all he wanted to know.

He at once rejoined Harry and told him that the Orient was Captain Barnabas' ship.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SLAVE SALE—OLD KING BRADY ON HAND.

“This is news worth having,” said Harry.

“I agree with you.”

“If we fail to shadow Captain Barnabas from the slave mart to-night, we may yet trail him from his ship.”

“Yes,” assented the other.

Nothing further of importance engaged the detectives’ attention until night.

Then they made entirely new Chinese disguises at the lodging house.

When they left it they were much more richly dressed than on the previous night.

In face, they looked like a pair of sporty Chinese gamblers.

“At the slave mart we’ll assume to be Chinese fan-tan sharps from New York,” said Old King Brady.

Harry assented.

And they proceeded to Chinatown.

Before eight o'clock they arrived near the store of Moy Ye.

Then they sauntered along slowly.

Presently they saw Moy Ye.

He came to the door of his store and looked out.

As he stood there his companion of the preceding night came up.

The two Chinamen exchanged a few words.

Then they walked away together.

Of course, the detectives proceeded in the same direction.

They kept the two Chinamen in sight constantly.

At length the pair arrived at the house in which, at the opening of this narrative, we introduced Hop Lee and Captain Barnabas.

While Moy Ye remained in the street his companion went to the door and was admitted by the humpbacked dwarf whom we saw there.

The officers halted on the opposite side of the street.

Presently the Chinaman who had gone into Hop Lee's house reappeared.

In his hand he carried a couple of red tickets.

Old King Brady spoke to Harry, and he glided across the street and stood behind a cart that was drawn up at the curb.

Listening, Harry heard the Chinaman with the tickets say to his friend:

“All right. I got tickets that will admit us to the slave mart. Hop Lee has gone there. But Ta-To, the humpback, knew me and let me have the two passes.”

With that the speaker put the two cards in the outside pocket of his blouse.

Then the two Chinese merchants walked on.

Harry had a happy thought.

He began to stagger along after them, and presently he lurched against the man with the tickets.

The Chinese merchant shoved him aside, uttering some angry words.

Harry muttered an unintelligible reply and stopped.

As the two Chinamen proceeded Old King Brady joined Harry.

The latter held up the two red tickets.

He had taken them from the Chinaman's pocket undetected when he staggered against the Celestial.

“A good trick,” said Old King Brady, when Harry had explained matters.

“We'll use these tickets,” said Harry then.

And he repeated what he had overheard the Chinaman say.

“So the hunchback at Hop Lee’s house is called Ta-To, eh? I know that name. Ha, I have it! A hunchback by that name used to be the doorkeeper of a fan-tan den in Pell street, New York. Good!” said Old King Brady.

“Bravo! Now we can make it seem that we obtained the tickets legitimately.”

“Yes—come on!”

The Chinese merchants were still in sight.

The detectives proceeded after them.

The two Celestials led the officers for a long distance.

But finally they entered a narrow alley, and presently descended a flight of basement steps.

The detectives came up boldly.

The time had come for them to play a bold part.

There was no other way for them to get into the slave mart, it seemed.

They saw the two Chinese merchants vainly trying to gain admission to the basement. A couple of ruffianly Mongolians guarded the door.

The detectives paused and listened.

They heard the doorkeepers absolutely refuse to admit the merchants.

The latter declared they had secured tickets, but that they had lost them.

Finally the doorkeepers ordered the merchants off, making the threat that they would beat them if they did not leave at once.

The merchants finally ascended the stairs, passed the detectives and walked off muttering in anger.

Then Old King Brady and Harry descended to the basement door.

They presented the red tickets.

At once the doorkeepers stood aside.

The officers entered.

They found themselves in a sort of anteroom. At the further end of it was a closed door.

From beyond this came the sound of muffled voices.

“We must go ahead boldly now,” whispered Old King Brady.

A moment later he opened the closed door, and passed through it.

Harry unhesitatingly followed.

The officers found themselves in a large room in which some two score Chinamen of the wealthy class were assembled.

On a raised platform in the center of the room six Chinese girls were seated.

The Mongolians thronged about the platform, eying the slave girls who were soon to be sold to the highest bidder.

Among the poor creatures the detectives saw one who seemed to be admired much by the Chinamen.

She was by far the most attractive one of the Chinese girls.

From an American standpoint she would not have been considered a beauty.

But the Celestials have different views.

In a moment Old King Brady and Harry saw Hop Lee.

The slave dealer was descanting upon the merits of his human merchandise.

As the attention of the audience was centered on the slave girls no one seemed to pay any particular attention to the detectives.

The two officers had been in the slave mart only for a few moments when they saw Captain Barnabas enter.

He seemed to be well known to the Celestials who were present.

Many of them saluted him in a friendly manner.

His arrival seemed to be the signal for the beginning of the sale.

Hop Lee pounded upon the platform with a huge cane, and announced in Chinese:

“The sale will now begin.”

Then he ordered one of the slave girls to rise.

When she was standing up Hop Lee proceeded as auctioneer.

And in a few moments the unfortunate creature was struck off to an old Chinaman.

After that the sale proceeded rapidly.

And very soon all the Chinese girls, save the one who had the most claim to beauty, were sold.

Then Hop Lee said:

I now offer the most beautiful girl of the lot for sale. Stand up, Te Lala.”

As the girl got upon her feet, Old King Brady whispered to Harry:

“The girl bears the name of Sing Ho’s sister. She is the girl I want to save.”

Harry nodded.

At once the bidding became brisk. Half a dozen men evidently wished to purchase Te Lala.

Until now, Captain Barnabas had not made a bid.

But presently he shouted:

“Eight hundred I offer for the girl!”

Thus he raised the last bid, which was six hundred dollars.

“Eight hundred! Eight hundred! Who says one thousand?” cried Hop Lee.

“One thousand!” said Old King Brady, in excellent Chinese.

Hop Lee looked at him.

“You are a stranger! I must know you can pay before I call your bid,” he said.

“I am Foy Sam, the fan-tan man of Pell street. New York. Your man, Ta-To, gave me tickets for the sale. You probably know Ta-To used to tend the door of my Pell street joint,” answered the shrewd officer.

“All right,” replied Hop Lee, evidently without a suspicion.

Then he called Old King Brady’s bid.

“Twelve hundred!” shouted Captain Barnabas.

“Thirteen hundred!” said the detective.

“Sixteen hundred!” roared the American opium fiend.

“Eighteen hundred!” was Old King Brady’s next bid.

“Make it two thousand!” shouted Captain Barnabas. “No New York fan-tan sharp can outbid me,” he added.

“We shall see. Twenty-one hundred!” said the detective.

Hop Lee called the bid.

“The girl is worth three thousand,” he added.

“I’ll give twenty-five hundred,” said Captain Barnabas.

“Make it three thousand!” cried Old King Brady, defiantly.

Captain Barnabas glared at him.

“I want that girl! You draw out of the bidding, if you know when you are well off!” he hissed.

“Three thousand!” cried Hop Lee.

“Thirty-two hundred!” said Captain Barnabas.

“I say thirty-five hundred!” said Old King Brady.

“All right, I’ll bid no more, but you won’t have the girl long,” cried Captain Barnabas, looking at Old King Brady fiercely.

“Thirty-five hundred!” called Hop Lee.

“Are you all done?” he added.

No one responded.

“Thirty-five hundred once! Thirty-five hundred twice! Thirty five hundred three times, and sold to Foy Sam!” concluded the slave dealer.

At that, Old King Brady stepped up to the platform, and from a leather wallet counted out the price of Te Lala, which he handed to Hop Lee.

Then he led the girl out of the basement.

No one interfered, and Harry followed his partner.

When they were in the alley, the latter said to Harry:

“Take this poor girl to Clara Moore. Later a home must be found for her in some good American family.”

Te Lala seemed to be in a state of hopeless apathy, and she said nothing. Before Harry could reply to Old King Brady’s last remark, he added:

“I’ll remain to shadow Captain Barnabas.”

CHAPTER IX.

A CUNNING RUSE—AT THE HOUSE OF CAPTAIN BARNABAS.

Harry did not like the idea of leaving Old King Brady.

He was afraid that Captain Barnabas might attack the veteran.

So he hesitated.

“Make haste to get away from here. The girl must be cared for,” said Old King Brady.

“All right, but you will be in peril, I fear.”

“Never mind me. But look sharp. There may be danger for you.”

“I know Captain Barnabas’ agents may try to take the girl from me.”

“That’s it. Now go.”

“Remember you are only one against a multitude,” said the young officer.

Then he reluctantly led the Chinese girl away.

They reached the street at the end of the alley.

Harry looked at his charge, and asked:

“Are you Sing Ho’s sister?”

Of course he spoke in Chinese.

“I am the sister of Sing Ho,” answered the girl. She regarded Harry with surprise.

“Do you know Sing Ho? Oh, take me to him!” she quickly added.

“I will take you to friends,” answered Harry.

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He did not wish to tell the girl then that Sing Ho was dead.

Just then he saw a band of a dozen policemen of the Chinese quarter coming.

All the police employed in Chinatown are members of the regular San Francisco force.

And for the most part they are Irishmen or Americans; no Chinamen are employed on the police force.

The approaching officers were passing Harry and the Chinese girl presently.

Then Harry accosted the sergeant.

“Give me an escort of four men, sergeant,” said Harry.

“What’s this? A heathen that speaks good English! What do you want my men for?” said the sergeant.

“I’ve just taken this girl out of a bad den. I want to get out of Chinatown with her.”

“Faith, and you have a nerve. We’re going to raid a fan-tan joint, and I can’t let ye have a man.”

Harry saw that he must explain.

So he stepped up close to the sergeant.

“Officer,” said he, “I am an American. A detective in disguise.”

“Oh, that’s different.”

“Now you’ll let me have four of your men?”

“Sure, Mike.”

The sergeant then named four officers and told them to go with Harry.

Accompanied by those men, Harry proceeded with the Chinese girl.

Presently he saw six men—ruffianly-looking Celestials—who were following him.

“I say, men, just give those pig tails a hint to break away,” said Harry.

The policemen then saw the Mongolians in their rear, and they turned on them.

“Git an’ keep goin’, or we’ll run the whole push of yez in,” admonished the leader of the officers.

The Celestials have a wholesome fear of the police, who do not hesitate to use their night sticks, and the six who had set in to follow Harry made off at once.

After that Harry and his escort proceeded.

And in due time they got out of Chinatown.

Then the officers left the young detective.

He hurried on with Te Lala.

Of course he made for Clara Moore’s house.

Having arrived there with his charge, he saw Miss Moore.

In a few words he explained matters, and Clara Moore agreed to care for the Chinese girl for the present.

Then Harry hastened away.

“I’m going back into Chinatown,” he muttered.

Though Old King Brady had not told him to return, the young detective thought he might yet assist his partner in the Chinese quarter that night.

Harry proceeded rapidly, and as he availed himself of the means of rapid transit he was not long in getting into Chinatown again.

Then he went to the alley on which the slave mart was located.

The narrow way was deserted.

Harry hardly knew what to do.

As he stood in the shadow reflecting, a Chinaman appeared.

He came out of the slave mart.

Harry at once determined on a stratagem.

As the Chinaman came along he accosted the fellow.

“I’ve a message for Captain Barnabas,” said he.

And his Chinese was perfect.

“Captain Barnabas has gone home,” answered the Celestial.

“That’s bad. I must give him the letter.”

“Then go to his house.”

“So I will. Let me see. He hasn’t moved lately, has he?”

“No. He still lives in the white house on Canton Court.”

“Well, I’ll get there as soon as I can.”

So saying Harry hastened off.

And he congratulated himself on the success of his ruse.

The detective had no idea where Canton Court was.

But he soon came upon a Chinaman at the door of a shop, and in answer to his questions the Celestial set him right.

Following the course indicated by the Mongolian Harry at length entered Canton Court.

This was a short, broad street in the central part of Chinatown.

In a few moments Harry paused before a brick house, whose front was painted white.

As this was the only white house he could see, Harry thought it must be Captain Barnabas' home.

Harry set in to watch the house.

At the same time he wondered what had become of his partner.

The windows of the white house were all closed by heavy shutters.

Not a ray of light came from any of those portals, Harry noted.

He thought, possibly, Old King Brady was then in the house of the opium fiend.

And he resolved to remain near it.

He placed himself behind a great boxed tree. The street was deserted. He had little fear of being seen by anyone who would suspect his purpose.

As he stood with his eyes fixed on the white house, the sound of wheels reached his hearing.

Looking along the street Harry saw a cab coming. It was driven by a Chinaman.

The vehicle stopped before the white house.

Then Captain Barnabas alighted.

He spoke to the cabman, who drove off as the opium smuggler entered his dwelling.

Harry stared at the Chinese cabman. Suddenly as the young officer stepped out from behind the boxed tree the cabman turned and saw him.

Like a flash he raised his right hand and made a peculiar signal.

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Instantly the cabman made the same signal.

“Old King Brady as I live!” thought Harry.

The cab immediately turned into an alley.

Harry hastened to the mouth of the narrow way.

There he met the pretended Chinese driver of the cab.

He was indeed Old King Brady.

Harry saw the cab standing a little way down the alley where

the wonderful old secret agent had fastened the horse.

“So it’s you!” exclaimed Harry.

Old King Brady grasped his partner’s hand.

“You must know that soon after you left the slave mart alley, Captain Barnabas came out. I was hidden behind an ash barrel. I heard the rascal say he was going home. Then I set after him as a shadow. He went to the street and proceeded for some distance. I did not lose sight of him, but he did not go straight home. He went into an opium den. I waited outside. When he entered the joint I heard him make a bargain with the Chinese driver of a cab that stood before the den. The cabby agreed to drive him home when he came out. The rest was easy. I got the cabman to drink with me in a shop next to the opium den. In his liquor I put a little laudanum. He went to sleep, I got out of the den, taking the Chinaman’s coachman’s coat and hat with me. When Cap Barnabas came out he got into the cab, and as he gave me directions I drove him to his house as you have seen.”

“Well done!” exclaimed Harry, as Old King Brady concluded.

“Now what?” he added.

“We must get into Captain Barnabas’ house.”

“That may not be easy.”

“That’s so; but I have a plan.”

“What is it?”

“Captain Barnabas is under the influence of the drug which he must have smoked in the joint from which he came in the cab.”

“Well?”

“While he is half stupefied by opium he will not be very fly to drop to a scheme. I found this in the cab.”

Old King Brady held up the cane with the ivory handle which the opium fiend habitually carried.

“What do you mean to do with that?” asked Harry.

“I’m going to return it.”

Old King Brady went on and developed a plan to get into the house.

A few moments and he was at the door of the white house.

Harry crouched at one side of it.

His position was such that he could not be seen by anyone who opened the door.

Presently Old King Brady rang the bell, and directly the portal was opened.

Captain Barnabas appeared.

He looked to be half asleep.

“Here is a cane which you left in my cab,” said the disguised

detective, who had drawn his hat down so that his face was shaded.

“Thanks, my man, I’m obliged to you,” said the opium fiend, looking at the officer with half closed eyes.

“You ought to give me something for bringing the cane,” said Old King Brady.

“So I will,” answered Captain Barnabas.

He took out a piece of money and extended it to the detective.

“You ought to give me more than that,” said the officer.

“Everybody in Chinatown says Cap Barnabas is generous,” he added.

Old King Brady was working to make a chance for Harry to slip into the house undetected.

He had planned, in advance, to direct from the door the attention of anyone who might open it. But, of course, he knew his method must be directed by circumstances. He had seen that the money which was offered him was all there was in Captain Barnabas’ purse, so he was now working to get the opium fiend to go away from the door after more money.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISSING HEIRESS—"THE HOUSE OF THE BLUE LANTERN."

Old King Brady had held up the ivory-handled cane for Captain Barnabas' inspection, but the shrewd detective had not yet given it to the opium fiend.

"You are a rascal!" exclaimed Captain Barnabas, when the detective had last spoken.

"Finders are keepers," answered the latter.

And he held the cane behind his back.

"Do you mean that you won't give me my cane!" demanded the victim of the Chinese drug.

"It's a nice cane. Give me just twice what you have offered me, and you can have it."

"This is an imposition!" exclaimed the irate smuggler.

"Cap, you can't afford to make enemies in Chinatown," said Old King Brady, meaningly.

"That's so, my man. After all, you were honest to bring me the cane. It's worth ten times what you want as a reward for it. Wait! I'll get the money," answered the other.

He hastened into a room at the side of the hall.

The instant Barnabas was out of sight Old King Brady whispered to Harry.

“Now in you go,” said he.

Harry glided into the hall.

There was a door under a flight of stairs in it.

Noiselessly Harry slipped through this door.

Scarcely had he done so when Captain Barnabas re-entered the hall.

Of course Old King Brady had remained in the street door.

Captain Barnabas handed him the sum of money which he had demanded.

The officer took it.

19

Then he gave the other the cane.

Having thanked Captain Barnabas Old King Brady withdrew.

The smuggler at once closed and bolted the door.

Then he passed along the hall and went through a rear portal.

As he went by Harry's hiding place the latter heard him mutter:

“The cabman was right. I can't afford to make enemies in Chinatown. My safety depends upon my keeping in with the Chinese. Chinatown is the one place in San Francisco where I

feel pretty safe.”

Harry had found that the place he had entered was a closet.

He held the door on a crack.

And listening, he heard the receding footsteps of the renegade American.

At last those sounds no longer reached his hearing.

Then Harry crept out of the closet.

In a moment he reached the street door.

Softly he drew the bolts that fastened it.

Noiselessly the portal swung open under his hand.

Like a shadow Old King Brady glided in, and the door was closed.

“Things worked to suit my plan, eh, Harry?” whispered the remarkable officer.

“Yes. Now I suppose we shall search the house?”

“Certainly. But we must give Captain Barnabas time to fall sound asleep. It won’t take him long. He could hardly keep his eyes open at the door.”

“I think all the household was asleep when Barnabas came home; otherwise it’s likely a servant would have opened the

door for you.”

Old King Brady assented.

Then he led the way into the closet under the stairs.

There the two officers waited.

Half an hour elapsed.

At the end of that time Old King Brady said:

“Now we’ll go ahead with our search here.”

He led the way from the closet. Harry followed. They decided to proceed in the direction in which the younger officer told his partner Captain Barnabas had gone.

So they left the hall through the rear door.

At once they found themselves in a large, elegantly-furnished apartment.

Suddenly they paused. The room was lighted by a lamp with a red globe. The lurid light suddenly disclosed the form of Captain Barnabas.

The opium smuggler was lying on a splendid oriental divan that stood at the rear of the apartment.

A glance told the officers that the rascal was asleep.

He was fully dressed; evidently he had sank down on the divan

soon after leaving the hall.

As the two detectives stood looking at the sleeper a most unwelcome sound greeted their hearing.

Just then there came a loud ring at the street door.

“Quick! Follow me,” whispered Old King Brady.

As he spoke he led the way back to the hall.

Once more the officers entered the closet under the stairs.

Someone outside continued to ring the bell violently.

In a moment or so, as Old King Brady held the closet door ajar, he saw Captain Barnabas enter the hall.

The loud ringing of the bell had at last awakened the opium smuggler.

He went to the door and opened it; Old King Brady had bolted the door when he came in.

As Captain Barnabas swung the portal on its hinges the elder detective, still peering through the crack of the door, saw Hop Lee and six ruffianly-looking Chinamen crowd into the passage.

And at a glance, the officer recognized one of the band as the coachman whom he had drugged in the wine shop.

While Old King Brady listened, Hop Lee explained matters to Captain Barnabas. At last the latter understood that he had been

duped.

“Ha!” he exclaimed, “this looks like the work of a detective.”

“I believe it is the work of the detective we fear,” said Hop Lee.

“Old King Brady?”

“Yes.”

Then Captain Barnabas related what had passed between the pretended Chinese coachman and himself at his house.

“Ho! The spy did not do any great harm. I suspect he only sought to spot your house and make you pay him for the trouble. But since he now knows where you live the heiress of the bonanza king should no longer be kept here,” said the Chinese slave dealer.

“That’s so. I suspect the spy is after that girl. He will come here again to search for her. But he shall not find her. I’ll remove her to a safe place this very night,” declared Captain Barnabas.

“We must lay a new plan against Old and Young King Brady. It almost seems as if they bear charmed lives, since the deadly water snakes of China which I hurled upon them in the house to which Sing Ho led them did not bite them. But one snake did bite Sing Ho, so the decree of death which the Highbinders pronounced against him was fulfilled.” Hop Lee rejoined.

“Let us take the American girl away; then we will plan to lure the detectives into a death trap.”

“Good! The deadly water snakes of China shall yet cause the death of the two officers.”

“Come, Hop Lee, I’ll lead you to the girl whose fortune shall yet be ours. Let the others remain here.”

With that Captain Barnabas sprang up the stairs.

Hop Lee followed him.

Old King Brady and Harry had heard all.

The former hastened to whisper:

“I think it is best for us to allow the rascals to take the American girl out of the house.”

“Yes; the odds are too strong against us to warrant us in attempting to prevent her removal.”

20

“But we’ll follow the girl.”

“Certainly, and be ready to snatch her from the men who seek her fortune.”

“That’s it; but if we do not get a chance to do that on the street we must not fail to locate the new quarters to which the girl is taken.”

At that moment Captain Barnabas and Hop Lee descended the stairs with a veiled lady between them.

Old King Brady saw them when they reached the foot of the

flight.

“Now, Miss Edna,” said Captain Barnabas, “we must hasten to the place where my agents have informed me you will have a chance to see the man whom my men suspect you will identify as your father.”

“Then let us not delay. I have vowed to find my unnatural father who cruelly deserted my poor mother, and I mean to appeal to the law to compel him to support me, if I find him, and I would punish him for his unfeeling conduct,” said the veiled lady.

“Come,” answered Captain Barnabas.

Then he and Hop Lee passed out of the house with the girl, who was the intended victim of their dark plot.

The Chinese ruffians followed.

Captain Barnabas locked the door from the outside.

An instant later Old King Brady was at a wicket in the door. Looking through it he saw the veiled lady and her escort walking away.

Of course the detectives had overheard all that was said by the American girl and Captain Barnabas.

A few moments elapsed.

Then Old King Brady unlocked the door by means of a skeleton key.

“Now to shadow Edna Morton and the villain with her,” said the veteran.

“I’m with you to save that girl,” Harry replied.

They glided out of the house.

The party they meant to trace was still in sight.

Cunningly the detectives followed them. All the ruffianly Chinamen acted as the escort of their leader and the girl.

So Old King Brady and Harry did not attempt to take Miss Morton from them on the street by force.

At length Captain Barnabas, Edna Morton and Hop Lee entered a house which was distinguished from the other buildings near it, by a blue lantern that hung over the door.

Under the strange blue lantern Hop Lee dismissed his Mongolian attendants.

They hastened away.

While the detectives watched the house, two men, who were evidently well to do Chinamen, came out of it.

As they paused to light cigarettes, the officer who sauntered by them heard one of the Celestials say:

“Hop Lee’s new opium joint here is the finest in Chinatown.”

“Yes, and only high-class people are allowed in the house of the

blue lantern,” said the other Chinaman.

Then they walked on.

“We cannot attempt to get into the opium den in our present disguises, for Captain Barnabas is wide-awake now,” said Old King Brady to Harry, when the two Chinamen walked off.

“No. Captain Barnabas and Hop Lee would be sure to recognize us as the supposed fan-tan sharps, and as you have made an enemy of Barnabas, by buying the slave girl, he’d make trouble for you if you got into the joint.”

“I think, since we now know where to find Edna Morton, we had better leave Chinatown for to-night. Later we will rescue her from the opium den,” said the veteran.

Harry assented. They were about to leave the neighborhood, when Hop Lee came out of the house of the blue lantern alone.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE AT THE OPIUM DEN.

“Ha! there’s Hop Lee,” whispered Harry, as he saw the Celestial.

Old King Brady looked pleased.

“Harry,” said he, “I don’t like to be permanently separated from the good money which I paid for the slave girl.”

“Perhaps Hop Lee has that money in his pocket now.”

“It may be so, Harry, I think I’ll replevy that money in my own way.”

“Good. We can waylay the slave dealer.”

“That’s the game.”

Hop Lee was walking away.

The disguised officers glided after him.

The slave dealer did not appear to hear or see them.

The street was deserted.

Presently, Old King Brady whispered to Harry:

“Now we’ll close up.”

The succeeding moment he sprang forward. Hop Lee turned.

As he did so Old King Brady dealt him a blow with his clubbed revolver.

The Chinese slave dealer fell.

The detective's weapon had descended on his skull, and he was knocked senseless.

In a moment Old King Brady went through his pockets.

He brought to light a great bundle of bank notes.

From this the detective counted out the sum he had paid for the slave girl.

Having placed this money in his pocket, he put the rest of the bank notes back in the pocket of the Chinaman.

"He'll come to his senses in a few moments," said Old King Brady, as he led the way from the scene.

The two officers had no desire to remain in Chinatown any longer just then.

They proceeded swiftly, and at length they got clear of the great Mongolian district.

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Then they went to the lodging house.

There they removed their disguises, and a little later they were safe at their hotel.

In the morning Old King Brady said to Harry:

“Now we’ll make a bold move. Call a cab.”

“All right. Where do you mean to go?”

“To Chinatown.”

“To rescue Edna Morton?”

“Yes.”

“I thought so,” replied Harry, as he left the hotel.

Presently he re-entered it.

“The cab is here?” said he to his partner.

They passed out, and entered the vehicle after the elder officer had given the driver—a shrewd-looking Irishman—his directions.

The vehicle was driven away at once.

It proceeded rapidly and soon entered the confines of Chinatown.

The detectives kept the curtain closely drawn, for neither of them was in disguise.

“You know, Harry, it’s quite the fad for tourists to go sight-seeing in Chinatown. Curiosity leads many Americans to visit the opium dens there.”

“That’s so.”

“Therefore, the Chinese generally let sight-seers into their joints, for experience has taught the Celestials that they have nothing to fear from such guests.”

“I know that.”

“So I take it you and I will be admitted to the house of the blue lantern if Captain Barnabas is not there to spot us.”

“I think you are right.”

“And as opium fiends are not usually early risers, the chances are that this morning we will not encounter Barnabas,” said the veteran.

Ere long the cab stopped.

Old King Brady looked out of the window and then said to Harry:

“Here we are.”

He alighted and Harry followed.

“You will wait for us,” said the elder officer to the cabman.

“Sure I will, sor,” the latter answered.

Old King Brady and Harry went to the door of the opium joint.

A Mongolian opened it.

“What Melican gentlemen want?” he asked, in pigeon English.

“We want to hit the pipe once, just for fun. We’re tourists out sight-seeing,” answered Old King Brady, and he put a silver dollar in the palm of the yellow heathen.

“Me sabe, you comee in,” said the Chinaman.

Then he ushered the officers into a hall. Through this he conducted them. Finally they found themselves in the public room of the opium joint. It was magnificently furnished. Silk and velvet divans were ranged along the wall. Some few of these were occupied by Chinamen, who were enthralled in an opium sleep. Pipes for opium smoking were to be seen on little tables before the divans.

“Wait and me call man to tend pipe for Melican gentlemen,” said the Chinaman, as he ushered his guests into the smoking parlor.

He disappeared through a side door at once.

At the same instant Old King Brady heard a muffled voice which he recognized.

It was the voice of Captain Barnabas.

The voice emanated from a curtained door at the rear end of the smoking den.

Instantly Old King Brady glided to that portal, and Harry came close behind him.

Softly the veteran drew the curtain aside. Then he saw a closed door.

He gently tried to open it, and so found it was locked.

In his pocket he carried a bunch of skeleton keys.

Hastily he drew this out and fitted one of the keys in the lock.

Noiselessly he turned it. He had unlocked the door.

Without a sound he pushed it open on a crack an inch wide. Looking into the room beyond it, he saw it was fitted up even more elegantly than the public room as an opium joint.

And at a glance he saw Captain Barnabas standing with Hop Lee near a velvet-covered bunk, on which reclined a handsome American girl in an opium sleep. An opium pipe was in her mouth.

“She sleeps the sleep of the dope of China. She has finally refused to become my wife, and she suspects that I have deceived her about her father. But she shall be mine this day,” said Captain Barnabas, as he seemed to devour the beautiful girl with his evil eyes.

“Good! make girl your slave. Do as you will with her. Later she will consent to become your wife,” said Hop Lee.

“Harry,” whispered Old King Brady, “we’ll make a dash to rescue the American girl right now.”

“I am ready.”

“Then come on.”

As the last words passed the lips of Old King Brady he threw open the door and leaped straight at Captain Barnabas and Hop Lee.

In an instant the veteran detective was standing between them, holding one in each hand by the throat at arm's length.

Harry stood inside the door behind the trio. With revolver in one hand, he guarded the portal.

“I'm going to rescue that poor girl from this den if I have to choke the life out of you two!” hissed Old King Brady.

The veteran had completely surprised the two villains.

He had each by the throat before they could utter a sound.

While he yet held them he added to Harry:

“Get the girl out of this and into the cab!”

“I'll do it,” responded the powerful young athlete.

He sprang to the bunk and raised the fair victim of the opium habit in his arms.

Then he dashed out of the room.

Old King Brady held the two vainly struggling villains by their throats for a few moments. They turned black in their faces.

Suddenly the old detective let go of the rascals.

Instantly they sank to the floor, almost strangled into insensibility.

Old King Brady did not tarry in the room after that.

Rushing into the public apartment, he made his way through it unhindered.

A moment subsequently he was in the street.

Harry had encountered no one in the house, and he had already placed the rescued girl in the cab and taken his place beside her.

Old King Brady leaped into the vehicle as soon as he saw Harry and Edna Morton in it.

Then the vehicle was driven away.

The driver had his orders to make the best possible speed.

The promise of ten dollars for himself inspired him.

Probably the horses attached to the cab never made better time.

In a few moments the cab was out of sight of the house of the blue lantern, and speeding toward the confines of Chinatown.

The rescued girl lay back on the seat and still slept.

As the vehicle proceeded Old King Brady said:

“We were in great luck at the opium den!”

“Yes. Because we did not have to fight our way out of it.”

“Certainly. And now we must consider what we shall do with Miss Morton.”

“I propose that we take her to the home of Clara Moore. Since she received the Chinese girl at your request, she will not decline to give the young American girl a home for the present.”

“You are right, I think.”

Old King Brady presently looked out of the window, and then he announced that the cab was clear of Chinatown.

A little later he directed the driver to proceed to the home of Clara Moore.

The detectives alighted when the house was reached, and between them they carried Miss Morton into it, for still the potent thrall of an opium sleep held her in its power.

To Clara Moore Old King Brady related the story of Edna Morton.

And the sympathy of that lady was aroused.

She said she would be glad to receive the beautiful heiress as her guest, until such a time as she could claim and secure her inheritance.

Leaving the rescued girl to the care of Miss Moore, the detectives once more repaired to their hotel.

The hour was late, and as they were very tired they soon sought welcome sleep.

Meanwhile in the house of the blue lantern there was a scene of excitement, after the departure of the detectives with the intended victim of Captain Barnabas.

As soon as the half strangled villain and Hop Lee recovered they darted out of the private smoking room of the joint, and Hop Lee fell upon the Chinese doorkeeper of the den and began to belabor him. But Captain Barnabas passed to the street. There he looked about in vain for the detectives and the girl whom they had saved.

A little later the opium smuggler and Hop Lee were at the house of the former, conspiring against Old and Young King Brady.

CHAPTER XII.

HARRY DETERMINES ON A DARING VENTURE.

The following morning Old King Brady and Harry went to call on Edna Morton at the house of Clara Moore.

The officers were shown into the presence of the heiress.

She looked pale and wan as she reclined on a sofa.

But she was no longer under the influence of opium.

Clara Moore had already told Miss Morton how and by whom she had been rescued.

Miss Moore introduced the two detectives to the heiress.

The latter thanked them warmly.

Then Old King Brady asked:

“How did you come to disappear so suddenly from your usual haunts?”

“I will tell you all,” answered the young lady.

Speaking rapidly she went on to say:

“Before I disappeared I had made the acquaintance of Captain Barnabas at the home of a mutual friend, whom I am sure is

ignorant of any knowledge of the true character of the villain.”

Miss Morton paused, hesitated, and then coloring a little she continued:

“I must confess that before I made the acquaintance of Captain Barnabas I had become addicted to the use of opium, which I took at first as a medicine. After I came to know Captain Barnabas, whom I took for an honorable man, he came to me and assured me that he could help me find my father.”

“The treacherous villain!” exclaimed Old King Brady.

“Yes, he is an evil man. But to continue: Captain Barnabas assured me that my father had become well off and that he was in Chinatown. The plotter induced me to go with him to Chinatown to find my father. The wretch had evidently found out that I had acquired the opium habit, and I fell an easy victim to it. He led me into a Chinese den. The appetite for the deadly drug overcame my scruples. I smoked opium in the den and from that day my life has been one long opium dream. Only at intervals have I been clear-headed. Captain Barnabas took me to his house and there kept me supplied with opium and encouraged me to use it. But he did not attempt to harm me further. Like one in a trance I remained in that house. But in my lucid periods I knew that the plotter sought to induce me to become his wife. At length, only the other day, I became clear-headed enough to tell him that I would never consent to become his. And then the suspicion came upon me that he had deceived me about my father. I meant to escape from his house. But again the resistless longing for opium came upon me and I was soon under its fatal influence once more.”

As Miss Morton concluded, Old King Brady said:

“Your unnatural father died recently in Leadville, and he left a great fortune of which you are the heiress.”

“Then Captain Barnabas knew that before he lured me into Chinatown?”

“I have no doubt of it.”

“And he meant to make me his wife in order to gain my fortune?”

“Yes,” assented Old King Brady.

Then he gave Miss Morton the address of the lawyers of her father.

She thanked him, and said:

“I shall communicate with the attorneys at once.”

“Do so, and I have no doubt that you will soon be in possession of your fortune,” answered the officer.

Then he turned to Clara Moore and asked:

“What about the Chinese girl whom I sent here?”

“She is doing well, and as she is intelligent and in need, I have concluded to keep her in my service as a domestic.”

“Good! Please call her,” said Old King Brady.

Miss Moore did so.

Presently Te Lala entered the room.

Old King Brady spoke to her in Chinese, and told her about the death of her brother, Sing Ho.

But he did not make known the suspicions he had, regarding the mystery of the death of the Chinaman.

He wished to see if the Chinese girl would make any suggestion.

In truth, he supposed she might have some knowledge of the fatal methods which the Highbinders employed in China.

As soon as Old King Brady had related the mysterious circumstances that attended the death of Sing Ho, the Chinese girl cried out in her native language:

“Oh, I know what killed my brother! He was bitten by the deadly white water snake of China!”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because many men have been thus slain in China by the Highbinder assassins. This is well known in Canton, my former home,” answered Te Lala.

Then, at the detective’s request she went on and described the poisonous white water snake.

When she concluded Old King Brady said:

“You have confirmed my suspicions.”

Turning to Miss Moore, he added:

“I shall now try to find the deadly snakes. The man who has them in his keeping is the assassin of your brother.”

“It must be so,” Miss Moore assented.

Then the two officers bade the ladies good-day and left the house.

Old King Brady led the way to police headquarters.

There he and Harry had a talk with the chief.

The elder detective reported that he had found and rescued Miss Morton.

Some conversation ensued. But in a short time the detectives left police headquarters.

“Now we have got to do some fine work.” said Old King Brady, when he and Harry were on the street.

“In order to gain the absolute proof of the identity of the assassins who use the deadly snakes?”

“Yes, for though we have convinced ourselves on that point, we must have proof which will convict the guilty when they are brought to trial.”

“We must closely pipe Captain Barnabas and Hop Lee, then?”

“That’s it.”

“How will you proceed?”

“Harry, I believe the deadly snakes are kept in the house in which Blake Moore and Sing Ho were slain.”

“It may be so.”

“And you know we have not thoroughly explored that house.”

“True.”

“I propose to do so. To-night we will visit the former storehouse of the opium smugglers.”

Harry assented, and they discussed their project at some length.

That night at ten o’clock two seeming Chinamen of the cooly class—the lowest order of the Celestial race—were in the heart of Chinatown.

They were, of course, Old and Young King Brady in new disguises.

At Harry’s earnest request Old King Brady had consented to let the younger officer assume the most dangerous part in their new stratagem.

That evening, at an early hour, the two detectives were in a low den in Chinatown, which was kept by an old Mongolian who acted as an employment agent.

The old Celestial made a business of furnishing cheap help to the better, richer class of his countrymen.

In his place Old King Brady and Harry learned something of which they later decided to take advantage.

While they were in the Chinese employment agency, a cooly came in and accosted the proprietor.

“I want work. I hear you want to hire men,” he said.

“Yes,” responded the old Celestial. “I want eight men to ship as sailors on a steam vessel bound for China, in ten days.”

“I am a seaman.”

“Good; I’ll ship you.”

There was some further talk.

Then the agent told the cooly that the vessel he was wanted for was called the Orient.

He added:

“I also want a strong man to act as body servant for a rich man of Chinatown.”

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The cooly answered.

“I will send some men to you.”

When he had gone out Harry approached the agent, and said:

“I am very strong and I fear no man. I would like to engage as a body servant.”

The old celestial looked Harry over.

Then as he noted how strongly the young man was built, he said:

“Perhaps you will suit. I’ll give you a card, which you will take to the man who wants a body servant.”

Harry was profuse in his thanks.

“But if you get the place, you must give me your first month’s wages,” continued the old celestial.

“I’ll do so,” Harry promised.

Then the old Chinaman wrote on a card which he handed to Harry.

“Go to this address,” said he.

“At what time?”

“Not until after ten to-night.”

“Why so late?”

“The gentleman will not be at home until after ten.”

“Very good.”

Once more Harry thanked the employment agent.

And, with his preceptor, he immediately went to the street.

“Here is a piece of rare good luck,” said Harry, when they were out of the agent’s house.

He held up the card which the latter had given him.

Old King Brady read what was written on the card.

It ran as follows:

Hop Lee, Hong street, No. 6.

“Umph! This is luck sure enough!”

“Of course I’ll try to get a job with the slave dealer.”

“It’s a dangerous thing to undertake, Harry.”

“But, of course, you see if I can get the place I shall have a chance to find out Hop Lee’s secrets.”

“Very likely. Still I don’t like to have you take the great risk.”

“If you are found out you will be murdered.”

“I shall be constantly on my guard.”

“Harry, you know I have a sincere regard for you. It is because of my liking for you that I do not want you to venture into the power of the Chinese assassins alone.”

“But it seems I must go alone, if I go at all.”

“That’s so.”

“If I can secure this situation I hope to gain all the proof we shall need to convict Hop Lee and Captain Barnabas.”

“I see you have set your heart upon this undertaking.”

“Indeed I have.”

“Well, so be it.”

“Then you consent?”

“Yes. But I do so reluctantly.”

“I do not think I shall be found out if I get the place, but if I am you may be sure that I will make a good fight to escape.”

“Of that I have no doubt,” assented the other. “I only fear that you may be slain without having a chance to fight. Remember the snakes!”

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE AGAINST FIVE—THE TEST OF A BRAVE MAN.

It was some time after they engaged in the foregoing conversation, that Old and Young King Brady were in the heart of Chinatown, as we have seen.

They were then on their way to the house of Hop Lee.

Proceeding steadily, they at length reached Hong street.

A little later they came in sight of No. 6.

“Now, I’ll cross to the side of the street opposite the house of Hop Lee,” then said Old King Brady.

“All right,” Harry answered.

“And while you go into the house I’ll watch outside.”

“Very well.”

“If you get the job, manage to give me the silent signal.”

“I will.”

“Then I’ll meet you at the Chinese employment agency at ten tomorrow morning.”

“I’ll be there.”

“Look out for yourself, Harry, and may good luck attend you,” said the elder officer.

With that he crossed the street.

Harry went on.

Having arrived at Hop Lee’s house, he went to the door.

Just as he reached it the portal was opened.

The humpbacked dwarf, who was employed by the slave dealer, appeared.

Seeing Harry he demanded in Chinese:

“What do you want here?”

“I want to see Hop Lee.”

“He is busy.”

“The employment agent sent me.”

“Then you seek a situation?”

“Yes, as body servant to Hop Lee.”

“Wait here, and I’ll see my master.”

The misshapen dwarf closed the door.

Harry remained before it, and he had not long to wait.

Presently the door again opened.

The ugly dwarf once more appeared and said:

“Come in, Hop Lee will see you.”

He ushered the disguised detective into the house.

Across the way stood Old King Brady, and he saw Harry enter the house of the slave dealer.

As the door closed behind the brave young man, Old King Brady experienced a singular sinking sensation of the heart.

“I wonder if this is a premonition?” he muttered.

“I think it is,” he added, “for on several other occasions, I’ve had the same sensation when Harry entered a dangerous place. Each time he has narrowly escaped with his life.”

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While Old King Brady was making these reflections, which only served to increase his anxiety on his young partner’s account, the latter was conducted into the presence of Hop Lee.

He found the Highbinder chief alone in a well furnished room.

“The man from the employment agency,” announced the dwarf, as he ushered Harry into the presence of Hop Lee.

Then the speaker withdrew.

Harry bowed low and handed the yellow rascal the card which he had received from the agent.

“You look strong,” said Hop Lee, as he eyed Harry from head to foot.

“I am very strong,” said Harry, modestly.

“Your name?”

“Ah Sin.”

“Do you live in Chinatown?”

“No; I just came from the mines of Montana.”

“Are you brave?”

“I fear no man.”

“Would you kill a man if your master bade you do so?” asked Hop Lee, coolly.

“Yes. Try me.”

“Perhaps I may. But now let me tell you I have need of a body servant who will fight to the death for me if necessary. The man I engage must prove to me that he is not only without fear, but powerful enough to fight against odds.”

“I am such a man.”

“You look it. But will you submit to a trial?”

“Yes.”

“Do not be too quick to assent. You shall have to show that you

can defeat several men in a fight before I engage you.”

“Bring on your men.”

“Ha! I like your spirit, my man. If you stand the trial I’ll engage you.”

“That’s all I ask.”

“And maybe later on, I will show you how you can earn more gold than most men of your class ever see.”

“Ah Sin will do anything for money.”

“Well said,” answered Hop Lee.

Then he shouted:

“Ho, there, Ta-To!”

The dwarf immediately appeared at the door.

“Are my men in their quarters?” asked Hop Lee of the dwarf.

“They are.”

“Then send Wo John, the wrestler, and the four rough and tumble fighters to me.”

“Yes, master,” assented the dwarf, as he withdrew.

“My man, I am about to pit five of my men against you,” said Hop Lee.

Harry began to think that he had a big contract on his hands.

But he did not weaken.

On the contrary, he said boldly:

“How shall we fight?”

“As I don’t want you to be killed, but only to test your strength and skill no weapons will be used.”

Harry felt relieved.

It occurred to him that the skill which he had long since acquired as a boxer might now serve him well.

We have already stated that Harry was an all round athlete.

In boxing and wrestling he excelled most amateurs.

Harry divested himself of his blouse, as he waited for the appearance of Hop Lee’s fighting men.

In a few moments five sturdy Chinamen entered the room.

One of them was a regular giant.

Pointing at him Hop Lee said:

“This is Wo John, the great wrestler. The four other men are all round handy fighters.”

Harry bowed, and eyed the five Chinese ruffians closely.

“Have you any weapon on you, my man?” added Hop Lee, addressing Harry.

“Only this,” the latter answered.

As he spoke he pulled out a Chinese knife.

“Throw it down,” ordered Hop Lee.

Harry obeyed.

“Are any of you armed?” asked the slave dealer, turning to his yellow henchmen.

They replied negatively.

“Good! You are to fight this man and overpower him. But understand, you are not to kill, or seriously hurt him. This is merely a test of his prowess,” continued the slave dealer.

The five Mongolian ruffians seemed to be delighted.

And the expressions of their ugly faces told that they expected to have no trouble to overpower the stranger.

“Let me fight him alone. Wo John will put him on his back and hold him there,” said the huge ruffian alluded to specially.

“All right. Get ready,” assented Hop Lee.

Wo John glared at Harry as if he thus hoped to intimidate the latter.

But the disguised detective looked at the giant fearlessly.

“Now go at it!” cried Hop Lee, an instant later.

At once the burly Mongolian wrestler charged at Harry.

The latter merely neatly side-stepped.

And as the big ruffian went by him, he dealt him a blow on the point of the jaw with his fists.

This was a swinging upper cut, as the boxers call it.

The blow landed square and fair.

As Harry had put all his strength into it, only one result could ensue.

Of course, Wo John was knocked down.

He crashed upon the floor, and lay there trembling all over.

Harry saw that the burly wrestler was knocked out.

Hop Lee uttered a surprised cry.

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“You strike a powerful blow,” he said.

Harry folded his arms, and stood smiling confidently as Wo John’s comrades worked over the fallen man, until he regained his senses.

Then he got upon his feet looking dazed and sheepish.

“The stranger has an iron fist,” he muttered.

“Come now, all ready. Go at the stranger altogether,” said Hop Lee, a moment subsequently.

The next instant there was a grand mix up, to use a pugilistic term.

As the Chinamen came at him, Harry danced about as quick as a flash.

His arms worked like lightning, and each blow he dealt told.

The Chinamen were no boxers.

In less time than it takes to record the fact the young detective had given his adversaries severe punishment, and two of them lay on the floor knocked out.

Then the others drew off.

Harry laughed. He had received only one or two blows and was not at all hurt.

“I am satisfied. You are a great fighter. You shall be my body servant,” cried Hop Lee, in tones of admiration.

“Thanks, sir,” answered Harry, quietly.

Then he shook hands with the Mongolians, all save Wo John.

The latter refused to shake hands and he looked at Harry savagely.

Presently Hop Lee dismissed his men.

Then he and Harry agreed upon the wages which the latter was to receive.

“You will stay here from this hour, and Ta-To will show you to your quarters,” said Hop Lee, when the bargain was made.

The detective assented.

Then Hop Lee once more summoned the dwarf.

He led Harry from the room, and to an apartment on the second floor.

There the officer was left alone.

Presently he went to a window and looked out. As he saw the street in front of the house he drew from his pocket a red handkerchief.

This he held in the window for a moment, with the light behind it.

As he thus made the silent signal, of which Old King Brady had spoken, he saw his partner opposite the house.

Thus assured that the latter observed the signal, Harry watched him.

Presently he saw Old King Brady walking away.

A moment later and he heard some one pass the closed door of

his room.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MAN WITH THE SNAKES AND THE DETECTIVES.

Harry went softly to the door, and noiselessly opened it on a crack.

Then he peered into the passage, and saw Hop Lee and the dwarf.

The two Chinamen were going along the hall.

And Harry heard Hop Lee say:

“Now you will go and look after the snakes, while I talk with the Chinese girl. Ah, she will do my bidding, and with her assistance I shall lure the American detectives to their doom.”

The dwarf descended the stairs.

Hop Lee disappeared through a door at the end of the hall.

Harry decided to follow the dwarf.

He wanted to locate the poisonous snakes, which he hoped yet to produce as silent witnesses against the Chinese murderers.

Noiselessly the daring young detective crept down the stairs.

The street door opened as he descended, and the dwarf went out without seeing the crouching figure on the stairs.

Harry waited for a moment.

Then he reached the door. Finding that the dwarf had locked it behind him, the officer produced a bunch of keys, and soon found one that served his purpose.

With this he unlocked the door.

Then he slipped out and carefully relocked the portal.

Glancing along the street he saw Ta-To.

The dwarf had gone but a short distance.

Harry glided across the street and followed the dwarf.

The latter proceeded straight to the house in which Sing Ho had met his death.

Harry saw the dwarf enter this building by the front portal.

Then the young officer quickly reached the yard in the rear of it.

Of course he traversed the same route that he and Old King Brady had previously gone over when they visited the house.

Now, Harry remembered that when they came into Chinatown that night, it was Old King Brady's idea to go to the former storehouse of the opium smugglers and search it.

As only the chance which led them to the employment agency, merely as curious visitors, had caused a change in the veteran's plan, it occurred to Harry that his partner might have concluded

to come to the former retreat of the opium gang by himself, after he withdrew from before the residence of Hop Lee.

So Harry was on the lookout for a possible meeting with his partner.

But in the yard at the rear of the house he saw no one.

And he was unable to discover a ray of light in any of the windows.

Noiselessly the young officer reached the rear door.

And in a moment he let himself in, using the key which the unfortunate Sing Ho had previously employed for the same purpose.

Once inside the house, Harry paused to listen.

At once he caught the sound of shuffling footsteps in a room in front of the rear one.

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“A Chinaman is there. The fellow is the dwarf I suppose,” thought Harry.

He did not make a sound as he crossed the room and reached an inner door.

The portal stood on a crack. A ray of light came through the opening.

Harry saw Ta-To the dwarf.

The Mongolian stood in the center of the room.

And as the detective looked the servant of Hop Lee put a lantern which he carried on the floor.

Then he produced a singular-looking Chinese flute.

Placing the instrument to his lips he began to blow upon it.

At once strange, soft and plaintive notes were produced.

The officer thought of how the native snake charmers of India call serpents by means of a flute.

This reflection prepared the youth for some strange developments.

Only a few moments elapsed when through a small hole in the baseboard of the room came a small white snake.

The Chinese dwarf took the strange musical instrument from his lips, and drawing a handful of bread crumbs from his pocket scattered them on the floor.

The snake began to eat them eagerly.

Then Ta-To resumed playing on the flute, and presently another snake, precisely like the first, came through the hole in the wall.

Suddenly Ta-To put the musical instrument in his pocket. With a quick movement he drew on a pair of heavy leather gloves, and suddenly snatched up a snake in each hand.

The next instant he put out the light of the lantern.

Harry wondered at this.

But in a moment he understood why Ta-To had so suddenly extinguished the lantern, for he heard footsteps in the front hall.

All was darkness in the room which Ta-To occupied, with the deadly snakes in his hands.

Harry could only conjecture that the dwarf meant to hurl the poisonous reptiles upon any stranger who had entered the house.

The devoted lad's heart leaped to his throat, as he thought:

“Perhaps Old King Brady is now in the hall.”

If he had been able to penetrate the walls of the house, Harry would have seen that what he feared was really true.

At that moment Old King Brady was in the front hall.

When the veteran left the vicinity of the house of Hop Lee he decided to go to the former retreat of the opium smugglers alone.

And, of course, it was his purpose to make the investigation which he had previously intended to make in Harry's company.

As the experienced officer was on his way to the house of mystery he caught sight of Captain Barnabas on the street, and turning aside he followed the rascal to an opium den.

But as he decided on reflection that it was not important to shadow the smuggler at that time, he soon again proceeded on the way to the house of the snakes as he mentally designated it.

It was because he turned aside to trail Captain Barnabas that Old King Brady did not arrive at the house before Ta-To and Harry.

On this occasion the veteran admitted himself by the front portal.

As the street was deserted and he found one of his skeleton keys would serve his purpose, he saw no reason why he should go to the rear door.

The veteran did not see a single ray of light in the house, for the light of Ta-To's lantern could not penetrate to the hall.

And that light was put out at almost the same instant that Old King Brady entered the hall.

The Chinese dwarf heard the officer before Harry caught the sound of his footsteps.

As soon as he had gained the interior of the building, the veteran officer produced his pocket lantern.

And directly its light enabled him to see his surroundings.

Then he advanced to the closed door of the room in which stood the Chinese dwarf with the deadly reptiles in his heavily gloved hands.

As Old King Brady advanced along the hall the dwarf noiselessly crossed to the hall door.

Because of the gloom Harry could not discern the movements of Ta-To.

But he knew instinctively that in a moment or so some person would be in deadly peril at the hands of the yellow demon who held the deadly snakes.

Like a shadow the young officer glided into the dark room where swift and sure death lurked.

If the person who was in the hall should prove to be Old King Brady, or any other white man, Harry meant to do his best to save him.

Though he knew he might fall a victim to the deadly reptiles, Harry did not hesitate.

Meanwhile, when Old King Brady reached the door of the room in which stood the Chinaman with the snakes, he paused and listened.

Hearing no sound from beyond the closed portal, or from any other direction, the veteran presently made bold to lay his hand upon the door knob.

The succeeding moment he threw it open.

Then a cry of surprise and alarm fell from the lips of the old hero.

He saw Ta-To just inside the door, and the dwarf was in the act of raising his hands to fling the poisonous snakes in his face.

At that instant the doom of Old King Brady would have been sealed in the most horrible manner, had not Harry acted with lightning-like rapidity.

With one flying leap he cleared the distance between the dwarf Chinaman and his position, and before the Mongolian could hurl the snakes at Old King Brady, he received a blow on the skull from Harry's clubbed revolver.

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The little villain fell to the floor.

The snakes wriggled out of his grasp, and instantly vanished through the hole in the wall whence they had come, when they heard the strange music of the Chinese flute.

Harry fell upon Ta-To and clutched him by the throat.

“You have saved me from an awful fate, Harry!” exclaimed the veteran, deeply moved.

“I am glad that I was able to do so. But we must secure this little devil.”

“Yes, I'll put the bracelets on him,” replied the elder officer.

And he snapped a pair of handcuffs on Ta-To's wrists.

Mutual explanations were quickly made by the two officers.

Then Harry said:

“I cannot go back to play my part at Hop Lee’s house, unless I am assured that this rascal is behind prison bars.”

“We will take him to a prison cell, and his arrest shall be kept a secret until we have brought the Chinese assassins to justice.”

So saying, Old King Brady gagged Ta-To.

Harry secured the little rascal’s hands behind his back, and having bound him further, so that he could not use his feet, the officer left him and at once began to search the house.

But when they had concluded an exhaustive investigation they came back to the dwarf, having failed to find the den of the snakes for which they sought.

“Suppose we make Ta-To tell us how to find the snakes,” suggested Harry.

To this Old King Brady agreed, and he removed the gag from the mouth of the dwarf. Then he said, threateningly:

“Now, then, tell us how to reach and secure the serpents, or you die.”

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

The dwarf's face showed great alarm.

He uttered whiningly:

"I'll tell you all you want to know."

He proceeded and said further:

"The snakes are kept in a little iron tank full of water, which is in a little room or space between the partitions that separates this room from the next one. The snakes like water. They stay in the tank unless they are called out by the flute. There is a runway made for them, by which they can crawl into different rooms to which they are called by the flute by going through holes made for them in the baseboard of these apartments."

Having thus spoken, Ta-To pointed at a place in the wall where there was a small, dark mark.

"Press on that spot and the door leading to the tank will open. The snakes are in it by this time. You have only to close the slide on the tank to fasten them in it. My gloves are made to resist the teeth of the snakes," continued the dwarf.

"Then I'll take your gloves," said Old King Brady.

Quickly he removed the heavy leather gloves from the hands of Ta-To and put them on.

Then he went to the wall and pressed upon the spot which the dwarf had indicated.

At once a small door opened.

Beyond it, in the space between the walls of the partition, there stood an iron tank about four feet long and two in width.

The sliding cover of the tank was partly open.

The detective flashed the light of his lantern into the tank and saw it was nearly filled with water.

At the bottom he caught sight of the two white snakes.

Harry was looking over the veteran's shoulder.

He, too, saw the snakes, and exclaimed:

“Close the lid!”

Old King Brady thrust forward one gloved hand.

As he did so one of the poisonous reptiles shot upward, but before it reached the surface of the water the officer closed the sliding lid.

Then he and Harry withdrew and held a whispered conversation.

A few moments later, having freed the dwarf's limbs, they led him out of the house by the rear way.

While Harry stood guard over the prisoner in the rear yard, Old King Brady glided away through the alley.

But he soon returned with a cab, driven by an Irishman who had a stand in the Chinese quarter.

The detectives placed Ta-To in the cab.

Then Old King Brady went back into the house and brought out the tank containing the snakes.

As it was made of light sheet iron the officer carried it easily.

He placed the tank in the cab, which was driven away when he had taken his place in it with Harry and the dwarf.

“Well, we have got the snakes,” said the young officer, exultantly.

“Yes, and will keep them to use as evidence against the assassins,” answered Old King Brady.

By his order the cab was driven near Hop Lee’s house.

Not far from the residence of the slave dealer Harry alighted.

And having again agreed to meet him at ten o’clock next morning at the employment agency, Old King Brady was driven away.

The elder officer took his prisoner to a police station.

There he was placed in a cell.

And, at Old King Brady's request, the police agreed to keep the arrest a secret.

The cab had waited for Old King Brady.

When he came out of the police station, he re-entered the vehicle and was driven to the lodging house in which he had rented a room.

He took the tank containing the snakes to that room, and having placed it under the couch, he locked the door and then went to his hotel.

29

Meanwhile, Harry had got back into Hop Lee's house unseen.

In the morning the slave dealer said to Harry:

"Now, Ah Sin, I'm going to employ you to help me kill two enemies. Are you afraid?"

"No," answered the young officer promptly.

"Good! If you succeed I'll give you fifty dollars. Now listen."

Hop Lee went on and developed a cunning plot to lure Old King Brady and Harry to their death.

When the Chinaman had concluded, Harry said:

"Ah Sin will do as you say."

Then the slave dealer dismissed the disguised officer.

As Harry withdrew, he said:

“I promised to call at the employment agency this morning, to let the agent know if I got a situation here. If you will not need me for the present I’ll go now.”

“All right, you can go where you wish until night, when you must report to me for the job I’ve told you about,” answered Hop Lee.

A little later Harry was at the door of the Chinese employment agency.

Old King Brady came out as Harry was about to enter, and the two detectives walked away.

The veteran hastened to tell his partner that he had placed Ta-To in a cell at the police station.

And he also stated what he had done with the tank which contained the snakes.

Then Harry made known all about the plans of Hop Lee, which the slave dealer had engaged him to assist him in against the officers.

When Harry had concluded, Old King Brady knew Hop Lee meant that night to lure him and Harry to their death.

The two officers conversed for some time.

The result was that they developed a cunning counterplot by which they hoped not only to defeat Hop Lee’s murderous

scheme, but also to catch the slave dealer and his confederates in the toils.

Finally the two detectives separated.

Harry soon returned to the house of Hop Lee.

And Old King Brady went to make preparations for the plan he meant to carry out against the Mongolians.

Nothing of importance transpired at the abode of Hop Lee until night came.

Then Captain Barnabas came there.

A little later, Hop Lee, Captain Barnabas, and Harry, who was introduced to the latter by the slave dealer as a Chinese desperado, entered a cab, in which a slave girl, belonging to Hop Lee, had already taken her place.

The girl was attired as an American young lady, but she wore a thick veil, which concealed her Chinese features. Harry saw that she was about the height and build of Edna Morton. The cab was driven away as soon as all the party had entered it.

Harry then mentally reviewed the plot of the assassins, as he had heard it from Hop Lee.

The scheme which the cunning Celestial had hatched against the detective was as follows:

That night at nine o'clock Old King Brady was to be led to go to the house of Miss Moore, where the Chinaman had found out, in

some unexplained way, that Te Lala, the sister of Sing Ho, had been taken. A forged note, written by Barnabas, to which Miss Moore's name was signed, had been sent to Old King Brady at his hotel. This note urged the officer to come to Miss Moore's house at nine o'clock.

The rest of the plan was to make Old King Brady think that Edna Morton had been abducted by Barnabas, and the slave girl, who was dressed like an American lady, was to personate Miss Morton under circumstances which would lead the detective to follow her, thinking to rescue her.

In this way the conspirators hoped to lure Old King Brady, and Harry, too, into the house in which Sing Ho had met his death.

As we know, Harry had told Old King Brady all about this plot. We have now only to follow the course of events to learn whether the plot succeeded or not.

As the cab containing Harry and the conspirators came near the house of Miss Moore it was halted by Hop Lee. Then Captain Barnabas and the closely-veiled Chinese girl alighted. They went on to Miss Moore's house. As they reached it the city clocks began to strike the hour of nine. A moment later Barnabas saw Old King Brady approaching undisguised. The American renegade and the Chinese girl had ascended the steps of Miss Moore's house.

As Old King Brady drew nearer the pair rushed down the steps and Captain Barnabas raised the Chinese girl in his arms and darted to the waiting cab, in which he placed the girl, who pretended to struggle.

Instantly when Captain Barnabas and the girl were in the cab, and as Old King Brady was rushing toward it, merely pretending to think the girl was Miss Morton, the cab was driven away.

There was a cab stand near by. Looking from the window of his vehicle, Hop Lee saw Old King Brady enter a cab and start in pursuit. Of this he informed Harry and Captain Barnabas.

“Good! The detective has taken the bait! I’m sorry his partner is not with him, though,” said the slave dealer.

“Never mind. Another time we’ll get Harry Brady. And when both of the detectives are done for, we’ll really abduct Edna Morton and I’ll force her to become my wife,” replied Captain Barnabas.

Harry smiled, for he thought the conspirators would never again trouble Old King Brady or himself.

While the Chinaman’s vehicle was swiftly driven into Chinatown, and then toward the house of the snakes, the cab which contained Old King Brady continued to follow it.

30

Now, before Hop Lee set out with his companions in the cab that night, as Harry knew, he had sent Wo John and the ruffians whom the young detective had knocked about so easily at the slave dealer’s house to the dwelling in which the snakes had been kept.

Those men were ordered to lay in wait in the house. At a given signal they were to rush upon the detectives. But they were told

not to show themselves until Hop Lee first attempted to hurl the poisonous snakes upon the detectives. In case the Chinaman failed to make the snakes bite the detectives, or one of them, in case the other did not come to the house, Harry was under orders to lead the hidden assassins in the attack.

Hop Lee relied on the great strength and bravery of his new body servant, to enable him to down the detectives, even if the other Chinamen did not promptly come to his assistance.

Of course, Harry was a trifle excited by the time the cab in which he rode with the opium fiends arrived at its destination.

The cab stopped before the house of the snakes.

A moment later Captain Barnabas carried the Chinese girl into it, and Harry and Hop Lee followed.

The party secured the door, and went to the room in the wall of which the tank containing the snakes had formerly been kept.

Hop Lee produced a lantern and then opened a door that led to a small side room. Looking into that room Harry saw five Chinamen at the further end of it. But the light of the lantern did not fully banish the shadows in which the Celestials stood, and Harry could not see them plainly.

But Hop Lee seemed satisfied.

“All right, men,” said he. “Wait for the signal.”

With that he closed the door.

A moment later he closed the slide on his lantern thus shutting off the light.

At the same instant Old King Brady entered the house by the rear door, still playing his part in the counterplot against the Chinamen.

“The detective is in the house,” whispered Hop Lee, as he heard the officer’s footsteps.

Then he glided across the room, which was now in complete darkness.

As he proceeded noiselessly he added in a voice scarcely above his breath, as if speaking more to himself than his companions:

“Now to get out the snakes. The heavy leather gloves I wear will enable me to handle them without danger.”

Harry knew the climax of the counter game which he and Old King Brady were working was now almost at hand.

And the young detective knew that Old King Brady had carried out his part of that stratagem.

But before we relate the thrilling episode which almost immediately ensued, we must explain what Old King Brady had done before he pretended to fall a victim to Hop Lee’s ruse by following the disguised Chinese girl to the fatal house.

In the afternoon of that day Old King Brady had led five policemen to the house. They were all cleverly disguised as

Chinamen. In the house these men remained in ambush, acting under orders from the veteran detective. When Wo John and the four other Chinese henchmen of Hop Lee came into the house that night some time before the arrival of Hop Lee and his companions, the disguised policemen surprised and captured them.

The five Chinamen were bound, gagged and handcuffed. Then they were placed in the cellar.

The disguised policemen, still acting under Old King Brady's instructions, remained in the house to impersonate the men whom they had captured, in order to make the surprise of Hop Lee more certain.

Now to return to the scene which we interrupted at the moment when Hop Lee went to the wall in which the den of the snakes had been kept.

An instant later the slave dealer opened the small, hidden door in the wall.

Then, as he thrust in his hand and failed to find the tank that contained the reptiles, he started back.

"Treachery!" he said, in a hissing whisper.

At that moment the door of the rear room was softly opened by Old King Brady who did not show any light.

Hop Lee heard the door open.

Then he gave a peculiar whistle and exclaimed:

“Now, then, Ah Sin, all together!”

As he spoke, he flashed on the light of his masked lantern, and Old King Brady stood revealed. Harry leaped at his partner and began to struggle with him. The policemen, who were disguised as Chinamen, rushed into the room and assisted Harry.

Old King Brady was overpowered, and at Hop Lee’s order Harry held a revolver at his partner’s head, while two of the disguised policemen held the veteran down.

Then, in the hearing of all those disguised witnesses, Hop Lee said, as he regarded Old King Brady exultantly:

“I meant to kill you with the poison white water snakes of China, but they are gone. Some traitor, whom I’ll yet find out, has taken them away. But, though you will not die as did Blake Moore and Sing Ho—by the bites of the snakes which I hurled upon them—you shall be put to death. Hop Lee has proven himself too cunning for you!”

“Not at all,” answered Old King Brady. “You will not put me to death. On the contrary, you shall soon pay the death penalty for the horrible crimes which you have committed.”

“Ho! You are an idle boaster! Ah Sin, send a bullet through the detective’s head!” cried Hop Lee.

As he spoke Captain Barnabas made a dash, passed the disguised police, and reached the rear room, whence he fled from the house. Just then the American renegade had discovered that the pretended Chinamen were not what they seemed.

As Barnabas fled Harry leaped upon Hop Lee. In a moment he hurled the astounded Chinaman upon the floor, and he was quickly handcuffed by Old King Brady, who at once bounded to his feet.

Two of the disguised policemen had started after Captain Barnabas; but by the time Hop Lee was secured they came back without the fugitive.

Hop Lee was dumb with rage and terror when Harry presently threw off his disguise and the police revealed that they were not Chinamen.

Later that night Hop Lee and his henchmen were in prison cells, to which the two King Bradys and the police took them. The Chinese slave girl was also held as a witness.

As Old King Brady and Harry thought that Captain Barnabas would lose no time in trying to leave the country before dawn, they secured a squad of revenue men, and in a cutter they went off to the vessel called the Orient, which was still in the harbor. The detectives and their comrades boarded Captain Barnabas' ship and searched it. Finally they found the opium smuggler concealed in the hold.

Captain Barnabas was taken to a cell in the city prison.

Later Hop Lee and his Chinese comrades were tried and convicted. In due time they were punished according to law.

At the trial Old and Young King Brady produced the deadly snakes.

And the policemen, who had heard Hop Lee acknowledge that he had used the snakes to kill Blake Moore and Sing Ho, so testified, as did the detectives.

Captain Barnabas was convicted of being an opium smuggler and an accomplice of the slave dealer.

Some months later, when the two King Bradys were back in New York, they heard from Dr. Raymond that he had completely cured Edna Morton of the opium habit, and that she had obtained her fortune.

The following summer the officers received an invitation to the wedding of Dr. Raymond and Edna Morton.

[THE END.]

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- Corrected some palpable typographical errors.

[The end of *Hop Lee, the Chinese Slave dealer; or, Old and Young King Brady and the Opium Fiends* by Francis Worcester Doughty]