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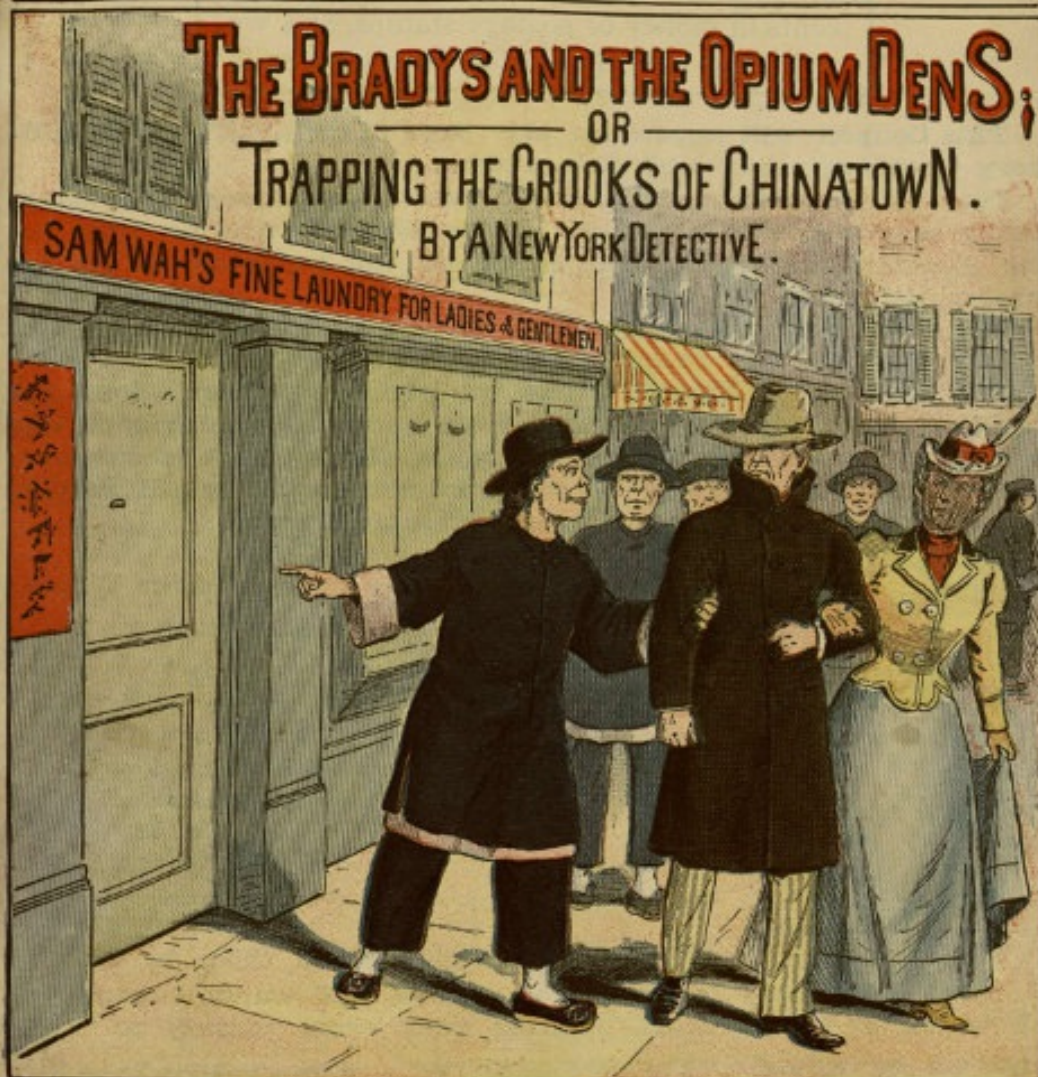
OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter of the New York Post Office, by Frank Torrey.

No. 56.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 16, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.



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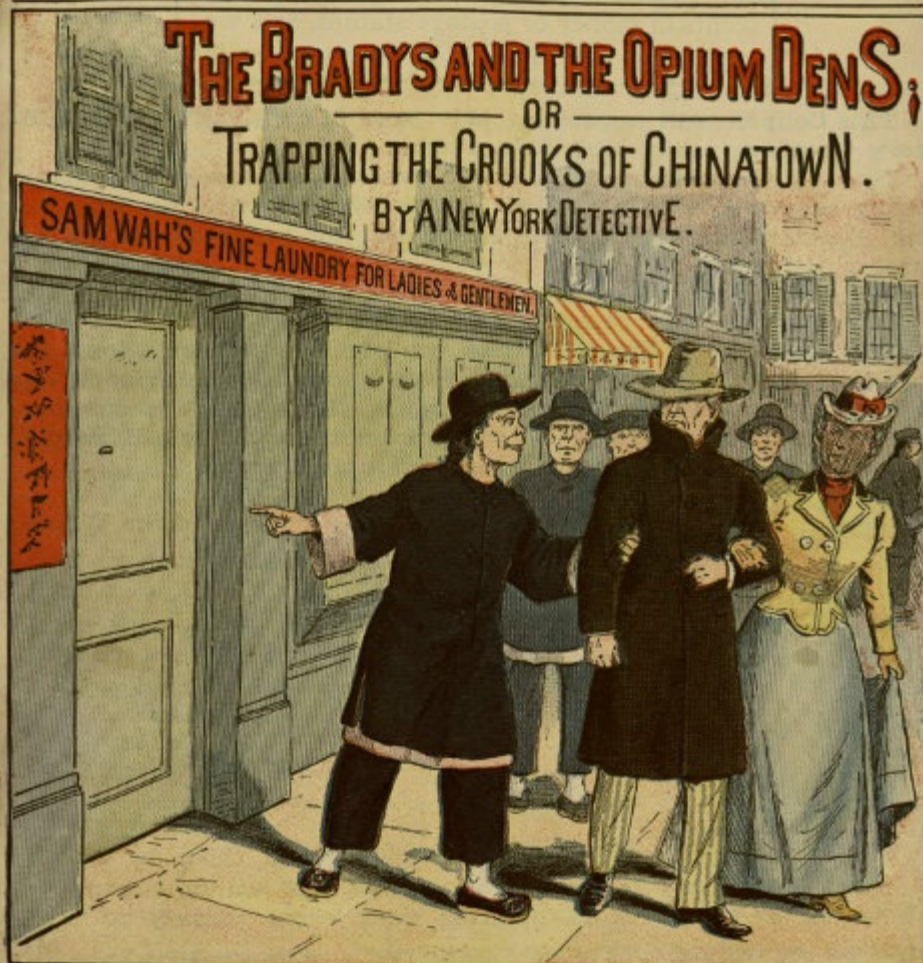
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The Bradys and the Opium Dens; OR, Trapping the Crooks of Chinatown.

A DARK DETECTIVE STORY.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

Just as Old King Brady and his supposed female escort were passing the laundry, Sam Wah rushed out, and, grasping Old King Brady by the arm, exclaimed, "Stepee inside, have something to showee you."

CHAPTER I.

THE MISSING MAN.

“It is a very strange case,” said the chief of the Secret Service as he leaned back in his chair and drummed with his fingers upon the desk.

“I will admit that,” said Old King Brady, with a low bow; “but yet it is not without many parallels. Every day people drop from sight in this great city of New York and are never heard from again.”

“Very true,” agreed the chief. “But a man of the prominence and standing of Jonathan Small in his own country town of Bushville does not drop from sight voluntarily as a usual thing.”

“But it is the unusual that is happening every day all about us,” said Old King Brady.

“His disappearance is certainly unusual.”

“And yet not altogether to be wondered at.”

“What do you mean?”

“It is to me a literal wonder that there are not more such disappearances.”

“Will you explain?”

“With pleasure,” agreed the old detective. “Here is the idea:

Every incoming train brings a legion of our country cousins, some on business and some on pleasure intent.

“Every man from the rural districts, as soon as he strikes New York, seems to lose his identity as a man of sound sense and judgment. His conceptions of metropolitan life and customs are greatly at variance with the real facts.

“At home he refuses to be deceived by the keenest of sharps; but once in New York, he flings prudence and virtue to the winds, and as a result is an easy victim of sharpers and thugs. He runs the gauntlet of the dens of vice with a sang froid and a recklessness which even the most hardened Tenderloiner will hardly essay.

“The result follows swiftly: He is cheated and fleeced and swindled, and sometimes murdered. In other words, he will do things in New York which at home he would never dream of doing.

“Now the metropolis offers every possible warning. It has the most splendid detective system in the world. The daily newspapers present such examples in their columns of the effects of vicious living in New York, that you would think the country man would be warned by them. But they are as foolish as a cow on a railroad track and fully as obdurate.”

The chief leaned back in his chair and laughed.

“Well, I never took that view of it, Brady,” he declared. “But I can see that you are right.”

“I speak from observation.”

“Your theory is sound. So you think that Mr. Small has fallen a victim to the crooks of Gotham?”

“In no other way can I see any explanation of his disappearance.”

“But what do you think has become of him?”

Old King Brady gave a deprecatory shrug.

“That is one of the mysteries of the city,” he replied.

“You must bear in mind that he was one of the church deacons in Bushville and strict in his morals.”

“Humph! that makes no difference.”

“Do you believe that he would forsake his principles so far as to indulge in dissipation in the slums?”

“Men will do queer things as well as women,” said Old King Brady. “I recall one case of a full-fledged Baptist clergyman who was found in a den of gamblers one night by a member of his congregation. He was from the West and deemed himself absolutely safe. He put up the valid excuse that he was seeking converts. Rather a novel way of doing missionary work, but he passed all right.”

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“Was not that rather an unusual case?”

“Yes. I am glad to say that it was more than unusual—it was an isolated case,” replied Old King Brady.

“Well,” said the chief, succinctly, “this is the case: A wealthy resident of Bushville came down to New York a week ago to do some business. He was registered at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

“Very mysteriously he disappeared. Not a clew to his whereabouts can be found. His relatives called here yesterday. They propose offering a reward of fifty thousand dollars for his body, dead or alive.”

“Tell them not to do it,” cried the old detective.

“What do you mean?”

“They must not do it.”

The chief was surprised.

“Why not?” he asked.

“Ask me for no reason just yet,” said the old detective. “Simply oblige me by telling them to offer no reward. I will endeavor to find the missing man.”

“Then you are interested in the case?” cried the chief, eagerly.

“Yes, very much indeed. Be assured my partner and I will do all in our power to solve the mystery.”

“That is enough,” cried the chief, with delight. “I know that if anybody can solve this case it is Old King Brady. I wish you success.”

“Thank you. I shall try.”

Old King Brady arose and started for the door.

He was a man of few words and terse methods.

All over the country his name and fame were known.

For many years he had figured in the criminal circles of New York as a most astute and clever sleuth.

All his life he had worked out his cases alone, and trusted to his own deductions and skill.

Of late, however, he had formed the acquaintance of a younger detective, whose name was also Brady, though he was no blood relation.

Harry Brady was a promising young detective.

Association with Old King Brady had been largely to his advantage.

He had gained many points and was rising rapidly to such proficiency as would one day make him a worthy successor of Old King Brady.

As they were seen together so much, they were soon known as Old and Young King Brady. They were a pair of keen sleuths.

Old King Brady left the office of the chief of the Secret Service.

He had possessed himself of all the details of the missing man mystery.

The old detective had already formed his theories, though he said nothing about them to the chief. How accurate they were the incidents of this story will divulge.

When he reached the street the old detective boarded an uptown car.

He alighted at Twenty-third street and entered the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

He applied at the desk for certain information.

“May I see the night register of one week ago?” he asked.

The clerk complied.

Old King Brady ran his eye down the page. There was the entry:

“Jonathan Small, Bushville, N. Y.”

“When did Mr. Small leave?” he asked of the clerk.

“He was here two days, and his baggage is here yet,” replied the clerk.

“Ah! May I have the privilege of looking at his baggage?”

“Are you a friend?” asked the clerk.

“I am a Secret Service man.”

Old King Brady showed his star.

“Ah, yes,” agreed the clerk, politely. “It is in the storeroom.

Front?”

A bell boy responded.

“Take this gentleman to the storeroom and show him these pieces of luggage,” and he gave the boy two checks.

Old King Brady followed the bell boy to the storeroom.

Here the old detective found that the missing man’s effects consisted of an umbrella, a traveling-bag and a rain coat.

The traveling-bag had been opened, and contained a miscellaneous array of articles of very little consequence, so far as a clew was concerned.

They were articles of toilet and wearing apparel.

Detectives had already examined these without any result.

Old King Brady’s efforts only met with the same result. He did not linger in the storeroom.

When he returned through the office, however, the clerk signaled him.

“I know you by sight,” he said. “Are you not Old King Brady?”

“I am so called,” replied the detective.

“Well, perhaps this might be of value to you. It is a letter which was left in the office by the carrier shortly after Mr. Small’s disappearance.”

“A letter?”

Old King Brady took the missive eagerly.

He studied the postmark and the chirography very closely.

He saw that it was a curious foreign hand and that the postmark was New York city.

“A local letter,” he said, meditatively. “It may be of value.”

As he turned it over in his hand he noticed that the seal was only imperfectly made.

“Look here,” he said to the clerk, “I am going to open this in your presence. It may afford a clew.”

“All right,” agreed the clerk.

Old King Brady completed the breaking of the seal.

The envelope contained only a slip of notepaper. On it was written:

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“I start for the land of dreams to-night at eleven. If you have not already started to keep the appointment upon receipt of this, do not fail to come. I shall await you, and we will journey together to the land of delirious delight, of ecstatic repose and voluptuous enjoyments. You know the path. Be on hand.

From the Prince of Pleasure.”

Old King Brady read this strange epistle several times. The

clerk did the same.

“I should think some lunatic wrote it,” declared the clerk.

“No,” said Old King Brady, shaking his head, “not that.”

“Who, then?”

“The person who wrote this letter was sane. Do me a favor.”

“What?”

“Do not mention the existence of this letter to any living being.”

“I will respect your wish, certainly,” replied the clerk. “Do you consider it a clew?”

“The clew,” said Old King Brady.

CHAPTER II. AMONG THE OPIUM DENS.

Old King Brady left the hotel.

On the street he hailed a cab.

“Drive me to No. — Fourteenth street,” he commanded. The cabby whipped up his horse.

Down Broadway dashed the hansom and turned into Fourteenth street.

Before the entrance of one of the large dry-goods stores Old King Brady alighted.

He glanced about warily, and as he did so a well-built man with a blonde beard made him a scarcely perceptible signal.

The old detective walked around the corner into Sixth avenue.

Two blocks below the man with the blonde beard overtook him.

“Well, partner, what is up?” he asked as he came alongside.

“There is hot work ahead for us, Harry Brady,” said the old detective.

Young King Brady, for he it was, gave a start.

“Do you mean it?” he exclaimed. “Something a little more

exciting than tracking shoplifters?”

“Indeed yes.”

“What is it?”

“You have read in the newspapers of the mysterious disappearance of Jonathan Small from Bushville?”

“One of the country bumpkins who always give the police so much trouble righting their wrongs?”

“No, a man of standing and wealth, who, I fear, has been led astray.”

Young King Brady looked surprised.

“By what method?”

“Read that.”

Old King Brady handed him the letter. Harry read it slowly.

“A decoy!” he said.

“Well, yes, in one sense.”

“What does it all mean?”

“Don’t you see?”

“No; I don’t understand that reference to delirious delight. Oh, I see!”

The young detective caught the inspiration in an instant. He looked straight in the old detective's eyes and spoke one word:

“Opium!”

Old King Brady nodded.

“There you are,” he said.

The two detectives were silent for a time. Then Young King Brady said:

“It is a good time to take a trip through those opium dens.”

“It is in our way to do so now,” said Old King Brady.

“Then we are to go to work on this case?”

“Yes.”

“Very good. I am ready.”

“There is one difficulty. We are absolutely without a clew beyond this letter.”

“The letter establishes much.”

“Yes, but not the identity of the sender.”

Old King Brady studied the epistle. Then he said:

“Deduction is in order now. Let us begin at the bottom.”

“Yes,” agreed Harry.

“In the first place, Mr. Jonathan Small of Bushville comes down to New York.”

“Yes.”

“He goes to the Fifth Avenue Hotel.”

“Just so.”

“While at that hostelry we will assume that he falls in with some new acquaintance.”

“Exactly.”

“Of course it is possible that he met the acquaintance outside the hotel, or he may have known him long, and he may have come to New York for the purpose of seeing him.”

“Just so,” agreed Harry.

“In any event, there is a friend or acquaintance in the case. We will assume that the acquaintance is an opium fiend.”

“Yes.”

“Now he has made an appointment with Mr. Small at an opium den. This letter proves that. They are to meet there.”

“That looks plausible.”

“It shows that Mr. Small has had experience with opium before. The tone of the letter also shows that he was going to keep the appointment for the purpose of hitting the pipe.”

“Which is very plain.”

“Now we have two questions to settle: Who was the acquaintance and where is the den?”

“Just so.”

“It may be one of dozens in the part of New York known as Chinatown.”

“It can hardly be elsewhere.”

“No. Now we have these reasonable conclusions. Now, I have one more assumption.”

Young King Brady had made a note of all this.

He looked up inquiringly.

“What is it?” he asked.

“The writer of this note is a foreigner. The chirography shows the German school. Yet he may be French, or even Italian. He is certainly a foreigner.”

“In that event,” said Harry, “he will be easier to trace.”

“Yes,” said Old King Brady, reflectively. “Let us go back to the hotel.”

Harry was surprised.

“What for?” he asked.

“I will tell you when we get there.”

Back to the Fifth Avenue Hotel went the two detectives. Once more Old King Brady asked the clerk for the register.

He carefully scanned the list of arrivals of that day.

He then looked over those of the day before.

This resulted in a discovery. On the page of the register he found a name which attracted his attention.

Thus it read:

“COUNT PAOLO BARETTI,
“Milan, Italy.”

“Ah!” said the old detective in a low tone. “He is an Italian.”

Harry looked surprised.

“How are you so sure of him?” he asked.

“Why not? He is the only foreigner entered on this register within the space of time Small was here.”

Then he caught the ear of the clerk.

“Do you recall the appearance of the man who signed this name?” asked Old King Brady.

“Indeed, yes,” agreed the clerk. “Count Baretti. Tall and dark, with a long mustache and pointed whiskers.”

“Did he appear to be a man of means?”

“Well, perhaps so. Yet I recall a certain shabbiness in his dress.”

“He is not here now?”

“No; as you see, he went away on the twenty-fifth. He was only here two days.”

“Can you tell me if in that time he was at all in the company of Mr. Small of Bushville?”

“Small!” repeated the clerk. “Ah! now I recall. The country merchant and the Italian count were much together. Yes, I saw them several times in each other’s society.”

“You don’t know where Count Baretti went?”

“No,” replied the clerk. “He brought no trunk, only a steamer case.”

The detectives walked out of the hotel well satisfied.

Step by step they saw the case unfolding before them.

The haze was lifting very rapidly and very effectually.

But the question now was, where had Small gone?

Where was the opium den into which he had been lured, and where the detectives now expected to find him?

The Bradys could see only one plan, and this was to at once pay a visit to the dens of Chinatown.

In some one of them they might find the man they sought.

He might be even now under the influence of the powerful drug, and perhaps personally unwilling to leave the den.

It did not take the detectives long to act.

They instantly boarded a down-town car for Chinatown. They alighted in the lower Bowery and made their way to Pell street.

They had shrewdly donned a clever disguise which it was hard to penetrate. They were good examples of countrymen looking for a good time.

They walked into Mott street and paused before the door of a laundry. On the door was emblazoned the name:

“CHINN LING.
“Chinese Laundry.”

Old King Brady opened the door and walked in.

Harry followed. The two detectives were instantly the keen objects of scrutiny on the part of a couple of Mongolians who were ejecting spray from their mouths upon the linen they were ironing.

“Ah! muchee wellycome, Melican man,” said one of them with a smile. “Washee shirtee allee samee?”

“Naw!” said Old King Brady in a suggestive way. “We don’t want no shirt washed. We want to hit the pipe.”

Chinn Ling came nearer and fixed his slant eyes on the detective.

He shook his head slowly.

“No hittee pipe here,” he said. “Mebbe pleeceman come, lockee up. Slee?”

“Aw, come off!” said Harry. “What do ye take us fer? Don’t you see we’re onto our job?”

Chinn Ling looked critically at the two visitors.

Then he spoke in Chinese to his companions. The result was speedy.

“Allee light,” he said. “Melican man allee light. Come ddis way.”

The detectives followed the Celestials through an inner door. Here stairs led down into darkness.

Chinn Ling made a queer vocal signal. It was answered from below.

Then light flashed up the stairway.

The detectives saw a wicket door below and a yellow face at the wicket.

They descended and the door opened. Sickening fumes came to their nostrils from beyond.

They passed into a little corridor.

Here they purchased pipes and little jars of opium off the Chinese keeper.

Then they made their way to an inner room, low-ceiled and hung with Chinese tapestry.

There were bunks against the sides of the den, and in these lay men and women in a beastly state of stupor.

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Some were dreaming in that delirium which sooner or later must end in death.

Others were just about beginning, and one or two were reviving from the intoxicating trance induced by the drug.

The detectives carefully noted the faces of all in the den.

They saw none, however, answering the description of those they sought.

They pretended to indulge in the opium to a slight extent.

But as soon as they dared they made an exit from the place and reached the open air.

“Whew!” exclaimed Harry. “This will be the death of us before we can get through. Only think of the experiences before us.”

“I can see no other way,” said Old King Brady, “unless—ha! do you see that man across the street?”

Both detectives stared at a dark man with pointed mustache and goatee who had just come out of a Chinese house.

“It is Baretta!” said Old King Brady.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW PHASE OF THE CASE.

Both Old and Young King Brady were instantly attracted by the Italian count across the street.

Neither had ever seen him before.

But from the description given Old King Brady was ready to swear that he was no other than Baretti.

Old King Brady quickly noted the house from which Baretti emerged.

Then the detectives proceeded to follow the Italian.

He walked out to the Bowery.

Here he took an up-town car. The detectives also boarded it.

The Italian looked serene and composed. In fact he was the last person in the world to be selected as an abductor and a swindler.

But that he was such the detectives seemed to feel sure.

Of course the detectives wondered much where he was going and what was his errand.

They, however, took care to keep well out of his sight on the forward platform of the car.

At Fourteenth street Baretto alighted.

He walked along until he reached the entrance to the Academy Billiard Parlors. Then he entered the place.

The detectives leisurely sauntered in behind the count.

Baretto strolled to the far end of the room and sat down in a chair. Some men were playing pool at a table close by.

The Italian lit a cigar and seemed to give himself up to a contemplation of the game.

“What is up?” whispered Harry.

“It looks like an appointment,” said Old King Brady.

“An appointment?”

“Yes.”

“With whom?”

“We shall see.”

“Then you think Baretto has accomplices?” asked Harry.

“Anything is possible. Straws show which way the wind blows. At present we are obliged to rely upon the evidence of straws.”

The two Bradys, to avoid exciting the suspicion of their bird, now called for a table and indulged in a game of billiards.

For three-quarters of an hour Baretto sat leisurely in his chair,

smoking, and watched them play.

Then suddenly the long-looked-for development transpired.

Old King Brady's theory was verified.

Into the place came a man of peculiar appearance.

He was short and thick-set and dressed in shabby clothes.

But his features were of an unusual cast. His face had the queer appearance of being broader than it was long.

His nose was low at the bridge and his eyes small and ferret-like, his chin sharp and projecting, and his forehead broad and bulging.

He recognized the count, who at once sprang up and in a voice audible to the detectives exclaimed:

“Ah! Uriah Swift, you have come. I have waited long for you.”

“I was detained, Baretto,” said Swift in an oily voice. “But I am here now and ready for business.”

“I am glad to hear that.”

Then the two arch villains, for such the detectives believed them to be, walked out of the place.

Harry speedily followed them, while Old King Brady paid the bill.

The detectives shadowed their birds along Fourteenth street to Broadway.

Here the two villains entered a Central Park car.

The detectives got on the front platform. They were not noticed by the villains, who were engaged in earnest conversation.

At Fifty-ninth street all left the car. Swift and the count crossed the street and entered the park.

The Bradys shadowed them skillfully, wondering what all this meant.

Into by-paths the two plotters, for such the detectives believed they were, made their way.

After some time they reached a little arbor back of a huge ledge and near a roadway.

Here they sat down.

The detectives cautiously crept around to the summit of the ledge, and from whence every word uttered came readily to their ears.

And what they heard was a revelation.

Swift was speaking:

“I think the relatives will pay a big ransom for the old man,” he declared. “It would be my advice to accept it.”

“And mine also,” declared Baretta. “But it’s of no use to talk to Andrew Emerson on that score.”

“He is a fool!”

“So I think.”

“Women are all right enough in their place, but there is no use in making a fool of one’s self over them.”

“Just so.”

“Now here is a chance to make a heap of money. We can get a good sum for the safe return of the old man.”

“Of course.”

“I say, take it, and let the girl alone.”

“Emerson won’t agree to it. He is dead in love with the girl.”

“She won’t marry him.”

“No, but his game is to decoy her into Sam Wah’s place and dose her with opium. He believes that in that way he can bring her to terms.”

“Well, he’ll burn his fingers, and you can bet he will.”

“Of course he will.”

“I’ll propose that we take our share of the money and let him go along with his game. I’m out of it.”

“The same here.”

The detectives had listened to all this with thrilling interest.

The conclusions to be gained were easy enough to understand.

There was a female in the case.

From what the detectives had gathered, she was the daughter of the missing man, and that one Andrew Emerson was conspiring in her abduction.

Their whole being revolted at the thought of anything so villainous.

But they did not precipitate matters as yet by attempting the arrest of Swift and Baretto.

The time had not yet arrived for action so summary. They believed that more would be gained by waiting and watching.

So they held their place on the ledge.

Suddenly the sound of footsteps was heard.

Then a man came along the walk to the arbor. He was tall and well dressed and bore the stamp of a man of the world.

Instantly Baretto and Swift leaped up. Their manner changed.

“Hello, Emerson!” cried Swift. “You are behind time.”

The detectives focussed their gaze upon Emerson.

“Am I?” he exclaimed, with a grin. “Have I kept you waiting?”

“We have been here nearly twenty minutes,” declared Baretto, “and my time, as you know, is valuable.”

“Ah! Well, I am sorry,” said Emerson. “But to tell you the truth, I have been a busy man.”

“What have you been busy about?”

“Trapping the dove.”

Both Baretto and Swift exchanged glances.

“Well, I think you’re a fool, Andy,” said Swift, slowly.

“What do you mean?”

“There’s plenty of money for us in this job. To risk losing it is folly.”

“Am I taking such a risk?”

“Yes.”

“How?”

“By fooling with this girl. What do you want to risk your neck for her for? I tell you there’s no luck in it!”

Emerson’s face clouded. His eyes gleamed with a sullen light.

“I believe I know my business,” he said stiffly. “As long as you get your share you can’t kick.”

“What is our share?”

“The money.”

“And you?”

“I’ll take the girl.”

“Well,” said Baretti, with better grace, “I can’t say that I admire your taste, but I am sure we are getting the best end of the bargain. We will stand.”

“Then let that end the croaking.”

“It does.”

“Now to business. How is the bird?”

“All safe.”

“Have you just come from there?”

“Yes.”

“You think Sam Wah can be trusted?”

“Yes.”

“All right. Now I have to tell you that all plans are laid for the safe transportation of the girl to the city. No one suspects the job.”

“Well, everything is all ready below.”

“By the way, I have heard a report.”

“Ah! What is it?”

“Two noted detectives are on our track.”

“The Bradys!”

“Old and Young King Brady?” gasped Baretti. “Par-dieu! that is bad. We shall have to watch ourselves.”

“Bah!” said Emerson, with a cruel smile. “I have heard a good deal about the Bradys. Some people are mortally afraid of them.”

“They always succeed.”

“Well, curse them, let this be their Waterloo then! They are up against a hard gang.”

Baretti and Swift applauded this.

“You are right they are!” cried the Italian. “It will be worth a victor’s crown to the man who trips them up forever. Men in our line will feel safer.”

“Well, it is our fault if we do not do so.”

“Death to the Bradys!”

The detectives exchanged glances and smiled.

It was certain that this blood-curdling declaration did not

frighten them in the least.

“Well,” said Barette, finally, “I’ll tell Sam Wah then that you are all ready to bring the girl in.”

“Yes—perhaps to-night.”

“As soon as that?”

“I think so. I may as well tell you the truth. She is already in the outskirts of the city. I have only to take her down to the den.”

“Whew!” cried Barette. “You are immediate in your methods, Emerson. You don’t mean to take any chances.”

“You bet I don’t! I’m up for a winner. Hello!”

A bit of gravel inadvertently started by Harry leaning too far over the verge rattled down and struck the ground at the villain’s feet.

He glanced up.

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The Bradys tried to shrink back.

But they were too late.

Seeing that they were discovered, Old King Brady threw off the mask and made quick and startling action.

CHAPTER IV. IN CHINATOWN.

Pen can hardly depict the sheer amazement of the trio of villains as they looked up and saw the detectives above them.

“Jericho!” gasped Emerson. “We are betrayed!”

“The Bradys!” gasped Swift. “I told you so!”

“Stand your ground!” cried Old King Brady in trumpet tones.
“The man who moves dies!”

“Scatter!” yelled Baretto.

“Lay ’em out!” screamed Emerson.

What followed was swift and extremely confusing.

Down leaped the Bradys.

They struck the ground right in the midst of the villains. Then there ensued a struggle which baffles description.

Uriah Swift, who was always a coward, dashed away down the path.

As Old King Brady struck the ground he stumbled and nearly fell.

Baretto struck him a terrific blow on the head, which nigh took

away his senses. For a few moments he was too dizzy to arise.

From afar two park policemen had seen the affair and were coming to the rescue.

The villains saw this, and Emerson cried:

“Kill ’em! Brain ’em if you can! Don’t let them escape alive!”

Emerson had grappled with Harry.

The young detective would have mastered him but for the interference of Baretta.

The Italian came to the rescue of his pal.

Harry warded off a blow which would have brained him. In the struggle he was hurled across the pathway, and reeling, went down an embankment.

Before he could recover himself and get back to the path every one of the villains had vanished.

They had thought discretion the better part of valor, and seeing the park officers coming, had decided to postpone the summary execution of the detectives.

Old King Brady had now recovered, only to find himself in the clutches of the park police.

“What is all this row?” demanded the park officer. “No fighting is allowed in this park.”

“If you had got here sooner it might have been avoided,” retorted Old King Brady. “But if you continue to hold me those villains will escape.”

“I’ll hold ye!” cried the mistaken officer. “You shall be run in for this.”

“Nonsense! You are hindering us. We want your assistance. Lively! Those rogues must not escape from the park!”

Old King Brady flashed his star in the officer’s face.

He gave a gasp.

“Jemima!” he ejaculated. “You are Secret Service men!”

“That’s what we are!”

“But who were the other fellows?”

“They are noted crooks and we must capture them. Come, make lively work of it!”

The park officers needed no further bidding.

They whistled for help and the quest was begun. The Bradys, aided by the park police, looked high and low for the crooks.

But not a trace was found.

They had made good their escape. It was of no use. After an hour’s work the search was abandoned.

The Bradys now saw that they had made a mistake.

They regretted their action in having delayed for a moment in the park. They should have proceeded at once to Chinatown.

“By Jove!” cried Harry, “before we get there they will have moved the prisoner to some other place!”

From what the detectives had overheard they knew that the missing man, Jonathan Small, had been imprisoned in the opium den of Sam Wah, a Celestial resident of Mott street.

The detectives, as soon as they realized their error, lost no further time.

They started for the elevated station.

As they were nearer the Sixth avenue line, they took a train to Park place. Here they alighted and crossed to Chatham square and thence to Mott street.

When they reached Chinatown it was dark.

Turning into Mott street, the detectives began their search for Sam Wah's place.

It was not long before they located it. It was the very house from which they had seen Baretta emerge.

“Here we are!” whispered Harry. “Now, shall we invade the place? I will ring up a hurry call!”

Old King Brady was thoughtful.

“No,” he said, finally; “I believe it is better to keep dark a while yet.”

With this, the detectives drew into some shadows and made a quick change in their personal appearance.

The disguise they donned was that of two countrymen, as before.

They now emerged from the shadows and boldly entered Sam Wah’s laundry.

A number of Celestials were engaged in ironing linen as the detectives entered.

One of them, a lanky, sharp-eyed fellow, looked up and nodded pleasantly.

“Hab washee? Heap shirtee?” he asked.

“Are you Sam Wah?” asked Old King Brady.

“Yep! Me Sam Wah.”

“Well, we want to hit the pipe,” said Old King Brady in a whisper.

Sam Wah looked at them searchingly, and then, apparently satisfied that they were all right, replied:

“Allee light! Go rightee in!”

He opened a door which led down stairs to a door below. As in Chin Ling’s place, a signal was given.

And the detectives entered the opium den in the same manner.

They called for pipes and opium of the attendant and then crept into their berths.

There were a number of devotees of the drug in the place.

As soon as practicable, the detectives crept out of their bunks and made a search of the place.

But not a trace of the man they were looking for could be found.

He was not in the den.

The detectives were a little disappointed, though by no means assured that he was not at least in hiding somewhere near.

They crept about the place, very cautiously examining the floor and the walls.

The drug-soaked dreamers in the bunks paid no attention to them. The attendants were outside.

“It is queer,” whispered Harry. “There is no doubt but that he was brought here.”

“Very true, but they have got the start of us.”

“You think they have taken him away?”

“I see no other explanation.”

The detectives looked in vain for another connecting room. But

there was no evidence of such.

Suddenly the door was heard to open at the end of the passage.

A familiar voice came floating down the passage. The detectives knew that Andrew Emerson was the owner.

“I don’t know whether it is safe to bring her here or not, Sam,” he said. “The cursed detectives are hot on our trail.”

“Me foolee dem allee light,” declared the Chinaman.

Then their voices died out suddenly.

They did not enter the opium den. But where had they gone?

The detectives were startled.

To them one thing seemed plain. This was not the only chamber of Sam Wah’s den.

There was another.

But where was it?

Under a whisper the detectives discussed the question. How were they to discover it and how enter it?

“I believe it would pay to make one big haul,” said Harry. “We can surround the place with officers and then it will be impossible for them to escape or conceal the prisoner.”

“It would seem so,” said Old King Brady. “And yet, if we did

not succeed, we would be all at sea. At present we are on the trail. I believe it is better to lull them into security.”

Just at this moment a creaking sound was heard.

Then the voices again came to the ears of the detectives.

“It’s queer they haven’t descended on your place yet, Sam.”

It was Emerson who spoke.

“Yep! Mebbe dey don’t know,” said the Chinaman.

“Ah! that may be,” declared Emerson with apparent conviction.

“In that case, we are all right. If those skunks of detectives didn’t overhear all we said in the park, we are safe.”

“Me tinkee so. Me foolee!”

“Yes, I believe you can fool them, and I think it is all safe. If no descent is made on this place to-night, I shall know that everything is all right.”

Then a door creaked and the voices died away.

The detectives were on the qui vive.

There was no longer doubt in their minds that the imprisoned man was in the vicinity.

It did not take them long to decide upon a plan of action.

It was apparent to both that something desperate must be done,

and at once.

They waited some time in the den.

Then they crept softly into the passage which led to the attendant's position by the wicket door.

The fellow sat with his back turned to the den.

The Bradys exchanged signals and crept nearer to him.

Old King Brady paused for a moment.

Then he made a dash forward.

Swiftly and silently he descended upon the unsuspecting Celestial.

Before the Chinaman could move or cry out, the detective's fingers closed about his windpipe.

The success of the attack was the result of its unexpectedness.

In a jiffy the doorkeeper was on his back and helpless.

Harry thrust a gag into his mouth and this silenced him effectually.

Then his arms and legs were bound. They carried him into the den and put him into one of the bunks.

The coast was clear.

The detectives lost no time.

With his dark-lantern Old King Brady proceeded to examine the door. For a long time the detectives searched in vain.

Then a sharp whisper from Harry announced that he had made a discovery.

CHAPTER V. IN A TRAP.

“What is it, Harry?” asked Old King Brady.

“There is a section of the partition here which has been sawed,” he said. “I think I can see hinges.”

“Ah! Press upon it.”

The young detective ran his fingers carefully over the surface of the partition.

Suddenly they encountered a small object. He gave a chuckle.

“I have it!” he whispered.

“What?”

“Press the button and so forth. Here goes!”

The young detective pressed the button.

The next moment he wished he hadn't. The result was unexpected.

9

There was the booming of a gong and in an instant lights were out. The thumping of feet was heard overhead.

The detectives were in utter darkness. It was easy to understand what had happened.

Far from being the secret spring which was to open the secret door, the push button had set an alarm going.

The lights were extinguished and steps were heard rushing down the stairs.

Jabbering voices were heard.

The detectives knew that they were in deadly peril.

They had placed themselves in a literal death trap.

They stood the chance of being at any moment carved into bits by the knives of the gang of highbinders whom the signal would summon to the spot.

Simultaneously with the signal, the doors of the opium den were closed automatically.

What was to be done?

For one brief instant they saw no other way but to make a gory fight of it.

They were much averse to doing this, for they knew that it would mean in no way the accomplishment of the case.

But they drew their revolvers and crouched back in the little passageway.

As they did so, Old King Brady felt the floor slowly sinking beneath him.

For a moment the horror of a possible descent into a well or vault of death underground was upon him.

Then he flashed his lantern light downward, drawing the slide by impulse. He saw that which gave him a start.

“Ah! Harry,” he cried, “we have found it!”

“What?”

“The secret den!”

“You don’t mean it?”

“Look for yourself.”

The trap on which Old King Brady had stood had descended for two feet and showed an illuminated chamber below.

It was hung with curtains, and against the wall was a couch, on which lay the recumbent figure of a man.

Beside the couch was a pipe and the opium dishes of an opium taker.

So far as the detectives could see, this single occupant of the room was under the influence of the drug.

The detectives had just time to see this when the crash came.

Down against the wicket door descended a number of heavy forms. Snarling cries and curses were heard.

Old King Brady placed his pistol to the door and fired.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Crack! Crack! Crack!

No human power could stand against such a deadly fusillade.

Yells and cries of rage and pain were heard.

Then retreating footsteps showed that for the moment the field belonged to the detectives.

“We have repulsed them, Harry,” declared Old King Brady triumphantly. “Fortune is with us.”

“I should say so!” cried the young detective. “That is the best of luck.”

“Now, while I hold the fort here, you slip down there and see who that is on that couch.”

“Do you not believe it is our missing man?”

“Yes, I do.”

“All right, here goes!”

Down into the place slid Young King Brady.

He struck the floor of the underground chamber. In a moment more he was bending over the drugged man.

He gave a sharp cry.

“It is our man!” he shouted.

“Good!” cried Old King Brady. “Then we have gained our end!”

Harry leaned over the sleeping man and shook him.

He seemed to be in a deep stupor.

But after repeated efforts he came slowly out of his dazed condition.

He opened his eyes and looked up in a puzzled way into the young detective’s face.

“What is this?” he muttered. “Where have I been?”

“You have been under the influence of a drug,” declared Harry. “But it is leaving you now.”

“Where am I now?”

“You are in Sam Wah’s opium den in Mott street, New York.”

With an effort, the imprisoned man sat upon the edge of his couch. His wits were yet sluggish.

“I don’t understand,” he said slowly. “I have been traveling in very strange lands. There has been a delicious sensation through it all. But now—oh, I am ill!”

A spasm of violent retching seized the drugged victim.

But Harry knew that this was a good symptom.

It was nature's effort to throw off the poisonous drug. It would not be long before the sick man would have possession of his faculties.

While he was thus recovering Harry went back to Old King Brady's side.

The position of the two detectives was now an anxious and trying one.

The highbinders did not again attempt to return to the attack.

That some of them were wounded by Old King Brady's shots there was no doubt.

The Chinaman is a coward.

Old King Brady knew that they would not venture down the stairway again at once.

On the other hand, the detectives were in a dangerous predicament.

For the time they were victors.

But it was necessary to leave the place, and how this was to be done safely was a conundrum.

Certainly for either to expose himself in the stairway would mean certain death.

At the landing above no doubt a half dozen or more infuriated Celestials were crouched.

“We are stuck!” said Harry.

Old King Brady shook his head.

He did not like to acknowledge it.

“What shall we do?” asked Harry.

10

The old detective did not reply for some moments. Then he said:

“Perhaps there is another mode of exit from this place.”

“I don’t see it,” said Harry.

“Why?”

“We are underground.”

This was true.

But Old King Brady was not the kind of a man to be blocked by any lack of effort.

“Stay here,” he said; “I’ll take a run about this place.”

“All right.”

Harry stationed himself at the wicket door. For some while he held his post.

Then he saw the outline of a human head upon the landing

above. Then a thin voice came down:

“Whatee matter down there? Tellee Chineeman whatee wrong?”

“Just a little rumpus, that is all,” said Harry.

“Chineeman come down?”

“If you do you’ll run into a bullet!”

This ominous threat was fully digested by the yellow rascals above.

“Melican man heap clazee?” was the next question. “Pipe makee him clazee? Whatee sabe?”

“You’ll find out if you try to come down,” said Harry.

“Melican man comee up. Go out allee safe. Sam Wah no keepee joint. Keepee ’spectable place.”

“Yes, that’s all right. Just go out and bring in a policeman,” said Harry. “There is a fellow down here who needs to be put under arrest.”

An excited jabbering confab followed above.

Then the answer came back:

“No gettee pleeceman! Melican man stay there! Starve allee samee! Neber comee up! Chineeman killee quick!”

“Yes, that’s what I thought,” said Harry, dryly. “Well, you stay

there, you yellow dogs. If you dare to try any treacherous game on us you'll die like the curs you are!"

No more talk was made.

Meanwhile Old King Brady had been busy in his investigations.

And they had not been without result either—of a most gratifying kind.

The old detective knew that the building in which was Sam Wah's den was of the old style residence construction without the so-called English basement.

The opium den had been located in the cellar.

The lower den in which was the prisoner must have been excavated at a later date, and probably for the specific purpose for which it was used.

Now in houses of this kind there were certain to be small windows in the foundation. It was for these that the old detective searched.

And his search was rewarded.

Against two sides of the cellar the wooden berths of the opium sleepers were built.

But the other wall was simply hung with arras. Behind this was the cold stone of the cellar wall.

The old detective tore down this arras.

One of the opium sleepers leaned out of his berth and deliriously asked:

“Is this the golden spring of Helicon? Are we in pleasure land?”

“Yes,” replied Old King Brady. “Sleep away, you wretch. May heaven have pity on you!”

Then the opium taker sank back and became quiet again.

The detective tore down all the hangings on that side of the cellar.

He passed the rays of his lantern along the upper part of the wall. Just what he was looking for was disclosed.

This was the cellar window.

It was nailed firmly in its wooden frame, but time had rotted the casing, and Old King Brady easily dislodged the mortar and loosened it.

Then he lifted the window bodily from the niche.

He took a tabaret and stood upon it.

He was thus enabled to put his head out of the window and look about.

The window opened upon a dark alley.

The end next the street was closed.

But the other end terminated in an inner court, which was lighted dimly by light from the dingy panes of a tenement window.

CHAPTER VI. THE RESCUE.

Old King Brady saw that here was a likely avenue of escape.

At least it might prove so if quickly acted upon.

Of course at any moment the inmates of Sam Wah's place might think of the possibility of escape in this direction and try to block it.

Old King Brady crept down.

"Harry!" he called.

"Well?"

"Come here."

The young detective was quickly at his side.

"Look!" said the old detective. "If we act quickly——"

"Good!" cried the young detective. "But we must not go without our man."

"Certainly not."

"How can we get him out of here? Do you think he will be able to act for himself?"

"I don't see why not," said the old detective.

“Go down and see what you can do with him.”

Old King Brady complied.

When he descended into the lower cellar he was astonished to find that the opium victim was on his feet.

He was still weak, but his head was clear.

“I think I am beginning to understand my position,” he said.

“Good!” said Old King Brady. “Then you are ready to leave here?”

“I think I have been trapped.”

11

“That is very true.”

“Who are you?”

“We are detectives.”

“Ah! What place is this?”

“It is an opium den.”

“My head is not quite clear. How did I come here?”

“You were decoyed by a villain named Barette.”

Small gave a violent start.

“Ah! yes!” he cried. “That is the fellow. Barette was his name. He is a scoundrel!”

“That he is.”

“Why did they bring me here?”

“They wished to hold you for ransom. Your relatives were ready to offer fifty thousand dollars for your safe return.”

“A fiendish job!”

“Yes.”

“Help me out of this.”

“We are ready. Do you think you could do a little bit of climbing?”

“Oh, indeed, I am quite smart now. Only my head is weak.”

Old King Brady assisted him up the ladder to the main den above.

Then the detective pulled up the ladder and placed it at the cellar window.

Up this ladder they hastily assisted the prisoner.

He was pushed through the cellar window and out into the alley.

The detectives followed.

Freedom was before them.

Through the alley to the inner court they glided.

An uproar arose from Sam Wah's place.

The escape had been discovered.

The detectives dodged into the dingy hallway of a squalid tenement.

They followed this through to the street. When they emerged they knew that all danger was past.

They walked boldly out to the Bowery.

Here Harry asked:

“Shall we send a posse of officers in to raid the den?”

“Oh, no!” said Old King Brady.

“Why not?”

“It would be a mistake.”

“How so?”

“Why, as it now stands, the joint is an admirable means of gaining clues. You see we have only started on our case.”

“True!”

“We have found the missing man.”

“And rescued him.”

“Yes, and our next move must be to hunt down the gang of

blackmailers and abductors.”

“Exactly!”

“We must not forget that Miss Small is in their clutches, and her rescue will be our next business.”

“We shall take you as far as the Fifth Avenue Hotel,” said Old King Brady to Small. “There you will be under close guard and absolutely safe.”

“Very well,” agreed Small; “you shall be well rewarded.”

The detectives boarded an up-town car.

They knew that little more was to be gained in Chinatown that night.

The villainous gang of which Emerson was the head were no doubt long ere this in a place of safety.

Nothing would be gained by the arrest of Sam Wah.

It was decided to let the opium joint and its habitues alone for a time.

So back to the Fifth Avenue Hotel went the detectives.

When they arrived there, Jonathan Small walked quite steadily into the place and went to his own room.

There he at once went to bed.

Medical advice was obtained, and before morning the fumes of the opium had partially cleared from his brain.

The Bradys worked all night to get track of Emerson and his gang.

But all was vain.

In the morning they returned to the hotel and were shown to Mr. Small's room.

The magnate of Bushville appeared to be extremely rational.

“It has all come to me,” he said, joyfully. “I remember Baretta. But he never mentioned the fact that he was an opium fiend.”

Old King Brady was astounded.

“What?” he exclaimed. “Do you mean that?”

“I do.”

“How do you explain this letter, which suggests that you had made an appointment to meet the writer in an opium den?”

Small looked astonished.

“What letter?” he asked in amazement.

“Here it is.”

The detective handed him the letter signed by one, “The Prince of Pleasure.”

Small read it.

“Where did you get this?” he asked.

“It was left here at the hotel for you after you went out.”

“Well,” said Small, positively, “it is an atrocious fabrication! I made no appointment with anybody.”

“You did not?”

“No.”

“And you never took opium before?”

“Never!”

“You never knew of Sam Wah’s place?”

“I never heard of it.”

The detectives were surprised.

“Then why did you go there?”

“I never knew,” replied the magnate of Bushville.

“The story is simple. Barette agreed to meet me at a point in lower Broadway. He drove up in a cab and asked me to get in with him.

“I did so. It was the most fatal thing I ever did. Just as I sat down in the cushions, Barette put his hand on my hand.

“I felt a sharp sting. I remember looking down and seeing a hypodermic syringe in his hand. I knew no more.”

“Drugged!”

“Yes, and the drug that time was no opium. Whatever it was, it certainly was very swift and powerful.”

12

“What followed next?”

“Next I awoke in the opium den. They placed a pipe in my mouth and forced me to inhale the fumes. I grew very delirious. You know the rest.”

The Bradys were silent.

They were doing some deep thinking.

They were trying to account for the mysterious letter.

“It is very strange,” declared Harry. “How do you account for it, partner?”

“I think I have it.”

“Ah! What is it?”

“This letter was written and left here to mislead the friends of Mr. Small. It was intended to convey the impression that he was an opium taker.”

“There you are!” cried Small. “There is no doubt of that!”

“It would show that in going into opium dens you went voluntarily.”

“My dearest friends could not believe that of me.”

Old King Brady shook his head.

“I don’t know,” he said. “Sometimes our dearest friends who know us best judge us the harshest.”

“I will admit that,” agreed Small. “But it is not right.”

“Oh, no, it is not right. But it is nevertheless true.”

“By the way,” said Old King Brady, “now that you are recovered, it is my duty to break some bad news to you.”

The magnate of Bushville straightened up and said:

“Bad news?”

“Yes.”

“Ah! What may it be?”

“First, I will ask a question. Was this villain Andrew Emerson ever a suitor for the hand of your daughter?”

Small gave a mighty start.

“Emerson!” he cried. “Yes, he sued for my daughter Eva’s hand. But I would not hear of it.”

Old King Brady nodded.

“I thought so.”

“Well, what of it?”

“You may as well know now and at once as later. Your daughter has been abducted and is in his power.”

A hoarse cry escaped Small.

He turned frightfully pale and his whole frame quivered with grief and anger.

“What, my Eva—my sweet child in that villain’s hands?”

“It is too true.”

“Oh, my God!” groaned the wretched parent. “Then she is lost!”

“I hardly think you need say that,” declared Old King Brady.

“Is there hope?”

“Yes, and very much.”

“God bless you! You are encouraging, but I fear the worst.”

“You need not, for we shall save your daughter.”

The two detectives arose.

“That will be our next purpose, Mr. Small,” they declared. “We have saved you, now we’ll save your daughter.”

Small was profuse in his gratitude but exceedingly bitter in his

despair.

His daughter Eva was as the apple of his eye, and he gave her up as lost.

The detectives left the hotel.

First, however, they had seen that Secret Service men were placed on guard at the hotel.

Already extras were on the street, for the newspapers had got the story of Jonathan Small's return.

On one page was the announcement of his rescue.

On the other page was the statement of his daughter's mysterious disappearance. Not in years had any incident excited one-half the interest that this did.

And the case was only just begun!

CHAPTER VII. A CLEVER GAME.

When the Bradys first assumed the solving of the missing man case, they felt assured that the restoration of Jonathan Small to his friends would necessarily end the case.

But this very thing had come to pass, and yet it was certain that the case was not yet begun, far from being ended.

The abduction of Eva Small had added a complex feature.

To rescue her now was the work of the two Bradys.

When they left the Fifth Avenue Hotel they had little idea as to where they ought to look for the missing girl.

They felt sure that Eva was in concealment somewhere in the city.

She was no doubt kept deeply under the influence of the drugs. Moreover, there was still a possibility that she was to be found hidden among the opium dens of Chinatown.

In that secret and mysterious region of crime, Emerson would no doubt feel safe to pursue his nefarious plans.

From Small the detectives had already secured a history of Emerson.

They learned that he was a native of Bushville, who had some

years before sued for the hand of Eva Small.

She was the heiress of the region.

But he had been refused.

Chagrined and vowing revenge, he had gone down to New York City and plunged into dissipation.

He had become initiated into the inner circles of crime.

But through all his purpose of winning Eva Small for his bride, by foul means if not fair, was never abandoned.

So it was not likely that he would easily give her up, now that she was in his hands.

The detectives, knowing no better plan, therefore returned to Chinatown.

But this time they adopted a different disguise.

Young King Brady was slender and possessed of smooth, regular features, so he easily made up for a young girl.

On Old King Brady's arm he walked boldly through the place.

They indulged in chop suey in the restaurants, and visited the Chinese shops.

Finally they turned into Mott street.

As they approached Sam Wah's place, they wondered if there

was any possibility of their being recognized.

A surprising thing occurred.

Just as Old King Brady and his supposed female escort were passing the laundry, Sam Wah rushed out, and grasping Old King Brady by the arm, exclaimed:

“Stepee inside. Have something to showee you!”

Young King Brady, to simulate his part, shrank from the Chinaman.

Other Celestials passing along the street watched the scene, and perhaps wondered at Sam Wah’s familiarity.

The wily keeper of the opium joint pointed at the door of his place. Cut in the door was a small aperture, through which the habitues of the place had been accustomed to pass their cards of admission.

For one brief instant the detectives feared a trap.

This was dispelled.

They saw by Sam Wah’s face that he was simply trying to solicit custom.

So Old King Brady drew Harry toward the door, nodding in the affirmative to Sam Wah.

When the detectives entered the laundry, they knew that they were taking their lives in their hands.

But it was no time for being squeamish.

There was deep, dark and deadly work before them.

To shrink now meant failure.

Sam Wah proved a clever solicitor of customers.

In the laundry window was an assortment of Chinese articles.

He tried hard to induce Old King Brady to buy these.

The old detective listened attentively. Then he suddenly changed his tactics.

He drew Sam Wah aside and showed a roll of bills.

The Chinaman's eyes dilated.

“Look here, pigtail,” said the old detective sharply, “you like to make money?”

“Likee monee belly well! Workee hard. Slee?”

“Yes,” said Old King Brady. “And I will pay you money if you will help me do a little job of work.”

Sam Wah rubbed his hands.

“Belly glad,” he said.

“It is settled then?”

“Whatee want Chineeman do? Tellee allee samee.”

“You see the lady I am with?”

Sam fixed his slant eyes on Harry.

“Yeppee. Me slee.”

“Very good! Now I want her to marry me, but she won’t. You understand?”

The Celestial’s eyes rolled.

“Yepee, me slee.”

“Now, if she could be kept a prisoner for a little while and fed on opium, she’d do anything I might ask of her.”

“Ah, me slee!” said Sam Wah, rubbing his hands. “You wantee me lockee up Melican girl and keepee safe?”

“Yes, that’s it?”

“Allee light! Payee me good monee?”

“One hundred dollars.”

Sam Wah’s eyes rolled.

Greed and avarice shone in them.

“Me do it,” he agreed. “Me knowee how do it.”

“Ah!” said Old King Brady deftly, “did you ever do it before?”

“Yeppee! Me hab——” then Sam Wah came to a startled stop.

He rolled his eyes apprehensively and looked around him.

The old detective needed no further confirmation.

The truth was revealed.

Eva Small was in Chinatown.

Perhaps in this very place.

The old detective affected not to notice Sam Wah's embarrassment. He rejoined in a whisper:

“What sort of a place have you got to keep her in?”

“Heap fine place!” replied the laundryman. “Showee you now?”

Before Old King Brady could answer a man entered the place.

Instantly Sam Wah straightened up. Had it been possible he would no doubt have turned pale.

And Old King Brady gave a start himself, and exchanged glances with Harry.

The newcomer was recognized by both detectives.

He was no other than Andrew Emerson, in a very poor disguise.

The villain gazed quickly and searchingly at the detectives.

But he luckily did not suspect their identity.

“Look here, Sam Wah,” he said roughly, “where are my shirts?”

“Allee ready, Mistler Smith,” replied the Celestial. “Findee allee samee in back loom.”

“All right,” said Emerson, and he passed beyond a curtain to the back part of the laundry.

Old King Brady realized that it was time to go.

So he said in an undertone:

“I’ll come back later and talk with you, Sam. You understand?”

“Allee light,” agreed Sam Wah in his most polite way. “Belly glood.”

The old detective made a signal to Harry, and they passed out of the place.

Chinatown is constantly besieged with an army of sightseers.

So the visit of the Bradys created but little attention. They did not believe that Emerson’s suspicions were aroused.

The detectives made their way out of Mott street, and eventually into the Bowery.

Here they entered a little liquor saloon and sat down at a table in a quiet corner.

They called for beer and were left by themselves.

“Well,” said Old King Brady, “we hit it all right, Harry.”

“I should say so!”

“Mark my word, the girl is in Chinatown. Am I right?”

“I believe you are.”

“But I have another fancy.”

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“What?”

“She is not in Sam Wah’s place.”

Harry was astonished.

“Why, I thought the Chinaman almost confessed that she was.”

“It might seem so. But I watched him carefully, and I believe that she is in some other den.”

“Well, that is not impossible, as all these Chinatown dens are connected more or less.”

“That is true. Now, I believe if we play a waiting game everything will come our way.”

“I agree. But still, you must know that the drug is all this while having its effect upon Eva Small. She may be forced to break her resolution.”

“That is true. What do you think of carrying out the plan I suggested to Sam Wah?”

Harry shook his head.

“We would gain little,” he said. “It would simply tie me up, and result in nothing, I believe.”

Old King Brady nodded.

“Yes,” he assented.

“Of course,” said Harry, “if we knew for a certainty that she was in Sam’s place, it would be a capital scheme.”

“Let me see. We must locate her at once.”

“But where?”

“I believe Chinn Ling is a confrere of Sam Wah’s.”

“Do you?”

“Yes.”

“Well, it may be true. Shall we pay Chinn a visit?”

“Yes, but first we ought to change our disguises.”

“You think so?”

“Oh, certainly! We should never appear in Chinatown twice in the same guise. Let me see, the proprietor of this place probably has rooms to rent.”

Old King Brady walked up to the bar.

“Pardon me,” he said, “but have you rooms to let?”

“Just a few on the next floor,” replied the bartender. “Is it for the two of ye?”

“Yes, my wife wants a quiet room free from noise.”

“I’ve just the thing, Number 7, on the next floor. Here’s the key. Take the stairs, and go along the little passage to the back of the house.”

Old King Brady threw out a couple of dollars to pay for the room in advance.

The two detectives crept up the stairs to the dingy little floor above. They had no difficulty in finding Number 7.

It was a small and poorly furnished chamber.

But there was soap and water and a mirror, and this was all they wanted at present.

They lost no time.

CHAPTER VIII. ON THE SCENT.

Harry speedily divested himself of the female attire he wore.

It was of a character which admitted of being compressed into a small compass.

He wound it about his body.

Then he produced other articles from the lining of his coat, and other convenient places. In a short time the two detectives were metamorphosed.

They were masters in the art of make-up.

Old King Brady posed as a free-hearted Westerner, with mustache and goatee, and a fancy waistcoat.

Harry made himself up as a shabby young man about town.

His dark hair was changed to a bright auburn red.

When they had finally finished their make-up, the Bradys boldly started downstairs.

The proprietor started at them as they walked out.

No doubt their appearance surprised him. He wondered who they were and where they had come from.

But he wondered more when they failed to return, and he found the lodgers in Number 7 missing.

The Bradys went now in quest of Chinn Ling's place.

It did not take them long to find it.

As they approached it they saw Chinn Ling standing in the door.

He was looking reflectively up at the sky.

Suddenly he looked around and saw the detectives coming. His slant eyes dilated.

He saw possible customers, as did other Chinamen in the street. Indeed, the detectives had all the appearance of easy victims.

In his guise as a Westerner, Old King Brady looked as if he was out for game of any kind.

Harry was a figure at all times familiar in Chinatown.

So the detectives speedily found that things were being made easy for them.

But they worked their cards very shrewdly, despite this.

They passed Chinn Ling a few steps, and then looked back.

Acting as if upon impulse, Harry then approached the Chinaman.

He made a peculiar sign.

Instantly Chinn Ling's face broadened.

“Comee light in, gen’lemen,” he said glibly. “Hittee pipe, playee lily game, allee likee samee!”

“What kind of a game?”

“Playee fan-tan?”

Harry shot a swift glance at Old King Brady.

Both detectives decided at once to accept the offer.

So Harry nodded and said:

“Is it safe?”

“Allee safe. No pleeceman comee in Chinn Ling’s place.”

The detectives entered.

Chinn Ling led them through the laundry and beyond several pairs of curtains which screened as many back rooms.

This brought them to a partition in which was a wicket door, such as was used in the opium den.

Chinn Ling made a chirruping sound with his lips, and instantly the wicket flew open.

A yellow face appeared.

Chinn Ling mumbled something in Chinese.

Instantly the wicket door flew open, and the detectives entered a labyrinth of passages between yellow hangings.

Then they came out into a room which had all the characteristics of a typical Chinese gambling den.

Lanterns and huge fans, paper dragons and gods ornamented the walls and hung from the ceiling.

The air of the place was Oriental most thoroughly, and the odor of Japanese incense was perceptible.

About the room were all the appliances of a Chinese gambling den.

A dozen feverish gamblers were in the place.

Most of them were Chinamen.

The others were men of the type usually found in the slums.

But there were two gamblers who at once attracted the attention of the detectives.

They at once recognized them.

Uriah Swift was one, and the immaculate Count Baretto the other.

“By Jove!” whispered Harry. “We have a lead this time, partner!”

“You’re right,” agreed the old detective. “Fortune has played the birds right into our hands.”

Baretto was cursing violently, and it was very evident that luck

was against him.

Swift seemed in the best of spirits.

The Bradys were seated by Chinn Ling, who said:

“Melican man play allee samee. Gettee into de game!”

“All right,” said Old King Brady, in a bluff manner. “You leave that to me, Johnny Chinaman. I hain’t summered and wintered on Roger Flats fer fifteen years fer nothin’. I know the game!”

At these loud words all in the room looked up.

Baretti and Swift exchanged glances.

“Hello!” said the Italian in an undertone. “This looks like an opening. They’re greenhorns!”

“Don’t be so sure,” said Swift, scanning the two detectives. “Mebbe they’re old ducks at it!”

“The old fellow looks easy.”

“Yes, he plays the Western game, and we can beat that. But the young fellow looks like a rounder.”

“Bah! Let’s give them a run for their money!”

“All right!”

With this Swift leaned over and asked:

“Strangers, eh?”

“Wall, summat,” replied Old King Brady.

“Do you play?”

“Anything from pitch to pinochle, from poker straight to old maid.”

“Would you like to try a hand at the Chinese game?”

“Sure!”

“Come into the circle then.”

Harry and the old detective drew up to the deal table.

Then the chips were laid out and paid for, and the game began, with Swift as the banker.

The chips were played at their full value, one, five and ten dollars. Fortunately Old King Brady had plenty of money with him.

The game of fan-tan is an exceedingly fascinating one.

The players became deeply absorbed in it.

They played with varying fortune for a while.

But on the finish, somehow Swift always seemed to have the right card to complete the pack, and thus scooped the pot of money.

The Bradys, however, were not averse to this.

Though they detected the most glaring of cheating, and could see right through the tricks of the villains, they said nothing.

Soon Old King Brady had run behind the game one hundred dollars.

Baretti and Swift were elated.

At this juncture Old King Brady yawned and said:

“I believe I’ll draw out, gents.”

“Don’t you want the chance to win your money back?” asked Swift.

“Naw! I don’t care anything about a little bit of cash like that. I’ve played the high limit before now at whisky poker.”

“Never played that much!”

“Well, it’s a warm game.”

“I should imagine so. You are from the West, I take it?”

“Yas. My name is Caleb Bowles. This is my young nephew, Tom Frisby. He is a New Yorker, but I’m not.”

“We can see that. Well, we’re glad to meet you, Mr. Bowles. Perhaps we can make your stay pleasant in New York,” said Baretti softly.

“P’raps ye kin!” agreed the detective. “Durn my hooks but I like the looks of ye both, mind ye. I’m a gentleman, and I like to

associate with gentlemen.”

“Well, here’s my friend, the count, here,” said Swift. “He’s first cousin to Humbert of Italy.”

“I wouldn’t keer if his father was a ragman, if his heart is all clear,” protested Old King Brady.

The two villains exchanged glances.

To them Caleb Bowles was a bluff, large-hearted plainsman, a stickler for honor and not up to city ways.

In many days they had not struck what was apparently so soft a snap.

It did not take them long to avail themselves of it. They proposed to stick to their new acquaintances like a leech.

They were aware of the fact that Tom Frisby, which Young King Brady was known as, was a New Yorker.

But they already conceived giving him knockout drops when the necessary time for action arrived.

Now the detectives read the purpose of the villains.

It was all a printed book to them.

As a matter of fact, the Bradys were right on their guard.

But they were not disposed to leave Chinn Ling’s place until after they had made further investigations.

Just how to bring their ends about was not as yet quite clear.

But while in this state of doubt the curtains parted and a newcomer entered the place.

At sight of him the Bradys gave a start.

He was no other than Emerson, the villainous abductor of Eva Small.

The villain nodded to Baretto and Swift and then passed through the room.

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He opened a door beyond and vanished.

Instantly Old King Brady turned to Swift and asked:

“Do ye know that chap?”

“Yes,” replied Swift in surprise.

“Who is he?”

“His name is Andrew Emerson.”

“Where is he going?”

“He is going to hit the pipe.”

“Is there an opium den in there?”

“Yes.”

Old King Brady whipped a revolver out and started for the door

in pursuit of Emerson.

Aghast and astounded both Swift and Barette stepped in front of him.

“Where are you going?” asked the former, sharply.

“I am going to square accounts with that black cur,” cried Old King Brady. “Get out of my path.”

CHAPTER IX. IN THE DEATH TRAP.

The sheer amazement of Swift and Baretto at this declaration of the old detective can hardly be imagined.

“What?” gasped Baretto. “Have you a grudge against him?”

“Have I? I have sworn to shoot him on sight.”

“You are mistaken,” cried Swift excitedly. “Where did you ever see him before?”

“In Carson City. He is Sam Fenton the gambler, or Black Sam, as we used to know him. He shot a friend of mine out there, and I have sworn to kill him. Get out of my way!”

Baretto and Swift believed that Old King Brady was in earnest.

Their faces were livid.

“But you are wrong!” cried Swift in terror. “You have not got the right man at all!”

“Eh?” ejaculated the pseudo Westerner with a frightful scowl. “Do you mean to tell me I’m a fool? I’d know Sam Fenton in Hades. Stand aside or I’ll bore you!”

The detective flourished his revolver. Harry stood with every nerve on the alert, but outwardly phlegmatic and calm.

“Talk to him!” cried Baretta. “You ought to stop him. You wouldn’t see him take human life!”

But Harry only looked stolid.

Old King Brady put up a splendid piece of bluff.

His words and conduct had stopped the games.

The inmates of the place had all leaped to their feet.

The old detective’s game was a clever and daring one.

It was his purpose to follow the villain Emerson, and this was the best excuse he could offer.

He cared not what the result might be, if he could once get beyond that screen and trap the villain.

He was sure that he was on his way to the secret hiding place of Eva Small. The old detective felt sure that he could hold the fort if he could only push his way into the place and establish the fact that the young girl was confined there.

So brandishing the revolver he dashed forward.

In an instant a scene of commotion ensued.

A gong rang, the lights grew dim, and the room was filled with struggling forms, dressed in Chinese garb.

The two detectives, however, had anticipated just such a denouement.

They were prepared for it.

They had marked well the spot where Emerson had vanished.

Through the curtains they dashed.

Old King Brady came in contact with a human figure.

Strong hands clutched him.

He struck out and instantly felled his assailant. A dimly lit corridor was before him.

He saw that the man he had encountered was a Celestial, so he did not stop to bother with him.

On he rushed through the corridor.

Then he heard the clanging of doors, felt a draught in his face and was in utter darkness.

Another step and a strange thing happened.

The floor sank beneath his feet, and he fell, how far he knew not, for he experienced a shock and was unconscious.

When he came to his first impulse was to feel about him, and his hands encountered slimy walls of stone.

Gradually a recollection of all came back to him.

He wondered where he was.

The darkness was inky.

He lay quite still for a time and listened.

But this resulted in nothing.

All was as silent as the tomb, save for a peculiar dripping of water.

He felt a pool of it under him, perhaps an inch in depth.

Then he scrambled to his feet.

It did not require long for him to ascertain by feeling that he was in a sort of well, walled up with stone.

That it was a death-trap planned by the cunning Chinese he felt sure.

As high as he could reach the wall extended.

He placed his hands and feet in the niches between the stones, and with any effort climbed upward.

Up he went for a number of feet.

Then he missed his hold on the slippery stones and fell back.

Again and again he essayed the feat.

And each time he failed.

The drip, drip, drip of the water continued, and presently began to have effect on his nerves.

The old detective made an appalling discovery.

The water in the bottom of the well was rising.

It was plain that this was a peculiarity of the death-trap.

Water was permitted to drip slowly into the place until it should rise to a sufficient height to drown the prisoner.

The horror of this fearful thing palled upon Old King Brady.

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It nigh drove him mad.

Cold sweat was upon him.

He knew the cruel ways of Chinese inquisitors, and realized that he was a victim.

The thought that he must die in such a dreadful way was unbearable.

Bodily torture is dreadful, but torture of the mind is worse.

It was torture of an exquisite sort to be compelled to listen to the dripping of that water and to know that every drop contributed to the shortening of the victim's life.

“God help me,” groaned the old detective. “Am I to die thus?”

He thought of Harry and wondered where the young detective was.

When last seen he was following Old King Brady into the corridor.

Why had he not fallen into the trap?

Then Old King Brady pondered and reflected, and all to no purpose. He could not find a method of escape.

Even if Chinn Ling's den was raided and the place cleaned out it would be hardly likely to avail him.

He would hardly be discovered in this underground death-trap.

Suddenly an idea came to him.

He recalled the fact that in his possession was a pocket lantern.

At once he drew it out.

He found some matches in an inner pocket. The walls were too damp to scratch them on.

He found a dry place in the lining of his coat and scratched one on that. The blaze lit up the place.

Then he saw the slimy walls of the well and the increasing depth of water at his feet.

He lit the lantern and flashed its rays about.

Far above his head were planks which covered the well. This was, no doubt, the trap-door through which he had fallen.

Old King Brady counted the chances of climbing up this distance.

Hope revived in his bosom.

He saw a thin stream of water trickling down the stony sides from the mouth of an iron pipe just below the trap.

This was evidence that the influx of the water was only a part of the devilish plan to kill him.

He wondered if any other had died thus in this same trap.

But he realized that time was precious.

He acted at once.

Taking the handle of the lantern in his teeth he began to climb upward.

Up and up he went.

Steadily, slowly! He was aided much by the lantern, for he could easily see where to place his hold.

Up and still up.

Every moment he neared the trap. Now he was but a few feet from it.

There was one advantage.

The well narrowed as he went on. This enabled him to get easier hold with less strain.

Still up the detective crept.

Now he was right under the trap.

He reached up and touched the planks above. Then he essayed to push on them.

But they would not yield.

The top was too heavy.

He might as well have pitted his strength against the weight of a mountain. In his cramped position he could not exert it fully.

“My soul!” he groaned. “It is of no use! I am lost!”

His strength seemed leaving him, and he feared that he must drop back to the bottom of the well.

But just then the light of the lantern enabled him to see an aperture to the right and just between the flooring and the upper layer of stones of the well.

He calculated the chances of crawling into this.

It was a herculean task.

He clung to the well sides a moment to gain his strength.

Then he raised himself steadily and slowly. He grasped one of the floor beams and pulled himself forward.

Wonderful to relate, he was enabled to reach the aperture. A little more strength and he was flat on his stomach under the floor.

The ground was damp and ill-smelling. But he was out of the well.

What this might amount to he could only guess.

It might be only a transition from one death to another. Yet it certainly was a respite.

The old detective lay on his side and rested a long time.

He knew that the boards over him must be the flooring of the opium den.

He listened for some sounds above, but none came. All was silent as the grave.

He could understand how this might be.

The place was deserted.

For a long time Old King Brady occupied his present position.

Then he began to seek betterment. He found that there was space enough under the floor for him to crawl on, and this he did.

He wormed his way along for a space. Then a startling surprise was accorded him.

Ahead a glimmer of light caught his gaze.

He paused in amazement.

What did it mean?

From whence did it come?

He crept slowly and eagerly on. Presently all was explained to him in a startling manner.

He reached the foundation wall of the building. Here there was a crevice through which the glimmer of light came.

Old King Brady looked through and beheld a thrilling scene.

CHAPTER X. A DARK PLOT.

The scene upon which Old King Brady gazed was one which made his blood tingle.

He looked down into an opium den in the cellar of what was the adjoining building.

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It differed in no essential from Sam Wah's place or any other.

There were berths for the smokers and curtained walls. The odor of the drug was perceptible.

And upon a divan in the centre of the place the old detective saw the reclining figure of a young girl.

She was very beautiful and richly dressed, and was either stupefied with opium or asleep.

One glance at her face settled all doubt in Old King Brady's mind.

She was not an opium fiend.

She lacked the yellow skin and deadly hue of the confirmed opium taker.

The old detective could conceive but one belief.

This was that she was the young girl for whom he was looking.

No other than Eva Small.

Satisfied of this, the mad desire to outwit her captors seized Old King Brady.

He considered the possibility of such a thing. He tested the foundation stones.

They were firm, but he found that the cement in which they were laid was capable of being easily removed.

Satisfied of this he at once began work.

If he could only enlarge the opening so that he could gain admittance to the opium den he believed he could effect the rescue.

Piece by piece he chipped away the cement.

Suddenly, as he was thus engaged, an accident occurred which arrested him in his work.

A door clanged, footsteps were heard, and then a mumble of voices.

Some persons were entering the den.

So far as Old King Brady could see the young girl on the couch was the only occupant of the place.

The voices were high-pitched like men in a quarrel.

The next moment they entered the place.

There were five of them.

The old detective's nerves tingled as he recognized them all.

Emerson was loudly arguing with Count Baretto and Swift.

Behind them were the two Chinese opium den keepers, Sam Wah and Chinn Ling. What followed was of vital interest to Old King Brady.

Baretto and Swift were excited and very angry.

Emerson was cool and ugly.

“You talk like a couple of fools,” said the villain, contemptuously. “Why don't you be reasonable?”

“That is all the argument you can make,” snapped Baretto.

“We have heard it so long we are sick of it,” said Swift, savagely.

“Well, what do you expect?”

“You know well enough.”

“We want our pay.”

“You hired us to do your dirty work. We have done it, and now it's up to you to pay us.”

“I hired you on a partnership plan,” protested Emerson. “You know it well. We were to divide equally the ransom money for

Jonathan Small.”

“You represented that it would be a large sum.”

“I did not!”

“Yes, you did!”

“Well, it would have been if we had got it!”

“That’s not our outlook!”

“You know that it is. If I didn’t get the money, how can I pay you?”

“We were to receive thirty thousand dollars. You agreed to pay it. It’s not our fault that old Small escaped. Now we want the money.”

Emerson leered at Swift in a decidedly ugly way.

“You know you won’t get it,” he said. “You know I haven’t got it.”

“Well, what are we going to do?”

“I don’t know.”

“Nor don’t care.”

“Perhaps not.”

Swift dropped an oath.

“What’s the use?” he gritted. “You know you can pay us. We want to get out of the country.”

“That is a mistake.”

“Why?”

“I am just beginning to win.”

“To win? Bah! It’s like all of your winning combinations. You’ll be in Sing Sing in a month.”

“You talk like a pair of fools. What are you afraid of?”

“Well, it’s time to be afraid when you’re spotted. Every detective in New York is on our track.”

Emerson laughed jeeringly.

“There is one who is not.”

“Ah! Whom do you mean?”

“Old King Brady.”

“Well,” agreed Swift, “he’s in the dark hole, and likely to stay there!”

“Yes, his body will never be found.”

“How is that?”

“I mean to fill that hole up after he drowns like a rat there, and make it his eternal grave.”

“There’ll be rejoicing among us crooks when that is done.”

“But I’ll bet my hat he’ll come to life and dig his way out,” cried Barette. “He’s been killed a good many times.”

“That’s so.”

“Nonsense,” said Emerson, savagely. “He’s human like everybody else. I’ll bet ten thousand to one he don’t come out alive.”

The old detective in his concealment chuckled.

“I’m tempted to take that bet,” he muttered.

“Well, allow the old detective is dead,” cried Swift. “There’s the young one.”

“Oh, hang him.”

“Yes, but he’s just about as good as the old detective, and don’t you forget it. You mustn’t fail to reckon on him.”

“Anyway,” declared Swift, “it’s getting too hot for us in New York.”

“And you’re going back on me?” asked Emerson.

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“We’re sick of this job.”

“You’re a couple of quitters.”

“Allow that we are.”

“I tell you, you will make a big mistake.”

“Can you show us any chance?”

“Yes.”

Baretti and Swift whistled.

“What is it?”

“Well,” said Emerson, advancing to the couch where the young girl lay and glowering upon her fair features, “you see this girl?”

“Yes.”

“She is mine, soul and body. As soon as I can tie her up legally, the game for millions is ready.”

Baretti and Swift were interested.

“That sounds well. So do all your plans,” said Swift. “Let us have the whole thing.”

“Will you stand by me?”

“If there is anything in it.”

“You fools!” declared Emerson scornfully. “You are throwing away the biggest haul of your lives.”

“Are we?” said Baretti. “Show us the haul.”

“If you can show us we’ll stand,” said Swift.

“Well, listen.”

“We will.”

“Once this girl is legally my wife the game is ready. She is the heiress to three millions.

“Now, it will be in order to simply put old Small out of the way. She inherits and the money gets into my hands. Do you see?”

The eyes of the villains glittered.

Sam Wah and Chinn Ling looked stolidly on all the while.

“I see,” said Baretto, curling his mustache. “It looks easy.”

“It is easy.”

“What do you want us to do?”

“Put old Small out of the way.”

Then Baretto said:

“What do you think of it, Swift?”

“I’m ready for any game that there is anything in.”

“This looks pretty sure.”

“Well, then, it’s a go. But what are we to get out of it?”

“One hundred thousand each,” said Emerson.

“When?”

“As soon as I can get my claws onto the money.”

“Whatee you givee us?” asked Sam Wah, suddenly.

“Ten thousand each, and a free ticket to China,” replied Emerson.

The two Chinamen cut a pigeon wing.

“Me likee dat,” cried Chinn Ling. “Makee rich man in China.”

“Velly glood,” agreed Sam Wah.

“That’s all settled?” asked Emerson.

“Yes,” agreed Baretti. “But what method are you going to pursue to bring the girl to terms?”

“I’ll give her opium enough to make her dopey,” replied Emerson. “Then she’ll agree to anything. There’s a minister out in Westchester who’ll marry us for a good fee. The rest is easy.”

“Well,” said Baretti, “we’re ready for our part of the contract.”

“I’ll let you know when to work it.”

“All right.”

Baretti advanced and bent down over the sleeping girl.

“By Jupiter!” he cried, “she’s a regular Venus, isn’t she?”

“That she is.”

“I wouldn’t push her aside myself. I don’t blame you, Emerson. Go in and win. She’s a prize.”

Emerson felt of the stupefied girl’s pulse.

“The drug holds her steady,” he said. “Well, that’s all right. She’ll sleep for an hour yet. You yellow dogs keep a sharp watch. Perhaps that young Brady may bring the police down on us.”

“Yeppee,” agreed Sam Wah. “We keepee watch allee samee.”

“See that you do. Now, we’ll leave her for a while.”

With this the villainous crew withdrew.

For some while after they had gone Old King Brady lay quite still in his hiding-place engaged in reflection.

Then a startling sound reached his ears.

The creaking of hinges was heard in the distance, and the tramp of feet sounded. Then he heard voices:

“Put the lantern down where I can see, Chinn Ling. The old fox must be down there somewhere.”

It was Emerson’s voice.

Old King Brady understood.

The villains were taking a look into the trap of death where they expected to find him.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EXPLORING TOUR.

Young King Brady had not fallen into the same death-trap, for a very good and fortunate reason.

He was, to be sure, very close behind Old King Brady in that dash into the dimly-lit corridor.

But just as he entered the place he was grabbed by an unseen foe.

Old King Brady, as we have seen, had thrown off the attack of his assailant.

But Harry was unable to do this.

The Chinaman who grappled with him was strong and hauled him back into the gaming den.

And just at that moment the lights were again turned on. Harry found himself the centre of a gang of foes.

Beneath superior weight he was forced to a corner of the room. Here he held the foe at bay.

But his disguise was ruined.

His wig was gone, and his beard also. He stood fully revealed.

Swift and Baretta almost instantly recognized him.

“Heigh!” shouted the count. “What have we here?”

“Treachery!”

The cry went up.

Not one in the party but recognized the young detective. Thus it was that they knew afterwards that it was the old detective who had plunged into the death-trap.

“It is the detective.”

“Young King Brady.”

“Down him!”

“He must not escape.”

“Killee quick!”

Gamblers and Chinamen rushed upon the young detective.

They dared not fire upon him, for fear that the report might bring the police from the street.

Their purpose was to overcome him by brute force.

So they came to the attack like a pack of wolves.

Young King Brady knew that all depended upon quick action. He lost no time in this.

Swift as a flash he whirled the chair over his head and brought it down upon a Chinaman’s skull.

The yellow Celestial dropped like a log. Swift and Baretto drew knives and began slashing at the young detective.

The result might have been most serious for Harry had not a thrilling incident intervened in his favor.

Some one of the Chinese attendants suddenly rushed into the place.

He shouted in tones of alarm:

“Pleeceman come. Quickee, allee samee! Gittee out!”

The alarm spread like wildfire.

It had the most terrifying effect upon the gang.

Neither Swift nor Baretto wished to be captured by the police.

So a bell jangled and again the lights went out.

There was a mad rush for the door.

How Harry got out of the place he never knew. But he finally succeeded and reached the street.

His immediate impulse was to summon policemen and return to the aid of Old King Brady.

But just at that moment he saw Swift and Baretto dodge into an alley in the rear of Chinn Ling’s place.

The young detective acted upon the impulse and followed them.

They quickly disappeared.

Then, bound not to be defeated, the young detective began a baffling search for them.

He knew that it was his duty to secure these rascals if he could.

He had no doubt of Old King Brady's ability to take care of himself. So he did not attempt to return to the opium joint.

The alley in which Harry now found himself was very narrow and dirty, and led into an area.

In this place the villains had disappeared in the shadows.

The young detective proceeded with caution.

He knew well enough the risk of an encounter with some foe in the darkness of a place like this.

A blow with a knife might terminate his career. So he kept well on the defensive.

A dim light glowed in the basement window of one of the buildings.

Harry crept up to this and looked in through the dingy panes of glass.

He saw a number of Chinamen seated in a circle about a table.

They were playing fan-tan.

This was only another joint of the same kind as Chinn Ling's. Harry recognized this fact.

He saw nothing of Swift or Barette in the place.

Yet for all that they might be there. He could find no other mode of escape except into this place.

So Harry crept up to the window and watched the gamblers for a time.

Then he crept down to the little basement door.

It was ajar.

As he stood there listening he heard distant voices. They were familiar. He was sure that one of them belonged to Swift.

He could not distinguish what was being said.

But it was a sufficient incentive for him to enter the place.

He crept into the little stairway and listened. The voices died out.

To Harry they seemed to come from a point beneath him.

He crept along the stairway and finally reached a battered door. There he suddenly crouched down in the shadows.

He was just in time.

The latch was raised, the door swung open, and a man came out

into the dark hall.

Harry caught only a faint glimpse of the room beyond.

It was dimly lighted.

He could see that it was furnished in Chinese style, with heathen idols and outfits. But there seemed no other occupant.

The man who had emerged was a Chinaman.

He passed out of the hall into the court beyond and his footsteps died out.

The young detective hesitated a moment.

Then he placed his ear to the door and listened.

There was no sound of life within.

What perplexed him was the right locality of the voices he had heard, which he believed belonged to Swift and Barette.

Young King Brady acted with sudden decision.

He placed a hand on the door-latch and softly lifted it.

He gently pushed the door open and looked into the room. He saw that it was unoccupied.

But there was a door ajar into another room.

The young detective crossed to this.

As he did so he saw a white object lying at his feet. He knelt down and picked it up.

It was a lady's handkerchief.

It was of fine material and trimmed with lace.

The young detective examined it carefully. Then he gave a start.

In the corner, marked plainly with a pen, was a name:

“Eva Small.”

“By Jove!” muttered Harry with excitement. “Here is a
clew.”

21

He knew he was on the right trail.

It proved one thing.

The young girl had been recently an inmate of that room. She was somewhere in hiding in the purlieus of Chinatown.

There was no doubt of this.

Much encouraged, Young King Brady now gave up all other theories, and forgot all else in his interest in this clew.

He lost no time.

He made a hasty examination of the room but found nothing else.

Then he glided into the next room.

It was furnished much like the first. He began to realize now where he was.

He was in a Chinese hotel.

He remembered now that there was such an institution right next door to Chinn Ling's place.

He realized the danger of his position.

At any moment somebody might come into the room and discover him. The result might be serious.

Unwelcome visitors are roughly treated by the denizens of Chinatown.

People have gone into the opium dens and never been seen again.

Not that Young King Brady feared personal injury. But he knew that discovery might break his plans.

So he acted quickly.

The next room was much like the first.

He carefully and thoroughly explored it. But nothing of importance was found.

He was now confident that Barette and Swift had been in these rooms.

He was satisfied that it was their voices he had heard. But

where had they gone?

This was a puzzle which seemed not easy of solution.

But while the young detective was ruminating upon the subject he received a thrilling shock.

Suddenly footsteps and voices smote upon his hearing.

Somebody had entered the adjoining room.

For a moment the young detective was in a quandary. Then he acted quickly.

He slipped behind some yellow hangings at one end of the room.

The next moment the newcomers crossed the threshold from the outer room into this.

Then he was thrilled.

He recognized the voices as those of Emerson, Baretta and Swift.

“I never saw the beat of those accursed Bradys,” declared Emerson with an oath. “They’re always turning up just when and where you don’t expect them. I never saw their equal.”

“They are our most dangerous foes,” declared Baretta.

“But one of them is where he won’t do any more harm right away,” declared Swift with a coarse laugh.

“Where?”

“In the death-trap.”

Harry caught his breath. This was the first intimation he had gained that harm had come to Old King Brady.

He felt conscience-stricken now that he had not followed the old detective up and given him relief.

“Are you sure it’s Old King Brady?” asked Emerson.

“Yes,” replied Baretta.

“I’ll bet you ten dollars, then, that he’s fooled you, and that you won’t find him where you think he is.”

Baretta and Swift exchanged glances.

“I’ll take that bet,” cried the count. “Do you stand it?”

“I do,” agreed Emerson.

CHAPTER XII.

HARRY'S ADVENTURES.

Harry was horror-struck at the declaration that Old King Brady was in a death-trap.

For a moment grief and anguish oppressed him.

Then hope revived when Emerson offered his wager.

“Perhaps he has escaped,” he reflected. “At least I will cling to hope.”

The villains quickly settled the terms of their wager.

Then they left the room.

“How do you go to get into the part of Chinn Ling’s place?” asked Emerson.

“There is a blind door at the right, at the foot of the stairs,” declared Baretta. “Push it open and you will find stairs and a corridor.”

“All right.”

The three villains now departed.

Young King Brady glided from his concealment.

Of course he would follow them. There would be no trouble

about this.

He remembered well the statement of Barette in regard to the blind door.

He followed along the corridor to the stairs.

He waited carefully until their voices had died out.

Then he descended the stairs very slowly and carefully. He listened intently.

He could hear the click of dice and the rattle of chips from the room on the left, where the Chinese gamblers were.

Then he felt along the wainscoting of the hallway.

As his fingers traversed the woodwork they met a little niche. He inserted a finger in this and pulled gently.

A section of the wooden partition swung back.

He saw an illy-lighted stairway.

It was a secret entrance to one of the opium dens.

The detective closed the blind door after him and went down into the depth.

He found himself in a narrow passage which led to a door of green baize.

He gently pushed this open and stood in a room hung with

Japanese cloth.

It was a literal maze of hangings, through which he crept, following the distant intonation of voices.

22

There were bunks and divans, but no opium smokers.

The detective kept on for some way, until of a sudden the voices grew plainer.

There was an excited confab, and now he could distinguish the words.

“Look out there, you fool,” cried Baretti’s voice. “If you aren’t careful you’ll go through the trap yourself.”

“How do you open it?” asked Emerson.

“There is an automatic lift.”

“Stand aside!”

There was a creaking and groaning of hinges and the detective crept near enough now to behold all.

The three villains stood about an open trap.

A dark pit yawned at their feet.

There was the splash of gently falling water.

“You see, it’s a great scheme,” cried Baretti. “It’s Chinn Ling’s invention. I tell you that Chinaman has a great head.”

“Oh, how does it work?”

“Well, here’s a pit eighteen feet deep. When you set the spring a pound weight on the trap will spring it.”

“I see.”

“The victim falls to the bottom of the pit. At the same moment water is turned on through a pipe.

“It slowly fills up the well, and in the end drowns the victim.”

“And you think Old King Brady went down through this trap?”

“Yes.”

“Did you see him?”

“No, but the Chinaman sprung it and saw him fall.”

“Humph! Show him to me, and I’ll pay the ten dollars.”

“Well, all right.”

“It’s dark down there.”

“Yes, it is.”

“Give us a light.”

A lantern was procured, a cord tied to it and it was lowered into the place.

Not until it touched the black surface of the water was anything

said.

The three villains peering down into the pit gave a cry of surprise.

“He’s not there,” screamed Swift.

“What did I tell you,” cried Emerson with triumph.

“What?” gasped Baretta. “Not there? It’s a mistake. He could not escape.”

“You can see for yourself.”

“He’s under the water then. He’s drowned.”

“Bah! don’t be a fool. There is not two feet of water in the place.”

This was true.

Old King Brady was not there.

The reader is already aware of that. The surprise of the two villains was intense.

“Well, I’ll be hanged,” declared Baretta, “that detective has supernatural power.”

“The devil aids him.”

Harry, listening to all this, was secretly thrilled with delight.

He could not guess how the old detective had made his escape.

But he felt sure that he was safe.

It was a source of joy.

The three villains wrangled and argued for a long while. Then Baretto declared:

“Well, if this is the case, then I can tell you to keep an eye on your girl, Emerson.”

“What?”

“If that old fox is smart enough to make his escape in such a manner he has witchcraft enough to spirit that girl of yours away.”

“I’ll take her out of these cursed opium dens at once,” declared Emerson. “There’s no luck here.”

“I’d advise you to.”

“Let’s go back and make sure that she’s not already gone,” said Baretto.

This was decided upon.

Harry was elated.

Not since he had undertaken the case had he seen the way clear for such important revelations.

Nothing could have pleased him more.

The three villains hastened away.

With steps of silence the young detective followed them.

Back through the maze of hangings they went. Back to the stairway which led up to the rooms they had started from.

Harry managed to keep closely behind them.

But he was not observed.

Entering the first room, Barette pulled away some hangings and disclosed another secret door.

Never in all his detective experience had Harry even seen the equal of this labyrinth of dens.

The three villains passed through the door and out of sight.

It closed behind them with a snap.

Harry lost no time.

He quickly reached it and applied his ear to the crack. He heard receding footsteps on the stairs.

They soon died out.

Then he acted fearlessly.

He opened the door and silently stepped into the narrow passage beyond.

A spiral staircase led down. How far he could only guess.

He hastily proceeded to descend this. Down he went through the shaft until he reached the bottom.

He was assured that he was now below the level of the ground.

It was easy for him to understand now how the crooks of Chinatown could conceal themselves so effectually from all pursuers.

There were so many hiding places.

If one was discovered they had only to go to another.

Thus, to make sure of trapping the crooks it was necessary to first gain an accurate knowledge of this maze of dens and their entrances and exits.

And this was just what Harry was doing.

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At the foot of the spiral stairway there was a door.

It had a wicket like all the doors of the opium dens.

But no yellow face appeared at the wicket, nor was there a sentry on hand. Harry safely tried the door.

It would not yield.

He knew well enough why.

There is always a trick about these sort of doors. The Chinese attendant could open it instantly.

But Harry had long since possessed himself of the trick of the Chinese lock.

So very quickly he mastered it and the door flew open.

The young detective passed through.

He was in another arras hung room. But in that instant startling sounds came to his ear.

They were yells and cries of rage and dismay.

The young detective knew that something had gone wrong with the plans of the crooks. What could it be?

He pressed forward until he gained a complete view of the den in which Eva Small had been left.

There was the divan on which she had reclined.

But she was no longer there.

Nor was she to be found in the den.

Frantic with rage and surprise, Emerson was searching for her.

“Curse you all for a lot of blockheads,” he screamed. “You ought to have finished that old detective while you were about it.

“I tell you it’s his work. He has spirited the girl away. All my work is gone for nothing. We are ruined.”

“But it can’t be,” protested Baretti. “There are only two ways of getting in here.”

“I don’t care. She is gone and you can see it.”

The villains were in a fearful state of excitement.

Harry listened with apprehension.

He suddenly realized that his own position was by no means one of safety. No doubt the den would be completely ransacked, and if he was discovered his fate would be sealed.

“Perhaps she has wandered away into some other part of the room,” said Baretti.

“You’re a fool,” gritted Emerson. “There’s no likelihood of such a thing. I tell you she’s lost.”

But the villains at once instituted a search.

Harry was in a precarious position.

He began cautiously to retreat to the spiral stairway.

But in some way Uriah Swift managed to make his way into that part of the den first.

He was between Harry and the stairway. The young detective next turned to the other entrance.

But at this moment both Emerson and the count were in front of the door.

The next moment a crisis was reached.

CHAPTER XIII. ON THE ROOF.

We left Old King Brady in a critical position under the flooring of the opium den, and looking down into another den, with a couch in view upon which reclined the figure of Eva Small in a state of complete stupor.

The old detective had managed to enlarge the opening in the foundation so that he could easily crawl through it and descend into the den which was the prison chamber of the young girl.

We have seen how the sounds of the visit of his foes to the death-trap had reached his ears.

Their discomfiture at not finding him there was intense. It can be truly said that the old detective enjoyed this.

At the same time he was not blind to the peril of his position.

He knew that every corner would be explored in the search for him.

Moreover, the resolution was uppermost in his mind to rescue the captive girl.

He listened for a few moments very intently to the voices of Emerson and his companions.

Then he crawled carefully through the opening and dropped down into the opium den.

In a moment he was by Eva Small's side.

He took her hand and felt the pulse in her wrist.

It was slow and sluggish. The drug held her enthralled.

He opened the eyelid and looked at the pupil of one eye. Then he looked about him.

He saw that the young girl was in a helpless state. She could not be depended upon to act for herself.

The old detective quickly examined the place.

He found the stairway leading up into the laundry above.

But he knew that it would be suicidal to go in that direction.

Without any doubt he would have to face a half dozen Chinamen, well armed and murderous.

The den, so far as he could see at the moment, had no other exit. But presently he made a discovery.

This was a door, barely discernible, in the partition of matched boards. He opened it and saw Chinese hangings beyond.

He passed through these and came to a corridor dimly lighted.

This led to a spiral stairway—in fact the very stairway by which the villains, followed by Harry, descended later.

Old King Brady hesitated no longer.

Quick as a flash he sprang up the stairway and reached the doorway above. He pushed it open.

He saw a chamber with an open door into another chamber. He waited for no more.

Back to the den he went.

In a jiffy he lifted the drugged girl from the couch and started up the spiral staircase.

She was not a heavy burden, but the staircase was very narrow. Old King Brady had his hands full.

But in due time he succeeded in reaching the landing and entered the room above.

He took the precaution to very carefully close the secret door.

He was now in the rooms occupied by Emerson in the Chinese hotel, and which Harry had but a short while since discovered.

Old King Brady knew that he was far from having reached a point of safety.

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At any moment he was liable to meet with discovery. In that case his purpose might be defeated.

If he could once gain the open air with the rescued girl the rest would be easy.

He carried her lightly in his arms across the room to the door, and thence into the outer hall.

Here he listened intently.

Then he reached the staircase which led down to the passageway below. Once down there, in a few steps he could reach the outer court.

But just at that moment voices were heard.

It was at the moment when Emerson and his pals were returning from Chinn Ling's den and were on their way to the hiding place of the captive girl.

For a moment Old King Brady deemed all lost.

He thought of some means of defense, for he felt sure a terrible battle must ensue. It seemed discouraging.

But he retreated to the far end of the passage, and here found that there were other stairs leading to the floors above.

In lieu of any better plan, the old detective crept up these stairs.

Had the villains gone higher than the first floor they must have overtaken him.

But, to the old detective's joy, they did not.

They remained on the floor below, as we know, and thence descended to the opium den.

Old King Brady, however, had but reached the landing above when he heard other voices below.

He distinguished the jargon of the Chinese, and knew that a number of the Celestials were coming up behind Emerson and his friends.

These latter did not pause on the first floor.

They came to the foot of the second flight of stairs and began to ascend. Old King Brady lost no time.

Silently he flitted up the next flight of stairs.

This brought him to the top story and there was only the roof above. The old detective decided to attempt escape in that direction.

So up the skylight stairs he crept.

He pushed up the trap and emerged upon the roof.

All was darkness and he could only dimly see the outlines of the chimneys and other roof-tops.

The cool night air had an instant effect upon the young girl.

She began to quiver in the old detective's arms and essayed to free herself. But Old King Brady placed his lips to her ear and whispered:

“You are in the hands of a friend. Do not struggle and have no fear.”

She lay quiet then, and the detective made his way along over the roof.

From one building to another he passed.

Then he was unable to go further, for he had reached the corner of the block. He now left his fair charge a moment and crept to the edge of the roof and looked down.

He saw the lamp-lit street far below.

The hour was late and few people were moving about. But the old detective saw that the building he was on was a tenement block of the poorer class.

He did not believe that it was tenanted by Chinese.

He drew a deep breath of relief.

It seemed to him as if success was to reward his efforts.

He returned to where he had left the young girl, and once more lifting her in his arms, made his way to the skylight trap.

He lifted it and crept softly down the stairs.

But ere he had half descended something reached his nostrils. He paused with a chill of horror.

It was smoke.

Almost in that instant a stir went up from below and a thrilling cry broke the night air:

“Fire! Fire!”

The cry of fire at any time has a note of terror for even the hardiest soul.

In an instant doors were heard to open and forms rushed out into the halls. Loud shouts and shrill screams went up.

Old King Brady required only a glance down the narrow stairway to see that further descent would be suicidal.

Flames were lapping the stairs and the terrified tenants were driven back to the fire-escapes.

The old detective accordingly beat a hasty retreat.

Once more he was on the roof. But just as he reached there he saw dark figures coming across the next roof.

In an instant he guessed the truth.

They were foes!

The Chinese from the opium den were upon his trail and in some way had tracked him to the roof.

For a moment the old detective was in a literal dilemma.

With the fire upon one side and the heathen foe on the other, there was little choice.

Had he been armed he would not have cared. But he had lost his weapons and was defenceless.

Even at that moment he saw that his foes had seen him.

He was cornered.

Had it not been for the fire his escape would have been consummated long ere this.

What was he to do?

Old King Brady was a man given to quick thought. He was never lacking in decision.

He saw that it would be a hopeless struggle against such odds.

There was a chance of reaching a fire-escape, and he decided to go back into the burning building.

With this decision, he turned and started for the skylight.

But before he could reach it the crack of a pistol broke upon the air, and the old detective grew faint and sank unconscious upon the gravel of the roof.

The roar of the flames was in his ears when he came to.

He heard excited voices, and looking up, saw men in firemen's uniform bending over him.

“Hello, Bill!” a voice cried. “Give us a hand here. It's some poor chap as has crawled up here and fell down in a faint.”

“That so, Jim? I say, there's blood on his face!”

“Only a scratch, I reckon.”

The firemen lifted Old King Brady and carried him to the next roof.

A little whisky revived him, and he sat up with his back to a chimney. Very rapidly his strength came back.

His wound was only slight.

The bullet had grazed his temple and stunned him. In a few moments he was once more himself.

The firemen had a line of hose on the roof and were rapidly getting the fire under control.

They had now left Old King Brady to himself.

He was not obliged to give them any explanation. He managed to arise and look about him. He recalled all that had happened now.

And he experienced bitter chagrin as he realized that Eva Small was gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD KING BRADY'S HARD LUCK.

The old detective had suffered defeat.

The villains had once more got the upper hand, and this time the outlook was darker than ever.

After having rescued the young girl only to lose her again was indeed a hard reflection.

But the iron will and cool grit of Old King Brady came again to his aid. He was not yet ready to give up.

Pulling himself together, he quickly made up his mind how to act.

He knew that it would be madness to return to the opium den alone.

They would murder him.

He saw that the firemen had gained the roof by means of a skylight in the next roof. He at once sought descent by this.

Old King Brady had quickly figured out in his mind just what move the villains would now make.

They would certainly quit Chinatown the quickest way.

Old King Brady could at least have the satisfaction of knowing

that he had made it too hot for them there.

Emerson would remove his drugged girl captive to some safer quarter.

The old detective quickly made his way to the street.

He had decided upon a desperate remedy, as became a desperate case.

When he reached the sidewalk, as good luck had it, he ran into a policeman.

The fire had attracted a large crowd to the street.

“Look here, my man,” he said, hurriedly, “I want a dozen men from headquarters on a hurry call.”

“Eh?” exclaimed the officer. “What’s the matter?”

“I want Chinn Ling’s opium den pulled. I wish you would send in the call for me.”

“But——”

“Oh, it’s all right!”

Old King Brady showed his star.

“All right, boss,” agreed the roundsman. “There’s a signal box on the next corner. But what is up?”

“They are holding an abducted young girl in that place. It’s a

rendezvous for crooks.”

“Jerusalem! You don’t mean it? I will ring in the call at once.”

The officer hurried away.

Then Old King Brady rushed down the street to guard the door to the opium den. But just as he reached the corner he beheld a disheartening sight.

A cab was in front of Chinn Ling’s place.

A woman’s form had been lifted into it and a man closely muffled followed.

A half-dozen Chinamen went skurrying back into the laundry.

“Hold!” yelled Old King Brady to the driver. “You are under arrest!”

But he might as well have spared his breath.

The cabby whipped up his horse and dashed away at full speed. The old detective made a vain pursuit.

It was useless.

The cab disappeared from view.

That it contained Eva Small, drugged and helpless, he was sure. The villains meant to transport her to a safer place.

Old King Brady was beside himself with chagrin and despair.

He was utterly at a loss to know what to do.

He could see no use in now ransacking the opium dens beyond the necessity of arresting the proprietors.

So when the hurry wagon arrived he explained to the police sergeant.

“Pull Chinn Ling’s place, and Sam Wah’s also. Put them in the Tombs and wait to hear from me.”

“All right, Old King Brady,” agreed the sergeant.

“If you can find two rascals named Swift and Baretta, take them in also.”

“All right.”

“This opium business has got to be stopped. Chinatown harbors the worst den of crooks in this country.”

With this Old King Brady started in pursuit of the cab.

He hired another cab, and the driver was sure that he knew the driver of the fugitive cab.

“I know him, boss,” he said. “His name is Sam Beals, and he works for the Metropolitan Company.”

“Well, in that case, I shall find him and have him brought up in court,” declared Old King Brady. “He is crooked!”

“Of course he is. Every man in the business knows that.”

Away went Old King Brady in pursuit of Beals' cab. But though he drove all night and explored all the upper part of New York, not a trace of Beals and his cab could be found.

“Drive me to the cab company's office,” said Old King Brady.

“All right, sir.”

Some while later the old detective applied at the cab office.

A man sat on a cab just outside the door.

The superintendent appeared and listened to Old King Brady's story.

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“Beals? Why, yes, sir. He drives for this company. There he is on his cab yonder.”

A glance was enough.

Old King Brady saw that it was not the same driver at all. He was angry and disgusted.

In this frame of mind he was driven back to Chinatown.

Here he found that the laundries of Sam Wah and Chinn Ling were closed and the shutters closely drawn.

All was exceedingly quiet in the neighborhood. Hardly a Chinaman dared show his head out of doors.

Old King Brady next went over to headquarters.

“We’ve got the whole outfit here,” said the chief of police. “We found six fan-tan outfits and cleaned out four opium dens.”

“And the prisoners?”

“Prisoners?”

“Yes. Sam Wah and Chinn Ling were the ringleaders.”

The chief shook his head.

“Not a Chinaman was found in any of the places,” he said. “We did not succeed in making an arrest.”

Old King Brady gasped.

“Do you mean to say that they all got away?”

“I’m afraid that’s true.”

The old detective was stupefied.

Then a sudden thought came to him.

“By the way,” he asked, “did you see anything of my partner about there?”

“Young King Brady?”

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Queer!” muttered the old detective. “Give me a couple of

officers.”

“What for?”

“I’m going back there.”

“You’ll find nothing.”

“Perhaps not. But I may. I know the place better than you.”

“Very well.”

The chief assigned two officers.

With them Old King Brady went back to Sam Wah’s place. He forced the door and entered.

To every part of the establishment the old detective went.

Then he went through Chinn Ling’s place.

He visited the death trap and the secret stairway.

But he found nothing.

He was completely mystified.

For two days he haunted Chinatown. But it resulted in nothing. He was wholly off the scent.

The old detective was now much concerned as to Harry’s fate.

He feared that something evil had befallen the young detective.

In this extremity he visited Mr. Jonathan Small at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

The millionaire received the old detective with manifestations of extreme delight. But this was only temporary. He grew deeply depressed when he heard the story told by Old King Brady.

“So they have designs on my life?” said the millionaire. “I shall be on my guard. Oh, but I am dreadfully worried about my darling child.”

“Keep up good courage,” said Old King Brady.

“How can I when every day brings some discouraging report?”

“Still, I believe we are near the end of the case.”

“I can’t see it.”

“But I can.”

“What are your reasons for thinking that?”

“Well, in the first place, you must admit that we have broken up the opium dens.”

“Yes, that is true.”

“In the next place, the villains have been compelled to change their plans. There is bound to be disaffection between them sooner or later.”

“Do you believe that?”

“I do.”

Mr. Small was much encouraged.

“Yet,” he said, dubiously, “Eva is yet in their hands. She is by no means out of harm’s way.”

“I will admit that,” agreed Old King Brady. “But before she can come to harm we shall hope to have effected her rescue.”

“Would that it might be done!”

“I think it can.”

“But your partner——”

Old King Brady’s face clouded.

He was truly worried about Harry.

He could not understand why he did not hear from him. He knew that the young detective was usually able to take care of himself.

But he feared harm had come to him despite this.

Just at this moment, however, a boy entered the lobby of the hotel with a telegram.

The clerk pointed Old King Brady out and the messenger approached him.

“What is this?” asked the old detective.

“Be you Old King Brady?”

“Yes.”

“Message for you.”

“Ah! Let’s have it.”

Old King Brady signed the book.

Then he opened the envelope.

He glanced at the message.

That was enough.

A cry of joy escaped his lips.

“Hurrah!” he shouted. “It’s all right! We are bound to win!”

Mr. Small was excited.

“What’s that?” he asked. “What has happened now?”

“Read that,” said Old King Brady, handing him the message.

The millionaire read as follows:

“JAMES BRADY, Fifth Avenue Hotel.

“I am safe here at Plattsburg. Come as quick as you can. I have tracked the birds and they are seeking a hiding place in the woods. Yours hastily,

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“HARRY BRADY.”

A great load was lifted from the minds of the detective and the millionaire.

CHAPTER XV. WHICH ENDS THE STORY.

Old King Brady felt like dancing.

He was supremely delighted.

“That boy is all right!” he declared. “I am proud of him!”

“He is your protege?”

“I am beginning to think that I shall have to accept him as a teacher.”

“Ah! indeed!”

“Why, only think what he has done. He has accomplished what I have easily failed to do.”

“That is to his credit.”

We left Young King Brady in a dubious position in the opium den.

He was apparently hemmed in on all sides.

Swift was at the staircase.

Emerson and the count were between him and the door. Certainly it all looked very serious.

But the young detective was not one to lose nerve or courage.

Quick as a flash he started for Swift. He knew that he must make a dash for it.

And he stood a much better chance against one man than two. So he selected Swift.

The villain's back was turned as Harry made his assault.

Like an avalanche he descended upon the villain.

He caught him by the shoulders and hurled him the whole length of the room. Swift went crashing into the hangings.

He emitted a yell of warning, but before he could disentangle himself Harry was on the spiral staircase.

Then a maddened yell went up.

Both Emerson and Barette came rushing in pursuit.

Crack! Crack!

Two pistol shots rang out.

The bullets went wide, however, and Harry reached the landing above.

Fierce were the cries of Emerson and Barette. They were intended to arouse all in the opium dens.

“It's the cursed detective!”

“Kill him!”

“Don’t let him escape!”

Thus the cries went up.

Harry dashed through the secret door into the room beyond. As he did so he heard steps coming up from the other Stairs below.

He was caught between two fires.

Capture seemed inevitable.

But the young detective was bound to make a good bid for his life.

He dashed into the corridor and turned to the right. At this moment Old King Brady was on the roof with his fair charge.

If Harry had kept on to the top of the house he would certainly have fallen in with the old detective.

But as he reached the foot of the stairs he heard doors open above. He was cut off again.

The young detective acted upon impulse and darted into a dark hole under the stairs.

Here he crouched breathlessly.

Meanwhile the three villains had come tearing up from the den below. They met a gang of Chinamen who had come up the other way.

“Did you meet him?” asked Emerson.

“No slee anybody,” replied Sam Wah, who was one of them.

“You didn’t?”

“No.”

“Then he’s gone to the roof.”

Up the stairs to the roof the whole gang went. Thus Harry was the innocent cause of the pursuit of Old King Brady.

But he had diverted it from himself. As soon as he was assured that the coast was clear, he descended to the court below.

But here he was obliged to remain in hiding again.

Chinamen were in the alley, evidently as sentries. So Harry kept low.

It was while waiting thus, though, that he saw Emerson descend carrying Eva Small in his arms.

The villain assisted her into the cab and drove away. But Harry, lurking in the shadows, caught the order.

“Burke’s wharf, East river!”

At an unobserved moment the young detective dodged out and sped after the cab.

When the cab reached the pier in question, it was some while before Harry got along. But the young detective learned that a small boat with a man and drunken woman in it had left on a

course up the river toward the Sound.

Then Harry step by step tracked the escaping villains to Bridgeport.

Thence by degrees he tracked them to Plattsburg. He learned their purpose here.

This was to seek refuge in the Adirondack fastnesses, and also he learned the exact point they intended to make for.

This was a camp in the wilds known as Red Joe's.

It was on a little island in a lake deep in the heart of the hills.

Here Emerson proposed to keep the abducted girl in captivity until she could be forced to marry him.

It was at this juncture that Harry telegraphed Old King Brady.

The old detective lost no time.

He started at once for the depot and boarded a train for Plattsburg.

When he reached that little town in the northern part of the State he was just in time to join Harry in his pursuit of the birds.

“I think we shall round the game up this time,” declared the young detective.

“You do?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I hope so,” said Old King Brady. “You have done yourself proud, Harry.”

“Pshaw! I have only done what it came in my way to do.”

Harry had procured a horse and carriage, which he had hired for an unlimited time.

The two detectives drove out of Plattsburg in the early morning.

It was not difficult to trace the villains, for a clew was obtained at every roadside hotel or stopping place.

The three men with the quiet young lady were well remembered.

The detectives came up with the gang in the very depths of the forest.

The highway had grown narrow and bush-grown. Suddenly they rounded a bend in the road, and Harry cried:

“There they are!”

Just ahead it was easy to see a large covered carriage, to which two horses were attached.

Harry put the whip on his horse. Old King Brady drew a brace of revolvers.

Both detectives knew that the tug-of-war was at hand.

At this moment a cross-roads was reached. The team ahead came to a stop, as if the inmates were undecided as to what road to take.

“Now!” whispered Old King Brady. “Run alongside of them, Harry.”

The young detective obeyed.

The startled trio of villains had just time to turn their heads when the buggy was ranged alongside.

Old King Brady covered them with his revolvers.

“Hands up!” he shouted. “Your rig is run!”

Curses and threatening cries burst from the astonished ruffians.

But the sight of the pistol muzzles was potent. They did not dare go against them.

“Handcuff them, Harry,” said Old King Brady.

The young detective leaped out to obey this command.

Against the cushions of the rear seat leaned Eva Small in a stupefied state. She did not comprehend what was going on.

Harry leaped into the other carriage and quickly handcuffed Baretti. But Emerson, whose face was deadly pale, gave a defiant cry:

“By Jupiter! I’ll not be taken alive!” he cried. “Listen to what I

have to say!”

“Well, say it quick,” said Old King Brady.

“I want to know what you propose to do with us?”

“They’ll jug us, of course, you cursed fool!” cried Swift, “and all on account of this cursed woman. I told you there was no luck in it.”

“That’s my affair, curse ye!” cried Emerson, savagely. “I owe you nothing!”

“In answer to your question,” said Harry, “we shall turn you over to the law. It is for the courts to decide what your punishment will be.”

“If we’ll give up the girl, will you let us go?”

“That hardly seems necessary.”

“Why?”

“You and the girl are ours already.”

“Not by a long shot!” yelled Emerson, as he made an attempt to leap out of the carriage. But Harry, quick as a flash, caught his arm and pulled him back.

Almost before Emerson knew it the handcuffs were on him.

Swift made no resistance.

The three villains were handcuffed together after this.

Harry turned the team about and got into it to drive. Old King Brady drove behind with the single team.

And thus they journeyed back to Plattsburg.

The chase was ended.

The great opium den case had reached its termination. The Bradys had covered themselves with glory.

They were certainly entitled to a great deal of praise and credit for their plucky work.

Sam Wah and Chinn Ling were arrested later and also taken to the Tombs.

The opium den case came up a little later and Emerson received a sentence of fifteen years.

The other two villains were sentenced for eight years each. They were out of criminal society for a while at least.

The Chinamen got good sentences. The affair was a warning to the crooks of Chinatown not soon forgotten.

The case and its solution won fresh fame for the Bradys.

Jonathan Small paid them a large reward for the safe return to him of his beloved daughter Eva.

He returned to his country home and was troubled no further by

crooks. The Bradys, however, were quickly absorbed in the exciting details of another case, which we will leave to a future story to tell.

And this will finish the story of “The Bradys and the Opium Dens.”

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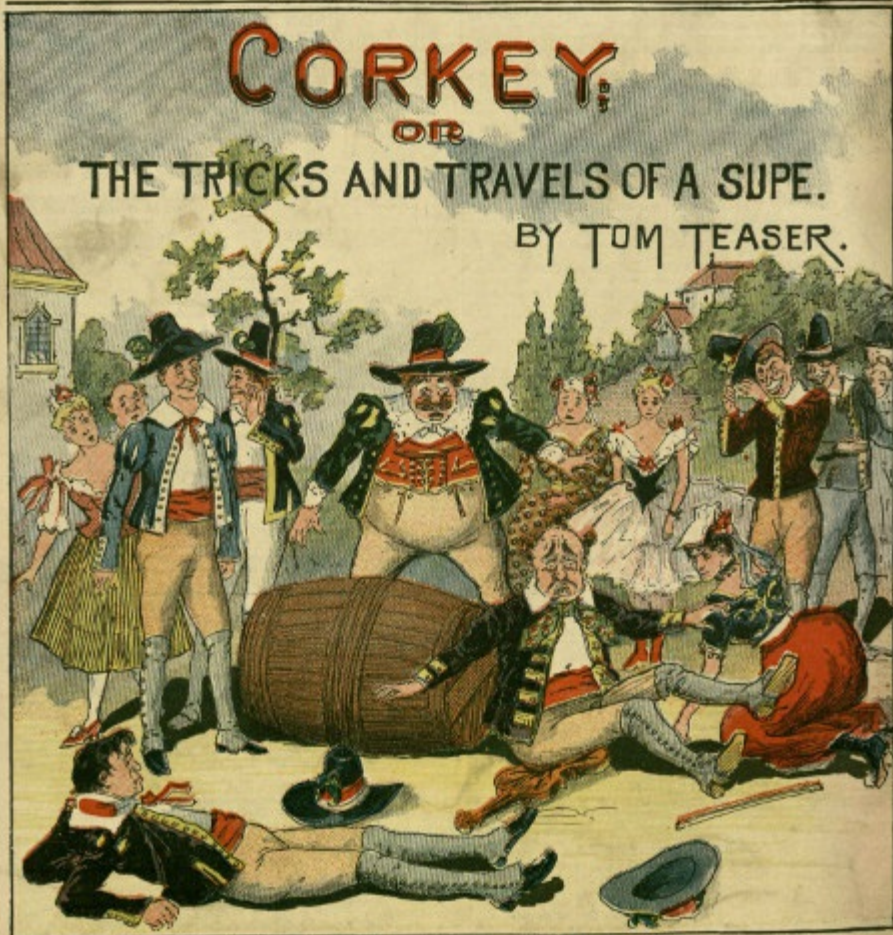
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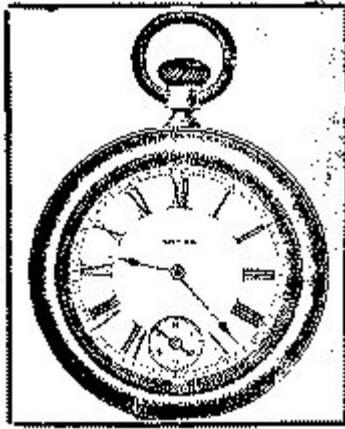
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