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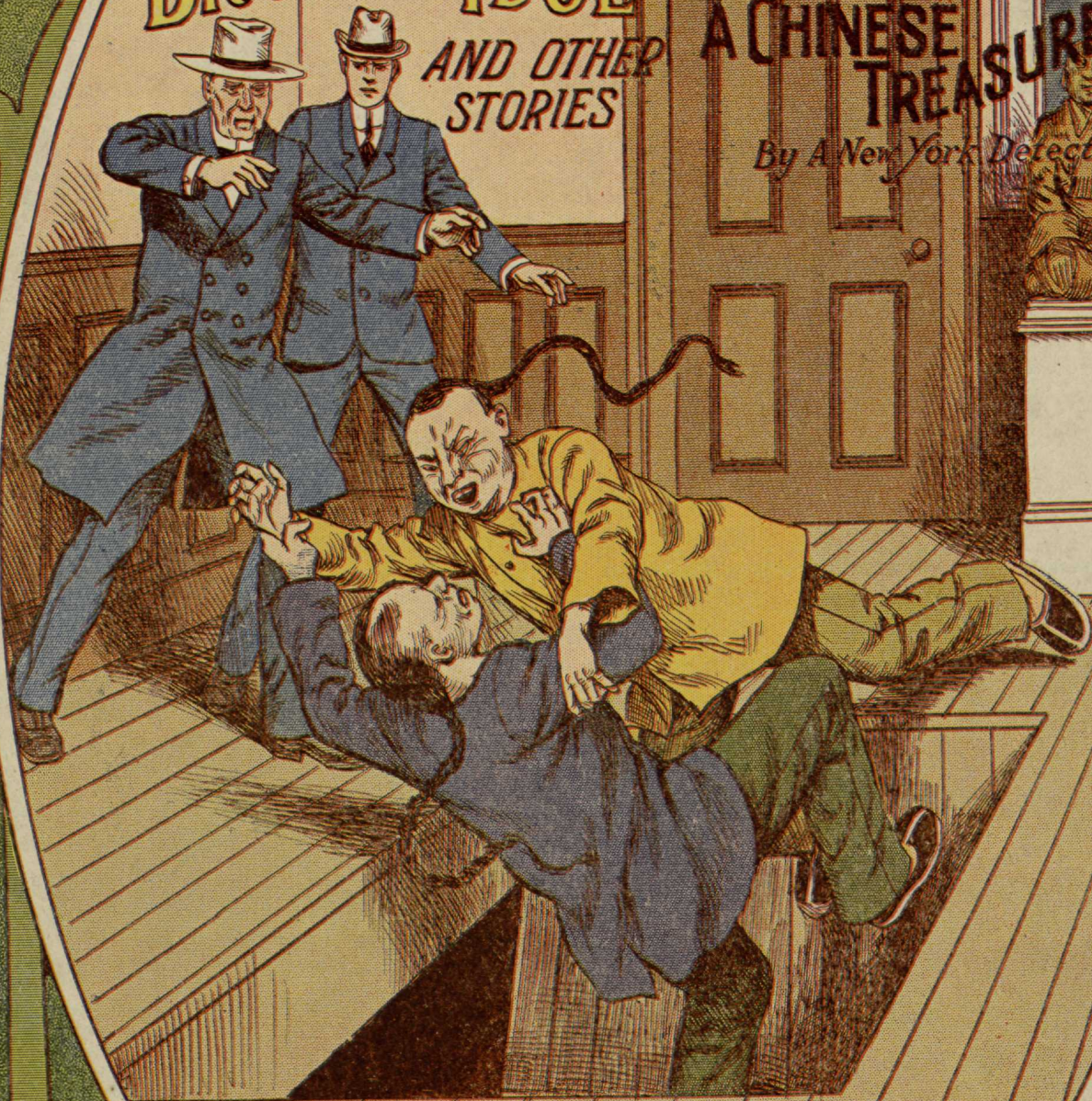
SECRET SERVICE.

THE BRADYS AND THE BRONZE IDOL

AND OTHER
STORIES

OR TRACKING A CHINESE TREASURE

By A New York Detective



FRANK TOUSEY
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The struggle between the two Chinamen had an unexpected termination. As they rolled on the floor a trapdoor dropped; down they went, in spite of the efforts of the Bradys to prevent it.



SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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TRACKING A CHINESE TREASURE

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

CHAPTER I.

THE MATTER OF THE DREAM GOD.

A year or so ago, while the Bradys, those world-famous detectives, were in San Francisco, a case came their way which was something out of the usual, even for these men of many unusual experiences. Upon this case is based our story.

The Bradys had just finished up a matter which had taken them more or less among the wealthier Chinese, thus their presence in the city was pretty generally known in the higher Chinatown circles, where the detectives have many acquaintances.

It was on a Thursday afternoon that they completed their work.

Old King Brady had planned a trip to the Geysers, which his partners, Young King Brady and Alice Montgomery, had never seen.

The intention was to start in the morning, but as it turned out they never started at all, for that evening they began on the case in question, and the way it came about was as we shall now proceed to tell.

The three detectives were seated in their private parlor at the Palace Hotel, when a well-engraved card was handed in, which bore the following:

"DR. J. L. LEE."

Above, in lead pencil, was written "Introducing," and beneath was the word "Over."

Old King Brady reversed the card and read:

"DEAR MR. BRADY: I am sending you Dr. Lee, to whom I am under many obligations. Aid him if you can, and I shall be greatly obliged."

This brief note was signed by a prominent banker in San Francisco, to whom Old King Brady was indebted for more than one fat fee.

"Naturally, it led to the page being ordered to send Dr. Lee right up, and up he came, accordingly.

He proved to be a very much Americanized Chinaman; a young man, good-looking for one of his race, gentlemanly in his manner, possessed of a perfect knowledge of the English language, and altogether a superior person.

"I have called, Mr. Brady, to see if you will take up an investigation for me," he began, coming directly to the point. "I am not in position to do the work myself, as I am but little acquainted in San Francisco, although I was born here twenty-eight years ago. I will add in explanation of myself that I am a graduate of the English Medical College at Hong Kong, and have practiced my profession at Hankow, China, and also at Honolulu, Hawaii, where, as it happened, I fell in with Mr. —, who has kindly favored me with this introduction. I am acting as the agent of what you would term the board of directors of the temple of Hankow, which you may be aware is one of the largest and richest of our Chinese religious institutions. It is on their business that I am now here, and I have papers to prove this. I am informed that Miss Montgomery is familiar with the Chinese language, and I would like to have her examine these papers before we proceed any further."

"I am not anxious to take up any ordinary Chinese case, doctor," replied the old detective, "therefore I can't hold out any encouragement. Still, I am willing to oblige Mr. — if I can. You may produce your papers and state your case. We will then decide."

Dr. Lee bowed and, drawing out a wallet, took from it a narrow strip of red paper folded many times, which he handed to Alice.

Now, Alice Montgomery, who is a full partner in the Brady Detective Bureau of Union Square, New York, is, in her way, a very gifted woman.

She can read and speak several of the ordinary European languages. The daughter of a missionary, born and brought up in China, she can also read and speak Chinese.

Unfolding this paper, she studied it for some time in silence.

Meanwhile, Dr. Lee proceeded to explain.

"You must know, Mr. Brady," he continued, "that some years ago, in the winter of 1906 to be exact, the great temple at Hankow was robbed by a neophyte priest, as you would call him. He stole a bronze idol of great antiquity which was most highly prized, and from a religious standpoint was of inestimable value. The robbery was committed out of revenge. Wink Fat—such was the name of the thief—had been disgraced by the superior of the temple, which, you must know, is conducted on similar lines to a Catholic monastery. The man was traced first to Hawaii, then to Mexico, where he was smuggled over the border and turned up in San Francisco two days before the great earthquake and fire of April 18, 1906. That much we know. He disappeared during that dreadful time when Chinatown was totally destroyed, and the bronze idol vanished with him. A large reward was offered for its recovery at the time, but nothing came of it. The matter was then dropped. It was supposed that Wink Fat lost his life in the fire and that the idol had been burned. It remained for me to revive the matter, and it came about in a most peculiar way."

Just here Alice interrupted.

"I find these papers all right, Mr. Brady," she announced. "Dr. Lee is certainly the authorized agent of what we would call the corporation of the great temple at Hankow. In addition to the signatures of the managers of the temple, here is the affidavit of the American Consul at Hankow, stating that this commission to find and take charge of this idol, which is known as the Dream God, about to be forwarded to Dr. Lee at Honolulu, was signed and sealed in his presence. It only remains for Dr. Lee to prove his own identity."

"My card of introduction," suggested the doctor.

"Is quite satisfactory if I can get Mr. — to confirm it over the telephone," said Old King Brady, "which can be done when I have decided to take up this case."

"Exactly," replied Dr. Lee, receiving back the commission. "You will want to know along what lines this search is to be carried out."

"It would be as well," said Old King Brady.

"Let me explain," continued Dr. Lee. "It is rather hard to make you Westerners understand these things, but Miss Montgomery, having lived among my people, may be able to comprehend.

"While practicing my profession at Hankow three years ago, I was called one day to attend the head priest of the temple, who is a man of great ability, and one who has imbibed many modern ideas, among others that a modern doctor educated in an English medical college is superior to a Chinese physician of the old style.

"The man was seriously ill, and I saved him from death, if I do say it. He firmly believed this, and was duly grateful. Indeed, he believed that he actually did die and that I brought him back to life. I make no such claim, of course, but it remains a fact that he was unconscious nine hours, and part of that time lay to all appearances dead, and that I brought him out of it. He claims that while in that state he saw and talked with his predecessor, as priest

of the temple, and that this man told him that the Dream God would be secured through me. It was for this reason that he gave me that commission after his recovery."

"Have you done anything about the matter?" demanded Old King Brady, rather impatiently, for he saw little in all this.

"Just a moment. I am coming to it," said Dr. Lee. "I soon left Hankow and went to Honolulu, where I met with considerable success, for there is a little prejudice against the Chinese there. I thought little of the idol. I saw no way of tracing it. I put the whole thing down to the priest's imagination, and so the matter rested until about a month ago I was called to attend a boy who had been picked up in the street in some sort of fit.

"He proved to be a half-breed Chinese. He was part of the crew of the steamer J. H. Dole, which ran between Honolulu and the other island. He was considered half-witted by his mates. He was subject to these fits, which sometimes lasted for hours. Epilepsy is my specialty, Mr. Brady. I have made a most exhaustive study of it. I found that the beginning of these attacks with this boy, who goes by the name of Jim Kelly, although his father was a Chinaman, Kelly being his mother's name, dated from the night of the burning of Chinatown, San Francisco. While the attacks are on him the boy talks precisely as if he was another person. He remembers nothing of this when he comes out of the fit. He claims to have been hurt in the head that night. He remembers nothing that occurred afterward, until weeks later he found himself in the hospital. When the fits are on him—and they come quite frequently—he speaks only Chinese, which he learned as a child, but claims to have forgotten, and while the fit is on him he talks of nothing else but the bronze idol and his adventures during the night Chinatown burned. And now for the singular part of it, and the part you will all find it hard to believe. When the fit is on him this boy believes himself to be Wink Fat, the renegade priest, who stole the Dream God from the temple at Hankow."

The doctor paused and gazed at Old King Brady curiously.

"So you have got to the point at last," remarked Old King Brady.

"At last. Sorry I had to be so long about it."

"Does the boy tell what he did with the idol?"

"Yes; all about it, but all is changed in Chinatown. I can't locate the place he describes, nor have I been able to find any one who can. I am afraid to take a Chinaman into my confidence. I need responsible help. I applied to Mr. — without telling him anything of what I have just told you, and he informed me that you knew old Chinatown with all its ins and outs as few white men knew it. He said you were in the city, and that you were just the man I wanted. So he wrote me that introduction, and here I am."

"Doctor," said Old King Brady after a brief silence, "I am satisfied of one thing, you have not told me all the story yet."

The doctor started slightly.

"Why do you say that?" he asked.

"Because I believe it," said the old detective. "I judge by your manner that you are holding something back."

"And so I am," replied the doctor, quickly, "but it is only that you might hear it from the boy's own lips. Come with me and you shall see him and hear him talk for yourself. Then I think you will be willing enough to take up my case."

"No," replied Old King Brady, "there is something else involved, and I must know the truth now. Is it money?"

"No!" cried the doctor, his excitement increasing, "it's not money. It's diamonds, it's big rubies, emeralds and sapphires. It's gems of all sorts, the grouping of a thousand years' worth; heaven knows how much."

"Ha! I suspected as much, and these gems are concealed within the idol?"

"They were at the time it was stolen."

"And the value of this Chinese treasure, doctor?"

"I have no idea. It is very great, however."

"Your information comes solely from the priest whose life you saved?"

"From him originally. Wink Fat confirms it."

"By that you mean the Kelly boy talking in his fit?"

"Yes."

"Well! This is certainly strange business, but we can do nothing about it."

"Nothing, Mr. Brady!" gasped Dr. Lee in a tone of intense disappointment.

"You are too quick, doctor. I was about to add until we have seen the boy. As I understand it, you have him in charge?"

"Yes. I brought him here from Honolulu. We arrived two weeks ago. I am putting up for him. When will you come and see him?"

"When will it suit you?"

"To-night. We are living in two furnished rooms in a very retired way; both of us go in native Chinese dress; I most of the time, Jim all the time."

"If you will give me the address we will call on you say about eight o'clock. But suppose the boy has no fit. You say he knows nothing of this treasure at other times?"

"Absolutely nothing; all he knows is that he has been told by his mates on shipboard that when he is in a fit he talks Chinese. The substance of his talk never seems to have been explained to him."

"How came he to come with you to San Francisco then?"

"Oh, I hired him. I pay him wages. He is a sort of valet to me."

"I see. The address?"

The doctor gave a number on Pacific street, near Mason, on the edge of Chinatown and the notorious "Barbary Coast."

"We have the top floor," he said.

"Under the name of Lee?" asked Old King Brady.

"Yes; I am known there as Jim Lee."

"But suppose the boy has no fit while we are there?"

"Oh, he'll have one, all right. I can bring them on him any time I please."

"Very well; we will be on hand," added Old King Brady, "and after I have heard the boy talk I will decide at once if I care to take up with your case."

There was some general talk after this, and then Dr. Lee withdrew.

CHAPTER II.

THE KIDNAPING OF JIM KELLY.

New York's little Chinatown of a few short blocks is but a patch alongside the big Chinese community in the heart of the older part of San Francisco, where for many blocks along the line of Dupont street none but Chinese dwell.

After the fire there was much talk of forcing the Chinese to vacate this quarter, which would be a most valuable addition to the business district of the city, but it proved to be impossible.

Many of its residents have grown very rich. Much of the property is now owned by the Chinese, held in the names of white wives and half-breed children.

So Chinatown was rebuilt on a larger and better scale than ever.

That many of the old underground dens untouched by the fire are still in existence is a known fact.

After the departure of Dr. Lee, Old King Brady got the banker who had acted as his sponsor on the telephone, and learned that the doctor had spoken only the truth in regard to his standing in Honolulu.

"He saved my wife when all others had given her up," declared the banker. "I regard Dr. Lee as a very skilful man. What is it he wants you to do?"

Old King Brady explained about the stolen bronze idol and let it go at that, for in one thing Dr. Lee was certainly right. This was a case which should be kept very close.

Old King Brady felt that it was not his business to go into details in the matter.

"What do you think about it, anyhow, governor?" asked Young King Brady after this talk. "Do you believe in this treasure?"

"That it once existed is easy to believe. That it was really in the idol on the night of the fire and remained there is doubtful. However, Harry, there is no use speculating over the matter. We will have our interview with the Kelly boy and then decide."

But it was written that Old King Brady should not be present at this interview.

Directly after supper the old detective was seized with an attack of a certain form of indigestion to which he is subject. It was decided that bed was the best place for him, and to bed he went, leaving Harry and Alice to wait on Dr. Lee, and empowering them to decide whether the firm should take up the case or not.

Accordingly, at the appointed time, Harry and Alice turned up on Pacific street.

They found that the house in question was a rickety old frame dwelling, one of a row of three which had been but partially burned during the fire, and had been repaired.

It was inhabited solely by Chinese.

"Rather odd that Dr. Lee would choose such a place, don't you think so?" Harry remarked as they looked the house over from the outside.

"He is safest from observation in just such a house, it seems to me," replied Alice. "I suppose, as he said, that's

what he is driving at. But we must not stand talking here. We are attracting almost as much attention as if Old King Brady was with us. Let us go right upstairs."

The allusion was to Old King Brady's peculiar style of dress.

For always when not in disguise the old detective wears a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white felt hat with an unusually broad brim.

Harry and Alice hurried up to the top floor and knocked at the first door they came to, which was at once opened by Dr. Lee, who was now in Chinese dress, which gave him a very different appearance.

He seemed greatly disappointed that Old King Brady was not coming, even when Harry assured him that it would make no difference, as he could decide about the case.

"Where is the boy?" asked Alice.

"Out just at present," replied the doctor. "He has become devoted to me. I allow him complete freedom. You must remember he has no idea what I am driving at."

"You are confident of this?" demanded Harry.

"Absolutely."

"How do you account for him imagining that he is Wink Fat when he is in his fits?"

"Oh, that's easily explained. It is a very common case with epileptics to imagine themselves some one else in their fits. You see on the night of the fire Jim first fell in with Wink Fat; the man had injured his leg by falling in a crowd which was being driven back by the police. He was quite helpless, and he asked Jim, who had assisted him home, to go into his rooms and help him move out his belongings, for it had then become certain that all Chinatown must go. Jim agreed, and they started upstairs."

"Excuse me; where was this?"

"In a house on Dupont street, near Sacramento."

"All right. Go on."

"On the way up Wink Fat explained that he had a very heavy box to carry. He thought, however, that they would be able to manage it between them. That box, I believe, contained the idol. At least, Wink Fat so assures me."

"When you say that you mean Jim in his fit?"

"Yes; whenever I speak of Wink Fat as being at present alive and with me, understand that is always what I mean."

"All right. Go on."

"He didn't tell Jim where he meant to take the box. They started downstairs with it, Jim being ahead. Wink Fat's injured leg gave way under him, and he let go his hold; the weight of the box was then all thrown upon Jim; he lost his balance and fell down the entire flight, the box struck him in the forehead, and that is the last he remembers until he came to himself in the hospital weeks later while in his normal condition."

"And what happened afterward he tells in Chinese, speaking as Wink Fat while in his fits?"

"That's it; but this I want you to hear from his own lips."

"Remember, I can't understand him," said Harry.

"But Miss Montgomery can?"

"Certainly, if he speaks Chinese."

"Let us talk Chinese a few minutes, if Mr. Brady will excuse us."

They did so, and the doctor declared that Alice's use of that difficult language was all but perfect.

They were still talking when quick footsteps were heard on the stairs, and a boy of about eighteen entered the room.

He was a very ordinary looking person, except that while his hair was red his eyes were black and almond shaped.

This was the only feature he possessed which made him look like a Chinaman, but native dress helped a lot.

As Dr. Lee had put it, the boy had not the faintest idea who was expected nor why they were to be there.

He was not introduced.

Passing into another room, he called to the doctor and said he wanted to speak to him for a minute.

When the doctor came back he looked annoyed and closed the dividing doors.

"What do you think," he said. "Jim tells me that he is sure he has been followed this evening by a Chinaman, for every time he looked around the same man was at his heels. He don't understand it. Says he don't know the man, but it bothers him. What do you think? Can some one have caught onto what I know, and he knows?"

"Were there any Chinamen among the crew of the Dole?" asked Harry.

"Yes; the steward. His name is Yung Ling. He came twice to my house where I kept Jim before we left Honolulu to see the boy, but Jim said he didn't like the fellow and didn't want to see him, so I sent him away."

"Jim had his fits while he was on board the Dole, didn't he?"

"Certainly. Many times, and, by the way, he worked for the steward."

"Did he then? I think you need go no further, doctor."

"It troubles me," said the doctor. "I don't like it, I must confess."

"Did this Chinaman follow him to the house?"

"Yes; to the very door."

Harry got up, went on tip-toe to the door and flung it suddenly open.

He half expected to find somebody in the hall, but there was no one there.

"We better get right down to business," he said.

"I'll call Jim in," replied the doctor; but before there was time for him to make another move, a sharp cry was heard in the back room.

The words were:

"Doctor! Help!"

The doctor dashed to the door and flung it open.

Harry, with his revolver drawn, was right behind him.

They were just in time to see the back window closed down, but neither saw who did it. Jim was not in evidence.

"Is there a fire-escape? They've kidnaped the boy!" cried Harry, rushing to the window.

"No fire-escape," said the doctor.

"Then they must have let a ladder down from the roof. The way up! Be quick!"

They ran out into the hall, but there was no one to be seen.

The doctor flung open a closet door, revealing the roof ladder and scuttle.

As quickly as it was in his power to do so Harry got out on the roof, taking the lead, as the doctor was a man of somewhat portly build, and also unarmed.

Harry was just in time to see the scuttle on the third house—the last of the old row up the hill—closing down, and he caught sight of a Chinese face beneath it.

On the roof was a rope ladder made sailor fashion attached to one of the chimneys.

"Guard the roof, doctor!" he cried. "I will make for the street and see what I can do."

He got down the ladder with all speed and, hastily explaining to Alice, told her to remain where she was.

Perhaps three minutes had elapsed before Harry gained Pacific street from the time the boy uttered that despairing cry.

This was certainly quick work, and that which followed was equally so, for by rare good luck Harry happened to meet at the very door the ward detective attached to that section—a man whom he knew.

"A half-breed boy in whom I am interested has just been captured by Chinamen," he explained. "He was taken down by way of the roof into that house. Help me to get him if it isn't too late."

"Yours truly," cried the wardman. "If he's there we'll have him out."

They went through the house with all speed, beginning at the top floor, but no trace of Jim Kelly was to be found.

The wardman declared that so far as he knew, these three houses were occupied by a superior class of Chinamen.

There was neither fantan nor opium joints in either of them.

All he could do was to promise Harry to get an interpreter and try it again. He would do it right then if Harry wished it so, he added, and as Young King Brady did wish it, he hurried off and quickly returned with the interpreter.

Again the rounds of the rooms in the last house were made, and this time Alice and Dr. Lee were with them.

Both agreed with the interpreter as to what was said.

Everybody spoken to declared that they knew nothing of any boy having been brought into the house by way of the roof.

"And what do you propose to do now, doctor?" Harry asked when it was all over.

"What can I do but to wait and see if Jim returns," replied the doctor. "If you want to hear his revelations second-hand I am prepared to give them."

"It is getting late," said Harry, and as I am worried about Old King Brady, I think we better get back. If he is better in the morning we will call on you about nine o'clock."

Old King Brady was asleep when Harry looked in on him, and he did not learn of the outcome of their visit until the next day.

"Somebody else has got next in this business," he said

then. "Looks as if it might be the Chinese steward of the Dole. Still you can never tell."

"Will you go to the doctor's?" asked Harry.

"Yes," was the reply. "I am feeling all right now, and my curiosity is aroused. We will get around there as soon as we have finished breakfast."

But they had not yet finished when the doctor was announced, and when they joined him they found the man in a state of great excitement.

"Read that," he cried, thrusting a letter into Alice's hand.

It proved to be in Chinese, and was very brief.

Alice read aloud as follows:

"DR. LEE: You may as well go back to Honolulu. The Dream God is found, and you will never see it or its contents. Waste no time trying to find the boy, either. He is dead."

The letter was unsigned.

"Bluff! Mere bluff!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "We'll take your case, doctor, hit or miss. I want to help you out if I can."

CHAPTER III.

LOOKING UP THE ELEVEN LANTERNS.

At great lengths, and indulging in many repetitions, Dr. Lee that morning gave the Bradys his version of the revelations made by Jim Kelly while in his epileptic fits.

What he said need not be gone into here, for the same material will have to be gone over later.

For the present it is enough to say that the boy, speaking as Wink Fat, declared that the box was taken by them into an underground room beneath a restaurant and opium joint known as the "Eleven Lanterns," and there buried.

By the time they had finished their work the house had taken fire and their escape was cut off.

"Wink Fat"—Jim in his fit—further declared that he perished, but that the real Jim managed to crawl through a hole too small for him—Wink Fat—and so escaped.

What the supposed dead man could not tell was the location of the Eleven Lanterns, nor why the box containing the bronze idol was taken there.

He did not even know the name of the street on which it stood. He was altogether misty as to why the box was taken there.

Dr. Lee declared that he had tried in vain to locate this restaurant, but he could not believe that it had no existence except in the imagination of the half-demented boy.

Such was the problem which the Bradys now undertook to solve.

The first thing they did was to cover the ground Dr. Lee had already covered, but they went about it in a different way.

That morning Old King Brady called upon the chief of police, and every courtesy was shown him.

There are Chinese detectives employed in San Francisco. All of these were summoned, but none of them had ever

heard of the house of the Eleven Lanterns, and all of them claimed to have been thoroughly acquainted in old Chinatown.

"It must have been some private Chinese club which was kept very close if it ever had any existence," Old King Brady said to Dr. Lee.

They had now left police headquarters, having received the promise that every possible effort would be made to find the kidnaped boy.

"And supposing you are right?" questioned the doctor.

"Let me ask," said Old King Brady, "are the people who worship in the great temple of Hankow of the same religion as the ordinary Cantonese Chinamen of San Francisco?"

"No," replied the doctor. "Altogether different. They are of the religion of western China. There are many of the same kind in Pekin; all of them belong to the upper classes. Miss Montgomery will understand."

"In other words, they are pure Bhuddists, like some of the Hindoos and the Japanese," said Alice.

"That's it," replied Dr. Lee.

"Then we see our course for a short distance ahead," said Old King Brady. "You come with me, Alice. Doctor, you and Harry make the rounds of every opium joint and restaurant and see if you can catch a clew to this steward, Yung Ling. Probably it will do no good, but it should be tried."

They separated then, and Old King Brady with Alice went up Market street to a Japanese curio store kept by a man named Matsada, who was secretly employed by the United States Secret Service Bureau to look after smuggling in his line.

Just how trustworthy Mr. Matsada was Old King Brady could not tell, but he was well acquainted with him, and they were courteously received. Matsada had several times worked in connection with Old King Brady on smuggling cases.

"Matsada, I am in a fix," said the old detective when the first greetings had been exchanged. "It is absolutely necessary for me to find out where in Chinatown there was a private restaurant club-house, opium joint, or whatever it really was, known as the House of the Eleven Lanterns."

"Before the fire?" broke in Matsada.

"Yes. Do you know of it?"

"No. What about it?"

"I have but one clew," continued Old King Brady. "It is known that a certain Bhuddist priest from the great temple at Hankow was in the habit of going there. It therefore occurred to me that it might have been a sort of religious club, and that you, as a Japanese and a Bhuddist, might know of it, or at least know of some way of getting at the information."

Matsada sat silent for several minutes.

"I don't know that there is any reason why I should not help you," he said, "nor do I know that I can. Let me ask the name of this priest. Was he a Chinaman?"

"He was a Chinaman. His name was Wink Fat."

"Was he in good standing?"

"No. He was a thief. He had robbed the temple of Hankow."

"I thought as much."

"Ha! You know something then?"

"Not so fast. I know nothing definite. What had he stolen?"

"A bronze idol of great age, known as the Dream God."

"That is only a translation of the Chinese name?"

"I presume so."

"I know what you mean. Listen! All I can say is this. In our form of religion certain numbers have a certain significance. Eleven we call the thieves' number. It also applies to murderers and those who have violated their religious vows. Many such come here from China and Japan, just as San Francisco is the refuge for all sorts of shady people from the States and from foreign countries. If any such bunch got together and formed a private club, calling it the Eleven Lanterns, and they were Bhuddists, then they were also crooks, of that you may be sure. They would also be sure to keep their club very close."

"It may still exist."

"It may, of course. The only way I can help you is this. I know a countryman of mine who was once a Bhuddist priest. He was forced to leave Japan for violating the rules of his order. He is now in San Francisco working as a butler for a rich man on Nob Hill. If such a club as you speak of ever existed, and still exists, that man would be likely to belong to it."

"What's his name?"

"He goes by the name of Yama."

"And the address?"

Matsada gave a number on California street. The name of the owner of the house he didn't know.

"First clew!" Old King Brady remarked to Alice as soon as they got outside. "We must follow this right up. I don't want to waste a moment over this case, so I'm going to take the bull by the horns and send you to call on Yama's employer, whoever he or she may prove to be. Get a cab and go there at once. It will be best to question the man through the employer. Don't come back without having done this; whether you succeed or fail in getting the information is a matter we can't control."

Alice left and Old King Brady strolled back towards Chinatown with the intention of calling on an old Chinaman who had formerly kept a restaurant on Dupont street and whom he had known for many years.

The name of this man was Soo Ming. Old King Brady by no means reckoned him as a friend. On the contrary, he believed the old fellow to be a great rascal. But the man was very old, very rich, and was entirely out of business. The old detective believed that he could work the information out of him if he possessed any.

It was not altogether easy to locate Soo Ming, but Old King Brady managed it, and an hour later found him in a back room on the ground floor of a Chinese merchant's office on Sacramento street.

In this house Soo Ming was supposed to live. A boy had been sent upstairs after him, and Old King Brady sat facing three solemn-looking Chinks awaiting his appearance.

These men claimed to speak no English. The talk had been made with the boy.

They were all smoking Chinese tobacco pipes with long

bamboo stems, and they stared owlily at the detective, now and then saying something to each other in their own language.

After a little, old Soo Ming entered, clad in rich native garments, with gold nuggets for his blouse buttons and a big diamond set in a ring glittering on his finger.

"Hello! Mister Old Kling Blady!" he exclaimed. "How do? Longee time since me see you. Befo fire, yair. Allee me flends. Sittee down, yair."

He placed a chair, said something to the boy, and while Old King Brady was still answering his civil greeting, cakes and wine were served.

"Ming," said the old detective after he had eaten a cake and sipped a glass of wine, "can you tell me whereabouts in Chinatown used to be the House of the Eleven Lanterns before the fire?"

Soo Ming partially closed his eyes and glanced at his three companions.

From the interested look which came over their faces the old detective felt satisfied that they understood every word.

"Me no know, but me can findee out," said Ming. "Man upstairs, he know. Waitee bit."

He arose and left the room, the others following him.

That this sudden vanishing of all hands was peculiar Old King Brady had reason to think afterward, but he did not reflect upon it at the time. So much that the Chinese do is peculiar that a little thing like this was not calculated to claim attention.

The old detective was now left alone for about twenty minutes, when Soo Ming came shuffling in again.

"Me findee out, Blady," he said. "Dlata house down Dupont street. Why for you wantee know?"

"I am trying to find out whether a certain man is alive or dead," replied the old detective.

"What him name?"

"Jim Lee," replied Old King Brady, not disposed to take this man into his confidence.

"Him livee Slan Flancisco?"

"No, no. He came from China only a few days before the fire. What kind of a place was this House of the Eleven Lanterns, Ming?"

"Lestaurant; hop smokee place, yair."

"What number Dupont street was it?"

"Me don't gettee dlat. Come along; me show you where. Me know feller what keep store dere; samee lot, yair."

He put on a hat and they started and went down Dupont street as far as Jackson, where Soo Ming pointed out a new three-story building of white brick.

"Dlata place user be upee stlairs dere," he said, and just as he spoke a Chinaman in American dress came out the side door.

"Hello, Ming!" he exclaimed, and he came forward and shook hands.

"Dlis me flend George, Blady," said Soo Ming. "He know allee bout 'Leven Lanterns."

"House of the Eleven Lanterns! Why, I used to be a waiter in that place," said George, whose English was perfect.

"Did you," said the old detective. "Were you employed there at the time of the fire?"

"Sure! Remember the night well," replied George, glibly. "Say," he added, "I've got a picture of the old joint upstairs in my room. Snap-shot. Want to see it? Come on up and you shall."

"Go and get it, I'll wait here," said the old detective.

He had just looked around and made the discovery that Soo Ming had vanished in the crowd which is ever surging up and down Dupont street.

It struck him as peculiar. So did George's friendly manner and his sudden appearance on the scene. It suggested a confidence game. Old King Brady decided to be on his guard, and repeated that he would wait.

"Oh, if you don't care to see it, that's all right, too," said George, adding:

"Say, you're a detective, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. I've often seen you around Chinatown. What did you want to know about the old Eleven Lanterns, anyway?"

"Oh, anything you have to tell would interest me," replied Old King Brady. "I was just looking up its history. Was it a tough joint?"

"Not just that, but pretty well so. It was a private club. No ordinary Chink could get admitted. Just a certain kind."

"Any Japs belong to the club?"

"Yes, there were a few. There was nothing special about the place, anyhow. Just a club, as I say."

"Thanks," replied Old King Brady, and bidding George good-day, he moved on.

Reaching Pacific street, he ran into Harry and Dr. Lee. As he did so he suddenly turned and saw George close at his heels.

"There's Yung Ling now," whispered Dr. Lee.

"The man with the brown coat? The one who is striking across the street?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Yes."

"We want him!" said the old detective, and they all started across the street.

"George," for it was he Dr. Lee had indicated, could not have seen them coming, for he did not look back.

Doubtless he knew that they would come, however, for he made a quick dive into a doorway and vanished.

"I've put my foot in it all right," growled Old King Brady.

"What about that?" demanded Harry.

"Why, I've just been talking with that fellow about the House of the Eleven Lanterns. He pretended he was a waiter in the place at the time of the fire, but I believe he lied. I've given myself away to the enemy, surest thing you know."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRADYS SEE JIM KELLY, AND ALICE LOCATES THE ELEVEN LANTERNS.

To have attempted to follow up the slippery steward of the Dole into the house in which he had vanished would have been to create altogether too much excitement for Old King Brady to be willing to undertake it.

"Have you two accomplished anything?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied Harry. "Absolutely nothing. But what about all this?"

"Let us walk around to your rooms, doctor," said the old detective. "I repeat I have made a bad break, but I think I have settled one thing. The kidnaping of Jim Kelly is surely the work of the steward. Perhaps on the side I have located a bunch of Chinks who are in with him. But hear my story and judge for yourselves."

The story was told in the doctor's room.

"What can we do?" asked Harry.

"As I figure it out, the invitation to enter that house and see the picture was a deliberate attempt to lead me into a trap," said Old King Brady. "It must have been cooked up by Soo Ming. The man was always more or less of a crook. He went right out, and the other three followed him just as soon as I mentioned the Eleven Lanterns. I didn't suspect anything at the time, but I see now that there was something strange about their action. I hit them harder than I knew."

"Probably," said Dr. Lee. "What about all three of us going upstairs in that house together. We will see if Yung Ling is known there. It may be that we can pick up something. For three of us to go together it ought to be safe enough."

"I don't object trying it," said Old King Brady. "We shall be on our guard. I am satisfied that it was a deliberate attempt to lure me into a trap. Let us go now."

They went.

The halls were well kept for a Chinese tenement, for such above the store floor it appeared to be.

They proceeded to the top floor and knocked at the first door they struck. This connected with a rear room. There was no answer.

A knock on the door of the front room brought a Chinaman.

The room appeared to be well furnished.

The doctor inquired for Yung Ling, but the woman had never heard of him.

She was sure that no such person lived in the house. She had lived there ever since the fire, and knew everybody in the house she declared.

"Who lived in the back rooms?" was now asked by the doctor.

The woman replied that nobody lived there. Those rooms were not rented and never had been; why, she did not know. All the other rooms on the different floors were occupied, she said.

"Ask her who owns the house?" said Old King Brady when Dr. Lee translated this.

The question put, it brought an answer which in no way surprised the old detective.

The woman said that she did not know who owned the house, but that her husband paid rent to Soo Ming, on Sacramento street.

Thanking her, the detective withdrew, and when the woman had closed the door they paused at the head of the stairs.

"Behind that door is where I should have been taken all right," said Old King Brady. "We must see the inside of that room."

He produced his bunch of skeleton keys and soon found one which opened the door.

In spite of what the Chinawoman had said, the apartment was neatly furnished as a bedroom in the Chinese style.

Another room opened from it which was unfurnished. They entered after making sure that the floor was solid. Shades were drawn at the windows, and Old King Brady raised one of them.

The window commanded a view of a new tenement on the other side of China Alley, on which once notorious by-way the house backed.

"Well, upon my word!" exclaimed the old detective as he glanced across the alley.

"What is it?" demanded Harry.

"I see!" cried Dr. Lee. "Yung Ling!"

Sure enough, there, standing at a window looking over at them, was the genial "George," otherwise Yung Ling, the steward of the Dole.

He was as smiling as ever, and he waved his hand at them and then drew back out of sight.

"Another fluke," muttered Old King Brady. "I have served his purpose all right by coming here."

"Oh, I don't know as you have to say that, governor," replied Harry. "He knew already that we are out after Jim Kelly and the bronze idol, I suppose. I don't know that seeing us here has told him any more."

"Wait a bit," said the doctor. "Perhaps he will show himself again. That is, unless you want to go over there and arrest him."

"On what ground could we arrest him?" asked Old King Brady. "I can think of none, nor do I know that I care to arrest the man. I had much rather go on his trail."

"Suppose we strike for that?" suggested Harry. "It would be rather difficult for you, dressed as you are, but I might make a quick disguise and try it."

"Wait! There he is again!" exclaimed the doctor.

For a second the steward showed himself, and then once more dodged back out of sight.

"Singular tactics," said Harry. "Shall I disguise, governor?"

"Wait a second," replied the old detective. "That move was just to see if we were still here. Ha! Now we have it!"

Again the steward appeared at the window. He held by the arm a boy dressed in pajamas only, whose eyes were closed.

"Jim!" cried Dr. Lee, "and he's in a fit."

Clearly the only object of the steward was to exhibit Jim Kelly, for he immediately drew the boy away again and disappeared himself.

"A challenge!" cried Old King Brady.

"Nothing else," replied Dr. Lee. "Now you have good grounds for arrest."

"We will get the wardman and go through the house," declared Old King Brady. "Something may come of it, but I doubt it. At least, for the present. There is some deep motive for that move."

Hastily closing the door they went downstairs and out into China Alley by the back way.

They had carefully noted the floor, and Old King Brady

and the doctor now stationed themselves at the door to remain on guard while Harry hurried away to find his friend, the wardman.

Meanwhile, Alice had been busy about her mission.

Reaching the number, she found it attached to one of those beautiful frame mansions of which so many were built by the old California millionaires on the brow of Nob Hill.

This house had been but partly destroyed by the great fire and had since been carefully restored.

Having made sure of her number, Alice looked up a policeman and, exhibiting her shield, inquired who lived in the house.

"Why, it is Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Benjamin Bartlett," replied the officer.

"What does he do?" asked Alice.

"Do? Nothing," was the reply. "He lives on his money. He's enormously rich. Made his money in mining stocks long ago."

"I have to get an interview with him if I can," said Alice. "What sort of a man is he, officer, if you know?"

"He is very old and very peculiar," replied the policeman. "His family are all dead or married off, and he lives there in that big house alone with a few servants. He is a very civil-spoken gentleman. I don't think you will have any trouble."

Alice, accordingly, rang Mr. Bartlett's bell, and the door was opened by a Japanese, who might well have been Yama himself.

Alice asked to see Mr. Bartlett, and handed the man her personal card.

"I don't think he will see you unless you state your business," said the Jap when Alice had declined to do this. "He don't often see ladies. If it's money for charity you're after, it will be no use."

"It is not," said Alice. She exchanged the card for a professional one, and told the Jap to say to Mr. Bartlett that she wished to see him on important business.

A liberal tip settled it with the Jap, and her card was taken in, but Alice herself was left outside.

The Jap presently returned with word that Mr. Bartlett would see her, but he was not feeling well that day, and as he did not care to leave his room, she would have to wait on him there.

He conducted her upstairs, and they entered a room fitted up as a library.

Thousands of books were ranged on shelves which reached from floor to ceiling.

From this room they went into another which was a sort of museum of Oriental curiosities of every sort kept in a great glass case, and among these things were many small Chinese and Japanese images of gold, silver, wood, ivory and bronze.

Larger idols stood about the room, some on the floor and others upon pedestals.

Over by the rear windows sat a tall, elderly man at a long table which was littered with books.

He did not even raise his head as they entered, but continued the writing he was engaged with.

"Place a chair, Yama!" he called out. "You will have

to excuse me for a few minutes, miss. I can't break in on this train of thought."

And for fully half an hour after this he did not raise his eyes, but continued to scribble away as if his life depended upon it.

At last he laid down his pen and, swinging around in his chair, abruptly asked Alice what she wanted.

To such a man it would evidently be necessary to speak out, and Alice explained that the Bradys had taken up the search for a bronze idol known as the Dream God, which had disappeared at the time of the great fire, the last being known of it was that it had been buried in the cellar of a Chinese restaurant or club known as the Eleven Lanterns.

Mr. Bartlett listened with a considerable show of excitement.

"The Dream God! The Dream God!" he now exclaimed. "There is but one original statue of the ancient Dream God of the Bhuddists known to exist, although there are many copies. That statue is made of bronze, and for more than 2,000 years has occupied a niche in the great temple of Hankow. You must know, Miss Montgomery, that I am an authority on such subjects. I suppose some one has so informed you, and that is why you are here. I am at present writing a book on Oriental religions and their idols. For that statue of the Dream God, if its genuineness could be proved, I should be willing to pay a large sum."

"It is the same statue, undoubtedly," said Alice. "The man for whom we are working is a Chinese doctor named Lee. He holds a commission from the managers of the temple of Hankow to find this idol, which was stolen from the temple a few years ago."

"Stolen! Is it possible! Why, I traveled all the way to China for no other purpose than to examine that particular idol. That was just before the great fire—1905. The idol was then in charge of a priest named Wink Fat, a man of low intelligence, but he knew its value. His only business was to look after that particular idol."

"It was he who stole it," said Alice, "but I had no idea that I was coming to an authority on such subjects. Let me explain just why I called on you, Mr. Bartlett."

And Alice went on to tell of the visit to the Japanese Matsada.

"Yes, yes!" cried the old collector, "I am well aware that my butler is a renegade Bhuddist priest. That is why I hired him. I have traveled much in Japan. I speak the language, also some Chinese, but I never heard of this club. I don't believe it exists. But Matsada is right. Eleven is the thieves' lucky number. This is most interesting. I'll call Yama and question him. Perhaps he knows."

"I wouldn't say anything to him about the idol, then, if I were you," said Alice.

"Who, I? Indeed, I'm no such fool," snapped Mr. Bartlett. "If there is such a club, and they have the Dream God, they will never give it up voluntarily, of that you may rest assured."

He rang the bell then and leaned back in his chair. Not a word had Alice said about the treasure concealed in the idol. She wondered if Mr. Bartlett suspected. Yama came, and they talked in Japanese.

Both appeared to get somewhat excited, particularly the

butler, who looked at Alice from time to time in a most peculiar way.

At length he left the room.

"Well?" demanded Alice.

"It is most remarkable," said Mr. Bartlett. "There was such a club at the time of the fire. Their rooms were on Jackson street, where they occupied an upper floor. Yama was a member. He says the club is out of existence now. I doubt it. I am satisfied that he is lying. If you understood these matters you would know that the possession of the Dream God would be most invaluable to such people. They believe that it has the power to make them dream of luck numbers and as to whether their undertakings are to be successful or not."

"And will it do the same for crooks as for honest people?" Alice asked with a smile.

"Just the same. You don't understand."

"Oh, I think I do, Mr. Bartlett."

"I am sure you don't, then, miss, by your leave; but who do you suppose owned that property at the time of the fire, and owns it still?"

"I judge from your way of speaking, sir, that you must be the man," said Alice.

"Right!" he cried. "That house is mine."

"Does Yama know it?"

"No, no! I was not such a fool as to hint such a thing. The original Dream God buried in my cellar! Amazing! We will go in search of it at once. If it is found there, this Dr. Lee will have to prove his claim to it pretty thoroughly before he gets it away from me."

"Botheration!" thought Alice. "Here's a mess."

"Was the cellar disturbed when the house was rebuilt?" she asked.

"That's just it!" cried Mr. Bartlett. "It wasn't disturbed at all. The house was only partially destroyed. It was merely repaired. The cellar remained just as it always was. Come, my dear young lady. You have given me the tip in this matter. We will start a hunt for this Chinese treasure at once."

"Upon my word, I believe he suspects," thought Alice. "If I only could consult with Old King Brady. But I mustn't leave this enthusiast. If once he gets his hands on the Dream God I don't believe he will ever give it up."

CHAPTER V.

SHADOWS ON THE SHADES.

Harry soon returned with the wardman and an officer.

Old King Brady and Dr. Lee reported that nothing had been seen of Yung Ling or Jim Kelly.

They ascended to the correct floor and knocked on the door of the room Old King Brady decided was the right one.

There was no answer.

Old King Brady then opened the door with his skeleton keys, but it was only to find the room vacant.

There were plain evidences that some one had recently been in there, however.

The floor was covered with dust, and in the dust were two sets of footprints.

Dr. Lee declared that Jim had an unusually large foot for a boy of his age.

There were imprints of large, bare feet.

The others were of a man wearing shoes.

The imprints led to and from the door.

"Not the room we want," remarked Harry.

"Evidently not," replied Old King Brady, looking around.

There were two other doors in the room.

One connected with an unusually large closet, the other with an adjoining room. The latter was locked.

Old King Brady knocked on it, and a voice answered in Chinese.

"What does he say?" asked the old detective.

"To go around the other way," replied Dr. Lee.

They went out into the hall and found a stupid-looking Chinaman with very few clothes on standing there.

He started back when he saw the policeman, but they crowded into his room.

He proved to be merely a cigar-maker, working alone.

Old King Brady was quite sure that he had no license, and was refilling old cigar boxes, for he saw no stamps and no new boxes. He said nothing of this, however, for he did not care to meddle.

The other rooms on the floor—in fact every room in the house—was visited even to the cellar, but it all went for nothing.

No one knew the steward of the Dole, nor could any trace of Jim Kelly be discovered.

It was with the utmost reluctance that the Bradys gave it up, as they were finally obliged to do at last.

The wardman promised to do what he could towards locating the genial George, though he assured Harry that he did not know the man.

"Now, then, I'm going back to the hotel," said the old detective. "No more daylight work. To-night we will return to that room and hide in the closet. I believe there will be something doing."

They parted from Dr. Lee and went back to the Palace, expecting to find Alice there, but she had not come up to four o'clock, when the Bradys started out in search of her.

They went to Mr. Bartlett's in an electric cab, and having learned the man's name, Harry left the cab to make the inquiries.

He quickly returned looking rather more disturbed than he had been before.

"Well, what about it?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Why, she called there," replied Harry. "She had a long talk with Mr. Bartlett, and then went away with him. They left the house together on foot. They did not say where they were going. They have not yet returned."

"Strange," muttered the old detective. "By the way, I didn't stop to tell you, but I know all about this man Bartlett."

"Do you, then? What's his record? Is he all right?"

"Why, he is one of the wealthiest men in San Francisco. He is a great student, and also a great collector of Oriental art objects. I can't imagine anything crooked about him. It almost looks to me as if he and Alice had

got on the trail of the bronze idol. I daresay she will turn up all right."

But Alice had not turned up at all by supper time, and the detectives began to grow decidedly anxious about her.

It was while they were at supper that a page waited on the Bradys and informed them that a Chinaman wanted to see them.

The detectives were eating in their own private suite, as they sometimes do, so they ordered the man shown up at once.

He proved to be another much Americanized proposition, a young man who declined to give his name.

"You know George?" he said to Old King Brady upon entering.

"Yes, I know George."

"Well, I come from George."

"And for what? Out with it."

"You want that boy you saw at the window to-day there in China Alley?"

"Yes."

"If you will do as I tell you then you can get him."

"Tell it."

"Go to that other room to-night at nine o'clock. George will meet you and tell you what to do to get the boy, but you mustn't bring the police. You must come alone."

Old King Brady thought for a minute, and then said:

"I shall do nothing of the sort. You people begin by kidnapping a boy in whom I am interested. Then you try other tricks which fail. You are a little too tricky. I will meet George only on the street."

"I don't think he will consent to that."

"Very well, then. Nothing doing. Go back and tell George so."

The Chinaman twisted uneasily in his chair.

"You are making a mistake, Mr. Brady," he said. "George has his own reasons for not wanting to show himself. He can tell you things you want to know. Under certain conditions he is willing to give up the boy."

"I shall make no conditions with him except this much. To-night at nine I will be in front of that house where I first met him. There will be no policeman, and I will agree not to arrest him. He can then say his say."

"I'll tell him," replied the Chinaman, "but I don't think he will consent. If he does come he don't want to find Dr. Lee with you, either."

"Dr. Lee shall not be with me. I'll yield that much. Go tell him what I say."

The nameless Chink then left.

Meanwhile, Harry, in obedience to Old King Brady's secret sign, had slipped into the adjoining room, where he quickly assumed a Chinese disguise which he had been using in the case the Bradys had just completed.

Thus disguised, Harry started on the trail.

As the door closed on the ambassador from the genial George, Old King Brady got up and opened the door of the adjoining room, into which he looked to see if Harry had departed, and finding that he had, he sat down and quietly finished his supper, after which he indulged in a nap, and then at about eight o'clock left the hotel.

He went first to Dr. Lee's room, but the doctor was out.

Some time was spent in wandering about Chinatown

to see if he could see anything of Harry, and failing in this, at nine o'clock the old detective turned up at the place of his appointment.

Here he waited for more than half an hour, but nothing was seen of George.

Just as Old King Brady was turning away, Harry came up in his disguise.

"Ha! You at last!" exclaimed the old detective.

"Yes."

"He did not come."

"So I perceive. I've been watching as well as you. I hardly thought he would."

"Let us walk. I don't care to meet him here now. He has been given his chance and rejected it. I am under no obligations to him now."

They walked on down Dupont street, and the old detective asked Harry where his shadowing had led him.

"First to the Jackson street joss house," replied Harry.

"He met George in there and they remained talking together for nearly half an hour. I didn't go near them, for I could not have understood what they were saying. After that they went to supper at a Dupont street restaurant. I was there. After supper they separated. George went to Soo Ming's house. I watched until nearly the time for the appointment, and then came here. That's all."

"All you could do in any case," said the old detective, "and now to decide on our course."

"Did Alice return?"

"Not up to the time I left."

"Suppose we call up Mr. Bartlett and see if he has come back?"

The call was made accordingly, and the voice of the Japanese butler answered them.

He said that Mr. Bartlett had not returned, nor had there been any word from him.

"It begins to look serious," sighed Harry. "If Alice was in trouble she certainly would have found some way of communicating with us."

"It would seem so," replied Old King Brady, "but we can do nothing about it now. I'm for watching in that room, Harry."

"What do you expect?"

"That these conspirators of ours are using it for a meeting place."

"Possibly. But why not the room across the alley, since Soo Ming either owns the house or has it in charge?"

"We will go where we saw the boy."

"All right! You're the boss. Shall we take Dr. Lee with us?"

"Yes; if we can find him. He wasn't in half an hour ago, but he may only have gone out to supper. We'll get around there at once."

They did so, and this time found the doctor.

He had heard nothing and was feeling rather discouraged.

He readily fell in with the Bradys' plans, so they all went around to China Alley, where Old King Brady obtained an entrance to the rooms with his skeleton key.

They found things as they had left them. There was

nothing to indicate that any one had been there since their previous visit.

Leaving the closet door open so that they could quickly beat a retreat, the detectives and the doctor stood around for nearly an hour, but nothing occurred.

The doctor was talking of life in the Hawaiian islands, when Harry suddenly broke in, saying:

"Look, governor! A light in the window of that room across the alley!"

"Sure enough," said Old King Brady, and they all went to the window.

The shades were drawn at the window opposite, but as they continued to watch they could see shadows flitting past them.

One was certainly a Chinaman in native dress. They could see the shadow of his queue. Soo Ming wore a queue; Old King Brady wondered if it could be the ex-restaurant keeper.

Presently the shadows on the shades ceased to be seen.

"We ought to get over there," said Harry. "I said so in the first place."

"Let us go," replied Old King Brady. "I think I will bring this matter to a head. We will break in on them and arrest whoever we find in George's company, along with the steward himself if he is there."

They left the room then, locking the door behind them, and started downstairs.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IDOL IS DISCOVERED.

Alice found herself not a little puzzled to know how to handle herself with Mr. Bartlett.

The old man talked incessantly as he made ready to depart. His talk was all on one subject, the Dream God, and the immense addition it would be to his collection.

He seemed to have forgotten all about Dr. Lee and that the bronze idol belonged to the great temple at Hankow, which had possessed it, according to him, for more than 2,000 years.

Alice asked to be allowed to use the telephone.

"For what, my dear young lady, for what?" demanded Mr. Bartlett.

"I want to telephone Old King Brady and tell him where I am going."

"Very sorry, but my telephone isn't working. But I wouldn't bother. We'll just take a look down there and see what we can discover. Understand, you don't have to go unless you want to. I can attend to it alone. You can call to-morrow and see how I have made out."

Needless to say this plan did not suit Alice at all.

The old man seemed to want to get rid of her. She concluded not to leave him even for a moment.

He was soon ready, and they started away on foot.

Nothing was said to Yama as to where they were going, nor did the Jap exhibit any curiosity.

They crossed over to Jackson street and went down the

hill, coming at length to a large frame tenement close to the big Chinese joss house.

"This is the place," said Mr. Bartlett. "I never go in here alone. I suppose I ought to take my agent with me by rights. I hope nobody will interfere with us. What do you think?"

"It's a risk," replied Alice. "Is the cellar separately rented?"

"No, it is not. To tell the truth, I haven't been in it since right after the fire, when the house was being overhauled. But come on. We'll risk it."

They entered, and Mr. Bartlett led the way to the cellar door.

Two Chinamen passed them in the hall, but neither spoke, although they regarded them curiously.

The cellar door proved to be locked.

"Looks as if the agent didn't allow any of the tenants to have the use of the cellar," remarked Alice.

"Perhaps not, perhaps not," he replied. "I don't know. How should I? I have never interested myself in the matter. I simply know that I don't receive any rent for the cellar. We must see the agent, I suppose."

"Is he a Chinaman?"

"No, no! He is a real estate man on Kearney street. He has charge of all my property. I own a great many houses, and several of them are in Chinatown. I hate to bring him into it, however, but I see no other way."

Alice examined the lock.

"I have a bunch of skeleton keys with me," she said. "I think I can easily open that door."

"Try it! Try it!" he cried, and he spoke so loud and excitedly that a Chinaman came out of one of the rooms, and in poor English inquired what they wanted.

"What do I want? Why, I own the house. My name is Bartlett," retorted the old man.

"Mr. Miller owns the house," said the Chinaman.

"Mr. Miller is only my agent. I am the landlord."

"The door is open, Mr. Bartlett," said Alice.

The Chinaman turned away without further words, and they descended into the cellar.

There was nothing to be seen except an accumulation of old boxes and barrels.

"We shall not accomplish anything," said Alice. "Even if the story I have told you is true, the idol may be buried anywhere in the cellar. How can we tell where to dig?"

"That's so, but let us look around a bit," said Mr. Bartlett. "I don't expect too much. Of course, somebody may have dug it up long ago, but——"

He paused abruptly and began pulling the boxes about.

"Upon my word, I believe he knows something which he is keeping to himself," thought Alice.

The old man pulled the boxes away at several points. At last, as he moved one, he gave an exclamation.

"Yes, yes! Here it is!" he exclaimed.

Beneath the box was a flat slab of soapstone imbedded in the ground, for the cellar floor was not boarded over.

"There you are, my dear young lady! There you are!" cried Mr. Bartlett, excitedly.

"What about that?" demanded Alice, who was beginning to get up a little excitement on her own account.

"Just this. I remembered seeing that stone when the

cellar was being overhauled, and wondered how it ever got there. I remembered, also, that the ground looked as if it had been recently disturbed, and at the time I wondered why. See how things stick in one's mind. I never thought of it since, but when I heard that the Eleven Lanterns Club, or whatever you like to call it, met in my house and pieced it onto your story, it all came back to me. My dear young lady, it wouldn't surprise me at all if the Dream God was now lying peacefully under that slab of soapstone which looks as if it might have belonged to some heating apparatus. I remember there was a soapstone warmer put in for the restaurant keeper on the top floor. He of the Eleven Lanterns, I suppose. But enough of all this. We must find out what lies beneath that stone. Really, Miss Montgomery, if it does prove to be the Dream God, I shall hold myself under everlasting obligations to you."

"But, Mr. Bartlett," said Alice, "the bronze idol belongs to the Hankow temple, and we detectives are working for its authorized agent. Don't forget that."

"That's all right, that's all right. I will correspond with these people. If the idol turns up on my premises I certainly shall not surrender it to any such unauthorized person as this Dr. Lee you speak of."

"But he is not unauthorized, Mr. Bartlett. He holds a special commission from the chief priest of the temple. I have read it. It is duly certified by the American consul at Hankow."

"Is it in Chinese?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to tell me that you can read Chinese?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Pretty well."

"How did you ever come to learn it?"

"I was born and brought up in China."

"Bless me, is that so! Why, Miss Montgomery, you would be invaluable to me as an assistant. Come and work with me. I'll give you a hundred dollars a month and board. What do you say? The detective business is not fit for a woman, anyhow."

"No, no. I couldn't think of it. But you see how the case stands. If the idol is found——"

"Then I keep it until I can communicate with the Hankow people. That Chinese commission would not stand for an instant in our California courts."

"Upon my word, I believe this man is crazy," thought Alice. "What shall I ever do with him? But there is one comfort. The Dream God is probably too heavy for him to lift."

While this talk was going on, Mr. Bartlett had been moving about the cellar excitedly.

"I must find something to dig with," he now said. "Something to pry up the stone."

"Don't you think we better go out and get the agent to help us?" suggested Alice. "We can return with a pick and shovel, and——"

"No, no!" he cried. "No time like the present. I can rip off a board from one of the boxes. Perhaps I can manage to pry up the stone with that. Ha! Some one coming! Not a word of our purpose, my dear young lady."

The cellar door had opened.

Voices could be heard whispering. Then two men appeared on the stairs.

One was the Chinaman who had challenged them, while to Alice's surprise she saw that the other was Yama, Mr. Bartlett's butler.

"Yama!" cried the old man. "What does this mean? Why have you followed me here?"

"For two reasons," replied the Jap, insolently. "First, to get the Dream God, if it is actually buried here. Second, to get you."

"To get me, you rascal! What do you mean?"

"Business," replied the butler, suddenly drawing a revolver, and his companion did the same.

Alice was covered before she could make a move to defend herself.

"Here, Sam, give me that gun," cried Yama, and taking the revolver, he held both Alice and Mr. Bartlett covered.

"Now go ahead and do your work," he added, "and listen, you two; the first one of you who so much as squeaks gets a bullet. Mind, I mean just what I say."

"This is an outrage, Yama," began Mr. Bartlett, when the butler broke in with:

"Stop it, you old fool! Utter another word and you die. Same to you, Miss Detective, if you don't instantly throw down your revolver. You've got one, of course."

There was nothing for Alice to do but to obey.

Sam now produced strong cord and tied the hands of both prisoners behind them.

This done, he thrust a handkerchief in their mouths as a gag.

"That's all right," said Yama. "Now then, Bartlett, let me explain. I've been a year in your employ, and that's a year too long, you crazy fool. I listened at the door while you talked with this young woman. With the Dream God in my possession I can make a bag of money. I propose to take my chance. Let me tell you that the Eleven Lanterns Club still exists. I am a member of it. It is an organization which is kept so secret that I doubt if a dozen people in San Francisco outside of its membership are aware of its existence. But enough for the present."

He turned to Sam, and in Chinese ordered him to go for a pick and shovel, and he gave him money to purchase the tools.

Alice was in despair.

She realized that she had got herself into serious trouble. Mr. Bartlett's face gave plain evidence of his rage.

Sam departed, and Yama seating himself on a box, rested the revolver on his knee.

"You wonder at me suddenly turning on you, Bartlett," he said. "Well, let me tell you I have been meaning to do it this long time. I came to your house for no other purpose than to rob you. I found it comfortable there, and I have been putting off the matter from time to time. You little guessed what sort of a man you were harboring. It is true that I was once a priest in a Buddhist temple, but I am also a professional thief, and that is the real reason why I left Japan and went to China, where I lived for a number of years."

Of course, Mr. Bartlett could only listen in silence, but

if looks could have killed, the treacherous butler would have fallen dead on the spot.

At last Sam returned with a new pick and shovel.

Yama had long ago ceased to pay any other attention to his prisoners than to watch them. He just sat there smoking cigarettes.

Sam seemed to be quite under his thumb, for when he was ordered to get to work he meekly obeyed, and with the pick pried up the stone.

It came readily enough, for the sandy soil on which San Francisco is built offers little resistance.

Beneath was sand.

Alice watched curiously.

The cellar was not very dark, as there were two small windows at the rear end.

Sam now got busy with the shovel, and the sand was soon disposed of and wood encountered.

Yama now began to get excited.

"Thank you, dear miss! Thank you!" he cried. "We are going to get there, I see. Bartlett, you will never add the Dream God to your collection, old man. Never! Never! Work away, Sam. Clear all around the box."

"Better get up and lock the cellar door," said Sam in Chinese. "The woman has a bunch of keys which will do it."

Yama removed Alice's gag and asked her where the keys were.

She told him, as it seemed best to keep on the good side of the man as far as possible.

The door was locked, the work on Sam's part meanwhile proceeding.

A box about four feet long was revealed.

It had two rope handles attached, by means of which the butler and the Chinaman lifted it out.

It appeared to be pretty heavy.

Sam now seized the pick-axe and attacked the lid.

"Careful, careful," cautioned Yama. "If you drive that pick through the Dream God I'll make short work of you, my friend."

The cover was quickly split, and within the box a bronze idol was revealed, a half length representation of a pensive looking man.

"That's it! That's it!" cried Yama. "That's the original Dream God! I've seen it in the temple at Hankow many a time."

"Thank goodness he seems to know nothing of the treasure," thought Alice. "If he had any knowledge of it he would have mentioned it, sure."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW GEORGE MET THE BRADYS.

When the Bradys and Dr. Lee got down into the alley they saw that the light was still burning in the window where they had seen the shadows on the shades.

They entered the house and stole upstairs, where they listened at the door of the rear room.

Not a sound was to be heard.

After listening for a long time they came to the conclusion that nobody could be within unless they were sleeping, and the old detective cautiously tried the door.

It was not fastened, so he ventured to open it.

The room was unoccupied. So was the one beyond. A lamp burned on a table, and it showed the Bradys and Dr. Lee a small panel standing ajar in the wall near the chimney breast.

"Same old business," said Harry. "Secret stairs. How the Chinks do love them."

"Indeed yes," chuckled Dr. Lee. "No well regulated Chinese house is without them."

"Not quite so bad as that, doctor," added Old King Brady. "Still the boy and I have seen enough of them in our time. But why is this panel open? That's the question. Can it be a bait thrown out for our special benefit?"

"Like enough," replied Harry, who was standing by the panel listening.

"Do you hear anything down there?" Old King Brady asked.

"Nothing. Going to venture down? I know you want to."

He was right; Old King Brady did want to, but still he scarcely dared.

He said no then, but after waiting a long time and hearing nothing, he suggested that they sneak down the stairs with revolvers ready for instant use.

Harry assented, for he also was anxious to see the matter through.

There was a bolt on the inside of the room door, and Old King Brady took the precaution to shoot it before they started.

Then having carefully studied the mechanism of the secret spring, making sure that he could open the door from the inside, they started to descend.

The stairs ran all the way down to the cellar without a break. No doors opened on the other floors.

This was as the Bradys calculated it. Of course, they could not tell just how far down they had gone.

The end was up against another secret panel precisely like the one above, which was closed.

"We can't go any further," breathed the old detective, "but I tell you what we can do. You get to the station, Harry, and bring help. We will raid this place. The doctor and I will remain on guard here. If any one dares to show themselves we'll be good for them, I fancy. At least, we can hold them back."

"Right!" replied Harry, and he was just about starting when the secret door was suddenly and noiselessly thrown open and there stood Jim Kelly and the genial George, his face all smiles.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," said the steward, who was now in Chinese dress.

Just then old Soo Ming stepped into view.

The place seemed to be a sort of lodge-room.

There were many chairs ranged around the walls, and a larger one stood upon a raised platform.

"Oh, doctor! They got me!" cried Jim, who wore only pajamas.

"Have they treated you badly, Jim?" demanded the doctor, quickly.

"No," replied the half-breed, "they have treated me all right, only they won't give me my clothes, and they tried to make me throw a fit. Once they succeeded, too."

The Bradys and the doctor had not raised their revolvers, as the two Chinamen had displayed no weapons.

"Well!" said Old King Brady, who had not troubled himself to reply to George's salutation.

"It is well that you have come," answered George. "We thought you probably would if we left the way open. Now put up your revolvers. You have no need of them. There is no plot against you, no intention of doing you any harm. We know what you are after. When Jim was on the Dole he talked in his fits, and I was the only one who understood him. I know you are after the Dream God of Hankow, the most valuable image in all China. We know that Wink Fat's spirit gets hold of Jim in his fits, and that he alone can help us to find the bronze idol, as you call it. He won't tell us anything. If it was different you wouldn't see us here now."

"You can believe that nonsense if you like, my friend," said Old King Brady, dryly. "I don't. The boy's memory of what happened that night while his brain was disordered comes back to him when he is in one of his fits, and that's all there is about it. Do you give up? Are you going to let us take the boy without further fuss?"

"Yes; we can do nothing with him," replied the steward. "We are alone here, my friend Soo Ming and me. You are three to two against us, so what could we do even if we wanted to? But I'll tell you something, old man. We now know that you are the one destined to find the bronze idol. Therefore I suggest to Wink Fat, if he is here now, that he gets down to business. If you choose to let us in on the divide we shan't kick. We know what's inside the idol. Of course, you three don't intend that any of the treasure shall go back to Hankow."

Jim listened with wide-open eyes.

"What's all this?" he cried. "What are they talking about, doctor? What do I say in my fits?"

"All sorts of rubbish," replied the doctor, who was not a little surprised to find that the steward had not already enlightened the boy.

"Wink Fat don't seem to respond," said Old King Brady. "I fancy he is not here. If he is, then perhaps he knows how wrong you are in your conclusions, Mr. Ling. If we get the bronze idol it will be turned over to Dr. Lee with all its contents. If you have any terms to make, you must make them with him."

The words were scarcely spoken when Jim's eyes closed, his face began to twitch, and he fell flat on the floor, foaming slightly at the mouth.

"There you are!" cried George. "The show begins. But walk in, gentlemen. No need of standing in the doorway. You are perfectly safe here."

"Is that a straight fit, doctor?" asked Old King Brady, whose curiosity was fully aroused.

"It is," replied the doctor. "I think we may as well see it through."

"We will put up our revolvers," said Old King Brady, "but at the slightest sign of treachery you two get shot—

mark that. Doctor, put the boy through his paces. Let us see what this is all about."

Then suddenly a deep voice, proceeding from Jim, apparently, began a lot of talk in Chinese.

The doctor answered.

"It is Wink Fat speaking," he said at length.

"Is it, indeed?" snapped Old King Brady, surprised that the doctor should apparently believe such nonsense; "then I wish you would ask Wink Fat as a particular favor to me if he won't speak English, which happens to be the only language I understand."

Dr. Lee said something in Chinese, and the deep voice, which certainly was very unlike Jim's, answered.

Certainly the doctor appeared to take the situation seriously, for with all gravity he replied:

"He says he can't speak English, but if you will wait a minute he will try to get some one to take hold who can."

This seemed too absurd.

Old King Brady and Harry both laughed.

The three Chinamen seemed to take it all seriously, however.

All sat down now and waited in silence. At last Jim, in a different voice from his own, and altogether different from the deep voice he had just used, said:

"Good-evening all!"

"Good-evening!" cried George. "Who are you?"

"Don't you butt in," snapped Jim. "I am talking to Dr. Lee. Doctor, it is no matter who I am. I am the interpreter."

"Go ahead," replied the doctor.

"I am speaking as Wink Fat."

"Speak any way you please," said Old King Brady.

"And don't you butt in, either, old man," snapped Jim. "I am dealing only with Dr. Lee."

"Go ahead! Go ahead!" said the doctor. "What have you to say?"

"That old man will get the Dream God and all there is in it."

"Good! Will you tell now where the House of the Eleven Lanterns is? You have always said you didn't know before."

Instead of answering the question, Jim began his usual story. How on the night of the fire he ran into Wink Fat and started to help him move the heavy box.

It is scarcely necessary to give all he said, for that ground has practically been covered.

"We buried it in the cellar, that box," the boy continued; "we put a piece of stone over the sand after we had shoveled it in. Then the fire caught me and I died. Jim escaped. I want the Dream God and all there is in it to go back to Hankow and to be restored to the temple. It will cost you your life if you fail in this, Dr. Lee."

"It shall be done," said the doctor. "That I swear. Now tell us where this cellar is if you can."

"I can name no names," replied the boy, "but this I will tell you, it is the cellar of the house just above the temple of the many gods where the cash dragon hung in the shop window. The old man knows."

All looked at Old King Brady.

"It is a fact," said the old detective. "I remember that

dragon make of Chinese cash strung together. I know just the house."

"So me know, too," said Soo Ming, speaking for the first time. "By Jackson street joss house."

"Go on. Tell us more," cried the doctor.

There was no answer.

The foam was running out of Jim's mouth again.

"It's all over," said Dr. Lee. "I don't think he will speak again."

"Never mindee. We finde out vat ve vant to knowee, so Blady!" cried Ming. "So you did no tinkee ven you comee askee me dlat me vant knowee slame ting mine-slelf."

Just then Jim opened his eyes.

"Do I get out of it alive again, doctor?" he wearily asked.

"That's what you do, Jim," replied the doctor.

"Oh, I'm so tired. Take me home. I want to go to sleep."

But as he said it he yawned, rolled over and went to sleep right there on the floor, as it seemed.

Was he shamming?

Not in the least, probably.

Doctors who have made a study of epileptics have many strange things of a similar character to report.

Some have reported them, but more have not.

Epilepsy as a disease is very little understood.

"Get his clothes," ordered Dr. Lee. "I'm going to take him away now."

"Sure," said George, blandly, "but his clothes are not in this house."

"Where then?"

"Across the way."

"Look here, Ming, do you own that house across the way, too?" Old King Brady asked.

"Me sure do," replied the old restaurant keeper.

"And there is a secret underground passage between them?"

"Sure. Come long. Me show you. Dlen we gettee clothes and takee boy away."

"Go get the clothes. We will take the boy upstairs and wait for you there," said the old detective.

The pair glanced at each other.

It was just a quick look, but the fact that it was given settled the old detective.

He resolved upon no account to follow these men.

Dr. Lee seemed to feel the same way.

He bent down and aroused Jim, but not without some difficulty, and ordered him to get up, which he did.

"You may as well come, Mr. Brady," said George as the pair arose.

"No; we go back by the way we came," persisted Old King Brady.

"All right then," said George, and, opening an inner door, he and Soo Ming passed into what appeared to be the entrance to a narrow passage.

"Let us go right upstairs and make sure that our escape is not cut off," said Old King Brady. "Harry, you go ahead. I'll follow. Look to the boy, doctor."

They ascended to the room, and Harry unbolted the door.

But when he tried the knob it would not open.

"What about this?" he cried. "It appears to be bolted on the other side."

Old King Brady seized the knob.

"That's what it is," he said. "It is secured above and below, but I know for a fact that there are no bolts on the other side. There must be bolts in the door itself controlled by a secret spring."

As he spoke he heard a click behind him.

Turning, they saw that the secret panel had closed.

Quickly Old King Brady pressed the spring, which it will be remembered he had taken care to locate while the door was still open.

It refused to work.

"The sly rascals!" exclaimed the old detective. "They have penned us in and mean to keep us prisoners here until they have had time to secure the treasure."

CHAPTER VIII.

IN A CHINESE PRISON.

Now that the bronze idol was found, Alice hoped that matters might be brought to a head, so far as she and Mr. Bartlett were concerned, for she was heartily tired of her present situation.

And so they were, but it was after a fashion anything but agreeable.

Yama did not take the Dream God out of the box. He seemed to be perfectly satisfied with having found it, which confirmed Alice in her belief that he had no knowledge of the existence of the treasure.

"Now then, Bartlett, it is all over," he said, sneeringly, "and you don't get the Dream God. I'm going to remove your gag for a minute. If you holler for help I shall shoot you—see?"

He took out the gag, and he had no sooner done so than the old man's eyes closed, his head dropped forward, and he would have fallen from the box if Sam had not caught him.

"What in thunder is the matter with the old guy?" cried Yama in dismay. "I don't want him to die on my hands here."

His command of English was certainly perfect.

It was learned later that the man was once a steward on an English battleship, which probably accounted for his knowledge of the language.

"Probably he has fainted," suggested Sam, whose broken English we shall not attempt to imitate. "It is very hot here and hard to breathe with that gag in the mouth."

And, indeed, Alice could have vouched for this.

She felt like fainting herself.

It was only a faint, and Mr. Bartlett soon revived.

"You villain!" he gasped. "To treat me so, and after all the kindness I have shown you."

"Keep your shirt on, old man," retorted Yama. "Now look here, if I take you home, will you write me a check for \$10,000 and let it go at that? Keep your mouth shut about all this business? Hey?"

"Never!" he cried.

"Very well," said Yama. "Then I shall have to kill you both and bury you right here in the cellar."

"You wretch! I believe you are equal to it."

"That's what I am. Quick! Decide."

"I have decided. I won't give up a cent. I won't even give you the small satisfaction of handling my check, which I could easily have stopped later."

"I see there is no use talking," said Yama. "Gag him again, Sam. We'll get the Dream God upstairs and then we will decide what to do with them."

This was done.

Alice and Mr. Bartlett were left alone for an hour.

It was in vain that the brave girl struggled to free herself from her bonds; she was very securely tied.

At last the precious pair returned, and this time they worked in silence.

Sam removed Alice's gag and pulled her head back, while the butler, in spite of her struggles, poured some sweet tasting liquid from a small bottle down her throat.

Within two minutes Alice became unconscious.

When she came to herself she was lying on a bed in a meanly furnished room which had but one window, and that a very small one up near the ceiling.

Clearly she was in another cellar she thought, and it was so, but how she got there she never learned.

A lamp burned on a table, and near it lay a sheet of white paper.

After Alice had sufficiently pulled herself together to be able to think and act, she got up and went over to the table, where she found that there was writing on the paper.

It was an ill-spelled scrawl, and ran as follows:

"DETECTIVE: Mr. B. is in the next room. It is up to you to look out for him. If you do this till I can close up what I have undertaken, you will both be set free, and in the meantime no harm shall come to you.

"YAMA."

Alice immediately went to what appeared to be the dividing door, and knocked.

"Are you in there, Mr. Bartlett?" she called.

"Yes," was the faint response.

"Can I come in?"

"I wish you would. I am dying, I think."

Alice opened the door.

The old man was in a very dirty bed. There was no sign of his clothes, but Alice had found herself lying fully dressed on the bed in the other room.

"What is the matter with you? What makes you think you are dying?" she asked.

"He drugged me same as he did you," was the reply. "I feel terrible."

"Do you know where we are and how we came to be here?"

"No. I know nothing about it. I suppose those wretches must have brought us here while we were unconscious. Oh, I'm so hot, Miss Montgomery. I am sure I'm going to die."

She placed her hand on his forehead.

The old man was in a high fever.

"This is a bad business, but we must try to make the best of it," said Alice, and she read him Yama's note.

"What do you suppose he means to do?" she asked.

"Rob me of my collections, I suppose," replied Bartlett. "He can do it, too."

"Does he know all about their value?"

"Yes, indeed. Fool that I was, I made a confidant of him in all those matters; he seemed so intelligent and so obliging."

"It is a dangerous business trusting his sort."

"Don't I know it now? I never should have done it."

"But the other servants?"

"I only keep two others, both Chinamen, and both were hired by him. You heard what he said about having intended to rob me this long while. Oh, I have no doubt that is what he is up to, the wretch. He'll sell my invaluable Oriental art objects in Chinatown. I shall never be able to trace them. They have cost me a small fortune, and I have spent years getting them together. It is a wicked shame."

Alice said nothing for some minutes.

She could not feel altogether sorry for this selfish old millionaire, for there was no question about his intentions in regard to the bronze idol in her mind.

It seemed to her altogether a case of the biter being bit.

The truth was Alice had taken up with a selfish old man who had never been any too straight in his business methods, who was a wild enthusiast, and now in his old age was slightly insane.

From such a character there had been nothing to expect in the first place, and less now.

During the remainder of that night Alice found herself with her hands full.

The only door opening from these two rooms into the main cellar, which was in Alice's room, was securely bolted on the outside.

As time passed Mr. Bartlett's fever increased, until at last he went out of his head altogether, and began raving about the bronze idol and the loss of his treasures.

He fancied himself in his museum struggling to keep Yama from entering.

He sprang out of bed, rushed into the other room and, shouting for Alice to aid him, braced himself against the door, and this happened again and again, until at last worn out by his exertions he fell into a troubled sleep.

No one came near them all night.

The next day Sam brought food and water, two Chinamen standing guard while they ate.

Mr. Bartlett had now quieted down, and the fever having left him, his reason returned.

Sam departed, leaving a small supply of food behind him.

They saw no more of him during the day.

Through the morning Mr. Bartlett slept, awakening in the early afternoon quite himself but very weak.

"What shall we do, Miss Montgomery?" he now demanded. "Can you think of no way by which we can escape?"

"There is a chance," replied Alice. "I don't know just

what it is going to amount to, but there seems to be a chance."

"What is it? Tell me, quick, for heaven's sake. I shall die if I remain here much longer."

"Oh, no, you won't. You are a lot better than you were last night. In short, you are getting used to the situation."

"But this chance of escape?"

"I am coming to it. See this paper?"

She held up a sheet of paper on which there was Chinese writing.

"This was thrust through the little window about half an hour ago," she explained. "I don't know exactly what it means."

"Read it."

Alice read as follows:

"LADY: I know you are a prisoner and who is with you. I also know why. I am going to try to help you if you are still there when night comes.

"A FRIEND."

"Who can he be?" cried Mr. Bartlett.

"How can I tell? Have you any Chinese acquaintance?"

"None but my servants. I have known Chinamen in the past, but it is many years ago. Probably all I knew are dead."

"It may not be so. However, we can only await developments. As for the rest, I have examined everything with the greatest care here. I see no possible chance of escape."

The afternoon dragged heavily.

Alice had all she could do to keep Mr. Bartlett quiet, but in a way she succeeded, for his wild fit did not return.

At last daylight vanished from the little window, and as nothing had been seen of their jailers, Alice began to look forward to the coming of the "friend."

But several hours were still to pass. Somewhere around ten o'clock while Mr. Bartlett was sleeping, she heard a low voice at the little window calling in Chinese:

"Lady, come! Lady, come! I am here!"

Alice hurried to the window and saw a Chinaman peering in.

"Is everything just the same with you?" he asked in his own language, and in Chinese Alice replied that there had been no change.

"I know you," said the man. "You are one of the Brady Bureau detectives. Is it not so?"

"Yes."

"And the old man with you is the rich Mr. Bartlett?"

"Yes."

"Tell me who is holding you prisoners here?"

"A Japanese; he is Mr. Bartlett's steward. His name is Yama. Can you get us out of this? You will be well paid."

"I think so. I am going to try."

"Who are you? How did you find us out?"

"No matter about those things. I can tell you nothing yet. Your lives are in danger. I propose to save you if I can, but before I do anything about it you must tell me one thing. Did Yama get the bronze idol known as the Dream God?"

For an instant Alice hesitated.

Should she tell?

If this man suspected the truth, then it seemed to her it could do no harm to confirm his suspicions. Anyway, to escape seemed the whole thing, so she said yes.

The next instant she was sorry she did it, for he asked:

"Did he open the statue? Did he get the treasure?"

"What treasure?" retorted Alice, quickly. "The Dream God is a treasure in itself."

"Oh, you know," he answered. "Don't try to fool me, miss, if you expect my help."

"Well, then, all I can say is that he did not open the statue. I don't believe he knows it opens if it actually does. I saw no treasure. I can say no more."

"You have said enough," was the reply. "I will return and try to cut out this window sash, lower a rope and pull you through the opening. That is the best I can do."

"Listen!" said Alice. "They took away Mr. Bartlett's clothes. He has only his underwear. He cannot go on the street so."

"Is that it?" was the reply. "Then I must bring him clothes. Call him and let me see how he is built."

"He is sleeping now. He is very nervous, and I don't like to disturb him. He is a tall, slim man. You can judge by that."

"Very well. Let it be so. I am going now. I shall return as soon as I can."

"I wish you would tell me who you are," urged Alice.

"It would do no good," he replied. "Enough for you to know that I am trying to be your friend."

And with this the Chinaman departed, leaving Alice puzzled enough to guess the meaning of it all.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH OLD KING BRADY?

"They have simply locked us in so that they can head us off in the search for the idol," said Old King Brady. "This outer door must have been fastened by some confederate. As for the inner door, I believe they sneaked back and fastened it themselves."

"They are certainly a slick pair," sighed Dr. Lee. "When I saw that steward out in Honolulu it never occurred to me that he was such a man, but with my people one never can tell.

"We find it so," replied Harry, "but I never supposed you Chinamen did.

"Oh, we do, I assure you," answered the doctor. "Mr. Brady, this is simply disgusting. Can you think of no way of helping us out?"

"Oh, yes," replied the old detective, quietly. "I guess I can open up a way all right, doctor. It may be a dangerous one, though."

"Oh, hang the danger. So long as we get out I don't care."

"Oh, I am so tired," yawned Jim. "I'm almost asleep. If I could only get to bed."

"Lie down on that bed and take a nap then," said Old King Brady. "It may take a little time."

Jim did so and was asleep in an instant.

Old King Brady produced one of those handles known as a universal tool and, opening it up, affixed a gimlet to it.

"We shall have to tackle the secret panel," he said. "To cut around those hidden bolts in the door would take forever. I am satisfied there are three of them. The spring of the panel I can easily cut out. Only thing is it will take time."

He bored a number of holes around the place where he knew the spring to be located, and then fixing a saw in the handle, got down to real work.

It took more than half an hour, for the panel was of hard, live oak, but at length the piece came out and the spring with it. The way to the secret stairs was now cleared.

They listened, but could hear nothing.

Arousing Jim, they descended to the secret lodge-room, which they found deserted.

Using his electric flashlight to guide them, Old King Brady tried his hand at the panel here through which Soo Ming had departed, but this proved to be firmly secured on the other side, too.

"More delay," growled the old detective. "Light that lamp, Harry. I shall have to get on the job again."

He went right at it and more than a second half-hour was consumed, Jim sleeping in a chair while the old detective worked.

The panel open at last, they pushed through the passage, coming to a room exactly similar to the one they had left, except that it was not furnished.

The only other way out of it proved to be by just such a secret stairs as existed in the other house.

Here they found Jim's clothing in a closet, and the boy showed himself, much to his relief.

Meanwhile, Old King Brady had discovered that this panel was in working order.

They ascended to the vacant room above and passed out without difficulty.

"Free at last," sighed the doctor.

"Yes, and the enemy has had an hour's start," replied Harry.

"More," added Old King Brady. "However, it can't be helped. We will push ahead and learn how the case stands. Thanks to our friend, Wink Fat, we know exactly where to go."

"I want to go home," grumbled Jim. "I'm tired to death. I don't care anything about this business. I don't understand it at all."

"Go on," said Dr. Lee, and after Jim had departed he remarked that they had no further use for the boy, anyhow.

They now hurried around on Jackson street, and Old King Brady easily located the house where the "cash" dragon had formerly been displayed in the window. He declared that it was the same old house which had stood there before the fire, restored.

Nobody appeared in the doorway or hall. They located the cellar door, and, finding it unlocked descended.

They felt but little hope of accomplishing anything.

Indeed, Old King Brady hardly expected to find any trace of the bronze idol, for he felt little faith in Jim's so-called disclosures.

But in this he was destined to find himself mistaken, as we know.

There was the hole, and near it lay the slab of soapstone.

The pick and shovel used by Sam were not in evidence.

That somebody had been at work here was evident, but this was as far as they could get.

The doctor was in despair.

"You see, it was all true, and those rascals have cut in ahead of us," he cried.

"Don't jump at conclusions," said Old King Brady. "Somebody has been digging a hole here, that's evident. Beyond that, it is all guesswork. Ha! Some one coming!"

Footsteps were heard on the cellar stairs, and a Chinaman looked down upon them.

It was Sam, as it developed afterward.

His manner was singularly childlike and bland

"What want?" he demanded. "Why for you comee down cellar?"

"Who dug that hole?" demanded Old King Brady, displaying his shield.

"Hello! You 'flective?" said Sam. "Boss his come here; him dig hole."

"Talk to him in Chinese, doctor," said Old King Brady. "Find out just what he means."

And then, in a minute, the doctor had it to tell that he meant the landlord of the house.

What did the landlord dig the hole for?

Sam didn't know. All he knew was that a big box had been taken out of the hole by the landlord and carried away on a wagon.

What was the landlord's name?

That Sam didn't know, either, nor did he know where the box had been taken. The digging had been done in the early afternoon, he declared, and after that they failed to get any further information.

When asked about George and Soo Ming, he had nothing to tell.

Dr. Lee, taking his cue from the old detective, questioned Sam at considerable length.

The man declared he was a waiter out of work, and that he lived in the back room on the lower floor.

At last they gave it up and went upstairs.

Not satisfied with Sam, Old King Brady knocked on the door of the front room, and a white woman answered.

Did she know anything about a box having been dug up in the cellar? the old detective asked.

The woman declared that she knew something had been going on in the cellar in the afternoon. She had heard that the landlord had been cleaning it out.

Questioned about George and Soo Ming, her reply was more definite.

She had seen two Chinamen coming up out of the cellar about an hour and a half before.

Were they empty handed?

They certainly were.

Again the Bradys were balked.

And Sam stood by, listening to it all, his face more childlike and bland than ever.

They went out on Jackson street and stood talking for a few minutes.

"What do you think now, Mr. Brady?" demanded the doctor. "Do you begin to believe in Wink Fat?"

"No more than I did before," replied the old detective, "but I believe in the Dream God now, where before I was doubtful. The bronze idol was surely in that box."

"We must hunt up that landlord," said Harry.

"Yes, but it is not likely we can locate him to-night, nor is it probable that we could do anything in the matter if we did," replied the old detective. "I fear we shall be obliged to give it up and go our way."

"But you will not give up altogether, I hope?" said Dr. Lee, anxiously.

"Oh, no; we shall work on. We may succeed yet. If what we hear is true, the discovery of the idol may have been mere accident. This man may not have the least idea that it contains a treasure. Good-night, doctor. We will look you up in the morning."

After they had left the doctor, Old King Brady began to talk in a different strain.

"Now, see here, Harry," he said, "this case has taken a strange twist. I am satisfied that the Chink who butted in on us knows more than he told."

"So am I," replied Harry. "He never once asked us why we were there, nor displayed the slightest curiosity. He's a deep one, all right."

"That's what he is. He must be shadowed."

"You did not even ask his name, governor."

"Where would have been the use? He would have given any old name. No; we must get at it another way. In the morning you be on hand as early as five o'clock. Change your appearance slightly. No elaborate disguise is necessary, for you took no part in the conversation. Right after breakfast I'll find out who this landlord is, and will look him up. It is all we can do. Now, let us hurry on. It is to be hoped that Alice has returned."

But Alice had not returned, as we know, nor did she turn up in the morning.

This altered Old King Brady's plan.

Harry went out after Sam, as arranged, but the old detective jumped into an electric cab and was driven directly to Mr. Bartlett's.

His ring was answered by Yama, who was most polite.

"Oh, you are the party who telephoned yesterday!" he exclaimed, when Old King Brady inquired for Alice. "Mr. Bartlett has gone away. He told me that he was going to Los Angeles and didn't know when he would be back. He is giving up here for good."

"But the lady who went out with him yesterday?" urged Old King Brady.

"Really, I didn't ask him, sir," replied Yama. "He came in during the evening alone. I told him that you had called up about the lady, and all he said was 'Oh, I left her hours ago.' He didn't say any more, sir, and it was not my place to ask questions. I am only a servant here."

When did Mr. Bartlett leave for Los Angeles?" inquired the old detective, and Yama's answer was that he left on the midnight train.

Balked again and greatly troubled on Alice's account, Old King Brady ordered the cab to take him to Jackson and Stockton streets, where he dismissed it.

He now started to look up Harry, but he was nowhere in evidence.

He entered Sam's house and knocked on the door of the Chinaman's room, but there was no response.

Old King Brady then tackled a Chinaman who kept a curio store on the other side of the tenement, which was a double one.

This man proved to be intelligent and spoke good English. He gave the old detective the name and address of a real estate man on Kearney street whom, he said, was agent for the house. He added that he did not know who the landlord was.

The next step was to look up this Mr. Miller, and then followed the discovery that Mr. Bartlett was the owner of the house.

This stirred up Old King Brady not a little.

"Look here, Mr. Miller," he said, having previously made his name and business known, "my assistant, Miss Montgomery, called on Mr. Bartlett yesterday on business. They went out hastily together. According to the Japanese butler, Mr. Bartlett did not return until late in the evening and then left for Los Angeles for an indefinite stay by the midnight train; as for Miss Montgomery, she has not been seen or heard of since."

"What!" cried the agent.

"It is as I tell you."

"It can't be. Mr. Bartlett is over eighty. He would never dream of starting off for Los Angeles alone. Besides, he would surely have informed me. Why, he hasn't left San Francisco since he returned from China eight years ago."

"Is he infirm?"

"Not exactly infirm, but he is in no shape to undertake a large journey alone. Besides, he is decidedly childish. Something all wrong here. That Jap has lied to you, Mr. Brady—that's all."

"He also told me that Mr. Bartlett was giving up his house, and that he had been left behind to pack things up."

"Did he, then! It looks bad. I have often warned the old man that he was running a great risk to live alone with two Chinamen and a Jap in the way he does. This must be looked into at once. Suppose we call a cab and go to the house? Yama knows me. He will hardly dare to lie to me."

"I'm willing," said the old detective, and they started forthwith.

Arrived at the house, Yama again answered the bell.

He paid no attention to Old King Brady, but cried out:

"Oh, how are you, Mr. Miller. Mr. Bartlett was just sending me for you."

"Is he at home, then?" demanded the agent.

"Certainly. He very seldom goes out, as you know."

"What do you mean by that sort of talk? You told me not half an hour ago that Mr. Bartlett started for Los Angeles on the midnight train," said Old King Brady, sternly.

"I told you that?" cried Yama, brazenly. "Why, I never saw you before in my life, sir. I don't know what you mean."

"Then we will precious soon find out what you mean!" thundered the agent. "Stand aside! Mr. Bartlett is in this house, of course, and if any harm has come to him you

will get all that's coming to you! Look out for him, Mr. Brady!"

"Oh, I've got him, all right," said the old detective, who had drawn his revolver.

They passed into the house, leaving the door slightly open, for Yama was forced ahead of them, and Old King Brady did not stop to close it.

This much the chauffeur of the cab observed, but he did not hear what was said, nor did he see Old King Brady draw the revolver.

After he had waited about ten minutes, the door was thrown wide open, and the butler, bare-headed, appeared at the top of the steps.

"Hello!" he called. "The gentlemen told me to tell you that they won't want the cab any longer. If you will come here I'll pay your fare."

It seemed strange to the chauffeur, but as the only thing he was really interested in was his fare, he came up the steps and Yama paid what he asked.

The cab then departed. Yama watched until it was out of sight and then went inside and closed the door.

Now what was the matter with Old King Brady and Mr. Miller.

Had the wily Jap proved too many for them, in spite of the old detective's revolver.

It looked that way—it did indeed!

CHAPTER X.

IS THIS THE HOUSE OF THE ELEVEN LANTERNS?

Harry was on hand at that Jackson street house shortly after five o'clock, before it was actually daylight.

It seemed hardly possible that the man Sam had got the start of him, but after an hour's wait, when he had not made his appearance, Young King Brady began to wonder, and he passed through the hall into the backyard.

Sam's room was on the ground floor in the rear, it will be remembered. Harry thought he might get a look into the room.

It was easier even than he had anticipated.

There were two windows to Sam's room, and behind both the shades were drawn, but there were many holes in the shades, and, seeing how the case stood, Young King Brady ventured to apply his eye to one of them.

He at once saw that he had been wasting his time.

There was a small single bed in one corner, a cook stove and other housekeeping arrangements, but no Sam.

The bed was tumbled up as though it had been occupied the night before. Clearly the man had got on the move earlier than Harry.

As there was no telling where he had gone or when he would return, Young King Brady resolved to give up for the present and go and get his breakfast.

He decided that it should be a Chinese breakfast, for Harry is very fond of Chinese cooking, as most people are who know it.

The restaurant on Dupont street which he had in mind was not yet open when he reached it, so Harry went around into Pacific street, with the idea of calling on Dr. Lee and inviting him to join him.

He found the doctor just getting up.

"Why, sure, I shall be glad to go to breakfast with you," he said. "What's new? Anything?"

"Nothing, except that our Miss Montgomery has been gone since yesterday, and we are worried enough about her, I can assure you."

"Is that so? What are you doing about it?"

"Old King Brady is going to look for her. My orders were to shadow that fellow we saw last night, but I haven't been able to locate him yet. I am hoping it will turn out all right. Miss Montgomery is well able to take care of herself. How is Jim?"

"Asleep, I guess. I haven't seen him this morning," replied the doctor, putting on his Chinese blouse, for he was sticking to his native costume.

"Do we have to take him with us?"

"Not at all. He'll take care of himself."

"Any more fits?"

"No. I'll just look in on him."

He opened the door of an inner room and exclaimed:

"Upon my word, he's in a fit now!"

The boy lay on his back with his arms twisted out from under the covers and eyes closed.

There was foam about his mouth and his hands were clenched.

Harry looked in.

"Does he often have them in his sleep?" he asked.

"Never knew him to before," replied the doctor. "I'm afraid he will become incurable if this keeps on."

"Speak to him."

The doctor said something in Chinese.

Immediately Jim answered in the gruff voice which was supposed to represent Wink Fat.

They held a brief conversation, during which the doctor seemed to grow excited.

Suddenly he drew back and shut the door.

"What is it?" demanded Harry.

He says it is not the way you think. People he don't know have got the Dream God, but that you will get it to-night."

"Does he, then? That's good news, if his honor can be believed."

"I believe him."

"I neither believe nor disbelieve. But what about George and Soo Ming?"

"He says they did not get the Dream God. It was gone when they got to the cellar."

"I can believe that. Couldn't you get any clew to who these people are?"

"No. He said he was trying to find out."

"Humph! It is to be hoped that he may meet with success then. Shall we go to breakfast?"

Dr. Lee assented and they went around on Dupont street where they found the restaurant open.

Harry had the doctor order the best Chinese breakfast the place could supply, and while they were waiting for it, he tried to cheer himself up by talking anything but business.

The doctor, however, seemed rather glum.

"What's the matter?" Harry asked.

"Oh, nothing," was the reply.

"But there is. Out with it. More of Jim's talk?"

"Yes, if you will have it."

"What?"

"He said that to-day I should be in great peril, and that to-night I should probably die."

"Pshaw! Why do you let the ravings of an epileptic worry you, doctor?"

"Well, I mustn't, I suppose," sighed the doctor. "But I don't view these matters as you do, nor would you if you had practiced medicine among people of my race. But enough of this. Here comes the breakfast. One thing you must admit, however. The Dream God actually was in that cellar."

"We have yet to prove it," retorted Harry. "We know nothing."

The coming of two Chinamen to the next table cut further conversation on the subject out.

While breakfast proceeded, Dr. Lee suddenly cut a remark Harry was making short by whispering:

"Hush! I want to listen to what those fellows are saying."

Then, after a little, he added in a still lower whisper:

"They are talking about the Dream God."

"No!" breathed Harry.

"As true as you live. They have seen it. According to them it was brought into the House of the Eleven Lanterns last night. They are rejoicing over it. They think it is going to bring great good luck to the club."

"Can they be the ones who unearthed it?"

"From what they say I am sure they are not."

"You better listen."

"No need. They are talking of something else now."

"We must shadow them, or rather, I must. We want to find out where this club now meets."

"It will be no use to shadow them. They are both going to San Jose by the next train. They expect to return this evening, however, and are to have supper here at nine o'clock. We must be on hand and take up our shadowing then."

"That's the talk. This is business."

"Yes, and now what do you think of Jim's prophecy, as you would say? Don't it look as if we might win out to-night?"

To humor him Harry assented.

Shortly afterward the two Chinamen left.

Harry and the doctor were not long behind them.

They went around on Jackson street to see if there was anything doing in Sam's case.

They just missed Old King Brady on his first visit.

Sam's shades were still down.

It looked like a hopeless case, so Harry started back to the hotel, leaving the doctor to go where he pleased.

The understanding was that they should meet at the doctor's rooms not later than half-past eight.

Of course, Harry found no news awaiting him and he again returned to Chinatown.

He looked in at the house where they had been imprisoned the night before.

The door of that backroom was still fastened, but it yielded when Harry, after listening and hearing nothing, ventured to use his skeleton key. The secret bolts had evidently been withdrawn.

There was nobody inside, and the panel remained in the same condition as they had left it.

Harry pulled right out and again went after Sam. Still it was the same.

He waited awhile and then pulled out, determined to make an attempt to locate the Eleven Lanterns' club, although he felt little hope of success.

Up and down Chinatown Harry went, in and out everywhere, until at length he turned into a court which runs in from Sacramento street to the rear.

Harry was determined to omit nothing, so he passed along this court and found that it led into a backyard, where there were three pig ovens under a shed.

Two Chinamen were tending the ovens, which were a sort of round brick pots in which pigs are roasted whole.

One of the men was in the act of raising the lid just as Harry came up, and the odor of roast pork streamed forth.

"Good! Most done," the young fellow exclaimed in English.

Just before the oven was a low doorway. Over it hung a paper lantern upon which was a Chinese character.

Now one of the few things in the line of Chinese which Harry had been able to learn from Alice are the signs which indicate the figures.

This sign he at once recognized as the one meaning eleven.

Harry moved on.

There was an alley at the end of the court leading to the next street and he walked slowly through it, thinking.

What could that number mean?

Surely not the number of that house, for it fronted on Sacramento street. There was no other door opening on the court so far as he could see.

Could it be that this was the sign of the Eleven Lanterns' club?

The idea seized firm hold of Harry.

He turned back and went on to the pig ovens.

The lids were closed over and the two men had departed. There was no one in sight and Harry shot in through that open door, resolved to investigate further.

He expected to find stairs leading to rooms overhead, but there were none. Instead, there was a long, narrow hall.

This, being followed, took two turns in the queerest fashion. Then it came to an abrupt end before a closed door, on which was the same Chinese character—eleven.

Harry bent down and listened at the keyhole, but could not hear a sound.

He tried the door and found it fast.

With some notion of using his skeleton keys, he examined the lock.

There was nothing doing. It was a Yale lock. Here his skeleton would be of no avail.

He was just turning away when he heard footsteps coming along the winding passage.

Young King Brady advanced boldly and found himself face to face with the man Sam.

The Chinaman eyed him suspiciously as they passed each other, but it seemed evident to Harry that he did not recognize him nor was there any reason why he should have done so, for Harry was quite differently dressed from what he had been the night before.

Harry passed on to the pig ovens.

For over an hour Harry hovered around that court, but Sam did not reappear.

It seemed foolish to wait any longer for there might be a dozen ways of getting out from behind that door beside through the door itself.

Giving up at last once more Harry went to the Palace Hotel.

No word from Alice—none from Old King Brady, which, as it was now getting on towards noon, seemed strange.

Harry could stand it no longer.

Deeply in love with Alice and practically engaged to her he resolved to get busy at once.

He determined to see if he could not find Old King Brady and hearing that the old detective intended among other things to look up the landlord of the Jackson street house, Harry started to do this himself, feeling that perhaps he could get on his trail that way.

And in this he was so far successful as to obtain Mr. Miller's name and number and he then presented himself at the Kearney street real estate office.

A civil spoken old gentleman met him and when Harry presented his card he said:

"Why Old King Brady was here himself this morning. He went away with Mr. Miller."

"Indeed!" said Harry. "Do you know where they went?"

"Why yes; to Mr. Bartlett's on California street. Old King Brady told Mr. Miller things which worried him about Mr. Bartlett's safety."

"Is Mr. Bartlett the owner of No. — Jackson street?" inquired Harry, quickly.

"He is," was the reply, and then the whole story of Old King Brady's call came out.

"How long ago was this?" asked Harry.

"Several hours," was the reply. "I can't understand why they have not returned."

Neither could Harry and he resolved to take in Mr. Bartlett's without an instant's delay.

CHAPTER XI.

YAMA'S LITTLE GAME FOILED.

Old King Brady and Mr. Miller were having troubles of their own in Mr. Bartlett's house.

That slick proposition Yama knew the house and they did not, although Mr. Miller, had he been asked, would have claimed to know all about it.

They started up stairs and Yama let them go.

These stairs were peculiarly arranged at the top.

Instead of an open line of banisters there was a partition.

Thus the stairs were boxed in and the only opening was immediately at their head.

Mr. Miller knew this, but he had never known that there was a secret door here made of thin steel.

This was one of Mr. Bartlett's many precautions to guard his art treasures. He was accustomed to close this door every night and it was closed now.

Old King Brady and Mr. Miller thus found further advance cut off.

Yama, who had followed them part way up the stairs, stood grinning maliciously as they turned around.

"What is this?" cried Mr. Miller. "I never knew there was a door here."

He tried to open it but it resisted his efforts.

"Yes," said Yama; "that door is there. It is locked, too."

"Open it at once!" cried the agent.

"Excuse me, Mr. Miller, but I can't."

"How long has this door been here?"

"It was here when I came to work for Mr. Bartlett; that's all I know. When the boss wants to be alone he closes the door. I never disturb him then; that's the rule of the house."

"Is there no way of reaching him? No speaking tube? No bell?"

"No, sir; the only way is to go up the back stairs, and he won't like it if he is disturbed."

"We must follow this business up, Mr. Miller," said Old King Brady.

"Sure thing," said the agent. "I was never up the back stairs. Where are they, Yama? Show them to me at once."

"All right, if you want to take the responsibility, follow me," said the Jap.

He led them to the end of the main hall and opening what appeared to be a closet door the back stairs were exhibited.

Old King Brady and Mr. Miller started right up.

As they did so they heard Yama call out something in a foreign language, but whether it was Chinese or Japanese they could not tell.

They had proceeded about half way up the stairs when the whole flight suddenly closed up like a fan and they promptly slid to the bottom amidst the loud ringing of an electric bell.

They had hit another of Mr. Bartlett's protective schemes against burglars.

The deluded man had little dreamed that all the time he had a burglar under his own roof in the person of his butler.

The old detective and Mr. Miller landed in a heap at the foot of the stairs.

Instantly Yama had them covered with a cocked revolver.

Two Chinamen now appeared on the scene and one of them drew a revolver also.

"Move and you are dead ones," hissed the Jap. "You will come butting in where you ain't wanted? Take the consequences then. Give up your revolver, you detective. You've got one, of course. Mind how you handle it now!"

There seemed nothing for it but to give up and Old King Brady did so.

He could have tried to better his condition as he drew out the revolver, but Yama held his own weapon pressed against his head.

More talk with the two Chinamen followed.

The result of it was that Old King Brady and Mr. Miller were bound hand and foot, carried down into the cellar and locked in a wine room.

The real estate man was furious.

"This is simply disgusting," he declared. "It makes me tired to think of it. Mr. Brady, can nothing be done?"

"I know of nothing," said Old King Brady. "I can't free my hands. Perhaps you can."

"Indeed I can't. But right here I fear for Mr. Bartlett's safety. I begin to think that villain of a Jap has murdered him."

"I wouldn't wonder. My anxiety for our Miss Montgomery is just as great. Is there much valuable stuff in this house?"

"Is there? Well I should say there was! Mr. Bartlett has a regular museum upstairs. His is one of the most valuable collections of Oriental art objects in America."

"Does this Jap know its value?"

"Of course he does. Mr. Bartlett has made a great confidant of him. An immense mistake. I have warned him again and again."

Old King Brady was distinctly puzzled.

He could believe that Yama meant to rob his employer and perhaps had murdered him, but he could not understand how Alice could have become involved in the matter.

He was not enlightened either as the hours passed, for no one came near them.

Meanwhile they could hear a good deal of stir upstairs. It seemed as if heavy objects were being moved about.

Later they heard some sort of electric vehicle come up to the house and stop.

From the sounds which followed it seemed as if things were being carried out of the house which were difficult to move on account of their weight.

At last the electric truck, or whatever it was, went away and everything quieted down.

No one came near them.

Prisoners they were and prisoners they seemed likely to remain.

Such was Old King Brady's situation when Harry started in to look him up.

As soon as he heard what Mr. Miller's assistant had to say Young King Brady at once started for Mr. Bartlett's.

It was perhaps two o'clock when he reached the house.

An electric truck stood at the door and two men were loading some packing cases on it.

The door was open and a Japanese stood at the head of the steps.

Now it must be remembered that Harry had not the slightest reason to suspect the treacherous Jap, except from what he had heard at Mr. Miller's office, but this was enough to put him fully on his guard.

He ascended the steps and inquired for Mr. Bartlett.

"He is not here. He has gone to New York," said Yama.

"How is that?"

"Sir, I cannot tell you. I am only Mr. Bartlett's confidential secretary. He does not tell me all his business either. What is it you wish to see him about?"

"Do you know Mr. Miller?" asked Harry abruptly.

"Certainly. He is Mr. Bartlett's agent."

"Did he call here to-day with another gentleman?"

"No; I have not seen Mr. Miller in a month," replied Yama with such perfect assurance that almost anyone would have been deceived, but Harry's suspicions further aroused by seeing the things being moved out he took a different view.

"Moving out here?" he asked casually.

"I don't know what right you have to ask that question, but I will answer it," returned Yama becoming still more insolent in his manner. "No, we are not moving out; Mr. Bartlett will spend some months in New York. I am putting some of his things in a storage warehouse. Now are you satisfied? Will you state your name and business? I have no time to answer any more questions."

He had overstepped the mark.

Harry's suspicions were more thoroughly aroused.

Two men were bringing a heavy case downstairs. They looked like honest fellows and Americans.

Harry on the spur of the moment called out:

"Look here, you two, I am an officer. By whose orders are these things being moved?"

The men had now reached the foot of the stairs and they dropped the case.

Harry displayed his shield.

"That's the man who hired us," one said, pointing to the Jap.

"There's something wrong here," continued Harry. "I believe this Jap is robbing his employer. He may have murdered him for all I know."

Yama was furious.

He began to bluff, but Harry cut him short.

"I am going to search this house," he said. "You two fellows help me and you will be well paid for your trouble."

"Don't you dare!" cried Yama. "If you do I'll report you to your boss. Put that case on the truck."

But Harry had the big end of the stick as it happened, for the suspicions of these truckmen that everything was not right had been aroused for the reason that they had already taken one load to a certain house in Chinatown.

"Say, I'm glad you butted in," exclaimed one. "I was beginning to feel doubtful myself, seeing nobody but this Jap. We are taking this stuff to a Chink's house on Clay street."

Yama started out the door.

"Don't you stir a step!" cried Harry, drawing his revolver with a suddenness which took the fellow all aback. "I may be all wrong, but I don't think so. Lead the way. I'm going to search the house. Follow me, boys. There is something all wrong here."

Yama subsided then.

Not another word did he utter.

They went all over the house.

Harry was impressed by the immense collection of books and art objects on the floor above.

Here two Chinamen were packing up the images. They claimed to speak no English, so nothing could be learned from them.

It was all in vain to question Yama. He simply would not reply except to say that this was an outrage, and Harry would be made to pay for it.

And now only the cellar remained to be searched.

As soon as Harry opened the door, Yama turned and, bounding through the hall, dashed up the stairs.

"After him!" cried Harry, and all ran.

It was no use, though.

The Jap was out of the door like a flash, and he ran off bareheaded down California street with such speed that Harry saw that it meant a long chase, so he pulled back.

"He's a crook, all right," said one of the men. "Can he have murdered his boss then?"

"We have the cellar to examine yet," replied Harry. "That may settle the question. Come on."

They went, and that was the time that relief came to Old King Brady and Mr. Miller.

"Here I am, boy!" cried the old detective as Harry opened the door of the wine room. Caught napping again. I need a guardian. I'm getting too old for my business."

"What about Alice?" demanded Harry.

But on this point, much to his disgust, Old King Brady had nothing to tell.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

We left Alice waiting for the return of her mysterious "friend."

Soon she heard a stir at the little window, and she went to see what it meant.

"I am here, lady," said the same voice in Chinese. "I am going to cut out the sash now."

Mr. Bartlett was awake now, and he came forward.

"Is he going to set us free?" he asked.

"He says so," replied Alice. "You see what he is doing?"

"Has he brought me clothes?"

"I hope so. I can't get much out of the man. That's the way with some Chinese."

The casing was soon removed.

The Chinaman now let down a rope.

"Pass this under your arms and make fast, lady," he said. "I will draw you up."

"But what about Mr. Bartlett?" demanded Alice.

"You come first," was the reply.

"You were going to bring clothes to him. Pass them down."

This was all said in English. Now the man shifted to Chinese.

"Listen!" he said; "it must be my way or none. I can't take Mr. Bartlett out just now—only you."

"And do you think I will go alone with you? Never! I don't know you. I don't propose to put myself in a worse position than I am in now."

"Listen!" he persisted. "I am all right. The Bradys know me. They sent me here. Come with me and we will get the Dream God. It is written that one of your firm shall get it to-night."

"Give me some token that the Bradys sent you here."

"Here's my token," he cried, suddenly covering Alice with a revolver. "Obey me or I fire! Move in any way except to tie that rope under your arms and I shoot you dead!"

"You're a fine friend," said Alice, folding her arms. "I shall not leave this place with you. Shoot me if you dare!"

* * * * *

The escape of Yama kept the Bradys all in the dark.

They left Mr. Bartlett's house in charge of Mr. Miller and his assistant.

Harry had hopes that something might be learned from the two Chinamen, but they could not be found when the detectives went to look for them.

A raid on the room behind the door marked eleven was suggested by Harry, but Old King Brady thought differently.

"You see it is like this," he said. "We will admit that the bronze idol is there; that this is the club-room of the Eleven Lanterns, but chances are the idol is hidden, and we may run into further trouble. Now what I suggest is that we follow up your clew obtained at the restaurant. We will be on hand when those two Chinamen meet. If they are to visit the club to-night we will simply follow them up and let police enough to make the raid effectual follow us. At night, with the club in session, the Dream God will probably be on exhibition. What do you say?"

"Let it stand so, then," said Harry. "Your way is usually the best, but all this don't help us out about Alice a bit."

Evening came, and Old King Brady and Harry kept the appointment the latter had made with Dr. Lee.

All three went to supper at the Chinese restaurant at nine. The two Chinamen from San Jose had not put in an appearance, but a little later they came.

The Bradys were now about through supper.

Harry slipped out and met his friend, the wardman, who, by previous arrangement, had been watching on the outside.

He took him inside the restaurant and pointed out the two Chinamen.

He had already explained their purpose, and the wardman now promised to be ready with several policemen to trail after them when the men started away.

This happened shortly after ten.

The Bradys and Dr. Lee followed them up.

To their disappointment there was nothing in it.

Evidently the pair must have changed their minds, for they quickly separated. One went into a Dupont street store, where he seemed to belong, from the way he acted.

Old King Brady watched there on the outside, while Harry and the doctor followed the other until they saw him take a Market street car bound for Hays Valley.

Clearly there was nothing doing.

The wardman and the police had remained with Old King Brady. Harry and the doctor now joined them, and a consultation was held.

"There is nothing to be done but to make a descent on that place of yours, Harry," said the old detective. "I see no other way."

"Suppose I venture there alone?" suggested the doctor. "I can knock at the door. Somebody will open it. I will get a sight of the interior anyway. I can pretend to be inquiring for some one. You two can be just behind me, and if I go in you can follow."

"I don't know but that is as good a way as any if you are not afraid," said the old detective. "Try it, anyhow."

They proceeded to the court and entered the winding passage.

The doctor went ahead. The Bradys followed at a little distance; the wardman and his officers kept themselves still further in the rear.

Reaching the door, Dr. Lee, who was in Chinese dress, boldly knocked.

The Bradys, who stood just around a turn in the passage, where by craning their necks they could catch a glimpse of the door, heard a gruff voice reply in Chinese, and then the door was opened by a Chinaman in native dress.

"Sam!" breathed Harry. "The doctor is going in."

He went in with a vengeance!

Scarcely had he put his foot across the threshold when Sam, with a cry of rage, grappled with him.

The Bradys pressed forward.

Now they could see the interior of the room.

The only object in evidence was a bronze idol resting upon a pedestal.

Sam and the doctor were going for each other for all they were worth, although the doctor was merely doing his best to defend himself.

The fierce struggle between the two Chinamen before the bronze idol had an unexpected termination.

As they rolled on the floor a trap-door dropped. Down they went in spite of the efforts of the Bradys to prevent.

At the same instant a scream rang out from below in a woman's voice.

"Alice!" shouted Harry.

And Alice it was.

At the instant she uttered her bold defiance, the ceiling above her suddenly fell, and down came two Chinamen looked in each other's arms.

And this was at the same instant chosen by the Chinaman at the window to make good his threat, for he fired at Alice, and the ball entered the back of Dr. Lee.

Jim's prediction was fulfilled.

Harry looked down the trap and saw Alice and Mr. Bartlett. Sam sprang to his feet. The doctor lay groaning on the floor.

Harry leaped down through the trap and had Sam covered before he could pull himself together.

"Get the fellow who fired that shot, Mr. Brady!" cried Alice; "it was intended for me."

"Handcuff that man, Harry. I'll hold him covered!" shouted the old detective.

Then the wardman and some of his officers came tumbling in. Two had been left in the court by the pig ovens to guard the door.

They heard the shot and the loud talk. Running into the shed where the ovens were, they came upon a Chinaman with a revolver coming through a door at the back, and called him on general principles. The revolver was taken from him, and he was dragged into the presence of the wardman and Old King Brady, who instantly recognized the genial George, steward of the J. H. Dole.

And thus ended the hunt for the bronze idol.

This place was, indeed, the meeting room of the Eleven Lanterns Club.

As the Bradys learned later, it had been the intention to hold a meeting that night, but for certain reasons it was postponed. There was no one in the club-room but Sam.

As for George, he knew nothing of the club, and had no idea that he was so near the idol. By accident he learned that Alice and Mr. Bartlett had been taken to that cellar.

Firm in his belief that Wink Fat's prediction would come true, and that the Dream God would be found by the Bradys that night, he determined to capture Alice and hide her away so that he could make terms with the detectives and so get something for all the bother he had been at. This he confessed when he was taken before the examining magistrate next day, charged with shooting Dr. Lee, for which he landed in San Quentin.

Alice and Mr. Bartlett were speedily taken out of their prison, and the explanations which followed made all plain.

Finding that Dr. Lee was seriously wounded, an ambulance was called and he was taken to a hospital, where he hovered for a week between life and death. It was three months before he finally recovered.

The Dream God the Bradys took away with them in a cab and landed it safely at the Palace Hotel, Mr. Bartlett going with them.

Here Old King Brady undertook to open the image, and at length succeeded.

Stones of all colors were indeed contained inside the Dream God, but all were false, mere glass imitations, but very skilfully made.

Had the real treasure been removed years before by the wily priests of the great temple at Hankow?

Harry suggested trying to find out through Jim, but there the Bradys were balked, for when they went to look for the boy he had vanished, leaving behind him a note for Dr. Lee, saying that he was tired of it all and was going to Seattle. The Bradys never heard of him again.

Mr. Bartlett asked the Bradys to take up his case and try to recover his goods, but they declined, and other detectives undertook the work.

Some of the art objects were recovered, but not nearly all. Yama was never caught. It was supposed that he managed somehow to get away with the stuff.

The Bradys deposited the bronze idol in a safe deposit vault taken in the name of Dr. Lee, and went back to New York.

A year later they received a letter in Chinese from the temple priests at Hankow, thanking them for their work and stating that the doctor had returned the idol. No mention was made of the glass "gems" one way or the other, but they must have been satisfied, for the letter enclosed a draft for \$500, which was all the Bradys ever got out of the case.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BRADYS AND THE SALES GIRL; OR, A SIX DAYS' SEARCH IN THE SLUMS."

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SPECIAL NOTICE:—All back numbers of this weekly, except the following, are in print: 1 to 6, 9, 13, 42, 46, 47, 53, to 56, 63, 81. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d street, New York City, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

By Horace Appleton.

Exiled to the Siberian mines!

The sentence had fallen like a thunderbolt upon my senses, and I had not recovered from the stunning effect which the words had produced when I found myself on the way to my living tomb, a prisoner for life.

Even after I had fairly awakened to the reality of my position I could scarcely understand why I, Ivan Cardowitz, had received that sentence. I was nineteen years of age, with neither parents nor guardian to restrain my liberty; I was possessed of a large fortune, and had not, knowingly, an enemy in the world. And yet, as my brain gradually recalled the events of the last few days, which had been scarcely heeded at the time, I thought I understood better why it was that I was a prisoner, and whom I had to thank for it.

I had always felt deep sympathy for the downtrodden classes in Russia, and on several occasions had expressed my opinions on the subject with more freedom than prudence. It was because of these utterances that I had been denounced and sentenced—the charge being that I was a Nihilist.

I was convinced that my accuser, a man of notoriously bad character, but one who managed to keep in favor at the court, hoped to obtain my fortune after it was confiscated, as a reward for the zeal which he had displayed in my conviction.

But in the meantime I was being hurried along toward the land whose very name struck a deadly chill to the heart of a Russian, and I racked my brains in vain for a means of escape.

On the following day, however, something occurred to give me a faint gleam of hope. Among the guards I recognized one who had been for years a retainer in our family. Even as I recognized him, he came up to me, and, unobserved, slipped a paper into my hand.

From it I learned that it would be possible for him to assist me to escape after nightfall, if I would carefully follow his directions.

Overjoyed at the prospect of escape, it is needless to say that I did as he had directed me, with the gratifying result that the following morning found me once more a free man.

It was my purpose, if possible, to reach the estate of my uncle, who, as nearly as I could judge from my limited knowledge of the region in which I found myself, lived from one to two hundred miles to the southwest.

It was a long journey to undertake on foot in bitter cold weather, and with the fear of pursuit haunting me at every turn, but there was no help for it, and I set forth courageously, withdrawing myself from observation as much as possible, and disguising myself partially with some clothing which I had obtained from a peasant to whom I had applied for lodging one night.

Whether my escape was not discovered in time to render any pursuit successful, or whether that pursuit was carried on in the wrong direction, I had no means of knowing, but I had reached a point about twenty miles

distant from my destination without having been molested in any way, and my heart beat high with gratitude for the safety which was so near at hand.

The remainder of my journey was perfectly familiar to me, for I had passed many months of my boyhood upon my uncle's estate, and knew the surrounding country well. Just at dusk I came to the cottage of a peasant with whom I had often exchanged a friendly word in the old days, and believing that he would be willing to befriend me, I went up to the door and knocked vigorously.

The snow was beginning to fall, and as I stood waiting for a response to my knock I shook the white flakes from my shoulders and arms, mentally congratulating myself that I had found a shelter from the terrific night which was at hand.

After a considerable lapse of time the door was cautiously opened, and the old peasant put his head out and peered at me from beneath the fur cap which he wore night and day.

"Can you give me a lodging for the night?" I began, but before I could say more he had slowly shaken his head, and was shutting the door. He had not recognized me in the dim light and in the nondescript dress which I wore.

"Stay!" I said hastily, putting my foot upon the door-sill. "You surely will not turn me away on such a night as this?"

He looked out upon the drifting snow, and appeared to hesitate for a moment, but then, shaking his head once more, he again attempted to shut the door.

"Wait!" I said, putting my hand upon his arm. "Do you not remember Ivan Cardowitz?"

A light of recognition flashed into his withered old face, and he made as if he would have opened the door wide to me; but some sudden recollection seemed to check him, and he stood undecided, holding the half-shut door.

At length he muttered "Wait," and going within, he closed the door leaving me upon the doorstep, in the midst of the heavily falling snow."

He was gone a long time, so long that my patience was almost exhausted before the low murmur of voices from within ceased, and he once more opened the door.

"Enter," he said, and without more ado I stepped into the hut, where the sight which greeted my eyes made me pause in wonder.

Upon a low cot in the corner lay a man whose livid features and heavy breathing told me that he had not long to live; and bending over him, with a face full of anxiety, was one of the most beautiful girls whom I had ever seen. As I entered the room she raised her dark, violet-gray eyes to mine, and after looking searchingly at me for a moment a visible expression of relief passed over her gentle yet spirited face, and with a half smile and bow she turned once more to her patient, while I followed the old peasant into the only other room which the house afforded, where I did ample justice to the bountiful but simple supper which was set before me.

I had just risen from my chair when the young girl appeared upon the threshold.

"Sir, my servant, who is lying in the next room very ill, wishes me to ask you if you will do him the favor to grant

him an interview. And I entreat you not to allow him to excite himself, for he is in no condition to bear it."

Following her through the low doorway, I saw her once more bending over the sick man, and the look upon his white, drawn face told me, inexperienced lad though I was, that his hours were numbered.

As he caught sight of me, he said: "Go, now, my lady, and leave me to speak with the gentleman."

Seating myself by the side of the dying man, I asked: "Did you wish to speak to me?"

"Yes," he said. "Heaven has sent you to help us in our extremity, and I only pray that my strength may hold out to tell you what you must know."

He spoke slowly, with frequent pauses for breath, but his voice was clear and distinct, and I listened attentively.

"She who has just left us, the Lady Irma, is sole heiress of one of the largest estates in Russia. I have been a servant in her family all my life, and love her with a reverent devotion which makes it easy even to die for her. She has no family, and her guardian, an ardent politician, has recently urged upon her, for reasons of state, a marriage with a man who is in every possible way repulsive to her, a man toward whom she could never feel anything but loathing.

"Her guardian, for motives of his own, has fully determined upon this union which is so abhorrent to her, and after an unusually stormy interview with him yesterday she came to me in despair, with tears streaming from her beautiful eyes.

"Nicholas," she said, "I have no one but you to help me, and you must save me!"

"And then she told me that she had another guardian, an old school friend of her father's, who lived not far from us, and she thought he would protect her in this emergency, although of late years he had had little to do with her, having been abroad most of the time.

"So I said that I would take her to him, and we started before daybreak this morning. But we had not ridden far before we knew that we were pursued, and ere long a bullet from the rifle of Lady Irma's guardian hit me.

"Now, as a dying man, and for the sake of Lady Irma, I ask you to take my place and accompany her to the house of her father's friend."

Before I could answer he put his handkerchief suddenly to his lips, from whence the life blood was flowing, and almost before I could utter a cry, or summon assistance, the end had come.

Lady Irma was overwhelmed with grief, but bravely stifled it, as I told her what it was that her faithful servant had asked of me. She told me the name of the gentleman to whom she was going for protection, and I recognized it as that of my uncle's next-door neighbor.

I endeavored to cheer her by telling her that I knew the road perfectly, and could take her to her destination in a few hours, but she shook her head, and murmured a name which caused me to spring to my feet in horror.

It was the name of the relentless pursuer who had been the cause of my sentence to exile.

"If I am to help you to escape, we must start before daybreak. If I am recognized by that man I am lost." And in a few words I explained to her my position.

Swiftly we made our preparations for departure. At

her entreaty I put on the fur-trimmed coat and cap which had been worn by poor Nicholas, and which were a welcome addition to my insufficient clothing, for the night was bitterly cold. She even brought me his long boots, and with her own little white fingers fastened on the belt in which his long hunting-knife was thrust. Then, handing me his rifle, she bade me, with feverish haste, to go and get the horses.

When day dawned we were well on our way, and I was beginning to feel a little respite from anxiety, but suddenly a low cry from my companion made me turn my head quickly. Our road lay through the midst of a forest, and far away behind us, at the end of a long vista, I saw three men riding furiously toward us.

But soon I saw that we were slowly but surely gaining on them. If we could keep up this pace for the two or three miles yet remaining we were saved.

Another mile flashed by, and we were far ahead.

"Courage," I said. "We have only one more mile."

But she uttered a sharp cry, and pointed to the forest. In its depths, rushing toward us with long, savage leaps, was a wolf, one of the largest I had ever seen.

"We are lost!" she gasped.

"Do not despair," I said. "Guide the horses while I fire." Bringing the rifle to my shoulder, I took aim at the ravenous beast and fired.

I had missed him!

There was no time to reload, and our pursuers were coming swiftly toward us.

"When I spring to the ground," I said hastily, "take my horse's rein and hold him there beside your own. It is our only chance."

The wolf was now almost upon us. Throwing the rein toward my companion, I leaped to the ground, and, grasping the rifle firmly in both hands, I stood waiting for the savage beast. And I could hear the sound of the horses' hoofs behind us as they thundered along in pursuit.

One mighty bound, and the wolf, with flaming eyes and open jaws, was upon me. But I was ready for him, and as he leaped, the butt of my rifle, wielded with a strength born of desperation, fell with tremendous force upon his uplifted head, and without a sound he rolled over and over upon the freshly fallen snow, stone dead.

To spring upon my horse and to bury the spurs deep in his sides, was but the work of an instant, and like the wind we dashed away, just in time to escape a rifle bullet from behind.

Urging our noble animals by every means in our power, we covered the remaining distance with incredible speed, and were safe in our place of refuge before Lady Irma's enemy and mine drew up his foaming steed and demanded admission.

Needless to say that he was denied permission to take his ward back with him, and that she found a happy home with her other guardian.

Through the influence of my uncle a pardon was obtained for me from the Czar, and my enemy lost the opportunity of enriching himself with my estates, which were returned to me intact.

The Lady Irma is now my wife, but as long as our lives last we will never forget that terrible ride through the snow-covered forest.

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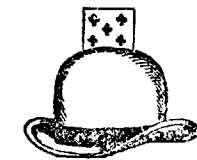
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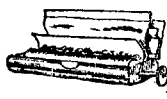
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The wonderful blow-gun used by the South American savages is the model on which these splendid guns are built. They are 12 inches long, made of heavy tin, with a wooden moutpiece, and shoot as straight as a die. With one you can shoot putty balls, nails, peas, sticks, darts, and many other missiles. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.
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THE MAGIC WALLET
Lots of fun can be had with it, puzzling people, while being used in a practical way to carry bank bills, letters, invoices, etc. Open with the straight bands on the left, lay a bill on top of bands, close wallet; open to the left, and the bill will be found under the crossed bands. Close wallet, open to the right, and the bill will be found under straight bands. How did it get there? That's the question. Price, 12 cents each, postpaid.
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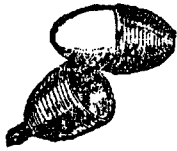
X-RAY WONDER
This is a wonderful little optical illusion. In use, you apparently see the bones in your hand, the hole in a pipe-stem, the lead in a pencil, etc. The principle on which it is operated cannot be disclosed here, but it will afford no end of fun for any person who has one. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

FOUR WEEKS (A LOUD BOOK).



Has the absolute and exact shape of a book in cloth. Upon the opening of the book, after having it set up according to directions furnished, a loud report similar to that of a pistol-shot will be heard, much to the amazement and surprise of the victim. Caps not available; can be bought at any toy store. Price, 65c, by mail, postpaid.

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VANISHING AND RE-APPEARING EGG.—Very fine, easy to perform and it produces a marvelous and mystifying effect. Egg is made to appear and vanish right before the eyes. Beautifully made.

Price, 25c.
M. O'NEILL,
425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

LITTLE RIP'S TEN-PINS.



In each set there are ten pins and two bowling balls, packed in a beautifully ornamented box. With one of these miniature sets you can play ten-pins on your dining-room table just as well as the game can be played in a regular alley. Every game known to professional bowlers can be worked with these pins. Price, 10c. per box by mail, postpaid.

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The Bottle Imp.—The peculiarity of this little bottle is that it cannot be made to lie down, and yet by simply passing the hand over it, the performer causes it to do so.

This trick affords great amusement, and is of convenient size to carry about. Price, 10c.
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SURPRISE PERFUME BOTTLE.



Those in the joke may freely smell the perfume in the bottle, but the uninitiated, on removing the cork will receive the contents in his hands. This is a simple and clever joke. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.

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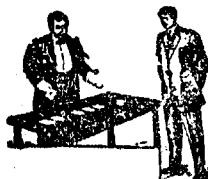
THE SWIMMING FISH.



Here is a fine mechanical toy. It is an imitation goldfish, about 4 1/2 inches long, and contains a water-tight compartment which will not allow it to sink. To keep it in a natural position, the lower fin is ballasted with lead. To make it work, a spring is wound up. You then throw it in the water, and the machinery inside causes the tail to wiggle, and propel it in the most lifelike manner. When it runs down the fish floats until it is recovered, and it can then be rewound. Races between two of these fishes are very interesting. Price, 25 cents each by mail, postpaid.

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THE SPOTTER, OR THE EDUCATED DIE.



—The performer exhibits a die. The Ace of Spades and five cards are now taken from a pack. The Ace of Spades is thoroughly shuffled with the other cards, which are then placed face down in a row on the table. The die is now thrown, and as it is embodied with superhuman intelligence, the exact position of the Ace is indicated. Without touching the die, the performer picks up the cards, gives them a complete shuffle and again spreads them out. The die is rolled as before by any person, and is seen to come to a stop with the locating number uppermost. The card is turned over and found to correspond in position. Price, 15c.

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Ayvad's Water-Wings



Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-handkerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring marks under the mouthpiece.

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Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nicked brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c.

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CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 28th St., N. Y.



SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING.—No trick has ever puzzled the scientists more and created a greater sensation than the famous spirit-writings which appear between sealed slates which have freshly been shown cleaned, carefully tied together and given to a spectator to hold. These spirits answer questions. Sold by us complete, slates and secret. No chemical used. Price, 75c.

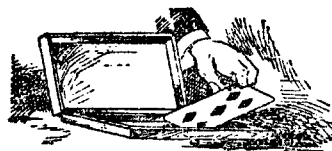
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THE FLUTTER-BY.



This mechanical flying machine is worked by a new principle. It looks like a beautiful butterfly, about 9 inches wide. In action its wing movements are exactly like those of a live butterfly. It will travel through the air about 25 feet, in the most natural manner. As flying toys are all the rage, this one should be a source of profit and amusement to both old and young. Price, 15c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



MAGIC CARD BOX.—A very cleverly made box of exchanging or vanishing cards. In fact, any number of tricks of this character can be performed by it. A very necessary magical accessory. Price, 15c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.



THE PRINCESS OF YOGI CARD TRICK.

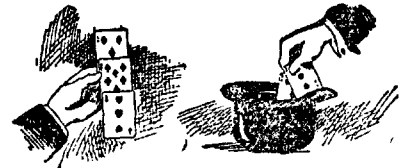
Four cards are held in the form of a fan and a spectator is requested to mentally select one of the four. The cards are now shuffled and one is openly taken away and placed in his pocket. The performer remarks that he has taken the card mentally selected by the spectator. The three cards are now displayed and the selected card is found to be missing. Reaching in his pocket the performer removes and exhibits the chosen card. Price, 15c.

J. KENNEDY, 56 Sedgwick Av., Yonkers, N. Y.



JUMPING CARD.—A pretty little trick, easy to perform. Effect: A selected card returned to the deck jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

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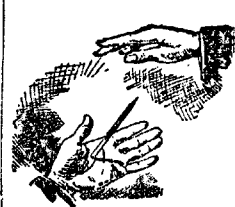
THE DEVIL'S CARD TRICK.—From three cards held in the hand anyone is asked to mentally select one. All three cards are placed in a hat and the performer removes first the two that the audience did not select and passing the hat to them their card has mysteriously vanished. A great climax; highly recommended. Price, 10c.

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APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do. Price, 35c.

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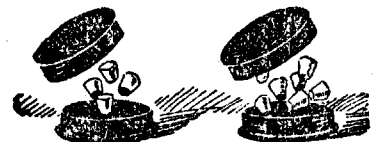
—The performer exhibits an ordinary pencil and shows it top and bottom. The pencil is laid on the palm, the performer calling attention to his hypnotic power over innate objects. The pencil is seen slowly to rise, following the movements of the other hand. The witnesses are asked to pass their hand around it to assure themselves no thread or hair is used. Price, 25c.

J. KENNEDY, 56 Sedgwick Av., Yonkers, N. Y.



"KNOCK-OUT" CARD TRICK.—Five cards are shown, front and back, and there are no two cards alike. You place some of them in a handkerchief and ask any person to hold them by the corners in full view of the audience. You now take the remaining cards and request anyone to name any card shown. This done, you repeat the name of the card and state that you will cause it to invisibly leave your hand and pass into the handkerchief, where it will be found among the other cards. At the word "Go!" you show that the chosen card has vanished, leaving absolutely only two cards. The handkerchief is unfolded by any person, and in it is found the identical card. Price, 10c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.



THE MULTIPLYING CORKS.—A small round box is shown to be empty and one of the spectators is allowed to place three corks in it. The cover is put on and the box is handed to one of the spectators, who, upon removing the cover, finds six corks in the box. Three of the corks are now made to vanish as mysteriously as they came. Very deceptive. Price, 15c.

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"Secret Service"

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 18, 1912.

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ITEMS WORTH READING

Seventeen species of shark, some of them 25 feet in length, inhabit the far Western seas, while the basking shark of the Indian Ocean frequently attains a length of 50 feet.

During the Boer war of 1881 one of the sentries of a British regiment, having been found asleep at his post, was tried by court martial and condemned to be shot. At the appointed time he was marched to a spot outside the camp, and the troops were drawn up to witness the execution of the unfortunate man. Just as the officer in charge was about to give the order to fire, a bullet flew into the group of officers and men, and the prisoner fell dead at their feet. The shot was from the rifle of a concealed Boer marksman. In "sniping" the British troops, he had unwittingly acted as executioner.

A Rhine Museum is soon to be founded at Koblenz, if present plans are carried out. It will include a large collection of charts, pictures, models and diagrams illustrating the physical conditions, past and present, of the famous river, and a complete exposition of its economic history. Some of the unique features will be: Models of the various types of vessel used on the Rhine from early times to the present; models of past and present bridges; illustrations of the methods and apparatus used in maintaining and improving the navigability of the river. A fine series of geological models is contemplated. The city of Koblenz has already given a site for the building.

The largest flyingfish on record was recently served for breakfast on the British warship *Ardeola* a short time ago. The *Ardeola* was homeward bound, and was off the Canary Islands, when a large school of flyingfish was observed. They were apparently in full flight from some deep-sea enemy, and traveling rapidly. As the ship met and passed them several flew on board, and were seized by the crew as welcome additions to the mess. One of the fish measured nineteen inches. The largest flyingfish ever seen before the *Ardeola's* catch have never exceeded ten inches. The big one was fried for the captain's breakfast. Flyingfish are very palatable, and taste like trout.

That the patent business of the Government has outgrown the quarters assigned for the conduct of the business is a fact well known to those in touch with conditions in the Patent Office. The pressure upon the space of the building has about reached its limit. It has been given out on authority that if all the printed patents stored in the building were laid end to end they would form a strip over 69,000 miles in length; or, if placed in a pile, would form a mass as high as the Washington Monument and ten feet square. If they were placed on one shelf; that shelf would be nineteen miles long. Over two miles of cases; nine shelves high, are crowded in the rooms, galleries, corridors and out-of-the-way nooks, from basement to attic, in the Patent Office. The papers accumulate at a rate which requires 100 feet of shelf space a week. Wooden shelving and these masses of papers make the fire danger great.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS

Farmer's Wife—What is your business? Weary William—I have started to walk around the world in the greatest possible number of days.

The most attentive man to business we ever knew was he who wrote on his store door: "Gone to get married. Back in fifteen minutes."

"Handsome decorations don't make life easier," said Uncle Eben. "A gold alarm clock wouldn't make it any mo' cheerful to git up dan one dat's nickel-plated."

"What do you think of this idea of the recall?" "It wouldn't work," replied the baseball fan. "If you undertook to put an umpire out every time the crowd hissed him the game couldn't go on."

"I told him there were dozens of people here in town who had never heard of him." "I guess that took him down a peg or two." "I'm sure it didn't. He started right out to find them and borrow money."

Jones (to wife)—Well, Maria, I'm going to stay at home with you to-day and help you to tidy up the house. I'll tack down the hall carpets and hang up the pictures, to begin with. Mrs. J. (to the children)—Children, you may go over to grandma's and stay all day. (Aside): I know my husband is a deacon of the church, but for all that he is just as apt to hit his thumb with a hammer as any other man.

Willie was a smart boy, and anxious to get on. His first job was in the bank. "Well, Willie, my boy," said his uncle to him, as he met him in the street car one day, "how are you getting on in business? I suppose you'll soon be manager, eh?" "Yes, uncle," replied Willie, "I'm getting on nicely. I'm already a draft clerk." "Really," replied his avuncular relative. "A draft clerk? That's very good." "Yes, uncle," remarked the bright lad. "I open and shut the windows according to order, and close the doors after people have left 'em open."

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