

Doughty Francis Worcester

**The Bradys' Chinese Clew: or,
The Secret Dens of Pell
Street**



Francis Doughty

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«Public Domain»

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CHAPTER I CAUGHT IN A TRAP

Late in the evening on August 12th, 19 – , one of the heaviest thunder storms known in many years broke over the city of New York.

The storm was accompanied by a terrific gale; trees were blown down, sign boards wrecked, houses were unroofed, sewers overflowed, and there was a general shake-up all along the line.

Of course, lives were lost here and there, especially on the rivers.

It taxed the memory even of the oldest inhabitant to recall such another storm.

During the height of the gale two gentlemen sat in the famous Tuxedo restaurant, that delight of chop suey fiends and slumming parties, on Pell street, Chinatown, indulging in a late supper, Chinese style.

One was an elderly man of striking appearance and peculiar dress.

He wore a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, while hanging to a peg above his head was a big white felt hat with an unusually broad brim.

His companion was a bright looking young fellow in his twenties.

The two men were none other than the world-famous detectives, the Bradys of the Brady Detective Bureau, Union Square, New York.

"Heavens, how it rains, governor," remarked Young King Brady as there was an extra loud splash against the window near which they sat.

"An awful storm, indeed," remarked the old detective. "It wouldn't surprise me if after all Mr. Butler did not come."

"He spoke in his letter of being quite feeble."

"Yes, and yet he gave his age at only sixty-five."

"Some men wear better than others."

"Decidedly so. We can only wait and see. I hate to disappoint Alice. There is no telling what difference it may make to her."

A deafening thunderclap interrupted the conversation.

Evidently the Bradys had come to Pell street for a purpose.

The storm continued to rage.

At twenty minutes past eleven the Bradys, who had held the table far beyond the limit by tipping their waiter, began to think it time to pull out.

"He will hardly come now," said the old detective. "Probably we shall hear from him to-morrow, but I am sorry we could not have finished up to-night. Alice is running a great risk, and I don't care to have her remain with that Chinese woman a moment longer than necessary."

He had scarcely spoken when a very young man, little more than a boy, in fact, entered the restaurant.

In his buttonhole he wore a yellow dahlia.

It was rather a singular flower for a boutonniere.

The Bradys noticed it at once.

"Look!" whispered Harry. "A yellow dahlia, the flower Mr. Butler was to wear so that we could identify him."

"Yes, but a young man – a mere boy. It must be a coincidence," the old detective replied.

"I don't know, governor. He has evidently spotted you. He is coming this way."

"Can Mr. Butler have sent a substitute?"

The boy approached the table.

He was dark and handsome, slightly undersized, and very well dressed.

"Excuse me," he said in a manly way, addressing the elder detective, "are you Old King Brady?"

"I am," was the reply.

"I thought so. My name is Butler – Ed Butler. My father had an appointment with you to-night at half-past ten; Mr. Edward Butler, of Albany. He was too sick to come to New York. He gave out at the last moment, so he sent me in his place."

"Sit down," replied Old King Brady. "You are terribly wet, my boy."

"Yes, it's raining like the dickens."

"Won't you have something to eat? A cup of coffee. You get good coffee here."

The boy sat down with a shudder.

"I don't want to eat anything in this place," he replied. "I think that mere knowledge that the food was prepared by a Chinaman would make it choke me."

"You don't like the Chinese, evidently," said Harry.

"Can you wonder? They have stolen my sister. Isn't that enough?"

"It is sad," observed Old King Brady, "but if white men will permit their daughters to act as teachers for Chinamen, what can they expect."

"That's what I say. I was opposed to Ethel having anything to do with that mission from the first, so was father, but mother encouraged her, and Ethel always would have her way. Now she has run off with a Chink, and I suppose it is the last we shall ever see of her. The minister who married them ought to be shot."

It was the old story.

Ed Butler's brief speech tells it. We need not enlarge.

Here was a pretty Albany girl, a mission worker, eloping with one of her Chinese pupils, a man years older than herself, and now her deluded mother sought to get her back again.

The Bradys would hardly have touched the case if it had not been that Mr. Butler occupied a government position at Albany, and they had been particularly requested by the chief of the Secret Service Bureau at Washington to take the matter up.

So far it had been only a matter of correspondence.

Old King Brady knew some things about the business which young Ed Butler did not know, and he was destined to learn still other things from a letter which the boy now delivered.

"When father found he couldn't come he wrote this, Mr. Brady," he said. "My orders were to deliver it to you before we made any talk."

"Ah!" said the old detective. "We will read the letter."

He did so.

It was quite lengthy.

Harry noticed that the old detective read certain parts of it over twice.

Folding it up and putting it in his pocket, at last the old detective turned to Ed.

"Are you much attached to Miss Ethel, my boy?" he asked.

"Why, sure – she's my sister," he replied quickly.

"I want the truth," said Old King Brady. "Certain points in your father's letter require me to ask the question. Be frank and honest now. You were constantly quarreling, were you not?"

"Sometimes we quarreled – yes. Ethel was rather hard on me."

"In other words, if she were not your sister you would not be in the least attached to her?"

Ed nodded, looking surprised.

"Well, I will say then for your benefit that the girl is no relation whatever to you. Your mother, as you are aware, is your father's second wife. You have always supposed Ethel to be your half sister, but she isn't even that. She is the daughter of Mr. Rawson, your mother's first husband by a previous marriage."

"Gee! I'm glad!" blurted the boy. "Now I can say what I really think. She's just horrid! I shouldn't shed a tear if we never found her, and that's a fact."

"So there is one load off your mind," observed the old detective.

"Yes, but why didn't my father tell me?" demanded Ed.

"He had sworn to your mother never to tell you. He instructs me to tell you, so that, in a way, he may not break his word."

"Poor pop," sighed Ed. "He certainly has a hard time of it. But what about Ethel? Is she here in Chinatown, as you supposed?"

"I believe such to be the case. My partner, Miss Montgomery, who has been working for three days on the matter, is to report to us to-night. Disguised as a Chinese woman, she has been in a certain place where she expected to get information, and I have no doubt has done so by this time. We shall soon see her, and then you will know."

"Am I to go along?"

"Yes, by your father's particular request. He says this is the first time you have been to New York. He wants you to learn something of the city and its peculiar ways."

"All right. I have seen enough of it already to make me think that I never want to see it again."

"You decide hastily. If you have come directly from the Grand Central station, as I suppose –"

"That's right."

"Then you have seen very little of it, and that little under unfavorable circumstances. Wait for a daylight view of New York before you decide."

"Where do we go?"

"To a Chinese house around the corner on Mott street."

"I don't see how your partner can work in with the Chinks. Of course, she can't speak Chinese?"

"As it happens she can, and that is just where her advantage comes in. But come, let us go."

They passed out into Pell street.

The rain had now almost ceased, and the wind had died away entirely, but the gutters were running rivers.

"A tremendous amount of water must have fallen," Harry observed.

"Indeed yes," replied Old King Brady. "It has been a terrible storm."

He and Harry walked ahead. Ed walked behind, as there was not room enough on the narrow sidewalk for them to walk three abreast.

"There is more to this case than appears on the surface," Old King Brady whispered to his partner.

"It seems that this wretched girl has robbed Mr. Butler of three thousand dollars in cash, and also of a bunch of valuable papers. He does not want to get her back. His engaging us with that idea is merely a bluff for the benefit of the wife. He does want the papers, however, and if she will give them up he is willing that she shall keep the cash. I am sorry the man did not come himself. There seems to be some mystery about the papers which I fail to understand."

"He makes no explanation of their contents?"

"Nothing further than to say that their loss will probably involve him in a large loss of money. I don't just see what he can mean, for, as I understand it, Mr. Butler is merely working on a salary, and not a very heavy one at that."

"I should like to see the letter. Perhaps I can make something more out of it."

"Possibly, possibly, still I doubt it. I will show it to you first chance I get, and – Good heavens! What was that?"

They had almost reached the point where Mott street joins with Pell.

Suddenly a crash had sounded behind them, and with it came a cry in a boyish voice:

"Help! Mr. Brady! Oh, help!"

Knowing, of course, that it could be no one else than the boy, Ed Butler, the Bradys instantly turned.

The boy had vanished.

Chinamen were running across the street, others were hurrying forward on the same side of the way.

There in the sidewalk was a large, gaping hole.

Two of the flagstones, undermined by the storm, probably, had sunk down just as the Bradys stepped off them.

Ed, less fortunate, had been caught in the break.

"Bless my soul! This is a great piece of business," cried Old King Brady.

Harry peered down into the hole.

It seemed to be pretty deep and it was also very dark.

Young King Brady could see nothing of the boy.

"Hello down there, Ed! Are you hurt?" he called.

"No; I'm all right. I went down with the stone. I'm not hurt a bit," came the answer, "but for heaven's sake get me out of here!"

It was easier said than done. The chattering bunch of Chinks crowding around offered no help.

"I don't see how in thunder we are going to get the boy up without a ladder," muttered Old King Brady.

"And where will we find one?" echoed Harry.

"That's the point. But here comes a policeman. Perhaps he can suggest – "

Thus far in his speech Old King Brady got when there came another call for help.

He could not exactly make out the words, but it was certainly, also, a cry of fear.

"Let go! Don't you touch me!" they heard now.

The cry came from the hole.

Then all was still below, although above the Chinamen chattered louder than ever.

"By Jove! the Chinks are going for the boy," cried Harry. "He has fallen into one of the secret dens of Pell street, sure!"

It looked like it.

The policeman came.

The Bradys turned electric flash lights into the hole.

It seemed to be a brick vault of considerable size.

But there was no one in it so far as they could discover.

Harry's repeated shouts to Ed brought no response.

"I must go down there and look for the boy!" cried Harry.

"Hold on," said the policeman, who was a person they knew; "if the Chinks have got him, they may get you, too. You know what Chinatown is."

"I ought to by this time!" cried Harry. "Lower me down, governor."

"The officer is right," said Old King Brady. "We better be sure than sorry. If we only had a rope."

"Look here, some of youse guys, get a rope!" cried the policeman, charging in among the crowd.

There were enough that understood him.

Some of them started to act.

A moment later a man came out of a Chinese grocery near by with a rope.

It was tied under Harry's arms and he was lowered into the hole.

The floor of the vault had water an inch deep upon it; the brick sides were dripping with a slimy ooze.

But there was no sign of Ed.

Nor was there any apparent opening except at the top.

The walls on all sides looked to be solid.

And Young King Brady saw now that they were up against another Chinese mystery.

But a mystery had also been revealed.

For the great storm had laid open one of the secrets of Pell street.

And who could say into what sort of a queer den this opening might lead?

CHAPTER II

ED FINDS ETHEL

Ed Cullen was not yet eighteen, although he looked to be twenty.
The boy, in fact, had but just graduated from the Albany High School.
He little dreamed into what peculiar adventures this visit to New York was destined to lead him.
The fall of the two flagstones came altogether as a surprise to Ed.
Doubtless the weight of the Bradys as they trod upon them completed the work of the water.
At all events, Ed had no more than planted his feet upon them when down they went.
The shock sent the boy on his knees.
He scrambled up and answered the Bradys as told.
Then an instant later Ed was seized from behind by two pairs of hands.
A secret door – bricks set in a box – had opened.
The boy, in spite of his struggles, was dragged through the opening.
Two Chinamen had captured Ed.
But why?

There was the mystery!

And we may as well add right here that just how it came about was never fully explained.

The chances are that the pair were inside the secret door when Ed fell, and hearing the noise, looked in upon him, although he did not see them.

A third Chink in American dress, which was not the case with the others, stood in a narrow passage holding a lantern.

Instantly Ed recognized him as Pow Chow, the Chinese mission worker who had run away with Ethel Rawson and caused all the trouble.

"You scoundrel!" cried Ed, who was nothing if not plucky.

He made a dive at the fellow and dealt him a stinging blow in the face.

It was a piece of folly, of course.

That was the time Ed got it good and plenty.

Pow Chow hit him over the head with the lantern.

The two others set upon the boy and gave him a good pounding.

Then having completely subdued him, for Ed saw that he was not in it, they dragged him along the passage through a door, and into one of the secret dens of Pell street, of which there are many, if rumor tells the truth.

It was a square room furnished in Chinese style and lighted by a hanging lamp.

The Chinaman gave Ed a shove and laughed when he landed on his back in a corner.

But Pow Chow did not laugh.

He came forward threateningly.

"You little fool! Whatever brought you to New York?" he demanded. "Looking for Ethel, hey?"

Pow Chow's English was perfect, for he was San Francisco born and his mother was a white woman, so he had always claimed, although he did not look like a half breed.

Ed picked himself up and glared at this man, whom he hated and despised.

"Where's Ethel?" he demanded, feeling that he had to say something.

"Never you mind where she is. What brought you here? Came to find her and to bring her back, I suppose. Well, she won't go."

"I haven't a thing to say to you," retorted Ed. "You let me out of here or Old King Brady will be after you. I want you to understand I am with him."

It was an exceedingly foolish speech.

The two Chinks began to chatter in their own language.

"Do you mean to say your father has set Old King Brady on to me?" demanded Pow Chow.

"Yes, he has. I was with him and his partner when I fell down into that hole. They'll be right after me. You let me go!"

Instead of answering, the man said something to his companions.

Evidently he gave the order to have Ed carried still further into these secret dens.

They immediately set upon the boy and blindfolded him.

Ed was then dragged out of the room, hurried upstairs and downstairs, through passages, up more stairs, and then down a long flight.

Resistance was impossible. A Chinaman had him on either side.

At last the journey ending, the handkerchief was removed, and Ed found himself in a little box of a room where there was a mattress flung down on the floor.

"There!" exclaimed Pow Chow. "Now we have brought you to a place where your friends, the Bradys, will never find you, Eddie. See that bed – it's yours for to-night – better get on it and make yourself as comfortable as you can."

And having said this, Pow Chow withdrew. His companions followed him, and Ed found himself a prisoner behind an iron door, which no power he could have exerted would budge.

And in that secret den Ed Butler stopped all night.

Worse still for the boy's peace of mind, he remained in that hot, stuffy place all the next day.

No one came near him.

At the end of his imprisonment Ed found himself a very uncomfortable boy.

Ravenously hungry, choked with thirst, despairing of ever getting help, he was thoroughly alarmed for his own safety.

He had almost come to the conclusion that Pow Chow meant to let him starve to death there in the secret den.

But no!

Relief came at last.

It did not come with the appearance of Pow Chow, however.

The two Chinamen who had captured him now appeared.

Ed was taken out and again blindfolded, was led by many devious ways to a large, well furnished room, which seemed to be on an upper floor, for he could see roofs out of a window.

There were several Chinamen sitting around smoking.

None of them paid any attention to Ed.

The idea now seemed to be to give the boy a chance to repair damages.

He was shown a sink, where he washed his face and hands.

Meanwhile a big, coarse looking white woman was busy putting food on a table.

A fairly good meal was spread, and Ed was told to eat.

By this time, as may well be imagined, the boy's prejudices had been overcome, and he demolished the food in short order.

Twice he asked about Pow Chow, and once what they intended to do with him, but no attention whatever was paid to his questions.

The meal over, one of the Chinamen offered him a cigar.

Ed had learned to smoke.

The cigar looked good to him, and he lit it, thinking that if he made himself sociable good might come of it.

It was just the reverse.

The cigar was drugged beyond all question.

Ed did not discover this until he had smoked fully half of it.

Then his head began to buzz.

He put the cigar down and staggered to his feet.

The Chinks were all watching him curiously the moment he made a move.

Ed tried to speak, but the words sounded like gibberish even to his own ears.

The room was whirling now.

Ed thought he was whirling with it.

The next he knew he was staggering backward.

He tried to get his balance, but it was impossible.

Falling, he struck the back of his head a blow which knocked him out completely.

When at last the boy came to his senses the scene had changed.

Ed now found himself lying on the bottom of a wagon with a pillow under his head.

He felt miserably sick and nauseated, and his head ached horribly.

The wagon was rattling over rough pavements.

He could see that it was being driven by an Americanized Chinaman; another of the same sort sat with him on the seat.

Slowly the boy began to pull himself together and to take in his situation.

His next discovery was that instead of being in his own clothes he was dressed in Chinese costume.

"Where can they be taking me? Whatever do they mean to do with me?" Ed asked himself.

But these were questions to which he could find no answer, of course.

He ventured to speak at last.

One of the Chinamen then produced a revolver, and looking back, stuck the weapon in Ed's face.

"Lookee here, you boy!" he growled, "keepee belly still; be belly good now or me shootee you dead – see? Dlat light. Me killee you if you makee fluss – see?"

Ed would have been dumb indeed if he had not understood the danger of his position.

He resolved to go slow, and he lay still for the remainder of the drive, which seemed interminable.

But it came to an end at last.

As Ed lay he could form no idea where he was going; indeed, he could not have told much about it anyhow.

All he had to go by was the fact that for the last half hour they had been driving along a country road.

He felt sure that they must have passed beyond the city limits for that reason.

At last the wagon stopped and one of the Chinamen got out.

He was gone some minutes, and when he returned Pow Chow was with him.

The latter climbed up into the wagon and looked in on Ed.

"Well, Eddie, how do you feel?" he demanded in a tone which seemed to be intended to be friendly.

"I feel bad enough even to suit you, I guess," replied Ed. "What have you brought me away out here for? What do you intend to do with me?"

"I intend to take you to Ethel if you will go quietly," was the answer. "If you won't do that, I suppose I shall have to take you by force. Which shall it be?"

"Oh, I'll go," said Ed. "Got to, I suppose. Does Ethel stand for the way you have treated me?"

"Ethel is my wife," replied Pow Chow. "She stands for anything I stand for – see? Get out and behave yourself now, Eddy, and you will come to no harm. I am sorry they kept you so long without feeding you. That was a mistake."

Ed now allowed Pow Chow to help him out of the wagon.

The effects of the drugged cigar had not altogether departed yet, as he found when he got on his feet.

They were out in the country and close to the shore of some large body of salt water, but it was not the ocean. Ed could see lights on the opposite shore, which seemed to be a long distance away.

They turned up a lane and came to a small frame house standing back among trees. Ed could not see any other house near.

Pow Chow led him around to the rear, and as they approached Ed saw Ethel appear at the open door.

The foolish girl was flashily dressed in Chinese female costume, wearing a red silk blouse and yellow trousers with Chinese shoes on her feet.

There were imitation diamonds in her hair and a big one in the form of a brooch was at her throat – perhaps she thought them real.

She looked to Ed so ridiculous that he could hardly refrain from laughing.

But he controlled himself and she came out to meet him.

"Oh, Eddie!" she exclaimed. "So you've come. I could hardly believe dear Pow when he said he meant to fetch you. How did you leave them all at home? Of course, I don't care what Mr. Butler thinks, but is mother very mad with me?"

"Indeed she is! I left her sick in bed," replied Ed. "Oh, Ethel, how could you ever be such a fool?"

"Come, shut up. None of that talk," said Pow Chow gruffly. "Go on in."

They entered, Ethel leading the way to a little parlor.

"We have taken this house, furnished, for a few weeks," she said. "You see we had to hide, for, of course, I knew father – I mean Mr. Butler – would send detectives after us. I hear he did it, too – the Bradys. You were with them last night. Tell me all about it, Eddie, and then perhaps I'll tell you something which will make you open your eyes."

"Come, cut that out!" broke in Pow Chow. "We haven't decided yet whether to tell him or not, you know. Anyway, we have got him safely out of Chinatown. I understand the Bradys were looking for him half the night."

"And they didn't find him. Oh, I am so glad. It's a shame he had to suffer so, though. I think you might have made it easier for my brother, Pow."

Ed was on the point of breaking in with: "I'm not your brother," but he concluded that it would pay him best to hold his tongue until he understood better what all this meant.

He had his suspicions, however.

He felt quite certain that it had something to do with the papers stolen from his father about which there had been much mystery.

Ed knew something about these papers, but not all.

What he knew we shall later explain.

CHAPTER III

WORKING FOR A CHINESE CLEW

It was true that the Bradys spent much time searching for Ed.

In this they were aided by a wardman from the Elizabeth street station, who was supposed to know much about the secret dens of Pell street, and we want it understood that the Bradys are by no means ignorant on that subject themselves.

But as it happened they did not know of any secret dens under that particular house, nor did the wardman, nor could they find any. At last they broke down the wall on two sides of the vault from which Ed had vanished.

Then they discovered the secret passage.

They traced it to its end, and it took a turn, bringing them in under another house.

Here there were two secret rooms where there had once been a private joss house conducted by the Chinese "Tong" or guild known as the Brother of the Red Door.

This particular place, as it happened, had been pulled by the Bradys about a year before.

They found the rooms empty and deserted.

Thus they missed it so far as Ed was concerned, and they finally gave up, feeling satisfied that they had overlooked some hidden door or passage which, of course, must have been the case.

It was now too late to look up Alice, as intended.

Where she was must now be explained.

Alice some time before had made a friend of a certain Chinese woman whose husband was a sort of detective or spy for the On Leong tong or merchants society in Chinatown.

This man's operations were confined to his own people.

He also knew Alice and liked her.

It was he who suggested that she come to his wife's rooms in Chinese disguise, and so be on hand ready to talk with the missing girl as soon as he could locate her, which he felt quite certain he would be able to do, for he had received positive knowledge that the girl had been seen in Chinatown along with an Americanized Chink, a stranger there, whom he believed to be Pow Chow.

But it would have done the Bradys little good if they had taken Mr. Butler to Alice, as they originally intended to do, for the detective did not come home that night.

Next morning his wife heard that he had gone to Chicago on business for the On Leong tong, so Alice gave it up, and about nine o'clock turned up at the offices of the Brady Detective Bureau, on Union Square, in her ordinary dress.

"Oh, you are here," exclaimed Old King Brady. "Harry was just going down to Chinatown to look you up. I suppose you are wondering what became of us last night?" and he went on to explain.

"This is a bad beginning," remarked Alice. "I don't know that I can help any more, either," and she went on to tell about the Chinese detective being called away.

"I am sorry," said Old King Brady. "I should have liked to have had his advice. The disappearance of that boy is certainly a puzzle. I shall never rest until I have found him. I wish now I had never touched the case."

"It does look pretty hopeless," remarked Harry, who had entered just in time to overhear this remark, "but never mind. We will get there. One thing, though. If it was me I wouldn't do a thing further than to try to find the boy until I knew more about the case. Mr. Butler ought to at least tell us what these papers are he is so anxious to find."

"He is singularly reticent about them," replied Old King Brady, "frank as he is on other points, especially his dislike for his wife. But we must decide upon some course of action. I don't propose to be downed."

Just then a clerk handed in a card.

It was a lady's visiting card and bore the name of Mrs. Butler.

"Another surprise," muttered Old King Brady. "Not satisfied with sending his son to us, the man has now sent his wife."

The visitor proved to be an overdressed, loud-voiced woman of forty odd.

"I suppose you are surprised to see me, Mr. Brady!" she exclaimed, making eyes at the old detective as she proceeded to seat herself. "The fact is, Mr. Butler was taken sick. He sent his son to you yesterday. The foolishness of it. Ed is a good boy, but he is only a boy. Where is he? Has he been here yet?"

"No, madam, he has not been here," replied Old King Brady, who saw at once that the woman was acting on her own account, and probably without the knowledge of her husband.

"The lazy fellow has probably overslept himself," said the woman, working her fan. "Just like him. I thought it might be so. I am just as well pleased. I wanted a chance to talk to you first. Have you heard anything of Ethel – my daughter, I mean?"

"No, madam; nothing definite as yet," replied the old detective.

"I was afraid it would be so. Pow is a very slick fellow. But you must certainly find her, Mr. Brady. You see, not only do I love the poor deluded girl dearly, but she has robbed us. Three thousand in cash, Mr. Brady; money that I have been saving for years. Then there are certain important papers. Those are what we are most anxious to obtain."

"Yes, ma'am. And what may the nature of those papers be?" the old detective asked.

"That I should prefer not to explain."

"But, my dear madam, you leave us in the dark. How can we be expected to find papers of which we know nothing?"

"Oh, you just find my daughter. She will give up the papers quick enough."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure if I can only once get my hands on her."

"Where are you staying?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet. You see I came here directly from the train. I shall make it a point to send you my address once I am located."

"And this boy! Shall we send him home?"

"That will be the best way, if he will mind you. He never will me. He is a wild, harum-scarum fellow. It was perfect nonsense to send him here to look for his sister. But I wish you would tell me what you have done. I understood from Mr. Butler that you had learned that Ethel was here along with her Chinese husband."

"We have learned that much, Mrs. Butler, but we have been unable to locate her."

"It is too bad. I suppose Mr. Butler considers it all my fault. I don't. Pow persuaded Ethel to act as she did, I am sure. I don't know as I am to be held accountable in such a case."

Old King Brady all this time had been sizing the woman up.

With her husband's letter in his pocket, which told him of family jars, accusing Mrs. Butler of aiding and abetting Ethel in her Chinese escapade, and even hinting at the necessity of a speedy divorce for the writer, he saw plainly that some powerful motive other than love for her adopted daughter must have influenced her when she made this sudden move.

He resolved to shake her off and turn her over to Alice, telling her nothing about Ed.

"Mrs. Butler," he said, "let me be perfectly frank with you. Since Mr. Butler could not come to us, we must decline to pursue this case any further. All I have been able to learn about your daughter came to me through a certain female detective, a woman who is partly Chinese. She has a room on Pell street, in Chinatown. Better see her this afternoon. I happen to know that she will be in her room at three o'clock. No doubt she will be glad to help you along in the matter. She is a person you can rely on."

The woman looked surprised.

Old King Brady felt that she also looked rather relieved.

"What is this woman's name?" she asked.

"Her real name is Chinese. I forget it," was the reply. "She goes by the name of Gertrude Brown. Here is her address."

Old King Brady scribbled name and address on a slip of paper and passed it over to Mrs. Butler.

"Are her charges high?" the woman asked.

"Just the reverse. She is very reasonable, while our charges are high. Tell her that I sent you and that I have dropped the case. She will use you right."

"I am sure I am very much obliged to you," said Mrs. Butler, rising to depart. "But about Ed. You will send him home if he comes to you?"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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