

GREEN EYES

by Maxwell Grant

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Why had the master detective, who menaced evildoers of the East, followed a trail of death to San Francisco? Had he unraveled the mystery of Stephen Laird's gruesome murder? Only The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER I

THE MARK OF DEATH

THE MOUNTAIN LIMITED was clicking slowly over the rails that trail through the highest and wildest land in America - the western slope of the Rockies. Speed was cut down as the big special labored toward the highest point on its line - nearly seven thousand feet above sea level.

Midnight had struck.

Outside, the gloomy mountains hung over the track; seemed about to close in on it, and wipe out the train and all its passengers.

Within the club car of the train, only a handful of men remained in the comfortable chairs.

All of these were dozing away, with the exception of one who sat at the end of the car, puffing furiously at a pipe that was no longer alight. His lips twitched, his eyes blinked furiously, and every time one of his dozing companions stirred, he whirled around quickly, as though the sound had some hideous portent.

Pulling a watch from his pocket, he gave it a hurried glance, then allowed his eyes to wander around the car. Satisfied that no one was observing him, he crossed quickly to the writing desk.

His hand shook, partly from nervousness and partly from the swaying of the train. Making no effort to control the blotching of the pen, he pushed it rapidly across the paper. There was something furtive in his haste.

Finally he signed his name - Stephen Laird - and blotted the letter. Just then one of the other men in the car mumbled something drowsily, and Laird thrust the letter into his pocket. He leaned back and assumed an air of nonchalance that was obviously false.

For a minute he sat there, tensely posed in an attitude of ease. Then, he took the sheet of letter paper from his pocket, and laid it on the desk.

Rapidly Laird addressed an envelope, blotted it, put the letter in, and stamped it. The glue from the stamp smeared over his lower lip as he licked it with sharp, uncertain movements.

Stephen Laird jumped up from the desk, and started to walk forward in the car. Suddenly he stopped, went back to the writing desk, and, picking up the blotter that he had used, thrust it into his pocket.

It was a new sheet of white blotting paper, and had retained an almost perfect reproduction of what Laird had written. Drops of sweat appeared upon his forehead, as though in horror at a near escape.

The sweat made a mark on the man's forehead stand out in relief. It was a red mark - almost as red as blood. There was something awe-striking about it.

LAIRD started toward the front end of the car again. As he neared the corridor, the porter appeared, blinking drowsily. Laird handed the Negro a dollar bill.

"How soon can you mail a letter for me?" he asked in a low, nervous, voice.

"Next stop is Truckee, suh," answered the porter.

"How soon?" was the sharp retort.

"Bout fo'ty minutes, suh. Train goes downhill pretty soon, now."

Laird hesitated. His hand moved toward the pocket where he had put the letter.

"Come and see me in twenty minutes, then. I'll have a letter for you."

"Yes, suh."

"Or, no, wait a minute." Laird took the letter from his pocket, and held it tentatively for a minute. He studied the porter through narrowed eyelids.

The porter gazed back timidly. He noticed that the passenger's eyes were close together. They seemed like two threatening knife points to the superstitious Pullman hand.

Laird seemed satisfied with his scrutiny. He relaxed slightly, and handed the porter the letter. The latter gazed at it slyly, and said:

"I'll sho' mail this, Misteh Laird. I won't forget now!"

Laird jumped.

"How did you know my name?" He shot the question at the terrified porter viciously.

"Fum the envelope, suh. Jus' fum the corner of the envelope."

Again Laird relaxed. The porter tried to pull himself together, but just as he was on the point of regaining his composure, he noticed the little red mark on Laird's forehead.

It seemed to strike terror to the Negro's soul, though he could not explain why. There was something sinister about the bloodlike mark.

Laird laughed, half in relief at having gotten the letter off his hands, half in amusement at the porter's obvious terror. Then he turned and walked unconcernedly back toward the rear of the train.

After the passenger had gone, the porter stood still a moment, trying to connect the red mark with something else in his experience. Finally he shook his head, and walked to the letter rack in the rear of the car.

Into the open rack he dropped the letter. There were already a half dozen envelopes there, ready to be mailed at Truckee.

The porter disappeared into the linen closet. Immediately one of the dozing men leaped to his feet. He sprang to the letter rack, threw a quick glance around the car, and withdrew the letter the porter had just placed there. Then he hurried from the car.

THE train was slowing down still further as it reached the pass through the mountains. As the man who had just stolen the letter hastened in the same direction Stephen Laird had taken, he noticed that there was hardly any sideward motion at all.

The letter thief quickly reached the observation car. It was deserted. The man walked to the glass door at the rear of the car, hesitated a few moments, and then stepped out onto the platform.

Although it was now past one o'clock, there was a man sitting in the darkness on the left side of the little platform. He glanced up sharply as the thief appeared; but the newcomer paid no attention to him. Instead, he dusted off the unoccupied chair, and sat down on the right side of the gallery.

After a few minutes of silence, the man on the left lighted a cigarette. The glare of the match in his cupped hands revealed the sallow, nervous features of Stephen Laird. The crimson mark stood out over the blinking, furtive eyes.

The match went out. Laird's head was facing forward, looking straight back along the dropping tracks that stretched to the coast.

The train rattled as it bumped over a switch point and onto the double-tracked roadbed that indicated a bypass. A signal post appeared.

It carried a single green light. Laird's eyes focused on that glare. His body shook with an irresistible shudder. That single disk of brilliant green had awakened some horrible memory in his mind!

He mumbled: "Green! Green! Like those other lights - like those awful eyes!"

The words were not loud enough for the man who had stolen the speaker's letter to distinguish. His side of the platform was wrapped in a blanket of clickings and grumbings as a long line of darkened sleepers passed by, bound west.

Brakes ground as the eastbound limited slowed. A crying gasp sounded on the observation platform. It rose to a crescendo that was completely obscured by the noise of the brakes and the passing train. Finally it sank to a gasping moan.

The observation platform was dark. The brakeman who climbed over the rear railing noticed nothing as he swung his lantern over the right side of the platform for an increase in speed.

The limited picked up speed on the easy down grade to Truckee. The brakeman, his work done, turned to go into the car. His red lantern swung within a foot of the chair that Laird had been occupying. The light showed the huddled, motionless form of a man. His head was forward on his chest. His breath was coming in short, audible gasps.

The brakeman set down the lantern and shook the huddled body. There was no response. Quickly the train hand swung the helpless man into the closed part of the car, and dropped him on a long couch.

The light in the car showed a horrible sight. Stephen Laird's chest was covered with blood. His coat and vest were ripped to shreds. He had been brutally stabbed!

The brakeman dropped to his knees to support the gory victim, and shouted for the porter. The latter brought the conductor, who tried to force water between Laird's lips.

Both the brakeman and the conductor focused their eyes on the crimson sign that stood out like a beacon against the deathly pallor of Laird's forehead.

The porter ran to try and find a doctor. It was immediately apparent that without medical assistance, Laird would not live the few minutes it would take the train to get to Truckee and a hospital.

Laird's lips were moving. The conductor bent over, trying to catch something that would give a clue to the attack.

"Eyes," said the dying man. "Green eyes!"

The conductor reached for a slip of paper. He urged Laird to speak further.

"In the box," was all he could distinguish.

"Yes," said the conductor. "In the box. What box?"

"See -" The words were cut off by a gurgle of blood issuing from Laird's pale lips.

The dying man said something indistinguishable. The conductor crouched closer.

"T - A - G -" A pause, and then: "A -" The pale lips and dimming brain were trying to say something of such importance that it had to be spelled. The

conductor wrote down the letters.

They were the last that Stephen Laird ever said. His mouth opened, and more blood gushed forth. His fingers twitched twice, and then stiffened.

A physician, hastily aroused by the observation-car porter, hurried in, dressed in trousers over pajamas. He bent over Laird a moment, and then straightened.

"He's dead," he said. "Murdered!"

THE conductor went through Laird's pocket, looking for a railroad check. He found it, in an envelope marked Stephen Laird. He wrote the name on a sheet of paper, and then copied his notes. He read them to the doctor:

"See in the box. Tag A.' He tried to spell it. 'T - A - G' - then, he managed to gasp out the letter 'A.' That was all he was able to say."

The brakeman went out on the platform where he had found Laird's body. He called to the conductor, pointed to the blood-stained corner of the platform, and held up a piece of white paper.

"Right here, where I found - found him, there was this."

The conductor took the fragment. It was part of the blotter that Laird had thrust into his pocket in the club car. This scrap bore only two letters: R and D, in reverse, the last letters of the murdered man's signature.

The conductor did not realize this. He searched for the rest of the blotter, in vain.

"Go up ahead," he said to the brakeman, "and bring back the porter from the club car. Maybe he'll know something. This looks like one of the line's blotters."

The porter, brought in by the brakeman, eyed the body cautiously.

"Yes, suh," he said. "That's the one, suh. He give me a letter, suh, jus' a li'l while ago. I got it heah, Misteh Conductuh, right heah in the mail foh Truckee."

While he spoke, he had been searching through the mail for Truckee. There was no envelope with Stephen Laird's name on the corner.

Meanwhile the observation-car porter and the brakeman had been having trouble keeping curious passengers out of the car. The brakeman called to the conductor.

"Here's a gentleman who says he's from the newspapers, conductor. Shall I let him in?"

The conductor nodded his assent. A man bustled forward, dressed, like the doctor, in pajamas and trousers. He showed the conductor his credentials. He was a correspondent from one of the newspaper syndicates, returning from a Western story.

The conductor told this man what he knew about the murder. The latter's eyes glistened. This was a fine story. "Murder on the Mountain Limited." He could already see the headlines.

He made a special note of the mysterious last words of Stephen Laird.

"Laird said something, too, about eyes," remarked the conductor thoughtfully. "Green eyes, as I remember it. But that was when I first got there. This is all I have written down: 'in the box,' and then 'see,' and then this about 'Tag A,' that he tried to spell."

Up ahead, the whistle blasted through the night. The train was coming into Truckee, where the authorities would take over the body and the mystery.

The little group of men around the dead man dropped into silence. The correspondent was sitting down scribbling off a telegram to file at the station.

But he said nothing about the red mark on Stephen Laird's forehead, because no one had thought to mention it.

That mark was scarcely noticeable now. It was nothing more than a faint blur.

Living, the red mark on Laird's forehead had impressed three men: the porter, the conductor, and the brakeman.

Now that Laird was dead, the mark was dying, too, as though it were connected with his soul, rather than with his body. In the excitement, the mark was forgotten.

The porter had been sent back to his car. All that the newspapers and the authorities were told was that a man had been found stabbed on the observation platform; a fragment of blotter had been found beside him; he had uttered certain vague words and letters before his death; and a letter which he had written had been stolen.

But of all the details marking the murder of Stephen Laird, that vanished crimson mark was most significant. For it was that sign that brought him to his doom!

That spot that shone like blood was the mark of death! Now, death had struck; and its mark - no longer needed - was gone!

CHAPTER II

THE FACE FROM THE DARK

SEVERAL days had passed since the strange death of Stephen Laird, passenger on the Mountain Limited. The case had created a wide sensation at first. Now, with no solution toward the mystery, it had dropped into prompt oblivion.

It was evening, in San Francisco. A tall, well-dressed man entered the lobby of the Aldebaran Hotel, carrying a light suitcase. He stepped up to the desk to register. The clerk noted the name which the writer fashioned in a clear, sweeping hand.

The new guest's name was Henry Arnaud.

"What kind of a room would you like, Mr. Arnaud?" questioned the clerk.

"I should prefer one on the top floor," was the reply.

The clerk looked over the list of vacant rooms. The Aldebaran was a second-rate hostelry, and was never filled with guests. But due to its location on one of the noisy streets that angle northward from Market, the rooms on the upper floors were always occupied. At present, there was just one vacancy on the eighth floor, the highest story in the house. The clerk passed it by.

"I can give you something on the seventh -"

"No," said Arnaud, shaking his head emphatically. "I want to be as high up as possible. If I can't get a room on the top floor, I shall go somewhere else."

"Wait a moment!" The clerk pretended to make a sudden discovery. "Here you are, sir - Room 806. A very nice room, Mr. Arnaud."

The guest seemed highly pleased, and turned his bag over to the waiting bell boy. The clerk called out the number of the room, and Henry Arnaud started to the elevator. The clerk shrugged his shoulders.

There was a very definite reason why Room 806 was vacant. Until a few nights ago, it had been occupied by Stephen Laird. That guest had left the Aldebaran one evening to take the Mountain Limited for Chicago.

The police at Truckee had discovered an envelope in Laird's pocket, marked with the number of the room and the name of the hotel at which he had stopped in San Francisco.

So, on the following morning, the police of the coast city had called at the Aldebaran to search the room for clues that might lead to a solution of the murder of Stephen Laird. The room had been bare of evidence, and the clerk had been instructed to keep it vacant for a few days.

There was no ban now; but 806 was not to be offered to a guest without good excuse for so doing. The excuse had worked excellently tonight. Henry Arnaud had insisted upon an eighth-story room; he had received the only one available.

The clerk's eyes scanned the lobby. He wanted to be sure that the issuing of Room 806 had caused no comments. Many of the guests at the Aldebaran were permanents who might talk about the fact that Laird had lived there almost until the time of his murder.

One man who had been reading a newspaper was strolling from the lobby; no others showed any sign of activity.

MEANWHILE, Henry Arnaud had reached Room 806. The room occupied a corner of the hotel. One window opened on the front street; the other covered a vacant lot.

The room was small. It had no bath. A large wardrobe stood in the corner, in lieu of a closet. The only modern touch to this room was a reading lamp on a small table beside the single bed.

Yet Arnaud did not appear dissatisfied with his quarters. He tipped the bell boy and carefully locked the door after the attendant had left the room. He seated himself in a chair beside the bed. He took an old newspaper from the pocket of his light overcoat.

As Arnaud spread the paper, his eyes rested upon a paragraph relating to the death of Stephen Laird. It was an exact account of the man's demise, and gave the conductor's version of everything he had heard the dying man say.

What was the meaning of the statement, "Tag A," the last message that Laird had tried to give? That was a mystery. The newspaper paragraph also stated that the envelope scrawled with 806, Aldebaran Hotel, had been found in the dead man's pocket.

Henry Arnaud smiled as he scanned that notice. It explained his presence here tonight. He had chosen this room by design, not by accident.

The light that shone upon Henry Arnaud's face revealed a countenance that was both distinctive and unusual. Henry Arnaud was possessed of firmly molded features that appeared almost as if they had been chiseled by a human hand. They gave a quiet, motionless expression to his countenance.

One could not have told the age of this man. Forty years might have been a fair estimate, but its accuracy could not have been more than speculative.

He was a being with a human mask, whose face became more inscrutable as it was examined closer. In the proximity of the light, it was even more impressive than in the poorly illuminated lobby. Arnaud's eyes were an amazing factor. They sparkled with a glow that boded mystery.

Slowly, Henry Arnaud raised his hand and extinguished the light beside the bed. The room was now in total darkness. No sign existed of its human occupant.

Henry Arnaud had not stirred from his chair. But now, his eyes were turned toward the window.

Blocks away, they saw the glow of an illuminated district. Henry Arnaud was looking toward the strangest and most fascinating district of America - San Francisco's Chinatown.

The lights from that cluster of steep-pitched streets betokened a merging of Occidental invention with the glamour of the Orient. There, within sight of this hotel, dwelt the largest settlement of Chinese outside of China itself.

Electric signs glowed with Chinese characters. These were accompanied by English words. It was upon one such sign that Henry Arnaud's eyes were focused. This sign bore the large words:

MUKDEN THEATER.

The sign itself was a bizarre Oriental creation. Rows of colored lights crawled dragonlike from the lower corners until they reached a glittering ball of resplendent incandescents near the top of the sign.

Above these was a small circle of yellow lights that did not move. From the center of the circle shone two lights of green, placed side by side. They seemed a challenge to the man who watched them from the window of the hotel.

An imaginative person - had Henry Arnaud been such - might have sworn that those lights were staring back at him.

Click! The lamp came on in the room. Henry Arnaud arose from his chair and walked about. He doffed his coat and vest. He removed his collar and necktie. He went to the telephone and ordered ice water.

When the bell boy arrived, Arnaud opened the door and stepped into the hall to receive the pitcher. He yawned as he tipped the servitor.

"Leave a call at the desk for me," he said. "Tell them seven thirty - and to keep on ringing until I wake up. I'm dead tired. I'll be sleeping soundly ten minutes from now, and it takes lots of noise to arouse me."

"Yes, sir," responded the bell boy.

The door closed. The lock clicked. The bell boy returned to the elevator and stood waiting in the deep silence of the hall.

The Aldebaran was a gloomy hotel. When the bell boy had gone down in the elevator, the place was as still and as morbid as a morgue.

ACROSS the hall from Arnaud's room, a door was ajar. Eyes were peering through the crack of that door - eyes that stared with a sinister purpose. They were glued upon the single exit from Arnaud's room. They were waiting and watching, making sure that the guest in 806 did not leave.

Now a figure appeared from the door. It was a grotesque, crouching figure that crept slowly forward, making no noise as it advanced. The clothes that it wore were dark; but the face above them bore a yellow tinge.

In action, although not in guise, this creature bore the semblance of a Chinaman. His hands were close against his breast.

He listened outside the door of 806, his face now hidden from the light. This was a secluded portion of the hall. Yet the crouched man seemed ready to slide back to the other room at the first sign of an approaching person.

Within the room, Henry Arnaud again stood in darkness. The only indications of his presence that reached the man outside were the sounds that he made.

The clasps of the bag clicked as Arnaud undid them. He coughed slightly as he removed articles of apparel from the bag. The door of the wardrobe banged dully as he pushed it shut. Then the bed creaked as Arnaud flung himself upon it.

The noise of his breathing was interrupted occasionally by a slight cough. Then those sounds decreased, and there were steady minutes of prolonged silence.

The man outside the door was listening intently. With the subsidence of all sound, he moved, surely, but cautiously.

One hand came from his body. Deftly, he inserted a pass key in the lock of the door. The key turned. The other hand was upon the knob.

Softly, steadily, the door of Henry Arnaud's room opened until it was ajar like that of the room across the way.

In this end of the hall, the light was dim and obscure. Even so, the filtering rays might have attracted the attention of a man awake upon the bed. But there was no sign to show that Henry Arnaud had stirred.

The sinister approacher took this as a good sign. He stepped softly into the room, and closed the door behind him.

He crept around the foot of the bed, and passed slowly by the half-opened window. He was close to the floor; the dim, reflected glow from Chinatown was not sufficient to betray the presence of the sneaking native who had come from that section of the city, to be here tonight.

But those vague rays of light did tell something of the man's purpose. Something gleamed in one of the creeper's hands. It was the blade of a long, vicious knife - the silent weapon of a noiseless assassin.

The crawling Chinaman stopped at the table by the head of the bed. He listened there; then loomed upward. His body extended over the bed. His

knife was in his right hand, ready to deliver a well-aimed thrust. His left hand gripped the cord of the table lamp.

The hovering creature was one who planned his purpose well. He was ready to perform two operations simultaneously. That hand toying with the cord was prepared for its duty.

When the light came on, the knife blade would descend swiftly toward a vital spot before the sleeping victim could become cognizant of danger.

Click! The light was on. Its sudden glare revealed the face from the dark - the yellow, leering face whose peering eyes were seeking the helpless form of the man in the bed.

The knife blade gleamed beside that sinister countenance. But it remained suspended - motionless.

The bed was empty! Not only empty, but the covers were unturned.

Henry Arnaud was not there!

THE lean, leering face of the Chinaman became a hideous, glaring monstrosity. The stooping man wheeled quickly, looking for his prey.

With the lamp still lighted, he dropped beside the bed, and his peering eyes glared beneath. Arnaud was not hiding there.

Writhing serpentlike along the floor, the man approached the wardrobe - the only spot in the lighted room that afforded a hiding place.

The big door of the upright chest was latched - a sign that no one could be within. But the Chinaman intended to make sure. He was willing to rely upon his blade, even though his intended victim might be on the alert.

His clawlike hand clutched the little knob of the wardrobe. It drew the door open, and the Chinaman leaped into the space behind it, his knife blade launching for a thrust.

That deadly arm stopped midway. The wardrobe, like the bed, was empty!

Revolting though the yellow face had become, the look of perplexity now upon it was ludicrous. The man stood momentarily thwarted, but his bewilderment did not last. He sprang back across the room and extinguished the table lamp.

The sinister face from the dark had returned to the dark. But those insidious eyes were still searching. They peered from the front window of the room.

The head extended through the opening, and turned downward toward the street below, a drop of sixty feet. It appeared again at the side window. Here, too, it inspected a sheer drop of more than sixty feet.

The wicked face turned its gaze toward the distant glow of Chinatown. There, the sign of the Mukden Theater still displayed its roving change of lights. But the luminous circle at the top now presented a blank center. The two glaring spots of green had disappeared.

The Chinaman turned his eyes back into the room. His hands were buried against his body. The knife was there, waiting.

Ten minutes went by; then the crouching figure went back across the room and tiptoed to the other side of the hall. The door of 806 was closed and locked. But the tricked assassin waited, wondering.

Within the room, the dim glare of the distant lights was totally obscured by a black shadow in the window. Henry Arnaud had returned. He went noiselessly to his suitcase and took it with him to the window. He affixed the handle of the bag to a thin, suspended rope.

His body - virtually invisible - swung from the window. Long arms, reaching upward gripped a protruding row of bricks below the roof. With amazing agility, the man ascended and drew himself to safety. His bag came, up as he pulled the slender rope.

Across the roof he strode, toward the rear of the hotel. He slid down a wall to a lower building. His form seemed to dwindle away and disappear. His further descent was an action unseen.

Henry Arnaud had gone. He did not reappear. But in his stead, a tall, black-clad man arrived at the end of a narrow street, a block from the Aldebaran Hotel.

Stooping in the gloom, he compressed his suitcase into a small, compact bundle that disappeared beneath the flowing cloak that he wore. From beneath his slouch hat, this man peered forward with shrewd, gleaming eyes.

There, in the silence, hidden lips laughed, and their low, throbbing mockery made an eerie sound on the night air.

In the guise of Henry Arnaud, The Shadow had come to San Francisco! The Shadow - dread avenger, who menaced evildoers of the East - had come to the Pacific coast!

What was his purpose here? Did it concern the strange death of Stephen Laird? Had that event declared the existence of criminal hands whose actions could be ended only by the power of this one man who waged relentless war on evil?

Only The Shadow knew! Tonight he had thwarted the first of his hidden enemies. He had walked into a trap. He had tricked the assassin, the man whose hideous face had come from the dark.

Back in the hotel, that evil face was still on watch - its wicked eyes staring across the hall toward a room that was deserted.

The Shadow, strange wizard of the night, had learned why Stephen Laird had occupied that room. With that knowledge gained, The Shadow was gone. Only the echo of a weird, mocking laugh remained.

CHAPTER III

A MIDNIGHT CONFERENCE

TWO men were seated in the living room of an elegantly furnished apartment. One, the host, was attired in evening clothes. He was a man about fifty years of age.

His gray hair gave him a firm dignity. His eyes, mild and kindly, showed passivity, but with it, human understanding.

The visitor, plainly dressed, was about fifteen years younger. He had an air of assurance, and his chin portrayed the man of action. But now he possessed a patient attitude that seemed at odds with his natural inclinations.

It was he who was speaking; and he was choosing his words as he uttered them.

"I have come to you, Mr. Darley," he said, "because you are a man who keeps confidence. You may be surprised by my visit. You may wonder what it is about. But you will quickly understand.

"I told you that my work concerned the Civilian Committee of San Francisco, of which you are the head; but I must explain that it is also of a nature that will make it a private matter between you and myself."

Joseph Darley nodded slowly. He knew that this was an important meeting. He had received a telephone call that afternoon, from this man, who called himself Cleve Branch. Darley had arranged the appointment for midnight.

As chairman of the Civilian Committee, Darley held a most important executive position, and special meetings of this type were not foreign to his work. Therefore, he was definite in his reply.

"Whatever your purpose," he said, "you can rely fully upon my keeping it confidential, Mr. Branch. I understand that you seek my cooperation in a certain enterprise. Whether or not I can give that cooperation, you have my absolute promise that whatever you may tell me shall reach no other person."

"Very well," said Branch. "My work, Mr. Darley, is in behalf of the Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice of the United States government.

Darley leaned forward in his chair. He realized now the prime importance of this visit. On former occasions, Darley had supplied valuable data to the government. Now, he understood, his services were to be sought.

"I have come to San Francisco," continued Branch, "to make a thorough investigation of the activities of the Wu-Fan - and to learn more about its organizer, the Chinaman, Ling Soo."

DARLEY leaned back in his chair. He considered the ceiling thoughtfully. When he spoke, it was plain that his mind was reverting to facts which he knew well, and was seeking to give in detail.

"Do you know Ling Soo?" inquired Branch.

"Yes," said Darley. "I do. More than that; I know him well. He is a man with a complex brain. A Chinese idealist; and being such, he is difficult for us to understand."

"What of the Wu-Fan?" asked Branch.

"Before I answer that question," replied Darley, with a thoughtful smile, "I should like to know what impression you have already formed of the Wu-Fan. I ask that, because you are probably acquainted with its activities outside of San Francisco.

"In other words, you may have seen something of the effects; while I believe myself to be acquainted with the cause. Shall we work back from effect to cause? Or from cause to effect?"

"I can tell you what I know," said Branch. "That is not difficult. When we first encountered the organization, we supposed it to be an offshoot of some Chinese tong. But we soon discovered that it was a different proposition.

"Our agents began to report that in virtually every city where Chinese lived, there were men of that race who appeared to be identified with the order. They are chiefly Chinese of the more enterprising class - restaurant owners rather than laundrymen.

"All wear an emblem like this" - from his pocket, Branch drew a white button that bore a golden dragon head - "and these are of different colors. We have seen many variations; and we have learned that there are certain rovers in the outfit - Chinese who move from one city to another.

"We have observed, also, that payments have been made by stationary members to the travelers. Questioning of members has produced only vague answers. There's no one in the world who can tell you less than a Chinaman when he doesn't feel like being questioned.

"But we have learned, from isolated cases, that some of these Chinamen have a pretty big idea of their importance. But more than that" - Branch extended his forefinger as he spoke - "it appears that there are a few Americans tied up with the outfit. They might speak - if we could locate them. But, though we hear of them, we never see them."

"Americans," said Darley thoughtfully. "Yes, Ling Soo knows a number of Americans; but I did not know that they were actively interested in his picturesque plans."

"One was," declared Branch shortly, "but he isn't any more. That's the reason why I am here."

"You knew one?"

"I knew of him. He knew of me. He was to communicate with me. I was waiting. But he happened to die very suddenly."

"How?"

"He was murdered. Not so many nights ago. Stabbed to death on the Mountain Limited, going East."

"You mean the man Laird?" questioned Darley, in a surprised voice. "The man who was found dying on the observation platform?"

"THAT'S the one," declared Branch. "If you read the newspaper reports, you may have learned that Laird wrote a letter shortly before he was killed. I rather suspect that the letter was addressed to me."

"Remarkable!" exclaimed Darley. "This is somewhat amazing to me. You are sure that his death was caused by the Wu-Fan?"

"Not at all," replied Branch. "I believe that his death was connected with the Wu-Fan; but how, I cannot tell."

"Ah," said Darley, nodding. "That is an important point. It brings up other elements. I may be able to offer a possible solution. Nevertheless, this theory comes as a surprise to me. Tell me, have you seen any other cases that resemble that of Laird?"

"No," said Branch.

"You know nothing more about the Wu-Fan?"

"Nothing of importance."

"Then," said Darley, tapping the arm of his chair, "it is time that I told you what I know. You have seen only the confusing angles of the Wu-Fan situation.

"If you understand the Chinese nature, you will know that every individual has a habit of interpreting all important matters in his own way. That is one reason why centralized government has never been highly effective in China. It is the reason why a clear idea of the Wu-Fan and its purposes can be gained only by a study of Ling Soo himself."

"And you know Ling Soo?"

"I do. The Wu-Fan, Mr. Branch, is primarily a San Francisco problem. It began here; it took hold here; and the Civilian Committee looked into it. I made the acquaintance of Ling Soo himself."

"What did you find out about him?"

"I found him to be a cultured Chinese gentleman, an Oriental idealist, whose plans are as astounding as they are absurd.

"The Wu-Fan, Branch, is a curious paradox. It is both an imaginative dream of useless ceremony, and at the same time a gigantic scheme to make Ling Soo's own race the dominating power in America!"

"You mean that Ling Soo thinks he can -"

"I mean that Ling Soo prides himself as being the emperor of a colossal domain that takes in all the United States; that when he says the word, his faithful followers will rule all! But at the same time, he is too wise to ever say the word."

"But these men who work for him -"

"Ah! They are believers. He has divided the whole of this country into imaginary provinces. He has appointed viceroys and prefects. From them he collects tribute. In true Chinese fashion, he sells his great offices to the highest bidders."

"Then there is danger that Chinese outbursts may occur throughout the country?"

"A danger?" Darley laughed. "Theoretically, yes. Practically, no. Ling Soo's empire is a dream of the future.

"He estimates that the Chinese population is increasing more rapidly in America than the white. Today, the Chinese occupy what may be termed a subservient position, because they are such a small minority. But in years to come, they will increase until they constitute a powerful minority.

"Ling Soo foresees that, at that time, they will encounter persecution. They will be restrained by laws directed against them.

"Then - and then only - will the ruler of the invisible empire of these Chinese give the word. His viceroys will call upon their subjects to arise.

"The whole scheme of Ling Soo's well-planned government will - according to his beliefs - go into effect. It will replace the existing government. Quickly and speedily."

"The man must be crazy," declared Branch. "It will take hundreds of years

-"

"The Chinese think in terms of centuries - not in terms of years."

"But the man's schemes are treasonable!"

"If taken seriously, yes. But Ling Soo is too cagy for that. His organization cannot be considered as more than a harmless order with scattered members.

"On the surface, it is so vague and theoretical that to attack it would mean ridicule. Ling Soo is accumulating wealth, which he intends to pass to his successor, that the great cause may go on.

"Those traveling representatives of his are like the collectors whom the ancient Chinese emperors used to send into their provinces to gather funds for the support of the imperial Peking government.

"But in actual practice, these disciples of Ling Soo are the most law-abiding of all Chinese in America. As a result, our Civilian Committee organization felt that they needed our friendship rather than our opposition."

"Because they behaved themselves?"

"Yes; and because they have incurred the enmity of lawless Chinese. The members of the Wu-Fan; peaceful and idealistic, feel that the tongs, with their wranglings, are detrimental to the progress of the great cause. They try to keep clear of the secret societies known as the tongs.

"In turn, the tongs see loss of power threatening them. So they are hostile, and the only thing that has prevented an outburst has been the fact that the Wu-Fan is large enough in San Francisco to protect itself if openly attacked.

"So, when you speak of death from the Wu-Fan, I know that you are mistaken. There have been deaths because of the Wu-Fan, but the Wu-Fan itself is free from blame."

"I'm getting the point of it now," said Branch. "This fellow Laird, who was undoubtedly doing some work for the Wu-Fan, may have crossed some tong leaders."

"Exactly," declared Darley. "If I had known more about the traveling activities of the Wu-Fan, I would have informed the government long ago - just as I have done in certain other matters.

"But I should state emphatically that if the Wu-Fan can be considered as a menace, all that lies in the distant future, and to oppose it at the present would be making great oaks out of newly planted acorns."

"WELL, Mr. Darley," said the Bureau of Investigation agent, "you've given me a real slant on this affair. You seem to know the inside workings; and from what you say, the Wu-Fan won't cause us any worry.

"However, I'm here for one important purpose - to get a report at first hand. I want to see how the Wu-Fan works. I want to know all I can about Ling Soo. I want to get the real lowdown on Stephen Laird's death.

"That's a State affair - not a government proposition - unless it's directly traceable to a widely working organization. I can use a complete report from your committee. But I won't need it until after I've made my own.

"That's what I'm out to get now - facts on the Wu-Fan. I want to know the best way to go at it. You've done your bit, but you can probably suggest the way for me to proceed."

"By seeing Ling Soo," responded Darley. "That takes you right to the source. He is quite willing to talk. Why not see him?"

"In what capacity?"

"As my friend - he never questions them. I have always taken members of the Civilian Committee with me when I have visited Ling Soo. Your name will mean nothing to him. In fact, I do not even have to introduce you, other than as an associate from my office.

"The membership of our committee undergoes constant changes as the members - outside of executives like myself - serve as volunteers without fee. We investigate affairs of the community and report them to the authorities if we deem it necessary."

"And you have never reported the Wu-Fan?"

"Never - outside of stating that such an order happened to be in existence."

"Then you have sanctioned it?"

"Practically. We have not censored it."

Cleve Branch arose and walked in short paces, hands in pockets. He swung toward Joseph Darley and extended his hand.

"Thanks, Mr. Darley," he said. "I have come to the right man. I'm leaving now - and when you're ready - soon - I'll count on you taking me to see this chap Ling Soo."

"That will be tomorrow," responded Darley, with an agreeable smile.

"Great!" said Branch. "I'll phone you at your office."

With that declaration, the government operative made his departure. Joseph Darley was alone, smiling to himself, as he recalled the interview. How vague, he thought, were the idea's of those who saw things from the outside.

If the visit were to be made tomorrow, Darley realized, it must be planned at once. For the Chinese liked to arrange their affairs well in advance.

So Joseph Darley sat down at the telephone table in his apartment and called the Chinaman, Ling Soo, to tell him that he could expect visitors on the

morrow.

CHAPTER IV

LING SOO

CHINATOWN was a splash of light the following evening, when Joseph Darley and Cleve Branch arrived there in the committeeman's limousine. To Darley, a visit to this district was scarcely more than a matter of routine.

Cleve Branch, although familiar with portions of the Chinese settlement, still found it unusual. His observant eyes wandered here and there, peering toward the yellow faces of passing Celestials; noting carefully the appearance of Americans who were passing through the district.

Darley had purposely left the limousine on the border of Chinatown. Now, he led the way along a narrow thoroughfare that was comparatively level for this hilly portion of the city.

The two men passed by lighted Chinese shops. They turned a corner, and encountered a gay scene. On the right was the bizarre Mukden Theater, a playhouse which presented stars from the Orient. Branch noted the billings - in English and Chinese - that announced the arrival of popular actors from Shanghai and Canton.

They were on the opposite side of the street from the theater, and Branch, glancing across, noted persons idling by the entrance to the playhouse. Some were Chinese; others Americans.

Time moved slowly here in Chinatown, in this spot of the Orient dropped from its native soil.

Joseph Darley stopped at a door that lay diagonally across the street from the Mukden Theater. It formed an unpretentious entrance between two shops.

The committeeman led the way into this entrance. They passed through a plain, lighted hall. They reached a small elevator at the end of the passage.

Darley opened the door, and the men ascended in the lift. It was an automatic elevator that moved in a solid shaft.

They reached a spot that Cleve Branch estimated as two stories above the street. The elevator stopped. They made their exit into a small anteroom. The atmosphere was altogether Oriental now. This silent spot seemed miles away from the street below. For here, with the elevator behind them, both men sensed the exotic setting of China itself.

Darley - a man who was a traveler - remarked upon it as he drew a tasseled cord which hung from the door at the other side of the anteroom.

"You are in China, now, Branch," he said. "You will meet a man whose mind dwells in China. Not content with keeping aloof from the realities about him, he desires to spread the customs and traditions of his native land."

THE door opened as Darley ceased speaking. A crouching servant, garbed in Chinese robes, stepped back that the visitors might enter. Cleve Branch eyed the man suspiciously.

A casual observer might have mistaken the man's stooped position for a bow. Cleve realized that it was the Chinaman's natural posture.

He felt a revulsion toward this servant of Ling Soo. The man seemed treacherous. Those half-closed, slitlike eyes returned Cleve's glance.

If the impression of the servant was any forecast of the master, Ling Soo would be a man to watch.

The stooped Chinaman was gliding along a splendid hallway, with the two visitors traveling in his wake. He reached a pair of doors faced with hammered brass. Fantastic dragons writhed in bas-relief upon the panels.

The servant, as though performing a ceremony, bent low and touched his forehead with his fingertips. The doors swung inward of their own accord. The Americans walked through.

They were in a large, sumptuous reception room - large enough to be a meeting place. It was furnished in pure Chinese style. Oddly carved chairs were stationed about the room.

Cleve did not notice the decorations closely. He was interested in the figure at the end of the room. There, in a thronelike chair, rested a placid Chinaman.

The man's face was like fine yellow parchment. He might have been fifty years old. He might have been a hundred. To estimate the antiquity of this blinking personage was impossible.

A living joss god, he sat in solemn state, while curls of strangely scented incense smoke rose languidly beside him from dragon-headed burners.

The face of this man - Ling Soo - was cryptic. It had a kindly expression, yet was Sphinxlike in its solemnity. The man's eyes - almost gentle - blinked mildly through large-rimmed spectacles.

He was like a character in a play, Ling Soo; yet Cleve, as he approached him, realized that this was all a natural and subtle personality.

In fact, the government man was somewhat at a loss. He wondered how one began to treat with so unusual a character as Ling Soo.

Darley, as an act of courtesy, raised one forefinger and tapped his forehead. Ling Soo responded with the same motion. Now the Chinaman's eyes were upon Cleve, gently questioning.

Cleve responded in the manner that Darley had done. The Chinaman returned the friendly salute.

This ceremony ended, Darley became businesslike. He drew one of the near-by chairs toward Ling Soo's low throne, and motioned to Cleve to do the same.

LING SOO was the first to speak. Cleve, despite his previous contact with intellectual Chinese, rather expected Ling Soo to talk in pidgin English, for the man, Cleve knew, was one who upheld Chinese customs.

But here Cleve was surprised. Ling Soo, when he talked, displayed a marvelous facility with the English language.

"Greetings, gentlemen," he said, in calm, easily enunciated words. "Greetings, to my friend, Joseph Darley - and greetings to his friend - who shall be my friend."

"Good evening, Ling Soo," said Darley politely. "This is Mr. Branch, one of my associates. I deemed it wise to see you tonight, and Mr. Branch kindly consented to accompany me."

"His kindness does me honor," commented Ling Soo. "He shall be welcome here whenever he may choose to come. Your friends, Mr. Darley, are pleasant ones to meet. They are what you say" - he paused only momentarily - "regular fellows. Am I not right?"

Darley laughed, and Branch joined in. Ling Soo beamed with pleasure. He seemed to pride himself upon his knowledge of American expressions.

"I shall tell you why I have come here this evening," said Darley briskly. "I want to talk with you about the Wu-Fan. Changes take place in affairs everywhere - even here in the Chinese settlement. You know it is my task to observe all that happens.

"Tell me, Ling Soo. Has there been any new development in the policy of your order?"

"The Wu-Fan never changes," said Ling Soo solemnly. "It is the same always. It shall be the same always. The Wu-Fan is the spirit of my native land. It continues the ancient and honorable customs that lived through so many ages."

"I understand that," replied Darley. "But I have to look at it from a different standpoint than you, Ling Soo. I can't forget that China itself has undergone some radical changes during recent years.

"Chinatown is a microcosm of China itself. There can be changes here - as well as in your native land."

"There is no change in the Wu-Fan," reaffirmed Ling Soo solemnly.

"But there may have been changes in those who oppose it," declared Darley.

The mild eyes flashed. Ling Soo's passivity vanished, for an instant. Then it returned. Cleve wondered at the change. It had been in the dark eyes alone. The face had given no different expression.

But with the return of Ling Soo's normal character, the thin, yellow lips parted in a broad smile, and from them came a long, cackling laugh. Ling Soo was amused.

"Would one question the lion," he asked, "to learn what the jackal seeks to accomplish?"

"Hardly," smiled Darley.

"The Wu-Fan," cackled Ling Soo, "is mightier than an lion." His voice and expression became solemn. "The symbol of the Wu-Fan is the ancient dragon - greater than the lion. But the enemies of the Wu-Fan - they are lower even than the jackal."

"Then," said Darley, "you believe that what I already know about the Wu-Fan is complete - that my previous report may remain unchanged?"

"Absolutely," said Ling Soo, with an odd emphasis on the word.

"Tell me," resumed Darley, "is the progress of the Wu-Fan continuing uninterrupted? Is your membership increasing? Are the new initiates responding as the old have done?"

"All who join the Wu-Fan respond the same," declared Ling Soo. "What I have told you of the Wu-Fan, I shall repeat. It is the living spirit of old China - the Wu-Fan. It seeks not to do harm. It seeks only to do good.

"Those who believe in it are trustworthy. They rise higher in the order as they prove their worth. They are distinguished by the different badges of membership."

"One must not judge the Wu-Fan by a single member any more than one should judge a race by an individual. There are traitors in the Wu-Fan, as there are traitors everywhere."

"You punish them?"

"What does one mean by punishment? That is a question. We have no form of punishment embodied in our code. We place a ban upon the traitor. He is no longer allowed to mingle in the affairs of the Wu-Fan. We make it impossible for him to continue in our service. That is all."

CLEVE BRANCH was studying Ling Soo. He knew instinctively that the ancient Mongol was speaking the absolute truth. But he sensed a subtle something in Ling Soo's phraseology.

While Cleve was considering the statement that had just been made, Joseph Darley asked another question, and Cleve forgot all else in his interest in this new subject.

"Does the Wu-Fan," asked Darley, "intend to be a ruling power here or elsewhere?"

Cleve knew that Ling Soo's reply would be important.

"The Wu-Fan," said the Chinaman blandly, "is an ideal. It consists of those who think and believe in common.

"You Americans have your orders - your lodges, as you call them. They have swayed the minds of those who belong to them - many working toward the common good. Such is the Wu-Fan; but it is Chinese, not American."

"That is just my point," declared Darley. "The Chinese are different from Americans."

"Exactly," said Ling Soo, in a precise tone. "The Chinese are more peaceful than your race. We bide our time. We are not on the rush. The Wu-Fan seeks no quick results. It is patient."

"Then," prompted Darley, "your attitude toward American customs and government is -"

He left the statement for Ling Soo to fill. The Chinaman did not hesitate.

"It is friendly," he declared. "Friendly, because it protects the Wu-Fan. In China, the Wu-Fan would be impossible now, because our native land is ruled by those who conflict, who will not allow those who believe in the past to have their say.

"The jackals, there, have found the dragon weary. The jackals, here, are afraid to attack the young and healthy dragon. For if they so do, they shall find themselves departing from the law of this land, which allows to all the right to think and act with peace."

Darley threw a sidelong glance toward Cleve. The description that he had given of Ling Soo was being proven. It was evident that the Chinaman himself had vague ideas regarding the present purpose of the Wu-Fan, and that the society constituted no menace.

Yet there was a suavity in Ling Soo's bearing that placed Cleve on his guard. He felt that it would be necessary for him to know more of this order before passing final judgment.

Joseph Darley was a keen individual, but it was quite possible that he had been deceived by Ling Soo's honeyed expressions.

There was one important question that had not been answered. What was the attitude of Ling Soo's underlings toward their chief? That, Cleve was determined to discover.

As the interview drew toward its close, the Bureau of Investigation agent was already looking toward the future. He was vaguely planning an independent course of action.

"We of the Wu-Fan have a high ideal," Ling Soo was reiterating. "You have seen the Wu-Fan here, Mr. Darley. It exists beyond San Francisco.

"Throughout this country, we have many followers who feel it their duty to contribute liberally toward the future of our cause. I have my representatives who travel here and there on their mission of friendship.

"Some day" - Ling Soo swelled with pride - "the Wu-Fan will be known. It will bring to this country a new era. Perhaps that day will be distant. It has not yet come. But when it is here, my friends, the Wu-Fan will be ready."

Ling Soo's voice retained its placidity, but it carried a hidden challenge. The mogul of the Wu-Fan was lost in his dream of future glory. Here, in his own environment, he sat in the state of an emperor. Was his dream purely a mad one? Reason said yes.

Reflecting, Cleve realized that he was viewing the genius who might some day bring the much discussed yellow peril into reality. At the same time, he knew that it would be difficult, now, to bring the action of the government against Ling Soo and the Wu-Fan.

Unless this man and his organization had already embarked upon overt crime, there could be no charge.

JOSEPH DARLEY was rising to leave. Cleve Branch did the same. It was then that the stooped servant entered and approached the throne at the command of Ling Soo.

The crouching man spoke in Chinese to his master. Ling Soo, in return, gave an order. Cleve was watching, and he observed a marked change.

Ling Soo's suavity was gone when he dealt with his countryman. He was stern-visaged, and his quiet eyes took on a startling glare. The servant responded in a plaintive voice, and Ling Soo, forgetful of the presence of his guests, spat harsh, fierce words.

The servant started toward the door. Ling Soo's eyes still flashed - until they met Cleve's stare. Then their anger dwindled. They became placid and retiring; a gentle smile replaced the angry frown on Ling Soo's countenance.

"My servant, Wu Foy," he said. "He is faithful, but very stupid; or, as you Americans might say - dumb." Ling Soo cackled as he used the slang expression. "I must tell him many times when I speak to him. Many times is many times too often. One time is sufficient."

Darley bowed and touched his finger to his forehead. Cleve did the same. The visitors turned and left through the brass doors, which lay open before them.

As they neared the door to the anteroom, Cleve managed to glance behind him. The doors were still open. Ling Soo, enthroned, was staring straight ahead.

Silent and motionless, his distant figure seemed sinister and menacing to Cleve.

Foy appeared and opened the door to the anteroom. The brass doors were closing now. The form of Ling Soo was hidden from view. The servant accompanied them into the anteroom, and pressed the button for the elevator.

The light was vague here, and the forms of the standing men cast long shadows on the floor. Cleve was glancing toward those shadows. To his surprise, he saw four instead of three!

He looked up in surprise; then toward the floor again. The fourth shadow was slipping away. Dwindling, it drew itself toward the door to the anteroom. It vanished while Cleve was staring at it.

Looking up quickly, the government agent saw the door that led into Ling Soo's abode closing silently. What was that he glimpsed through the crack of the closing door? It seemed like a mass of black - a huge, living shadow! What could it mean? Had Ling Soo followed them?

No, that was hardly likely. It seemed more that someone had slipped from the anteroom into the hall toward Ling Soo's reception room - someone who had been waiting here, half hidden in the gloom!

A sudden recollection came to Cleve Branch. He remembered that when he and Darley had passed the Mukden Theater, he had seen such a shadow on the sidewalk in front of the playhouse. It had caught his attention then, but he had forgotten it in his interest to reach Ling Soo's.

The elevator was here. Mechanically, Cleve followed Darley into the car and felt the descent begin. He was wrapped in thought.

Cleve pictured Ling Soo, the suave Chinaman whose courtesy was lulling. He recalled Foy, the crouching servant of the Mongol master.

But more than that, he visioned the black form that he had seen upon the floor - the rising shadow that had become a thing of life.

There were three occupants of that apartment which he had just left; and of the three, the one whose shadow Cleve had seen, was the most mysterious.

Even more astounding and impressive than the parchment-faced Ling Soo and sinister Foy, was the living form that had appeared only as a shadow!

CHAPTER V

CLEVE WORKS ALONE

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS after his journey to the sanctum of Ling Soo, Cleve Branch paid another visit to Chinatown. This time he went alone. No one - not even Joseph Darley - knew of this trip.

Cleve smiled to himself as he wended his way through the bizarre streets of the Chinese quarter. He was thinking of Darley and of Ling Soo.

Perhaps the chairman of the Civilian Committee was right, in that Ling Soo's organization was scarcely more than a fantastic idea. But Cleve was determined to learn if Darley was right.

The Bureau of Investigation, he reflected, was different from the Civilian Committee of San Francisco. The agents of the government must be thorough in their methods.

Here, in his pocket now, Cleve had a report given him by Darley at the office of the committee, that afternoon. The report covered all that Darley knew about the Wu-Fan.

Cleve had accepted the report with thanks. He had remarked upon its conciseness. When Darley had asked him his plans, Cleve had told him exactly what they were to be.

"I shall stay in San Francisco for a while," Cleve had said. "In and out of Chinatown, I may uncover facts that refer to the Wu-Fan. My report, Mr. Darley, can not be made until I have investigated on my own."

"Excellent," Darley had agreed.

The head of the Civilian Committee had been useful. Cleve knew that he could count on him later on, if necessary. But tonight, the Bureau of Investigation agent was out to tap another source of information that might be even more valuable than Joseph Darley.

There was nothing in his action to indicate that Cleve Branch was bound toward a definite destination. His footsteps were carrying him along the well known channels of Chinatown.

He was scarcely more than a sightseer. He stopped before Oriental shops and admired their wares in the lighted windows. He looked at curious doors as though wondering what lay behind them.

Yet all the time, Cleve was cautious. He traced his steps in varying directions, doubling suddenly on his tracks to note if he were being followed. For Cleve knew the ways of subtle Chinamen, and of all that he had ever met, Ling Soo had appeared most crafty.

The lighted lobby of the Mukden Theater attracted Cleve. He stopped there and viewed the placards in the lobby. Foo Yat, the Cantonese tenor, was playing there.

The man must have been a headliner in his native land, Cleve decided, for a steady throng of patrons was entering the playhouse. As he watched the flow of bland-faced Chinese, Cleve was on the lookout for Wu-Fan badges. He saw none. If any had them, they were keeping them concealed.

TURNING toward the sidewalk, Cleve stopped suddenly. Before him, he observed a splotch of blackness. It was the tall, silhouetted shadow of a man. The same shadow that had been on the floor of Ling Soo's anteroom!

Once again, Cleve was too late when he looked up. The shadowy surface was uncanny. For the moment that Cleve's gaze found it, the blackness started to glide swiftly away. Searching for its owner, Cleve barely caught a glimpse of a tall man stepping off into the darkness.

With no attempt at haste, Cleve moved to the sidewalk and stared in the direction that the figure had gone. But the elusive phantom had vanished into the gloom beyond.

What did that shadow mean?

Three times, now, Cleve had seen it. Did it indicate that a man was on his trail? If so, who was the man? What was his purpose? Was he a member of the Wu-Fan?

Lacking a name for this man whom he knew existed, Cleve supplied one - The Shadow!

That name sounded familiar to Cleve. He recalled certain reports which had included mention of a person known as The Shadow. A certain man had been instrumental in thwarting the plans of a counterfeiting ring. Again, this unknown had balked the schemes of Red agents who had been active in America.

The Shadow - a man who moved by night. Could this be the same personage?

Future events might tell. Meanwhile, Cleve decided to be on the watch, not only for visible members of the Wu-Fan, but for this invisible being whom he identified, in his own mind, as The Shadow.

In all his activities as a government agent, Cleve Branch had followed one sure formula, when no other seemed available. He knew that those who looked for trouble would surely find it.

Last night, Cleve had visited Ling Soo. If the leader of the Wu-Fan had nothing to conceal, Cleve's visit would have meant nothing to him. Hence, Cleve would now be a nonentity.

But if Ling Soo chanced to be a dangerous plotter, it was a sure bet that the visit had aroused his suspicions. Therefore, he would be on the lookout for Cleve Branch.

Here, in Chinatown, Cleve was in the enemy's territory. He knew well that Ling Soo would know of his presence. Being aware of it, Ling Soo would be sure to have his henchmen on the trail.

That was what Cleve wanted. For he had an uncanny ability when it came to spotting hidden watchers. He had proven this tonight, when he had seen that shadow. Only a shadow - but a shadow meant a man in the background.

Cleve was thoughtful as he again wended his way along a slanting thoroughfare of Chinatown. His regular formula called for a new step now. It was time to turn the tables on those who were watching him - to watch them instead.

Ordinarily, Cleve would have waited longer, in hopes of gaining a complete knowledge of unknown watchers. But here, in Chinatown, the streets seemed peopled with unseen eyes. Latticed windows were suspicious. Alleyways seemed made for lurkers. Even the smiling shopkeepers must be taken into consideration.

So Cleve decided to lose no time. He would investigate the Wu-Fan; and before he began, he would gain the additional information he required, from one qualified to know.

TURNING into a side street, as though at random, Cleve Branch strolled by a little restaurant. He gazed curiously at the sign above the doorway. There, surrounded by Chinese characters, he read the words:

HOANG-HO CAFE.

The place seemed picturesque. Cleve entered. He ascended a flight of stairs, and found himself in a little room that had entrances in each of its four walls. Patrons could enter it from all quarters.

Cleve glanced at the menu. He chose an item that suited his taste. When a waiter approached, Cleve indicated his choice, with the point of a lead pencil that he had taken from his pocket.

Beneath the printed item, Cleve carelessly traced a little wavy line. The waiter bowed and left to get the order.

In leisurely fashion, Cleve consumed the Chinese dish. He looked about the restaurant as he ate. There were only Chinese here, and none of them appeared to pay any attention to the American.

Cleve's eyes were not only on the patrons. At times, his gaze roamed along the floors and up the walls. For Cleve had hopes that here, as before, he might observe a shadow.

His wily search was in vain. The waiter came with a check. Cleve drew some coins from his pocket, and dropped them with a clink. The waiter made change; then walked toward the doorway at the right.

Cleve waited until the man was out of sight. Then he strolled from his table, and followed the same path that the waiter had taken.

He reached a little entry at the head of a flight of stairs. A quick glance showed him an open doorway at the left. Cleve stepped through the opening, and the door slid shut behind him.

Simultaneously, a light appeared in the darkness. It disclosed a short passageway, with a closed door at the end. Cleve stopped before the door, and tapped softly. The door slid open, and he stepped into a room that was furnished like an office.

The room had no windows. A Chinaman attired in American clothes was seated by a desk.

Approaching this individual, Cleve Branch drew back his coat and showed the glimmer of his badge. The Chinaman pointed to a chair on the other side of the desk. In another moment, Cleve was seated there.

He had never before seen this Chinaman, but Cleve knew who he was. Moy Chen, Chinese merchant, was the secret undercover man to whom all Bureau of Investigation agents could look for assistance when in San Francisco.

"Branch," said Cleve quietly, by way of introduction. "Investigating the Wu-Fan and its head, Ling Soo."

Moy Chen nodded solemnly.

"Met Ling Soo last night," continued Cleve. "Received report on him from Joseph Darley of the Civilian Committee."

Drawing the report from his pocket, Cleve passed it across the table to Moy Chen. The Chinaman studied the papers, slowly and solemnly, his brow wrinkling as he read.

It was several minutes before he had completed his survey. Then he passed the report back to its owner and nodded, while he blinked in owl fashion.

"Can you add to it?" questioned Cleve.

Moy Chen shook his head as solemnly as he had nodded it. Then, for the first time, he spoke.

"THIS is quite complete," he declared, in slow, short syllables. "I can tell you nothing more."

"You know of the Wu-Fan?"

"Of course. I have been told of it."

"But you have never sought to join?"

"No. The tongs would not permit. I must not oppose the tongs. I learn much through them."

"I understand," said Cleve. "Well, Moy Chen, I'm not satisfied with this report. I want to see the Wu-Fan at first hand, you understand? It's spreading all over the country, and I'm here to take a good look at its headquarters. How would you suggest I go about it?"

Moy Chen considered the question thoughtfully. His blinking eyes and round face showed perplexity. Cleve offered a suggestion.

"A man named Stephen Laird was killed," he said. "He was an American. He was also a member of the Wu-Fan. Can you explain that?"

"Yes," said Moy Chen simply. "As you have said, Ling Soo has men who travel far. They go many places for him. They see many people who are Chinese, and who are with the Wu-Fan. Americans may travel with more ease than may Chinese. That is why Ling Soo can use Americans."

"What are the qualifications?"

"I do not know; but I can make a suppose" - Moy Chen was slipping into a trace of pidgin English. "If an American man should seek to be with the Wu-Fan, he could do so. I think I could tell him how."

"Give me your idea, Moy Chen."

"There are certain Chinese who are easy friends for an American man to make. If that American man should be full of interest in what they say, he would hear from them in the Wu-Fan. If he should listen well, and speak high of it, they would want him to be with the Wu-Fan, too."

"Great!" exclaimed Cleve. "That's my ticket, Moy Chen. If I join the Wu-Fan, I'll have the real slant on the whole crew. But I won't be Branch when I meet that outfit."

"You must be someone else," agreed Moy Chen.

"And you are the man to see that I am," returned Cleve, knowingly.

"When do you wish to do this?" asked Moy Chen.

"As soon as possible," answered Cleve.

"As soon as possible," mused the Chinaman. "As soon as possible. That is now. You shall be someone else - now."

Rising slowly, he went across the room with short, toddling steps. He beckoned to Cleve to follow.

Through a door they went, into a side room. From a large chest, Moy Chen removed well-pressed clothes and a box of make-up materials.

The transformation began. Cleve submitted himself to Moy Chen's art. The Chinese undercover man was a master in the creation of disguise. With subtle touches here and there, he seemed to change the contour of his subject's face.

When Cleve had donned the other clothes, he examined himself in the mirror at the side of the room.

He found himself staring at a face that he could never have recognized as his own. It had taken on a swarthy hue. The cheeks seemed less full. Even the square chin had lost its challenge. Deftly, Moy Chen had added patches of eyebrows that had effected the most noticeable change.

Rubbing his hand over his face, Cleve was pleased to find that his new visage would stand the test. He had heard of Moy Chen's ability in forming new features. He had witnessed it now, in himself.

"You say that Ling Soo has seen you," declared Moy Chen. "He has seen the man named Branch. He has not seen this man. You may go to see Ling Soo. He will not know. That I can say - and I mean - sure."

Cleve reached in the pocket of his vest and produced a wallet. It was a special one that he always carried with him. It contained cards and other identifying articles that bore the name of Hugo Barnes. He showed these to Moy Chen. The Chinaman nodded.

MOY CHEN led the way through a series of passages and down two short flights of stairs. They arrived in a little ground-floor office, coming through a door that slid back to form a portion of the wall.

Seating himself at a desk, Moy Chen carefully wrote out a list of names. These were Chinese businessmen whom Cleve - as Hugo Barnes - was to visit.

"You must have money," declared Moy Chen. "You must show much money to those who are the right people. The Wu-Fan likes those who have much money."

The Chinaman produced a stack of bills from a desk drawer, and tendered them to the newly created Hugo Barnes.

"It is from here you must go," declared Moy Chen. "It is to here you must come back, while you are Barnes. When you should wish to be Branch again, you must go away by the door through which you came when you did see me first."

"I understand."

"You come here, when you wish," added Moy Chen, "because you have found great interest in those goods which I sell. It is because of that I bring you in this room. Here I bring those who mean good business."

So saying, the Chinaman opened the door of the room and brought Cleve into the back of a large store stocked with Oriental wares.

With calm demeanor, Moy Chen led his companion to the front of the shop, stopping now and then to point out some attractive piece of merchandise. At the door to the street, the Chinaman became silent and stood blinking, as though expecting a statement from the man beside him.

"Thanks," said Hugo Barnes, in a voice that varied greatly from the tones of Cleve Branch. "I like your shop. Best place I've seen in Chinatown. I've got my eye on a couple of things I want. I'll come back in a few days to buy them."

Moy Chen bowed, silently and with courtesy. He watched with approving eyes as Hugo Barnes shuffled from the shop with a slow, indifferent gait, no longer Cleve Branch.

THE man who called himself Hugo Barnes smiled in a peculiar manner as he sauntered along the street. Cleve Branch was eliminated for the present. This new identity would mean new lodgings at another hotel. The abode of Cleve Branch would temporarily be unoccupied.

Hugo Barnes affected indifference as he passed the Mukden Theater. The first part of the game was ended. Hidden watchers could stare in vain. Keen eyes could not detect the presence of this disguise. The watched had become the watcher.

Tomorrow, Cleve Branch, in a new identity, would meet in person members of the Wu-Fan. But in the meantime, Hugo Barnes was on the lookout for a mysterious shadow. Now, he felt sure, that shadow would not move away as it had gone before.

There was a patch of darkness on the sidewalk beyond the Mukden Theater.

No shadow could have been visible there. Perhaps that was why the alert eyes of Hugo Barnes failed to see a tall, dark figure that stood motionless in a blackened doorway.

But the watching form saw Hugo Barnes. When the disguised man rambled by, the silent figure moved.

Flitting invisibly, it followed at a distance. A jet-black cloak and low-brimmed hat concealed the peering eyes that watched the man called Hugo Barnes.

From unseen lips came a low - almost inaudible laugh - a sound that was eerie in its tone.

The disguise prepared by Moy Chen had failed in its first test. Beneath the semblance of Hugo Barnes was the concealed personage of Cleve Branch.

The Shadow had seen - and The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER VI

THE WU-FAN MEETS

ANOTHER evening had arrived in Chinatown. Tonight, odd Oriental buildings were aglow, even to their pagoda-shaped roofs.

A Chinese parade was moving along the narrow street beside the Mukden Theater. The eyes of viewing throngs were watching it. No one paid attention to those who jostled their way along the narrow sidewalks behind the pageant crowd.

Among the few who were pressing past the standing hordes was Cleve Branch - in his disguised personality of Hugo Barnes. He was on his way to something more important than a motorized version of an Oriental pageant. He was bound to a meeting of the Wu-Fan.

Moy Chen had served him well. Without even mentioning the name of the undercover Chinaman, Cleve had made the acquaintance of the men whom Moy Chen had suggested.

A roll of paper money, tactfully displayed in a Chinese shop, will work wonders. With Cleve - or Hugo, as he preferred to call himself - it had proven a perfect passport.

He had made friends with three Americanized Chinese. From one of them, he had heard of the Wu-Fan. He had mentioned the subject to another. The third had discussed it of his own accord.

Through his expression of admiration for Chinese customs, Hugo Barnes had received an unexpected invitation to be present at the meeting of the order. He had accepted. The place had been named. It was Ling Soo's.

Cleve paused before the entrance to Ling Soo's abode, and waited while a Chinaman detached himself from the crowd that lined the curb.

The Celestial entered Ling Soo's. Cleve gave him time to reach the elevator; then went in alone. He waited for the lift to descend, and rode up to the floor where Ling Soo lived.

He drew the cord at the anteroom door. This was in accordance with instructions. Foy appeared and glared suspiciously. Cleve lost no time in declaring his false identity.

"My name is Hugo Barnes," he said. "You savvy? Go tellee boss that Melican man is here."

The words had their effect upon Foy. The stoop-shouldered man evidently recognized the name of Hugo Barnes. He hesitated no longer. He opened the door and allowed Cleve to enter.

There were more than two dozen persons in Ling Soo's reception room. Cleve stood uncertainly for a moment; then one of his Chinese friends came forward and drew him toward the large chair where Ling Soo sat in state.

Awkwardly following his companion's gesture, Cleve touched his forehead with his forefinger and received Ling Soo's salute.

The leader's eyes were mild, but quizzical, as they rested upon the American. There seemed to be some purpose in Ling Soo's study. Americans were rare converts to the Wu-Fan, Cleve fancied. There were none here tonight besides himself. Perhaps they were much desired. From what Moy Chen had said, Ling Soo always required capable traveling delegates.

"It is a pleasure, Mr. Barnes," said Ling Soo, with a friendly smile. "A pleasure, indeed, to have you with us this evening. I have heard about you from my friends. They say that they have told you the purpose of the Wu-Fan."

"They have," replied Cleve, in the voice he used for Hugo Barnes. "I was very interested in what they had to say about your order."

"They have suggested," continued Ling Soo, "that you be named a member of the Wu-Fan. Is that your wish?"

"I should consider it an honor," said Cleve.

"So it shall be," declared Ling Soo.

HE clapped his hands. There was silence in the room. Foy crept forward, and stood beside his master's throne. Ling Soo, in the singsong words of the Chinese language, made an announcement to the others. A response of approval came in reply.

At Ling Soo's command, Foy thrust forward a small box. From it, Ling Soo produced a small blue badge that bore the head of a golden dragon. He tendered it to Cleve.

"My comrade," he said, in slowly enunciated English, "you are now an associate of the Wu-Fan. Those you see here tonight are men high in our order. All who wear the badge of the Wu-Fan shall be your friends. You have received the first honor; the others will be yours, in the future."

Foy had gone away while his master was speaking. Now the man returned and held a brass dragon head between Ling Soo and the new member.

Solemnly, the leader of the Wu-Fan touched the dragon's head with his forefinger, and then pressed the finger to his forehead. He nodded to Cleve. Acting the part of Hugo Barnes, the government operative placed his own forefinger upon the dragon's head and pressed it to his forehead.

The members of the Wu-Fan saluted, and Cleve stepped back. The men who had introduced him were extending their congratulations. Cleve fastened his badge upon his coat. It seemed to be the practice, here at the meeting, to keep the badges in view.

Cleve noticed that the emblems were of different colors; but all were alike in that they bore the dragon's head.

Ling Soo was speaking in Chinese. Between the sentences, one of Cleve's Oriental friends was trying to interpret the remarks.

Ling Soo was discoursing upon the glory of the Wu-Fan. All were listening in awed silence. When Ling Soo had finished, some of the Chinamen approached him one by one. Each individual appeared to have some request. Ling Soo responded gravely to each in turn.

To Cleve, the meeting was both assuring and disappointing. He was confident that Ling Soo had no idea of his identity; that the enthroned Chinaman had accepted him as Hugo Barnes. But at the same time, he had hoped that he might learn important secrets here tonight. This hope was unfulfilled.

It became apparent that there were no rites or mysteries conferred upon one who had just joined the Wu-Fan.

Unconsciously, Cleve found his thoughts turning to other matters than the meeting.

What would Joseph Darley say if he knew the character which Cleve had assumed! Cleve had called Darley tonight; but had learned that the committeeman had left by airplane for Los Angeles.

Cleve's call had been in response to a message sent to the hotel where he had been stopping. After three days as Hugo Barnes, Cleve had made a phone call to his old hotel. In his natural voice he had announced himself as Cleve Branch.

He had learned that a call had come from the Civilian Committee two days before. Hence, Cleve had called Darley at his home, only to learn that he was out of town.

What had Darley wanted? Did he have new information on the Wu-Fan and its activities?

Cleve smiled in the style of Hugo Barnes. Right now, a stranger in San Francisco, he was in a better position to learn facts pertaining to the Wu-Fan than was Darley.

LING SOO's firm tones came to Cleve and interrupted his thoughts. The leader was speaking forcefully to one of his subordinates. The man was bowing in apology. Cleve could see the fiery flash in Ling Soo's eyes.

There was silence as Ling Soo's voice raised, and he addressed the assembled group. Cleve could not understand the flow of Chinese words. His blank look attracted the attention of a sour-faced Chinaman who happened to be standing beside him.

"You heeree?" asked the Chinaman, in a low voice. "You no savvy? Me tellee you. He say he has go to the Sun Kew. He showee this" - the speaker thumbed his dragon-headed badge - "and tonight he sayee he not go.

"Ling Soo vellee angry, him not go. He sayee he send someone else, mlaybee. Tonight blig talkee down at Sun Kew. Vellee important one go. Mlaybee more go. They keepee ddragon here. They showee him!"

The man's action was explanatory. He pointed again to his emblem; then indicated beneath his coat. Cleve understood.

Something was happening at the Sun Kew. The badge of the Wu-Fan would serve as a mark of identity.

Ling Soo's anger had subsided. One by one, the members were approaching him, and each listened for a few moments; then received a sign of dismissal. Soon all but Cleve had departed. He approached the Chinaman's throne.

Responding to Cleve's salute, Ling Soo spoke.

"You will learn of our next meeting, Mr. Barnes," he said, in a pleasant voice. "Before then, you may come here when you wish. I should like to see you - often. I shall have time to talk with you in English. I understand" - Ling Soo's voice was almost questioning - "that you are a gentleman who spends much time in leisure."

"That's right," returned Cleve, in his affected voice.

"I shall discuss that matter with you," smiled Ling Soo. "In the meantime, remember that wherever the Wu-Fan is welcome, you are welcome. All privileges are yours. None shall question them.

"I may state that I confer special duties upon all our American members when they desire them. These, also, we may discuss when you visit me alone."

Ling Soo made the sign of the Wu-Fan. Cleve returned it and stood as though at a loss for what to do next. He was playing the part of the fictitious Hugo Barnes to perfection.

Foy was approaching. Ling Soo indicated the servant. Understanding at last, Cleve followed the leering creature to the anteroom.

WHEN he reached the street, Cleve found that the passing pageant had ended. The meeting at Ling Soo's had lasted longer than he had supposed.

But the evening was not yet over. Cleve still saw work that he could do.

The Sun Kew!

That was to be his next destination. From what his Chinese informant had said, something was taking place there tonight. Whatever it might be, the Wu-Fan was concerned, and the badge which Cleve had received would be a token of recognition.

Cleve slipped the badge from his coat and surreptitiously fastened it to his vest.

Ling Soo, so Cleve understood, had delegated a man to be present at the Sun Kew. That man, for some reason, had presented an excuse. It was assumed that Ling Soo had sent one - or more - of the followers in his stead.

Who was to know which ones had received the order? Ling Soo had talked privately with each departing member. Could he not have told Hugo Barnes to go, also? That seemed likely enough; but another thought occurred to Cleve.

Ling Soo had assured him that all privileges were his. Ling Soo could not become angry if his new follower took advantage of this one and appeared at the Sun Kew, tonight.

To incense Ling Soo would, of course, be to jeopardize his newly gained standing. Cleve realized that; but he saw no risk. Everything appeared advantageous.

Cleve's mind was settled. Hugo Barnes would be a visitor to the Sun Kew.

Cleve had not been idle during the past three days. As Hugo Barnes, he had been gaining a wide acquaintance with the ins and outs of Chinatown. Many portions of that labyrinthic region were still unknown to him; but he had seen the Sun Kew more than once.

It was a dilapidated place that appeared to be a decadent Chinese restaurant. Ten minutes would take him to that obscure portion of Chinatown where the building that housed the Sun Kew was located.

Wending his way along the street, Cleve so guided his course that he had opportunity to glance behind him.

Once again, he might be followed. He knew but little, so far, of the Wu-Fan and its methods. It might be customary to trail new members.

His second visit to Ling Soo's had brought Cleve once more into the field of surveillance - but now he was a new person, introduced by Chinese members in good standing, instead of Joseph Darley.

Yes, Hugo Barnes was safe! There was no sign of a follower tonight - not even a glimpse of an elusive shadow. The Shadow! Cleve thought of the unknown man, and indulged in the smile that was characteristic of Hugo Barnes.

He had seen no trace of The Shadow, since he had come - a new man - from the shop of Moy Chen.

But while Cleve Branch was congratulating himself upon that very point, a vague blot upon the curbing slid phantmlike across the street behind him.

It escaped Cleve's vision for that moment. Then it was obliterated by the darkness of the side street into which Cleve Branch had turned.

The Shadow had not been deceived! The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER VII

CLEVE SEES THE SHADOW

THE entrance to the Sun Kew was unimpressive. Only an old, dimly illuminated sign betokened the place. Cleve Branch entered warily, moving lightly up the cracked wooden steps, abandoning, for the moment, the shuffling gait of Hugo Barnes.

The interior was as uninviting as the outside. Cleve's supposition was right. The Sun Kew was a restaurant - or, rather, it had been a restaurant, and still preserved a shred of the resemblance. The place was populated by approximately a dozen Chinese, who sat at old tables in the large room.

Most of the men were drinking, and Cleve suspected that their beverage was the rice liquor relished by Chinese of the lower class. Some of those present were villainous-looking. One glance assured Cleve that none of the men who had attended the Wu-Fan meeting were here now.

Cleve had entered the room from a narrow hall. He did not know what lay up that darkened passage. He observed the doors of other, smaller rooms. But his chief attention was turned to the men about him.

Slipping into a chair at a corner table, Cleve avoided close inspection. He kept his eyes alert, turning his gaze occasionally to the door through which he had arrived.

It was several minutes before a tawdry waiter noted that an American had entered. He approached and addressed a few words in Chinese.

Cleve, responding with a shrug of his shoulders, indicated that he did not understand the language. The waiter retired. Cleve decided that the man had gone to inform someone who spoke English.

Under his coat, Cleve had packed a short-muzzled .38. It was his favorite weapon, that revolver. It had served him well on more than one occasion.

He had carried it to Ling Soo's. He had brought it here; and now his fingers sought it. There might be trouble in this place. Still, the gun must be the last resort.

The waiter was returning. His face did not appear friendly. Again, the Chinaman spoke in his native tongue. A shoulder shrug was Cleve's second answer.

The waiter signaled, and a man arose from a table close by. He came over and asked a question also. Cleve, half rising from his chair, now found himself in the center of a group of inquisitive Chinese.

They regarded him as an intruder.

Yet they were not malicious in their actions.

Not one of the crowd seemed to be able to talk English. It began to impress Cleve as ridiculous. They were trying to urge him toward the door.

As the explanation dawned on Cleve, he smiled and let his revolver glide from his hand.

These men must be lesser members of the Wu-Fan. Here they were holding a special meeting, awaiting the arrival of more important members. So Cleve believed, and his assumption was a logical one.

None of the men from Ling Soo's had appeared. These Chinese did not identify the strange American with their organization. That was all.

Cleve thought of the emblem beneath his coat. He had put it there, because it was to be worn concealed in this place - so his informant had said.

Right now, Cleve decided, that emblem would settle matters much more effectively than his government badge!

Quietly and impressively, Cleve drew back his coat and showed the sign of the Wu-Fan. He stepped back as he did so, in order that all might see.

THE result was entirely opposite from what Cleve had anticipated. Before he could move another step away, a knife gleamed as the nearest Chinaman leaped toward him. A wild, angry shout arose, and with it came the cry, "Wu-Fan!"

In another instant, the mad assailant was flinging himself upon the amazed American. Cleve leaped instinctively to one side.

The charging man was none too accurate. His blade sliced Cleve's sleeve. But this momentary escape was no salvation. As Cleve look up, he saw two new attackers spring from his right.

The door was behind him, but there was no escape now. With the bright blades descending, Cleve saw death, and dropped to the floor.

That action made him helpless. His hand had no time to gain the gun from the hidden pocket. Yet Cleve's futile effort to elude the knife thrusts actually contributed to the unexpected happening that thwarted the murderous attackers.

Two sharp shots cracked from the blackened doorway. The well-aimed missives found their marks. The first smashed the wrist of the one attacker, the other reached the shoulder of a knife-swinging Chinaman.

Both were upon Cleve now. One knife was poised above his head, but the hand that held it was guided by a deadened arm. The thrust was futile, and as Cleve struck the threatening hand, the blade flew free along the floor.

As he rolled free from his crippled antagonists, Cleve encountered a greater menace. The Chinaman who had made the first thrust was back again, determined not to miss, a second time.

A huge, surly fighter, he pounced upon his prey with upraised arm, and the broad-bladed dirk seemed certain of its victim. For Cleve was half lying on the floor.

Again an automatic spoke from the door. The Chinese assassin dropped his blade. It clattered beside Cleve.

Once again, the hidden marksman had prevailed. The Chinaman was shot in the hand. He dropped to the floor, pressing his wounded fingers against his body.

The man's actions indicated that he was no longer in the fray. He was writhing, as though in pain. But in that action lay his treachery.

Seeking to deceive his hidden foe, the big Chinaman huddled on the floor, and his left hand, out of sight from the doorway, obtained the knife that the right had dropped.

Cleve was crawling to his feet, his back turned toward the huge Chinaman. Up came that hidden left hand. Swinging into play, it drove the wicked blade straight for the center of Cleve's back.

The action was deft and swift. Those firmly clenched fingers formed a fist that even a bullet might not loosen on the instant.

Quick though the assassin was, the hidden sharpshooter was swifter. His fourth shot sounded. The bullet, skimming a few inches away from Cleve's back, reached its chosen mark - not the hand that held the knife, but the blade itself!

There was a sharp clack as the leaden missile clipped the blade. The knife was wrested from the hand that held it, as though plucked away by an invisible being.

Cleve Branch, staggering to his feet and drawing his revolver, found himself facing a trio of startled, bewildered Chinamen, whose death thrusts had been thwarted.

Who was this mysterious rescuer? Cleve did not know. He realized only that he had been saved from certain death; that he had found enemies where he had expected friends.

The attack had been frustrated by an unseen hand, and one lone comrade was ready to assist against a new onslaught.

THE menace of the first encounter had been its suddenness. Cleve had warning of the danger that was coming now - and he saw that he had much to fear.

He was in the midst of an Oriental nightmare. This room was dimly lighted by swaying Chinese lanterns. The three Chinamen, writhing on the floor, seemed grotesque in their odd garbs. Cleve had no dread of them now.

His eyes were staring about the dim room, peering at challenging yellow faces.

A singsong cry was passing back and forth. The name "Wu-Fan" was uttered in a weird, hostile tone. The pause seemed minutes long - yet it could not have been more than several seconds.

Strange eyes were peering from openings in the opposite wall. A chattered gabble was telling what had happened. Amidst the lull, Cleve raised his revolver as a threat, and began to back toward the door where he knew that safety lay.

The effect of his action was startling. It was the spark that kindled the fire of rage among the foeman. One purpose dominated the entire throng of Chinese: that their victim should not depart alive.

If Cleve had supposed that his enemies were armed only with long, wicked knives, he now learned his mistake. As though by given signal, a dozen revolvers flashed into view.

Cleve did not wait for the firing to start. He blazed away with his revolver, straight at the nearest group of opponents. One Chinaman fell. The others dropped behind the shelter of the tables.

Like rats, these Mongols had slipped out of sight, and opened fire from their ambushes.

As he sought the protection of a table, Cleve fired at spots where his enemies had been. He aimed well, but his plan could never have succeeded.

He was one against many, and the odds were impossible. His one lone revolver might account for a few of the attackers; but doom was inevitable. Cleve could never make that short dash to the door and expect to arrive alive.

Bursts of flame were coming from all quarters now. The room was ablaze with revolver shots. Cleve Branch was the target, and bullets smashed against the table which he had chosen for a buffer. Cleve's answering shots were pitifully small and few.

But he still had help. The man at the door was fighting with him. There, from an angle, the hidden marksman could see all portions of the room. He had a dozen targets, and he chose them well.

Yellow hands spread and dropped their weapons. Fingers that were pressed to triggers suddenly lost their purpose. The sharp, staccato barks of the automatic were tokens of unerring aim.

A strange silence dominated the room as the echoes of gunfire died away. Cleve, bewildered, gradually realized the explanation.

His revolver was empty and useless in his hand. He had brought no reserve supply of cartridges. He knew that his weapon had done little damage. Those shots from the door had turned the tide!

Prone, helpless Chinese were sprawled about the room. Those who still remained active were too wary. They were crouching, fearfully, in corners; or they were back behind the refuge of the doorways.

They knew too well that their own shots would betray their presence. They had seen the havoc wrought. Not one dared risk encounter with that superman whose aim was everywhere!

TO Cleve, the silence became a sign that all his enemies were fallen or had fled. In that he was wrong. His knowledge of the Chinese nature was at fault.

These men were snipers at heart. They had attacked openly because they were many against one. Now, realizing their error, those who remained uninjured were lying low, awaiting a false move by the man whose life they sought.

The blackened door was refuge, in Cleve's mind. The bursts of flame that had emerged from it were signs of sure protection. With gunfire ended, he felt that escape was the only course. Escape, before fresh attackers might arrive.

Springing from behind the table, Cleve leaped straight toward the door. His dash carried him no farther than five feet. The shots came from hidden Chinamen. A bullet winged Cleve in the shoulder, and he sprawled headlong on the floor.

The hidden friend was answering. Shots rang from his reloaded automatics. But now the task was superhuman. Cleve's false move had placed his helpless body where it was a target for the aim of merciless snipers.

These Chinese would not be content to let that body lie. Dead or alive, the form of Cleve Branch was due to receive a full quota of revengeful lead.

Cleve's eyes, upraised toward the door, were staring with both misery and amazement. For before him appeared a strange, unaccountable form. Sweeping in from the darkened hallway came a living shadow!

It was The Shadow!

No longer a mere fleeting phantom, The Shadow appeared as a man garbed in black - a flowing cloak upon his shoulders, a slouch hat pulled low over his inscrutable visage. Two black-gloved hands were clutching their automatics.

The Shadow was coming to the rescue!

His first move was a swift one. Like a living form of darkness, The Shadow swept forward, and his tall shape blotted out the form of Cleve Branch. Willfully, The Shadow had made himself the target for those hidden enemies.

His challenge was answered.

No longer was Cleve the victim that the murderers sought. Their fire turned toward this new menace - the man who had spoiled their schemes - the hidden marksman who had sent their comrades sprawling with his wondrous aim.

Swaying evasively, The Shadow made a strange target. His tall form, moving with a mystic rhythm, seemed to elude the fire of his foe. A bullet clipped the top of the slouch hat. Another zipped through the flowing border of the black cloak.

From hidden lips came a mocking laugh - a merciless mirth that boded no good for the relentless enemy. A living target, The Shadow had played the Chinamen's own game. He had caused their eagerness to prevail over their caution.

Unscathed by the shots that had greeted his appearance, he had surveyed the scene with piercing eyes. He had marked the spots from which betraying spurts of flame had told the presence of the snipers.

Now his automatics came into sudden action. They burst forth with roars that sounded like cannon in that low-ceilinged room. They formed a swift barrage - a deadly hail of uncanny fire that rained destruction on those who had unwisely found The Shadow's wrath!

One bullet caught a yellow-visaged sniper as he dodged behind a door. The man toppled sidewise and sprawled into the room, his revolver striking the floor four feet beyond his body. A sneaking form, slipping down behind a corner table, plumped suddenly and did not rise again.

The Shadow's left hand, with quickly moving forefinger, turned the path of an automatic across a blackened opening at the far side of the room.

Somewhere in that darkness lay a man whose revolver was pointed, ready to deliver a fatal bullet. The shot never came. The Shadow's remedy had worked. Another Chinaman became motionless.

THOSE deadly automatics brought another silence to the den of death. Down to a single shot that remained in his right-hand gun, The Shadow had dealt destruction to the hidden murderers. Not one Chinaman remained capable of action - either in that room or in the hidden passageways beyond.

A prone man in a corner was trying to rise and deliver a last shot; but his effort failed. He sank back helpless, and his revolver dropped from his grip.

There was an open window across the room. It opened on a narrow crevice between this building and the next. Through it, a yellow face was peering. This single assassin had crawled to his perch from the floor below.

The Shadow did not see that face, for his gaze was turning to the floor. There, a crippled knife-wielder was writhing upward at The Shadow's side. His blade was poised in his left hand. Seeking to attack at close range, he had approached The Shadow while the automatics were barking.

The Shadow saw his foe. His right hand swung wide with a long, forceful blow. It struck the Chinaman's raised wrist, and hurled the assassin sidewise. The knife, loosened from the grasp which held it, clicked harmlessly away.

A yellow hand was beside the face at the window. A gleaming revolver shone. Its muzzle was pointed directly at the form in black. The Shadow's cloak was spreading, and its crimson lining formed a background for the man within that cloak. The revolver moved upward at the window.

The Shadow, turning suddenly, saw the threatening gleam. His lowered automatic swung upward. Its last shot sped on its way, just as the poised enemy prepared to loose his fire.

The Shadow's bullet found its mark. It whizzed past the extended arm, almost clicking the gleaming gun. It struck the body behind the revolver.

The leering yellow face dropped backward. A hand waved wildly as the helpless Chinaman toppled from his perch. A moment of impressive silence; then, from the crevice below the window came a dull crash, as the victim reached the bottom of his fall.

The Shadow was helping Cleve to his feet. Dazed and bewildered, the disguised government man clutched his wounded shoulder and staggered forward under his rescuer's guidance.

They reached the wall beside the doorway. A clatter sounded in the passage. The Shadow's protecting grip was released. Cleve managed to support himself against the wall.

He saw the man in black leap to the other side of the doorway. Three Chinamen dashed in; two carrying revolvers, one holding a gleaming blade.

They had come, as reinforcements, from the street. Attracted here by the sound of gunfire, they paused and stood blinking at the signs of carnage.

The man with the knife saw Cleve. With a cry, he leaped toward the crippled American. The men with the revolvers turned as they heard his shout.

Like an avenging demon, The Shadow was upon them! With mighty force, he clutched the Chinaman who held the upraised knife. He swung the man's body as though it had been a form of straw!

Upward, backward, that body went. It was hurled, dirk and all, upon the gun-armed Chinese who were behind their comrade!

One man evaded the hurtling form and grappled with The Shadow. The other wriggled free, and fired wildly at the man in black. But as he pressed the trigger, The Shadow, twisting with amazing skill, precipitated himself and his opponent upon the man with the gun.

Of the two grapplers, it was the Chinaman - not The Shadow - who received the shots. The wrestler's grip dropped loose. He fell dead, a victim of his comrade's fire.

The Shadow, never faltering, seized the Chinaman who held the revolver. He plucked the gun from the Mongol's grasp as one would wrest a toy from a tiny child.

Sweeping toward the door, The Shadow gripped Cleve and swung him to the passage. The black-gloved hand delivered two quick shots back into the room.

These reports from the captured revolver sounded as a warning to all who might choose to follow. They were accompanied by a taunting, gibing laugh. The challenge was not answered. Few could have followed, had they wished!

Police whistles sounded in the distance, as Cleve Branch faltered along the narrow street, supported by the man who had rescued him. The fresh air was reviving. Cleve's wound ached dully now.

They were threading through dim, obscure streets. The man in black had become an obscure being. The only sign of his presence was the clutch of that guiding hand. Then, suddenly, the hand was gone. Cleve was alone.

He stood bewildered for a moment; then, with a start, he recognized his surroundings. The alleyway in which he stood opened on a lighted thoroughfare. Cleve hastened toward the street ahead. Arrived there, he turned sharply to his right, and slipped into an open doorway into the shop of Moy Chen!

Cleve Branch had been rescued from the dive called the Sun Kew. His phantom rescuer had brought him to a spot of safety. Amidst a horde of enemies, he had been aided by a friend.

These thoughts were amazing; but more startling was the knowledge that the strange shadow that had crossed his path was real and not imaginary.

Cleve Branch had seen The Shadow - seen, him and met him as a living man!

CHAPTER VIII

DARLEY OFFERS ADVICE

CLEVE BRANCH glanced at his watch. It was five in the afternoon. One could not gauge time without a watch, here in Moy Chen's upper office, for the little room was windowless. Cleve Branch was himself now. The disguise of Hugo Barnes had been discarded.

Moy Chen smiled placidly as he saw Cleve rubbing his shoulder. The wound had been a nasty one; but Moy Chen had shown himself equal to the task of mending it.

Cleve had been living here since that eventful night at the Sun Kew, and now he was ready to sally forth in his normal guise.

"I shall be back, Moy Chen," he said, as he arose from his chair. "I intend to visit Ling Soo, when the Wu-Fan holds its next meeting."

"Visit Ling Soo," said Moy Chen quietly. "But do not go to that place where you did go - to the Sun Kew."

"No, thanks," grinned Cleve.

Moy Chen had explained that the Sun Kew was a gathering place for members of the Tiger Tong - a secret society that had often wreaked havoc in Chinatown. For some years, now, the Tiger Tong had been quiet; but its members did not relish intrusion by Americans, at any time. That, to Moy Chen, was the probable explanation of the trouble Cleve had encountered.

Cleve had mentioned that he had shown the badge of the Wu-Fan. That, Moy Chen presumed, had caused the Chinese ruffians to class him as an impostor.

Moy Chen, Cleve had discovered, played a very passive part in the affairs of Chinatown, and seldom paid attention to the business of his neighbors. As an undercover man, it was wise for the Chinese merchant to avoid all conflicts.

Since Cleve had signified his readiness to depart, Moy Chen guided him. They went into the passage, and at the end, Cleve found the open door that took him to the head of the obscure stairway. He did not enter the Hoang-Ho Cafe. Instead, he made his way to the side street.

While recovering from his wound Cleve had lost all contact with outside affairs. He had resumed his normal personality for the definite purpose of visiting Joseph Darley. He knew that the chairman of the Civilian Committee was constantly feeling the pulse-beats of Chinatown; and through Darley, Cleve might learn new facts now.

HE arrived at Darley's apartment shortly before six o'clock. Cleve found Darley at home. The committeeman welcomed him.

"Well, well," said Darley. "I've been looking for you. Tried to communicate with you before I went to Los Angeles. Where have you been?"

"In and out of Chinatown," replied Cleve, with a smile. "Browsing about the district."

"I'm going there tonight," said Darley. "Why don't you come along? We'll have dinner at the St. Thomas Hotel; then we can head for Chinatown. We'll see a show at the Mukden Theater."

"All right," agreed Cleve.

This was convenient. As Cleve Branch, the government agent could visit the Chinese district with Joseph Darley. As Hugo Barnes, he could go alone and attend the meetings of the Wu-Fan. So the invitation for tonight was a good one to accept.

"You have been out of town?" inquired Cleve.

"Yes," said Darley. "I just arrived home this afternoon. I called you at your hotel. I wanted you to go with me - if you had been able to spare the time. I had a most enjoyable trip; down to Los Angeles by air, back by private yacht."

"An enjoyable trip?"

"Wonderful! Leo Frane, the movie magnate, is the owner of the yacht. He is East at present, and he ordered it up here to Frisco to meet him on his return. We had delightful weather from the time we left San Pedro."

"Frane is a friend of yours?"

"Yes. I have cruised with him occasionally. He knew that I was coming to Los Angeles, so he had the yacht held there until I arrived. I may go back to Los Angeles with him when he comes West - and if you have business in Southern California, I know that you would be a welcome passenger."

They left the apartment for the hotel. Darley found a secluded table in the corner, and ordered a sumptuous repast for himself and his guest.

To Cleve, after his recent adventures, the luxurious hotel seemed a strange contrast to Chinatown.

Within walking distance of this fine hostelry, where wealthy guests appeared in evening dress, lay the region cut by bizarre streets, where the intrigue of the Orient lay deep. It seemed incredible that these two contrasting districts did not overlap.

Chinatown, true enough, had adopted the mechanical inventions of America. Had social San Francisco, in turn, succumbed at all to the intrigue of the Chinese quarter?

As Cleve's thoughts dwelt on Chinatown, Joseph Darley's conversation turned to that very subject. Leaning across the table, he spoke in a low voice.

"I had almost forgotten it," he said. "I had information for you - that time I phoned to your hotel. Something that I had learned shortly after I gave you my report on the Wu-Fan."

"Which was -"

"That the Wu-Fan has encountered the open enmity of the Tiger Tong - an organization that has caused a great deal of trouble in the past. It is rumored that the Tiger Tong has been active against members of the Wu-Fan."

Darley's statement was intensely interesting. It explained something that Cleve had found perplexing. He realized now why the displaying of the Wu-Fan emblem at the Sun Kew had brought on the sudden attack.

But the Bureau of Investigation agent carefully refrained from giving indication of his extreme interest. He had his own plans to follow.

THERE were matters which Darley should know and matters which he need not know. Facts about Moy Chen belonged in the latter class. So far as any one except Moy Chen was concerned, the connection between Cleve Branch and Hugo Barnes must remain unknown.

"That was all I had to tell you before I left," continued Darley. "Today, at the office, I found another report on the Wu-Fan and the Tiger Tong. With it was a letter from Ling Soo."

"What did he have to say?"

"I only glanced over the papers. Tomorrow I can let you see them. I think, however, that I can give you the general facts, right now, from memory."

"I'd like to hear them."

"It appears," said Darley, "that the Tiger Tong made it known in no uncertain terms that it did not like the Wu-Fan. So Ling Soo sent a delegate to talk with a leader of the Tiger Tong, who makes his headquarters at a dive called the Sun Kew."

This was illuminating! The delegate must have been the man who said he would not go again!

"The delegate," continued Darley, "encountered some sort of trouble. So Ling Soo ordered three men to go there instead."

"They waited until late at night, because the riff-raff of the Tiger Tong are usually around the Sun Kew in the evening. When the delegates arrived there, they found the police in possession. There had been a riot at the Sun Kew."

"What caused it?" asked Cleve.

"The police could not find out," declared Darley. "But it was in reference to that riot that Ling Soo wrote to me. He believes that the Tiger Tong lured a few members of the Wu-Fan to the place and attacked them."

"Whether or not Ling Soo's followers rendered a good accounting and escaped, is a matter of speculation. It seems evident, however, that the disturbance was made by the members of the Tiger Tong themselves."

"It happened in their bailiwick," agreed Cleve.

"Yes," resumed Darley, "and it would be extremely unlikely that Ling Soo would have ordered an attack at that place. The Wu-Fan is not admired by the other tongs. If the Wu-Fan should start trouble with the Tiger Tong, it would place itself in a very dangerous position."

"This may be important," said Cleve.

"It is important," declared Darley. "Important to you as well as to me."

"Why to me, particularly?"

"Because it proves that any member of the Wu-Fan is in danger. It settles - in my mind - the question of Stephen Laird's death on the Mountain Limited."

"You believe that he was murdered by Chinese opposed to the Wu-Fan?"

"Without a doubt."

Cleve reflected. Joseph Darley's theory appeared correct. Stephen Laird had died from a knife thrust. The members of the Tiger Tong had been knife-wielders. They had attacked Cleve - an American and a member of the Wu-Fan.

It was logical that Stephen Laird - also an American affiliated with the Wu-Fan - had been a victim of the Tiger Tong. If this were true, it meant that Cleve's investigation of this case was ended.

The Chinese tongs were already under surveillance. The Bureau of Investigation was interested in the Wu-Fan only because it was a new organization. Laird's death had appeared as a smirch upon its record. With the Wu-Fan exonerated, Cleve could make his final report and leave San Francisco.

He put one question to Joseph Darley, because he knew that the answer would have an important bearing on the situation.

"We must remember," he said, "that Stephen Laird was not killed in San Francisco. He was murdered while traveling. Is that in accord, with tong practice?"

"Yes," said Darley emphatically. "At least to the degree that it affects this case. Had Laird been killed far away from San Francisco - or in some small city - we could hardly blame the tong. This city and New York are the strongholds of the tongs. But Laird was less than a night's journey on his trip eastward.

"Some member of the Tiger Tong may have been appointed to kill Laird. Failing, the assassin took the chance of following him on the train. It goes badly with tong members, you know, if they fail in a definitely appointed task."

Cleve was thinking. He was recalling the dying words of Stephen Laird, as they had been emblazoned in the newspaper reports. "Tag A - see in the box."

These statements and a vague reference to someone with green eyes were the only message that Laird had given. After all, they sounded trivial.

Perhaps, somewhere, Laird had left a report. A tag marked "A" might have been a bit of evidence that would lead to the man who had murdered him - a man with green eyes.

Green eyes! Cleve had noticed none as yet. Ling Soo's eyes were usually dull. They flashed at times, but they were dark - not green. So were the eyes of his crouching servant, Foy. Dark eyes - all dark eyes.

Cleve smiled as he looked at Joseph Darley. Thinking of eyes, he encountered those of the committeeman. Mild, kindly eyes, of a light grayish-blue. Like Darley's countenance, and the man's gray hair, they expressed sympathy and understanding.

"I think that you are right," declared Cleve. "While I remain in San Francisco, it would probably be best for me to learn facts about the Tiger Tong instead of the Wu-Fan. Can you aid me in that?"

"I shall do as much as possible," said Darley. "The police can also give you information. They know of men who are reputed to be killers."

"Tomorrow, then," said Cleve, "I shall prepare to finish my report."

The decision seemed a good one. It obviated further necessity of being Hugo Barnes. With complete data on the Tiger Tong - evidence, perhaps, of attempted killings or actual deaths of Wu-Fan members - Cleve could terminate this adventurous stay in San Francisco.

With thoughts along these lines, Cleve dined with Joseph Darley. But as he ate, Cleve had new thoughts - impressions which meant that he must stay a while before his work was ended.

Cleve was thinking of The Shadow.

The invisible man who had chosen to appear on one occasion still remained a mystery!

Why was The Shadow here? Why had he been at Ling Soo's? Why had he followed Cleve? Why had he made the rescue?

Important questions - all. But there was another realization that brought a furrow to Cleve's brow as he considered it.

The Shadow had followed him while he was Cleve Branch, and also while he was Hugo Barnes. Could it be possible that this man of the dark knew the existence of both identities?

Cleve recalled that he had been left close by Moy Chen's shop. Evidently, The Shadow knew that Hugo Barnes had contact there. Where was the explanation of the riddle?

Instinctively, Cleve glanced about him. His eyes sought the floor. They saw a shadow there! But there was no mystery to this shadow. It belonged to a gentleman who was dining alone at a table close by - scarcely within earshot of Cleve Branch and Joseph Darley.

Cleve watched as the gentleman arose and strolled from the dining room, his shadow moving with him. A waiter was bowing as the man went by.

Evidently a guest at the hotel - not a person whom one could connect with darkened alleyways and sinister dives in Chinatown.

The departing guest was speaking to the head waiter at the door of the dining room. That was a considerable distance away, and Cleve lost his passing interest. He turned to dinner and continued with the course that he was eating.

Yet his thoughts were still of The Shadow. That man of mystery was one whom Cleve could not forget. Although he did not mention it to Darley, Cleve intended to remain in San Francisco.

He was determined to learn the secret of The Shadow!

CHAPTER IX

THE SHADOW LAUGHS

THE gentleman left the dining room and walked slowly across the spacious lobby of the St. Thomas Hotel. He stopped at the desk, and spoke to the clerk. He received a key that bore the number 1216.

"No messages, Mr. Arnaud," said the clerk.

Henry Arnaud nodded pleasantly and went to the elevator. He rode upstairs in silence. His face was inscrutable - as calm as it had been the night when its owner had first arrived in San Francisco.

Henry Arnaud's shadow moved along the twelfth floor beside the man who cast it. Cleve Branch had noted that shadow in the dining room. A difficult thing to recognize - a person's shadow. No wonder that Cleve had failed to identify the shadow with the one that had flitted through Chinatown.

Calm, deliberate, Henry Arnaud was not the type of person whom one might expect to see garbed in a black cloak and slouch hat, with smoking automatics looming in his hands. The Shadow, as Cleve had seen him, was a personage who had answered the last named description.

Yet Henry Arnaud was The Shadow!

The artifices of Moy Chen - the dabs whereby the Chinese merchant had transformed the visage of Cleve Branch into that of Hugo Barnes - these were childlike when compared to the craft of The Shadow.

As a master of disguise, The Shadow had no equal. His personality of Henry Arnaud was assumed. So were a hundred others - each as effective as this one. The Shadow was a man of changing countenance, and he alone in all the world knew his true identity.

The only guise to which he constantly resorted was that of a figure clad in black - a sinister, menacing figure, that brooked no opposition. Many had seen the man in black, but the countenance beneath the brimmed hat had remained unviewed by them.

The flash of piercing eyes - that was all that ever showed, between the turned-down brim and the upraised collar of the long black cloak.

One man had seen The Shadow's face - seen it against The Shadow's will. That man had sought to thwart The Shadow, and for a time his schemes had availed.

But that man no longer lived! Like other foemen of The Shadow, he had gone to deserved oblivion.

For The Shadow, whether in his customary black or in the guise of some adopted personality, was the sworn enemy of those who plotted crime. With law and lawlessness swinging in the balance, The Shadow was the factor who turned the scales in favor of justice.

A master of detection, a man with vast resources, a swift-moving phantom of the dark, The Shadow sought the source of crime and obliterated it.

Of all his amazing abilities, his greatest was his power of action. No odds were too great for The Shadow. His rescue of Cleve Branch, at the Sun Kew, was proof positive of that fact.

AS Henry Arnaud, this man of the dark was now entering his room on the twelfth floor of the hotel. The room contrasted greatly with that room in the Aldebaran Hotel, where Henry Arnaud had disappeared so strangely.

This apartment was a luxurious one - a small suite in itself. One of the most expensive rooms in the St. Thomas, it was furnished in completely modern style. Yet it had one factor in common with Henry Arnaud's former abode; a factor that was apparent to Henry Arnaud alone.

The tall, dignified man extinguished the light after he had entered the room. He was silent in the darkness. No noise told of his presence, until a click sounded in a corner of the room.

A small light shone above a glass-topped mahogany writing desk. Its rays, covered by a green shade, were spread upon the surface of the desk.

The light gave no sign of Henry Arnaud. That individual had vanished with the darkness. Another personality had replaced him. It was The Shadow who now occupied this room.

Two long, white hands appeared within the glow of light. They were hands that moved as of their own accord - hands that belonged to no visible wrists. For the arms beyond the hands were masked within black sleeves.

The hands, though slender and perfectly shaped, were hands of strength. Buried muscles vibrated beneath their skin. They were the hands which, encased within black gloves, had loosed destruction upon the hordes of the Tiger Tong.

There was a difference in the hands, as they now appeared. One was unadorned but on the other - the left - a gleaming gem shone from the base of the third finger.

A strange, weird stone, it glowed with many changing colors. From deep crimson, its flashes turned to darkish purple. It was a rare jewel - a girasol, or fire opal - this stone that The Shadow wore. Its very appearance betokened mystery - the symbol of The Shadow's mysterious existence.

The hands were busy. A paper and pencil were brought into the light. A clipping lay upon the table. The right hand took the pencil and marked a circle around words in the clipping. Then those words were transcribed to the sheet of paper.

The dying statements of Stephen Laird had been copied by The Shadow. There they stood, in tabulated form.

In the box. See.

Tag A. T - A - G - A -

Green Eyes.

Cryptic, unexplainable statements. Perhaps the ravings of a fevered mind. The Shadow's pencil paused above them. The hand crossed out the top line. At the right it inscribed, in capitals:

IN BOX C.

Moving to the second tabulation, the hand crossed out the statement "Tag A"; but the letters still remained. Now, a whispered voice spoke softly in the gloom of the room.

"T - A - G - A." The letters were repeated. "T - A - G - A. T - A - G - A..."

The pencil poised. It wrote as the voice spoke:

"T - A - G - A..."

Once more the voice pronounced the letters that the dying man had uttered. But this time, the hand made a most important change.

"T - A - G - A..." came the whisper!

"T - H - E - A..." wrote the hand!

Phonetically, both spellings were the same! Spoken aloud, the letters "T - H - E - A" sounded identically with those which the newspaper account contained!

"Tag A" was a myth. Stephen Laird had not talked of it. He had uttered a word which the conductor could not catch. To make it plain, the dying man had tried to spell. What he had said was: "T - H - E - A"; what the conductor had heard was: "T - A - G - A."

Perhaps it was the pause, the gasping pause that Laird had made before the final letter that had caused the deception. The result had been an error by the listening conductor. His ears had caught the syllables exactly; but his mind had misinterpreted them.

The Shadow had divined the meaning. The completion of the unfinished task required the addition of only a few letters. The pencil made its marks.

After the letters T - H - E - A appeared the letters T - E - R. The message was complete. Stephen Laird's misinterpreted statement had been understood.

"In box C. Theater."

The only remaining tabulation was the bottom one.

GREEN EYES.

The Shadow had capitalized these words.

Were they a name?

The light went out above the desk. Its click signified that The Shadow's task had been completed. But nothing had been written to explain that last notation!

A FORM was moving silently in the darkened room. It stood, lost in blackness, beside the open window. It was from this spot that the similarity between Room 806 in the Aldebaran Hotel, and Room 1216 in the St. Thomas became apparent.

From this window, an observer commanded the same view of the city that one gained from the window in the Aldebaran Hotel. The Shadow, now, was gazing straight toward Chinatown, exactly as he had gazed on the night when he had come to San Francisco!

In the distance, the watcher saw the crawling lights of the sign that topped the Mukden Theater. The luminous ring of stationary lights was aglow above the moving lines. From the center of that circle glowed two green spots, side by side.

Green eyes!

They sent a message - a message meant for others, not for The Shadow! But he received their message.

Those luminous spots were aglow for the first time since that other night. Like focused eyes, they seemed to glare into the blackness.

Green eyes of Chinatown, peering forth across the city!

What was the message that they sent?

That might be learned tonight. The Shadow knew that fact.

The man of the dark was preparing to accept the challenge. Those spots of green were the instruments of some unknown personage. Like The Shadow, that man had a veiled identity. He, too, possessed a strange, descriptive name.

Green Eyes!

Amid the darkness of the hotel room, a whispered sound arose. It shuddered softly. It reverberated from the walls. It mocked and taunted as its eerie tones were carried forth into the night.

It was the answer to a challenge. The distant spots that shone like glowing emeralds were the visible symbol of Green Eyes. The sardonic laugh that issued from this silent room was the audible reply of The Shadow!

The echoes of the sardonic laugh died away. The sinister mirth was ended. Silence, alone, prevailed. The Shadow was gone. The Shadow had laughed!

CHAPTER X

THE CHINESE THEATER

It was gala night at the Mukden Theater. All the elite of Chinatown had turned out. The reason was the return to America of Foo Chow, one of China's most celebrated dramatic actors. Since the days of the dowager empress, this famous impersonator had dominated the theaters of old China.

The prices rivaled those of a "Follies" premiere. Chinese first-nighters were entering the playhouse so eagerly that it was difficult to distinguish individuals in the throng. Americans were there, displaying advance reservations.

Joseph Darley and Cleve Branch arrived afoot. Darley had discharged his limousine. He had picked up two friends on the way, and with four seats reserved, there would be room for all the party.

Within, the Mukden Theater resembled a large American playhouse. In fact, it was more American than Chinese, for in its construction, the builders had adopted the most modern plans. The seats which Darley had obtained were on a side aisle. Cleve noticed that there were boxes on both sides, but only the upstairs ones were occupied.

This was probably due to the narrowness of the stage. The aisles converged sharply, and the entire stage was not fully visible even from the spot where Cleve was located. The upper boxes, projecting over the audience, might be satisfactory; but the lower ones were practically useless.

The downstairs portion of the theater was not entirely filled. Darley explained that this was due to the high prices asked for seats. Later in Foo Chow's engagement, prices would be lower, then the less wealthy Chinese would throng the playhouse.

The show began. It was Cleve's first experience in a Chinese theater, and the costumes and gestures of the actors were interesting at the beginning.

Gorgeously dressed women appeared upon the stage. Darley explained that they were impersonators. For years there had been a taboo on actresses in China, and that custom was in force here.

Tragic gesticulations and chanting singsong voices became monotonous. Cleve looked over the sea of faces in the theater. He could just distinguish solemn yellow countenances.

He wondered if Ling Soo had fared here tonight. Probably not. Lost in his fantastic dream of a Yellow Empire, the leader of the Wu-Fan would probably have no time for theaters.

The body of the theater was bathed in gloom. The side aisles by the walls were black. All eyes were toward the stage. Hence neither Cleve nor any one else in the vast throng observed a motion there.

A tall, black figure was gliding along the wall. It reached the curtain that marked the entrance to the side boxes, it moved through.

A phantomlike shape stood beside the individual entrance to Box C. Then it passed the last curtain, and stood in the box itself.

Box C was a deep recess, with a high, solid railing. Its black interior was impenetrable while the performance was going on. The black form stationed itself in a corner of the box, and waited there, motionless.

The Shadow was in the Mukden Theater - in the very place that Stephen Laird had tried to designate!

Shrouded in blackness, the invisible man of the darkness was prepared for all who might come this way. A silent, unseen form, he was seeking hidden facts.

What did this visit presage? Only The Shadow knew!

THE performance continued on the stage. Foo Chow made his appearance, garbed in a mandarin costume. He was a tall, well-built Chinaman, whose very appearance excited the approval of the audience.

His work was more interesting than that of the other actors; but, to Cleve Branch, it grew monotonous, and he was pleased when Foo Chow's part had ended.

Joseph Darley seemed to share Cleve's restlessness. He spoke to his companions in a low voice.

"Would you like to meet this celebrated actor?" he questioned.

His friends replied in the affirmative. Darley stated that he could arrange it.

"Foo Chow's part is ended now," he explained. "I met him once before. I'll go back stage and arrange an interview with him. You can expect me back shortly."

He left his seat, gained the aisle, and followed the wall until he reached the curtains that led to the downstairs boxes.

Cleve watched Darley go, and saw him disappear behind the curtains. Then Cleve studied the stage indifferently, and settled himself back in his seat. This evening was a wasted one, he decided.

The performance was nearly ended when Darley returned. He motioned from the end of the row, and they arose and joined him at the side aisle.

"Come on back," he said. "This way - through the entrance by the boxes."

They pushed through the thick curtain. Cleve was the last of the four. He noticed the inner entrances to the unoccupied boxes, as he passed. Then they reached the sliding door to the wings of the stage. Darley conducted the party to a dressing room, where he introduced his friends to Foo Chow.

The Chinese actor was a most interesting specimen of his race. He was much older than he had appeared when on stage. He shook hands in American style, and beamed pleasantly.

"I like these visits to America," he said, in perfect English. "There is an appreciation here that one does not find in my own land. There, they are used to my work. Here, it is new to those who witness it."

To Cleve, the brief visit was as uninteresting as the performance had proved to be; but he made no comment. He saw no possible connection between Foo Chow and the affairs of Chinatown.

Ling Soo - the Wu-Fan - the Tiger Tong. These were matters that seemed of more importance than a visit back stage at the Mukden Theater.

Such thoughts brought Cleve's mind to The Shadow. He was still thinking of the mysterious man in black when he left the dressing room with his companions.

They followed the narrow passage beside the boxes, Cleve again at the rear. As they came to the curtain, the man ahead of Cleve dropped the hanging, and Cleve stood alone in the darkness.

Something prompted him to look in the nearest box. It was Box C, although Cleve did not know it, and would have thought nothing of the fact. He stepped past the curtain of the box. He saw the outlines of seats, by the high, built-up rail.

A board creaked under Cleve's foot as he approached a chair and stood there, watching the stage.

The Chinese play was drawing to its close. Cleve Branch viewed it mechanically. He had a vague impression that someone was here, close beside him, in this box. He turned instinctively and stared at the shadowy corner.

It was nothing but a mass of blackness. The impression still persisted.

Cleve shrugged his shoulders and left the box. He felt that his imagination was getting the better of him. Chinatown was strange enough, without giving way to fancies and odd qualms.

Yet as Cleve walked up the side aisle, beside the wall, he could not help but glance back at times. He seemed to sense someone gliding behind him. Yet each quick inspection revealed no one.

DARLEY and the others were waiting at the entrance of the theater. They walked slowly through the lobby, one man stopping to point to a picture of Foo Chow, whom they had just met. It was a full-length likeness of the Chinese actor.

Cleve's eyes, moving to the right, stopped suddenly. There, on the marble panel of the lobby, was a long, mysterious shadow. It bore a striking resemblance to a man - to the man whom Cleve had seen that night at the Sun Kew!

It was the shadow of The Shadow!

A grotesque, silhouetted face - a black portion that was shaped like a large slouch hat - in every detail, Cleve saw the replica of the man whom he was seeking.

As though it possessed eyes that sensed Cleve's gaze, the substanceless shape melted away. Cleve whirled, and was in time to glimpse a tall figure moving into the dark. The cloak - the hat - both betokened the departure of The Shadow!

For an instant, Cleve was about to spring in wild pursuit. Long had he sought The Shadow. This time, he must trail the strange man of the dark.

But Darley's hand was upon his arm, and realizing that the committeeman was watching him, Cleve abandoned his desire. The matter of The Shadow was one that he chose to discuss with no one - not even Joseph Darley.

"Come," suggested Darley. "My limousine is waiting. We can go up to my apartment and enjoy ourselves for a while. These Chinese theatricals are all right - for the Chinese. But they leave the evening rather tasteless for me."

There was nothing to do but accept the invitation. Cleve went along with Darley and his friends. He was silent as they rode away from Chinatown.

Why was The Shadow at the Mukden Theater tonight? Cleve wondered over the perplexing question. Then he remembered the thoughts that he had experienced while he had been standing in the box. He had felt sure that someone was there; that someone had followed him up the aisle.

That someone could only be - The Shadow!

The more Cleve Branch pondered, the less he knew. He sought for a hidden connection, but could not find one. Joseph Darley - Foo Chow - the two Americans he had met tonight - these could hardly interest The Shadow.

In the past, The Shadow had shown an interest in Cleve's affairs. Tonight, there could be no reason for such interest.

Amid these scattered thoughts, Cleve realized one important fact. He must remain in San Francisco. He must spend his future time in Chinatown. Somehow, he felt that the interests of The Shadow were identical with his own.

Behind the Wu-Fan - in spite of Darley's opinion to the contrary - there might lay the key to a mighty scheme that carried a threat of danger. Cleve's duty was to uncover such a plot.

This mysterious man he had termed The Shadow must know facts that were important. It would be imperative to meet him and find out what he knew.

Tomorrow would be soon enough. Tonight, the best plan would be to assert that his work in San Francisco was ended. The identity of Cleve Branch must go; once again, Hugo Barnes must rove the streets of Chinatown.

That box in the Mukden Theater! Was it The Shadow's hiding place? That was a thought, but like all others, it led to no conclusion.

While Cleve was cogitating thus, a simple event was taking place at the St. Thomas Hotel. Gentlemanly Henry Arnaud was asking the clerk for the key to
1216.

Arriving in his room, Arnaud looked about and smiled. He extinguished the light and walked softly toward the window. He stood there, staring out across the city.

Once again, the eyes of The Shadow were upon the glittering lights that topped the Mukden Theater. Crawling lines, varicolored flickerings, and the ring of stationary lights were glowing as before.

But no longer did two lurid spots of green stare forth into the darkness, like glowing, Promethean eyes. The mysterious lights had vanished.

Green Eyes had sent his message. The call had been answered.

Strange events had happened tonight. Cleve Branch had been where he could have learned them, had he known. But only The Shadow knew!

The Shadow laughed, as he had laughed before. His laugh was one of hidden understanding.

For The Shadow had learned what he wanted to know!

CHAPTER XI

CLEVE PLAYS THE SPY

CLEVE BRANCH had left San Francisco. He had departed on the morning after his visit to the Mukden Theater. He had gone with a report received from Joseph Darley; the final report that concerned the Wu-Fan and its persecution by the Tiger Tong.

But Cleve had left the city only as a personality. In his place, another man remained.

Once again, Hugo Barnes was on the watch in Chinatown. Moy Chen had replaced his former workmanship. The identity of Cleve Branch was obscured by the features of Hugo Barnes.

There were two spots in Chinatown that Cleve decided were worth watching.

One was the Mukden Theater; for there, he had encountered the presence of The Shadow. The other was the abode of Ling Soo. It was possible that The Shadow might appear there.

The place was also the headquarters of the Wu-Fan. And, it could be watched simultaneously with the Mukden Theater.

Fifty feet away from the entrance to the theater, Cleve lounged idly at the doorway of a Chinese auction house. The place was busy tonight, and the figure of Hugo Barnes was inconspicuous.

Cleve rubbed his hand across his face. He could almost feel the swarthy complexion. He touched his overhanging eyebrows. They, more than any other feature, had changed his countenance.

Cleve had no fear of recognition, but he was wary in his actions. For although the personality of Cleve Branch was safe from detection, he remembered well that Hugo Barnes was now a budding member of the Wu-Fan.

The badge of membership was fastened to Cleve's vest; and, recollecting his experience at the Sun Kew, he wisely kept it hidden.

Bright lights began to flash. Long rows of bulbs showed on the sides of buildings. Strange music blared from up the street.

Small crowds were forming along the sidewalks - solemn, aged Chinamen, dainty Chinese flappers, old and young were gathering to witness another of the many parades that cleaved their way along this teeming thoroughfare.

The crowd was not as large as it had been on the last pageant night. Nevertheless, it obscured the view of Ling Soo's entrance. The lobby of the Mukden Theater was on a higher level, for the street sloped upward in that direction.

Cleve pushed his way to the curb, and moved across the street ahead of the approaching procession. He stationed himself at a new spot, and was pleased to note that here he could observe both Ling Soo's door and the front of the theater.

Someone jostled against Cleve. He turned and stared squarely into the face of Joseph Darley!

An exclamation stopped on Cleve's lips. His features formed a pleased grin. As Hugo Barnes, Cleve had escaped recognition. Darley had viewed him as a total stranger!

CLEVE watched the committeeman work his way along the street. What was Darley's mission here tonight? A visit to Ling Soo?

Yes - the surmise was correct. The man had turned into the little entrance.

Knowing the comparative frequency of Darley's visits to Ling Soo, Cleve realized that the meeting of the two men might be of small significance. Whatever might be discussed in relation to the Wu-Fan could be learned from Darley afterward.

But there was a very definite reason why Cleve could not communicate with Darley. That very morning, Cleve had announced that he was through with his investigation. Right now, he was supposed to be traveling east, away from San Francisco.

Banners were waving in the lighted streets. Exotic music was sounding with rhythmic beat. But Cleve scarcely saw or heard. A brilliant plan was forming in his mind.

Ling Soo had said that Hugo Barnes, as a new member of the Wu-Fan, would be welcome at headquarters any time. Cleve had never accepted the standing invitation.

Now was the time to do so! Perhaps, by visiting Ling Soo, he might be introduced to Darley and hear what the Chinaman was telling the chairman of the Civilian Committee!

A great idea, especially as Cleve's disguise had proven its worth already, so far as Joseph Darley was concerned.

Acting upon the impulse, Cleve threaded his way past solemn Chinamen who were watching the parade. He reached the door to Ling Soo's quarters and entered. The elevator came to the ground floor when he pushed the control button. Two minutes later, Cleve Branch was standing in Ling Soo's anteroom.

A pull of the tasseled cord beside the door would summon Foy. But Cleve hesitated before performing the action. He noted that the door was ajar. Foy must have failed to close it tightly.

Softly, Cleve opened the door and stepped into Ling Soo's hallway. The place was deserted.

It gave Cleve an idea for an excuse, should he be discovered. He could claim that he received no response to his ring - that he supposed it would be all right to enter. In character with Hugo Barnes, such an explanation might easily satisfy Ling Soo.

Cleve went forward to the brass-faced doors that bore the Chinese dragons. These portals, too, were slightly open. Not enough for Cleve to peer through, but sufficient for him to listen.

Pressing his ear to the crack, Cleve scanned the side wall and noted a hanging curtain in the hallway. It would afford a hiding place, should he need it.

The buzz of conversation reached his ears. English words were distinguishable. As Cleve listened, they became clearer, and he caught snatches of the talk.

"It is wise to wait," came Ling Soo's voice. "But it is not wise to wait too long -"

The words became inaudible. Perhaps the man was speaking in a lower voice. Cleve thought he heard the words "Wu-Fan" and "Tiger Tong."

Then came Darley's response.

"Los Angeles... next week..." These were the words that Cleve heard plainly.

"Last night..." This was only a snatch of Ling Soo's statement "It has been settled... Green Eyes."

There was an impressive sound to the final words. They were uttered as one would speak a name.

Green Eyes!

Dying, Stephen Laird had spoken of green eyes. Had he been telling of a living person? Of his murderer? The thought was startling!

WHY did Ling Soo name Green Eyes? There was something sinister in the title. It brought a chain of wild, fantastic ideas.

Joseph Darley had said nothing of any one called Green Eyes. Was he hearing the name for the first time tonight?

"They are ready," Ling Soo was saying, in a tone that made Cleve realize the men were just within the doors. "Green Eyes must speak again and name the exact hour. Then you will be ready. The men will come to me."

"Good," said Darley.

"But you must have the paper," came the tones of Ling Soo. "It will be the symbol that they shall accept."

"It is safe at my apartment."

The doors began to tremble. Quickly, Cleve slipped toward the hanging curtain. He slid behind it and found himself backed against a depressed door.

For a few moments, nothing happened. Then, the crouched form of Foy appeared from the inner room.

Peering from a corner of the curtain, Cleve saw the evil, stooping Chinaman wend his way toward the outer door that opened into the anteroom.

Ling Soo appeared, walking slowly with Joseph Darley.

Until now, Cleve had never seen the Chinaman standing. On both previous occasions, Ling Soo had remained seated on his throne that betokened his high office in the Wu-Fan. Tonight, he saw Ling Soo as a squat, chunky figure.

The Chinaman was short, but heavy. He was attired in a black robe. Emblazoned on the back was a large golden dragon, the sign of the Wu-Fan. Words were being spoken by Ling Soo and Cleve heard them plainly.

"You are sure that it is safe," Ling Soo was saying. "It must not be seen."

"It is buried in a bottom table drawer," declared Darley, in return. "Nothing of value lies there. No one would know its purpose. Do not worry, Ling Soo."

"You are going back to your apartment now?"

"No. I shall not return until late."

"Since no one will be there -" The rest of Ling Soo's statement was lost. It died away as the men reached the entrance to the anteroom.

A buzz was all that Cleve could hear now. Ling Soo was gesticulating. Darley was shaking his head; then nodding as though in agreement. Cleve ducked as Ling Soo turned and came waddling back toward his inner room. He heard the door of the anteroom close. Then came a cackling laugh - the harsh chuckle that Ling Soo used when he was pleased.

Hiding, Cleve relied only on his ears. He heard talk close by; probably at the dragon doors. The words were uttered in Chinese, by Ling Soo. A short response in the same language came from the lips of Foy. The brass doors clanged shut.

A slight, scarcely audible movement now told that Foy alone was in the hallway. Cleve peered forth to see the Chinese servant headed toward the anteroom. He went through the door. It closed behind him. Cleve was alone.

What should he do now? Intuitively, Cleve waited, and, while he remained, he reflected.

Something important had taken place tonight. Ling Soo had discussed unusual affairs with Joseph Darley.

Whatever the meaning might be, it was certain that the presence of an intruder was something that Ling Soo would doubtless resent. For Cleve to burst in now as Hugo Barnes would be a grave mistake. It would be preferable to reserve a visit with Ling Soo for a later occasion.

Joseph Darley was gone. Foy was in the anteroom. That indicated that the servant had also made his departure.

Foy had been present during the discussion between Ling Soo and Darley. That meant nothing, for Foy could not talk English.

It was imperative that Cleve should learn the facts regarding this unexpected conference between Ling Soo and Joseph Darley,

As Hugo Barnes, Cleve could meet Ling Soo, but it was certain that he could learn nothing from the impassive Chinaman.

To question Darley - say tomorrow - would mean a reversion to the character of Cleve Branch. How could that be avoided? A sudden thought came to Cleve.

A paper - an expected symbol - safely hidden - in the bottom drawer of a table - at Joseph Darley's apartment - where no one would be tonight -

THESE disjointed thoughts burst upon Cleve Branch. They were the answer to his problem!

Darley had evidently received the paper from Ling Soo. It probably referred to something that concerned the Wu-Fan.

Groping for an explanation, Cleve thought that perhaps peace was to be declared between the Wu-Fan and the Tiger Tong.

But what was the use of such wasted speculation? The paper itself would tell the story.

There was one sure way to see it. That was to go to Joseph Darley's. Cleve was acquainted with the apartment and its location. If he could find that paper, he might learn all.

What if Darley should return and discover him? What of it? In an emergency, Cleve could reveal his dual identity to Darley.

Yes; that was the solution! He would go to Darley's and find the paper. Go there now. Acting responsively to his thought, Cleve moved sidewise from the curtain and strode cautiously to the door of the anteroom. He found the catch of the door and opened it.

As he had felt certain, the anteroom was empty. Foy had gone, as well as Joseph Darley.

Cleve descended in the elevator and breathed freely when he reached the street. The pageant had gone by now, and Cleve quietly joined the passing throng of pedestrians.

He reflected now on the safety of his position. As Hugo Barnes, he would not be suspected if any Wu-Fan men had seen him coming from the entrance to Ling Soo's. For Cleve was a member of the Wu-Fan himself.

He could risk the visit to Darley's - and be sure that in a pinch he could explain all to satisfaction.

In the fashion of Hugo Barnes, Cleve shuffled along the street, and cast a wary eye toward the Mukden Theater as he passed by. Only one factor had been omitted from his calculations until now. That factor was The Shadow.

But tonight, Cleve saw nothing that indicated the presence of the man in black. The Shadow could not be everywhere. Furthermore, Cleve had never seen actual traces of his presence outside of Chinatown. Traveling into the city proper, he felt sure that he would free himself from the realm of The Shadow's observance.

Past the outskirts of Chinatown, Cleve hailed a passing cab and gave an address near the apartment house where Joseph Darley lived. Reaching his destination, he alighted, paid the driver, and waited until the tail light of the departing cab had faded in the distance.

Here, Cleve felt safe. He smiled the peculiar smile of Hugo Barnes, as he stepped into the shuffling stride.

Hugo Barnes would enter Joseph Darley's home tonight. There, Hugo Barnes would make a find that would be of interest to Cleve Branch.

And The Shadow would not know!

CHAPTER XII

A SHOT FROM THE DARK

TO enter the apartment house, Cleve Branch took the simplest and most effective method. He walked in the front door.

He knew that an attendant was sometimes on duty. If the man happened to be there, Cleve intended to make a false inquiry, using a fictitious name. But the attendant was not on hand, and Cleve calmly sauntered up the flight of stairs at the side of the quiet lobby.

He used this course because he did not wish to wait for the automatic elevator, which might be on an upper story. The apartment which Darley occupied was on the third floor. Cleve arrived there a minute after he had left the lobby.

The question of forcible entrance was one that proved perplexing for a time. The apartment house, like so many San Francisco buildings, was on a hill, and Darley's apartment faced the upper side. Entrance by a window would have meant a climb of nearly twenty feet. The door was the better plan - if Cleve could get in this way. But the special lock offered a difficult barrier.

Recalling what he had seen of the apartment on his visits to Darley, Cleve remembered that the place had an unused kitchenette. That would be at the back. Cleve spied the entrance to a fire escape down the hall, and went in that direction. He stepped out on a railed platform.

There he saw a window - the only window at the end of the apartment. He could almost reach it from the fire escape. Climbing over the rail, Cleve reached out and tried the window with one hand. It appeared to be locked, but it rattled loosely.

There was no fear of detection, for this new apartment house was isolated from neighboring buildings. No lights showed from the window above or from the window below.

Cleve jarred the window of the kitchenette. He pushed inward and upward, with his right hand, while his left clung to the rail of the fire-escape platform.

The window yielded suddenly. Only Cleve's firm grip upon the rail prevented him from falling.

He clambered through the open window and made his way through to the front of the apartment. There, he reached the living room. He turned on a lamp and looked about him.

Cleve had noticed several tables in this room; and now the question arose as to which would be the proper one to search first.

The drawers of one table were unlocked. He rummaged there, but found that they contained few articles and no papers. The second table had locked drawers; this, Cleve decided, must be the one.

He could handle locks after a fashion; but something prompted him to try the third table before he proceeded with the picking.

Here were unlocked drawers, and the first bottom drawer that Cleve opened brought him his reward. The drawer contained two stacks of papers. Lifting them, Cleve discovered others strewn beneath.

DARLEY had been wise, he realized. An unlocked drawer, filled with useless papers, would not command a thorough search by a burglar.

Cleve withheld his haste, for he realized that it would be wise to replace these papers as he found them. So he laid the stacks upon the table, exactly as they had been in the drawer. One by one, he began to examine each of the odd papers.

He stopped at odd moments to listen. There was a tenseness to this work, and Cleve realized that he must proceed with caution for the task might prove to be most important.

Once, fancying that hidden eyes might be watching him, Cleve stared toward the window, but saw nothing except the jet-black pane, because of the reflected light of the lamp.

Again, he listened, wondering if he had heard the door of the apartment open. He laid these qualms to his fancy.

Ordinarily, Cleve was cool and indifferent to danger; but the sinister atmosphere of Chinatown had made him susceptible to sudden suspicions.

He reflected that the job of burglary which he was now performing was by far the simplest and least dangerous task that he had undertaken since his advent in San Francisco. Here, at least, he was safe from the unseen menaces that hovered over Chinatown.

Cleve reached the last paper in the drawer. He unfolded it in expectation. It must be the one he sought. He could see markings through the sheet as he unfolded it. Then, with the paper spread before him, he stared perplexed.

It was, without doubt, the paper that Ling Soo had mentioned. But it did not contain a word of English. It was inscribed with a series of Chinese characters!

What could this message mean?

Darley, Cleve felt sure, had no extensive knowledge of the Chinese language. The only solution was that Ling Soo had given certain information to Darley, and had included this paper as evidence. But to Cleve, the paper was no more enlightening than a laundry ticket!

Cleve hesitated, wondering what to do. He could take the paper with him, but he felt that such a course would be an error. The only man whom he could trust to translate it was the undercover agent, Moy Chen.

That would mean a trip to Chinatown, time lost there; and a return journey, to get the paper back into the drawer. In the meantime, Darley might return.

If possible, Cleve did not want Darley to find the paper missing. That might lead to difficulties and complications. A safe course would be to copy the Chinese characters on another sheet of paper.

But they were numerous and intricate. Cleve knew well that any inaccuracies in the transcription might ruin the import of the message.

Seeking an answer to this dilemma, Cleve stood staring at the paper, forgetful of all about him. The light was dim, for the floor light which he had turned on was in a corner at the opposite side of the room.

Then came a sudden end to his reflections.

Cleve, fancying he heard a footfall, turned. His mind, working with lightning speed, flashed the thought that it must be Joseph Darley, and that explanations would be in order. At that instant, a man leaped upon him. Cleve had not seen the face of the attacker; nor could the man have seen his, for an arm swung fiercely as it wrapped itself about Cleve's head.

Backward went Cleve, wrested by a powerful opponent. His hands clutched wildly in thin air. Twisted sidewise by the arm that lay across his face, Cleve's eyes had just enough space to peer upward and catch the gleam of a shining, pointed knife!

His legs gave way beneath him. Cleve landed flat on his back, half beneath the table, his face staring upward as the knife descended.

Half stunned by the blow against the back of his head, Cleve saw and heard everything in disjointed fashion.

Like a portrait in a frame, he recognized the evil face of Foy, the servant of Ling Soo. Descending with arrowlike aim came the flash of the falling dagger as the yellow hand aimed it for the victim's heart.

Then, from the direction of the window came a sharp report accompanied by a flash of flame. Like a dummy figure, Foy's form sprawled sidewise and rolled upon the floor, the knife still extending from the tight-clenched fist.

The lamp went out. Lying in darkness, his head throbbing, Cleve wondered what would happen next. Silence followed. Then came the sparkle of a tiny flashlight.

It moved about the room, while Cleve, prone and helpless, felt himself incapable of motion. The light flickered on his face.

Almost wearily, Cleve closed his eyes. He opened them again to see the paper with the Chinese characters, held suspended in air by an invisible hand.

Eyes in the dark were reading that message! They were the eyes of The Shadow!

The light was turned upon the drawer. The paper seemed to fold itself and drop back in its hiding place.

Other papers rustled. The light moved away; then went out.

Cleve's senses were returning; still he lay motionless. He knew that The Shadow was in action. Once again, the man of the dark had saved his life. The best course now was to wait until he could divine The Shadow's purpose.

All noise had ceased, and Cleve wondered what was happening. The events that had just taken place began to seem like an incredible dream.

Gripping the leg of the table, Cleve drew himself to his feet. He stood swaying in the darkness. His ears detected no sound. Cleve groped his way toward the lamp in the corner. He found it. He drew the cord.

Amazement followed. He was alone in the room!

The table drawer, its papers replaced, was closed. The Shadow was nowhere to be seen. But, most astonishing of all, Foy had disappeared!

Cleve rubbed the back of his head. This was incredible!

Foy had sought to kill. The Shadow had shot Foy. They must be enemies; yet both had left. It was possible that one had been instrumental in the departure of the other; still Cleve wondered that he had not heard them going.

Then he realized that his own deadened senses must have betrayed him. He had lost all knowledge of the passing of time. Even now, he was unsteady on his feet.

He pieced it all together. The Shadow had shot Foy from the window. The wounded assassin must have fled by the door. The Shadow, making no effort to follow, had remained a short while; then had departed by the window.

Cleve went to the window, and found it closed, but unlocked. He opened the window and inhaled fresh air. He closed the window and stole across the room to the hallway; there, he found the door of the apartment. It was closed, and the latch was turned.

What next?

The paper! He must go back to it; take it away if necessary.

Cleve was turning toward the living room when he heard a sound outside the door. He slipped along the hall toward the kitchenette. He heard the clicking of a key in the lock, and gained his refuge just as a flood of light appeared in the hallway.

Peering from darkness, Cleve saw Joseph Darley enter and turn toward the living room. The light there must have attracted his attention, for Cleve had left the lamp burning.

Darley's momentary departure served Cleve well. He slipped through the window of the kitchenette, and gained the fire escape, making very little noise as he went.

He traveled softly down the iron steps and reached the darkness at the bottom of the building. His mind was pondering dully as he made his way toward the street.

Why had The Shadow let Foy escape?

That was but one problem. More important was the matter of the paper which Cleve had been forced to leave neglected.

What was the import of its Chinese message?

The thought of that paper hovering before the glimmer of a tiny light made Cleve realize that another besides himself had viewed it!

The message was a mystery to Cleve, but perhaps The Shadow knew its meaning!

CHAPTER XIII

GREEN EYES SPEAKS

ONCE again, the green spots shone from the sign above the Mukden Theater. But tonight, no eyes were watching them from the twelfth floor of the St. Thomas Hotel. Henry Arnaud had checked out the night before.

The lights were not visible to Ling Soo, across the street from the theater. For he was seated on his throne in the windowless room, where he dwelt in state. His placid countenance was more inscrutable than ever.

Ling Soo clapped his hands. Foy came skulking into the room. Ling Soo addressed the servant in a singsong voice. Foy replied.

The master arose from his throne and waddled across the room, with Foy at his heels. Pressing a spot upon the wall, Ling Soo operated a panel that slowly opened. He ordered Foy to go first. The servant entered; Ling Soo followed, and the panel closed.

The two passed down a spiral stairway that was hidden in the darkness. They seemed familiar with the pathway, for they moved steadily toward the bottom. When they were far below the level of Ling Soo's apartment, they stopped before a solid barrier, which, like the panel, opened at Ling Soo's touch.

This revealed a dim corridor. Ling Soo stepped by his servant and took the lead along the narrow passage. There was a turn, and then another passage.

The men were passing through a tunnel laid beneath the street. They came to a final barrier. This slid away and closed after both had made their exit. They were at the entrance of a room.

Ling Soo rapped once. He paused and rapped again. A door slid up into the ceiling. The leader of the Wu-Fan entered, followed by his minion.

A small group of men were seated about the room. Their forms were barely visible, for the room was shrouded in gloom.

These persons were awaiting the arrival of others. Ling Soo and Foy joined the group.

Here, Ling Soo was no chieftain. He was one of a select few. That was all. A rap at the door. Another man was admitted. The circle was complete.

A light came on at the top of the room. It was a peculiar, flickering glow that cast an odd hue over the assembled men.

It showed them clad in long robes, much like the black attire that Ling Soo wore. But it made faces difficult to distinguish. Yellow and white, alike, were toned with a strange, colorless pallor.

One member of the group spoke a single word in the Chinese language. All turned in his direction. At first glance, he was no different from the rest. But as the combined gaze was focused upon him, a strange oddity asserted itself.

The man's eyes shone a brilliant green!

There was mystery in their glare - a strange, unaccountable mystery. The glow from those eyes sparkled in the light. It seemed to be a flashing, living flame! It disappeared at moments; then returned.

Green Eyes!

He was the amazing member of this assemblage. No greater than any other - for all were equal - he seemed to dominate through that uncanny individuality which he possessed. No one could meet the glance of those green eyes without feeling an impression of their power.

THE silence which followed was broken by the voice of Ling Soo. The leader of the Wu-Fan spoke in English. It was the use of this language that revealed the personnel of the assemblage.

Most were Chinese, of culture and with command of English. A few were Americans, unfamiliar with the Chinese tongue. The English words were understandable by all.

"Our plans are made," declared Ling Soo. "We were prepared last night. We have now discovered danger."

He paused to let the words make their impression.

"We have discussed this one man who has troubled us," continued Ling Soo. "We let him join the Wu-Fan to mislead him. I purposely let him hear of the Sun Kew. He went there, but escaped. How, we do not know. But he did not suspect me of planning his death.

"I told all this two nights ago. Last night, I supposed that all was safe. But he has appeared again - this man from the government - and he is seeking to uncover us."

A low murmur of suppressed rage came from members of the circle. Ling Soo silenced it with upraised hand.

"I sent Foy, The Slayer," declared Ling Soo. "Last night, Foy did not kill. Foy has not spoken. He does not need to speak. The man has escaped. That is all. He must not escape again!"

Another member spoke. His voice, though quiet, was less deliberate than that of Ling Soo. This man was evidently an American, from his speech.

"An agent of the government," he said, "is dangerous, even though he may know but little. It was wise to let him go his way. But now he is a danger. If

he knows -"

"He does not know," interposed Ling Soo, "but he may learn. Should he learn now, the danger would be great."

"What do you propose?" came a question.

"I have misled him once," replied Ling Soo calmly. "He became a member of the Wu-Fan. He expects to learn more of the Wu-Fan. I can promise him more. I can mislead him again."

A murmur of approval greeted the plan. Then came Ling Soo's next statement - uttered with quiet composure.

"Let him see Green Eyes," said the leader of the Wu-Fan.

"Let him see Green Eyes!"

The echo came from the other men, as they spoke almost in unison.

"The time is near," said a solemn voice. Green Eyes was speaking. "Until now, it was wise to wait. But we cannot act with this danger present. Let us rely on Ling Soo. Let him bring our enemy here. Here, he shall find death."

"Green Eyes has spoken," declared Ling Soo, as he blinked in owlish fashion.

"Green Eyes has spoken," echoed a murmur.

ALL seemed satisfied with the verdict. Silence gripped the group of plotters. The most important business had been settled. Still, they waited. Ling Soo spoke, addressing Green Eyes.

"Shall the death be that of torture?" he questioned. "Or shall it be by the hand of Foy?"

"The torture is not needed," replied Green Eyes. "The hand of Foy has been known to fail."

"It cannot fail us when the man is our prisoner."

"You are right," declared Green Eyes. "Foy shall have his opportunity to correct his error. Our enemy shall die at the hand of Foy."

"Green Eyes has spoken," said Ling Soo.

"Who shall be the witness?" came a voice.

"Let our brother from China be the witness," pronounced Green Eyes. "He shall see the hand of Foy, The Slayer."

"Green Eyes has spoken," declared Ling Soo.

"We await the action of Ling Soo," asserted the man called Green Eyes. "When he is ready, I shall know. My call shall tell that the time has come. It shall be the last. After it, our work must be done."

"Green Eyes has spoken," came a low response.

There was a motion in the subterranean room as the members of the insidious group began to retire, one by one. Those who remained, spoke to each other in low voices.

Ling Soo, with Foy standing at his side, became engaged in conversation with a man in the corner. Their discourse was in the Chinese language:

They formed an odd trio.

Ling Soo, squat, heavy, and owl-eyed; Foy, stooped, silent, and leering; the third man, aged but well-featured. He was listening intently, this stranger, and his face could be seen by both Ling Soo and Foy. The man was Foo Chow, the Chinese actor appearing at the Mukden Theater.

"Our brother from China shall see." This was the import of Ling Soo's words. "He shall see the hand of Foy. When that hand strikes, its work is quick and sure. When Foy has failed - as you have heard Green Eyes say - it is only because he has not found the opportunity to strike."

"Foy deals death to traitors?"

"Yes," declared Ling Soo. "There was one who died not long ago, but by another hand. It was Green Eyes, himself, who dealt death then. It is seldom that Green Eyes strikes. His hand is firm, but not so certain as the hand of Foy. For Foy is The Slayer."

The pride in Ling Soo's voice indicated that Foy was his protegee. Foo Chow nodded solemnly.

"We all have work," declared Ling Soo. "Green Eyes has spoken. It is for me to watch and act; that the time may come when Foy shall strike. You, brother from China, have your work there."

Foo Chow nodded approvingly.

The room was almost deserted. Foo Chow observed the fact and bowed to Ling Soo. Then the actor left by the door.

When he had gone, Ling Soo spoke to Foy. Followed by his silent servant, the leader of the Wu-Fan made his exit.

One man alone remained. He was seated in his chair, thoughtful and still. He was a sinister figure in that flickering light. He was looking straight

ahead and, as he gazed, his eyes glowed and flashed their sparkles of green light. They were eyes that held a dominating sway.

The light in the room went out. But in the semigloom that still remained, the dull glow of two green spots was visible. Those spots moved upward and across the room. They marked the progress of Green Eyes, as he, too, made his departure from the meeting place.

The members of the inner shrine had made their plan. The dragonmen, who controlled the Wu-Fan as their pawn, had plotted death tonight.

Green Eyes had spoken!

The silent, secret room was devoid of occupants. Far above it, on the roof of the Mukden Theater, a huge, illuminated sign flashed forth into the night. The uppermost circle of light upon that sign was a blank space now. Two glowing bulbs of green had been extinguished.

No longer did the call of Green Eyes beckon to the few who knew its meaning. When next it sent its message through the night, its words would be the call of death!

Death by the hand of Foy, "The Slayer"!

So Green Eyes had spoken!

CHAPTER XIV

THE SUBTLETY OF LING SOO

WHEN Ling Soo planned, he employed an uncanny craftiness that showed a mingling of Oriental wisdom and Occidental efficiency. Behind those bespectacled eyes of his lay a brain that prepared schemes far more practical than the fantastic visions of a future Chinese Empire.

Ling Soo seldom disclosed the workings of his mind. When he did indulge in reminiscent talk, he used the Chinese language, and the man to whom he expressed his views was Foy - the sinister servant whom Ling mildly dubbed The Slayer.

Ling Soo could be stern with Foy. He dominated the man, and thereby assured himself of Foy's lasting loyalty.

When Foy incurred Ling Soo's displeasure, the master spoke harshly. But between these occasional outbursts, Ling Soo usually chose to treat his servant as a confidant - although even then, he was careful not to say too much.

Back in Ling Soo's abode, the squat Chinaman was seated on his picturesque throne. He had adopted his favorite pose - that of leader of the Wu-Fan. Foy, hovering near, awaited his master's bidding. No orders came. Instead, Ling Soo began to express his inner thoughts.

"Last night, Foy," he said, in his native tongue, "you failed. Tonight you shall see that Ling Soo never fails. You will learn, tonight, Foy. You will learn much that you should know."

The crouching servant leered as his master spoke. His wicked face seemed to express interest in what Ling Soo had to say. The master went on.

"It is time that you should prove your strength, again," resumed Ling Soo. "You have been lacking, Foy. You have not lived up to the name that I have given you - the name of Slayer. I am disappointed, Foy."

"I had marked the traitor - the man called Laird - for your knife. But Green Eyes spoke, and said that he would do that deed. Green Eyes can strike, Foy, but he cannot slay with the skill that you have shown. When Green Eyes kills - death may be slow. When you kill - death is swift."

Foy, although unspeaking, seemed to agree with what Ling Soo had said. The master's voice became more stern as he went on.

"I sent you to the room in the hotel," he said. "To the room in which the traitor Laird had lived. A new man had come there. His actions showed that he was an enemy. I ordered you to slay. You did not slay."

"The man was not there," responded Foy, in a sullen voice.

"You said that he went in," declared Ling Soo. "You did not see him come out."

"He was not there," repeated Foy.

"We may forget that man," resumed Ling Soo, ignoring Foy's protest. "He has not appeared since then. It may be well that you did not slay him. But last night, Foy, you failed again."

"I sent you to watch the home of Joseph Darley; to watch while Darley was not there. To come and tell when he had returned. You say to me that you entered there and saw the man whom we call Barnes. Yet you failed to strike."

"He went away," growled Foy. "I was not soon enough to strike him."

"That is no excuse, Foy." Ling Soo eyed the servant coldly. "It is not like Foy to say that one went away before Foy could strike. This has happened twice, Foy. It shall not happen again."

Ling Soo paused reflectively and changed the subject with a thoughtful, even tone.

"The man whom we call Barnes," he said. "He has another name. He is the man who came here before, with Darley. He thinks that he is wise; but he is not so wise as Ling Soo."

"I have been told that he is in these streets tonight. So I have sent two of the Wu-Fan who know him, to bring him hither."

"I wish to speak with him, Foy. But we must remember that you sought to slay him last night. He may have known your wish. He may be suspicious tonight. Do nothing, Foy, to make him view you as an enemy."

SCARCELY had Ling Soo finished speaking, before a bell rang softly close by. Ling Soo nodded to Foy. The servant left the inner room toward the hallway.

Ling Soo sat serenely on his throne.

He was blinking mildly when the door opened and Foy entered, followed by the man who called himself Hugo Barnes.

To Cleve Branch, firm-faced in spite of his disguise, this meeting was an important one. Since that event at Joseph Darley's last night, he had been wondering whether it would be wise to again visit Ling Soo. For there, he knew, he might encounter Foy, the insidious slayer who had so mysteriously escaped after The Shadow had wounded him.

Prowling through Chinatown, pondering on this important question, Cleve had encountered one of the Chinese acquaintances who had arranged his entrance into the Wu-Fan. The man had been glad to see him. In a low voice, he had told Cleve that Ling Soo desired to see his American friend as soon

as convenient.

So Cleve was here; and the first man he had met was Foy!

The servant's face was as ugly as before; but it showed no deep-set malice. It seemed evident that Foy must have failed to recognize the man whom he had tried to knife at Darley's. Nevertheless, Cleve had clutched the handle of his stub-nosed pocket revolver as he had crossed the hallway toward the sanctum of Ling Soo.

The staid leader of the Wu-Fan smiled placidly as Cleve awkwardly raised his forefinger to his forehead. Ling Soo returned the salute.

Cleve sat down in a chair indicated by the Wu-Fan chieftain. He felt relieved when he saw the crouching Foy retire to a corner of the room, where he stood in plain view, his slitted eyelids nearly closed.

Cleve felt at ease as he reflected on the circumstances of this visit. Ling Soo had no knowledge of the spying which Cleve had done. The most that the Chinaman could know was that Cleve had entered Joseph Darley's apartment, in search of a paper which Ling Soo had given to the head of the Civilian Committee.

Foy had gone there, in anticipation of an intruder. The fact that Cleve was the man who had entered could not have given Ling Soo a real inkling of the part that Cleve was playing, in the disguise of Hugo Barnes.

Perhaps - as Cleve had thought before - Foy had not recognized him. If that were true, Cleve's position here was as strong as ever.

Cleve studied Ling Soo carefully, as the Chinese leader began to speak. There was nothing in the squat man's bearing, or in his speech, that betokened menace. On the contrary, Ling Soo was friendly. In fact, he seemed almost chiding; and it was that manner that lulled Cleve into believing that all was well.

"YOU have been here once," remarked Ling Soo. "Once is not often. That is why I have sought you, tonight. It is well that we are friends. It would be better if our friendship should increase."

Cleve nodded in agreement.

"There is a reason," declared Ling Soo, "why I seek the better acquaintance of my American friends who have seen the light of the Wu-Fan.

"Our great order needs the advice of such friends. For, though the Wu-Fan is of China, its purpose lies in America. Great power will come to those who believe with the Wu-Fan. Would you like to share that power?"

The proposition was suggested in a mild, friendly tone. Cleve, thinking keenly, believed that he understood Ling Soo's inference.

It was a positive fact that Stephen Laird had been an agent of the Wu-Fan. Laird had been slain - and Cleve inclined, from experience, to the theory that the Tiger Tong had been responsible.

Despite the fact that sinister Foy had wielded a knife with which he had sought Cleve's life, the government agent discounted any murderous intentions on the part of the Wu-Fan.

It was logical that Ling Soo needed someone to take the place that death had caused Stephen Laird to vacate. If so, it would be to Cleve's advantage to seize the opportunity. He put forward a question, which, if answered, would give him a clew to Ling Soo's design.

"Does danger accompany that power?" Cleve asked.

"Yes," responded Ling Soo quietly. "Danger threatens all who learn the inner secrets of the Wu-Fan. One can not expect power without danger.

"We of the Wu-Fan have enemies. We must guard against them. Hence those who are the chosen few of our great number are the ones who know the most cherished secrets."

Ling Soo's impersonal speech carried a subtlety which was not detected by Cleve Branch. Keen though the investigator was, his urge to learn more overcame his natural reluctance to accept such luring statements as these.

He saw his opportunity. Established as an inner member of the secret order, he could quickly learn the truth concerning the death of Stephen Laird. Not only that; he could gain important information of the Wu-Fan's secret methods.

"My American friends," commented Ling Soo sadly, "are all too few. I must have more of them. There is work ahead - great work.

"Think well before you accept my offer, friend Barnes, for I warn you that many duties will be imposed upon you. But if you choose to accept, I can assure you that a great power will be yours."

Ling Soo's change of tack - his unwillingness to force Hugo Barnes into the inner circle of the Wu-Fan - was the subtle note that brought Cleve's prompt decision.

He made a definite reply as he stared squarely into the owl eyes that were large and kindly behind the thick lenses of the spectacles.

"I accept your offer," said Cleve, in the tone of Hugo Barnes. "What do you wish me to do?"

"You must promise, first," declared Ling Soo softly. "Promise by your oath in the Wu-Fan to keep your new knowledge a complete secret."

"I promise," replied Cleve.

He caught Ling Soo's gesture, and followed the statement by making the sign of the Wu-Fan, to which Ling Soo solemnly responded.

"You have promised," said Ling Soo, with a touch of sternness in his voice. "Tomorrow night, you may meet, for the first time, the members of our inner shrine.

"Be cautious in your actions until then. Await the hour of ten. Come, then, to the Mukden Theater, which lies across the street from the doorway to my home. There you will see a man with folded arms. Upon his finger a ring - such as this."

Ling Soo displayed his left hand. Upon it was a ring, fashioned with the head of the golden dragon. Cleve noted that the eyes of the little dragon were two tiny emeralds. It brought a sudden meaning to his mind.

Green Eyes!

Could this be an inner secret of the Wu-Fan? Those were words which Stephen Laird had uttered. Green Eyes!

"Approach that man," continued Ling Soo, apparently oblivious to the fact that his visitor was still staring at the dragon ring. "When you see him face to face, make the secret sign of the Wu-Fan."

The squat Chinaman solemnly raised his finger to his forehead, and Cleve duplicated the action.

"That man will lead you to the meeting place," declared Ling Soo, in a final tone. "There you will learn the secrets of the inner shrine - the highest secrets of the Wu-Fan.

"Remember" - the voice spoke more deliberately than usual - "until then, you must tell no one of your purpose. Your promise has been made. Your secrecy begins now."

"I understand," said Cleve.

Ling Soo clapped his hands. Foy came gliding forward, carrying the brass image of the dragon. He held it between the other men.

Ling Soo placed his finger upon the dragon's head; then raised it to his forehead, and held it there. Cleve, in response, pressed his finger to the metal image, and placed it to his forehead. He held that position until Ling Soo lowered his hand.

The ceremony was ended.

LING SOO slipped down from his throne. It was his act of special courtesy to accompany an honored guest to the outer door of the abode.

Foy going ahead to open the doors, Cleve and Ling Soo walked out to the anteroom. With Foy, they formed a group beside the door of the elevator.

Cleve, softly repeating the instructions he had received, stepped into the lift. It was then that he saw something which startled him. A shadow on the floor, beside the two Chinese - a long, mysterious shadow!

The Shadow!

Could he be here? Cleve looked up quickly. Except for Ling Soo and Foy, the anteroom was empty.

Quickly seeking to cover up his mistake, Cleve closed the door of the elevator and began the descent. But as he traveled downward, he was wondering about the presence of that shadow!

Up above, Ling Soo was returning toward his inner room. Behind him stalked the form of Foy. The servant's hands were doubled against his body. Ling Soo noticed it as they entered the inner room. The leader of the Wu-Fan cackled.

"Foy!" he said. "Foy. His hand is ready" - the words were in Chinese - "ready to strike tomorrow night! Foy, The Slayer, is ready!"

A murderous grin came over the leering features of Foy. The man's yellow skin was livid in the dull light of the room. The brass dragon image was lying on a taboret. Ling Soo drew a silk cloth from beneath his robe. With it he stroked his hands, then his forehead, and finally the brass image.

"Ling Soo has planned," he said solemnly, in Chinese. "Foy shall strike. His victim shall be the man who bears the mark of death! Green Eyes has spoken!"

Grinning, Foy stared at his master. Ling Soo cackled again as he tapped his forehead knowingly.

Handing the brass image to Foy, the leader of the Wu-Fan, plodded toward his throne, with his servant advancing, crouched, beside him.

A strange, insidious pair! One had planned death. The other was to deal it.

Yet more sinister than these living men was the long shadow that lay across the floor in front of Ling Soo's thronelike chair. It was a living shadow - a phantom shade that was foreboding!

Foy retired to the outer room. Ling Soo rested on his throne. He was staring toward the floor. The sinister blotch was there no longer.

Keen, though he was, Ling Soo had not sensed the presence of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XV

GREEN LIGHTS GLOW

It was late the next afternoon. Cleve Branch was sitting in a hotel room. He was himself again; but tonight he would assume the personality of Hugo Barnes - perhaps for the last time.

Cleve was confident that his work in San Francisco was nearing its completion.

Ling Soo had told Hugo Barnes to be cautious in his actions until the meeting time. Cleve had taken those instructions to heart.

With Ling Soo, he had secretly agreed that the less seen of Hugo Barnes the better. So immediately upon leaving the abode of Ling Soo, he had shambled away in Hugo Barnes style, and had stolen into the shop of Moy Chen.

Cleve had not required the services of Moy Chen to remove the traces of Hugo Barnes. Cleve had done that himself, wiping away the make-up with a thorough application of cold cream. Himself, again, he had sauntered from the side entrance of the Hoang-Ho Cafe.

Indifference had gripped Cleve on his way to the hotel. As Cleve Branch he could not be identified with Hugo Barnes, member of the Wu-Fan. Cleve had decided to rest and to forget. He had slept late in the morning; he had eaten his meals in his room. Now, with dinnertime approaching, he was ready to go forth.

He glanced at himself in the mirror. Due to the dimness of the room, Cleve saw only the outline of his face - not its details. He chuckled to himself. With this game of Branch and Barnes, it was sometimes difficult to remember which he was.

Had the lights been on in the room, Cleve might have noticed something unusual about his face. But, as it was, Cleve had not seen his mirrored reflection closely since he had left Ling Soo's the night before!

A door was ajar across the hall. Cleve did not notice it as he left the room. When he reached the lobby, he left his key at the desk and strolled to the barber shop.

He did not observe the man who peered at him over the top of a newspaper. That man was dressed like an American; but his face had a yellowish hue.

In the barber shop, Cleve slipped into a chair and ordered a shave. In glancing at Cleve's face, the barber paused and leaned over, as though wondering about something he saw there.

But the man made no comment; and Cleve did not encourage conversation. He was thinking of his plans for tonight. He was still in a meditative mood when he left the barber shop, and dined in a small restaurant near the hotel.

There, as before, Cleve paid no attention to the persons about him. He did not see the sidelong glances of a man who was seated at a table in the corner. For Cleve, while he ate, was considering an important visit before he set forth to change his character at Moy Chen's.

CLEVE was thinking about Joseph Darley. So far as he knew, the committeeman still had the paper with the Chinese inscription. Darley had received the paper from Ling Soo. In their discussion, both Darley and Ling Soo had regarded the paper as important.

After all, Cleve felt that he had adopted the wrong course when he had entered Darley's home, like a burglar. He would have been to blame had he fallen at the hand of Foy.

Cleve was positive now that the Chinese assassin had not recognized him as Hugo Barnes. All during the fray, Foy's arm had been across Cleve's face. Then had come the shot - the extinguishing of the lamp - the appearance of The Shadow - the disappearance of Foy.

Ling Soo, last night, had sounded genuine in his talk. So far as the Wu-Fan was concerned, Cleve felt safe; and he smiled as he thought of an additional precaution that would render him secure. That would be adopted tonight.

But why had Foy been at Joseph Darley's?

There were two answers to the question.

First: Ling Soo might have feared that the paper would be molested, and had therefore sent Foy to watch the apartment. The vicious Chinese servant must have been listening outside, while Cleve was in the apartment.

Second: Ling Soo may have wanted to steal the paper back from Darley!

There might have been reasons for this. Perhaps Ling Soo had thought that he had made a mistake in letting Darley have the paper. Ling Soo's suggestion to Darley - that the paper might be stolen - had all the semblance of a subtle alibi.

These perplexities had been bothering Cleve all day; and for that reason, he had decided to follow the very course that he should have adopted in the first place.

The best way to learn the import of the paper was to visit Darley and see if the man mentioned it. That was what Cleve intended to do tonight.

It was after seven o'clock when he left the restaurant and rode in a cab to Darley's apartment. The doorman was on duty when Cleve entered. He rang up Darley, and announced the visitor. Cleve was ushered upstairs. He found Darley in his living room. The man seemed agreeably surprised to see him.

As they shook hands, Cleve felt fully at ease. He had planned to give a reason for his unexpected return to San Francisco; and he realized that Joseph Darley could know nothing of his adventures in the guise of Hugo Barnes. Cleve's private investigations in disguise need not be mentioned.

"Back to San Francisco," said Cleve, with a smile. "This time - I am pleased to say - it has nothing to do with the Wu-Fan."

"Ah!" exclaimed Darley. "You completed your report on that subject?"

"I did," said Cleve, "and now I am virtually on leave for the next few weeks. I have to report at San Diego, later. So, with nothing to do, I remembered your invitation to join you on the yacht cruise to Los Angeles."

"Grand!" exclaimed Darley, with enthusiasm. "Leo Frane is due here at the end of the week. Keep in touch with me. We would like to have you sail along with us."

"All right," said Cleve. "I just dropped in to say 'howdy.' I'm running over to Sausalito tonight on the ferry. Leaving pretty soon, so I can't stay long."

"By the way" - Darley's face became serious - "if you have not fully closed that case of the Wu-Fan, I advise you to wait a short while. There have been new developments that may affect the Wu-Fan."

"You have discovered something?" inquired Cleve, with interest.

"I have received information," returned Darley. "It came from Ling Soo. It refers to the activities of the Tiger Tong. It proves, more conclusively than ever, that the tong - not the Wu-Fan - is responsible for any difficulties that may occur. In fact, I may say that this new information completely exonerates the Wu-Fan of all crimes that may at first glance seem to be of Chinese origin."

"What is the nature of the information?"

"I have it here."

DARLEY went directly to the drawer where Cleve had looked two nights ago. He brought out the very paper that Cleve had seen. He spread it out and showed the Chinese inscriptions.

"This," said Darley, "refers to certain activities aboard the Pung-Shoon - a Chinese junk which came through the Golden Gate a few days ago. The Pung-Shoon now lies at anchor in San Francisco Bay.

"This paper, from the translation that Ling Soo gave me, indicates that certain members of the Tiger Tong, now sought by the police, intend to sail on the Pung-Shoon tomorrow. They are going back to China, Ling Soo claims, to induce certain of their countrymen - members of the tong - to come to San Francisco."

"For what purpose?"

"As new recruits for the Tiger Tong's warlike campaign against the Wu-Fan. At least, that is Ling Soo's theory."

"Have you investigated it?"

"I am investigating tonight. I expect to go aboard the junk in behalf of the Civilian Committee. There I shall conduct a search.

"If I see any signs of Tiger Tong men, I shall report it to the authorities. The Pung-Shoon will not receive clearance papers from this port until I give it my approval."

"A very good idea."

"I should be glad to have you accompany me," said Darley. "Not as a government agent - for this matter is no more than a civil affair as yet - but as a friend."

"What time are you going there?" asked Cleve.

"At ten-o'clock," answered Darley. "I have a dinner engagement, now; after that I shall meet other members of the Civilian Committee. We cannot get started until after ten."

"I don't think I can make it," said, Cleve, knowing that the time Darley mentioned was identical with the hour of the Wu-Fan meeting. "I am very tired tonight. Came in from Denver on the Canyon Special, and I expect to turn in early. But I would like to talk with you tomorrow - to learn what you may have found."

"Very good," agreed Darley. "Incidentally, I understand that Ling Soo is calling a special meeting of those high in the Wu-Fan. He, too, may have more information tomorrow. Call at my office about noon. Will that be suitable?"

"Very," declared Cleve.

Darley's mention of a special Wu-Fan meeting tonight was illuminating. This must be the very meeting that Cleve was to attend. With the existence of the meeting known to Darley, Cleve felt fully assured that all would be well when he joined Ling Soo tonight.

"If you're going downtown," suggested Darley, "why don't you come along with me? My car is waiting outside."

Cleve accepted the invitation. He sat in a chair by the window and waited, while Darley went to get his coat and hat.

This window, Cleve reflected, had played a very important part in his career. It was from this very spot that The Shadow had fired at Foy.

All was a hazy recollection to Cleve. He remembered Foy and the knife, rolling away. Probably the bullet had only grazed the man. That seemed the logical explanation of Foy's quick escape.

Cleve had seen men fall, virtually unhurt, under similar circumstances. He had often seen wounded men rise and run. Foy must have escaped almost unscathed, for the crouching, sneaky Chinaman was back at Ling Soo's as capable as ever.

Cleve's eyes looked over the city. There he saw a flashing light that shone above a dull glow. He recognized it by its crawling lines - the sign over the Mukden Theater. That was where Cleve would be tonight - in the lobby of that very theater.

Darley was back. He was speaking as he stood beside Cleve, also gazing toward the lights of distant Chinatown.

"Eight o'clock," said Darley.

Two tiny green specks appeared in the luminous circle above the Mukden Theater sign. Only Darley noticed them, for Cleve was rising from his chair. Those specks were shining globes of light, showing from the distance like the pupils of two emerald eyes.

"I should be downtown now," remarked Darley. "Let us go."

The two men chatted as they rode through the night. Cleve alighted at a corner near his hotel. Beneath the glare of a street light, he stood beside the door and waved good-bye to Darley.

Cleve's face was in full view - plain in the light. Every feature was visible to Darley. There, on the center of Cleve's forehead, Darley noted a tiny spot of red. It flared in vivid crimson, like a blot of blood.

The limousine drew away. Cleve stood alone. Darley had not mentioned the spot that he had seen; so Cleve was still unconscious of it.

He did not know that his forehead bore the same mark that Stephen Laird had carried that night on the Mountain Limited.

That mark was the mark of death!

CHAPTER XVI

MOY CHEN FAILS

ACCUSTOMED, as Cleve Branch was, to the atmosphere of Chinatown, he felt uneasy tonight as he trod his way along the narrow, hilly street. This district seemed more sinister than ever.

Perhaps the chill air from the bay was responsible. That air betokened an approaching fog, that would be thick when morning dawned. Already a vague mist seemed to be settling through Chinatown.

Each alley that Cleve passed was gloomy - a place for hidden eyes. The very doors between the lighted shops were lurking spots.

As Cleve walked by a placid Chinaman, pipe-smoking at the door of a store, he fancied that he saw the fellow watching him.

Why this thought of prying eyes? If they were watching Cleve Branch, they would gain nothing; for soon Cleve Branch would be a lost identity, replaced by Hugo Barnes. Yet all Chinatown seemed alert tonight, Cleve thought as he walked along.

The explanation, had Cleve known it, was on his own forehead. There, beneath the glow of every light he passed, gleamed a spot that told a story.

It was a secret of the Wu-Fan - known to the most trusted Chinese members only. The mark of death - the mark that meant its bearer should be watched!

No matter what guise he might assume, Cleve would not be able to avoid those stealthy looks from almond eyes, unless he covered up the telltale spot.

Cleve Branch and Hugo Barnes would be alike tonight. Both, men who would be watched!

This had begun the night before. When Cleve had touched the brass dragon and placed his finger on his forehead, he had applied the secret charm.

It was the method of Ling Soo, the crafty leader of the Wu-Fan. So did he mark the men whose lives he sought.

An invisible paste, spread upon the surface of the metal dragon, had reached the forehead of Hugo Barnes. Within an hour after its application, the bloodlike spot had come there. It had shown on Cleve Branch, too, when he had appeared as himself instead of Hugo Barnes!

Since then, members of the Wu-Fan had been watching. Clever, shrewd and stealthy, they had not missed a single move which Cleve Branch had made!

The sight of that mark meant that quick reports must be given of every place the marked man went. All with whom he communicated, likewise, must be named.

Reports were even now on the way to Ling Soo, that the leader might issue orders to his secret followers. The eyes of Ling Soo were everywhere!

It was strange, Cleve thought, as he strode along, that with all these impressions of concealed observers, he saw no traces of The Shadow. He had fancied, last night, that the mysterious man had been in Ling Soo's anteroom. But he had been mistaken. Only Ling Soo and Foy had been there.

CLEVE was approaching the Hoang-Ho Cafe. He reached the side entrance. There he paused. Despite the creepy feeling of watchers from the darkness, he hurried up the stairs and gained the door to Moy Chen's hidden room.

Cleve knew the secret of that door, now - a certain lightly tapped signal, a moment of waiting, and the way would be clear.

Eagerly waiting by the door, he listened for all sounds. He fancied that someone might be creeping up the stairs by which he had come. Cleve was about to return and look. Then the door slid open, and he stepped to the passage. A few moments later he had reached the security of Moy Chen's windowless sanctum.

It was nearly nine o'clock now. An hour before the meeting time!

To Moy Chen, seated at his desk, Cleve signified that he intended to assume his disguise. The two men went into the other room.

As Moy Chen applied the make-up to Cleve's face, he remarked upon the tiny spot he saw on the agent's forehead. Cleve surveyed it in a mirror.

"Wonder where I got that?" he said. "Blot it out, Moy Chen, when you put on the eyebrows."

But, somehow, the mark would not blot. All applications that Moy Chen made failed to cover it effectually. Moy Chen arranged the heavy eyebrows, and found that he could diminish the mark, even though he could not obliterate it.

Cleve, looking in the mirror, decided that the makeshift would do. It was better than too much disguise.

"Tonight, Moy Chen," explained Cleve, "I attend a meeting of the inner group of the Wu-Fan. I may encounter danger, although I now believe that such is unlikely."

Moy Chen nodded.

"I am to be taken to the meeting place. I will not find the man who is to lead me until ten o'clock. You have been nearly fifteen minutes with my make-up. I will be out of here before half past nine."

"That will leave one half hour," said Moy Chen solemnly.

"A half an hour for you, Moy Chen," declared Cleve. "I know your connection here. I was told that if I needed immediate assistance, you could arrange for it."

"I can."

"Very well," said Cleve. "Have two men at the Mukden Theater by ten o'clock. Two men who can trail me to the meeting place."

"I shall arrange that," said Moy Chen.

"I have been working alone," said Cleve, "with this very purpose in mind. The other men will not be linked with Hugo Barnes. They will have no difficulty in trailing me."

Cleve slipped into the suit he wore when acting the part of Barnes. He drew his stub-nosed revolver from his pocket and examined the loaded chambers.

"If I encounter trouble," he said grimly, "I'll give those fellows something to think about. A shot will be the signal for the men who are trailing me. That's understood?"

"Yes," said Moy Chen.

Cleve had spoken in his own voice. Now he dropped into the character of Hugo Barnes.

Accompanied by Moy Chen, he made his way to the shop. He talked with the merchant, as they stood by the door. Then Cleve was on his way, confident that no one could penetrate his disguise.

MOY CHEN watched him from the door. Keen though the Chinaman's vision was, he did not see the lurking form that spotted Hugo Barnes as the departing man went by an alley.

Had Moy Chen continued to watch, he might have seen a sneaking Celestial pick up the trail. For the mark on the forehead of Cleve Branch was now visible on Hugo Barnes, whenever he walked by a lighted spot along the street.

Moy Chen, however, did not wait. He had remembered Cleve's last admonition. In approximately a half hour, Hugo Barnes would be at the entrance to the Mukden Theater. Others must be there, too.

Upstairs ambled Moy Chen. His thoughts, somehow, reverted to that blood-red spot on the forehead of Cleve Branch.

As he considered it now, Moy Chen felt sure that spot meant danger. For though, because of his undercover work, Moy Chen had avoided close contact with the Wu-Fan, the pretended merchant at least knew the sinister ways of Chinatown. People did not appear adorned with crimson spots unless there was a reason. That was Moy Chen's sound conclusion.

Reaching his windowless room, Moy Chen went to the desk and unlocked a drawer. From it, he produced a small telephone. It was connected with a special, outside wire.

By this phone, Moy Chen communicated with Bureau of Investigation agents. One or more could always be reached, at a special address in San Francisco. Time and again, the undercover man had brought government agents, seemingly from nowhere, to spoil the well-laid plans of the Chinese tongs.

For the first time, now, Moy Chen was using his informative weapon against the Wu-Fan. Tong leaders had never learned this secret. Ling Soo, whom Moy Chen had never thwarted, could not possibly know it.

So thought Moy Chen. But Moy Chen did not know the meaning of that mark on the forehead of Cleve Branch!

Moy Chen clicked the receiver. He leaned close to the telephone in order to speak clearly when the operator responded.

This message was important. There would be just time for men to reach the Mukden Theater. The headquarters which Moy Chen was calling was less than ten minutes from the border of Chinatown, where the Mukden Theater was situated.

The operator's voice sounded. Moy Chen was about to speak. But the number never left his lips.

A yellow-faced man had sprung across the room. His hands were at Moy Chen's throat. Another man was with him. This Mongol caught the telephone as it fell from Moy Chen's grasp.

While one was choking Moy Chen, the other was calmly placing the receiver on the hook and putting the telephone back into the desk drawer.

The hands on Moy Chen's neck were merciless. They were hands that worked for Ling Soo.

A quick report, flashed to the leader of the Wu-Fan, had told that Cleve Branch - the man who bore the mark of death - had entered through a secret door at the Hoang-Ho Cafe.

The minions of Ling Soo were killers all - when the occasion demanded it.

Whoever lived in that secret room must be watched. That was the word from Ling Soo. The choking fingers that gripped Moy Chen maintained their relentless hold.

The Chinese merchant struggled, but in vain. His throat was rattling. His eyes were staring. His vain resistance became weaker. His struggles

ceased. Then, only, did the fingers loose their hold.

Padded footsteps sounded softly as two men traced their way toward the passage that led back to the Hoang-Ho. An inert form remained in the windowless room.

Cleve Branch, unknowing, was on his own tonight. There would be no sleuths on hand to witness the meeting between Hugo Barnes and Ling Soo's agent in the Mukden Theater!

No word would reach the ears of the Bureau of Investigation field office in San Francisco. No longer did the government possess an undercover man in Chinatown.

For the sprawled, pitiful form upon the floor of the windowless room would never move again.

Moy Chen was dead!

CHAPTER XVII

THE FATE OF A TRAITOR

CLEVE BRANCH was cautious as he approached the entrance of the Mukden Theater. He passed the lobby, walking on the other side of the street, and stared at the display boards, which were the only objects in view.

The lobby was deserted, for the performance was now going on in the theater.

The fact that no one was waiting there was not surprising, for it was not quite ten o'clock, Cleve did not expect the messenger from Ling Soo until that time. He crossed the street and shambled by the lobby, in plain view.

By this time, the men summoned by Moy Chen should be in the vicinity. Moy Chen, always exact, would have given them a close description of Hugo Barnes. Cleve knew he could rely on that, for the features of Hugo Barnes were themselves a creation of Moy Chen's artful hands.

Cleve stopped suddenly when he had passed the lobby. He fancied that he had heard a hissing whistle in the dark, close by. He listened intently, but the sound was not repeated.

Its significance puzzled Cleve. He did not know that it was a signal used by the secret minions of the Wu-Fan - that it meant that no one should now molest the man who bore the mark of death.

Passing the lobby once again, Cleve made a close inspection from this close range. Seeing no person, he looked along the floor and up the walls.

Perhaps that phantom shade that indicated The Shadow would be here tonight. No, it was absent. Cleve wondered. Had something happened to that mysterious man, whose vigilance had twice saved Cleve from death?

Cleve pulled a watch from his pocket. The timepiece registered exactly ten o'clock.

The appointed hour was here. He must enter the lobby.

Cleve shuffled past the deserted box office, closed now that the evening's business was done. He stood alone in the light, where he could easily be seen by the men whom Moy Chen had summoned.

They were keeping under cover well, Cleve decided. That was their job. Cleve gave no sign that might betray his interest in their presence. He had often worked this way before. It was his task to play his affected part.

With all the characteristics of Hugo Barnes, he went farther into the lobby. There, a man stepped into view from the innermost corner.

This individual was a placid-faced Chinaman dressed in American clothes. He did not look at Cleve; in fact, he seemed totally disinterested in Cleve's presence. But the man's arms were folded, and upon his finger was a ring that bore a dragon's head!

Even at this distance, Cleve could catch the sparkle of the tiny emerald eyes set in the gold design. Approaching the man, Cleve bent his head a trifle and made the sign of the Wu-Fan. The Chinaman responded with the same salute.

While Cleve stood waiting, the Chinaman turned slowly. With arms still folded, he walked into the theater.

The action meant that Cleve was to follow. He did so, but controlled his shuffling gait to allow time for any concealed agents to take up the trail.

The man looked back impatiently. Cleve sensed that it would be unwise to delay too long. He slipped his hands in his coat pockets - a pose that went with the character of Hugo Barnes - and sauntered leisurely after his guide.

THE Chinaman turned to the left, and silently strode down the blackened aisle. Cleve was close behind him.

He suspected that the Chinaman was going back stage, and thence out into the night; for this was the pathway which Cleve had taken the night he had met Foo Chow, with Joseph Darley.

They reached the curtain at the entrance to the boxes. There, the Chinaman stopped. He motioned for Cleve to step through the curtain.

Cleve did so, boldly. He knew well that a false step now might loose unexpected dangers. He must play his part - that of a neophyte in the order of the Wu-Fan, seeking admission to a higher order.

He might be watched every step of the way; and this part of the journey might be only a blind to test him out.

Cleve was experienced in his work. He knew how to play his part. He obeyed the Chinaman's gesture; but his hand closed within his pocket as he gripped the butt of his short revolver.

Through the curtain, Cleve was shuffling toward the door to the stage when he felt the Chinaman's hand pluck his sleeve.

"Sh-h!" warned the guide.

The man opened the curtain of the nearest box. He gripped Cleve's arm firmly and guided him forward.

Cleve was momentarily astonished to find his foot poised over empty space, where there should have been a solid floor. He was advancing toward the seats by the rail of the box, but he was moving downward, and his guide was following him!

Staring upward, Cleve caught a last vague glimpse of the dome of the theater. Then, almost before he realized it, his head was below the level of the floor!

There was a slight noise above. Cleve kept boldly on, and his foot struck the level. The passage was broad here. The Chinaman was beside him. The guide pressed against a barrier ahead; a door opened into a dim passageway.

They were nearing the meeting place - and it was here, beneath the pit of the theater!

A recollection came to Cleve. He recalled that night when he had stood in the box above; how he had sensed a hidden presence.

He had been at the entrance to the inner shrine of the Wu-Fan - almost at the top step of the concealed stairway - and he had not known it!

He must have been observed, then, by some watcher in the dark. If so, he had been close to death. For the Wu-Fan - no matter how friendly it might seek to be - was, after all, an Oriental scheme.

The ways of the Chinese were dark, reflected Cleve, and he knew that intruders to this secret spot would encounter grave risks.

They were at a door now. The guide tapped once. Then again. The barrier slid upward. The passage had inclined downward, since the stairs and the room which Cleve now saw were far beneath the theater.

While he wondered how effective a revolver shot might prove if used as a signal, Cleve glanced about him to study the men that occupied the room.

The strange, flickering light made him blink. Its peculiar glow was troublesome. He could not distinguish faces; but as his vision swept about the circle, he recognized two men.

One was Ling Soo. Cleve could tell it by the squatness of the man's form. The other, crouched on a stool beside his master, was Foy.

Cleve noted his guide was making the sign of the Wu-Fan. He, too, performed the salute. It was returned by members of the group.

Again, Cleve's eyes were roving, past Ling Soo. There he saw a sight that made him pause, aghast.

Two brilliant eyes sparkled in the light. Their green hue sent long flashes, that seemed like livid tongues of flame.

Green Eyes!

The name echoed through Cleve's brain.

Who was this being? A higher power than Ling Soo?

CLEVE'S guide urged him to a vacant chair. He sat there and waited. The group appeared to be awaiting another arrival.

Cleve assumed the indifferent attitude of Hugo Barnes. The strangeness of this room was menacing; yet he felt a security in his false identity. He believed that calmness and silence would serve him well.

The door slid up, and another man entered. Cleve could not recognize him in the light. Although the man sat close beside him, he was unable to distinguish the features of Foo Chow.

The barrier had closed again. The hush was expectant.

Ling Soo began to speak, in English. His words, though low, were friendly in their tone.

"Tonight," said Ling Soo, "we have a new friend who seeks to be with the Wu-Fan. Is it right that we should have him here?"

"He has promised to be loyal?"

The question came from Green Eyes. Cleve could see the glowing optics sparkle as they stared in his direction.

"He has made his promise," declared Ling Soo.

"He may be with us," said Green Eyes.

Cleve felt a nudge beside him. It was from the man who had guided him here.

"The sign," came the Chinaman's whisper, in oddly spoken tones. "The sign of Wu-Fan."

Cleve understood. Deliberately he arose and stood in the center of the group. He felt no fear, whatever. With this formality passed, he believed he would gain the recognition he desired.

He raised his right hand and placed the forefinger to his forehead.

Although he did not realize the fact, Cleve's finger rested exactly upon that reddish spot - the mark of death. That spot had shown clearly in this shimmering light.

It was hidden now, by the finger that had made it. Cleve, who had made the mark unwittingly, was now indicating it, himself!

It was toward Green Eyes that Cleve was facing; and the glowing rays that sparkled in the light had gained his whole attention.

He did not realize what was happening behind him. His right hand, absent from his pocket, no longer controlled his hidden gun.

The attack came on the instant. The two men nearest Cleve bounded forward. Each seized an arm.

Struggling madly, Cleve was borne backward. Other members of the insidious crew were thronging forward. Their massed attack was overpowering. Cleve's arms and legs were held as he lay prone upon the floor.

There was no use struggling. Cleve realized that as his wrists were pinioned behind his back. He felt the cutting pressure of leather thongs as his assailants bound him hand and foot. The gag that was pressed between his teeth proved tight and merciless. The helpless man could barely gasp for breath.

Cleve felt himself raised; then he was laid in the center of the room amid the circle, like a human sacrifice.

Staring upward, he could see only those sparkling green eyes; and to Cleve's ears came the cold words of Green Eyes, himself.

"You swore to support the Wu-Fan," came the insidious voice. "Instead, you were a traitor! There were matters which you wished to learn. You had no right to learn them."

"The work of the Wu-Fan will go on. You can never stop them. Once death was planned for you at hands other than those of the Wu-Fan. You escaped it.

"Again, death was meant for you, by the hand of Foy. You eluded it. Tonight, no effort can avail you.

"Fool! You were not content to believe what you were told about the Wu-Fan. Your life was spared only because the Wu-Fan was wise. But now, the decree of wisdom has been changed. There is one fate for you.

"Death!"

THE room seemed to echo with the sinister word. Caught up by the lips of the others, it was hissed in a low, startling note that brought a shudder to the prisoner.

A momentary silence. Then came the tone of Ling Soo's voice:

"Green Eyes has spoken!"

The others echoed the statement. Green Eyes was silent; but Ling Soo took up the burden.

"The Slayer," he declared.

Foy arose and stood crouching by his chair, as sinister a figure as any in that room.

"The witness," came Ling Soo's solemn voice.

Foo Chow arose.

Each took his stand beside the helpless body of Cleve Branch; Foy on one side - Foo Chow on the other.

A word in the Chinese language was uttered by Green Eyes. One by one, the members of the fiendish gang began to depart.

Ling Soo leaned forward to stare gloatingly into the face of the man whom he had betrayed. Then he was gone.

Green Eyes - that strange, unknown monster, stood before the victim. The flashing optics sparkled as though kindled by the fury of a demon.

Two hands approached Cleve's face. The green eyes flashed close before him. The hands, with roughly sweeping touch, pulled away the disguising eyebrows and the other tokens of Moy Chen's craftsmanship.

There, in the uncertain light, the face of Hugo Barnes had been destroyed, and in its place were the features of Cleve Branch.

It was Cleve Branch who had sought to thwart the vile schemes of the Wu-Fan. It was Cleve Branch, now, who was to die.

Unable to send a cry for help; not even knowing the purpose that lay behind the secret mission of the Wu-Fan, the intruder was to feel the knife that killed.

The menace of the startling eyes was gone; but it brought no comfort to Cleve Branch. Green Eyes, too, had departed. Turning his head, Cleve saw the heavy door descend.

The final thud of that barrier was like a knell of doom. The last hope faded from Cleve's closing eyes.

Two men remained. Foy, The Slayer; and Foo Chow, the witness.

This was to be the room of death! A traitor to the Wu-Fan was to die!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HAND OF FOY

FOY was gloating fiendishly as he stooped above the prostrate form of Cleve Branch. The sight of a helpless victim was one that this insidious monster relished.

Foo Chow, cold and observant, was a menace also. In neither of those glaring faces could Cleve see a sign of mercy.

Foy's right hand came from his robe. It held a wicked-looking knife, sharp-pointed and long of blade.

Speaking in his native tongue, the Chinese slayer addressed Foo Chow. He passed the knife to Foo Chow, and the actor examined it. He returned the knife to Foy.

The slayer seemed in no hurry to do his work. Usually silent, he was loquacious now. His quaintly intonated voice was explaining to Foo Chow that the art of the death thrust was as well known in America as in China - by those who had studied it so cunningly as had Foy.

Cleve could not understand the meaning of the words; but there was something in their inflection that made him realize their malice. Foo Chow listened, unmoved.

Foy crouched low. He placed his hand above Cleve's heart, and seemed to be choosing the exact place for this thrust - a perfect thrust that Foo Chow would long remember. This, Foy had said, was to be a model stroke - one which Foo Chow would be proud to witness.

The pointed blade poised motionless, a foot above Cleve's breast. Cleve could not see it, but he sensed its presence.

He had divined, from Foy's attitude, that the slayer intended to perform a quick, effective murder. That, at least, would be better than a death by torture.

One lone, wild thought came into Cleve's maddened brain. That thought was of The Shadow - the strange man from the dark, who twice had saved him from death.

Seeking to forget the knife above, Cleve rolled his head and stared in each direction.

There were no shadows in this room. The queer, flickering illumination came from some hidden source. All the floor was the same dull hue. The walls were straight and barren. Only the door offered hope.

Cleve stared toward it, hopelessly. If that barrier could only move upward to admit the only man who could make a rescue here!

But the door did not move. Low, sinister whispers made Cleve stare upward. He saw the gloating face of Foy, with its cruel lips uttering words to the witness. Foo Chow stooped and looked at Cleve's body, to note the exact spot where Foy said the deadly knife would go.

Up came the hand of Foy. The blade glimmered its message of death. The hand lowered and swung upward again.

Cleve's bulging eyes were amazed as they saw the knife fly backward from Foy's hand, as the slayer's arm was at the top of its swing.

With a swift, incredible leap, Foy flung himself across Cleve's body. The hands of the slayer seized the throat of Foo Chow and hurled the actor writhing on the floor.

Cleve could not understand. Foo Chow had not spoken; yet Foy was attacking him!

The struggle was swiftly ended. Foo Chow was motionless. Foy crouched above the body of this victim, whom he had taken before he chose to deal with Cleve.

What was the purpose of this odd attack?

Had Foy gone mad? Had he chosen to be alone when he dealt the death thrust that would end Cleve's life?

The sinister slayer was picking up his knife; he was coming back to Cleve. The helpless man closed his eyes in agony. He could not bear to see that glittering blade rise again.

There was pressure at his feet. Cleve felt his body being rolled over. He moved his feet, and found that the thongs were gone from his ankles - although their cutting pressure still could be felt.

Now the knife slashed the thongs that bound his wrists. Another cut; the gag was loose. Firm arms were helping Cleve to his feet.

Bewildered, he tottered, scarcely able to stand, and he stared at the face of Foy. The man was no longer crouching. His figure had enlarged. Tall, slender, and erect, he was Foy no longer. Only his face appeared to be the face of Foy!

The Shadow!

LIKE a flash, the explanation came to Cleve. It all went back to that night at Darley's.

He remembered the certain shot that had felled Foy - a shot fired by The Shadow. Why had Cleve doubted the marksmanship of that firm hand that had aimed so often and so perfectly at the Sun Kew!

The single shot at Darley's had killed Foy. The evil Chinaman had not escaped. His dead body had been removed - by The Shadow!

Last night at Ling Soo's! That shadow on the floor. A shadow, long and weird, with no one there but Ling Soo and Foy.

That shadow had belonged to Foy - not to Foy himself, but to the man posing as Foy!

Incredible though it seemed, this was the truth. The Shadow had played the part of Foy so perfectly that he had even deceived Ling Soo.

Harbored in the very haunt of Ling Soo, The Shadow, as Foy, had been admitted to the inner circle of the Wu-Fan!

Perhaps he had learned the secrets of the order; perhaps he knew the insidious schemes that brewed tonight; perhaps he knew the identity of Green Eyes!

But The Shadow did not speak. Dwindling, he again became the sinister, crouching Foy, so real in his pose that Cleve could not believe his eyes.

With grimaces, this stooping man signaled Cleve toward the door. Faltering, Cleve went in that direction.

The false Foy stood by the wall. The barrier moved upward. Cleve was in the passage, with the form of Foy behind him; and the barrier had closed.

Cleve moved toward the door that led to the exit through the box in the theater. His companion stopped him.

Cleve looked down at the crouching form. On the floor he saw its shadow - long and amazing. This, alone, was the only proof that the man beside him was not Foy.

The crouching man drew Cleve through an opening that had appeared in the wall. There, in a dim, narrow passage, Cleve heard whispered instructions.

"Through the passage - up the steps - then to the right - through the curtained door - into the hallway outside of Ling Soo's inner room -"

The rest was plain. Cleve saw the way to safety. A firm hand thrust him forward.

From the end of the passage, Cleve turned to glance behind him. He caught one last glimpse of Foy through the closing door.

There were barriers ahead, but Cleve could pass them. A simple movement of The Shadow's hand had shown Cleve the way to find the secret catches.

Cleve reached the head of the stairs. He was in total darkness. He felt a barrier ahead, but an opening to the right.

Knowing his location, he was sure that the hidden door before him led into the inner room where Ling Soo might be. To the right, the passage would lead to that door behind the curtain - the very door against which Cleve had huddled, the night that he had spied on Ling Soo and Joseph Darley.

This was his way to the hallway; then the anteroom; and finally the elevator. This roundabout exit from the secret den could not be watched.

The Shadow might be following; or he might have left by the theater. Perhaps he had assumed his garb of black!

These were problems upon which it was useless to ponder. For Cleve could only remember his instructions and another whispered phrase which had been The Shadow's final utterance:

"Pung-Shoon - tonight!"

The words meant worlds to Cleve. They were the one inkling to what the Wu-Fan might be doing.

Once away from here, lost in the belated crowds of the street, Cleve could summon aid, and raid the junk that lay anchored in the harbor.

But first he must escape!

GROPING, he found the door. The secret catch was the same as the others. The door slid aside.

Cleve peered from the curtain. The brass doors to Ling Soo's inner room were closed. The hall itself was empty.

Cleve moved forward, and as he did, he tripped stupidly upon the bottom of the curtain. Seeking to regain his footing, he sprawled across the center of the hall.

As he regained his feet, Cleve heard a sound beyond those brass doors. He looked behind him as he reached the door to the anteroom.

Turning, Cleve saw the brass doors opening. Peering between them was the spectacled face of Ling Soo. Cleve's revolver was in his hand.

The sight of that hated visage maddened him. He pressed the trigger, and fired toward the opening. His first shots made in haste, were wild. The brass doors clanged, and Cleve's bullets smashed against the emblazoned dragons.

Still firing, with vengeance dominating him, Cleve suddenly realized that he was clicking empty cartridges. His senses returned on the instant.

He had been seen by Ling Soo! The fiend knew that the prisoner had escaped!

Hastening, Cleve gained the elevator and reached the passage to the street. He knew that Ling Soo's warning was on its way. He must hurry - hurry away from Chinatown, where grim death lurked.

He reached the street and pressed through the throng. In his mad desire, Cleve forgot all else but that one thought - escape!

Away from here, he would be free to act. Within the range of the Wu-Fan, death was a constant danger.

Stolid Chinamen stepped out of the way as Cleve dashed down the street. One man, blocking his path, stood firm. The eyes that peered through yellow lids saw the mark of death upon Cleve's forehead!

The Chinaman was a member of the Wu-Fan. He seized Cleve, and grappled with him. Cleve swung at him with his empty revolver, but missed his aim. He struggled free and stumbled forward, with his enemy in pursuit.

They were at the edge of Chinatown. Another yellow man had joined in the chase. Cleve's legs were weakening. He staggered toward the wall and fell, his shouting enemies upon him.

Clutching claws began to beat Cleve's head against the wall. On the verge of safety, he was facing death again. But others were coming to his aid. Three passing Americans, seeing the menace to their countryman, threw themselves upon the attackers.

Scudding like rats, the two Wu-Fan men dropped their victim and fled for shelter. They scurried into the first alleyway that they saw, but their swift pursuers caught them and laid them flat with well-placed blows.

Cleve, limp and helpless, was carried to a drug store to await the arrival of an ambulance.

He mumbled words as he recovered consciousness. But his words were scarcely audible.

"Pung-Shoon. Tonight."

Cleve Branch had been saved from the hand of Foy - for the hand of Foy was dead. It was the hand of The Shadow, who lived as Foy, that had saved him.

But Cleve was helpless, now. He could not tell that he had been seen, alive and free, by Ling Soo, leader of the Wu-Fan. Shrewd and cunning, Ling Soo could not fail to realize that the cause had been betrayed by Foy.

The law of the Wu-Fan was death to traitors!

Danger awaited The Shadow!

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHINESE JUNK

THE Pung-Shoon, squat and square rigged, lay at anchor in San Francisco Bay. Solemn, yellow-faced Chinamen, paced its high-set decks. A little motor boat lay beside the wooden ship.

Americans were visiting the Pung-Shoon. One was Joseph Darley. Two others were members of the Civilian Committee. With them were revenue agents.

Standing in the light that came from a cabin, Darley looked questioningly at his companions. They had timed this visit late, for the express purpose of finding if men had been smuggled aboard.

"There's no one here, Mr. Darley," said one of the revenue men. "We searched this ship from stem to stern, the moment she hit the harbor. A crazy ship - with lots of crannies."

"And that framework in the hold," reminded another official.

"Yeah," said the first. "You saw it, Mr. Darley. Can't figure what it's for. The men won't spill a word about it. Let them keep their secret if they want to. We've got plenty to do besides trying to solve Chinese puzzles."

"Well," said Darley, "there's no use watching the boat all night. You know its arrangement, now. Take another look before she sails tomorrow."

"Righto," agreed the agent.

As the others moved across the deck, this man drew Darley aside assuringly.

"If any Chinese try to make the slip on this junk, we'll nab 'em," he said. "We've labeled the crew, and we can tag any stowaways."

"You saw below. All loaded up with secret cupboards and what not. I'm giving you a straight line, Mr. Darley. This old scow's an opium ship!"

"An opium ship!" exclaimed Darley.

"That's what it is," reaffirmed the officer. "We got wind that it was headed this way, with a cargo of dope. You could pack a million dollars' worth of that stuff without a bit of it to show. So we were watching for this junk; and we went through it right. Not a pipeful of the stuff on board."

"How do you explain that?" asked Darley.

"Simple enough," said the revenue man. "This voyage was a blind. They've pulled that gag before. Let 'em come into port a few times - to get the lay. Then they'll be wise, and slip over a fast one on the next trip."

"How long does it take a ship of this type to cross the Pacific?"

"Plenty long," declared the agent, "We won't hear from this tub again for months. But she'll be back - you wait and see! There'll be trouble from the Pung-Shoon, some day."

Darley shrugged his shoulders.

"It's trouble enough tonight," was his comment. "Well, we can go in a few minutes, as soon as some of these Chinese watchers come aboard."

"Who are they?"

"Ones whom we know. They gave us the tip-off. So we came down to look around. Wanted them here to identify any suspects. I've decided to let them stay and keep watch."

"Good idea," said the revenue man.

"Yes," explained Darley. "We haven't bothered the police with this, because it may all be a false alarm. That's the Civilian Committee's work - to look into matters before they become serious."

As they reached the center of the deck, Darley turned to see a crouching Chinaman advancing from the side. He recognized the face of Foy. He knew that Ling Soo's servant was to be here tonight, as chief of the watchers.

As Foy spoke no English, and Joseph Darley did not discourse in Chinese, Darley merely acknowledged his presence with a slight nod.

"We can go, now," he said to the revenue man. "This fellow knows whom to let on the ship."

THE AMERICANS WENT OVER THE SIDE. Darley was following when he saw the squat form of Ling Soo coming in his direction.

The presence of the chief of the Wu-Fan was important. It had been arranged that Ling Soo would come only if he chose. Darley stopped and called to the boat below:

"Wait a few minutes. I'll come along. I want to speak to a man who has just arrived."

There was a response from beneath. Darley turned to Ling Soo. The Chinaman's face was serene. He spied Foy, and beckoned to the servant. He

spoke a few words in Chinese, and Foy responded.

Ling Soo's question was pertaining the death of Cleve Branch. He wanted to know if all had gone well. Foy had replied in the affirmative. Ling Soo beamed pleasantly.

He spoke now in English.

"A man was killed tonight," he said. "A man named Moy Chen. There is something I wish to tell you about his death. It is important."

Indicating that he wished Foy to follow, Ling Soo waddled toward a cabin. He and Joseph Darley seated themselves beside a table.

Foy, at Ling Soo's bidding, remained a short distance away, huddled with hands before his breast. He watched the speakers through his nearly closed eyelids.

"It is this," said Ling Soo, his eyes upon Darley. "The man Moy Chen was a prominent Chinese merchant, who lived -"

As Ling Soo spoke, his right hand was resting upon a molding at the side of the cabin. With scarcely more than a gesture, he drew his chair away, but still retained his hold upon the molding. It came with his hand. The floor of the cabin opened. The form of Foy straightened as it plunged into the hold below!

"Come!" exclaimed Ling Soo, releasing his hold so that the trap would spring back into place.

He and Darley hurried down a steep flight of steps, Ling Soo showing amazing speed for his odd bulk. The Chinaman slid open a door. A flashlight gleamed in his hand. It revealed the unconscious form of Foy.

"What have you done!" exclaimed Darley.

"Foy is a traitor!" declared Ling Soo. "I have tricked him. He knew that I might come here. He does not know that I have discovered him. He let the man Branch escape!"

"Branch! Where is he?" There was excitement in Darley's voice.

"Men of the Wu-Fan seized him," said Ling Soo placidly. "They tried to kill. He was carried away, seemingly dead. He cannot do any harm to us tonight.

Ling Soo was bending over the form of Foy. Assisted by Darley, he dragged the prostrate body toward a farther door. Ling Soo opened the barrier. He found a lantern and lighted it.

The glow showed a square room near the bow of the ship. In its center stood a heavy upright frame - two vertical rods, with a horizontal crosspiece at their top.

"Foy must tell," declared Ling Soo solemnly.

Joseph Darley nodded.

Ling Soo took a piece of stout rope. He crossed the wrists of the man who passed for Foy. He tied them tightly. He twisted a piece of wire to hold the knots firm. Pushing the end of the rope through a hole in the top of the rack, he drew it downward.

Darley, assisting, raised Foy's body upright. He held it in that position, while Ling Soo pulled the rope taut.

Foy's form, grotesquely lengthened, was hanging by its wrists, the toes just tipping the floor.

"Here," said Ling Soo, "he shall tell!"

"He shall tell," agreed Darley. "Then he shall die!"

"If he does not tell?"

"He shall die without telling!"

LING SOO bowed in acknowledgment. He seemed to accept the statement as an order. He listened placidly while Darley spoke, in a brutal tone.

"Keep him here," he told Ling Soo. "Let him hang until he gains his senses - if he does."

Darley's last phrase was a sound one; for the hanging form seemed devoid of life. It had dropped a distance of more than twenty-five feet when Ling Soo had drawn the trap in the cabin, high above!

"Should Foy seem able to speak," continued Darley, "threaten him with the full torture unless he tells. He will know its meaning. Each hour on that rack grows longer. No man can withstand its pain."

Ling Soo beamed pleasantly. This cruelty was something he seemed to relish. His own eyes blinked as they surveyed the form of Foy, with its head bent forward, hanging askew.

"If he does not speak," declared Darley, "you must wait until the others are here. Come again, to this spot, and offer him one more opportunity.

"Whether he speaks or does not speak, he must die then by your hand. Your killing shot will be the first signal. When it is heard from above, the firing will begin.

"Then for the shore - you with the ones who have fired. Let the sailors light the flares. Meanwhile the others will -"

Darley said no more. Ling Soo understood. He asked a single question, although it was unnecessary.

"You have the paper?"

"Yes," said Darley. "I shall show it to each one. To each shall go his own allotment. You need not worry, Ling Soo. Your work is here. Instead of being in your secluded apartment, you can perform the task assigned to Foy."

With that, Darley was gone. Ling Soo was alone, blinking stolidly at the form of the man who looked like Foy. A hateful look came into Ling Soo's eyes. He approached the hanging form, and from a hidden pocket in the front of the prisoner's black robe, Ling Soo whisked forth a gleaming knife.

Cackling, Ling Soo placed the blade beneath his own robe. The knife of Foy - The Slayer's only weapon! The knife that had failed again tonight!

Foy was a traitor. That was why he had failed. Tonight, he was to die!

Explanations had been unnecessary. Darley had accepted Ling Soo's word of Foy's perfidy. From the moment that Ling Soo had glimpsed the fleeing form of Cleve Branch, the sinister Chinaman had known that Foy was a traitor.

He had noted Cleve's attire. He had known that only Foy could have pointed the way to escape. Sneaking through the underground passageway, Ling Soo had reached the meeting room, where he had found the still body of Foo Chow, the witness.

Ling Soo had played his cards craftily. Knowing that Foy would be at the Chinese ship, he had hurried to the junk and had done his part there. That secret trap - an artful device that Ling Soo had seen used before.

Yet, despite the fact that Ling Soo was a master of craftiness, despite the fact that he knew Foy was a traitor, he did not understand that this hanging prisoner was not the real Foy!

The disguise of The Shadow was too perfect even for the shrewd eyes of Ling Soo!

BUT that could not save The Shadow, now. Ling Soo, cold and deliberate, was at work, cackling as he used his efforts.

He had attached the end of the rope to a stout hook on the wall. It went there at an angle from the top of the frame. The Shadow - false Foy - was bound in the Chinese torture rack!

This, the most formidable of all contrivances for slow death, was a device that utterly defied escape. Those hands - bound and wired - could do nothing more than claw the empty air. Well did Ling Soo know the prisoner's helplessness, for he had seen others in this rack before.

The toes of the prisoner, barely touching the floor, could not support a fraction of his weight. All strain was on the wrists. Arms and shoulders must take the burden that would increase with each succeeding minute.

Foy, the traitor, was doomed. His fate would be a bullet through his heart. Just how soon his life would pass away depended upon how soon Ling Soo would be ready to kill.

Tomorrow, thought the cackling Ling Soo, this body would be found, before the ship cleared the harbor. Those who discovered it would see the evidence of a fiendish Chinese plot. That plot would be attributed to the Tiger Tong.

Let the American authorities learn the identity of Foy! It would be to Ling Soo's liking.

For it would prove beyond a doubt that the Wu-Fan had been attacked by enemies. Foy - servant of Ling Soo, the leader - found tortured and slain! Nothing could be better.

It added the perfect touch that Ling Soo desired. Members of the Wu-Fan were coming peacefully to his ship. Here, a short outburst would take place. The members of the Wu-Fan would flee, Ling Soo among them.

That brief attack would be attributed to the Tiger Tong. It was to serve another purpose. For while all attention of harbor patrols would be centered on the Chinese junk, other members of the Wu-Fan would be craftily at work elsewhere!

Shots - lights - flares - all were ready for a short, quickly finished outburst. It would all be over before investigators arrived. But with this, there would be a finishing touch later - the finding of Foy, no longer living.

Ling Soo cackled in exuberance. He took the lantern in his hand. He reached up and tipped back the head of Foy. The face, streaked with blood from a gash above the forehead, was grotesque and brutal. It shone with yellow pallor.

Foy was still living, Ling Soo could see.

The squat Chinaman waited. He thought that Foy was regaining consciousness. The slitlike eyelids were moving. Ling Soo cackled again, and his insidious chuckle was loud in that hollowed space in the heart of the wooden ship.

Foy would have his chance to speak. If he would not speak, Ling Soo would wait and give him an opportunity. Then - whether or not he spoke - Foy would die! That was the verdict.

Ling Soo, as though in ceremony, uttered words aloud - designing, perhaps, that they would reach the ears of the man who was recovering his senses.

"It is death! Green Eyes has spoken!"

These were the words which Ling Soo uttered, in the language of his native land.

CHAPTER XX

ON THE TORTURE RACK

THE eyes of Foy opened. They were wide, and they gleamed in the light of the lantern - gleamed as Ling Soo had never seen them gleam before.

An instant later, that flash was gone. The yellow lids were half closed, in the manner of Foy.

Before him, The Shadow saw the merciless form of Ling Soo. Then The Shadow looked upward, and his half-closed eyes took in the strange surroundings. His keen brain, usually alert, was working slowly for the moment.

The strain upon the wrists was great. The Shadow, brought to full wakefulness by pain, began to sense the hopelessness of his predicament. In this terrible position, escape belonged to the realm of impossibility.

Ling Soo's cackling laugh echoed in the gloomy compartment. The master of the Wu-Fan was gloating. He spoke to his false henchman, Foy, and his words were filled with sinister significance.

"Why did you betray?" This question was in Chinese. "Tell me why - or you shall know the torture."

The hanging man did not reply.

"Your misery will be long," declared Ling Soo solemnly. "Speak! Tell the truth of your perfidy. Then only shall the torture end."

The sullen lips of Foy did not move.

"You let our enemy escape," gloated Ling Soo, "but that shall not save you. He was overpowered - perhaps he is dead at this moment. I am to perform the duty that was to be yours. Our plans shall prevail - in spite of your treachery, Foy."

The words had no effect upon the prisoner.

"You will not speak?" Ling Soo's question was malicious. "Then know the torture! Your senses have been gone. You have not felt the great pain yet. Unless you speak now, I shall depart. You shall suffer while I am away."

The eyelids of Foy were narrow and defiant.

"You have had your choice," said Ling Soo calmly. "I go. If you cry out - it can do you no good. Our friends, only, are here."

He hung the lantern on the wall. He stood, squat and glaring, by the open door to the next compartment. The shadow of Foy, long and fantastic, spread across the floor. Ling Soo had no time for shadows.

"Remember," came his cackling, singsong tones, "you are in the rack of torture. The rack from which no man can save himself!"

With that, Ling Soo was gone. Leaving the lantern so its glow would remind Foy of his hopeless position, Ling Soo closed the door.

As an instrument of agony, the Chinese torture rack was one of the strangest and most formidable devices in all the world. It brought slower pain than did the infernal creations of the Middle Ages, but its work was sure.

Ling Soo had spoken the truth when he had praised this Oriental contrivance; but he had been in error when he had said that escape was impossible. Some years before, one man had managed to extricate himself from its toils. The American, Houdini, had allowed himself to be fastened in a Chinese torture rack and had worked his way free after long and strenuous efforts.

There had been only one Houdini - a master of his art. Strong and powerful, he had used his amazing ingenuity to its utmost in that escape. Now The Shadow, weakened from his terrible fall into the hold of the ship, was confronted by the same problem that had taxed the skill of Houdini.

With The Shadow, it meant life or death. Unless his mighty mind could divine the only possible way of overcoming the hold of this machine, unless his weary muscles could respond to the efforts that were demanded, The Shadow would perish!

Time, too, was short. The Shadow, with wired ropes about his wrists, had been restrained while unconscious. He had gained no opportunity to fight against the bonds when they had been placed upon him.

His arms were already wearied from the strain which they had undergone. For he had dangled long before his consciousness had returned to him!

There he hung. His fingers could not reach the knots upon his wrists. They were more than a foot below the cross beam of the rack. It was humanly impossible to move upward. Nor could his feet avail him, for they barely touched the floor!

Buried alive in the hollow of the deep-set Chinese junk, The Shadow faced the most terrible situation in his long career.

Free, he could struggle against odds that were seemingly unconquerable. Bound with ordinary restraints, he could fight his way free. But he was now in the grasp of the powerful device that was the greatest machination ever designed by a subtle, Oriental mind!

Could, The Shadow meet this formidable test - the one that Houdini alone had undergone successfully?

His motionless, hanging body, with its still shadow stretched across the floor, betokened complete helplessness. The longer that it remained in that position, the more The Shadow's strength would dwindle. That was the most sinister factor of this horrible Chinese torture rack.

At last, The Shadow moved. In the silence of that room, broken only by a soft lapping of tiny waves against the wooden sides of the Pung-Shoon, the hands of The Shadow clutched above his head. Futilely at first, they finally succeeded in gripping the rope that led to the beam above.

BUT the fingers, alone, could afford no aid. Although they worked with supernormal strength, they did not raise the body a fraction of an inch.

The fingers did not seek that impossible task. They were twisting at the rope. The dangling form began to sway. The toes added to the sidewise motion. Grazing the floor, they added to the swing.

The action was prolonged and tedious. The fingers, gripping, worked from above. The feet raised slightly from the floor each time the body moved gently to one side. As it went in the opposite direction, the feet, stretched toes downward, added an impetus.

Inch by inch, the motion increased. Each swing was longer, now. Fingers and toes, working together and using every possible effort, were increasing the momentum.

Tedious though it seemed, The Shadow was gaining what he desired.

His body was swinging like a living pendulum!

What was the purpose of this amazing action?

It could not strain the stout rope. That was too firmly fastened. Ling Soo had left naught to chance. Seemingly, The Shadow was expending tremendous effort - all in vain!

Yet the pendulum swing kept on, while the grotesque shadow on the floor followed back and forth beneath the glow of the single lantern.

Wider - longer were the swings. Off to the right, The Shadow's foot almost touched the upright post on that side. Back went the swing; the left foot just touched the other post.

The wild swings still increased. Then came the final one, that served The Shadow's purpose.

The right foot, stretching to its utmost, went barely past the upright post. The extended toes were just beyond that spot. With uncanny skill, the tip of the foot caught the post and stopped the swing.

The body did not return across the floor between the posts. Instead, the foot made the utmost of its momentary hold. It squirmed and worked until the ankle was beyond the post. Then, with the body moving upward, the knee made its grip. The left leg had joined in the work now.

Inch by inch, The Shadow's lower limbs were climbing to the top of the upright post!

The objective was reached. The Shadow rested. His body, doubled, was beneath the crossbeam. His knees gripping near the joint of the upright post, were taking the strain from those tired wrists and arms.

Now The Shadow writhed in superhuman effort. Difficult though his first action had been, the present task was stupendous.

Twice he failed; but on the third time, with a mighty lunge, he urged his body to the top of the crossbeam. Poised there, balanced on the beam, his body was relieved of all burden. His hands, coming up with him, were pressed against his tired form.

One obstacle yet remained - those tightly knotted ropes, with wire bindings.

How could The Shadow work against them? His hands were helpless. His muscles were tired to the utmost. The straining wrists seemed scarcely capable of further action. Their strength was gone.

With elbows gripping the sides of the upright beam, The Shadow steadied his body. His head bent forward. His lips were against those binding ropes. With his teeth, The Shadow attacked the knots!

HE did not strive to undo the twisted bits of wire. The cord, with its knots, was the real force that held the wrists so tightly clamped together. Each tug that The Shadow made - each grip that his teeth supplied - served to weaken the strong knots.

They loosened gradually. The wires kept them from coming further undone. But now the wrists were aiding. The rest that they had received had afforded them new strength.

They spread and pressed, forcing the wires to the sides of the knots. The knots tightened; but the wrists had gained a slack!

Again, the teeth worked while the wrists rested. Once more the knots were slowly loosened. Then came the sharp tug of the straining wrists. The slack increased; but the binding wires now held with a tighter grip.

The wrists moved backward and forward. The ropes chafed them raw. They twisted and turned until finally they rested side by side, with a hand upon each forearm.

The Shadow's legs were holding him now. Each time he tugged with his arms, his form nearly toppled from its perch. At last, when strength seemed gone, the amazing man rested for a moment; then gave a final, mighty pull, his bound arms traveling in opposite directions.

The right arm came free! Its wrist was out of the bond!

But the sudden release had thrown The Shadow's body to one side - toward the front of the torture rack. His knees lost their hold. The right hand clutched for the crossbeam too late. With his left wrist still tangled in the loop, The Shadow plunged toward the floor.

It was the left hand, seizing the crossbeam as it passed, that broke the fall. Momentarily, The Shadow hung poised; then his fingers slipped away.

The cord came taut as the left arm fell; the wrist, now held only by a large, loose loop, wrenched free. The Shadow caught himself as he landed on his right side.

He lay there, a strange figure in the guise of Foy. His face was streaked with blood. His wrists were raw. His lips were bleeding from contact with the binding wires. His strength seemed gone, as he breathed heavily and did not seek to move.

The Shadow had accomplished the seemingly impossible! He had escaped from the Chinese torture rack! He had duplicated the feat of the great Houdini, under the most difficult of all conditions!

But what was the result?

His form was motionless. Was he lapsing back into unconsciousness? Had all his strength been spent?

Time was short. The Shadow was in the hold of a strange ship, manned by a hostile crew! What hope could the future hold for him if he did not act now?

Minutes ticked by. Long, silent minutes, as hopeless as those that The Shadow had spent on the torture rack. For then, The Shadow had been active. Now, he was motionless.

The limit of his time had come. Footsteps sounded without the closed door. Hands rattled at the barrier.

The Shadow stirred.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BATTLE ON THE JUNK

LING SOO paced the broad deck of the Pung-Shoon. He looked upward at the towering turrets of the old-fashioned Chinese ship. There, in the gloom, he could distinguish the forms of sailors. They were waiting for Ling Soo's signal.

The insidious Chinaman was gloating. He and four members of the Wu-Fan were aboard the junk. It had been Ling Soo's plan to go below and slay the false Foy himself. Then he had realized that a better scheme of death would do.

He had dispatched two of his men to do the work. Both were ones whom he knew that he could trust. One traitor - like Foy - did not mean a flock. For the secret methods of the Wu-Fan were too insidious to permit of plotting.

Other traitors had been discovered before - traitors like Stephen Laird - when they had begun to suggest their schemes to men whom they thought would work with them.

Ling Soo was near the door to the oddly furnished cabin. His keen ears were set to hear a dull shot from below. That shot would mean the death of the traitor, Foy. Then Ling Soo would give the signal. No time would be lost while the two men were coming from the hold.

It had been difficult for Ling Soo to waddle up those stairs from the hold. That reason, as much as any, was why the leader of the Wu-Fan had delegated his appointed work to his trusted subordinates.

By the high-railed side of the ship, Ling Soo could see the forms of the other two Wu-Fan men. They were ready at the ladder.

As soon as the signal was given, pandemonium would break loose. Then Ling Soo would join his companions, and they would escape, by the little boat, accompanied by the men who came from the hold.

All the crew of this ship were Chinamen - members of a chapter of the Wu-Fan, which existed in China itself. They were sworn to secrecy. They had done good work before; they would do good work tonight!

Ling Soo grinned as he bethought himself of what would be happening elsewhere, when others of the Wu-Fan took advantage of the furor on the junk to do a work that would mean great profit for Ling Soo. Profit for Ling Soo - and for Green Eyes! Millions of dollars in good American money!

The muffled report of a gun shot came to Ling Soo's ears. Then came a second. Good!

The smile spread over Ling Soo's face, and he cackled softly. Both men had done their work. Each had sent a bullet through the black heart of Foy, the traitor!

That made death sure; now there would be no more trouble.

Ling Soo stared about him in the dark; toward the high decks; toward the tall, square-rigged masts. The time had come, yet he was careful and deliberate.

From beneath his robe, Ling Soo produced a gleaming revolver. He pointed it off toward the bay. He pressed the trigger. The gun barked.

It was the signal for action!

Shots cracked from spots about the ship. Loud cries sounded. Ling Soo stood waiting, watching the stairs at the other side of the cabin. His two men would be here in a moment.

A head and shoulders appeared from the stairs; then the body of a man - a crouching, sinister form.

Ling Soo stood petrified.

Foy!

THE SLAYER had come to life! Somehow, he had escaped the terrible torture rack!

Had the others aided him? No - there would have been but one shot, if they had been traitors also. They would be coming, now, with Foy.

Ling Soo knew the truth in an instant. Those two muffled pistol shots had been from the hand of Foy. The traitor had killed the trusted henchmen!

A flare went up from a high deck. Its lurid glare showed the form of Ling Soo, on the deck beside the cabin door.

The leader of the Wu-Fan had pointed his revolver toward the hated form of the approaching Foy. But before he could fire, a flash came from the cabin.

The revolver fell from Ling Soo's grasp. He tottered toward the side of the ship. He sprawled upon the deck. As the flare died away, the two men by the rail came dashing to their leader's rescue.

Another flare revealed the form of Foy, now on the deck. The Shadow, still in the guise of the crouching slayer, was brandishing two automatics as the light revealed his figure.

Ling Soo, lying back against supporting arms, saw his enemy. He raised a long, hideous cry that rose above the shouts of the sailors.

It was the battle cry of the Wu-Fan - the cry that meant death when uttered by the leader! The pointing hand of Ling Soo was directed toward that figure at the cabin!

As the flare sizzled away, shouts came from everywhere. Ling Soo's two companions drew revolvers and tried to fire.

Bursts of flame from the cabin door stretched them, motionless upon the deck. The sailors - whose shots had been wild and meaningless - were firing again. The bullets from their revolvers smashed against the sides of the cabin.

Then came another flare. It showed a new sight. The Shadow was in the center of the deck. Swinging rapidly, to and fro, his automatics were discharging leaden messengers of death.

The forms of maddened sailors were visible in the light; but their hasty shots could not seem to strike that strange target - the crouching form that bore the semblance of Foy. From the decks, the range was too great for ordinary revolver aim.

But The Shadow's automatics mocked the distance. Bullets, coming from those tongue-flamed muzzles found the marks toward which they were directed. Sailors with upraised revolvers fell before they could fire.

In that brief interval, The Shadow loosed his entire load of deadly missiles. The automatics were empty. But when another flare came from an upper deck, it revealed two gleaming revolvers in those mighty hands - weapons which The Shadow had taken from the men whom he had conquered below!

NOW the aim of both those guns was directed toward a single spot. While bullets sank into the deck beside his weaving body, The Shadow had seen a group of faces peering from a rail upon a high-pitched deck. There, another flare was being lighted.

The Shadow's revolvers spoke their message. Two men, rising, toppled from the rail of the high deck. One, clutching an object on the rail, fell crashing to the deck below. Beside him came a hissing, burning flare. It scattered upon the deck. Its flaming portions were scattered about in all directions.

Another flare was starting from that same high rail. The man who had lighted it, dropped suddenly, as The Shadow spotted him for death. The second flare fell like a sudden meteor. Its fragments scattered also - some bounding through the door of an open cabin.

Unable to withstand those inhuman shots, startled sailors sprang from their hiding places. Stumbling over the bodies of their fallen comrades, they leaped for the places which were farthest from the deadly bullets.

Like monkeys, they scrambled up the masts of the towering junk, and pressed themselves upon sail-furled rigging. A mocking laugh came from the lone man on the deck. The laugh of The Shadow, it reached the ears of those cringing men whose only refuge had been flight.

A weird glow had replaced the flares. Smoke was pouring from a cabin.

The junk was on fire!

Other wreaths curled upward from spots of the deck as the dried wood of the old Pung-Shoon blazed like tinder.

Amidst the rising holocaust, the terrible man on the deck swept back toward the cabin from which he had come. Not a single shot defied him.

The Shadow's revolvers were empty. He tossed them away, and stooped to pick up the revolver which Ling Soo had let fall.

Something gleamed through the air. A knife was whistling from the rigging, its sharp point driving straight for the back of the stooping man.

Was it instinct that told The Shadow? Or did his keen ears sense the approach of that murderous blade, delivered from the mast, high above?

With his hand upon Ling Soo's gun, The Shadow dived suddenly away. The shimmering blade passed within an inch of his twisting body. It struck the deck at the exact spot where Ling Soo's gun had lain.

With point buried deep in the wood, the blade quivered. It had missed its mark!

But The Shadow did not let the thrust remain unanswered. Swinging upward, the muzzle of his revolver seemed to follow the path along which the knife had come. No one was visible, behind the sail where lay the cowering wretch whose skillful hand had sent the blade along its way.

A burst of flame from the revolver. A cry from high above. The form of a man tumbled from the darkness, clawing helplessly, until it reached the deck, forty feet below!

That master stroke ended all resistance. Yellow faces ducked behind the sails. Knives, already in hand, were thrust back in the belts from which they had been drawn. Not a single gun spoke.

The Shadow, backing toward the rail, had stifled all opposition. Wherever that revolver might point, there would it find a mark - and every cringing enemy knew it!

With another peal of taunting mirth, The Shadow passed the huddled forms of Ling Soo and his two bodyguards. Over the rail and down the ladder; yet from the side of the junk, these gibing peals of laughter still told their terrible threat.

A muffled motor chugged. The little boat brought by Ling Soo had left the side of the big ship. In it was a lone, crouching figure, stooping at the wheel - so low that he was almost invisible.

Whistles were sounding. Boats were putting out from everywhere to reach the junk, which was now a mass of smoke, tinged with spurts of rising flame. Forms were leaping from the rigging, seeking the safety of the bay.

A police boat, swinging by the burning Pung-Shoon, was capturing these miserable survivors.

All remaining on the junk were doomed. Some had missed when they had leaped for safety. Others had fallen wounded and helpless from The Shadow's bullets.

Among these, The Shadow knew, was Ling Soo. The insidious leader of the Wu-Fan had gone to a deserved fate. But there was another yet to be accounted for.

The little motor boat was speeding swiftly through the bay, lost against the blackened waves, far from the glare of the blazing junk.

Within that craft, a crouching man was carefully placing his fingers to his face. Two tiny spots of color glowed beneath his finger tips as they pressed beneath the eyebrows.

From the jet-black center of the tiny craft came the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XXII

GREEN EYES MEETS THE SHADOW

THE trim yacht Sepia was anchored in the bay, close to the Oakland side. A man was standing by the window of a lighted cabin.

It was Joseph Darley. He had come here after he had left the Pung-Shoon.

Darley was smiling as he looked across the bay and saw the miniature blaze that indicated the burning Pung-Shoon. Let the old junk go up in smoke, he thought. So much the better.

The burning might have been an accident, through excitement of the crew; or it might have been by new design of Ling Soo, the crafty Chinaman.

That did not matter. The junk was burning. All police boats, all other craft, would be at the side of the flaming ship, upon which the fire had become a holocaust. Here, in the silence of the bay, the work would soon be over.

The Sepia was a seaworthy craft; but its crew was small. They were trusted men, who obeyed Darley's commands as implicitly as the followers of Ling Soo obeyed the leader of the Wu-Fan. Darley could rely on them tonight.

He glanced at his watch. In ten minutes, the others would be here. Darley drew the list with the Chinese characters from his pocket. This would be useful, now - in case of any disagreement.

Darley suddenly received the impression that someone was in the cabin, close beside him. He turned quickly. He found himself staring into the face of Foy!

Darley was amazed. He had believed Foy to be dead, in the torture chamber of the Pung-Shoon. But here was Foy, now - and in his hand gleamed a revolver, its muzzle pointed toward Darley's body!

Instinctively, Darley looked at Foy's eyes. They were wide open - glaring, as Darley had never seen them before.

Small wonder that Darley quailed. He was staring into the eyes of The Shadow!

Now, Foy was speaking - not in singsong Chinese - but in English! His firm, cold tones were scarcely more than a weird whisper, but the sound made Darley shudder.

"Joseph Darley" - the voice carried an accusation - "I have come to settle scores with you!"

"Scores for what?" challenged Darley.

"For your misdeeds," declared The Shadow. "You, pretended man of influence, are the worst of all the plotters! The one who shared your wickedness - Ling Soo - has met his fate. Prepare for yours!"

"Ling Soo!"

"Ling Soo has perished in the flames of the Pung-Shoon."

DARLEY was too astounded to reply. He stood, helpless, beside the cabin window, wondering at the strange transformation that had come over Foy. For, the crouching man was growing tall. His shadow lay across the floor, and seemed to hover over Darley like a phantom of death.

"You are wondering about Foy," said The Shadow, in a mocking voice. "I am not Foy. I am The Shadow."

Darley made no reply.

"Perhaps you have never heard of The Shadow," resumed the sardonic voice. "Little wonder - for although The Shadow may be everywhere, The Shadow is seldom seen.

"It was I who rescued Cleve Branch from that den, the Sun Kew, where he went as Hugo Barnes. It was I who saved him from the knife of Foy, in your apartment.

"I found it necessary to kill Foy. I took his body with me. Some day it may be found. But I thought it best that Foy should seem to live - so I took his place.

"I learned your fiendish schemes while I lived there in the abode of Ling Soo. I attended the meetings of the inner group. I heard Green Eyes deliver his verdict of death to Cleve Branch. I saved the doomed man from that death.

"You cannot strive against me longer, Joseph Darley! I have learned every step in your plotting. This yacht is yours. Its pretended owner is a blind. On the way from San Pedro, you met the Pung-Shoon, and transferred its secret cargo to this vessel.

"While the Pung-Shoon burns, you are awaiting the Wu-Fan men who are coming to unload your million-dollar cargo. That list in your hand tells how the packages shall be distributed."

Darley gasped. He knew that The Shadow had been able to learn much, in the disguise of Foy - and, unquestionably, this amazing man had divined the rest. Yet Darley was sullen and resentful.

Why should he allow himself to be overcome by one lone man - no matter who that man might claim to be?

"A clever scheme," said The Shadow slowly. "The Wu-Fan was a blind. Small wonder you tried to make it appear an innocent organization. The Civilian Committee was a blind - a plan whereby you could operate as a privileged person, without any danger from the regular authorities.

"These trips of the Sepia between San Pedro and San Francisco. You, Joseph Darley, aboard a yacht engaged in a coastwise cruise!

"No wonder the revenue agents did not search for hidden compartments in the lockers and closets of this yacht. How could they suspect opium on a ship that had not been abroad?"

"All empty talk," cried Darley, in sudden rage. "You cannot prove a word. How can you link me with the Wu-Fan?"

"Through Green Eyes," declared The Shadow quietly.

"Green Eyes," laughed Darley. "Where will you find Green Eyes?"

"He stands before me," said The Shadow, looking squarely at the mild face of Joseph Darley. "Green Eyes - the slayer of Stephen Laird. The man who took vengeance in his own hands. The American who feared betrayal because Green Eyes knew too much. Green Eyes - the master mind more scheming than Ling Soo, is -"

The Shadow paused.

"Who?" demanded Darley.

"- Joseph Darley," declared The Shadow.

"Prove it!" came Darley's challenge.

"I can prove it," said The Shadow, "because I know the secret of Green Eyes!"

AS Darley stared, the man who looked like Foy closed his eyelids. Yet the eyes still seemed to be open! They were gazing, with livid, flashing green, directly at Joseph Darley!

The green eyes vanished. In their place were the eyes of The Shadow. Stern, unyielding eyes - more powerful than those weird flashing optics of green!

"I know your simple secret," said The Shadow. "I learned it the first time I saw you as Green Eyes.

"Not your eyes, Darley, but your eyelids, sent those sparkles. Two flat, green stones, attached to your eyelids. They caused that sinister sparkle that has deceived your companions.

"Your green eyes were amazing, Darley, when you looked at your followers. They did not know that your lids were closed, not open, when that strange gaze made them quail."

As if to emphasize his statement, The Shadow closed his eyelids. Again, that amazing flash of insidious green. But to Darley, that glow meant opportunity - not menace.

The Shadow's eyes were closed! This was Darley's chance!

Like a flash, the committeeman whipped out an automatic, and aimed it squarely between those glimmering eyes. But his ruse failed.

The Shadow had given Darley the opportunity, so he knew what to expect. The Shadow's own fingers pressed the trigger of Ling Soo's revolver.

The green eyes still shone from The Shadow's lids. Then they disappeared. The Shadow viewed the crumpled form of Joseph Darley.

Shooting with sure aim, knowing that Darley had not moved from the cover of that upraised gun, The Shadow had felled Green Eyes.

A startled man was coming to the cabin. One of the crew had heard the shot. He saw Darley's form, and hurried toward it. The Shadow fell upon him as he passed. The man lay helpless upon the floor.

Stepping to the deck, The Shadow listened. He could hear a faint sound from the water. He went back into the cabin. Garbing himself in coat and hat that lay upon the chair, The Shadow stepped noiselessly upon the deck.

The other members of the crew were forward. They were standing on the deck, with long wooden boxes at their feet.

The precious load of opium had been packed. Two small boats were approaching.

By the actions of the man who approached them in the dark, the crew of the Sepia thought that he was Darley. For as the coat-clad figure spoke in a low tone, the voice was Darley's voice.

The boats were at the side. Men were rising from them. Looking upward through the gloom, they saw two green eyes staring down at them.

The members of the Wu-Fan clambered over the side. They crowded about Darley, asking in low voices that they might see the list.

They seemed awed and amazed to find Green Eyes here. But their surprise was to be greater. For as they walked toward the boxes that the coat-clad figure indicated, a peal of gibing laughter burst through the night.

It was the laugh of The Shadow!

Standing with Ling Soo's revolver in his left hand, and Joseph Darley's automatic in his right, The Shadow was backed against the pilot house, covering the crew and the members of the Wu-Fan.

He fired one shot in the air. This was not muffled, like the report in the closed cabin. It could be heard far - across the waters of the bay. It was a signal to all who might hear that something was amiss upon the yacht Sepia.

NO green eyes were sparkling now, from beneath the hat which The Shadow wore. The members of the Wu-Fan realized they were tricked. The crew of the yacht went wild with fury. With one accord, a dozen men precipitated themselves upon this lone figure that had come upon them.

Revolvers and knives were coming into view, but not a single weapon could avail. Quick, staccato shots rang out, but all came from The Shadow's guns. Men were falling - some clutching at The Shadow's feet. Others were groveling by the rail.

Only two escaped. At the rear of the attacking horde, these men, both members of the Wu-Fan, leaped to the rail and gained the motor boat that had brought them there. Hastily they set the motor in action. They were chugging away to safety.

But then The Shadow acted. His shots were used; but with a gun borrowed, unasked, from a victim, he stood by the rail and blazed into the night.

One man gasped and slumped to the bottom of the boat. The second succumbed to another bullet. Chugging onward, the motor boat continued, swerving crazily, with no hand at its wheel.

The shots had aroused cries from other boats anchored in the distance. Lights were gleaming. The long rays of searchlights were being focused on the Sepia.

Dimly, from the distance, these rays revealed the figures sprawled upon the deck. But they did not show the form of The Shadow.

The master of the night had returned to the night. A little motor boat was picking its elusive way back across the bay toward San Francisco.

That boat was guided by the hand of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XXIII

CLEVE GETS CREDIT

RIDING eastward on the Mountain Limited, Cleve Branch was reading the accounts of the great dope ring and its exposure. All the news was there. His name was emblazoned in screaming headlines.

For Cleve Branch had played a part, after all. Recovering his senses in the hospital, he had answered questions relating to the Bureau of Investigation badge that had been found beneath his coat. Then he had lapsed back into unconsciousness.

Another agent had been summoned. At the police station, he had learned of Cleve's mumbled words. He had started for the bay, there to find the Pung-Shoon, a smoldering derelict.

Reports were coming from the Oakland side of the harbor - reports of the dead men on the yacht Sepia, among them Joseph Darley. Revenue men had learned of the opium. Cutters were on their way.

Thus Cleve's part had been passive. It was believed that the schemes of the plotters - Americans and Chinese - had been upset by quarrels that had started on the junk, and then ended on the palatial yacht.

It was the next day that Cleve had told his illuminating story, which had gone far to clear the mystery. A burned body drawn from the Pung-Shoon was recognized by Cleve. It was the squat form of Ling Soo.

Badges were found upon many of the dead men at the yacht. Cleve had led the way to the secret meeting place beneath the Mukden Theater, where the dead body of Foo Chow had been discovered.

Piece by piece, the story was unfolded.

The mystery of Green Eyes had been revealed by a strange freak. When Darley's body had been found, the eyes were open, bulging toward the ceiling of the cabin. When someone forced the lids shut, gleaming spots of green had appeared.

The Shadow - as a last mocking touch - had affixed the stones to Darley's dead eyelids, that the man's secret might be told in death!

But this fact was not mentioned. Indeed, Cleve Branch himself had not dwelt upon the factor of The Shadow. He said that a man had taken the part of Foy, and had rescued him; but he could not give any clew to the identity of that personage.

Darley's list had been found in the cabin. Its Chinese characters described the distribution of the opium. The members of the Wu-Fan had not identified Darley with Green Eyes. They had been sent to the yacht, to find the man in charge. The paper was the order which they were to follow, in case of difficulties in the removal of the dope.

The end of the dope ring! Its tentacles unraveled, through Cleve's account of his investigation of the Wu-Fan. It was a great triumph for Cleve Branch, on his way to Washington.

But though he was forced to take the credit, he knew that it justly belonged to one whom he did not know.

The end of the Wu-Fan, the death of Ling Soo, the disclosure of Green Eyes - all these had been accomplished by the hidden hand of The Shadow!

THE END