



THE LIVING JOSS

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. SHADOWS OF CHINATOWN

HAZY night had settled over Manhattan. The rumble of a departing elevated train came through the mist as a solitary man came down the dingy iron stairway from the downtown station. Reaching the street, the man stopped just beside the steps to light a cigarette which he had thrust in a short, gold-banded holder.

The glare of the match revealed a cunning face, topped with sleek black eyebrows that indicated the color of the man's hair. Flicking the match into the gutter, the man strolled leisurely along the street beside the elevated, walking with shoulders back, and one hand swinging idly.

There was something of the military in the man's bearing, combined with a nonchalance. His erect carriage, which made him seem taller than his middle height, was unusual for this locality; for all those who passed him amidst the fog were slouching, furtive characters.

A poorly clad derelict shambled toward the erect walker and whined a request for a few cents to make up coffee money. The reply that he received was a sharp refusal, so scoffing in tone that the bum hastily

slouched away. The strolling man emitted an ugly laugh, then puffed at his cigarette. He spied a narrow alleyway through the fog, and turned in that direction.

The little thoroughfare was illuminated only by dull lamps when the sallow-faced man entered it; but as he reached a turn in the street, the stroller entered the zone of an indirect glare which increased as he continued to the next turn. Swinging at a sharp angle, the man came into view of a bizarre scene that seemed like a magical transformation from the sordid surroundings which he had just left.

The wayfarer was approaching the outskirts of New York's Chinatown. A city within a city, this quaint district had all the semblance of an Oriental metropolis in miniature.

The hovering fog added to the picturesque glow of lighted doors and windows. The curving street led on toward a brilliant zone which might well have been a portion of old Shanghai. Yellow faces peered from shops. Corner loungers, despite their American clothes, proved to be Chinese.

A PLEASED, knowing smile appeared upon the stroller's lips. The sallow-complexioned man seemed to find a familiar interest in his new surroundings. His shifting eyes noted the features of solemn-faced Celestials. Still smoking his cigarette, the man was noting the expressions of yellow faces with an observation that denoted understanding.

The visitor's shifting gaze noted more than those who passed him on the street. His shrewd eyes glanced into Oriental shops, into ground-floor eating rooms, where Chinamen were gibbering as they manipulated chopsticks over bowls of rice.

At times the stroller paused, catching words that he heard uttered; then he continued onward into Chinatown.

He reached the corner of Mott and Pell Streets, that busy center in the heart of the Chinese district. Here, his eyes roved while his hands inserted a new cigarette into the holder.

The man looked up toward a lighted balcony high above the street - the reputed headquarters of a Chinese tong. Then his steady gaze centered itself upon the many yellow faces that were passing.

Two Chinamen walked by, engaged in low discussion between themselves. The sallow-faced man watched them with narrowing gaze. He strolled after them as they continued up one thoroughfare.

The Orientals, clad in American garments, did not notice the man behind them. They turned into a side street. The sallow-faced man paused to light his cigarette, then again followed.

The new thoroughfare was nothing more than a dingy alley, lined by blank walls, with occasional obscure shops. A single light, jutting from a wall, indicated a restaurant about a hundred feet ahead. This was obviously the destination of the conversing Chinamen.

So intent, however, was the sallow-faced man that he paid no attention to anything other than the men just ahead of him. He did not notice that there was someone else going in the same direction, but on the other side of the street. In fact, he could scarcely have seen this new personage, for the stranger's presence was barely visible.

A tall, moving form that had a human shape; a weird phantom of the night - this was all that indicated the one who was taking a course parallel to the Chinamen and their follower.

More apparent, indeed, than the shape which caused it, was a long, grotesque shadow that moved upon the opposite sidewalk. A silhouetted blotch that kept pace with the Chinamen and the man behind them; this was the chief manifestation of the hidden being who had entered the odd picture.

The Chinamen stopped at the light and went into the obscure restaurant. This consisted of a fair-sized room, with nearly a dozen tables. At the present hour, it was deserted. The Chinamen took a table at the side of the room.

A few minutes later, the sallow-faced man entered. He looked about him with the air of a man who had made an interesting discovery. He sat down at a vacant table.

One of the Celestials blinked blandly at the newcomer, then spoke to his companion. The gist of his remark - in Chinese - was that this must be some chance American making a random trip to Chinatown.

A waiter appeared, carrying bowls of food, which he placed before the Chinese patrons. They were evidently regular eaters here. When the waiter turned to the American, the latter addressed him in sing-song fashion.

"Chop suey?" he asked. "You givee chop suey here? Make him quick. Chop suey."

Again, one of the Chinamen spoke in his native tongue. He mentioned that this man was unquestionably a chance sight-seer. Chop suey was a dish favored by those who were not accustomed to real Chinese delicacies. This restaurant served it only for strangers such as this one.

TO most Occidentals, Chinese faces are expressionless. But to the sallow man seated in this obscure restaurant, it was plain that the dining Celestials had come here to converse in private. He had noted their peculiar reticence when he had first observed them at Mott and Pell.

They were speaking freely now, and the listener understood their jargon. Pretending to be a chance stroller, he was playing the part of eavesdropper.

He learned from the conversation that they were Chinatown merchants; and while he clumsily fumbled with chopsticks over a bowl of chop suey, he waited for a new trend in the discussion.

The Chinamen were paying no attention to him. He was apparently interested only in the chop suey. Hence neither the speaker nor the listeners were aware that another watcher had arrived.

Peering through the corner of the front window, an unseen personage was watching the Chinamen as they spoke, and also casting occasional glances in the direction of the sallow-faced American.

His form invisible against the wall outside the building, this being had become a specter of the night. Silent and watchful, he was observing all that passed within the room, and his keen eyes spotted the fact that the sallow-faced man was secretly interested in the Chinese discussion.

"You say, then," remarked one solemn Chinaman, in his native tongue, "that he has returned."

"I do not say that he has returned," replied the other. "I say only that which I have heard. There is talk about Kwa. Talk that he is here."

"Kwa has long been expected. Each time that he came before, it was soon learned that he was here."

"Yes; and each time that Kwa departed, we heard no more of him until he returned."

The yellow faces peered soberly at each other. Then one Chinese merchant took up the thought that was evidently in the minds of both.

"Kwa is called the Living Joss. His power is great among those who believe in him. It is wise not to speak too much of Kwa."

"The abode of Kwa is secret" - the added statement came from the second Chinaman - "and only those who believe can see the face of Kwa. No one can name those who believe in Kwa, nor those who do not believe in Kwa."

There was long silence. Not an expression appeared upon either yellow countenance. Yet the words, to one who understood the Chinese temperament were filled with definite meaning.

KWA, the Living Joss! Was he a myth or a real dweller here in New York's Chinatown? A being reputed by some to be almost a deity in human form, the followers of Kwa were a secret body who kept their beliefs to themselves.

These merchants, apparently close friends, had retired to seclusion before they dared bring up this tremendous subject. Even by themselves, they spoke in cautious tones. Neither one could be sure whether or not the other was a follower of Kwa. In Chinatown, adherence to a cause meant more than long friendship.

The merchants finished their meal. They left the restaurant still sober, and reserved. The sallow-faced listener smiled. An American familiar with the ways of Orientals, he could understand the apprehensions of the Chinamen, now that he had overheard the conversation.

For years, the powerful secret societies known as tongs had been a hidden influence in Chinatown, often rising to the surface. But here was a power greater than that of any tong - a group controlled by an unknown leader whose followers called him the Living Joss!

No wonder these merchants were perturbed. A being such as Kwa, if his claims were genuine, would have a superhuman power which he could direct against nonbelievers. On the contrary, Kwa, a pretender, could stir up fanatical underlings to a fever pitch. He could undermine the tongs themselves and plunge them into new wars from within!

The American pushed the remainder of his dish aside and strolled from the restaurant. He walked back toward the center of Chinatown. He did not see the black form that detached itself from the side of the dark building, to travel in his wake.

Two Chinamen were talking at the door of a shop. They ceased as they saw a man stop to light a cigarette; when they observed the sallow face of the American, they resumed their discourse, and the man caught a few words in Chinese lingo.

"It is said that Kwa has returned and -"

"Those who believe in Kwa -"

"None can know except those who have seen the face of Kwa, himself -"

The sallow-faced man moved along. He glanced at his watch as he came into the light of a bright but narrow street. He increased his gait to a swinging stride, but never ceased his alertness as he passed spots where Chinamen were loitering.

Again, he heard the spoken name of Kwa; later, as he picked a deserted side street on the outskirts of Chinatown, he caught the mumbled tones of an Oriental who was uttering the same mysterious title.

THE district was agog. Kwa had returned. In some unknown abode, an insidious power dwelt. Who was this unknown being who had returned to New York?

What was his mission here?

The man who had heard, thought of the shadowy streets in Chinatown. Strange menaces existed there - factors which could not exist outside of that town which seemed like a patch of the Orient transplanted to Manhattan.

A mysterious being such as Kwa could not be found elsewhere in New York - so the sallow-faced man reflected. But in that opinion he was wrong. Had he glanced behind him as he strode along, coming from an alleyway into a street beneath the elevated line, he might have glimpsed the sign of a phantom shape as amazing as any Living Joss.

Out of the shadows of Chinatown had come a Living Shadow - a weird, sinister shape which glided along in exact speed with the military stride of the departing man. A splotch of blackness, long and silhouetted in the fog-blended lights of street lamps, was following the man who had heard.

That strange shape had come to Chinatown tonight. It had crossed the path of the prowling American. It was the token of an unseen watcher in the night, one who had also learned the rumors that persisted concerning the unknown Kwa.

The Shadow, master of darkness, had watched the lips of the speaking Chinese merchants. Unobserved, The Shadow had heard the name Kwa uttered at the door of the obscure shop. Later, The Shadow had heard the remarks of other Chinamen, speaking in their native tongue as they mentioned the name of the Living Joss.

Now, spectral in the darkness, The Shadow was trailing the American who had so cleverly intruded upon Chinese conversations.

Shadows still remained in Chinatown; but The Shadow had departed, and none knew of his arrival or his departure!

CHAPTER II. THE MEETING

FOUR men were gathered about a circular table. The room in which they were seated was a built-in sun porch of a large mansion, a fact easily recognizable by the windows that flanked three sides. Behind drawn shades, the quartet was holding a quiet discussion. A vacant chair, however, signified that the group expected another member.

In the largest chair, the one which might well have constituted the head, was a weary, gray-haired man some seventy years of age. His shoulders were bowed, his face was pale, but kindly. His thin hands rested upon the edge of the table.

"Will we have to wait much longer?"

The old man asked the question in a quavering voice as he looked at his companions.

"I hope not, Mr. Schofield," came a reply. "We will allow just a few minutes more; then we can proceed."

The old man nodded. At that moment, a servant entered the sun porch and addressed the elderly individual.

"Doctor Zelka is here, sir."

"Tell him to come in at once."

The reply did not come from the old man. It was made by a middle-aged gentleman seated at his right -

the same one who had made the previous remark. He evidently played the part of Schofield's spokesman.

All eyes turned toward the door. The middle-aged gentleman arose and went in that direction. The door opened, and a sallow-faced man entered and bowed to the group as he delivered a smile intended as a greeting, despite its unpleasant twist.

"You are Doctor Ward Zelka?" questioned the middle-aged man.

"Yes," replied the visitor, extending his hand.

"I am Westley Hartnett," said the middle-aged man. "I am Barton Schofield's attorney. This, Doctor Zelka, is Mr. Schofield."

He led the visitor to the head of the table, where the old gentleman reached up to shake hands. Hartnett turned to continue the introduction.

"Blaine Goodall," he said to Zelka. "He is the president of the Huxley Corporation."

Zelka received the handshake of a tall, square-jawed man who had the physique of an athlete.

"And David Moultrie," continued Hartnett.

The visitor clasped hands with a wiry individual whose teeth showed in a wide-lipped grin. David Moultrie's countenance was chiefly mouth.

Introductions completed, Westley Hartnett conducted Doctor Ward Zelka to the empty chair. Still standing, the attorney looked about, as though suspicious of eavesdroppers. The drawn blinds reassured him. He studied the members of this group, as though preparing for an important discussion.

All looked toward Hartnett. Blaine Goodall was thoughtful; David Moultrie grinning. While old Barton Schofield still sat passively at the head of the table, Doctor Zelka drew a cigarette from his pocket and inserted it in the end of a short, gold-banded holder.

NO one noticed an imperceptible motion of one window shade. Hands from the outer darkness had raised the sash. Eyes were peering through a narrow crevice at the bottom of the blind. Unsuspected ears were listening to this conference.

The Shadow, master of the night, had arrived.

"Our discussion," began Hartnett, "involves the affairs of the Huxley Corporation. Mr. Goodall, as president of that concern, approached my client, Mr. Barton Schofield, and requested this conference. Mr. Schofield agreed to it.

"This meeting, gentlemen, is actually a secret assemblage of the principal shareholders in Huxley Corporation stock. I, therefore, go on record as expressing my disapproval of it at the outset. You may speak now, Mr. Goodall."

Westley Hartnett took his chair beside Barton Schofield, and held a whispered conversation with his client. Blaine Goodall, the corporation president, arose. Chewing his lips in nervous fashion, he addressed the other men.

"Mr. Hartnett is right," he said lamely. "This meeting is irregular, but I was induced to arrange it. The story is simply this. In about three months from now, Amalgamated Enterprises will make a strong bid for the

controlling interest in Huxley Corporation. It will be possible, at that time, for a group of majority holders to sell their stock at a price equivalent to what Amalgamated Enterprises would pay for the entire acquisition, if forced to buy shares on the open market.

"Amalgamated Enterprises has the impression that the controlling interest of Huxley Corporation is in the hands of a small group headed by Mr. Barton Schofield. In fact, they are ready to believe that Mr. Schofield himself has more than fifty per cent of the Huxley shares. Such, however, is not the case.

"While I was wondering about this matter, I was approached by David Moultrie" - he indicated the largemouthed man - "who had already spoken to Doctor Zelka. Mr. Moultrie is a gentleman who deals in corporation stocks. He stated that Doctor Zelka, like Mr. Schofield, held blocks of Huxley shares. He suggested that we form the group which is believed to exist.

"Mr. Schofield and Doctor Zelka will pool their interests. I am to keep silent on Huxley affairs while Mr. Moultrie buys up loose shares. We will then have the controlling interest that we seek."

David Moultrie arose as Blaine Goodall ceased speaking. With his leering grin, this fellow followed up the conservative statements of the corporation president.

"Let me get to work," he suggested, "and I'll buy up Huxley shares for next to nothing. If Goodall here keeps quiet, it will be soft. I'll make it look like Huxley is going to the dogs -"

"In other words," interposed Hartnett, his eyes blazing, "you plan to manipulate Huxley stock - to deceive the present shareholders -"

"Yes!" asserted Goodall. "That's just what I can do. I can swing it for two million dollars' profit - maybe more - and your client there will get his big cut out of it."

"One moment," ordered Hartnett, rising. "I have discussed this matter with Mr. Schofield. He is a man of integrity, a retired banker, whose name has never been smirched by any stigma. Mr. Schofield is willing to go into the open market, to buy Huxley shares on a legitimate basis, and thus to acquire a controlling interest. But to follow the scheme that you suggest - that would be an outrage! There is your answer, Moultrie!"

"Yes?" Moultrie grinned. "Try it! That's where I've got you blocked. Doctor Zelka, here, holds enough stock to give me a start. Go out and try to beat me, Hartnett. I'll kill your game. I'll drive Huxley stock into the ground. You'll be holding a stack of worthless shares. You'll never get control for Barton Schofield!"

For a moment, stock manipulator and attorney faced each other with challenging gazes. Old Barton Schofield was perturbed. Blaine Goodall was trying to restore a friendly feeling. Doctor Ward Zelka calmly puffed his cigarette. His sallow face registered enjoyment of the situation.

SINGULARLY enough, it was Zelka who finally gained the floor after a series of epithets had been hurled by both Hartnett and Moultrie. The sallow-faced man spoke in a raspy voice that brought attention in his direction.

"Why speak of integrity?" he demanded. "It is not at stake. Here is the situation in a nutshell. One man, with a good start, could quietly gain control of Huxley stock. I could be that man. Barton Schofield could be that man.

"However, David Moultrie seized upon the idea ahead of us. He needed one of us; he wisely decided to line up both. He came to me with opportunity, which I accepted. I advise you, Mr. Schofield" - Zelka

was speaking directly to the old man, not to Westley Hartnett - "to do the same."

"Hear that?" queried Moultrie, turning to Hartnett. "The doctor, here, is talking sense. I let Mr. Schofield in on the game because I figured he would listen to reason. He could go after the idea alone. Sure, Schofield could. So could Doctor Zelka. I could take a stab at it myself, starting from scratch. But the only wise way to work it is all together."

A silence; then Blaine Goodall took the floor. The president of the Huxley Corporation was nervous as he issued a plea for cooperation.

"Can't we come to some agreement?" he questioned. "This places me in an embarrassing situation, gentlemen. I, alone, am conversant with the facts. Unless something is done, I shall have to act in my official capacity - to make known to the public that Huxley Corporation is dealing with Amalgamated Enterprises."

"Make it known," ordered Westley, while old Barton Schofield delivered a weary nod of approval. "It will rectify your present mistake, Goodall. You are dealing with two men of questionable reputation.

"Moultrie, here" - the lawyer's tone was scathing - "is a crooked stock manipulator. As for Doctor Zelka, I have delved into his past. He is not a practicing physician in New York. He has no recognized status. Why?"

"A question?" asked Zelka, with narrowed eyes. "I can answer it, Mr. Hartnett. I am a man of some means. I have chosen a life of travel in preference to the retired existence of a medical practitioner."

"Travel?" jeered Hartnett. "Yes. I know of that, Doctor Zelka. You have been in Europe, through the Orient, even in South America for a time. There are some cities - in fact, some countries - which would not give you a healthy reception if you returned."

"Quite so," agreed Zelka suavely, as he lighted another cigarette. "An American traveling abroad frequently finds himself confronted by unfortunate circumstances which do him an injustice."

"Yes?" queried the lawyer. "Talk to Mr. Schofield about that, Doctor Zelka. My client, too, has traveled extensively during his long and useful life, but he has never encountered any of those unavoidable situations of which you speak. Integrity! You would do well to make it your watchword, Doctor."

It was David Moultrie who took up cudgels for the accused physician, but Doctor Zelka calmly waved the man down. Turning to Blaine Goodall, Zelka put a quiet question.

"How soon," he asked, "will you be forced to make the announcement of which you speak?"

"Two weeks from tonight," returned Goodall. "That is the longest that I can wait."

"That will be sufficient," decided Zelka. "Let us part friends, gentlemen. We will give Mr. Hartnett a chance to confer again with Mr. Schofield. Perhaps, with sober consideration, they will reverse their decision. If they do, Mr. Hartnett can make the fact known to Mr. Goodall, who, in turn, can inform Moultrie and myself. Of course, should we come to the agreement which Moultrie and I desire -"

"I'll hold off the announcement indefinitely," agreed Goodall, "provided that I know the deal is going through. But failure to get together throws me back to my duty to the Huxley Corporation."

"I understand," nodded Zelka, with a smile. "Come, Moultrie. We are leaving."

The physician extended his hand as a token of no ill feeling toward Westley Hartnett. The lawyer

accepted it.

"Sorry about the personalities, Doctor Zelka," he said. "But so far as the arrangement is concerned, I can tell you now that none will be effected."

"Think it over," urged Zelka, shaking hands with old Barton Schofield. It was impossible to tell whether his remark was made to the lawyer or to the retired banker.

Following Zelka's example, David Moultrie shook hands all around. The two men left the room. Blaine Goodall remarked that he must be leaving, also. Westley Hartnett summoned a servant; old Barton Schofield arose wearily and started upstairs, leaning upon the attendant. The old banker always retired early in the evening.

ONE window shade gave a feeble flutter as the sash beyond it was silently lowered. Outside the house, a phantom figure moved strangely through the darkness. It traveled swiftly across the blackened lawn, and reached a coupe that was parked on a secluded lane beside Barton Schofield's Long Island mansion.

Another coupe shot by the entrance of the lane. David Moultrie and Doctor Ward Zelka were departing in the former's car. Zelka had come here by taxi; Moultrie was taking him back to the city.

The hidden coupe moved. It swung into the road, and its dim lights glimmered. Far behind, it took up the trail of the distant tail light which indicated Moultrie's car.

A laugh sounded in the darkness of the following automobile. A sinister sound, that mirth caused a hollow echo within the confines of the coupe.

The Shadow, unseen, unknown, had listened well tonight. He had heard the schemes of two conniving men; and he had also heard the answer which had blocked their plans.

The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER III. THE AFTERMATH

DOCTOR WARD ZELKA and David Moultrie were seated in a little booth at the side of Brindle's restaurant. Over sandwiches and coffee, these thwarted stock manipulators were discussing the events at the home of Barton Schofield. They had chosen Brindle's as their Broadway rendezvous, because each booth seemed to draw its occupants apart from the world.

Thus, as they talked, both men were sure that they could not be heard. In this, however, they were wrong. Had they looked into the next booth, they would have seen a man who was listening to every word they said.

A calm-faced gentleman in evening dress was alone in that booth. He had entered wearing an overcoat, and carrying a small bag, which he had deposited beside him when he removed his coat.

The bag lay between this man and the wall. From it, deft fingers had drawn a small microphone - a miniature device which he had thrust through a crevice between the seat and the wall. He had attached a small, clamped earphone to the side of his head that was also toward the wall.

The microphone, wedged into the range of the next booth, was picking up the conversation. With food before him, the calm-faced man was listening in, thanks to the equipment in the bag beside him.

Who was this visitor to Brindle's? No one knew. His quiet entrance had attracted no attention. Yet there were silk-hat racketeers in that Broadway restaurant who would have trembled, had they known the true

identity of this obscure and solitary diner.

The calm face of the visitor was masklike. Its expression was cold and inscrutable. Steady eyes gleamed from either side of a hawkish nose. Even close inspection could not have revealed this inflexible countenance as an assumed visage, overlaid to hide the true face beneath it.

The chance diner was The Shadow. The master, whose mighty presence was a threat to all gangdom, had followed Zelka and Moultrie to this restaurant. Here, with the aid of a mechanical detector, he was listening to the aftermath of the conference at Barton Schofield's.

"I MADE a bull," David Moultrie was saying. "I should have left Barton Schofield out of the picture."

"You could hardly have done so," came Zelka's quiet response. "You had to talk to Goodall, to keep him quiet. Goodall was almost sure to speak to Schofield."

"Goodall has no foolish scruples," reminded Moultrie. "He might have kept his mouth shut."

"Goodall is a waverer," asserted Zelka. "He fluctuates between honesty and crookedness. Such men are troublesome. Ethical conduct is something which one must either retain fully, or else disregard entirely."

"Which puts us out of luck. There's no chance of getting Barton Schofield with us now."

"I am not so sure of that." Zelka was speaking in a thoughtful tone. "I left the field open for new negotiations. Barton Schofield, himself - well, if he were younger, he would have been flat in his refusal to deal with us. But he is close to a doddering state, completely swayed by Hartnett's opinion. That is where we have a chance."

"With Hartnett?" Moultrie's tone was incredulous. "Didn't you hear him talk about integrity?"

"Bunk," said Zelka suavely. "Listen, Moultrie. Hartnett is, unfortunately, an honest man. He is also a lawyer. I happen to know law as well as medicine.

"Few attorneys are troubled with deep consciences. They weigh all matters, and invariably make a decision in favor of the stronger point. It is just like the case in the courtroom. The district attorney fights for a verdict of guilty; the defending lawyer for acquittal. They can see no compromise - even though such a course might be the obvious way to justice.

"Who is Westley Hartnett? I shall tell you. He is an attorney hired to protect Barton Schofield's interests, now that the old banker has retired from active life. Along with Schofield's financial affairs is his integrity.

"Hartnett may realize that one or the other must be sacrificed. He has resolved to favor integrity. Our sudden parting, however, will make him think. He may reason as all lawyers do, that tangible affairs are in his keeping. Suppose he gets the idea that we are going to knock the bottom out of Huxley stock, just to even things up for the rebuff?"

"I see," nodded Moultrie. "He may figure that his duty to Barton Schofield requires him to protect the value of the stock which the old man already has."

"Exactly. If he salves his conscience, he will decide to let us go ahead. He will make sure that he can keep Barton Schofield's name out of the deal."

"That would be great."

"It is purely an opinion," remarked Zelka, as an afterthought. "It depends upon how important Huxley

stock is to Barton Schofield. Hartnett may stick to his guns. If so, we are sunk. It would be foolish to ruin the value of the stock I already hold. We cannot afford to enter a suicidal combat."

"Old Schofield is the real trouble," snarled Moultrie. "Two weeks. Bah! If we had longer to wait, the old man might drop dead before Goodall issues his manifesto. If Schofield was out -"

"Hartnett would be handling the estate," interposed Zelka, with an ugly smile. "If anybody ought to drop dead, it's Hartnett. Schofield could be handled if he were forced to look after his own affairs for a while."

"That's right," admitted Moultrie.

"The line-up is simple," declared Zelka. "Westley Hartnett is the chief obstacle. If he were eliminated, that would leave -"

"Barton Schofield."

"No. Blaine Goodall. He is a great factor. If Hartnett went out of the picture, Goodall would still have his duty to his corporation. He would have to be effectively squelched."

"For how long?"

"Until Barton Schofield could be forced to listen to reason. There would be the ideal way to handle the situation. Eliminate Hartnett as Schofield's attorney. Block Goodall so he could not act. Handle Schofield so that his affairs would be in our hands."

"Excellent. But it can't be done within two weeks."

"Hardly. That's why I suggest that we wait. Maybe Hartnett will change his opinion. There's no telling what may happen. In the meantime, as far as you and I are concerned -"

Doctor Zelka paused to puff upon his cigarette. David Moultrie watched the expression upon the sallow face. He could see that his companion was considering every possibility.

"YOU and I," resumed Zelka thoughtfully, "we must keep apart. Attend to your stock deals - and be very discreet. I shall indulge in a quiet existence about New York."

"Because of Hartnett?"

"Yes - and because of the others. Hartnett looked into our affairs. He may intend to investigate us further. People may be watching us; and if we appear to have no more than a passing acquaintanceship, it may prove of value.

"I" - Zelka tapped his chest with his forefinger - "simply happen to be a large holder of Huxley stock. You came to me as a stranger. I accepted your proposal, and approved your plan. There is no reason why I should see you again, unless new conference is called."

"Right," agreed Moultrie. "That will have an effect on Hartnett - on the others, too - if they get any report on our affairs. You thought my proposition was good. Why shouldn't old Barton Schofield grab it?"

Doctor Zelka smiled in recollection of the evening session which they had held at Schofield's. He was thinking of the personal remarks which Westley Hartnett had uttered.

"I have traveled much," he remarked. "I have been many places, Moultrie, and I have always had a penchant for the unusual. It interested me when Hartnett began to drag up my past. Whatever he may

have learned concerning me cannot be more than a fraction of the actual truth."

"You landed in trouble often?"

"Very often. But I have a way about me, Moultrie. I can always avoid difficulties. I enjoy intrigue; and I have engaged in it. But when it is necessary, I can generally manage to straighten my affairs.

"There were occasions when I encountered unexpected situations, and found it easier and more comfortable to stage a prompt departure than to stay around and face more trouble. Those are the cases of which Hartnett probably learned."

"They may have influenced him considerably," mused Moultrie. "He seemed to attach much significance to them."

"That was merely an excuse," asserted Zelka. "You saw how mildly I took his statements. Nevertheless, I have not forgotten them. I am something of an Oriental, Moultrie. I always liked to mingle with the natives of the East, to study their ways, and to speak their language.

"I seldom forget an insult, and I usually find ways of retaliation - particularly ways that prove beneficial to myself. Some day, Westley Hartnett will regret what he said tonight."

A strange expression appeared upon Ward Zelka's face. The physician evidently meant what he had said. To David Moultrie, however, this was a matter of minor consequence. The stock manipulator was still trying to think of some way to nullify tonight's failure.

He shrugged his shoulders as he slid from the side of the booth and reached the center floor of the restaurant. He reached out to shake hands with Ward Zelka.

"Good night," was Moultrie's parting. "Let's hope you're right - that something will intervene to change this situation. I doubt, however, that Hartnett will alter his opinion. We can only hope for it."

"And await developments," smiled Zelka.

WHEN David Moultrie had gone, the physician remained until he had finished his cigarette. Then he left the restaurant, and strolled down Broadway.

Shortly after Ward Zelka's departure, the man in the next booth closed his suitcase and donned his overcoat. He, too, departed from Brindle's, and followed Broadway until he reached a side street. There, he entered a parked coupe.

It was an hour later when Ward Zelka entered the small lobby of the uptown apartment house where he lived. The physician looked in his mail box; then unlocked the front door and entered. He did not notice anything unusual in the gloomy confines of the lobby.

But when the physician had gone, something occurred upon the very spot which he had left. A blotch upon the tiled floor came into sudden motion. A tall shape seemed to grow from the very wall.

A whispered laugh brought weird echoes to that gloomy vestibule. The outer door opened; the mysterious figure was gone. The Shadow's investigation was ended for the night.

He - The Shadow - had heard the aftermath between Zelka and Moultrie. He knew the thoughts that were in the brains of the schemers.

Chinatown - Long Island - uptown Manhattan. Were these connected with crime that might follow

thwarted schemes? If crime were looming, The Shadow would know!

CHAPTER IV. A STRANGE SUMMONS

THE following evening, Doctor Ward Zelka left his apartment house and strolled along the street toward the nearest avenue. This side street was lined with apartment buildings, and, near the entrance of one, Zelka sauntered past a young man who was about to enter.

The physician merely glanced at the stranger. He saw a sensuous, sophisticated face, and classified the man as an idling waster. Zelka smiled as he strolled onward.

The young man stopped in the apartment vestibule, glanced into a box which bore the name "Hugo Urvin"; then continued through until he reached the automatic elevator, which he took to the fourth floor.

Entering his apartment, Hugo Urvin threw his hat and coat aside, and slouched in an easy-chair. The place was in disorder, for Urvin no longer had the services of a valet. Clothes were strewn here and there; the table was covered with unpaid bills.

Even the young man's most prized possessions - framed photographs of a dozen or more debutantes - were heaped upon a corner chair. Hugo Urvin was contemplating a swift move from this apartment, for which he owed more than two months' rent.

Ward Zelka's mental impression of the young man's characteristics were correct. Hugo Urvin, scion of a wealthy family, had a wide range of social acquaintances. He possessed a smooth, ingratiating personality that enabled him to retain his friends. Recently, however, he had displayed bad traits which were much to his discredit.

His continued winnings at the card table had ended; not through ill luck, but by a shortage of players who cared to indulge in poker with him. Certain friends had called him to task because of his gross negligence in squaring debts which he had promised to settle.

On the ragged edge, Hugo Urvin was ready for anything; and there were people who suspected it. No finger of direct accusation could be pointed toward him, but there were many acquaintances who would not have been surprised, had Hugo Urvin been suddenly branded as a crook.

Two desires filled Urvin's present mood. The first was money. The second was dependent upon the first: namely, a way of getting money without sacrificing his threadbare social status. Easy funds, from a well-concealed source, would be much to Hugo Urvin's liking.

THE telephone rang. Hugo Urvin frowned. He had managed to keep the telephone service connected, but it had recently become a nuisance. Bill collectors and other debtors were using it more frequently than friends who extended invitations to social engagements.

For a few moments, Urvin was on the point of letting the telephone ring unanswered; then, the sight of the stacked photos on the chair reminded him that evening was the time to expect calls from various girl friends. Hugo Urvin picked up the receiver and ventured a smooth "Hello."

There was momentary silence. Then came a crackly voice that spoke in a slow, hesitating tone, placing peculiar accent upon each syllable:

"Is this Mr. Hugo Urvin?"

"Yes," responded the young man. Silence; then the voice:

"Would you like to have money?"

The peculiar gloating of the tone sounded like a ridicule of the young man's present financial condition. Urvin was about to bark an angry reply, when the voice added, more emphatically than before:

"Much money?"

"Yes," drawled Urvin. "Have you got some for me?"

The voice chuckled insidiously. Urvin felt ill at ease. He was sure now that this could not possibly be a practical joke at his expense. The speaker at the other end was advancing a definite offer.

"There is money for you," asserted the crackly voice, "if you will promise to obey."

The last word was heavily accented.

"Give me the proposition," declared Urvin, in a steady tone. "I'll take it."

"You are alone?" queried the voice.

"Yes," asserted Urvin.

"Continue to be alone," came the order. "Leave your apartment at once. Go directly to Forty-seventh Street and Broadway. Stand upon the southwest corner, near the curb. Listen to the first person who speaks to you. Do exactly as he suggests."

"Southwest corner," repeated Urvin, in a wondering tone. "Forty-seventh and Broadway - the first person who speaks to me. Say - what is this all about? What do I get out of it?"

"Much money," declared the voice in a convincing tone.

"All right," said Urvin, with a laugh. "I'll do it. I'll be there."

"Wait." The voice was emphatic. "That is not all. Later, you will hear someone utter a certain word. Wherever you are when you hear that word, remain."

"What is the word?"

"The word" - the crackling tones were very slow - "is a name which you must not repeat. It is Kwa. Do not repeat it now or later. Kwa. Do you understand? Kwa."

Urvin caught himself on the point of repeating the name. Instead, he simply said:

"Yes. I understand."

"Then," ordered the voice, "leave at once."

The conversation was ended. Hugo Urvin scratched the back of his head, perplexed.

The telephone call might be a practical joke, but he did not think so. There was something convincing about that crackly voice.

The young man pulled a few dollars from his pocket. This cash constituted his sole supply of funds. With a grunted laugh, Urvin donned his coat and hat to leave the apartment.

ARRIVED at the appointed corner, Urvin lighted a cigarette and idled near the curb. Hundreds of people

were passing this busy point. Other men were standing about, and Urvin wondered how he would be picked from the crowd. He decided that the person who had called must be someone who knew him.

Urvin frowned. He began to suspect a hoax - some pretended friend near here to enjoy a laugh at his expense.

Urvin threw his half-finished cigarette into the gutter beside the rear wheel of a heavy sight-seeing bus. This vehicle was adorned with Chinese lanterns, and it bore a large sign marked with the word, "Chinatown." Urvin noted that the bus was half filled with passengers, and as he still stared, a uniformed barker approached him from the side of the bus.

"Chinatown bus," announced the man. "Big trip for half a dollar. See Chinatown - "

"Nothing doing," growled Urvin.

"Waiting for someone, bo?" questioned the barker. "Girl friend, maybe? Bring her along when she gets here. Take her down to Chinatown."

Urvin swung his back on the fellow. The man annoyed him. The barker did not seem to mind the rebuff; he simply walked a few paces and began to urge another man to take a trip to Chinatown.

Minutes went by. Urvin began to be impatient. He stared about him, looking for peering faces of acquaintances who might be playing a joke on him. He glanced at the bus again, wondering if someone was watching him from within. The bus was nearly filled, and the anxious barker was avoiding the growls of passengers who wanted the bus to "get started."

"Come on, bo," the uniformed man was trying to persuade Urvin again. "One more passenger and we start. She ain't coming along. Take the trip - only half a buck -"

Hugo Urvin was about to express his ire, when a sudden thought burst upon him. Angry words died upon his lips.

Forty-seventh and Broadway - the first person who spoke to him -

"COMING, buddy?" questioned the barker.

Urvin looked at the man. He had never seen the fellow before, but he could tell that the chap was used to this business. Nevertheless, this barker was the first man who had spoken to him; and his instructions were to do exactly as the first person would suggest!

Fishing in his vest pocket, Urvin produced a half dollar and handed it to the barker. The fellow gave him a ticket, without even grinning. He was used to customers who changed their minds, no matter how hostile they had been at first.

Hugo Urvin entered the bus and took the last remaining seat. A guide joined the chauffeur, and the big sight-seeing car pulled out.

Going down Broadway, Urvin gave no heed to the wise-cracking palaver of the guide. He looked upon the sightseeing business as a racket, so far as seeing anything of importance was concerned. He began to wonder if he had added to his folly. If this were a hoax, he had certainly fallen heavy.

At the same time, the young man sensed that a clever brain might have contrived this meeting. The bus barkers accosted every one who loitered at their corner. It was obvious that one of them would speak to him. Hugo realized that the barker might well be an unwitting agent of the man with the cackled voice!

THE lumbering bus neared Chinatown. It came to a stop, and the guide told the passengers to alight. Headed by the uniformed man, the group of some thirty persons moved into a narrow street, where they soon encountered the lights of Chinatown.

Lingering near the rear of the cluster, Hugo Urvin listened for the word that had been given him over the telephone. It kept ringing in his brain, more mysterious than before, now that Chinatown had been reached.

Kwa!

What could it mean?

The guide turned into a narrow entry. He led the sight-seers through a small door, and they entered an oddly furnished room, which was evidently a shrine of Buddha, judging by the statues set along the wall.

A solemn Chinaman, dressed in Oriental robes, was introduced as Chon Look, the priest of the secret temple. In English, Chon Look explained the purpose of wishing sticks, of paper talismans, of other objects used by Buddhists.

Reaching the door, Chon Look extended his hand and mumbled Chinese words as he bowed. Most of the departing visitors laughed as they followed the guide, and heard the strange lingo of the Buddhist who kept this shrine.

But as Hugo Urvin approached, he heard a single word which the bowing Chinaman introduced at the end of every sentence. To him, that word had a meaning!

"Kwa!"

Urvin hesitated; then stopped as other sight-seers went on by him. He watched the lips of Chon Look, and saw, as well as heard, the next utterance of the mystic word.

"Kwa!"

Moving away from the last of the throng, Hugo Urvin stopped to examine the wishing sticks which had been shown to the visitors. Again, he heard the name of Kwa. When he looked around, all the bus passengers had gone. The outer door of the shrine was closed.

There had been two Chinese girls in attendance. They, too, had left the place.

Hugo Urvin was alone, with the solemn-faced Chinaman named Chon Look. There was something fantastic about the man's appearance now, as he stood alone, in his Buddhist robes, blinking solemnly at the only American who remained.

"Kwa," announced Chon Look, staring directly at Hugo Urvin.

The young man nodded. He remembered the admonition not to repeat the name. His silence seemed to be what Chon Look had expected.

"Come."

The robed Chinaman took Urvin by the elbow, and led him to the center of the room. The lights went out with unexpected suddenness. In the midst of jet-black darkness, Urvin was swung around by the Chinaman's grasp, so effectively that he lost all sense of direction.

Then, before he had recovered from a momentary dizziness, they were walking forward again. To Hugo

Urvin's surprise, they encountered no solid wall. Instead, they were moving through a pitch-black passage that had mysteriously opened for them.

Strange adventure had come to Hugo Urvin. Here, in a show place of Chinatown, a spot apparently designed merely to attract gawking sight-seers, he was being conducted to the meeting promised by a mysterious voice which had crackled through the receiver of the telephone in his apartment.

Where would the mission end?

Hugo Urvin did not know; but he was sure now that this could be no hoax. Somewhere, at the end of this strange walk, he would meet another other than Chon Look, the Buddhist.

Kwa!

The word was a name - so the voice had said. Now, Hugo Urvin sensed that it was Kwa himself who must have spoken; and at the end of this passage he would meet the singular being who bore that strange title!

CHAPTER V. THE LIVING JOSS

THE passage ended after a series of devious twists and turns. The finish was abrupt. Chon Look's tightening grasp prevented Hugo Urvin from bumping into a solid barrier that blocked farther progress.

Something clicked. A panel rose like a curtain. Light from a room beyond was the indication of the panel. The barrier, itself, was invisible; but the illumination rose slowly from the floor, and Chon Look conducted the American into an oddly shaped chamber which was hung with gorgeous tapestries.

The only article of furniture was a huge taboret, posted near the further wall. In front and on either side were incense burners - three in all - from which slow wreathes of smoke curled lazily toward the ceiling, to dissemble in the heavy, pungent atmosphere.

Hugo Urvin noted that the legs of the taboret were open. The top of the object was heavy, and appeared almost as a throne. The young man found himself standing alone. Chon Look had retired to a corner of the room.

Looking for the Chinaman, Urvin saw first that the panel through which they had entered was now closed; then he observed that Chon Look had picked up a heavy brass gong and a hammer. Approaching the large taboret, Chon Look motioned in that direction with the hammer. Then, as Hugo watched, the Buddhist struck the gong. The effect was most surprising. No clang occurred, although Urvin seemed to sense the reverberations of the stroke. The gong was soundless!

Before Urvin had recovered from his momentary amazement, another phenomenon took place. As in response to the noiseless stroke of wood against brass, each incense burner delivered a simultaneous puff. Sudden clouds of smoke shot upward, forming a heavy white veil around the taboret. When the smoke was gone, Hugo Urvin blinked.

A figure had appeared upon the taboret. A seated, cross-legged form clad in a gold-threaded Oriental jacket, was resting upon the seat which had been vacant before the puffs had come.

"Kwa," announced Chon Look, with a bow.

HUGO URVIN was staring at a venomous face. It was the most evil visage that he had ever seen. Bulging eyes, a twisted nose, thick, puckered lips, and sharp, jutting teeth; these were the features of Kwa's countenance.

Raising a scrawny, long-nailed hand, the hideous monster gesticulated toward Chon Look. The Buddhist bowed and retired.

Hugo Urvin thought he had merely gone to replace the gong in the corner; but when the young man looked behind, he noted that Chon Look was gone. The Chinaman must have passed through the panel and let it close behind him.

Nervously, Urvin turned to face Kwa. He felt an irrepressible awe of this fiendish being. This feeling was increased when the monster uttered a crackling chuckle - the same sound that Urvin had heard across the telephone wire.

"I am Kwa," announced the robed occupant of the odd throne. "I am the one who summoned you, Hugo Urvin. You were wise to give me your response."

The incense burners were curling their thin smoke upward. They wreathed the demon with streaks of whiteness. The hideousness of Kwa became even more impressive; yet Hugo Urvin managed to preserve his wits.

He had been brought here for a purpose ostensibly to his advantage. Despite the gloating meanness of Kwa's face, there was, as yet, no reason to believe in any menace.

"I summoned you," continued Kwa, in his peculiarly accented voice, "because I need you. In return I offer what you need. Money."

Urvin nodded.

"Money," repeated Kwa, with emphasis. "You shall have it if you promise to do my bidding."

Again, Urvin nodded. He was speechless. He realized, also, that he might commit himself by too definite an answer before he had learned what Kwa desired. The nod could be taken either as understanding or as willingness to obey; yet it would be possible to retract the sign.

Kwa seemed to divine the young man's thoughts. The monster chuckled and spoke again, making his next statement quite specific.

"Your duties," he crackled, "will be limited to those which you can easily perform. So long as you preserve the secrecy which I demand, there will be no danger from outside. So long as you do not fail to do my bidding, there will be no danger here."

A pause; then Kwa demanded:

"Do you promise?"

"Yes," agreed Urvin. "I promise."

"That is good," chuckled Kwa. "Tell me - have you ever heard of Kwa?"

"Never."

"I am Kwa. I am the one whom my followers call the Living Joss. They look upon me as a strange being - a demigod upon earth. They are right in their belief. I am Kwa."

The words were uttered with an impressive confidence that made Hugo Urvin shudder. The strange passage to this place; the soundless gong; the arrival of Kwa amid a puff of incense smoke; these were manifestations that could not be denied.

"The hands of Kwa" - the creature extended his long-nailed claws - "stretch everywhere. They reach out from this abode to pluck whatever Kwa may need. They can reach you, now that you belong to Kwa.

"But you need not fear, so long as you obey. You will not need to see the face of Kwa again; yet you will have new dealings with the one whom you first met - Chon Look. To you, he will give objects wrapped in paper - such as this."

With a sweeping gesture, Kwa drew a piece of layered rice paper from his jacket and held it between his claws. He made a peeling motion; the paper separated into two sheets, which Kwa scanned as though reading an important message.

"You will come as you did tonight," added Kwa, "whenever you have word to leave; whenever you have orders to receive. You need not speak to Chon Look. He will understand, and he will talk. And never" - the crackling voice became insidious in tone - "repeat the name of Kwa. You are not one who can safely pronounce the title of the Living Joss!"

The horrible creature waved its arms. Again, the incense burners puffed. Smoke, like a steam jet, covered the taboret. The cloud dispelled. Kwa was gone!

HUGO URVIN stood in profound amazement. While he was rooted to the spot, he heard a sound behind him. He turned swiftly to face Chon Look, who had returned. The Buddhist pointed to an open panel. Urvin followed his Chinese guide.

They reached the blackness of the shrine, after an untraceable route. Urvin felt himself spun around; the lights came on, and he was back in the room from which he had started, with no idea of where the passage had begun.

Chon Look pointed to the corner where the wishing sticks were lying. Urvin moved in that direction. Chon Look opened a door. The Chinese girls entered, and a few minutes later a crowd of sight-seers flocked in, accompanied by a new guide.

Hugo Urvin listened to Chon Look's monotonous lecture. At a motion from the Chinaman, he joined the departing throng after the talk had been completed. The girls were by the door now, handing little packages to Chon Look. The guide was explaining that the keeper of the shrine sometimes gave gifts to his patrons. Urvin received one of the packages and placed it in his pocket.

Outside, the guide held the crowd until one of the girls appeared to collect fifty cents from each visitor. The guide explained that this was necessary to support the shrine. Several sightseers growled their disapproval, but the collection went on, while the guide reminded them that he had mentioned that the temple trip cost extra.

Riding back to upper Broadway, Hugo Urvin still clutched the package in his pocket. He went to his apartment after he alighted from the bus, and hastily opened the parcel. Within the paper wrapping, he discovered five fifty dollar bills.

The young man pocketed the money with a laugh. This trip had proven profitable. He hoped that it was but the forerunner of many more. There was only one catch - the duty that Kwa might have imposed upon him.

The gift box in the package contained a little desk piece of the three wise monkeys. Urvin smiled as he laid it aside. He took the paper wrapping and spread it at the edge. It peeled into two pieces. One bore writing.

Urvin's smile continued as he read the instructions. A very simple duty had been imposed upon him; one that he could perform with ease. He would take care of the matter tomorrow evening.

Pocketing two hundred and fifty dollars, Urvin felt that he was on the road to easy money. He walked around the room in pleased fashion. He happened to glance at the table where he had placed the note from Kwa; and while he was wondering whether to destroy or keep the message, the paper took care of itself.

Puff! The sheet that held the writing broke forth with a flash of flame. As Urvin stepped back from the light, he saw that the message was reduced to ashes.

Flash paper - Urvin had seen it work before. But always, he had seen it ignited. This sheet had evidently been treated with a chemical that worked automatically after one portion of the peeled paper had been pulled from the other.

Whatever the explanation might be, the fiery disappearance of the message made Urvin remember the strange manifestations within the temple of Kwa.

The young man forced a laugh when he recalled Kwa's statement that he, Kwa, was a Living Joss. Nevertheless, Urvin could not forget the horror of that scene in the hidden room reaches from the Buddhist shrine.

As he left the apartment to test the spending power of the first fifty-dollar bill, Urvin found the words of Kwa still ringing in his ears.

All would be well - if he obeyed. There were reasons to obey the will of Kwa. One was the fiendishness of the strange creature himself; the other was the crinkle of the fifty-dollar bills which Urvin could feel in his pocket.

There was no question in the young man's mind. Kwa had chosen well. He had found an unscrupulous servitor to do his bidding.

Hugo Urvin intended to obey.

CHAPTER VI. KWA PREPARES

THE hidden temple was not long deserted after Hugo Urvin had left it. As soon as the sight-seers had gone, Chon Look went to one side of the shrine and pressed his hand against the side of a five-shelved rack which contained ornaments of jade and china.

The rack moved upward to reveal a gaping hole in the wall. Chon Look entered the passage, and the rack smoothly descended without disturbing the objects on its shelves.

At the same time, a similar scene was taking place in another part of Chinatown, nearly a block away from the Buddhist shrine. A Chinese merchant, whose little shop bore the name of Soy Foon, along with Chinese characters, closed the front door of his place, and went into a back room.

Soy Foon - the merchant was attired in his native costume - approached a rack which resembled the one in the Buddhist shrine. He performed the same action that Chon Look had exerted. The rack raised upward with its load of curios; Soy Foon entered an open passage, and the barrier slid down in back of him.

When he came to a final barrier, Soy Foon pressed a catch, and a panel arose to admit him to Kwa's temple. Chon Look was already there. The Buddhist had arrived by a different entrance than the one

used by the merchant. Thus there were two passages to the hidden temple, starting from places a block apart.

Chon Look picked up the gong and gave it a soundless stroke. Both Chinamen blinked solemnly toward the heavy taboret. A terrific puff of smoke came from the burners. When it cleared away, the glaring figure of Kwa was in view. The Chinamen bowed to this creature, whom they hailed as a Living Joss.

Kwa was the first to speak. His words were crackling and slowly accented, but now they came in the Chinese tongue. He questioned these men who came to serve him, and they made their replies.

"The man is gone," announced Chon Look. "He will do your bidding, great Kwa."

"My men are prepared, great Kwa," declared Soy Foon. "They are ready to do the bidding of Kwa. I have spoken with them tonight; with Koy Shan, the Mighty; with Chun Shi, the Crafty."

Delight gleamed upon the hideous face of Kwa. The protruding teeth that extended from the puffy, snarling lips were fierce as they champed.

"It is well," stated Kwa. "To you, Chon Look, belongs one duty; to you, Soy Foon, another. Those of the other race" - it was plain that he referred to Americans - "shall come to you, Chon Look. Those of our race" - both listeners bowed, as though accepting Kwa as a Chinese - "shall come to you, Soy Foon."

"Guard well the gates" - Kwa laughed scornfully - "for although Kwa needs no guarding, he is but seldom in his temple. Even now, I, Kwa, shall soon depart."

The Living Joss ceased speaking. His wild, glaring eyes stared at one Celestial; then at the other. Chon Look and Soy Foon stood in apparent awe. While they watched, a puff of smoke came from the incense burners. The steamy cloud cleared. Kwa was gone from his throne.

The atmosphere seemed to absorb these jets; its heavy fragrance had become almost sickening, but the Chinese appeared used to it. Without another word, each man turned. Chon Look left by one entrance; Soy Foon by the other.

BACK in his shrine, Chon Look stood pondering while he awaited the arrival of another crowd of tourists. Chon Look had fared well since he had become a follower of Kwa. Once an obscure merchant in Chinatown, he had mysteriously received funds with which to establish his shrine as one gate to Kwa's hidden temple.

The shrine was hardly more than a fake; nevertheless, Chon Look had not been criticized for opening it. In fact, other Chinese admired his enterprise. American sight-seers were considered open game in parts of Chinatown, and Chon Look, by a tie-up with the bus owners, soon had a going enterprise.

Backed by funds, he was in a position to defy would-be competitors. It was generally believed that Chon Look had been smart enough to turn the earnings from his old shop into this profitable business. Many Chinese would have been surprised had they known the true source of Chon Look's funds.

The artificial Buddhist shrine formed the best possible blind for the hidden temple of Kwa. With a constant stream of sight-seers pouring into it, Chon Look had no need for other revenue. Hence, the police who patrolled the Chinatown zone classed this place as one that needed no watching.

Chon Look knew this. His bland face indicated the fact after his return from Kwa's inner temple. Moreover, he understood Kwa's wisdom in using this shrine as a place for contact with Americans.

The young man who had come here tonight had merely been an odd member of a bus party seeing Chinatown. That same man could come again - and yet again - always in the same capacity!

WHILE Chon Look was quietly engaged in his pretended shrine, Soy Foon was also contemplative. The Chinese merchant was in the rear room of his shop; and there he, too, was considering the power of Kwa.

Soy Foon was conducting a legitimate business. In every way, he did his utmost to keep his shop in proper order, and to make it look like a place of normal trade.

For Soy Foon had a more dangerous work than Chon Look. The front of his shop was the blind. The rear was a rendezvous for certain Chinamen who were of questionable character.

Like Chon Look, Soy Foon stayed within beck and call of Kwa. An electric light upon the wall of Soy Foon's shop served as the signal. When that light glimmered, it meant that Kwa demanded an interview. Such a light, Soy Foon knew, was also placed upon the wall of Chon Look's shrine.

At present, Soy Foon's light was extinguished. That was because Kwa no longer needed him tonight. The inner temple was empty. Kwa had gone. But others were coming - here, to this back room of the shop - and even while Soy Foon waited, a light tapping marked the arrival of those whom he expected.

The merchant opened a rear door. Two yellow-faced men entered the dim light of the little room. Both were dressed in American clothes, and might easily have concealed their Chinese identity by keeping in the semidarkness.

These men formed a remarkable contrast. One was tall, heavy-built, and stalwart - a giant when compared with Chinese of average stature. The other was a short, wiry creature of scarcely more than dwarfish proportions.

The huge man had a flat, expressionless face that bore several wide, reddish scars. These were the marks from tong battles in which he had participated. His latent strength was apparent in his actions.

Soy Foon gazed at him with a pleased grin. This fellow was well fitted to serve Kwa. For the powerful Chinaman was one who could summon other henchmen of his own. He was known as Koy Shan, the Mighty.

Soy Foon's almond eyes turned toward the dwarfish man who accompanied Koy Shan. Here, Soy Foon observed a shrewd, leering face - a countenance that betokened both stealth and swiftness.

The lightness of the little man's body was emphasized by the greater proportions of his arms and legs. He seemed like a yellow spider, ready to crawl upon its prey.

Here, too, was one who would do well for Kwa. This distorted creature was the one whom Soy Foon had termed Chun Shi, the Crafty.

The Chinese merchant faced this pair of ruffians, and began to speak in singsong lingo. His words brought evil smiles to the faces of Koy Shan and Chun Shi.

"Kwa has spoken." Such was the gist of Soy Foon's talk. "He states that the time is here. Each of you must serve. Great work lies before you. When your tasks have been accomplished, you will receive the rewards of Kwa."

The grinning faces leered.

"Where might is needed," continued Soy Foon, "Koy Shan will be the one to serve great Kwa. Where craft is required, Chun Shi will perform the duty. That is all. Each may return at the hour which I have appointed. When Kwa speaks again, one of you will be called upon to act."

The evil-faced Chinamen bowed. They did not repeat the name of Kwa. That privilege belonged only to one like Soy Foon - a favorite who had actually met the Living Joss face to face.

Both Koy Shan and Chun Shi hoped that their reward would be promotion to the inner group - those members of the secret band of followers who were allowed to speak with Kwa himself.

Soy Foon returned the bow. Koy Shan and Chun Shi departed. The merchant was alone. A slow smile appeared upon his bland face. Soy Foon was pleased.

Like Chon Look, the Buddhist, Soy Foon, the merchant, was sure that he was worthy of the confidence given by Kwa.

Important service lay ahead. Kwa had prepared!

Koy Shan and Chun Shi had their orders. Hugo Urvin, too, had his instructions. Kwa was about to strike - where, no one knew.

CHAPTER VII. A CHANCE CALL

WESTLEY HARTNETT was seated in the living room of his apartment. The lawyer was at work upon a report which he had promised to prepare for Barton Schofield. This report concerned the condition of the Huxley Corporation.

Doctor Ward Zelka had spoken wisely when he had remarked to David Moultrie that Hartnett might reconsider his opinion. Here, on this evening, the attorney was studying the possible exigencies that might occur, should Moultrie choose to go ahead with his schemes.

Westley Hartnett had been sincere when he had spoken of Barton Schofield's integrity. The lawyer was a man well suited to the trust which the retired banker had bestowed upon him. Nevertheless, Hartnett was doing exactly what Zelka had predicted. He was balancing integrity against financial interests.

The lawyer continued his methodical work with the papers before him. Suddenly, he smacked his fist upon the documents and seized the telephone. He dialed a number; when the reply came, he asked to speak to Barton Schofield.

The old man's voice came over the wire. Hartnett began with an apology for his call at this late hour. It was only nine o'clock, but that was past Schofield's usual bedtime. When the banker's weary voice had responded to the apology, Hartnett made the statement that was on his mind.

"This Huxley case," he declared. "There'll be money lost if you stay out, Mr. Schofield. I've been worrying about it - worrying a great deal. Nevertheless, I still favor our stand. Shall we make it final?"

The lawyer listened intently. His face glowed as he received commending words from Barton Schofield. When the call was ended, Westley Hartnett arose and stood proudly beside his desk.

He was glad that he had stood by his first decision. Let the crooked manipulator and the stock-holding physician do what they pleased. Westley Hartnett, as Schofield's attorney, could never agree to participate in their shady dealings.

The lawyer admired Barton Schofield. The old banker could easily have acquired a million dollars as his

share of the unearned profits. Moultrie and Zelka would gladly have granted him that amount. But, with integrity involved, Schofield preferred to lose the opportunity for gain.

Moreover, he was willing to sacrifice his present holdings in Huxley shares, should Moultrie, in spirit of vengefulness, knock the bottom out of the stock value.

It was final. The lawyer and his important client saw eye to eye in this important matter. Schofield's support had completely ended all indecision on Hartnett's part. The old man had spoken with a firmness that seemed a momentary flashback to his days of business activity.

THE telephone rang. Hartnett answered it. The call was from the lobby. The doorman announced that a gentleman named Hugo Urvin was calling.

A perplexed frown appeared upon the lawyer's face. He said that the visitor could come up; but after he had hung up the receiver, Hartnett wondered why this young man had come to see him.

When Urvin appeared, the lawyer greeted him with a quizzical expression. Urvin smiled as he extended his hand. He asked if Hartnett could spare the time for a short visit.

Hartnett nodded and waved the visitor to a chair. The lawyer sat down beside the desk, where he had dropped his briefcase over the records that referred to the Huxley Corporation.

"Hope I haven't disturbed you," began Urvin affably. "I called your office this afternoon - but you had gone. I wanted to ask you about some legal matters. You are the one attorney whom I know among my friends."

"We have met," returned Hartnett. "Our meetings, however, can scarcely be termed an acquaintanceship."

"That is true," smiled Urvin. "We have usually seen each other at the Union Club. But the real reason why I chose to call upon you tonight was because of our meeting at the home of Barton Schofield."

"That's right," recalled Hartnett. "I did meet you there."

"At one of Maxine Schofield's parties," reminded Urvin. "She mentioned that you were her grandfather's attorney."

Hartnett recalled the incident. Maxine, twenty-year-old granddaughter of Barton Schofield, entertained frequently. Hartnett, whenever he was there, was introduced to the guests.

"I am going out there tomorrow night," continued Urvin. "Perhaps I may meet you again."

"Possibly," said Hartnett. "I shall probably be there early in the evening. I was talking to Mr. Schofield over the telephone, just before you came in."

"The purpose of my call," declared Urvin, changing the subject, "is in regard to my own affairs. I have just passed through a period of financial difficulty, which is now ended. I have managed to readjust my income to an excellent basis.

"However, I let matters slide very badly. The result is that I am being dunned for certain bills which I have already paid. I have been gathering proof of such payment - canceled checks and letters - but I hardly know how to proceed with my self-styled creditors.

"It occurred to me that you could handle the matter for me. I would like to meet you at your office; and

the whole thing has been worrying me so much that I thought this call would enable me to make an early appointment."

"Hardly tomorrow," mused Hartnett. "The day after, perhaps. Call the office day after tomorrow, Urvin. Will that be soon enough?"

Hugo Urvin became thoughtful. He arose restlessly from his chair and strolled over by the window, where he looked down into the gloom of a courtyard while he stroked his chin. He finally turned to the lawyer and nodded.

"Day after tomorrow," he agreed. "Of course, I could come here late tomorrow night and leave my papers with you. After I come back from Schofield's -"

"I shall be here," returned Hartnett quietly. "In fact, I intend to come directly to this apartment after I leave Mr. Schofield. But I would prefer to have you call at the office the next day."

Hugo Urvin nodded as he heard the finality of the lawyer's tone. Then, changing his worryment to affability, he glanced about the living room.

"Nice diggings you have here," he remarked. "Are you living all alone, Mr. Hartnett?"

"My wife is away," explained the lawyer. "I keep no servants. She will be back within a few days; in the meantime, I go out for my meals. I am merely sleeping here - except for some evening work at the desk."

Urvin shook hands and departed. Hartnett smiled as he sat down at his desk. He was used to troublesome clients like this one. Urvin, with his petty affairs, had seemed more worried than some big business men for whom the lawyer had handled matters of real importance.

An evening call - emphasis on the importance of an appointment - then the result would be some trifling unpaid bills that could be settled by letter with the collection attorneys.

Such cases annoyed Westley Hartnett, especially when someone whom he did not like was concerned. The lawyer had little use for Hugo Urvin, for he knew the fellow to be a spendthrift and an idler.

OUTSIDE, Hugo Urvin was strolling up Broadway, singing to himself. He had done good work tonight. He was sure that Westley Hartnett had not divined the real purpose of his visit. The crux had been when Urvin had gazed from the window.

As he walked along, Urvin was mumbling certain details which he had noticed. Hartnett's window was the fifth in from the southeast corner of the courtyard. It was on the ninth floor. Six windows away, around the turn, was the end of a short hall. Moreover, a narrow ledge protruded a few feet beneath the rows of windows.

Near Forty-seventh and Broadway, Hugo Urvin sighted a Chinatown bus. He approached the barker and paid the man fifty cents. He received his ticket, and found a single seat near the rear of the big car. There, he jotted down what he had noted at Hartnett's. He folded his message into a tiny wad, and inserted it in an envelope smaller than a playing card.

Pulling a newspaper from his pocket, Urvin began to read by the light that came from the illuminated corner. A bustle finally told him that the bus was ready to start. Men were taking down the sign and the Chinese lanterns, to hang them on the next bus that would stop at the corner.

Hugo Urvin smiled. Soon he would be in the Buddhist shrine. There, by the wishing sticks, he would

secretly drop his tiny envelope. Going out, he hoped, he would remove a wrapped gift from solemn-faced Chon Look - a gift meant for Urvin.

Urvin's smile broadened. He could already feel the crinkle of crisp new currency. Tonight's information was exactly what he had been sent to learn. He had every right to expect new funds for his faithfulness to Kwa!

The bus rolled down Broadway. Time seemed long to Hugo Urvin. The patter of the facetious guide, as he pointed out the sights of Manhattan, was boring to this one listener.

At last the bus reached the borders of Chinatown. The passengers alighted and were led toward the glaring lights.

Hugo Urvin, lagging at the rear of the crowd, noted Chinamen standing at the doors of their shops. Chancing to glance along the sidewalk, he noted a peculiar silhouette that lay there. Looking upward, he observed a solemn-faced Chinaman in American clothes, who was standing near the doorway of a little store.

There was something uncanny about the fellow's face. Urvin could not forget the peculiar hawkish countenance. Looking back over his shoulder, he still saw the Chinaman staring straight ahead. The blotch upon the grimy sidewalk seemed to have a sinister, yellowish hue.

Hugo Urvin could not forget the incident, even when the party neared the Buddhist shrine. There was a reason why the young man should be troubled. Hugo Urvin was now the accomplice of a criminal. A tool of crime, he had seen the master whose very presence was a menace to evildoers.

That sinister Chinaman was none other than The Shadow. Here, in Chinatown, the superman had adopted an Oriental disguise. He was seeking clues that would lead him to the lair of Kwa!

Yet in his quest for the Living Joss, The Shadow, master though he was, had engaged with a brain of consummate cunning. Before his very eyes, Hugo Urvin had passed as one of a group of sight-seers.

Well had Kwa planned. Seeking to reach beyond the confines of the Chinese district, he had smuggled in an aid so ingeniously that even The Shadow had not, as yet, detected the artful ruse!

CHAPTER VIII. THE YELLOW FACE

WESTLEY HARTNETT and Barton Schofield were seated on the sun porch of the old banker's home. The strains of music came through the half-opened door that led into the main portion of the house.

"Maxine enjoys these parties that she gives," remarked Hartnett. "Doesn't the noise ever disturb you after you have gone to bed?"

"Seldom," responded Schofield, with his weary tone. "My room is isolated upstairs. I am entirely alone, and the room is almost soundproof."

The mention of the old man's habit of retiring early seemed to have an immediate effect. Barton Schofield arose from his chair, and started weakly toward the door.

"It is after nine o'clock," he said. "I am going to bed. Good night, Hartnett."

The lawyer helped his client through the door. A servant came forward and assisted Barton Schofield in his labored progress toward the staircase. Westley Hartnett strolled into a large room where a dance had just ended.

Maxine Schofield spied the attorney. She came over to greet him with a smile. Claspings Hartnett's hand, she drew him toward a corner where a young man was standing.

"I want you to meet Mr. Vincent," said the girl. "He is a new friend of mine. I met him through Lamont Cranston."

Hartnett raised his eyebrows as he heard these words. Lamont Cranston, globe-trotting millionaire, was a man highly recognized by New York society; and any friend of his would be quickly invited and welcomed to an affair of this sort.

Westley Hartnett shook hands with a clean-cut young chap, and began a conversation. The lawyer usually took little interest in the young men who came to Maxine Schofield's parties, but Harry Vincent impressed him as one of a highly intelligent type.

"You are a friend of Lamont Cranston?" questioned the lawyer.

"Yes," replied the young man. "In fact, we were lunching together at the Ritz when he introduced me to Miss Schofield."

"Quite a character," remarked Hartnett. "Cranston is a most unusual man. He travels everywhere - coming and going as he chooses. In fact, I thought that he was abroad at present. The last I heard, he had set out to hunt elephants in Africa."

"I have known Cranston for a long while," returned Harry. "He has a way of talking about his travels that completely disregards the time element. He told me one story about Tibet that might have happened a month ago, or thirty years ago. He did not specify."

"I have met Cranston at the Cobalt Club," nodded Hartnett. "I have heard him tell of his travels, and have noted the very peculiarity of which you speak."

The two men were strolling away from the large room as they talked. Hartnett, interested in the conversation, did not realize that his companion was urging him to another spot.

Suddenly finding that they had left the range of the dancers, Hartnett suggested that they occupy the sun porch, and enjoy a smoke. Harry agreed.

The middle-aged lawyer and his young friend became involved in various discussions as they puffed at their perfectos in the seclusion of the porch. Time drifted rapidly, and Hartnett continued to enjoy the new companionship.

He wondered why Harry Vincent, a man who seemed practical-minded, had bothered to come to so trivial a function as the party which was now in progress.

Westley Hartnett would have been amazed had he known the answer. Harry Vincent was here for one special purpose. That was to watch Westley Hartnett.

HARRY VINCENT was an agent of that remarkable personage known as The Shadow. He had been introduced to Maxine Schofield, so that he could act as secret protector to either the lawyer or the old banker.

In a sense, Harry's duty was thus a double one, but he had been instructed to concentrate upon Hartnett unless some event should render Schofield more important.

Harry's introduction to Maxine Schofield had been well contrived. The personality of Lamont Cranston,

globe-trotting millionaire, who kept a permanent home in New Jersey, was one which The Shadow himself frequently adopted. Thus, The Shadow, as Cranston, had invited Harry to lunch at the Ritz - where Maxine Schofield always had her noontime meal.

Yet Harry, himself, did not know that it was his mysterious chief who had carried through the actual introduction. He knew that there must be some connection between Cranston and The Shadow, but he had accepted the famous millionaire purely as another confidential agent - not as The Shadow himself.

Tonight, Harry intended to remain at this mansion until Westley Hartnett made his departure. Then he was to follow the lawyer, unless something should command him to remain. The Shadow had placed reliance in Harry Vincent's judgment.

The talk turned to legal matters. Smoothly, Harry gained Hartnett's interest so effectively that the lawyer expressed a desire to meet him frequently. This was important progress for Harry Vincent. It meant that he would be able to keep close watch from now on.

"Stop in and see me," urged Hartnett. "Any time - at the office or the apartment. I'm batching it while my wife is away. There's plenty of room if you want to stay overnight. Frankly" - Hartnett smiled as he puffed his cigar - "it is unusual to meet someone of your intelligence at one of these parties. I am a man with few friends; and I like to further worthwhile acquaintances.

"Now, there" - Hartnett pointed through the door toward a young man who was donning his hat and coat, about to leave - "is one whom I distinctly do not like. He is typical of the idling, worthless class of social parasites."

Hugo Urvin was the one whom the lawyer indicated. Maxine Schofield was saying good night to the parting guest. Turning, the girl observed the pair upon the sun porch.

"I wondered what became of you," exclaimed Maxine. "I don't mind Mr. Hartnett running away, because he doesn't like to dance. But I can't excuse you, Mr. Vincent. Come alone - you will have this dance with me."

Harry nodded to Hartnett and went with the girl to join the other guests. At the end of the dance, he managed to return to the sun porch. As he neared the open door, he noted Hartnett drowsily holding his cigar. Then Harry stopped suddenly.

BEYOND the lawyer, peering through the pane of an unshaded window, was the most hideous face that Harry Vincent had ever seen. Glaring, gloating, with bulging eyes and extended teeth, it was the countenance of a terrible fiend.

A face of evil, it hung there like an insidious menace, a mass of grotesque yellow that seemed too horrible to be a human visage!

Harry Vincent waited, making no move to betray his arrival. While he watched, the face melted away as it withdrew into the outer darkness. Then Harry walked boldly into the sun porch. His appearance aroused Hartnett from his reverie.

"Hello, Vincent," said the lawyer. "I was half asleep. Think I'll have to be running into the city. Finish the cigar first, I guess. Sit down; sit down."

"I'll be back," remarked Harry. "I have a telephone call to make. I'll see you before you leave, Mr. Hartnett."

Harry found the telephone beside an obscure hall closet. He called a number, and a low voice

responded.

"Burbank speaking."

It was the voice of The Shadow's secret contact man. Burbank was always available to active agents such as Harry. Burbank, alone, held direct communication with The Shadow.

"Someone watching Hartnett," informed Harry, as he glanced about to make sure that no listeners were close by. "Yellow face - like a Chinaman - through the sun-porch window."

"Stand by for return call."

Harry hung up the receiver and waited. Several minutes went by. The bell began to ring, and Harry pounced upon the receiver so quickly that he was sure no one else could have heard the call.

"Vincent speaking," he informed.

"Burbank," came the quiet reply. "Hold Hartnett. Watch for the yellow face. Trace it if possible."

Harry hung up. He knew what this meant. The Shadow would be here with all possible speed. By keeping Hartnett for a while, all would be well.

But when Harry reached the sun porch, he found that the lawyer was no longer there. During the interim of Harry's absence, Hartnett had evidently decided to start into the city.

HURRYING past the dance room, Harry reached the front door and stepped out onto a veranda. There was a long walk to a curving drive; at the end, Harry saw a coupe just about to pull away.

Hartnett's car!

Orders were to hold Hartnett; that could not be done now. The only course was to follow the lawyer into the city.

Harry's own coupe was out in the same drive. But as the young man watched the moving vehicle, his eyes suddenly noticed a bush that was just within the glare of Hartnett's headlights.

Crouched behind the clump of shrubbery, discernible by Harry, but concealed from Hartnett's view, was a grotesque figure that was watching the departure of the lawyer. As the rays of light revealed the ugly shape, Harry saw the same face that he had observed at the sun-porch window.

A gruesome, yellow countenance was directing its fiendish gaze toward the moving car. Slowly rising, the gloating figure turned its head to stare at the driver of the coupe.

The car shot ahead; the lights were gone; but in a dull glow that stretched from the illuminated windows of Barton Schofield's mansion, Harry could still see the outline of the insidious creature.

Silently, Harry watched. This was a dilemma. He had two duties now; to watch Hartnett; to spy upon this nocturnal visitor. Had he not seen the huddled figure, Harry would have traveled in the lawyer's wake. Now, with what appeared to be an insidious enemy still in view, Harry decided to remain. He must be here to guide The Shadow. Westley Hartnett? Harry Vincent felt qualms; then decided that the lawyer would surely be safe. Hartnett had gone; but the menacing creature had not. Danger, Harry felt, was here.

He thought of Barton Schofield, and kept close vigil on the bush where the figure still crouched. If the creature started toward the house, a warning might prove necessary. Minutes passed while Harry

watched. Fifteen; twenty.

Straining his eyes, Harry suddenly detected that the monster was in motion. The figure became a long shape that sprang in apelike fashion as it left the bush. Bounding across the lawn, skirting the side of the house, it disappeared in blackness.

Was this the time for action? Harry hesitated. He waited a few minutes more, hoping that the creature might reappear. Then, in alarm, he turned to enter the house. Something gripped his arm; Harry repressed a startled gasp as he turned to face two glowing eyes that shone from the darkness which enshrouded this veranda.

The Shadow!

SELDOM did Harry meet his mysterious master. This incident was a flashback to the night when Harry had entered The Shadow's service. Then, a black figure had emerged from darkness to grip Harry just as the young man was about to take a suicidal leap from a bridge.

A deluge of memories swept through Harry's excited mind; they ended when he heard a single word uttered - a command which came in the sinister whisper of The Shadow.

"Report!"

In a hushed tone, Harry quickly told what he had seen. The Shadow answered in another single word:

"Remain!"

With that, the black-garbed phantom was gone. So swift and silent was the departure, that Harry could not imagine what direction The Shadow had taken.

It was several minutes before Harry Vincent again felt the firm grasp upon his arm. This time, without turning, he heard the whispered instructions of The Shadow.

"Your hat. Your coat. Drive your car to the lane beyond the lawn. Park without lights, beneath a tree."

Again, the figure of The Shadow faded away. Harry went back into the house, obtained his hat and coat, and told the servant to inform Miss Schofield that he had been forced to leave to keep an unexpected appointment.

He hurried to his coupe, and drove to the appointed spot. Hardly had he parked his car and extinguished the lights before the door of the coupe had opened, and a firm hand was drawing him from the car.

Reaching the fringe of the lawn, Harry heard the voice of The Shadow close beside his ear. The master of darkness was pointing out a special window that showed plainly against the gray stone of the house - a blackened spot that Harry quickly distinguished.

"Barton Schofield's room," carried The Shadow's uncanny whisper. "I was there. All is well at present. The window is the only way of entrance. The door beyond is locked. Keep watch for any intruder. Act if necessary."

The words ended almost in a tone of mockery. Strange, whispered echoes remained in Harry's ear. Before the sibilant sounds had faded, The Shadow was gone.

A car pulled away from a spot farther up the lane. Harry knew the meaning. The Shadow had departed on some mission. Perhaps he was going to cover Westley Hartnett while Harry remained on guard here.

Minutes went by; still Harry watched. No sign occurred. Between the time when Harry had last seen it, and the moment when The Shadow had arrived, that evil creature with the yellow face had made a quick and untraceable departure.

The Shadow, now, was gone. Harry Vincent remained upon his lonely vigil.

Yellow face! What menace did it carry? Was it the countenance of some superfiend that threatened the lives of helpless men?

Harry sensed that the demonish being might still be here, ready to attack a weary old man, asleep in an upstairs room of the mansion.

He, Harry Vincent, was the only person who could protect Barton Schofield from the threat, should it appear again. That window would be easily accessible to the springing, apish figure that Harry had seen upon the lawn.

Keyed to the importance of his duty, Harry Vincent waited, his hand upon the cold steel of an automatic which rested in the pocket of his overcoat.

One car had driven from the drive, just after the departure of The Shadow. Another left; other guests departed a few minutes later. Harry Vincent remained on watch.

CHAPTER IX. AT THE UNION CLUB

WHILE strange episodes were taking place at Barton Schofield's mansion, Hugo Urvin had reached the Union Club in Manhattan. The young man felt a keen satisfaction as he entered the portals of this exclusive meeting place.

His second visit to Chinatown had been made last night. There, in the Buddhist shrine, he had delivered his envelope. In return, he had received a wrapped gift from Chon Look.

The package had contained five bank notes wrapped around a souvenir tray made of brass. This time, however, the bills were of double value - one hundred dollars each. Between the peeled sheets of the wrapping paper, Urvin had discovered another message.

More money! That seemed to be the promise. For tonight, Urvin had another mission to perform in the service of Kwa. He had left Schofield's early in the evening, in order to reach the Union Club in time.

Strolling through the lounge room, Urvin spied the man whom he sought. This was Blaine Goodall, president of the Huxley Corporation. The Union Club was the place where Goodall could most frequently be found. He lived at the club, and seldom left it except to go to his office.

Affecting a prosperous air, Urvin sat down beside Goodall and began a friendly conversation. The corporation president seemed rather annoyed; nevertheless, he joined in the chat.

Urvin, seeking to emphasize the fact that he was now well supplied with funds, began to question Goodall regarding the advantages of living at the Union Club.

"I like it here," declared Goodall. "You would probably find it an excellent place to live."

"Which floor are you on?" questioned Urvin, in a casual tone.

"The fifth," asserted Goodall. "Room 550. I have never changed it since I came here. In fact, tonight will be the first time that I have been away in six months."

"Tonight?" echoed Urvin. "You are going out of town?"

"Yes," declared Goodall. "I expect to leave at midnight. I am driving down to Trenton."

"Rather late," remarked Urvin.

"I am waiting for a friend," returned Goodall. "Conrad Beecham is going with me. He cannot get here until midnight. If he were not going along, I would start now."

"Trenton," observed Urvin. "You take the Lincoln Highway, as usual, I suppose?"

"No," answered Goodall, "I prefer to cut across country. There is less traffic."

Goodall pulled an envelope from his pocket. He traced a route upon it, then tossed the envelope toward a wastebasket. The piece of paper fluttered and fell short, dropping between the chair and the basket.

"See you later, Goodall," remarked Urvin, rising. "Thanks for the information about the rooms."

AFTER strolling through the lobby, Urvin quickened his pace when he reached the outer door. He glanced at his watch. It was half past ten. The young man was tempted to take a taxicab as he neared Forty-seventh and Broadway, until he noticed that a late Chinatown bus was just about to pull out. Hurrying forward, Urvin paid the driver a half dollar, and took the last vacant seat.

Drawing a folded sheet of paper from his pocket, he began to make meaningless marks in pencil, while he observed the man beside whom he was sitting. Noting that the sight-seer was interested in the bus-driver's palaver, Urvin quickly wrote down a short report of his conversation with Blaine Goodall. Pocketing the note, he folded it while it was out of sight, and thrust it into a tiny envelope that was loose in his pocket.

It required nearly half an hour for the bus to reach its destination. The guide started the crowd through the streets of Chinatown. Before they reached the principal corner of Mott and Pell, the man conducted his charges down the alleyway that led to the Buddhist shrine.

Chon Look saw Hugo Urvin. After the Chinaman had finished his explanation of the wishing sticks, he observed the American picked them up for examination. He also saw the envelope that Urvin laid beside them.

Briefly terminating his talk, Chon Look conducted the visitors to the door and made a sign to the girls to bring forward gift packages. One of these was given to Hugo Urvin, along with the others.

"Important," mumbled Urvin, as he took the package from the Buddhist. "Work quickly."

Chon Look made no response, but Urvin knew that the Chinaman had heard.

The moment that the room was clear, Chon Look hurried over to the wishing sticks, picked up the envelope, and opened the secret passage. He reached the temple, and struck the soundless gong.

The incense burners puffed. The figure of Kwa appeared upon its taboret. Chon Look extended the envelope. Kwa tore it open with his clawing nails, and read the message. A gloating chuckle crackled from his evil lips. He pressed the side of the taboret.

A minute later, a panel opened, and Soy Foon entered. Kwa had signaled for this henchman. The Living Joss handed the note to Soy Foon, and uttered words in Chinese. The merchant bowed.

Before the gesture was ended, the incense burners delivered another terrific puff. Kwa disappeared.

Chon Look and Soy Foon turned. Each left by his own passage. Chon Look returned to idle in the shrine, but Soy Foon hastened away with definite purpose.

Reaching his back room, he uttered a shrill cry. A Chinese boy appeared. Soy Foon spoke to him in English, which seemed to be the language which this American-born child understood.

"Go to find Koy Shan," ordered Soy Foon.

The boy nodded and left.

FIVE minutes later, a rap on the door announced the arrival of the visitor. Soy Foon admitted the huge Chinaman.

"You are ready, Koy Shan?" questioned Soy Foon.

"As ready as was Chun Shi," returned the big man.

"Chun Shi has departed," declared Soy Foon, with a slow smile. "It is your turn, now, to do the same."

The merchant drew closer to the huge underling, and began to babble in a singsong monotone. A gleam of understanding glistened on the scarred countenance of Koy Shan, the Mighty.

A secret cabal in the heart of Chinatown; orders from Kwa, through his henchman, Soy Foon. This, indeed, was a sinister scene, but it was more than matched by another that occurred not far away from this spot.

In the front of a blackened building on an obscure Chinatown alley, a small grating moved upward from the sidewalk. The head and shoulders of a man were thrust cautiously into view. The body followed. A figure, muffled in an overcoat and hat, stretched upward and moved hastily along the alley, the grating sliding downward as the person left.

Keeping to alleys only, the moving man managed to avoid the light except at the first crossing. There, unseen by anyone, an evil face glowed yellow. It was the same countenance that Harry Vincent had seen on Barton Schofield's lawn. It was also the face of Kwa!

The evil visage was undergoing a change. Its fiendishness was lessening; but as it gained a more human appearance, the moving man entered another darkened alley. His rapid course led him to the street outside of Chinatown, where the huge structure of the elevated rumbled with the passing of a train overhead.

The figure was moving less swiftly as it entered a poorly lighted store that fronted on the street. The man who had been Kwa went into a dim corner where a telephone box was located on the wall. His face unseen by the store-keeper, the man dropped a coin and lifted the receiver.

The finger that dialed a number was less clawlike than before. It had lost its peculiar identity. The voice had undergone a change also. When this man spoke, his tone was disguised, but it no longer carried the familiar crackle.

Transformed to another person, this man who had been Kwa no longer bore any resemblance to the so-called Living Joss. His back - alone visible within the store - gave him the appearance of a chance New Yorker who had chosen this place at random in order to telephone.

Kwa was no longer Kwa. The demon was nonexistent. In his place was a quiet-speaking man whose low, convincing tones carried without accent into the mouthpiece of the telephone.

Yet in his present guise, Kwa was still a menace. The transformed Living Joss was paving the way for insidious crime.

CHAPTER X. THE CRAFT OF CHUN SHI

WESTLEY HARTNETT'S apartment was a long way uptown. Despite the fact that the lawyer had traveled rapidly in his car, it was nearly midnight when he reached his destination. Had he been riding to a locality in lower Manhattan - Chinatown for instance - he would have been there long before.

Westley Hartnett felt that he had made swift progress coming home. Another car, however, had followed at a much more rapid pace. The Shadow, sensing a menace to the lawyer, had taken up a speedy chase after he had left Harry Vincent. As Hartnett was entering the lobby of his apartment building, a trim coupe was swinging up the avenue less than a dozen blocks away.

Trivial incidents sometimes have important bearing on what is to follow. The elevator door was closing when Westley Hartnett approached. The operator just managed to glimpse the arriving lawyer. He reopened the door.

At the same time, back on the avenue, a taxicab from a cross street collided with a sedan, and traffic was automatically blocked. The driver of a coupe was forced to wait while the cars ahead of him moved into single file to pass the unexpected barricade.

Thus, Westley Hartnett experienced no delay whatever in going up to his apartment, whereas the person who was following his course lost precious minutes in his effort to overtake the lawyer.

Reaching his apartment, Hartnett promptly unlocked the door, and turned on a light in the entry. Had he paused here to remove his hat and coat, he would again have had a chance of thwarting impending doom. But tonight, contrary to his usual procedure, Hartnett walked directly into the large room, and turned on a floor lamp.

The lawyer happened to pick the lamp that was nearest to the window. Deciding that the room was stuffy, he raised the sash. Perhaps the fact that he had not yet doffed his overcoat was the cause for his decision that the room was too hot. Whatever the case might have been, Hartnett was unwittingly making a play into hands that lost no chance for prompt action.

As the lawyer turned from the window, a strange creature sprang in from the outer darkness. Like a human spider, it threw its long arms and legs about the attorney's body. Westley Hartnett uttered a choking gasp as he wrested forward, trying to shake this insidious clutch from his frame.

The creature twisted itself about the intended victim. Hartnett found himself staring into the eyes of an evil-faced yellow man - the spidery Chinaman known as Chun Shi, the Crafty. This minion of Kwa had been waiting on the outer ledge for the lawyer's return.

Throttling hands caught at Westley Hartnett's throat. Before the attorney could break the hold away, Chun Shi had added new twists. Like the curling tentacles of an octopus, the long limbs of the crafty slayer were encircling their prey.

With choking power, the Chinaman prevented Hartnett from making any outcry; yet he allowed the lawyer to stagger about the room. Therein lay Chun Shi's cunning; and Hartnett performed a fatal error. Had he struggled against the hands alone, he would have delayed his death, for Chun Shi would have required considerable time to strangle him.

IRONICALLY, a rescuer was nearing this very spot, and headwork by Hartnett would have meant

salvation. But the lawyer staggered about at random, and brought himself into the exact position that Chun Shi required.

Near the table, with Hartnett leaning backward, Chun Shi's distorted body seemed to spring upward, and the change of weight caused the lawyer to lose his balance. As Westley Hartnett toppled backward, the Chinaman emitted a fiendish croak and drove his right palm squarely into the lawyer's face.

The back of Hartnett's head smashed against the corner of the heavy desk, driven there with the crushing blow of a pile driver. The body collapsed limply and crumpled to the floor.

Chun Shi vaulted away with the ease of an acrobat. His long-limbed frame hovered above the lawyer's form. Beady, almond eyes saw that Hartnett's doom was sealed.

With a quick stride, Chun Shi gained the window. He slipped his feet to the ledge below, and scrambled in crablike fashion along the side of the building. He was like a yellow spider as he fled from window to window, always keeping below the level of the sills.

Within half a minute after he had sprung away from Westley Hartnett's body, Chun Shi had gained the window that led to the side hall. That marked his final departure from the neighborhood of death.

There was no motion in Westley Hartnett's body. It lay unbreathing upon the floor beside the desk. Slow, tedious minutes passed. Something clicked in the lock of the apartment door.

The portal opened, and a black shape came into view. The Shadow moved swiftly to the large room. A strange, spectral figure in the room illuminated by a single lamp, the master of darkness viewed the workmanship of Chun Shi.

Westley Hartnett was dead. Fate had conspired tonight. From the moment when Harry Vincent had missed the lawyer in the sun porch, all events had favored the evil schemes of murderers.

The insidious figure that Harry had seen on the streaky lawn had commanded The Shadow's investigation. The swift race of The Shadow had been intended to prevent that creature from overtaking Hartnett. Instead, a lesser fiend had been awaiting the lawyer's return to his apartment.

Despite that, The Shadow could have made the rescue but for freakish factors. Westley Hartnett's prompt arrival home; The Shadow's unforeseen delay on the avenue; the crafty strategy of Chun Shi!

Westley Hartnett was dead. His slayer was gone, leaving no clew to his identity. Yet The Shadow, as he viewed the lawyer's body with his searching eyes, knew well that death had struck but a few minutes before; and that there was but one avenue by which the slayer could have departed.

GAZING from the window, the keen-eyed investigator noted the ledge that ran beneath the line of windows. The Shadow knew that some swift-moving creature must have effected a rapid escape; that pursuit would not serve to overtake him.

A low, whispered laugh sounded in the dim room. It was a sibilant mockery of keen determination, The Shadow's sinister cry of vengeance. Evil had triumphed here tonight. Whoever the unknown slayer might be, he would most certainly never succeed in taking another life!

The Shadow was reviewing words that he had heard spoken only a few nights ago - the cold analysis which Doctor Ward Zelka had made in Brindle's restaurant. Westley Hartnett was one who blocked a crooked scheme. His elimination would further anyone who might plan for ill-gained wealth.

The Shadow's thoughts went further. They were no longer concerned with the affairs of Westley

Hartnett. The lawyer could not be restored to life. Another must be considered; one who was still alive.

Blaine Goodall! After Westley Hartnett, the president of the Huxley Corporation would prove a stumbling-block. Doom was due to strike again. How soon?

When crime was scheduled, The Shadow regarded it as an immediate menace. The master of detection never wasted time when fate had decreed that nothing more could be done.

Blaine Goodall, living, would need protection. Westley Hartnett, dead, required none.

The whispered laugh rebounded. Its echoes came back weirdly from the walls. When the last of those solemn sounds had ceased, the single-lighted room was occupied only by Westley Hartnett's body.

The Shadow was gone. The successful craft of Chun Shi was but the first step in murderous crime. When the next stroke fell, The Shadow would there to fight it!

CHAPTER XI. THE SHADOW MOVES

A TALL, keen-visaged man entered the portal of the Union Club shortly after midnight - less than half an hour following the unfortunate death of Westley Hartnett. The door-man of the club bowed as he recognized the arrival.

Lamont Cranston was not a member of the Union Club, but he held a guest card there, and his appearance pleased the doorman.

It was not often that this prominent millionaire visited the place. Members had urged him to join the organization; the door-man, proud of the club's prestige, had learned of this effort. He was quite obsequious when he spoke to Lamont Cranston by name.

The firm-faced millionaire nodded pleasantly and strolled through the lobby. His gaze turned toward the lounge room. His ears caught the sound of a protesting voice. Cranston stopped to watch a heated discussion between a fat-faced gentleman and an attendant.

"I tell you that Mr. Goodall must be here," argued the fat-faced club member. "He promised to wait for me - to wait until twelve o'clock -"

"I know that, Mr. Beecham," interposed the attendant. "But when I received your telephone message -"

"I didn't phone here!" blurted Beecham.

"I understand, sir," said the attendant. "Let me tell you exactly what occurred. I answered the telephone, and was told that the call was from you. I was instructed to tell Mr. Goodall that you could not join him on his trip to Trenton. I did so; Mr. Goodall left."

"Who called you?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Preposterous!" puffed Conrad Beecham. "I never told anyone to call here. Where was Mr. Goodall when you saw him last?"

"He was sitting right here, sir" - the attendant indicated a large chair - "and he seemed rather annoyed when I informed him you were not coming -"

"I never said that I would not join him!" snorted Beecham. "This is an outrage! I am going up to Goodall's

room. It will be fortunate for you if he is there. This may mean your dismissal, my man!"

The attendant shrugged his shoulders as Beecham stormed from the lounge room. He followed in the fat fellow's wake.

Lamont Cranston, a silent witness of the scene, slowly puffed upon a cigarette and strolled over toward the spot where the attendant had said that Blaine Goodall had been seated.

A TRIP to Trenton.

To a keen sleuth, this would have been regarded as a perfect clue. A broad highway led from New York to Trenton. By following that route, one could overtake a man who was traveling at normal speed. Yet The Shadow, even when he had learned that Blaine Goodall had departed, displayed no hasty response.

In the calm guise of Lamont Cranston, this supersleuth quietly surveyed the chair which Goodall had recently occupied.

A full minute passed - a minute which a smart detective might have considered as wasted time. But at the end of that minute, keen eyes had found a mark.

Protruding from beneath the edge of the chair was the corner of a white piece of paper. Still puffing his cigarette, Lamont Cranston seated himself in Blaine Goodall's chair, and with the same action, his hand plucked an envelope from the floor.

The eyes of The Shadow saw the rough sketch which Blaine Goodall had made for Hugo Urvin. The hand of The Shadow crumpled the envelope in a ball, and tossed it into the wastebasket - the target which Goodall had missed. The Shadow had scored an important point against the enemy. His deliberate actions had enabled him to avoid a useless step.

Where any other would have followed the direct route to the New Jersey capital, The Shadow was ready now to take the roundabout route for which Blaine Goodall had expressed a preference.

Still deliberate, this being who masked himself in the guise of Lamont Cranston arose and strolled to the lobby. He entered a telephone booth and called a New Jersey number. A voice answered; it was that of Richards, Lamont Cranston's valet.

"This is Mr. Cranston," said The Shadow, in the calm tone of the millionaire. "Tell Stanley that I intend to use the speedster tonight. Have him bring it immediately to the New Jersey side of the Holland Tunnel. He will wait for me there."

His call completed, The Shadow left the Union Club. The doorman gave Lamont Cranston a salute as he passed. A smile flickered upon thin lips beneath a hawkish nose.

Lamont Cranston! The name commanded great respect. Only The Shadow knew that the real Lamont Cranston was still hunting his elephants in the wilds of Nigeria!

Reaching a coupe, the actions of The Shadow became more swift. The trim car headed rapidly downtown. In quick time, it reached the Holland Tunnel, and sped through the tube beneath the Hudson River. A swift car, this one; yet not swift enough to overtake a man with the start that Blaine Goodall had gained.

AT the Jersey side of the tunnel, the coupe stopped. As Lamont Cranston, The Shadow emerged and approached a long-hooded roadster that was waiting there. A uniformed chauffeur tipped his hat.

"Hello, Stanley," came the easy tones of Cranston. "Take the coupe home. I am going for a spin."

The chauffeur nodded. He noted that his employer was carrying a briefcase. Lamont Cranston had one frequently.

Stanley would have been surprised had he known the contents of that bag. Within the darkness of the parked speedster, the personage who was the perfect double of the millionaire opened the briefcase and removed a bundle of dark material.

As the car moved forward, the driver seemed to disappear beneath the folds of a black cloak. A broad-brimmed slouch hat crowned his head. Black gloves were upon his hands.

The Shadow was The Shadow!

The huge speedster - a car with wheel base greater than that of a large limousine - moved rapidly along the Lincoln Highway. It was gaining, no doubt, upon Blaine Goodall; but its speed, at present, was no greater than that which the coupe could have made.

Then came the turning point. Following the odd route which Blaine Goodall had chosen for his trip to Trenton, the huge car swung off the traffic-ridden highway.

Miles behind? What were miles to this powerful foreign car? What were miles when The Shadow was at the steering wheel?

A long, clear stretch of road lay far ahead. Not a car in sight at this late hour. The motor purred softly at seventy miles an hour. It began to thrum at ninety. Then its noise became a roar.

The speedometer moved upward to one hundred and ten. It wavered there, occasionally tending toward a higher point than that terrific speed. At whirlwind pace, the huge speedster held the road, scarcely slackening at long, sweeping curves.

The hand of The Shadow was at the wheel. The master who battled crime was on the trail of Blaine Goodall, gaining one mile out of every two!

If danger lay in the path of an innocent man tonight, The Shadow would be there when the menace arrived!

CHAPTER XII. THE MIGHT OF KOY SHAN

OUT upon a lonely New Jersey road, not far from the town of Hopewell, Blaine Goodall was following a well-paved path to Trenton. The road which the corporation president had taken was excellent, despite its moderate width.

A light drizzle was beginning. The road was slippery, and Goodall dropped the gait of his sedan to forty-five miles an hour. Up to now, the man had been traveling between fifty and fifty-five.

Blaine Goodall was grumbling to himself. He could not understand why his friend Beecham had changed his mind about this trip to Trenton. Goodall had been angry ever since he had received the telephone message at the Union Club.

Because of the message from Beecham, Goodall was now riding alone. Had his friend been thoughtful enough to have informed him earlier, he would have been able to start at eight o'clock, and would now be enjoying a comfortable bed in a Trenton hotel.

The drizzle, foggy in parts, had made driving uncomfortable. Goodall could not understand the lack of consideration which Beecham had displayed.

Little did Goodall suppose that his chance conversation with Hugo Urvin had been the real cause of the present state of affairs! A chain of remarkable events had occurred immediately after that talk, and at this very moment, Goodall was riding into unexpected difficulties.

One driving hazard that annoyed Blaine Goodall was the frequency of crossing signs. Every time that he slowed the coupe in response to a shining warning, the driver discovered that the crossroad was nothing more than a third-class highway. Nevertheless, Goodall instinctively obeyed each caution as he approached it.

He was on a long, curving stretch of deserted roadway. Somewhere, in the distance, the whirling beacon of an airway marker played elusively across the horizon. Those flashes of light were always the same space away. Goodall decided that the road must be circling the beacon.

Something thrummed from far behind. The sound increased to a distant roar.

An airplane? It sounded more like a powerful motor that was following along the road, yet the swiftness of its approach convinced Goodall that it must be an air rider rather than an automobile, for the sound was gaining constantly.

A curve. Another crossing sign. Goodall applied the brakes and grunted as he rolled across a dirt-road intersection. He pressed the accelerator as he rose over a sloping bridge. Then, in the midst of this barren stretch, events began to happen.

THE roar behind became a terrific sound as a high-powered follower swept past the bend which Goodall had just taken. Powerful headlights glimmered in the mirror in front of Goodall's face.

Something else loomed ahead - across the highway, Goodall saw a touring car. The vehicle was parked at a slight angle, heading the same way that he was driving; but Goodall realized that if he kept on, a crash could not be avoided.

Powerful lights, accompanied by a terrific roar. That was the sign from the rear. A black, rakish automobile, like a pirate ship of the road, barring the way ahead. This sight was the real menace that startled Blaine Goodall.

The man applied the brakes with more than usual pressure.

Goodall's coupe began to skid. Still sticking to the brakes, Goodall controlled it to some degree as it swung sidewise in the road. In the midst of this dizzy whirl that was bringing him close to the touring car, Goodall was overtaken by a huge speedster that took to the side to avoid him.

Under the control of a driver who possessed amazing skill, the passing car began to slow its pace to avoid two crashes - the first with Goodall; the second with the touring car ahead.

His own car stopping, its nose turned back along the road which he had taken here, Goodall thrust his head through the opened window. He could see the touring car that blocked the way. Goodall gave a cry of fright. The glare of the stopping speedster's headlights revealed armed men in the touring car! Threatening revolvers pointed.

Even as he watched, the corporation president saw a flash of flame. A bullet whistled by the open window of Goodall's coupe.

Bandits of the road! They were opening fire. Their first shots were wide; but Goodall, helpless at the wheel of the sedan, would soon have been an easy target. Strange, yellow faces were behind those guns.

Terror gripped Blaine Goodall. Death lay before him - death which would have occurred within a minute, but for unexpected aid.

It was the driver of the huge speedster who intervened. With a swing of the steering wheel, the handler of that great car swept his motored Jagannath directly between the doomed car and the touring car that threatened it.

Startled yellow faces were no longer visible as the headlights of the speedster turned; but when an automatic roared its message from the helm of the arriving car, the fiends ahead realized that they had met their match. The Shadow had reached the end of his trail. He had arrived just in time to offset the ambush arranged for Blaine Goodall. Hurling his swift speedster to the gap between coupe and touring car, he was opening fire upon the murderous ruffians who blocked the highway!

The cannonade of the automatic was silencing in its power. Before it, the revolvers of the would-be assassins were no more than playthings. Metal messengers pronounced the power of The Shadow.

Each bark of the master's .45 found a living target. A mocking laugh pealed forth as The Shadow delivered his close-ranged broadside. Chinese mobsters crumpled. Each trigger finger faltered. Wild, hopeless shots were futile in response.

The driver of the touring car had alone escaped The Shadow's wrath. While the being in the speedster directed his shots toward the armed men whom he faced, the Chinaman who controlled the blocking touring car jammed his vehicle into low gear. With a wide swing that nearly wrecked it against a fence beside the road, the blocking automobile shot away and down the highway, fleeing from the power of The Shadow. The driver, alone, remained unwounded.

AGAIN, the laugh of The Shadow came as an uncanny cry through the drizzling haze that surrounded the lonely spot. His automatic emptied, The Shadow had another weapon in readiness. He had saved Blaine Goodall's life; he was prepared for further foemen.

Yet The Shadow's able work was destined to fail; not through the ability of the enemy, but because of a sudden lack of judgment which Blaine Goodall displayed at this moment of salvation.

The skid of his car had pointed Goodall back along the road. Despite the fact that the rescuer in the speedster was certainly a friend, Goodall took to frenzied flight. Before The Shadow could stop him, the frightened man shoved his car into low, and changed gears as he headed back toward the obscure crossroad on the other side of the bridge.

The Shadow responded as quickly as was possible. He made no effort to pursue his vanquished foemen; instead, he manipulated the speedster so that he could follow the same course that Goodall was now taking. The long, powerful car, however, required more time to turn than had the skidded coupe.

Just as The Shadow managed to gain the course, Blaine Goodall reached the approach of the bridge. The hunted man shouted aloud in new terror. A second touring car - almost identical with the first - had come out from the dirt road, and was parked across the highway to block retreat!

In the glare of his focused headlights, Goodall could see yellow faces as fierce as those which he had just escaped. A shot blazed in his direction.

It missed the coupe, but fear did the work. With a wild cry, Goodall pressed his foot against the brake of

the coupe. Again the car skidded. The scared driver lost control completely.

The coupe crashed into the rail of the bridge, broke through, and plunged headlong into a deep ravine.

The roar of The Shadow's speedster drowned the long, wailing cry that Goodall uttered. With powerful vengeance, The Shadow was speeding to the new attack. The foreign car had a right-hand drive. With his left hand upon the wheel, The Shadow leaned from the right of the car, and let his right hand loose its steel.

The muzzle of the big automatic sent its deadly projectiles into the midst of the enemy. Flashing revolvers tried to meet the fusillade. They failed. Yellow-faced men sprawled upon the seats of the second touring car. The driver responded by shooting the automobile straight down the dirt road that lay ahead.

His action was none too soon. The heavy speedster was bearing down upon the car that held the bewildered Chinese gunmen. The yellow-peopled automobile sped away just in time to avoid a devastating crash.

THE speedster came to a grinding stop. Far down the dirt road, the fleeing raiders were driving for safety. A figure emerged from behind the wheel of the big speedster. The Shadow moved through darkness toward the bridge.

A flashlight glimmered through the broken rail. It showed the shattered bulk of Blaine Goodall's coupe. Amid the misty drizzle, The Shadow lowered himself from the side of the bridge, and dropped to the craggy side of the ravine. He reached the smashed car.

The flashlight revealed a battered, dying form. Blaine Goodall, in a mad effort to escape death, had opened the door of the failing coupe.

The action had been an untimely one. Caught beneath the rolling body of the car, Goodall had met his doom. As the flashlight flickered on the terror-stricken face, the president of the Huxley Corporation breathed his final gasp.

The Shadow stood in silence. Again, fate had contrived against his surpassing skill. He had arrived in time to shoot down one squad of blocking enemies. He had turned and driven back to deliver death to another corps of skulking assassins. But in the midst of conflict, the man whom he had come to save had hurtled to his own destruction.

The might of Koy Shan had gained its evil purpose. Blaine Goodall was dead.

Long minutes followed The Shadow's sad discovery; then a figure clambered into the speedster, and the powerful motor roared as it started along the road that led back to New York.

The Shadow had performed mighty deeds tonight. Here, on a lonely road in New Jersey, he had acted with sufficient power to thwart an evil killing. Blaine Goodall had died through his own frightened efforts to escape while protected by The Shadow. The slippery road, too, had been a factor in the man's death.

The craft of Chun Shi; that, The Shadow had been too late to thwart. The might of Koy Shan; with it, The Shadow had deserved success. Yet this second minion of Kwa had gained his objective, although doom had come to the majority of his evil underlings.

The Shadow had another score to settle. Koy Shan belonged with Chun Shi. Like the crafty one, the mighty killer had gained his end. But never again would Koy Shan slay. Death would strike him before he had the new opportunity.

The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XIII. THE SHADOW'S CLEWS

THE next day's newspapers contained accounts of two murders. Westley Hartnett, prominent attorney, had been found slain in the living room of his apartment. Blaine Goodall, corporation president, had been killed while traveling along a lonely New Jersey road.

The difference in the circumstances surrounding these deaths was so apparent that no connection was made between them. Westley Hartnett had unquestionably been the victim of a fiendish killer. His case was one for the New York police.

Blaine Goodall, on the contrary, seemed to have been the victim of an unfortunate coincidence. Evidence in the form of tire tracks and dropped revolvers pointed to a gang fight between two mobs of gunmen. Goodall, apparently, had been caught in between. Seeking escape, he had crashed through the side of a bridge. His case was one for the New Jersey State police.

Thus Joe Cardona, ace detective on the New York force, was concerned with Hartnett's death alone. The star sleuth required very little time to check up on the lawyer's actions after he had reached his apartment.

Hartnett had spent the evening at Barton Schofield's. Cardona corroborated that fact by telephone. He had arrived home shortly before midnight. Some time between then and morning - his body was discovered at eight o'clock, by the woman who came to clean the apartment - a slayer had entered to take the lawyer's life.

When had the murder occurred? That fact was quickly ascertained. Medical inspectors affirmed that Hartnett must have been dead for nearly eight hours before his body was discovered. The fact that the lawyer was wearing his overcoat proved that he must have been slain shortly after he entered the apartment.

The murderer? On that point, Cardona could find no clew. His search of the apartment showed him nothing. The killer's mode of entry and exit could have been by door or window. It looked like the work of a maniac.

But while Cardona pondered, with threads of evidence lacking, another in New York was engaged in more effective investigation. The Shadow, a peerless sleuth, had access to facts which would have amazed Detective Joe Cardona.

A BLUISH light was glimmering in the corner of a room which was pitch-dark save for that one illuminated spot. Beneath the focused rays of the shaded lamp, long white hands were at work upon a polished table.

From the third finger of the left hand glowed a mysterious gem which possessed a myriad of ever-changing hues. Its colorful depths - which fluctuated from crimson to azure, with all the shades between - flashed elusive sparks upward toward the light.

This stone was The Shadow's girasol. A fire opal of priceless beauty, it served as the master's lone talisman. Like The Shadow himself, the gem was a token of mystery and hidden power.

The right hand of The Shadow began to inscribe cryptic notations upon a sheet of paper. Moving like a detached thing of life, that hand set down important facts, beginning with the preliminary factors that had led to the sudden outburst of murderous crime.

Kwa.

As the hand wrote that name, hidden lips pronounced the single syllable in a mysterious whisper.

"Kwa."

Since his return to Chinatown, intrigue had begun and crime had followed.

The Shadow had foreseen such events. Well did the master of darkness know the latent power that could be stirred to action within the confines of New York's Chinatown. Seeking the root of evil, The Shadow had invaded the Chinese quarter to search for the Living Joss. While he had pursued that course, Kwa, still hidden, had stretched forth his hands of evil.

Strange links had come to The Shadow's notice, but as he listed them, he observed that in this game of crime, coincidence might well have run side by side with evil design.

It was The Shadow's task to analyze all facts, to join the broken links into a finished chain, neglecting those which were not part of the straight line.

Whispers in Chinatown. An American who understood the language, who had listened to talk of Kwa. A meeting of five men, two of whom were now dead!

In New York, police believed that Westley Hartnett had been slain by a maniac. In New Jersey, State troopers had classed Blaine Goodall as the chance victim of hijacking gangsters. But The Shadow knew the truth.

Westley Hartnett had been murdered by a swift-moving killer, who had worked with expert craftiness. Agile as a monkey, this slayer had made an immediate escape. The Shadow knew that a creature had come out of Chinatown to commit that crime.

Blaine Goodall had been ambushed by armed fighters. They, however, had not been gangsters. Well did The Shadow know that fact! The headlights of his powerful speedster had shown Chinamen behind those revolvers which had failed against the leaden torrent from his automatics.

A second murderer: one who fought with might instead of stealth. Two minions of Kwa, fiendish foes to society, whose evil careers must be ended. The Shadow had sworn that these fiends would never again strike down a living man!

FIVE names appeared upon a sheet of paper as the hand of The Shadow wrote them there:

Westley Hartnett

Blaine Goodall

Barton Schofield

David Moultrie

Ward Zelka

With solemn gesture, The Shadow crossed out the first two on the list. Hartnett and Goodall were dead. Schofield was the next to be considered.

The yellow face! It had been at Schofield's last night. Harry Vincent had seen it. He had observed the bounding form that bore the venomous visage. He had watched throughout the night, to make sure that

the enemy did not return.

"Kwa!"

Again, the concealed lips of The Shadow repeated that insidious title. Eyes from the dark were glaring toward the table top. The Shadow knew well that some strange stroke was due to fall very soon at Barton Schofield's home.

Twice had The Shadow sought to thwart the crimes designed by Kwa. Both events had taken place last night; in each case, fate had tricked The Shadow.

A knowing laugh came in shuddering tones. There was one way in which The Shadow could control the course of destiny. That was to plan his counter-stroke before a deed of crime could fall!

A long white forefinger tapped the crossed-out name of Westley Hartnett. Someone, The Shadow knew, had studied the dead lawyer's actions. The lurking slayer at the apartment must have been guided by accurate information.

Another tap upon the eliminated name of Blaine Goodall. Here was direct evidence of contact. Someone, at the Union Club, had learned the route that Goodall was taking to Trenton. A false telephone call had eliminated Goodall's friend, Beecham, from the trip.

The Shadow had dealt with many murderers. Superfiends whom he had encountered in the past would have had no scruples about slaying an unneeded victim such as Beecham. But here, The Shadow knew, was one who had no scruples, yet who did not care to deal in unnecessary death. Such a plotter was far beyond an ordinary criminal.

Kwa! The master mind who posed as the Living Joss had gained the services of some useful tool. This man must be one who could have visited Westley Hartnett and Blaine Goodall with equal ease; one, perhaps, who would have access to Barton Schofield's home as well.

A laugh came softly as The Shadow unfolded a report from Harry Vincent. This was a detailed account of the evening's events at Barton Schofield's. In it, Harry Vincent had inserted the statement that Westley Hartnett had expressed dislike for a guest at Maxine Schofield's party.

Hugo Urvin was the fellow's name. A chance clew, but one which The Shadow had put to immediate use. Another report unfolded. This was from a second secret agent of The Shadow, a newspaper reporter named Clyde Burke.

Independent of the word which he had received from Harry Vincent, The Shadow had sent Clyde Burke to the Union Club. As a representative of the New York Classic, Burke had talked with club attendants regarding Blaine Goodall.

The reporter had learned that the corporation president was in the lounge room during the evening. Goodall had been waiting for his friend Beecham. He had seemed in good spirits; in fact, he had been seen chatting with another club member. Casually, Burke had learned the name of Goodall's temporary companion.

Hugo Urvin!

That young man had come to the Union Club after his early departure from Barton Schofield's mansion. This was one who might well be the secret representative of Kwa.

No detail escaped The Shadow's keen consideration. The envelope which he, as Lamont Cranston, had

plucked from the floor at the Union Club was a significant point in solving the present situation.

Hugo Urvin had talked with Blaine Goodall, and had learned the man's plans. That must have occurred between half past ten and half past eleven. Within that short period, a gang of Chinese slayers had been sent forward in two cars to intercept Goodall on his trip to Trenton.

The inference? To The Shadow there could be but one. Hugo Urvin had established quick contact with Kwa.

With further crime impending, new contact would be necessary. The Shadow, by many lesser clues, had gained the one he wanted. Through Hugo Urvin, he could find the way to the secret abode of the Living Joss!

ONCE again, The Shadow studied the list of names which he had written. Three remained of the five who had met at Barton Schofield's. The weary old banker; the large-mouthed stock manipulator; the suave physician.

One, Barton Schofield, was opposed by the other two. At the same time, David Moultrie and Ward Zelka, while they had united through circumstance, might each be engaged in individual activity.

Briefly, The Shadow wrote instructions, and sealed each order in a separate envelope. One to Clyde Burke, to keep watch on David Moultrie. The other to Harry Vincent, whose duty would be to observe Doctor Ward Zelka.

Barton Schofield remained to The Shadow. The old banker, with Hartnett and Goodall gone, was no longer associated with conservative men; yet The Shadow held no worry for Schofield's present safety.

Kwa had been at the banker's home last night; but Kwa had been watching Westley Hartnett, whose life was even then in the balance. Nothing had happened to Barton Schofield. Nothing would happen, until Kwa's reporting agent had again delivered information or received instructions.

The present situation involved two personalities. Kwa, the Living Joss, was one. Barton Schofield, the retired banker, was the other. The link between was probably Hugo Urvin. There, at the weak point, The Shadow would strike first.

The light clicked out above the polished table. The room became a mass of solid blackness. This was The Shadow's sanctum, the uncanny abode which only the master frequented. A laugh rippled through the stillness. Its wavering echoes came back in whispered merriment.

The Shadow was gone. He had departed from this room where darkness reigned. His new quest had begun. He was seeking the direct route to Kwa, the Living Joss!

The Shadow's clues were many; among them, the one of Hugo Urvin was the only link which The Shadow needed!

CHAPTER XIV. THE SHADOW LEARNS

THE bright lights of Broadway were aglow. It was early evening in Manhattan, and the dancing glare of Times Square was luring pleasure-seekers. At Forty-seventh and Broadway, a barker was crying forth the advantages of a trip to Chinatown.

Hugo Urvin, nattily dressed and sporting a new cane, lingered beside the filling bus. He drew a half dollar from his vest pocket, and tendered it to the barker. He received a ticket and stepped aboard the bus.

A few minutes later, another customer approached the barker, and also paid a half dollar. This man was a tall, calm-faced individual, who appeared quite inconspicuous despite the keenness of his hawklike features. He entered the sight-seeing bus, and took a seat in back of Hugo Urvin.

The Shadow was on the trail of his quarry. He had picked up Urvin's course outside of the apartment house where the young man lived. Already, he had discovered the simple but ingenious way in which Urvin paid his secret visits to the Chinese district.

Had Urvin been one of those New Yorkers who make their Chinatown trips as individual excursions, The Shadow would long since have learned his identity. The master of detection had spent long periods of observation in the streets of Chinatown.

But as a sight-seer on a bus - one of those many visitors to Manhattan who nightly go in herds to see the Chinese district - that policy had enabled Hugo Urvin to conceal his visits to the shrine controlled by Chon Look.

The big bus rolled down Broadway. Half an hour later, it stopped on a dingy thoroughfare, and the guide ordered the passengers to alight. The group moved along, most persons herding close to their fellows, anticipating adventure.

The sight of uniformed policemen patrolling this district as a regular beat did not dispel the enthusiasm of the crowd. The guide's build-up of the lurking dangers to be found in Chinatown was sufficient to preserve the awe which these visitors had gained.

Ablaze with light, the corner of Mott and Pell glimmered ahead. Most of the sight-seers were taking in the curious sights about them, when the guide turned his charges down the side alley toward the Buddhist shrine.

Two persons in the crowd followed with leisurely indifference. One was Hugo Urvin; the other was the hawk-faced man who watched him.

Unconscious of the eyes which took this interest in his affairs, Urvin swirled his cane and strolled through the doorway with the group of visitors.

CHON LOOK and the Chinese girls bowed solemnly when the crowd came in. With his singsong English, the keeper of the Buddhist shrine began to explain the purposes of prayer papers and wishing sticks. Hugo Urvin glanced curiously at the wishing sticks after Chon Look had laid them aside; but tonight the young man had no envelope.

This would have been a clew to the quiet individual, who was watching. Unfortunately, the clew was lacking. Nevertheless, The Shadow did not relax his vigil. The lecture terminated. The visitors departed, and, on the way, each received a wrapped package. Chon Look blandly handed one to Hugo Urvin; another to the calm-faced man who followed him.

The trip through Chinatown continued. At last, the visitors again reached the bus. But in that trip, the eyes of The Shadow had noted a significant fact. From the time that he had left the shrine governed by Chon Look, Hugo Urvin had displayed a marked impatience that he had been unable to conceal!

Forty-seventh and Broadway. The passengers alighted. Hugo Urvin entered the subway. The calm-faced man still followed him, but when the pair entered an uptown local, Hugo Urvin, glancing about, saw no one watching him.

His hand in the pocket of his overcoat, Urvin fumbled with the package that he held there. He knew that

it contained funds; and he was anticipative of the reward that he was to find there.

Hugo Urvin smiled cunningly. He had served Kwa well!

Urvin's apartment house was but a short distance from the subway station where the young man alighted. Swinging his cane with his right hand, clutching the pocketed package with his left, Urvin walked quickly toward his destination.

There was one, however, who moved with greater swiftness. It was obvious, as soon as Urvin had left the subway train, that he intended to go back to his apartment. A tall man had gone up the stairs ahead of Urvin; on the side street, this individual had stepped into a parked coupe.

Scarcely had Urvin passed that car before a figure glided from the door. A shape of blackness, an outlined form garbed in flowing cloak and slouch hat, The Shadow had replaced the hawk-faced man who had trailed Urvin.

A blotch of darkness moved along the sidewalk on the other side of the street. It crossed a hundred feet ahead of Urvin. The man with the cane did not observe that phantom shape as it glided into the vestibule of the apartment house.

The lock of the inner door clicked. The mysterious personage entered the hallway. The door closed and locked three full seconds before Hugo Urvin made his appearance. There was no trace of the invisible phantom when Urvin crossed the hallway.

Up in the elevator; to his own apartment. Urvin opened the door and chuckled. He strode to a corner and lighted a table lamp. With eager hands, he removed the wrapping from the package. A crisp stack of rolled bills came into his grasp.

URVIN set a little green jade elephant upon the table beside the rice-paper wrappings. With a hearty chuckle, he counted the hundred-dollar bills. Twelve of them tonight - a suitable reward from Kwa, the Living Joss. Urvin crinkled the currency and shoved it deep into his pocket. He smiled in new satisfaction.

Then, with new anticipation, he picked up the wrapping paper. The layered sheet came between him and the light. Urvin looked at it with satisfaction. These messages from Kwa were clever. No one could possibly detect the faded writing that lay within.

Something moved from the darkness between Hugo Urvin's back and the wall. The young man did not detect either sound or noise, for both were absent. In fact, no living form could possibly have been seen. The motion seemed like a shift of massed gloom.

The one manifestation of a living personage was the presence of a pair of glowing eyes. Their gaze, like that of Hugo Urvin, was directed toward the sheet of wrapping paper. As Urvin carefully peeled the layers apart, the eyes of The Shadow saw the important action.

Urvin laid the blank portion upon the table. He studied the other sheet, and carefully read the instructions that appeared there. So engrossed was he that he did not sense the approach of a looming form that closed behind him like an enveloping blanket of darkness.

A strange scene! Hugo Urvin perusing the paper by the light of the lamp, with the living shroud above him - a shape which blotted out the penetrating rays of the lamp, and held the remainder of the room in sepulchral darkness.

Every word that Urvin read was seen by The Shadow also; yet the unmoving form of blackness never

betrayed its presence.

As Urvin smiled in understanding of the new instructions, the shape behind him faded toward the wall. The rice paper fluttered to the table.

Urvin, now sensing danger for the first time, swung on his heel and stared toward the darkness of a farther corner.

Had something moved there?

For a moment, Urvin fancied that he had detected a shift in the gloom. The table lamp did not provide sufficient light. Urvin turned toward the switch at the door of the room.

At that instant, the sheet of rice paper flared. Used though he was to this phenomenon, Urvin was momentarily startled. He had forgotten about Kwa's message. Since the first one had taken care of itself, Urvin merely laid each succeeding one aside when he had finished reading it.

With a forced laugh, the young man went to the door of the room. But in that interval, in which his eyes had instinctively turned toward the burning message, a change had occurred in the darkened corner.

Gliding from the spot, The Shadow had gained the open door of another room. As Urvin pressed the light switch, the tall figure faded like a vanishing ghost. Urvin, looking to the corner, saw only the blank wall, plainly visible in the glare of the ceiling lights which the switch had illuminated.

Crumpling the useless section of the rice paper, Urvin threw it into a wastebasket. He placed the green jade elephant upon the bookcase, along with the three wise monkeys and other souvenirs of his visits to the Buddhist shrine in Chinatown.

THIS newest curio annoyed Urvin. He had a superstition that elephants were bad luck. His nerves seemed somewhat on edge.

There was a reason. Urvin knew well that he had definitely brought death to two men: Westley Hartnett and Blaine Goodall. It was not likely that he would ever be implicated in the murders; the work that he had done had required no drastic action.

Nevertheless, Urvin was squeamish. As a crook, he was of a petty class. Lack of real nerve - not the burden of a conscience - was the cause of Urvin's worryment. Here, alone, the man began to feel ill at ease. He pulled the twelve hundred dollars from his pocket, then thrust it away again.

Kwa's service paid well. It was too good to leave. There was no turning now. With another forced laugh, Urvin strode from his apartment. He wanted bright lights, fun at a night club, any form of artificial delight that would ease his mind.

For another task lay ahead - a new appointment in the service of Kwa. Like the others, it would be easy. Urvin nerved himself with the thought that he would not have to act until tomorrow night.

After all, no one could know of his connection with Kwa! No one could know what the Living Joss now required.

In this thought, Hugo Urvin was mistaken. When the door of the apartment had closed behind him, the form of The Shadow emerged from the inner room. Urvin had left the table lamp gleaming. Near the illumination, The Shadow formed a weird shape that cast a long, sinister silhouette across the floor.

A whispered laugh shuddered from hidden lips. Uncanny mockery came in a triumphant tone. What

Hugo Urvin knew, The Shadow knew. The next stroke planned by Kwa had been revealed to this sinister specter whose mighty arm was ready to strike down the evil foe.

Tomorrow night!

Another deed of crime was impending. Hugo Urvin was to play but a minor part. Others would be there to do the real evil. One of last night's murderers - both, perhaps - would be called upon for another fiendish stroke.

This time, The Shadow was prepared. He was ready to thwart the schemes of Kwa. The Shadow had learned the cunning ways of Kwa.

The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XV. THE NEXT NIGHT

AT eight o'clock the next evening, Hugo Urvin arrived at the home of Barton Schofield. He had come here for a party which had been scheduled some time previous. Maxine Schofield, when she extended invitations, invariably arranged for more than one event at a time.

Thus Urvin, when he had attended the dance two nights ago, had also known that he was coming here tonight. He had informed Kwa of both these social engagements, which had been in keeping with instructions in one of the notes.

Two nights ago, Urvin had performed no duty here, even though Westley Hartnett had been present; but this evening, Kwa's spying henchman was acting under new instructions. His task was to watch none other than Barton Schofield.

Urvin began his operations as soon as he had entered the house. While Maxine was greeting him in the hallway, Urvin managed to glance through the door that led to the sun porch. There he saw the old banker seated in a comfortable chair, drowsily awaiting his bedtime hour.

Hugo Urvin accompanied Maxine into the dance room. From now on, it would be easy to keep tabs upon Schofield's actions. All that Urvin awaited was the time when the old man went upstairs.

But, as he was walking with Maxine, Urvin happened to glance back into the hallway to see two strangers coming through the front door.

One was a tall young man with a long, solemn face; the other was a stocky, swarthy individual, whose countenance was grim and determined. They were not guests of Maxine's, Urvin knew. He noted that a servant was conducting them to the sun porch.

"Who are those persons?" Urvin asked Maxine.

"Men to see grandfather," replied the girl. "The tall one is George Cubitt. He works in Mr. Hartnett's law office. You heard about our lawyer, didn't you?"

"You mean Westley Hartnett?"

"Yes. It was terrible! He was killed the night before last, after he had gone home from here. Think of that! It was a terrible blow to grandfather."

Urvin nodded. He wondered what Cubitt was doing here. He hoped that the man and his companion would not linger long.

After all, Urvin reflected, their presence would mean no complication. They would leave when Barton Schofield decided to retire. The only lingering doubt which Urvin held was that concerning the identity of George Cubitt's companion.

Had Hugo Urvin looked in on the sun porch - an act which very sagely he did not perform - he would have learned the identity of the man who had come with Cubitt. That identity would have given Urvin real worry. The swarthy, stocky man with the firm face was none other than Detective Joe Cardona.

OUT on the sun porch, George Cubitt was introducing the sleuth to the old banker. Barton Schofield, his gray face wearied, pointed to chairs. His visitors sat down. Cardona had closed the door behind him. He motioned to Cubitt to speak.

"Mr. Schofield," explained the young lawyer, "Detective Cardona is investigating the death of Westley Hartnett."

"Ah!" Schofield's tired eyes came to life. "You have taken up that good work? Poor Hartnett" - the light faded in Schofield's face - "poor Hartnett. I hope that you can find the villain who slew him."

"We have learned something, Mr. Schofield," declared Cardona. "We are indebted to Mr. Cubitt here for a real clew. I want him to tell you about it."

Schofield turned toward Cubitt. The young lawyer leaned forward in his chair.

"Mr. Schofield," he asserted, "we have learned that Westley Hartnett, in handling your financial matters, had dealings with Blaine Goodall, the president of the Huxley Corporation."

"Of course," said Schofield, becoming less lethargic. "Goodall was here with Hartnett - not so many nights ago. They came to discuss Huxley stock with me."

"Ah!" exclaimed Cubitt, turning to Cardona. "You see? I was right. This connects the two deaths."

"The deaths?"

The question came from Barton Schofield. The old man's eyes expressed alarm. The banker was staring from Cardona to Cubitt.

"Certainly, the deaths," declared the detective. "Westley Hartnett was killed. Blaine Goodall was killed -"

Cardona stopped as he saw Barton Schofield slump back in his chair. The detective arose, half in alarm. Then he saw Schofield recover his composure. The old man waved his hand to indicate that he was all right.

"Blaine Goodall - dead?" Schofield paused solemnly. "Was he, too, murdered? Why was I not told?"

"You didn't know of it?" questioned Cardona in surprise.

Barton Schofield shook his head.

"Goodall was killed out on a New Jersey road," said the detective. "It looked like he had run into a fight between two gangs of gunmen. Now, it looks like murder."

"It is murder!" Schofield's cry came suddenly, as the old man sat bolt upright. "Murder! I can tell you why!"

Cardona leaned forward to hear what the old banker had to say. Cubitt was agog. Schofield, gripped by indignation, was speaking with a vehemence which he had evidently not shown in years. Cardona's warning had curbed the old man's excitement to a slight degree.

"If I only knew more!" gasped Schofield. "Ah, gentlemen, I let Hartnett manage all the details. My memory slips me. I never read the newspapers. I knew that Hartnett was dead only because this house was called and the servants told me that he had been slain. But Goodall's death! That is news to me - and now I understand."

"Tell us," urged Cardona tensely.

"Something regarding Huxley stock" - Barton Schofield's tone was bewildered - "and Hartnett had some men here! Two men, besides Goodall.

"I had intended to buy Huxley, gentlemen. These people whom Hartnett brought wanted to block it. Do you understand? My affairs interfered with theirs - and I followed Hartnett's advice. They were angry at Hartnett - at Goodall -"

Barton Schofield suddenly threw his hands to his heart. His sudden outburst had weakened him. The old man swayed back and forth. Cubitt leaped forward to catch him before he fell. Schofield gasped and leaned back in his chair, panting. His tremor passed; he managed to smile feebly.

"I - I must take it easy," he said wearily. "I - I am an old man. This - news - Goodall's death -"

Cubitt was beside the old banker, ready to give him further aid. The young lawyer was speaking; Cardona stopped him with a gesture.

"Who were the two men?" he questioned quietly. "What were their names?"

"I wish that I could remember," said Schofield, with a tired shake of his head.

"One man - one man - he had an odd sort of a face. Very distorted. Strangely" - Schofield smiled rather sheepishly - "I can recall only that his name had something about it that reminded me of birds -"

"Was it Byrd?"

"No" - Schofield was staring toward the ceiling - "more like chickens - some sort of fowl. I can't remember names - I never could. I didn't care who these men were. I was very tired the night that Hartnett introduced me to them."

"The other man?" questioned Cardona.

"He was a physician," declared Schofield, with a steady nod. "Yes, a physician. Hartnett mentioned the fact. A man who had traveled all over the world. His name was a very odd one."

There was a pause, then Schofield's face betrayed a haggard anxiety. He looked quickly from Cubitt to Cardona.

"Do you think I am threatened?" he questioned. "Is that why you have come here? Am I in danger? Tell me - tell me -"

"Don't worry, Mr. Schofield," said Cardona soberly. "We'll get those fellows. Maybe they can tell us something about this mess. If you could only remember their names!"

"I am in danger from them?" Schofield's talk was doddering. "Will you protect me?"

The old man was rising from his chair. He grasped the edge of the table, his clutch weakened, and he slumped back helplessly.

"Look after him," ordered Cardona quickly.

While George Cubitt responded, the detective hastened to the door and summoned a servant. Barton Schofield was moving feebly when the attendant arrived.

"Mr. Schofield has overexerted himself," declared the detective. "We must help him upstairs."

The servant nodded. He and Cardona aided the old banker to his feet. Cubitt followed. They reached the head of the stairs and turned left to Schofield's room. The old man was smiling weakly now.

"I'm better," he declared to Cardona. "I'm sorry that I overstrained myself. Suppose - suppose that I rest quietly; then you can ask me more."

"It is quite late, sir," interposed the servant.

"That does not matter," said Schofield, closing his eyes wearily. "I must concentrate. This is vitally important. Hartnett is dead - Goodall is dead -"

Cardona pondered. He could see that Barton Schofield was exhausted. The detective was a good psychologist. He knew that rest would ease the weary mind.

"It would be best for Mr. Schofield to sleep," he decided. "There is no cause for alarm. Mr. Cubitt and I are leaving. I shall return tomorrow, and talk to you in the morning, Mr. Schofield."

The banker muttered a reply. The servant nodded to indicate that Cardona's decision was a wise one. He began to help the old man remove his coat and vest. Cardona beckoned to Cubitt. The young lawyer followed him from the room.

DOWNSTAIRS, they went to the sun porch. Cardona extinguished the light. Cubitt wondered when he heard the detective fumble with the key that opened the door to the lawn. Then he felt Cardona's grasp. The detective led him to the hall, and called for hats and coats.

Hugo Urvin saw the pair depart. He smiled. His work was one that required caution. Barton Schofield had retired, but until these visitors were gone, Urvin would not act. He saw Cardona and Cubitt go out by the front door.

In the darkness of the veranda, the detective gripped the lawyer's arm. His voice was tense as he spoke in a low and decided tone.

"Come," he ordered. "Be careful."

He conducted Cubitt toward the side of the house. Together they clambered from the veranda and moved along, close by the side of the gray mansion. They reached the door of the sun porch - the one which Cardona had unlocked. The detective opened it carefully and motioned his companion inside.

Seated in corner chairs, the two were close together as Cardona whispered the reason for his strange behavior. Cubitt felt a chill as the detective pressed a revolver into his hand.

"I didn't want to scare the old man," declared Cardona, "but it looks to me like he is in danger, sure enough. When you told me of Hartnett and Goodall - that was bad enough. But with Schofield in it, too -"

"You think that those two unknown men may plan to harm Schofield?"

"Why not? They bumped off Hartnett and Goodall, didn't they? Listen. Schofield's an old man. The easy thing would be to let him alone. But suppose they're watching - spying here -"

"Then?"

"They've seen us come, haven't they? That is, if they're watching - inside or out? Well - do you realize what we've done? We may have put the old man on the spot!"

"By questioning him?"

"Sure. Any crook would know me. I didn't realize how serious this might be when I came here. I wised up quick. When Schofield began to get scared, I figured he might be marked."

"But if we stay here -"

"We can watch. I ought to have some men on hand, but it's too late to fetch them now. It's better to lay low - and if I give you the word, use that gat I handed you. Did you ever shoot one?"

"Yes. Target practice."

"All right. Keep your nerve, then. Maybe nothing will happen tonight. I'm just playing safe. Tomorrow, I'll detail men to cover this place. Say - when that party breaks up, I can call headquarters. I'd like to sneak around a bit now, but it's best to lay low."

The two men sat in darkness, Cardona cold and steady, Cubitt worried, but trying not to show it. A dance ended, and silence replaced the faint strains of music that had come to the sun porch.

IN the dance room, Hugo Urvin strolled toward the hallway. He lighted a cigarette and joined two men who were standing near the front door. Tonight's party was a small and informal one. Less than a dozen persons were present. It was on this account that Urvin guarded his action carefully.

He waited until his companions had turned back to the dance room; then, with a nonchalant air, Urvin opened the front door and stepped out upon the veranda. He strolled to the end opposite the way which Cardona and Cubitt had so surreptitiously followed.

At the edge, Urvin paused and puffed his cigarette. He removed the half-finished stump from his mouth, and flicked it with his thumb and second finger. The cigarette shot from the veranda on a long, meteoric arc that clearly defined a glowing curve in the darkness. Sparks scattered as the cigarette struck the lawn.

Strolling back to the front door, Urvin entered unnoticed and joined the others in the dance room.

No one realized that he had been temporarily absent. Yet in that short space of time, Urvin had performed the mission demanded by Kwa.

His sparkling cigarette had been a signal to men who were crouching in the outer darkness!

CHAPTER XVI. ON THE STAIRS

WHILE Hugo Urvin's cigarette still glowed upon the lawn beside Barton Schofield's mansion, a figure arose beside the house and stood in momentary watchfulness. Firm hands gripped a vine-covered trelliswork, and a strange, black-garbed shape began an upward course against the wall.

Invisible in motion, spectral in action, this shape was as awe-inspiring as the yellow-faced figure which Harry Vincent had spied two nights ago. But although eyes were watching this very house, the climbing form was completely hidden during its ascent.

The Shadow, master of the night, was making a secret excursion to the second floor of Barton Schofield's mansion. His lithe shape gained a window. The sash opened, and the cloaked figure entered.

Meanwhile, men were advancing upon the lawn. Peering from his vantage point, The Shadow could make out the shapes of stealthy invaders. Still, The Shadow watched. These were the ones who had been sent to wait for Hugo Urvin's signal. Scattered, hidden at various points, there had been no way of attacking one without alarming the others.

The advancers closed in upon a little door on the ground floor, at the side. The Shadow had expected this. He saw one man enter the opening; then another. Counting, he observed eight in all. The faint whisper of a laugh escaped The Shadow's hidden lips.

There were two chief henchmen whom Kwa employed. One moved by craft; the other by might. The Shadow had been prepared for either.

Had Chun Shi been chosen, it would have meant a single-handed combat. Koy Shan, however, was the designated person. One of the few Chinese gunmen who had escaped The Shadow's fire two nights ago, this powerful enemy was advancing with strong men behind him.

Murder was not in the cards tonight. The Shadow knew that fact now. The course was plain. These raiders had been sent to capture Barton Schofield alive. Eight fighters to take one old man!

Moving across a darkened room, The Shadow found a door and opened it. He entered a gloomy hallway and passed by the door of Barton Schofield's room. There was another doorway on the other side; beyond that the stairs. The Shadow merged with the blackness of the opposite portal.

MUSIC was coming from below. The second floor was deserted. Padded footsteps became evident. The raiders had arrived by way of an obscure back stairway. From his place of hiding, The Shadow could not count the members of the insidious band, but he could observe the door to Barton Schofield's room.

Figures clustered at that doorway. Among them was a huge fellow - Koy Shan, the Mighty. Yellow faces, darkened in the gloom, were looking toward their leader. Koy Shan gave a low command. Two men crouched and moved toward the head of the front staircase.

Koy Shan's strategy was now apparent. He had probably left two minions to guard the rear way. With two at the front stairs in case of emergency, he and his four helpers could invade the bedroom and seize the helpless old banker.

Two Chinamen looking downward; four at the banker's door with their backs toward The Shadow. One against six, but the advantage lay with the hidden master. As Koy Shan laid his huge hand upon the knob of the door, the figure of The Shadow moved slowly forward.

As The Shadow prepared to deliver a swift attack, one of the men at the head of the staircase chanced to turn to see how the others were progressing. This crouching Chinaman, like his comrade on the steps, was armed with a long knife.

Almond eyes widened as the guard saw a moving smirch of blackness that blotted out all sight of Koy Shan. It was a moment before the man realized that this was a living foe. He could not hold back the

amazement which accompanied his discovery. A snarling gasp came from his lips as he leaped forward, knife upraised.

As the Chinaman sprang, The Shadow whirled. His form shot forward to meet the attack. The Chinaman made a downward thrust, calculated to strike the back of the black-clad figure. The Shadow, however, was too swift.

His driving shoulder smashed against the Chinaman's knees. The man with the knife hurtled along the floor, his weapon flying from his grasp, to the feet of those at Schofield's door. Sprawled flat on his face, this enemy of The Shadow was eliminated for the time.

There was method in The Shadow's thrust. His driving attack kept on with unrestrained swiftness. The second guard was turning from the staircase. He raised his knife to deliver the stroke which the other had failed to make.

The arms of The Shadow caught the Chinaman's rising form. While the left served as a fulcrum behind the villain's back, the right shot the Chinaman's feet upward. With a shrill scream, the yellow man went plunging backward, his body describing a whirl as it spun down the staircase.

In the powerful effort which had tossed this enemy from the fray, The Shadow had again acted with unflinching calculation. His hurling motion terminated with a sweep that brought him face to face with Koy Shan and his henchmen. While the falling guard was still on the first lap of his long plunge, The Shadow sprang down the hall to meet a concerted attack.

KNOWING that stealth was the keynote of the invasion, The Shadow had correctly reasoned that the Chinamen would be ready with knives rather than guns. Blades that flashed in the gloom told the correctness of this belief.

The Shadow knew how to deal with such weapons. His tall form shot into the midst of the four attacking men. Black fists, sweeping from nowhere, smashed into yellow faces.

One man, alone, managed to grapple with the vengeful form in black. It was not Koy Shan - the big fellow had been floored by The Shadow's first blow. It was a wiry underling, who fought with ferocious venom as he plunged to the floor with his arms about the black-garbed attacker.

With a clever twist, the Chinaman jerked his right hand free, and drew it back to deliver a thrust with the knife which he still held. His left arm was clamped against The Shadow's body.

But in the fall, The Shadow had acted with the same promptitude. His own right hand had gone beneath his cloak. As he lay against the wall, the Chinaman kneeling half beside and half above him, The Shadow pressed the trigger of an automatic.

A terrific roar burst through the hallway. The Chinaman, his grinning face distorted, toppled sidewise and fell upon The Shadow's body. The knife clattered harmlessly to the floor.

The Shadow made no effort to remove the helpless burden; his right hand free, his keen eyes staring toward the front of the hall, he held the bead on his enemies.

One rising foe leaped forward, his swift hand swinging to hurl a knife toward The Shadow's body. The automatic roared. The Chinaman plunged as he sprang. The blade whistled above The Shadow's head, and clattered from the side wall.

Three of six had been totally eliminated. One had hurtled down the stairs; two had been felled by The Shadow's bullets. The others, Koy Shan among them, dived for the staircase.

Before The Shadow could fire after them, he was forced to meet another menace which his shrewd brain had anticipated - the pair of Mongols from the back way.

The Shadow's automatic turned. The muzzle flashed. The first of these reserves, the first Chinaman to produce a gun, went down, a useless revolver in his fist. The other, a few feet behind, dived back the way that he had come, and took the turn of the back stairs as The Shadow's automatic barked once more.

This Chinaman had managed to reach a spot of safety. The hallway was cleared. The Shadow, however, had even swifter work ahead. Hurling aside the limp body that lay upon him, the black-clad battler rose to his feet.

THERE was bedlam from the floor below. The crash of the first Chinaman falling down the steps had brought people rushing from the dance room. They had seen a limp form lying upon the hallway. That enemy was out.

Then had come the roar of The Shadow's automatic. Koy Shan and his companions, hurtling down the stairs, had been too great a terror to face. Unarmed men and frightened girls had dashed back into the dance room, for the Chinamen, in their flight, were brandishing their wicked knives.

Two Mongols reached the front door unobstructed. One was Koy Shan. The third, still on the steps, was trapped by the sudden arrival of Detective Joe Cardona and George Cubitt. With a sharp command, Cardona halted the fleeing Celestial in his tracks. The glowering assassin dropped his knife and raised his hands.

"Cover him!" cried Cardona. "I'm going up!"

George Cubitt obeyed. Cardona, revolver in hand, started up the steps to investigate the shots that now had ceased. A sudden cry of warning made him halt.

Nervously, Cubitt had danced toward the front door. The barrier had opened. There stood the huge form of Koy Shan, revolver in hand. Cubitt, trembling, still covered the Chinaman whom Cardona had just passed upon the steps.

A hoarse cry of exultation rose from Koy Shan's throat, as the big Chinaman leveled his automatic directly at Joe Cardona. This Chinese gangster had recognized the star detective. With merciless precision, Koy Shan prepared to end Cardona's life. His finger was on the trigger, while the detective still had his own gun at his side.

A mighty roar rolled from the head of the staircase. It was the terrific report of The Shadow's automatic. From long range, The Shadow had arrived in time to take quick aim at Koy Shan.

With that roar, which sent stern echoes from the close-walled upstairs hall, Koy Shan faltered. The huge Chinaman staggered two steps backward; his hand wavered, and the revolver dropped from his loosened fingers. With a hideous snarl on his evil lips, the big Mongol sank to the floor.

The Shadow's oath had been kept. Since the death of Blaine Goodall, Koy Shan had accomplished no new deed of murder. One of Kwa's chief threats had fallen. Koy Shan, the Mighty, was dead.

CHAPTER XVII. THE HANDS OF KWA

FRIGHTENED faces were peering from the dance room. George Cubitt was still covering the Chinaman, who cowered at the foot of the stairs. Only one man looked upward toward the second floor.

That man was Joe Cardona.

There, at the head of the staircase, the detective saw the grim form of an avenger clad in black. He observed the black cloak, its turned-back edge revealing a portion of crimson lining. He spied two keen, blazing eyes that alone were visible beneath the brim of the slouch hat. He saw the smoking muzzle of the automatic that projected from a black-gloved fist.

The Shadow!

Cardona had encountered that mysterious being before. He knew the power of The Shadow's might. He had, ere this, gained evidence of The Shadow's readiness to combat crime. Tonight, the hand of The Shadow had saved Cardona's life.

The weird peals of a mocking laugh seemed to rise from the dying echoes of The Shadow's amazing shot. Only perfect marksmanship could have thwarted Koy Shan. The Shadow had delivered it.

Then, as Cardona again ordered Cubitt to watch his prisoner, the form of The Shadow seemed to blend with darkness. A swish of the black cloak; the weird figure was gone. Joe Cardona started up the stairs.

Even though he knew The Shadow to be a friend, Cardona was impressed by a sense of awe as he reached the top of the staircase. The sight of four Chinamen sprawled upon the hallway floor brought a gasp from the detective's lips.

Joe Cardona stared. He could see no sign of The Shadow.

Barton Schofield's door was on the left. Cardona seized the knob. The door was unlocked. Cardona opened it and turned on the light. Barton Schofield was half out of bed, trembling as he stared toward the man who had entered. He gasped in momentary terror; then recognized the detective.

"All right?" queried Cardona.

"Yes," faltered Schofield. "What - what has happened?"

"Trouble," returned Cardona briefly. "They were here to get you, Mr. Schofield, but we" - Cardona paused sheepishly as he gave the plural pronoun - well, we managed to bag them. Lie down - you're all right."

"But if there's danger -"

"Never mind that. Lock your door. I'll send people up to watch."

Barton Schofield nodded obediently and rolled back into bed. The old man lay face upward, trembling slightly as he pulled the covers about his neck. Cardona made sure that there was no one in the room; then turned out the light and closed the door. He recalled then, that Schofield, in bed, would not be likely to arise in the darkness to turn the key; but the detective decided that it would be unnecessary.

CARDONA hurried to the head of the staircase, and was greeted by a shout from a young man below. One of the guests was guarding the captured Chinaman. The prisoner was helplessly bound with belts.

"Say" - the guest was giving information to Cardona - "the crowd has gone outside to round up any others that may have gotten away. That lawyer chap is with them - the one with the revolver. Maybe you'd better get out there - those men may be dangerous -"

With a growl, Cardona hurried down the staircase. He ran out on the veranda, and heard shouts coming

from the lawn at the left. Leaping the rail, Cardona saw a flashlight in the hand of a guest. Its rays revealed a scurrying Chinaman who was dashing across the lawn.

A revolver spoke. Cubitt had fired. The Chinaman kept on. Another shot - a third - the man who had claimed skill at target practice was proving his inability to hit a moving object. The range was too great for Cardona. He saw the Chinaman reach a big tree and run behind it.

"Look out!" shouted Cardona. "Look out! That fellow will turn!"

The warning went unheeded. The fool with the flashlight deliberately approached the tree where the Chinaman was hiding. Before Cardona could give another order, two other guests had stepped within the range of light. The Chinaman leaped into view, aiming a revolver at the nearest of the unarmed men.

Cardona fired a futile shot. He knew that at this distance, his bullet would go wide.

At the same instant, an automatic roared from the second story of the mansion. Cardona saw the Chinaman collapse. The detective turned quickly and stared toward the house; but there was no clew to the window from which the shot had been fired.

But Cardona knew the identity of the hand that had delivered that rescuing bullet. The cannonlike roar of a mammoth .45; the perfection of the aim at distant range - those betokened the presence of The Shadow.

Once again, the master hand had intervened. Now, Cardona was shouting orders that were heeded. The imminence of death had cowed the bravado spirits of these guests who had begun the Chinese round-up.

It was lucky, Cardona knew, that The Shadow was still on the second floor. He had probably heard the shots which Cubitt had fired, and had come to deliver his timely aid. Cardona glanced toward the house once more, then called to the others to follow him indoors.

He did not see the shape that was descending from the window by the trellis. The Shadow, who knew the number of the raiders, was coming down to search for the one missing Chinaman.

While the black-clad phantom was slowly circling the rear of the Schofield mansion, Cardona led Cubitt and the others to the front of the house. He pointed to the open door.

"Go on up," he told Cubitt. "Make sure that Mr. Schofield is no longer alarmed. I'm going around beneath his bedroom window. Call down to me from there."

Cardona prowled to the appointed spot. He waited, flashing an electric torch toward the rear of the house. Although he glanced in that direction, he did not see the shape of The Shadow, pressed against the rear corner of the mansion. The black-clad fighter was waiting until Cardona moved away.

Lights flashed in the upstairs room. Then came a loud, hoarse cry. George Cubitt's face appeared from the window. Seeing the detective below, the young lawyer proclaimed a startling discovery.

"Barton Schofield is gone!" he shouted. "Someone has grabbed him! Bedclothes ripped away - chair overturned -"

"What!" blurted Cardona.

At that very instant, a motor roared in the front driveway. Swinging his flashlight, Cardona bounded in that direction. He knew what the noise meant. New abductors had been lurking here; they had seized the

old banker after the detective had assured him that all was well!

CARDONA was a sprinter. He neared the drive just as a car was starting away. Behind him, traveling through darkness, came the weird form of The Shadow.

At the wheel of a large sedan, Cardona spotted the venomous countenance of a yellow-faced driver. This was the fiend who was driving away with Barton Schofield absolutely helpless in his power.

Up came Cardona's revolver. But before the detective could shoot down that insidious monster that snarled with its bulging teeth, an unexpected enemy leaped forward from a bush beside the drive.

The last of the missing Chinamen had been lying here! With upraised knife, he fell upon Joe Cardona, and bore the detective to the ground!

Thirty feet behind Cardona, The Shadow, unseen in the darkness, had begun to raise his automatic as Cardona had lifted his revolver. That fiendish countenance in the sedan, visible to The Shadow in the glare from Cardona's torch, was a direct target even at this distance.

But before The Shadow pressed the trigger, the last Chinaman thwarted Joe Cardona. The detective's light tumbled as its owner fell. Blackness covered the sedan, and Joe Cardona lay at the point of death, a dim figure crouched upon him.

In this emergency, The Shadow responded by diverted aim. Darkness increased the difficulty, but the glow of the flashlight upon the ground gave him a surer target than the cowering form in the moving sedan.

The Shadow fired, not at the car, but at the Chinaman who was about to stab the detective. Once - twice - the automatic roared. The Chinaman toppled from Cardona's body. For the second time tonight, The Shadow had saved the sleuth's life.

The automatic did not cease. It roared a cannonade as The Shadow shot through darkness in hope of stopping the flight of the sedan.

Though he fired blindly, The Shadow was uncanny in his skill. Two of his bullets were neatly directed after the unseen target. One brought the clattering crash of a shattered windshield; the other smashed through a fender, between tire and gasoline tank.

It was the driver of that speeding car - not The Shadow - who was lucky. Either bullet, had it landed but a few inches from the actual place it struck, would have crippled either the fiend at the wheel or the car itself.

The rescue of Joe Cardona had permitted the sedan to escape. It was too late now to stop it. The Shadow moved rapidly across the lawn toward the lane; then stopped. He knew that pursuit would this time be in vain.

Joe Cardona was on his feet. His flashlight played upon the features of the dying Chinaman. Grimly, the detective was speaking to this man. The almond eyes opened. Deliriously, the Mongol raised one hand and pointed toward the driveway, scarcely knowing what he did.

"Kwa!" he croaked. "Kwa - Kwa the -"

A rattle followed. The eyes closed. The Chinaman was dead. Joe Cardona growled in perplexity.

"Kwa," he repeated. "What in blazes does that mean?"

To Joe Cardona, the word was no clew. But the detective was not the only one who had heard the dying utterance. A tall, phantom figure, standing shrouded in the darkness, had listened to the Mongol's gasp, and had understood its meaning.

That fiendish figure at the wheel of the escaping sedan had been Kwa, the Living Joss! The hidden power in Chinatown, the venomous creature who dealt in evil, was responsible for the disappearance of the wealthy Barton Schofield.

The hands of Kwa had stretched forth from their terrible lair. The Shadow knew!

Yet, even though Kwa had escaped, the laugh of The Shadow sounded as a sinister whisper upon the spaces of the lawn!

CHAPTER XVIII. DOWN TO CHINATOWN

THE Chinese invasion which had resulted in the abduction of old Barton Schofield made a front-page newspaper story that persisted to hold the largest headlines through to the evening editions. At six o'clock the following evening, nearly twenty-four hours after the banker had been kidnapped, Doctor Ward Zelka was seated in a booth at Brindle's restaurant, scanning the latest reports.

Someone jostled against the table. Doctor Zelka looked up, and raised his eyebrows in surprise as he saw David Moultrie. With a sour grin that added no attraction to his large-toothed mouth, the stock manipulator took a seat opposite the physician.

"Well?" questioned Zelka.

"Well enough," said Moultrie, with a low laugh. "Looks like things are going good for the Huxley proposition, eh?"

"I don't like it," declared Zelka, in a hushed tone. "What's more, I don't like being with you, Moultrie, even in a secluded place like this."

With these words, Zelka peered from the booth. Seeing that he and Moultrie were well away from listening ears, he decided to resume the conversation.

"Rather drastic, don't you think?" questioned Zelka suavely. "Two murders and an abduction?"

"Yes," confessed Moultrie slowly. "I don't like crime, Zelka, even when it works to my advantage. I may be unethical, but I am not in favor of murder - or abduction."

Zelka was listening intently to the stock manipulator's words. He did not notice that two young men had arrived in the next booth. Harry Vincent and Clyde Burke, agents of The Shadow, had met outside of Brindle's restaurant. Together, they were seeking to edge in on the conversation between the men whom they were watching.

"You don't like it, eh?" questioned Zelka. "Even though it is to your advantage; even though the idea was suggested to you."

"Suggested to me?" Moultrie glowered. "Say, you aren't trying to pin this mess on me, are you? If I thought you were, I'd -"

Zelka's eyes narrowed. The physician seemed to be waiting the rest of Moultrie's threat. It did not come. The mouthy stock manipulator glared.

"I was merely making an impersonal remark," declared Zelka. "Sometimes, people take unusual measures when they see a way to easy gain. Murder? Nothing was further from my mind, Moultrie, when I told you that the elimination of Hartnett and Goodall would pave the way to a quiet deal with old man Schofield."

"Look here, Zelka," returned Moultrie, in a bold tone. "You've been reading the paper - it's right here on the table now. What about this business?"

"What about it?"

"Well - from my standpoint. A flock of Chinese are in back of these murders - that is, if the murders are connected with the abduction of Schofield. What do I know about Chinese?"

"Nothing, I suppose."

There was a tinge of sarcasm in Zelka's tone. Moultrie caught it and glowered.

"I can't even make out a Chinese laundry ticket," insisted the stock manipulator. "But when it comes to knowing something about China, you're the berries. You've been there. I'll bet you know the language perfectly."

"You are insinuating -"

"Nothing." Moultrie became suddenly calm. "I only mean this. We both stand to profit by the way that things have turned. Only - well, I don't want to be hooked up with killings."

"With which you think I am connected."

"Yes," admitted Moultrie.

DOCTOR ZELKA smiled. "When unusual circumstances arise," declared the physician, "it is sometimes advisable to take advantage of them without going too deeply into their source. I have found that a policy, Moultrie. Perhaps you would do well to follow the same thought."

"Which means?"

"That you and I - through the conditions which now exist - are able to proceed with a very definite plan of action regarding the acquisition of Huxley Corporation stock."

"I'll grant you that," agreed Moultrie. "Just the same, I don't want you to -"

"It so happens," interposed Zelka suavely, "that we are very much in the same boat. It does not matter" - Zelka paused to insert a cigarette in his goldbanded holder - "what has caused the deaths of Hartnett and Goodall, or who has chosen to abduct old Schofield. That is a problem for the police to handle. Our interest lies in the matter of Huxley stock."

David Moultrie grinned in a knowing manner. Doctor Zelka continued to speak in his suave tone.

"Suppose," he suggested, "that my analysis regarding these three men had caused you to take some action regarding them." Zelka, with a wave of his hand, stopped the beginning of Moultrie's protest. "What would the effect be upon me? I shall tell you.

"Certain people - the police for instance - would say that Moultrie and Zelka had much in common. Too much, perhaps. Therefore, Moultrie, your interests are ones that draw mine along with them. Is that plain?"

"Plain enough," asserted Moultrie. "But don't start to connect me -"

"I am connecting you with nothing," interrupted Zelka smoothly. "I am coming to the other side of the story. Suppose that my suggestion to you - the one regarding the three men who are now eliminated - had been a thought which I intended to put into practice. Very well; what would be said, now that circumstances exist as they do?"

"I shall tell you, Moultrie. People - the police included - would say that whatever Zelka did, Moultrie would benefit. Therefore Zelka's interests have drawn those of Moultrie."

The stock manipulator grinned sourly. He studied the physician's face. At last he shrugged his shoulders and made a blunt statement.

"Whatever you've done, I'll be blamed," said Moultrie. "I guess you're right, Zelka. Well, there's no getting out of it."

"Not a chance," declared Zelka. "In fact, Moultrie, if I had acted - let us say criminally - I would certainly expect to have you share the blame with me, inasmuch as you would share the profits if all went well."

"Conversely, I would not expect you to deal otherwise with me - assuming that you had gone to the great trouble of producing crime. I shall be frank, Moultrie. I do not approve of murder any more than do you. Nevertheless, there is no way of altering what has happened."

Steady gazes met. Moultrie tried to laugh matters off with a nasty leer. Zelka responded with a suave smile, which ended with a puff at the cigarette holder.

"UNDER the circumstances," remarked Zelka, "my advice that we should avoid each other's company is more important than before."

"You're right about that," returned Moultrie. "I was a fool to look for you here tonight. I just was curious, that was all - no - I was worried, too -"

"People who are worried," stated Zelka, "usually have some burden upon their minds. However" - his tone turned to a soothing purr - "you need not worry so far as I am concerned. As for Huxley stock, that can wait. Goodall is not here to make his statement. Hartnett can no longer influence Schofield. Perhaps" - the physician's tone was thoughtful - "we shall hear from the old banker before long."

"Do you know where he is?" queried Moultrie quickly.

"No," responded Zelka. "Do you?"

Moultrie laughed hoarsely.

"Suppose we don't hear from Schofield?" he said, in a cautious tone. "Suppose something has happened to him - like death - well, what will we do then?"

"If we do not hear from Schofield," answered Zelka calmly, "we can proceed with our purchases of Huxley stock. But it would be best to wait a while."

"Until we see what the police do?"

"Until we see how they make out with their Chinese theories. Their investigations may end in a blind result."

David Moultrie shifted and arose from the table. He was nodding as he went. Ward Zelka followed him

with a sophisticated smile.

"We'll leave it as is," was Moultrie's final statement, given in a tone of resignation.

DOCTOR WARD ZELKA lighted another cigarette after the stock manipulator had gone. He smoked in silence, then arose and strolled from the restaurant. He passed the booth in which Harry Vincent was now seated alone.

With Clyde Burke, Harry had caught snatches of the conversation between Moultrie and Zelka. They had each made notes; then Clyde had been forced to leave when Moultrie had departed. Now, in his turn, Harry took up the trail of Ward Zelka.

The physician strolled along Broadway, still puffing at his cigarette holder. He had the air of a man who intended to idle, until his eyes noted a Chinatown bus parked at Forty-seventh Street. Zelka paused to listen to the barker's spiel. He shook his head as the man tried to inveigle him into taking the trip.

Strolling farther on, Zelka glance back over his shoulder. The lanterns on the bus seemed to suggest some thought to him. He suddenly hailed a taxicab, and ordered the driver to take him to an East Side elevated station.

When Zelka alighted, he noticed a train approaching. He hastened up the steps, dropped a nickel in the coin box, and caught the train just as it was pulling away. Five seconds later, Harry Vincent arrived on the same platform.

Was it by accident or by design that Doctor Ward Zelka had eluded the man who was following him? Was it through chance or definite purpose that the physician happened to appear within the Chinese district less than half an hour later?

Strolling in the neighborhood of Mott and Pell, Doctor Zelka paused frequently. He was listening to snatches of Chinese lingo. Once he waited long as he heard a low voice pronounce the strange, mysterious name of Kwa.

The physician turned away from the passing throngs just as a uniformed guide appeared with a herd of sight-seers in his wake. None of this crowd saw Doctor Ward Zelka; the physician had strolled away a few moments before they arrived.

Near the rear of the throng came Hugo Urvin, lounging along with the air of a bored observer. Behind him strolled a tall, impassive-featured man, whose eyes were strangely cold and unflinching.

Once more, the minion of Kwa had come to Chinatown. Again, he was followed by another visitor to this strange district. New crime was brewing. Hugo Urvin was to play his part. Above the budding plans of Kwa hovered the sinister presence of The Shadow.

His thwarting power hidden from the knowledge of the Living Joss, the master of darkness was again preparing for the next stroke of Kwa!

CHAPTER XIX. THE LATE VISITOR

IT was nearly midnight when someone rang the bell of David Moultrie's apartment. A sleepy voice responded through the lobby telephone. The visitor announced himself as Hugo Urvin. He mentioned names of mutual acquaintances. A clicking sound at the locked door enabled Urvin to enter.

Moultrie's apartment was a small one on the third floor. The stock manipulator, attired in pajamas and dressing gown, admitted the man who had come to see him. He waved Hugo Urvin to a chair.

The apartment consisted of an entry and a living room, with one bedroom adjoining. The living room was of ample size, with an unusually high ceiling. The first objects of furniture that Irwin noted were a table in the center of the room, and a massive bookcase near the corner by the door.

"Sorry to have aroused you," remarked Urvin. "I was afraid I wouldn't get you in the office tomorrow morning. I have some investments to make. I was recommended to you, Mr. Moultrie -"

"Have a cigar," offered Moultrie, with a mouthy smile.

Hugo Urvin accepted a perfecto, and settled back in his chair.

"You have any particular stock in mind?" questioned Moultrie.

"Oil, preferably," said Urvin. "I'm willing to take a flyer to the tune of ten thousand. But I want something that has a chance of going over big."

Moultrie retained his smile. He sat down at the table, opened a drawer, and drew out a packet of papers. He began to work upon this customer. Men who had ten thousand to invest were not frequent. Speculative oil! To Moultrie, that was another name for a gold brick.

Hugo Urvin puffed his cigar contentedly. The young man felt a real satisfaction. He had come here, not to invest in phony stock, but to study the lay of the apartment. He was performing the same duty which he had done at Westley Hartnett's apartment.

A message from Kwa. A little curio with hundred-dollar bills about it. A sheet of wrapping paper which had peeled apart. A message which had disappeared in a smokeless flare. Instructions to come here and prepare the way; to return to Chinatown tomorrow, at eight o'clock.

Hugo Urvin was reviewing these matters. To him, Moultrie was another unsuspecting dupe. It never occurred to Urvin that he, himself, had been watched in his own apartment; that the message from Kwa had been read by eyes other than his own.

THE sinister presence of The Shadow had trailed Hugo Urvin as before; again, that presence had been veiled. Even now, it was close at hand - yet Urvin had no knowledge of the fact.

The door from the entry had opened by inches. Burning eyes were peering through a narrow crack. They could see Urvin as he studied the bookcase beyond Moultrie's bowed back. The Shadow observed the smile that rested upon Urvin's sensuous face.

"Three good propositions," declared Moultrie, bobbing up from the table drawer. "Here they are."

He planked a wad of stock certificates on the table, and began to remove a rubber band. Hugo Urvin stopped him with a gesture.

"You say you have three good stocks?" he questioned.

Moultrie nodded.

"That's fine," declared Urvin. "But how am I to choose the right one?"

"Leave that to me," grinned Moultrie. "Oil stock, Mr. Urvin" - the manipulator was speaking the truth - "is often a gamble. Remember, I am warning you in advance. I have other stocks that are less speculative. Nevertheless, oil offers wonderful opportunities. Wonderful -"

"Suppose," interposed Urvin, "that we get together definitely tomorrow. I deal in cash, Mr. Moultrie. I

intend to draw at least ten thousand from my bank. Then I can meet you -"

"At the office."

"I can't make it, Mr. Moultrie. You see, I am running up to Hartford - my home city - to draw out the money from the local trust company. Could I join you here, say in the evening?"

"Ten o'clock?"

"Half past would be better."

"Very well. You can, of course, give me a note now, if you wish to hold these securities."

"I would prefer to wait until tomorrow night," said Urvin, picking up his cane as he arose. "I shall have the money, then. It will give you time to pick out the best shares which I require. Please outline alternative plans, Mr. Moultrie. I may desire a choice in the matter."

David Moultrie shook hands warmly. The entry door closed gradually. A long streak of blackness slid along the floor. That projecting blotch had stretched almost to Hugo Urvin's chair. When Moultrie opened the door to the entry, there was no sign of a living presence.

When Hugo Urvin had gone, David Moultrie rubbed his palms and indulged in a gloating chuckle. A fly had walked into the spider's living room. Moultrie chucked the stock certificates into the drawer. He wrote down a memorandum for tomorrow evening's appointment.

MEANWHILE, Hugo Urvin was swinging his cane jauntily as he strolled along the street. He waved his walking stick at a passing taxicab. He laughed as he entered the vehicle.

David Moultrie had fallen for his game. Tomorrow night at half past ten? Hugo Urvin knew well that he would never keep that appointment.

He had spied effectively tonight. Tomorrow evening, David Moultrie would receive an unexpected visitor instead of Hugo Urvin. Kwa's minion was still considering the situation when he alighted from his taxicab, and went into his apartment house.

Shortly afterward, another cab rolled along the same street. Doctor Ward Zelka stepped out and paid the driver. The physician was smoking his inevitable cigarette. He entered his own apartment building, in a meditative mood.

Ward Zelka was invariably thoughtful after he had paid a belated visit to the Chinese district. He had long felt the lure of Chinatown. Mixing with quaint Orientals, listening to their language, with which he was familiar, gave Zelka the same feeling of keen interest that he had experienced during his travels in the Far East.

The side street was vaguely quiet. Darkness shrouded the fronts of the apartment buildings. A blotch of black faded as it passed the glow of a street lamp. That patch of gliding darkness was the sign of The Shadow.

David Moultrie - Hugo Urvin - Ward Zelka. Each had a part in the drama of strange crime that was following the abduction of Barton Schofield.

Much was to happen tomorrow night. The Shadow was in readiness!

CHAPTER XX. WORK IS ENDED

At nine the next evening, a Chinatown bus stopped at its usual corner. Hugo Urvin was among the passengers who left the vehicle. In his pocket he carried another package which he had taken from the hands of Chon Look, the Buddhist.

Half past ten. That was the hour when David Moultrie would be at home. Hugo Urvin smiled. He would hold no conference with the stock manipulator tonight. Instead, he would seek the seclusion of his own apartment, to consider the latest supply of funds that had come from Kwa.

A slouching, listless man had stepped from the bus with Hugo Urvin. This stranger bore no physical resemblance to the calm-faced person who had previously made the same trips that Urvin had taken. Yet there was a likeness. The silhouette that this man cast upon the sidewalk was identical with the one which the other had displayed.

A similarity which no one would ever have noticed. Yet it was the indication of The Shadow's presence! In another disguise, the master of the night had secretly been Urvin's companion on a visit to Chon Look's shrine.

When Hugo Urvin took the uptown subway, the stranger did not follow him. Instead, the man hailed a taxicab, and gave the driver an address. From a package which he carried - a bundle which was compact, yet not small - the disguised traveler removed a black cloak and slouch hat. He donned these garments in the darkness of the cab.

A piece of paper fluttered through the window, and landed beside the taxi driver as the man halted his cab near a corner apartment house. Picking it up, the taximan found that it was currency. Looking backward, the driver was amazed to see that the cab was empty. The passenger had mysteriously departed.

Meanwhile, Hugo Urvin was trudging through the door of his apartment. He lighted the corner lamp, and pulled the package from his pocket. Another gift from Kwa. Off came the wrapping. Urvin found a box within. It was a curious contrivance; one that appeared to have no opening.

No money? Urvin was puzzled. He picked up the wrapping paper and separated it. He read the message. It bore these words:

"Your work is ended. The final reward is within the box."

Urvin became excited. He felt a strange sensation of relief from bondage. No longer a minion of Kwa, he could again lead a life of idleness, provided only that sufficient reward lay within that box!

Gold? No; the box was too light. Urvin smiled. He had visions of some valuable gem, a gift which could be converted into ready cash.

THE young man manipulated the box. He paid no attention to the flare which Kwa's final message made upon the table. The box was a tricky one; it could be broken if it would not unlock. Urvin pressed the contrivance against the edge of the desk.

Snap! The box collapsed under the pressure. Hugo Urvin uttered a sharp cry as a powerful spring clamped upon his fingers, and he felt the jab of needle points. His left hand was caught in a trap. He managed to remove a metal snapper that had seized him. Angrily, he examined his fingers by the lamplight.

Red marks where the needles had jabbed. Livid marks that were becoming puffy. A sickening sensation gripped Hugo Urvin. He clutched the edge of the table. He felt his legs waver beneath him. He tried to

scream, but his throat muscles seemed paralyzed along with the rest of his body.

There was a thud as Urvin's form toppled to the floor. The young man moved no more. Hugo Urvin had received the reward of Kwa. His usefulness had ended. The victim of a virulent Oriental poison, he would no longer remain as one who had learned secrets of the Living Joss.

Something moved at the window. The spidery form of Chun Shi clambered into the room. The crafty slayer had been stationed here at Kwa's command, ready to act should the poison have failed.

Death had struck without the aid of Chun Shi, but there were other duties for the creature to perform. Swiftly, Chun Shi gathered up the odd objects which Hugo Urvin had received in the Buddhist shrine. The wise monkeys, the green elephant, finally, the steel trap which had sprung its needle points of doom.

Even the unwritten half of rice-paper wrapping was not omitted. Chun Shi slipped toward the window with the clues in his possession. His form became a crablike object that went sidewise along the wall to the window of a deserted apartment.

There was further work for Chun Shi tonight. This minion of Kwa was a lone agent, now that Koy Shan had died in combat with The Shadow. Kwa was employing the aid of craft, since he had lost his mighty helper.

Yet Kwa, himself, had shown a subtle cunning in his final dealing with Hugo Urvin. He had played upon the unscrupulous young man's greed for cash. He had known the secrecy that Urvin would employ in opening the package which contained the snare.

Through the simple medium of a gift from Chon Look, the Buddhist, Kwa had arranged a quick ending for the criminal career of Hugo Urvin.

Had The Shadow divined Kwa's intentions? Had the master of darkness let Hugo Urvin go to the fate which he deserved? Only The Shadow knew, and he was elsewhere tonight. Hugo Urvin's living room was deserted save for the lifeless body of the man who belonged there.

A motionless corpse, its features reddening under the touch of the poison which had delivered death. Such was Hugo Urvin, the man whom Kwa no longer needed.

Hugo Urvin's work was ended.

CHAPTER XXI. CARDONA FOLLOWS A HUNCH

DETECTIVE JOE CARDONA was pacing his office. The clock upon the wall indicated ten. The sleuth was expressing keen annoyance. A stack of papers upon his desk meant nothing but fruitless investigation.

The Chinese invasion that had resulted in the abduction of Barton Schofield had led to a blind trail. Cardona had learned the identity of Koy Shan, but that was all. The man was a tough character of Chinatown. No one could connect him with enterprises other than his own.

Cardona, himself, had traveled to the Chinese district, but to no avail. Other detectives had reported; not one had brought in evidence.

Cardona had suspected that some insidious power might be in back of Koy Shan, but except for the words of the Chinaman who had died upon the lawn, Cardona had gained no inkling to the strange identity of Kwa.

Cardona had forgotten the delirious cry. He had forgotten, also, the remarks that Barton Schofield had made prior to his abduction. But now, with no other clues at hand, the ace detective had suddenly recalled certain statements which Schofield had made regarding Huxley stock.

Cardona scratched his head. He had been a fool to forget all this! The Chinese business had swept him entirely away from his original course. The detective thumped his fists.

"Say, Markham" - Cardona called to the detective sergeant who was in an adjoining office - "come here a minute and tell me something. Did you ever hear of a name that sounded something like chickens?"

"What kind of a name?" queried Markham, wondering if Cardona were joking.

"A man's" said Joe.

"Shick?" asked Markham.

"Maybe," said Cardona thoughtfully. "It doesn't have to be like chickens, though. Let's see. It might be fowl - no, that couldn't be it. Ducks, geese - what do you call them all? I mean in a bunch. Wait! Maybe it's poultry!"

"Poultry," laughed Markham. "Never heard of a bird by that name."

"This is serious," growled Cardona. "Something that old Barton Schofield told me, before they grabbed him. He spoke of two men - a guy that deals in phony stock, and a doctor. The first one has a name something like poultry, maybe."

"Moultrie!" exclaimed Markham. "David Moultrie!"

"You know of a fellow by that name?" demanded Cardona quickly. "A stock manipulator."

"Yeah," nodded Markham. "He isn't a phony, though. We had some complaints a few months ago, from people who had bought shares from him. The stock had gone sour; but there wasn't anything to keep Moultrie from selling it to suckers who wanted to buy it."

Cardona snatched up the telephone book and searched for the name of David Moultrie. He found two addresses: an office and a residence. He pointed to the latter.

"That's where I'm going," he informed Markham. "Stick here, in case I want you."

IT was just half past ten when Joe Cardona arrived at David Moultrie's apartment house. The detective went upstairs and listened intently at the door of Moultrie's apartment. He heard someone coming along the hall, and stood up quickly to face a man who seemed headed for this very spot.

"Mr. Moultrie?" questioned Cardona.

"Yes," was the reply. "Sorry I'm late. I - er - er -"

Moultrie's grin turned to a look of surprise. He had mistaken Cardona for Hugo Urvin.

The detective drew back his coat and flashed a badge. Moultrie paled.

"Going in?"

Cardona wagged his thumb toward the door as he spoke. Moultrie nodded and produced a key. He fumbled as he nervously unlocked the door.

With Cardona at his heels, the stock manipulator turned on the light in the entry. Cardona was still close by when Moultrie illuminated the living room.

"Say" - Cardona, in his challenge, wanted a pretext that would prove misleading - "who were you expecting here tonight?"

"A man named Hugo Urvin," returned Moultrie, in a relieved tone. "He is buying stock from me. A good, reliable oil stock."

"Is there one?" quizzed Cardona gruffly. "That doesn't sound so good, Moultrie. When was this fellow Urvin due here?"

"He's due now," returned Moultrie.

"We'll wait a while, then," decided Cardona. "Maybe we can chat a bit while we're waiting. So you sell good stock, eh, Moultrie?"

The man nodded.

"You buy stock, of course?"

Again Moultrie nodded.

"Say something," growled the detective. "What kind of stock, for instance? Ever in on any really big deals?"

"Yes," said Moultrie nervously. "Er - I should say seldom. Pardon me if I appear worried. This was an important deal tonight - this one with Urvin."

"Half past ten," mused Cardona. "An odd time for a business deal."

"It is unusual," agreed Moultrie, affecting a grin. "Urvin had to go to Hartford. I didn't expect him until now. He set the time for this appointment."

"What sort of a fellow is this man Urvin?" asked Cardona casually. "What's his occupation? Is he a professional man?"

"I don't know a thing about him," insisted Moultrie. "He came here as a stranger, only last night. Said that he had money to invest. Say" - the man's tone became suddenly defiant - "what's going on, anyway? Is this a police grill?"

"May I use your telephone?" questioned Cardona quietly.

Moultrie waved his hand toward the instrument, which rested on the table. Cardona lifted the receiver, and called detective headquarters. He spoke to Markham.

"This is Cardona," informed Joe. "Markham, I want you to look up a man named Hugo Urvin. He's late for an appointment down here... Yes, I'm at Moultrie's... Find out where Urvin lives, and run up there... No, don't telephone. Go to his place, if you can locate it."

Cardona was thumbing the pages of a telephone directory while he talked. He found Urvin's listing, noted the name of the apartment, and gave it to Markham over the wire.

"I'm going back to headquarters," added Cardona emphatically. "I'll be waiting there when you return."

THE detective hung up the receiver and looked at David Moultrie. There was something about the stock manipulator's ugly, big-mouthed countenance that Cardona did not like.

The detective decided to play an unusual ruse; one which he had often worked before. The first step was to suddenly show his hand; the second - to give his quarry an unexpected opportunity.

"So you sell stocks, eh?" questioned Cardona. "Well, we're interested in some funny business that's going on in that line. Have you any customers who have been trying to buy shares of a stock called Huxley Corporation?"

"Not that I can recall," returned Moultrie. The man was on his guard now. "There are so many stocks -"

"I know," nodded Cardona. "Well, if you know anything about this Huxley stock, I want to find it out. If this fellow Urvin says that he is going to buy some, I'll have some more questions to ask you. But Urvin's not the only one -"

Cardona's eyes were on the door to the entry. With an abrupt ending to his statement, the detective went to the door and closed it as he departed. Out of view from David Moultrie, he clicked the latch of the outer door so that he could reopen it. Cardona closed the door and crouched in the corridor beyond.

The detective was timing his actions. He had given David Moultrie something to worry about. If the stock manipulator was involved in some criminal activity, it was a sure bet that he would now behave suspiciously.

Perhaps he would sneak to the corridor; perhaps he would try to call someone by telephone. Cardona had paved the way for a call to Urvin by dispatching Markham to the other man's apartment.

Whatever happened, Cardona was ready to pounce in at the earliest moment. The detective rested his hand upon the doorknob. He had handled cases like this before. He would give David Moultrie at least three minutes.

Three minutes! Much could happen in that space of time! Within his apartment, David Moultrie, at his table, was totally oblivious to a menace which threatened him. From the narrow space between the huge bookcase and the ceiling, long, tentacles arms were extending.

Then came the body - a rounded shape in contrast to the spiderlike arms. An evil form hung forward, ready for a tremendous spring. Its target was David Moultrie, five feet beneath. One fierce leap; this creature could crush its unsuspecting prey with one terrific swoop!

Moultrie was staring dully toward the half-opened door of the bedroom, which lay straight ahead. He fancied that the blackness there was impenetrable. It seemed to be a warning of impending danger.

Moultrie half arose from his table. At the same instant, the creature from the bookcase launched itself on a terrible leap. Simultaneously, a terrific roar issued from the darkness of the bedroom; with it came a long flash of flame.

David Moultrie cowered as he cried aloud in startled fear. The long-limbed creature that was diving forward seemed to spin sidewise in mid-air. Its spidery shape struck Moultrie on the shoulder, and staggered the frightened man; then the misshapen body plunged against the top of the table and hurtled to the floor.

The door burst open. Joe Cardona, revolver in hand, leaped into the room. The detective stopped short as he saw Moultrie cringing against the bookcase staring at the writhing, spidery creature upon the floor.

Cardona looked toward the top of the bookcase; then to the half-opened bedroom door. The heavy roar of the automatic was still echoing in his ears. The truth dawned upon the detective.

Someone - a being of amazing skill and foresight - had been awaiting this event. A steady hand had aimed at this strange creature who had been dropping down upon an unsuspecting man below.

The Shadow, unfailing in his power, had delivered death to Chun Shi, the Crafty!

CHAPTER XXII. THE LAW MOVES

DETECTIVE JOE CARDONA was facing David Moultrie across the table in the stock manipulator's living room. Men were coming from headquarters in answer to Cardona's summons. Orders had been left for Markham to relay a call when he reported from Urvin's.

Cardona had searched the bedroom to find it empty. The detective had expected as much. The window, opening beside a fire tower, had offered quick egress for The Shadow. Cardona was concerned now with the man before him.

"Come clean," growled the detective. "Better spill all you know about this."

"They were after me!" blurted Moultrie, staring at Cardona with a wild gaze. "Out to get me like they got Hartnett - Goodall - Schofield -"

"Who was out to get you?"

"I'll tell you!" Moultrie's voice was a hoarse scream. "It was Doctor Zelka - Ward Zelka! I was the only one left who would know about - about the chance to clean up on Huxley stock. He - he was afraid I'd blab to someone who -"

"Zelka," observed Cardona. "So that's the name of your crony, eh?"

"He was playing this alone, I tell you!" gasped Moultrie. "I was afraid he was doing all this. But I wasn't sure - until I saw him last night. Even then, I was doubtful. I had no proof.

"He had Huxley stock. He wanted me to buy him more. Schofield wouldn't play the game. That's why Zelka must have grabbed him - after he killed the others. Zelka wanted me dead, too."

Moultrie pointed to Chun Shi's body as he spoke. Cardona was forced to nod at the sight of the proof which the frenzied man indicated. This creature was a murderous one, a link with that fiendish yellow face which Cardona had seen driving away from Schofield's mansion.

Someone was rapping at the door. Cardona admitted two detectives. After a few brief instructions regarding the body of Chun Shi, Cardona again contemplated David Moultrie.

"All right," announced the detective, "you say you're on the level. This looks like a break for you. Someone thought enough of your welfare to bag this big spider from the other room. Instead of being dead, you're talking. So Ward Zelka is the man we want, eh? What about this Hugo Urvin?"

"I don't know a thing about him," confessed Moultrie. "I - I don't see how he could be mixed in it. He came here to talk about oil stocks."

Cardona's gaze rose to the top of the bookcase. The sleuth saw what Moultrie had ignored; that a murderer planted there might well have been informed of this strategic spot.

"Was Zelka ever in this apartment?" quizzed Cardona suddenly.

"Not that I know of," returned Moultrie.

Cardona smiled. He was beginning to be convinced of Moultrie's absolute innocence. The detective pondered as he rested his hand upon the telephone. Suddenly, the bell rang. Cardona raised the receiver. It was Markham.

"What!" Cardona's voice was tense. "Dead? How? Looks like a poison case? Stay there... Yes... Keep your men with you... Attempted murder down here..."

Joe Cardona replaced the receiver and looked directly at David Moultrie. He saw a look of dumbfoundedness upon the big-mouthed face.

"Hugo Urvin is dead," declared Cardona quietly. "Murdered. In his own apartment. Listen, now, Moultrie. Give me the dope on this guy Zelka. I'm going to move to get him."

WHILE Joe Cardona was discussing the affairs of Doctor Ward Zelka, the physician, himself, was entering his own apartment. He had come from the opposite direction tonight, and had apparently not observed the confusion which existed outside of the near-by building in which Hugo Urvin had died.

As Zelka closed the door of his apartment, his foot slid against a piece of paper on the floor. The physician turned on the light and picked up a folded note. He opened it, and a stern glint appeared in his eyes as he scanned the Chinese characters which adorned the page.

Strolling across the floor, Zelka again read the note; then rolled it between his palms and tossed it into the wastebasket. He sat down, adjusted a cigarette in his holder, and emitted an odd chuckle.

A curling smile flickered on the physician's lips. His sallow face was crafty in the gloomy room. Ward Zelka glanced at his watch.

Quietly, the physician picked up the desk telephone and dialed a number. He was calling the apartment of David Moultrie. He heard the bell ringing, and he nodded with a wise smile. Then, to his surprise, a voice answered.

The tones were those of David Moultrie, but Zelka was quick to notice a forced sound in the voice. He heard Moultrie demanding to know who was on the wire.

"Hello," remarked Zelka quietly. "Tell me, Moultrie, is anyone there with you at present?... Yes... This is Doctor Zelka..."

The physician heard a gasp that was evidently partially covered by a hand pressed over the mouthpiece at the other end of the wire. Then came a gruff, demanding voice. A look of alarm appeared momentarily upon Zelka's face. The physician dropped the desk phone on the hook.

The police were at David Moultrie's. Zelka had identified the gruff voice as of a detective. Zelka saw a menace in the presence of the law. He knew well that other sleuths might be on their way here. In Manhattan, the forces of the law move swiftly. Yanking open a desk drawer, Doctor Zelka seized a bundle of papers. He grabbed his hat and overcoat. He hastened from the apartment, not waiting long enough to extinguish the corner lamp. He did not go toward the elevator; instead, he headed for the fire tower.

Minutes drifted. The door opened and a figure entered the deserted apartment. The Shadow came into the range of light. A keen, spectral observer, he saw the opened drawer. His searching eyes looked

everywhere.

Standing by the desk, The Shadow glanced downward. He spotted the crumpled ball of paper which Zelka had so unwisely left in the wastebasket.

The Shadow understood. Zelka, upon entering here, had been calm and secure of mind. He had tossed some message into the basket, figuring that no one could ever find it; then, in sudden haste after a startling discovery, he had neglected to carry the piece of paper with him.

The gloved hand of The Shadow plucked the wad from the basket. The paper crinkled as The Shadow smoothed it. The keen eyes scanned the Chinese inscription. Instantly, The Shadow knew who had delivered this message here.

Chun Shi!

The terse statement of success at Hugo Urvin's. An announcement that the crafty slayer had departed for his scheduled destination at David Moultrie's. The words were written with the precision of a report sheet. A soft laugh came from hidden lips as The Shadow continued to scan the paper. Then, suddenly, the gloved hand crumpled the paper, and thrust it out of sight beneath the black cloak.

Swiftly, The Shadow gained the door of the apartment. His tall figure glided past a turn in the corridor, just as Detective Sergeant Markham and two other men arrived upon the scene. The trio had come without undue noise; yet the keen ears of The Shadow had sensed their approach.

The Shadow, like Doctor Zelka, was gone. The darkness of Manhattan had swallowed the fleeing physician and the black-garbed master as well. Markham had found an empty apartment. The Shadow had taken the only clew!

LIGHTS of Chinatown were glimmering. A dark blotch loomed along the yellowish sidewalk at an obscure corner not far from the center of this district. It was the only sign of The Shadow's presence.

Eyes peered into shops along a narrow alley. The Shadow, firm in the knowledge that crime was halted for the time, had come hither to burrow deeply into the secret ways of Kwa, the Living Joss.

Hugo Urvin had died tonight. David Moultrie had been saved from doom. Doctor Ward Zelka had disappeared. The Shadow, knowing all these facts from his own activities, had begun a new and emphatic step - from now on, he would seek the lair of Kwa!

The law had moved. Its mechanism, started by Detective Joe Cardona, was in heavy action now. But The Shadow had moved ahead of the law!

CHAPTER XXIII. CARDONA'S STRATEGY

THE next night found Detective Joe Cardona engaged in conference with Inspector Timothy Klein. The star sleuth was emphatically propounding his beliefs regarding the disappearance of Doctor Ward Zelka.

"Moultrie has told us plenty," he informed the inspector. "He and Zelka stood in line to make some real dough if Hartnett, Goodall, and Schofield were out. Zelka mentioned that very fact, so Moultrie says.

"Then two men died and one disappeared. Moultrie was ready to squeal, but he didn't know for sure. He was afraid it would put him in wrong because Zelka was so foxy. He's given us the Chinese tie-up. Zelka is pretty near to being a Chinaman himself. Knows the language; spent years in China."

"Good work," commented Klein.

"Now here's the line-up," insisted Cardona. "There's only one way it could have been worked. A big shot in Chinatown - a smart man buried there - giving orders to the Chinese. Believe me, that's what Zelka has been doing."

"Evidence?" questioned Klein.

"I've been looking into matters down there," remarked Cardona. "No luck, until late last night. Then, just after all this had come out, one of my men came in to tell me that he had gotten wind of some big Mogul down in the district. Some fellow who has them woozy."

"What else?"

"That's all. No definite clues. But I'm after one; and I'm playing a hunch. Listen, inspector. This guy, Hugo Urvin. He must have been in it kind of deep. That funny way he was poisoned - well, I think he picked up something down in Chinatown."

"You mean he may have contacted with some Chinese leader?"

"That's it. Now we can't find out anything from them. But a great idea hit me. There aren't many Americans around Chinatown. All right; any Americans down there would be the best ones to spot another American, wouldn't they?"

"Yes," agreed Klein, "but you're talking in circles, Joe. You just said there are no Americans down there -"

"Not many living down there," interrupted Cardona, with a wise grin, "but some who are there a lot. Those fellows that work as guides on the big Chinatown busses."

"Say, Joe!"

"Yes," smiled Cardona, "I've got them coming in to see the body. Over at the morgue - one by one - to look at Hugo Urvin. That's where I'm headed right now. Markham is on the job, talking with the first ones who have come in."

WHEN Joe Cardona reached the morgue, he was greeted by Markham. The detective sergeant seemed excited. He hurried Cardona to the room where Hugo Urvin's body lay. A uniformed Chinatown guide was looking at the inert form.

"This is the guy," he asserted, as the sleuths appeared beside him.

"Who?" questioned Cardona.

"The bloke who made about three trips with me," responded the guide. "Say - what do you want to know about him?"

"We figure he had business in Chinatown," declared Cardona. "You say he was on your bus three trips. Did he act suspiciously at any time?"

"Suspiciously?" queried the guide. "Say - after you've seen Chinatown once - the way we show it - you've seen it forever. This is the first mug I ever saw make a repeat trip - that is, alone. That's suspicious, ain't it?"

"All right," admitted Cardona. "But I want to know what he did down there."

"He just trailed along with us. That's all."

"No place where he could have stopped off to see anyone? No way he could have received some message - some object, maybe, that could have killed him with a deadly poison?"

The guide was slowly shaking his head. Suddenly he began to blink. He gripped Cardona's arm excitedly, and blurted forth a sudden idea.

"I got it!" was the guide's cry. "There's a phony Buddhist temple down there - a racket run by a man named Chon Look. Say - there's something that guy does that I've never figured out. Every now and then he gives stuff away - free packages - no charge - to the sight-seers.

"There's no telling when he's going to do it. I just figured it was some fool idea. You can't ever figure what the Chinese are thinking about anyway. But maybe this guy got a package there. Come to think of it, I believe I did see Chon Look pass him one."

"That's enough." Cardona turned to Markham. "We'll go down there and raid this temple. No - wait a moment. What kind of a place is it?"

"Nothing but one room," explained the guide. "I don't know what's in back of it -"

"Make a diagram," ordered Cardona. "You know the district. Show me streets and all."

The guide went to a table, and drew a rough map. Cardona noticed that the shrine of Chon Look fronted on a narrow street, midway in a block. The detective tapped the diagram with his finger.

"There may be a hide-out in back of Chon Look's," asserted the detective. "If there is, it will have another entrance. Not on this lighted street here - but we'll have the regular patrol watching there anyway.

"We're going to spread-out, Markham. We're not going down there in wagons. We'll load a whole crew of plain-clothes men in this fellow's bus, and let him take us to the temple. When we get there, we spread. Get it? Into every door on those three streets, with the men in uniform on the fourth side. Come along!"

HALF an hour later, a big Chinatown bus rolled into a garage. More than thirty men piled through the door, and rested back against the comfortable cushions.

The huge vehicle lumbered to Forty-second Street. It went eastward on that thoroughfare to Broadway. It took up the usual route toward Chinatown. The guide at the front seat began his usual jocular line of patter as he pointed out the sights of Manhattan.

The bus stopped on the outskirts of the Chinese district. The men filed forth.

Herding together, they followed the guide as he turned into a narrow alley toward the twinkling lights of Chinatown.

Close behind the guide was Detective Joe Cardona, with Markham at his side. The detail was on its way to the Buddhist shrine of Chon Look.

A spectacular raid was on tonight - one that had been planned by a clever sleuth. Joe Cardona had stolen an idea from the Living Joss. He was using Kwa's own method of bringing Americans to Chinatown in a fashion that would avoid suspicion.

Where Kwa had smuggled in one passenger aboard a bus, Cardona had unloaded a raiding squad of thirty men!

CHAPTER XXIV. THE SHADOW ADVANCES

WHILE Joe Cardona and his men were approaching the lighted streets of Chinatown, a quiet-faced American was standing in the shop of Soy Foon. His keen eyes, peering through the door of the back room, were noticing the curio rack against the wall.

The American strolled away. He reached the darkness of a side alley. He disappeared in a tiny space between two walls. He did not emerge. In his place came a swish as the folds of a cloak swept through the air.

The Shadow was here in Chinatown.

Like Joe Cardona, The Shadow had divined that there must be a hidden room behind the Buddhist shrine of Chon Look. Also, The Shadow knew that the secret apartment would have another outlet.

As a visitor to the shrine, The Shadow had noticed the odd-shaped rack against the wall. He had identified it as the probable entrance to a secret passage. In the shop of Soy Foon, a block away, The Shadow had spotted another rack which was the exact replica of the one in the shrine.

The secret portals to Kwa's hidden temple! The Shadow knew them both. Yet he had made no attempt to enter either one. Instead, he had searched for another and more subtle way of entrance.

Well did The Shadow know that the mysterious man who posed as a Living Joss would never go in and out by either of these routes. Some other passage must exist - one that would be known to Kwa alone!

A soft laugh came from hidden lips. The Shadow had searched long to find that spot - not in the block where both the shrine and the curio shop were located, but in places that were more remote.

Tonight, The Shadow had gained success. He was ready to invade the hidden lair of Kwa. But before he set out upon that mission, The Shadow had come to see that all was well at Soy Foon's and Chon Look's.

By summoning two agents, The Shadow could have men watch those outlets while he, himself, investigated the path which belonged to Kwa alone.

Reaching the alleyway upon which the Buddhist shrine fronted, The Shadow drew back into the darkness of a wall. A party of sight-seers were approaching, headed by a guide. As The Shadow watched, the uniformed man turned into the doorway that led to the Buddhist shrine. Three persons continued with him. The rest kept on!

There was a little restaurant between the shrine and the corner. One man dropped off there. The rest continued. With soft-shoe tread, they moved past the spot where the tall form was shrouded in blackness. Two men stopped at the corner. The rest turned.

WITH incredible stealth, the form of The Shadow flitted toward the other side of the alley. It moved along in darkness past the Buddhist shrine, and paused at the next corner on the edge of the lighted street.

Keen eyes saw men in blue uniform strolling along the thoroughfare. A whispered laugh came from The Shadow's lips. Silently, the mysterious personage in black returned along the alley, turned one corner, then another, and gained a last view of Soy Foon's curio shop.

There, as everywhere else, men were stationed. They were waiting for a signal. The Shadow glided into the darkness of a dingy alley that was no more than six feet in width. He was leaving the beleaguered

block.

An eerie laugh. The Shadow knew. Cardona and his detectives were acting on some clew. They were attacking from three sides, with police patrolling the fourth. Without realizing it, they were working in conjunction with The Shadow!

What need for watching agents now? The only need was haste. A massed attack would effectively block the passages from Chon Look's and Soy Foon's; but the confusion would be a warning to Kwa. When Cardona and the detectives eventually reached the domain of the Living Joss, they would be too late to capture the superfiend.

There lay The Shadow's task. He, the phantom of darkness, would time his invasion with that of the detectives. It was the very situation that The Shadow had desired - to come face to face with Kwa, the Living Joss!

The black shape was invisible in the gloom of a silent alley far from the surrounded block. A tiny flashlight gleamed and cast a disk of light the size of a silver dollar. This glow revealed a grating against the bottom of a deserted building.

The light went out. Firm hands raised the grate. A lithe form glided downward. The iron barrier slipped slowly and softly into place. In the front compartment of a small cellar - a chamber blocked from the rest of this building's basement - the hands of The Shadow were at work.

The glow of the tiny light showed a hole in the stone side of this entry. A black-gloved hand produced a slender, needle-pointed pick, and inserted it into the tiny opening. The probing steel brought a click from a hidden catch. The stone swung backward under pressure.

Down a flight of steps, the barrier closing behind him. With his flashlight casting a gleam ahead, The Shadow surveyed a narrow, musty passage that ended in a steel barrier.

That was the next obstacle in The Shadow's path. Like the first blocking wall, it would be opened by his skill.

The light glimmered as The Shadow advanced. Heading through this burrow under the streets of Chinatown, the master of darkness was penetrating toward the abode of Kwa! Should the Living Joss flee by this outlet, he would meet the powerful being who sought to thwart his evil machinations!

CHAPTER XXV. IN THE TEMPLE

A PANEL arose in the corner of Kwa's temple. A Chinaman staggered in, and the barrier dropped behind him. It was Chon Look. The usual placid face of the Buddhist was tinged with alarm.

Hurriedly, Chon Look raised the silent gong and made a soundless stroke. He waited for several seconds. The incense burners puffed, and the hideous form of Kwa appeared upon the huge taboret.

"Great Kwa!" Chon Look was gasping in his native tongue. "They are upon us! They are coming here!"

"Who is coming here?" questioned the Living Joss, in a crackled tone that seemed to indicate a knowledge of the answer.

"The police!" exclaimed Chon Look. "They came into the shrine. They began to question me. I managed to elude them; to come through the passage. They saw the entrance close behind me. They are coming -"

The Chinaman's voice faltered in its singsong lingo as a panel opened in the other corner. In dashed Soy Foon. The barrier dropped, and the merchant stopped short as he bowed solemnly to Kwa.

"They are coming here, great Kwa!" announced Soy Foon. "The police have entered my shop! I barely managed to escape them!"

A distorted chuckle came from the bulging mouth of the Living Joss. With sweeps of his arms, the figure on the big taboret indicated both the barriers.

"Open them!" he ordered. "Stand there - each of you - to greet our guests! Request that their leaders enter to speak with Kwa!"

With startled glances, Chon Look and Soy Foon looked at one another. The commands of Kwa must be obeyed. Bowing to the Living Joss, whose insidious shape was wreathed by the curling smoke of incense, each of the men moved to his respective barrier. The panels raised.

THE glare of a powerful torch came from the passage that Chon Look had followed here. Joe Cardona, at the head of his men, saw the bowing form of Chon Look. The keeper of the shrine was holding out his arms and bowing in welcome.

"You may come here," he announced in English. "My master will speak with you. But let there be a few - not many. Kwa will speak with the leaders alone."

The unexpected welcome brought Cardona to a stop. With a gruff laugh, the detective signaled to Markham and two others.

"Come with me, Markham," he ordered. "You fellows hold this panel open. The rest of you stay back - and pile in if there is any trouble."

Peering through the opening, Cardona saw the seated shape of Kwa. Chon Look stood aside to admit Cardona and Markham.

Both detectives stared in amazement at the hideous face before them. They had not dreamed that such a monstrous being could exist, even in this hidden lair in the depths of curious Chinatown.

"Others will be here" - Kwa spoke in English, his tones crackling - "and it would be wise for us to be undisturbed. They are coming through the other passage -"

He indicated the door where Soy Foon was standing. Even now, shouts were echoing along the buried corridor, a proof that detectives had entered from the shop.

Cardona motioned to Markham to watch the seated figure on the taboret. Going to the spot where Soy Foon stood, the detective shouted along the passage. His cry received a response of recognition.

"Two of you come up," called Joe. "Hold this panel. The rest of you stay back until needed."

Two detectives appeared. The pair obeyed Cardona's order. Joe Cardona joined Markham.

Together Cardona and his companion faced the Living Joss. The situation was all in favor of the sleuths. They held revolvers. Their men were ready with weapons at the panels.

The word had passed back, and the entire squad was congregating through these passages. No avenue of escape lay open to Kwa, the Living Joss. Here, in the temple, Cardona was ready to end the fantastic drama as quickly as it had begun.

"Who are you?" quizzed the sleuth. "What is this place for? What have you done with Barton Schofield?"

"I am Kwa, the Living Joss." Teeth snarled as the voice crackled. "I have nothing to do with your world. I am of China."

"Koy Shan was a Chinaman," retorted Cardona. "So was Chun Shi. Call yourself any name you wish - I know your true identity. You are not Chinese. Put up your arms" - the detective threatened with his revolver - "before I blast a bullet through your black heart - Doctor Ward Zelka!"

AS Cardona pronounced the name, an ugly snarl spat from the vile lips of Kwa. An expression of fiendish rage was manifest upon the evil face. Then came a crackling cry of challenge, as Kwa, raising his hands at Cardona's command, hurled back his reply.

"You have come to my temple" - the tone was hideous. "You have discovered my identity. You seek to capture me. You want Barton Schofield? He is my prisoner. You will never find him - never - for first you must seize Kwa, the Living Joss. That you will never do!"

The ugly form leaned backward, with a gloating chuckle. The shift of weight brought an instantaneous result.

Puff!

Thick jets of smoke burst from the incense burners. Joe Cardona, quickly recovering from his surprise, fired his revolver into the enveloping cloud of white.

The smoke cleared away. The terrible figure of Kwa was gone! Cardona's men were surging in from the passages to support their thwarted leader.

Chon Look and Soy Foon were prisoners; but Kwa was gone!

The Living Joss had vanished, but now a grim token of his evil might came in terrible retaliation against those who had come to capture Kwa. A pungent odor filled the temple. Detectives began to stagger. Joe Cardona saw Markham waver; then Joe, himself, felt the effects of an overwhelming gas.

The room rolled before his eyes. The star detective tottered and caught vainly at the taboret in front of him. Revolvers were clattering to the floor.

Death was entering this room, death in the form of a purplish vapor that was rising from the smoke-wreathed incense burners. Huddled on the floor, Joe Cardona felt the sickening sensation that comes as a forerunner to unconsciousness.

Kwa had departed; from somewhere outside this temple, he had launched a counterattack which was overpowering the huge squad of sleuths who had come here to snare him!

Death! That was Kwa's decree to Joe Cardona and his men!

CHAPTER XXVI. THE ROOM BELOW

IN a square-walled chamber directly beneath his temple, Kwa, the Living Joss, stood staring upward. Beside the superfiend were the mechanical contrivances with which he had worked his amazing feats.

A skeleton plunger, topped with a flat seat, pointed directly toward the ceiling. This was the heavy-sprung device which enabled Kwa to appear and vanish with such suddenness. The top of the plunger was designed as the solid seat of the taboret which served as the throne in Kwa's temple.

A tank was connected by a hose to jets which entered the ceiling. These supplied the incense burners. A second tank stood beside the first. Kwa had disconnected the automatic container which produced the smoke; in its place, he had quickly put the new tank, which was now pouring forth its overwhelming vapor.

The long hand of Kwa, an ugly claw with its extended finger nails, was resting on a lever which controlled the supply of deadly gas. Purple doom was rising to meet the foes of Kwa!

The glaring eyes of Kwa turned toward the wall at the right of the room. The gloating gleam vanished from those insidious orbs. That wall was the beginning of the path which this monster had designed for his escape. Slowly, the wall was spreading at the center!

Kwa held no weapon. His fiendish mind sensed an unexpected menace. Someone was coming through that barrier - some unknown enemy who had found Kwa's own underground passage! With a wild snarl, the Living Joss sprang to the opposite side of the room and clutched a lever with his clawing fist. As the right wall opened under pressure from without, this wall on the left separated also!

As Kwa dived through the spreading barrier, a black-garbed figure appeared at the opening in the opposite wall. The Shadow had broken the last barricade. He was in the heart of Kwa's domain, beneath the temple itself.

An automatic roared. Its shot was a moment too late. Kwa, with remarkable quickness, had closed the barrier through which he had escaped the menace of The Shadow.

A mocking laugh came from The Shadow's lips.

IN the dim light of this control room, the master of the night had spied the gas tank with its connected hose and opened lever. With one swift stride, The Shadow reached the instrument of death and pulled the switch. That action stopped the passage of the deadly vapor. Cardona and his men, helpless in the temple above, were saved from doom!

The Shadow turned to the barrier which Kwa had closed. The fiend had jammed it from the other side. If this way led to another secret exit, Kwa's escape would be a matter of course. The Shadow strove to wedge the curtained wall apart.

His first efforts failed. Then, with a sardonic laugh, the black-cloaked master brought forth two vials. One contained a grayish powder; the other a black substance that resembled graphite.

Sprinkling these together near the bottom of the creviced wall, The Shadow produced a small bottle and poured a liquid upon the united powders. Springing across the room, The Shadow gained the entrance through which he had forced his way. He reached the passage beyond, and shut the barrier behind him.

Long silence reigned in the control room. Then came a dull but powerful blast. The chemical action of liquid and powders had broken the barrier through which Kwa had passed. Strong fumes subsided. During that interval, The Shadow waited.

Pounding sounded from above. Cardona and his men were back at work. They were smashing down the heavy taboret. They had discovered the elevator opening in its center.

The eyes of The Shadow were peering through a narrow crevice. The slight opening closed as a detective dropped down through the hole from the ceiling. Another man followed. They called to those above. Cardona dropped through; then Markham.

The sleuths spied the broken barrier which marked the path of Kwa. They took it as the only exit to the

control room. With a call to the others to remain above, Cardona led the charge into a narrow passage.

Twenty-five feet of stone tunnel to a room at the end. Cardona uttered a cry of triumph as he reached the end, and saw a lean form sprawled upon a tawdry cot in the corner. His shout changed to apprehension as he approached the motionless figure.

This was not Kwa! It was the man whom the detective had come to rescue - Barton Schofield!

For a few moments, Cardona was afraid that the old banker was dead. But as the detective raised the gray-haired head and stared into the pallid face, Schofield's eyelids flickered, and he stared dully into the detective's eyes.

"Where is he?" questioned Cardona. "Where is Zelka - Kwa - the one we want? Which way did he go?"

Schofield was too weak to reply. One of the detectives, however, uttered a shout of discovery as he spied an open passage in the dim corner of this stonewall cell. Resting Schofield back upon the cot, Cardona hurried to the spot, and shot the rays of his torch down a short passage that ended in an abrupt turn.

Calling upon the others to follow, the ace detective took the one course which seemed available. Markham and the other sleuths followed him with drawn revolvers. Barton Schofield was alone.

Wearily, the old man tried to raise his head. His feeble efforts to find his rescuers were rewarded with increased strength. Schofield gained his feet. He saw the black opening, and tottered in that direction. He stumbled, caught himself, and straightened as he placed his hand upon a door that was open beside the exit through which the sleuths had passed.

A sudden sound made the old man turn. Looking toward the outer door, Barton Schofield saw a menacing figure garbed in black. An automatic jutted from a black-gloved fist.

The eyes of The Shadow burned; a weird, sinister laugh echoed from mocking lips!

CHAPTER XXVII. DOOM TO THE FIEND!

"KWA!"

The insidious name came from the taunting lips of The Shadow. The word was more than a name; it was an accusation. Barton Schofield cringed against the wall.

"Your doom is here," pronounced The Shadow. "You, Barton Schofield. The man who took the semblance of a fiend. You are the one who has played the part of Kwa, the Living Joss."

Schofield, cowering in pitiful fashion, tried by action to deny the charge. The Shadow's gibing mirth reverberated through the vault.

"Your dual personality was well concealed," remarked The Shadow, in a strange whisper. "You planned well, feigning yourself to be a broken old man by day, so that you could take your insidious part by night.

"Your strategy was clever. A paragon of integrity, you lived a life of strictness, surrounding yourself with men of honesty, to better mask the secret life which you preferred to lead. With Huxley Corporation stock offering easy millions, you played a cunning game.

"Westley Hartnett - Blaine Goodall" - solemnly, The Shadow named the men who had died by Kwa's insidious order - "they were your first victims. Koy Shan and Chun Shi were capable subordinates until I deprived you of their services.

"There were two others whom you planned to slay. You succeeded with one - Hugo Urvin - because he deserved to die. But David Moultrie did not die. I saved his life. I, The Shadow!"

A peculiar change was coming over Barton Schofield's face. The man was still cringing, but his features were undergoing a strange distortion, which he appeared to force. His lips were protruding; his lower jaw, disjointed, was extending. The man's eyes seemed to bulge as they took on a fiendish glare.

Barton Schofield, his double part declared by The Shadow, was assuming the hideous countenance that was the mark of Kwa, the Living Joss!

"You had a foil," resumed The Shadow, his tone more mocking than before. "Doctor Ward Zelka. A rogue, perhaps, but not a criminal. Zelka was a traveler. He knew the ways of the Chinese. He liked to stroll in Chinatown.

"He was well suited to be the scapegoat - the man whom the law would readily accept as the Living Joss. So you let Zelka live, knowing that he would quail when the time came to threaten him with death from Kwa.

"Your abduction was the step which you knew would place both Moultrie and Zelka in a hopeless position. By killing Moultrie, only Zelka would be left. Afraid of Kwa, afraid of police action, Zelka would have to flee to avoid being murdered or being declared a murderer."

BARTON SCHOFIELD, whose face was now a grotesque, livid countenance, snarled venomously. His body was swaying as though ready for a spring toward the doorway where The Shadow stood. The threat of the automatic, however, was enough to hold back the fiendishness of Kwa.

A crumpled ball of paper appeared in The Shadow's left hand. With a deft motion, the cloaked being smoothed it before the glaring eyes of Kwa.

"This was left at Zelka's," informed The Shadow. "He read its Chinese characters. He may have laughed at first, even though the message stated that Chun Shi had come from seeing one man die, and was going to slay David Moultrie.

"Then Zelka decided to find out if Moultrie had been slain. He learned that the plot had failed; but the police were in charge. He had only one course: to flee, as the note from Kwa had ordered him."

The laugh of The Shadow was sibilant.

"You knew," pronounced the being in black, "that Moultrie still lived. You were waiting for another opportunity. The police came here tonight. You tricked them. They still believe that Kwa is Ward Zelka.

"Your present ruse is to let them rescue you as Barton Schofield. Just now you realized that you could entrap the ones who had found you, and make another effort to escape. But you have faced The Shadow!

"I, The Shadow, have long since known the truth. A bounding figure upon the lawn of your mansion. That was an inkling. You planned a real abduction; to have Koy Shan bring you to Soy Foon, that he might lay you helpless in the temple of Kwa, where you, as Kwa's prisoner, would become the Living Joss himself!

"The abductors failed. Koy Shan died. You took the part of Kwa yourself, and fled. Others thought that Kwa had carried Barton Schofield with him. I, The Shadow, alone divined the truth!"

Barton Schofield was a terrible sight. His fierce face, his clawing hands, his bounding form that bobbed up and down in rage - these were the proofs of the fiendish nature which he had so cleverly disguised from the world.

The Shadow laughed.

"If you wish to play the part of Kwa" - the whisper from the hidden lips was taunting - "put on the trappings which you have so lately discarded. You have hidden them, but you need them now. Those false upper teeth - those long, imitation finger nails - the grotesque robes of the Living Joss! Put them on to add fully to your evil personality!"

With a monstrous snarl, Barton Schofield advanced upon The Shadow. Three long bounds brought him almost to the muzzle of the menacing automatic. There, this man who had played Kwa came to a cowering halt. That looming weapon, with its huge opening; those steady, burning eyes - these were threats which stopped him.

BACKING away, Schofield cowered toward the opening in the corner of the room. His face was still livid, and suddenly a snarl of joy escaped his insidious lips. The Shadow had moved backward; the being in black was lost in darkness!

About to pounce forward, Schofield hesitated; then turned. He saw the reason for The Shadow's quiet departure. The detectives, with Cardona at their head, were coming from the hole in the wall after a fruitless search down a blind passage!

Cardona blurted an amazed cry as he saw the face of Kwa upon the crouching figure in the center of the vaulted room. Then, as Cardona raised his revolver, Barton Schofield, as yet unrecognized by the detective, leaped forward and grappled with the sleuth.

The fiendish attack hurled Cardona backward; but as he staggered into the arms of Markham, who was behind him, Cardona fired. Furious hands clawed at his face. The fingers clutched Cardona's throat; then their power weakened. The attacking monster toppled to the floor.

"Schofield! Where is he?"

Cardona looked toward the couch as he uttered this cry; then his gaze moved about the room, and finally centered upon the figure which was lying motionless at his feet. In the dead face of Kwa, Cardona caught the strange resemblance.

"It's Schofield" cried the detective. "The old man was the fiend. Schofield, himself! It is incredible!"

The other men corroborated the discovery. In death, the semblance of fiendishness was slowly withering from Barton Schofield's visage. The countenance of Kwa was losing its gruesome features as the facial muscles relaxed.

"Carry him up," ordered Joe Cardona. "Search the place; get all the evidence we can discover. The robe he wore - anything else. Those tanks -"

CARDONA stood alone in the vaulted room after the others had acted. He knew now that Doctor Ward Zelka was innocent; that the physician had been forced to flee because of the mesh which Barton Schofield had curled about him.

The detective went forward, out of the vaulted room, up to the passage where the controls were located. The other sleuths, headed by Markham, had pushed Schofield's body up through the trap that led into the temple. They had taken the tanks along, to add them to the taboret and a gong of silence which had a transparent rubbery surface upon its face of brass.

Trophies of the superfiend! Cardona was not considering those items. The detective was staring at a new opening which had mysteriously appeared on the other side of the control room.

This must lead to the secret exit which the fiend had sought! Who had been there to stop his escape? Cardona learned the answer as he stepped forward to investigate the new passage.

From the hollow spaces of a stonewalled corridor came the sinister tone of a distant laugh. Cardona knew the author of that weird mirth. He knew the meaning of the sibilant echoes that persisted like the dying cries of a host of unseen beings.

The Shadow, master of darkness, had laughed. His tones of mystery were a death knell. They were the symbolic notes of triumphant justice - justice aided by The Shadow.

The Shadow had brought doom to the most insidious plotter who had ever dwelt in New York's Chinatown. The might of The Shadow had ended the crimes of Kwa, the Living Joss!

THE END