

An Opium Den

"Gambling and opium den discovered, after search by police of ten years. Open to public this week," read Ronald Thornton to his companion. "That would be jolly fun, let's go this afternoon."

His companion, an older man by some six years, bit his lip and made no answer.

The two were seated in a large, comfortable library, in front of an open fire. One could see at once that the room was a doctor's study. The books on the book-lined walls were large and official looking. Around the wall hung diplomas and photographs of college classes.

The friends had been at college together fifteen years before. The older man, Dr. Ballard, had gone to San Francisco immediately after graduation, and had made a name for himself, and, incidentally, money. Ronald had been a Sophomore at the time of his comrade's departure and after his college course, having inherited his uncle's fortune, had completed his education in Europe. "Today was their first visit together since "old college days."

Ronald was one who must be on the go, must be amused, and he had come to Frisco to be "shown the town," and didn't intend to waste any time.

"Come on, let's go now," he repeated, starting for the hall. The doctor made some excuse about the "rain," and "too bad day," but he was hustled out of the chair, into his overcoat and out into the storm.

They soon reached China-town, and stopping only to secure a guide, began the descent to the dens below. Everything was black and grimy. They passed along narrow corridors and whenever a door was opened a little electric bell rang out.

From almost every corner the face of a wrinkled Chinaman appeared, vanishing at sight of the guide.

It seemed as though they had gone miles, when at last the guide opened a door and they entered a room ablaze with lights, in which were four large tables, and, on these lay cues and balls as though a game had been in progress. Ronald remarked this and wondered where the players had gone. In answer the guide went to the side