

of a table, put his hand underneath, pushed a button and a panel of the wall moved noiselessly to one side, leaving an opening as large as a door. "Upon hearing a noise the players leave, and in this way have evaded the police," he explained.

They passed through this opening and into the hall, from which opened a little dark room. Another panel was opened, and the sight that met their eyes was awful. Four or five Chinamen and at least six women were sitting on the floor, smoking opium. The room was so filled with smoke and smell they did not enter. It was beautifully furnished with tapestries, and the floor was strewn with exquisite rugs and mats.

Ronald was very much interested at the sight and turned to his comrade to make a remark, but he stopped and turned pale. The doctor, every muscle contracted, as white as death, eyes dilated, was peering into a darkened corner of the den. Ronald followed his gaze and saw through the smoke the face and arms of a woman. Her face looked care-worn and tired; upon closer observation she seemed to have the features of an American. Waiting no longer, Ronald nodded to the guide and taking his friend's arm led him away through the passages, out onto the street.

"Ronald," Ballard hesitated and looked into the fire. Dinner was over and they were again in the library. This was the first attempt at conversation the doctor had made since their afternoon visit. "You wonder why I live alone. Now I'll tell you." Again he paused.

"Ten years ago tomorrow,"—he got up, went to the writing-desk and brought out a little wooden box, handed it to his friend, who turned the key and opened it. In it was a picture of a beautiful girl about twenty, a wedding-ring and a wedding invitation. In heavy type on the latter was inscribed,

"Miss Margaret Fields

to

Dr. Allan Ballard."

He went on, "About two weeks before the date on that invitation we started 'to do' Chinatown. Entering a room we gave our order.

"A big, surly Chinaman came to the door, beckoned, and said he had something to show me and I went. When I came back she was gone.

"I had given her a queer little Indian bracelet that afternoon, which she promised to wear always. I sought for years. I have