

BLIND-FOLDED
By EARLE ASHLEY WILCOIT
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SYNOPSIS.

Giles Dudley arrived in San Francisco to join his friend and distant relative Henry Wilton, whom he was to assist in an important and mysterious task, and who accompanied Dudley on the ferry boat trip into the city. The remarkable resemblance of the two men is noted and commented on by passengers on the ferry. There was a man with eagle eyes, which sends a thrill through Dudley. Wilton postpones an explanation of the strange arrangement Dudley is to perform, but occurrences cause him to know it is one of no ordinary meaning. Dudley is summoned to the morgue and there finds the dead body of his friend Henry Wilton. And thus Wilton dies without ever explaining to Dudley the puzzling work he was to perform in San Francisco. In order to discover the secret mission his friend had entrusted to him, Dudley continues his disguise and pretends himself to be known as Henry Wilton. He learns that there is a boy whom he is charged with securing and protecting. Dudley, mistaken for Wilton, is employed by Knapp to assist in a stock brokerage deal. Giles Dudley finds himself chained in a room with Mother Barton who makes a confidant of him. He can learn nothing about the mysterious boy further than that it is Tim Terrell and Dicky Meeke who are after him. Dudley visits the home of Knapp and is attracted by the beauty of Luella, his daughter. Slipping through the window he enters the house. The party in the parlor is being shadowed by Terrell, Luella and Dudley are cut off from the rest of the party and imprisoned in a hallway behind an iron-bound door. Three Chinese ruffians approach the imprisoned couple. A battle ensues. One is knocked down, Giles begins firing. Tim Terrell is seen in the mob. A newly formed mob is checked by shots from Giles' revolver. Police Captain Carson enters the door with an ax and the couple is rescued. Luella thanks Giles Dudley for saving her life. Giles appears at the office with no traces of the previous night's debauch. Following his instructions Dudley has a notable day in the stock exchange, selling "Cross" shares and buying Omega, the object being to crush Decker. Knapp's hated rival, Dudley discovers that he loves Luella Knapp. Mother Barton tells Giles Dudley that "they've discovered where the boy is." The mysterious unknown woman employer of Dudley leads him by appointment with "the boy" who is turned over to Dudley with his guards and they drive with him to the ferry boat to take a train out of the city. Dudley and his faithful guard convey "the boy" by train to the village of Livermore, as per the written instructions. The party is followed. Soon after the party is quartered in the hotel a special train arrives in Livermore. The "gang" including Dicky Meeke and Tim Terrell, lay siege to the hotel and endeavor to capture "the boy" who comes forward to see the light. "Tricked again," cries Tim Terrell, when he sees the youngster's face. "It's the wrong boy." Dudley and Terrell meet in battle of man to man. Dudley is knocked unconscious by Terrell's assistant, and awakes to find himself in a hotel room under care of his guards. The hotel is guarded by Terrell's men who are instructed to kill the first man who tries to escape. Dudley gives the note to the one-eyed man. The boy is left behind and Dudley and his remaining guards make their escape by horseback and by stealing a locomotive. Dodderidge Knapp and Decker meet face to face on the stock exchange. Decker is defeated. Dudley and Knapp prevent a coup to control the directors and declare Knapp's stock invalid. Mother Barton is mortally wounded and dies before she can tell Dudley the secret of his strange mission. The Davis street den is visited to rescue Barkhouse. A diagram that partially explains Dudley's mission is found. Barkhouse is released.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—Continued.
"I did not need it till Sunday," continued Mrs. Knapp. "I have been worried much at the situation of the boy, but I did not dare go near him. Henry and I decided that his hiding place was not safe. We had talked of moving him a few days before you came. When I found that Henry had disappeared I was anxious to make the change, but I could not venture to attempt it until the others were out of town, for I knew I was watched. Then I was assured from Mother Barton that they did not know where the boy was hidden, and I let the matter rest. But a few days ago—on Saturday—she sent me word that she thought they had found the place. Then it came to me to send you to Livermore with the other boy—oh, I hope no harm came to the little fellow," she exclaimed anxiously.

"He's safe in my rooms in charge of Wainwright," I said. "He got back on the morning train, and can be had for the asking."
"Oh, I'm so glad," said Mrs. Knapp. "I was afraid something would happen to him, but I had to take desperate chances. Well, you see my plan succeeded. They all followed you. But when I went to the hiding place the boy was gone. Henry had moved him weeks ago, and had died before he could tell me. Then I thought you might know more than you had told me—that Henry Wilton might have got you to help him when he made the change, and I wrote to you."

"And the key," I said, remembering the expression of the note. "Did you mean this diagram?"
"No," said Mrs. Knapp. "I meant the key to our cipher code. I was looking over Henry's letters for some hint of a hiding place and could not find the key to the cipher. I thought you might have given one. I found mine this afternoon, though, and there was no need of it, so it didn't matter after all."
The pitting and tossing of the boat had ceased. And, a minute later, with clang of bells and groan of engine we were at the wharf and were helped ashore.

"Tell the captain to wait here for us with fresh up," said Mrs. Knapp. "The carriage should be somewhere around here," she continued, peering anxiously about as we reached the foot of the wharf.
"This way," said a familiar voice, and a man stepped from the shadow. "Dicky Nah!" I exclaimed.
"Mr. Wilton!" mimicked Dicky. "But it's just as well not to speak so

loud. Here you are. I put the hack's lights out just to escape unpleasant remark."
Mrs. Knapp entered the carriage and called to me to follow her.
I remembered Mother Barton's warnings and my doubts of Dicky Nah.
"You're certain you know where you are going?" I asked him in an undertone.
"No, I'm not," said Dicky frankly. "I've found a man who says he knows. We are to meet him. We'll get there between 3 and 4 o'clock. He won't say another word to anybody but her or you. I guess he knows what he is about."
"Well, keep your eyes open. Meeker's gang is ahead of us. Is the driver reliable?"
"Right as a judge," said Dicky cheerfully. "Now, if you'll get in with madame we won't be wasting time here."

I stepped into the carriage. Dicky Nah closed the door softly and climbed on the seat by the driver, and in a moment we were rolling up Broadway in the gloomy stillness of the early morning hour.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Heart of the Mystery.
I was in the shadow of the mystery. A hundred questions rose to my lips; but behind them all frowned the grim wolf-visage of Dodderidge Knapp, and I could not find the courage that could make me speak to them.
"Mrs. Knapp," I said, "you have called me by my name. I had almost

"I should think she might. I had told her the whole story."
"She is used to keeping secrets, I suppose," replied Mrs. Knapp. "But I must reward her well for what she has done."
"She is beyond fear or reward."
"Dead!" cried Mrs. Knapp in a shocked voice. "And how?"
"She died, I fear, because she befriended me." And then I told her the story of Mother Barton's end.
"Poor creature!" said Mrs. Knapp sadly. "Yet perhaps it is better so. She has died in doing a good act."
The carriage had been rolling along swiftly. Despite the rain the streets were smooth and hard, and we made rapid progress. We had crossed a bridge, and with many turns made a course toward the southeast. Now the ground became softer, and progress was slow. An interminable array of trees lined the way on both sides, and to my impatient imagination stretched for miles before us. Then the road became better, the horses trotted briskly forward again, their hoofs patterling dully on the softened ground.
"All the better," I thought, "it's as good as a muffler if any one is listening for us."
"Here's the place," came the voice of Dicky, giving direction to the driver; and the carriage slackened pace and stopped. Looking out I saw that we were at a division of the road where a two-story house faced both of the branching ways.
"You'd better come out," said Dicky at the door, addressing his remark to me. "He was to meet us here."
"Be careful," cautioned Mrs. Knapp. I kept my hand on the revolver that lay in my overcoat pocket, and walked with Dicky on to the porch. It was a common roadside saloon, and at this hour it appeared wholly deserted. Even the dog, without which I knew no roadside saloon could exist, was as silent as its owners.
"Here's a go!" said Dicky. "He was to meet us, sure. What time have you got?"
I struck a match in a corner and looked at my watch by its flare.
"Five minutes to three."
"Whew!" he whispered, "we're regularly done. I thought he had a bad



"NO—I CAN CARRY HIM—I WANT TO CARRY HIM."

forgotten that I had ever borne it. I have lived more in the last month than in the 25 years that I remember before it, and I have almost come to think that the old name belongs to some one else. May I ask how you got hold of it?"
"It was simple enough. Henry had told me about you. I remembered that you were coming from the same town he had come from. I telegraphed to an agent in Boston. He went up to your place, made his inquiries and telegraphed me. I suppose you will be pleased to know," she continued with a droll affection of malice in her voice, "that he mailed me your full history as gathered from the town pump. It is at the house now."
"I tried to get something out of Mother Barton concerning you," continued Mrs. Knapp. "I even went so far as to see her once."
"I don't think you got any more out of her than she wanted to tell."
"Indeed I did not. I was afraid Mr. Richmond had not gone about it the right way. You know Mr. Richmond acted as my agent with her?"
"No, I didn't know. She was as close-mouthed with me as with you, I think."
"Well, I saw her. I wanted to get what information she had of you and of Henry."
"She had a good deal of it, if she wanted to give it up."
"So I suppose. But she was too clever for me. She spoke well of you, but not a word could I get from her about Henry. Yet she gave me the idea that she knew much."

eye when I was bargaining with him." I wondered if Dicky had a hand in the trick, if trick it should prove to be.
"Well," said Dicky dubiously, "I think I know where the fellow would have taken us. I trailed him this afternoon, and I'll lay two to one that I can pick out the right road."
"Is this the third road from Brooklyn?" I asked, pointing to the track that led to the left.
"I reckon so," said Dicky. "I haven't kept count, but I recollect only two before it."
"All right. Up with you then!" Dicky obediently mounted to the seat beside the driver.
"I shall ride outside," I said to Mrs. Knapp. "I may be needed."
Half a mile farther we passed a house, and within a quarter of a mile another.
"We are on the right road," was my thought as I compared these in my mind with the crosses on the diagram.
About half a mile farther a small cluster of buildings loomed up, dark and obscure, by the roadside.
"This is the place," I said confidently, motioning the driver to pull up. I remembered that Henry Wilton's map had stopped at the third cross from the parting of the roads.
"No, it isn't," said Dicky eagerly. "It's two or three miles farther on. I trailed the fellow myself to the next house, and that's a good two miles at least."
I had leaped to the ground, and opened the door of the carriage.
"We are at the fourth place," I said.

"And the cockeyed barn?" inquired Mrs. Knapp, peering out.
I was struck silent by this, and looked blankly at the dark forbidding structure that fronted on the road.
"You're right," said Mrs. Knapp with a laugh. "Can't you make out that funny little window at the end there?"
I looked more closely at the building. In the dim light of the stars the coat of whitewash that covered it made it possible to trace the outlines of a window in the gable that fronted the road. Some freak of the builder had turned it a quarter of the way around, giving it a comical suggestion of a man with a droop to his eye.
"And the iron cow?" I asked.
"Stupid! a pump, of course," replied Mrs. Knapp, with another laugh. "Now see if there is a lane here by the barn."
A narrow roadway just wide enough for a single wagon joined the main road at the corner of the building.
"Then drive up it quietly," was Mrs. Knapp's direction.
Just beyond the barn I made out the figure of the pump in a conspicuous place by the roadside and felt more confident that we were on the right road.
The driver swore in an undertone as the hack lurched and groaned in a boggy series of ruts, and a branch whipped him in the face. I was forced to give a grant myself, as another slapped my sore arm and sent a sharp twinge of pain shooting from the wound till it tingled in my toes. Dicky, protected between us, chuckled softly. I reflected savagely that nothing spoils a man for company like a mistaken sense of humor.
Suddenly the horses stopped so short that we were almost pitched out.
Mrs. Knapp rapped on the carriage door and I opened it.
"Have you come to the bars?" she asked presently.
"I guess so. We've come against something like a fence."
"Well, then," she replied, "when we get through, take the road to the left. That will bring us to the house."
"You are certain?"
"That is what Henry wrote in the cipher beneath the map. The house must be only a few hundred yards away."
The bars were there, and I lifted the wet and soggy boards with an anxious heart. Were we, after all, so near the hiding-place? And what were we to find?
On a sudden turn the house loomed up before us and a wild clamor of dogs broke the stillness of the night.
"I hope they are tied," I said, with a poor attempt to conceal my misgivings.
"We'll have a lively time in a quarter of a minute if they aren't," laughed Dicky, as he followed me.
But the baying and barking came no nearer, and I helped Mrs. Knapp out of the carriage. She looked at the house closely.
"This is the place," she said, in an unmistakable tone of decision. "We must be quick. I wish something would quiet those dogs; they will bring the whole country out."
It seemed an hour before we could raise any one, but it may not have been three minutes before a voice came from behind the door.
"Who's there?"
"It is L. M. K.," said Mrs. Knapp; then she added three words of gibberish that I took to be the passwords used to identify the friends of the boy.
At the words there was the sound of bolts shooting back and the heavy door opened enough to admit us. As we passed in, it was closed once more and the bolts shot home.
Before us stood a short, heavy-set man, holding a candle. His face, which was stamped with much of the bulldog look in it, was smooth shaven except for a bristling brown mustache. He looked inquiringly at us.
"Is he here—the boy?" cried Mrs. Knapp, her voice choked with anxiety.
"Yes," said the man. "Do we move again?"
"At once," said Mrs. Knapp, in her tone of decision.
"It will take ten minutes to get ready," said the man. "Come this way."
I was left standing alone by the door in the darkness, with a burden lifted from my mind. We had come in time. The single slip of paper left by Henry Wilton had been the means, through a strange combination of events, to point the way to the unknown hiding place of the boy.
In a few minutes the wavering light of the candle reappeared. Mrs. Knapp was carrying a bundle that I took to be the boy, and the man brought a valise and a blanket.
"It's all right," said Mrs. Knapp. "No—I can carry him—I want to carry him."
The man opened the door, then closed and locked it as I helped Mrs. Knapp into the carriage.
"Have you got him safe?" asked Dicky incredulously. "Well, I'll have to say that you know more than I thought you did." And the relief and satisfaction in his tone were so evident that I gladly repented of my suspicions of the light-hearted Dicky.
"Have you heard anything?" I asked him anxiously.
"I thought I heard a yell over here through the woods. We had better get out of here."
"Don't wait a second," said the man. "The south road comes over this other way. If you've heard anybody there, they will be here in five minutes. I'll follow you on a horse."
With an injunction to haste, I stepped after Mrs. Knapp into the carriage, the door was shut, Dicky mounted the seat, and we rolled down the road on the return journey.
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Prosperity and Adversity.
If we do not suffer ourselves to be transported by prosperity, neither shall we be reduced by adversity. Our souls will be proof against the dangers of both these states; and, having explored our strength, we shall be sure of it; for, in the midst of felicity, we shall have tried how we can bear misfortune.—Lord Bellingbrooke.

Mark Twain on Art.
Mark Twain and a party of friends recently went to visit the studio of a young sculptor who is coming rapidly into public notice. One of the pieces which was admired greatly by the majority of the party was the figure of a young woman coiling up her hair. Mark Twain listened to the encomiums in silence, and when urged for an expression of opinion said slowly:
"It is beautiful, but it is not true to nature."
All expressed their surprise at this unexpected verdict and demanded his reasons.
"She ought to have her mouth full of hairpins," replied Tom Sawyer's father.

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Nearly All On.
"Hurry up, Tommy!" called mother from downstairs. "We're late now. Have you got your shoes on?"
"Yes, mamma—all but one."—Everybody's Magazine.

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His Mug.
An Irishman went into a barber shop and was compelled to wait a long time. When he finally climbed into a chair, the barber asked him: "Have you a mug?" "Yes," replied the Irishman, "and I want you to shave it quick."—Acheson Globe.

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