

BLIND-FOLDED

By EARLE ASHLEY WALCOTT



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SYNOPSIS.

Giles Dudley arrived in San Francisco to join his friends and distant relatives 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 the people on the ferry. They see a man with eyes which send a thrill through Dudley. Wilton possesses an explanation of the strange errand Dudley is to perform, but occurrences cause him to know it is one of an ordinary meaning. Wilton leaves Giles in their room, with instructions to await his return and shoot any one who tries to enter. Outside there is heard a quarrel and the noise of a quarrel. Henry rushes in at his request the roommates quickly exchange clothes, and he hurries out again. Henry has been some time. He is startled by a cry of "Help," and he runs out to find some one being assaulted by a half dozen men. He summons a policeman but they are unable to find any trace of a crime. Giles returns to his room and hunts for some evidence that might explain his strange mission.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

There followed some numerals mixed in a drunken dance with half the letters of the alphabet—the explanation of the map, I suppose, in cipher, and as it might prove a clue to this dreadful business, I folded the sheet carefully in an envelope and placed it in an inner pocket. The search having failed of definite results, I sat with chair tilted against the wall to consider the situation. Then it was I would I could make something of it. There were desperate enterprises afoot of which I could see neither beginning nor end, purpose nor result. I repented of my consent to mix in these dangerous dealings and resolved that when the morning came I would find other quarters, take up the search for Henry, and look for such work as might be found. It was after midnight when I had come to this conclusion, and I had closed doors and windows as well as I could, I flung myself on the bed to rest, and I sank into an uneasy slumber.

When I awoke it was with a start and an oppressive sense that somebody else was in the room. The gas-light that I had left burning had been put out. Darkness was intense. I sat upright and felt for matches that I had seen upon the stand. In another instant I was flung back upon the bed. Whirring fingers gripped my throat, and a voice hissed in my ear: "Where is he? Where is the boy? Give me your papers, or I'll wring the life out of you!"

I was strong and vigorous, and, though taken at a disadvantage, struggled desperately enough to break the grip on my throat and get a hold upon my assailant. "Where is the boy?" gasped the voice once more; and then, as I made no reply, but twined my arms about him, my assailant saved all his breath for the struggle.

We rolled to the floor with a thud that shook the house, and in this change of base I had the luck to come out unscathed. Then my courage rose as I found that I could hold my man. I feared a knife, but if he had one he had not drawn it, and I was able to keep his hands too busy to allow him to get possession of it now. Finding that he was able to accomplish nothing, he gave a short cry and called: "Come!"

I heard a confusion of steps outside, and a sound as of a muffled oath. Then the door opened, there was a rush of feet behind me, and the flash of a bull's-eye lantern. I released my enemy, and sprang back to the corner where I could defend myself at some advantage.

I could distinguish four dark figures of men; but, instead of rushing upon me as I stood on the defensive, they seized upon my assailant. I looked on panting, and hardly able to regain my breath. It was not half a minute before my enemy was securely bound and gagged and carried out. One of the men lingered.

"Don't take such risks," he said. "I wouldn't have your job, Mr. Wilton, for all the old man's money. If we hadn't happened up here, you'd have been done for this time."

"In God's name, man, what does all this mean?" I gasped.

The man looked at me in evident surprise.

"They've got a fresh start, I guess," he said. "You'd better get some of the men up here. Mr. Richmond sent us up here to bring this letter."

He was gone silently, and I left in the darkness. I struck a match, lighted the gas once more, and, securing the revolver, looked to the letter. The envelope bore no address. I tore it open. The lines were written in a woman's hand, and a faint but peculiar perfume rose from the paper. It bore these words:

"Don't make the change until I see you. The money will be ready in the morning. Be at the bank at 10:30."

The note, puzzling as it was, was hardly an addition to my perplexities. It was evident that I had been plunged into the center of intrigue, plot and counterplot. I was supposed to have possession of somebody's boy. A powerful and active enemy threatened me with death. An equally active friend was working to preserve

my safety. People of wealth were concerned. I had dimly seen a fragment of the struggling forces, and it was plain that only a very rich person could afford the luxury of hiring the bravos and guards who threatened and protected me.

The fate of Henry showed the power of those who were pursuing me. Armed as we were with the knowledge of his danger, knowing, as I did not, what he had to guard and from what he had to guard it, he had yet fallen a victim.

I could not doubt that he was the man assaulted and stabbed in the alley below, but the fact that no trace of him or of the tragedy was to be found gave me hope that he was still alive. Yet, at best, he was wounded and in the hands of enemies, a prisoner to the men who had sought his life.

As I was hoping, speculating, planning, I was startled to hear a step on the stair.

The sound was not one that needed thought out of place in such a house as this neighborhood, even though the hour was past four in the morning. But it struck a chill through me, and I listened with growing apprehension as it mounted step by step.

The dread silence of the house that had cast its shadow of fear upon me now seemed to become vocal with protest against this intrusion, and to send warning through the halls. At last the step halted before my door and a loud knock startled the echoes.

With a great bound my heart threw



"CURSE YOU, YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG MAN!"

off its tremors, and I grasped the revolver firmly: "Who's there?"

"Open the door, sir; I've news for ye."

"Who are you?"

"Come now, no nonsense; I'm an officer."

I unlocked the door and stepped to one side. My bump of caution had developed amazingly in the few hours I had spent in San Francisco, and in spite of his assurance, I thought best to avoid any chance of a rush from my unknown friends, and to put myself in a good position to use my revolver if necessary.

The man stepped in and showed his star. He was the policeman I had met when I had run shouting into the street.

"I suspicion we've found your friend," he said gravely. "You're wanted at the morgue."

"Dead?" I gasped.

"Dead as Saint Patrick—rest his soul!"

CHAPTER IV.
A Change of Name.

"Here's your way, sir," said the policeman, turning to old City Hall, as it was even then known, and leading me to one of the inner rooms of the labyrinth of offices.

The policeman opened an office door, saluted, and motioned me to enter.

"Detective Coogan," he said, "here's your man."

Detective Coogan, from behind his desk, nodded with the careless dignity of official position.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Wilton," he said affably.

If I betrayed surprise at being

called by Henry's name, Detective Coogan did not notice it. But I hastened to disclaim the dangerous distinction.

"I am not Wilton," I declared. "My name is Dudley—Giles Dudley."

At this announcement Detective Coogan turned to the policeman.

"Just step into Morris' room, Carson, and tell him I'm going up to the morgue."

"Now," he continued, as the policeman closed the door behind him, "this won't do, Wilton. We've had to overlook a good deal, of course, but you needn't think you can play us for suckers all the time."

"But I tell you I'm not—" I began, when he interrupted me.

"You can't make that go here," he said contemptuously. "And I'll tell you what, Wilton, I shall have to take you into custody if you don't come down straight to business. We don't want to chimp in on the old man's play, of course, especially as we don't know what his game is." Detective Coogan appeared to regret this admission that he was not omniscient, and went on hastily: "You know as well as we do that we don't want any fight with him. But I'll tell you right now that if you force a fight, we'll make it so warm for him that he'll have to throw you overboard to lighten a ship."

Here was a fine prospect conveyed by Detective Coogan's picturesque confusion of metaphors. If I persisted in claiming my own name and person I was to be clapped into jail, and charged with Heaven-knows-what crimes. If I took my friend's name, I was to invite the career of adventure of which I had just had a taste. And while this was flashing through my mind, I wondered idly who the "old man" could be. The note I had received was certainly in a lady's hand. But if the lady was Henry's employer, it was evident that he had dealt with the police as the representative of a man of power.

My decision was of necessity promptly taken.

"Oh, well, if that's the way you look at it, Coogan," I said carelessly, "it's all right. I thought it was agreed

forth from the obscurity as he turned up the lights.

Detective Coogan's words seemed to come from a great distance as he said: "Here, you see, he was stabbed. The knife went to the heart. Here he was hit with something heavy and blunt; but it had enough of an edge to cut the scalp and lay the cheek open. The skull is broken. See here—"

I summoned my resolution and looked.

Disfigured and ghastly as it was, I recognized it. It was the face of Henry Wilton.

The next I knew I was sitting on a bench, and the detective was holding a bottle to my lips.

"There, take another swallow," he said, not unkindly. "I didn't know you weren't used to it."

"Oh," I gasped, "I'm all right now." And I was able to look steadily at the gruesome surroundings and the dreadful burden on the slab.

"Is this the man?" asked the detective.

"Yes."

"Dudley—James Dudley," I was not quite willing to transfer the whole of my identity to the dead, and changed the Giles to James.

"Was he a relative?"

"I shook my head, though I could not have said why I denied it. Then, in answer to the detective's question, I told the story of the scuffle in the alley, and of the events that followed.

"Did you see any of the men? To recognize them, I mean?"

I described the leader as well as I was able—the man with the face of the wolf that I had seen in the lantern-flash.

Detective Coogan lost his listless air, and looked at me in astonishment.

"I don't see your game, Wilton," he said.

"I'm giving you the straight facts," I said sullenly, a little disturbed by his manner and tone.

"Well, in that case, I'd expect you to keep the straight facts to yourself, my boy."

It was my turn to be astonished.

"Well, that's my lookout," I said with assumed carelessness.

"I don't see through you," said the detective with some irritation. "If you're playing with me to stop this inquiry by dragging in—well, we needn't use names—you'll find yourself in the hottest water you ever struck."

"You can do as you please," I said coolly.

The detective ripped out an oath.

"If I knew you were lying, Wilton, I'd clap you in jail this minute."

"Well, if you want to take the risks—" I said smiling.

"Candidly, I don't, and you know it," he said. "But this is a stunner on me. What's your game, anyhow?"

I wished I knew.

"So accomplished a detective should not be at a loss to answer so simple a question."

"Well, there's only one course open, as I see," he said with a groan. "We've got to have a story ready for the papers and the coroner's jury."

This was a new suggestion for me and I was alarmed.

"You can just forget your little tale about the row in the alley," he continued. "There's nothing to show that it had anything to do with this man here. Maybe it didn't happen. Anyhow, just think it was a dream. This was a water-front row—tough saloon-killed and robbed by parties unknown. Maybe we'll have you before the coroner for the identification, but maybe it's better not."

I nodded assent. My mind was too numbed to suggest another course.

The gray dawn was breaking through the chill fog, and people were stirring in the streets as Detective Coogan led the way out of the morgue. As we parted he gave me a curious look.

"I suppose you know your own business, Wilton," he said, but I suspect you'd be a sight safer if I'd clap you in jail."

And with this consoling comment he was gone, and was left in the dawn of my first morning in San Francisco, mind and body at the nadir of depression after the excitement and perils of the night.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

AUTOS AT A COYOTE DRIVE.

California Hunt Not as Successful as Had Been Hoped For.

A large crowd of San Joaquin county residents assembled at the Bollinger ranch, in the eastern part of the county, and enjoyed a coyote drive, which was not as destructive as the people of that district hoped for, as the animals kept out of sight and only a few were killed. Of late the coyotes have been killing sheep, pigs and chickens. The scarcity of dead animals has caused the coyotes to invade the ranches and give the farmer a lot of trouble. As a general rule, these animals seldom attack stock, but when driven to starvation they become bold.

It was with the hope that a large number would be killed that a general invitation was extended to the people to assemble and make a roundup. All kinds of vehicles, from the old-fashioned top buggy to the latest in automobiles, were in evidence, and many men appeared on horse-back and joined the chase. One drive was made in the forenoon and another in the afternoon, lunch being served between the two trips. Later another effort will be made to exterminate the troublesome animals.

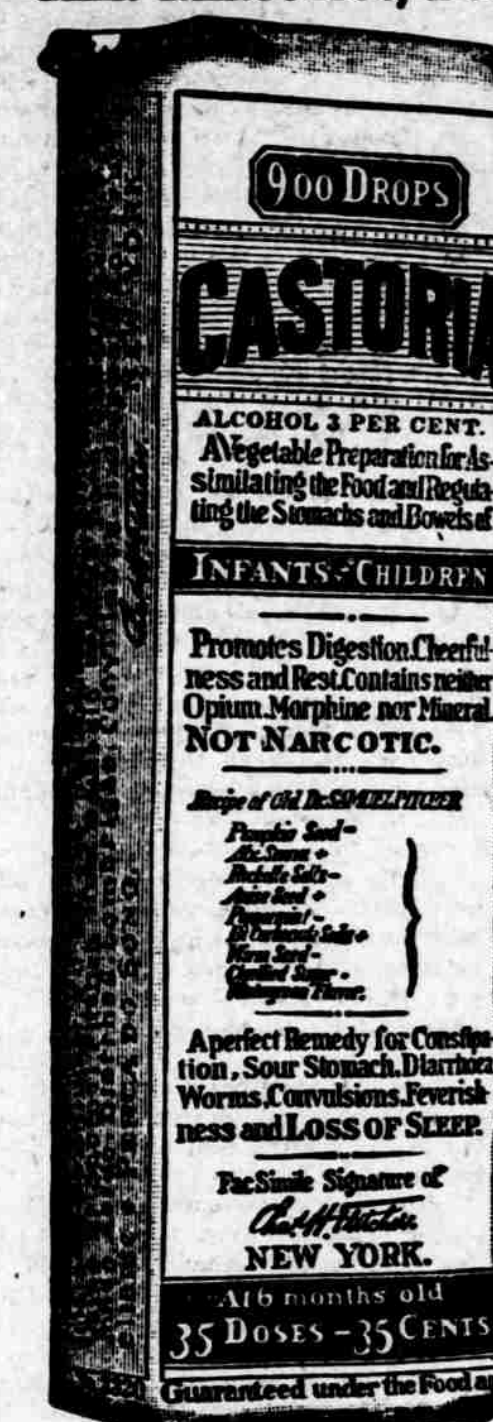
After which he took his big dog to a tree and solemnly executed it. Then he cut Jack down and buried him.

Pride Helps.

We, mortals, men and women, devour many a disappointment between breakfast and dinner time, keep back the ears and look a little pale about the lips, and in answer to inquiries say: "Oh, nothing!" Pride helps us, and pride is not a bad thing when it only urges us to hide our own hurts—not to hurt others.—George Elliot.

Don't Poison, Baby.

FORTY YEARS AGO almost every mother thought her child must have PAREGORIC or laudanum to make it sleep. These drugs will produce sleep, and **A FEW DROPS TOO MANY** will produce the SLEEP FROM WHICH THERE IS NO WAKING. Many are the children who have been killed or whose health has been ruined for life by paregoric, laudanum and morphine, each of which is a narcotic product of opium. Druggists are prohibited from selling either of the narcotics named to children at all, or to anybody without labeling them "poison." The definition of "narcotic" is: "A medicine which relieves pain and produces sleep, but which in poisonous doses produces stupor, coma, convulsions and death." The taste and smell of medicines containing opium are disguised, and sold under the names of "Drops," "Cordials," "Soothing Syrups," etc. You should not permit any medicine to be given to your children without you or your physician know of what it is composed. **GASTORIA DOES NOT CONTAIN NARCOTICS**, if it bears the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher.



Letters from Prominent Physicians addressed to Chas. H. Fletcher.

Dr. J. W. Dinicola, of Chicago, Ill., says: "I use your Castoria and advise its use in all families where there are children."
Dr. Alexander E. Mintle, of Cleveland, Ohio, says: "I have frequently prescribed your Castoria and have found it a reliable and pleasant remedy for children."
Dr. J. S. Alexander, of Omaha, Neb., says: "A medicine so valuable and beneficial for children as your Castoria is, deserves the highest praise. I find it in use everywhere."
Dr. J. A. McClellan, of Buffalo, N. Y., says: "I have frequently prescribed your Castoria for children and always got good results. In fact I use Castoria for my own children."
Dr. J. W. Allen, of St. Louis, Mo., says: "I heartily endorse your Castoria. I have frequently prescribed it in my medical practice, and have always found it to do all that is claimed for it."
Dr. C. H. Glidden, of St. Paul, Minn., says: "My experience as a practitioner with your Castoria has been highly satisfactory, and I consider it an excellent remedy for the young."
Dr. E. D. Benner, of Philadelphia, Pa., says: "I have used your Castoria as a purgative in the cases of children for years past with the most happy effect, and fully endorse it as a safe remedy."
Dr. J. A. Boardman, of Kansas City, Mo., says: "Your Castoria is a splendid remedy for children, known the world over. I use it in my practice and have no hesitancy in recommending it for the complaints of infants and children."
Dr. J. J. Mackey, of Brooklyn, N. Y., says: "I consider your Castoria an excellent preparation for children, being composed of reliable medicines and pleasant to the taste. A good remedy for all disturbances of the digestive organs."

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An Indignant Editor.

Last Saturday evening after sewing two patches on our Sunday trousers and cleaning and pressing them we hung them out to dry. An hour later we found that they had been stolen. This will explain why we were not in our accustomed place in church on Sunday. The human being who will deliberately steal a pair of trousers from the editor of a weekly paper, and knowing that they are his only pair for church-going, deserves a worse fate than our indignation will allow us to mention. It seems to us as if civilization had been turned back half a century.—Hometown (Pa.) Banner.

The Soft Answer.

Senator Tillman at a banquet in Washington said in humorous defense of outspoken and frank methods: "These people who always keep calm fill me with mistrust. Those that never lose their temper I suspect. He who wears under abuse an angelic smile is apt to be a hypocrite."

"An old South Carolina deacon once said to me with a chuckle: "'Keep yo' tempah, son. Don't yo' quarrel with no angry pesson. A soft answerd an' allus best. Hit's commanded an', furthermo', sonny, hit makes 'em maddah'n anything else yo' could say.'"

Selfish Etiquette.

Some rules in an old book on etiquette seem to encourage a practice commonly called "looking out for number one." Here are two of them: "When cake is passed, do not finger each piece, but with a quick glance select the best.

"Never refuse to taste of a dish because you are unfamiliar with it, or you will lose the taste of many a delicacy while others profit by your abstinence, to your lasting regret."—Youth's Companion.

DR. TALKS OF FOOD.

Pres. of Board of Health.

"What shall I eat?" is the daily inquiry the physician is met with. I do not hesitate to say that in my judgment a large percentage of disease is caused by poorly selected and improperly prepared food. My personal experience with the fully-cooked food, known as Grape-Nuts, enables me to speak freely of its merits.

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"I look upon Grape-Nuts as a perfect food, and no one can gainsay but that it has a most prominent place in a rational, scientific system of feeding. Any one who uses this food will soon be convinced of the soundness of the principle upon which it is manufactured and may thereby know the facts as to its true worth." Read "The Road to Wellville," in pgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

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Positively cured by these Little Pills. They also relieve Dyspepsia, Indigestion and Stomach Troubles. A perfect remedy for Biliousness, Headache, Dizziness, Stomach Pain, and all the ailments of the Liver and Stomach. Sold everywhere. Small Pills. Small Dose. Small Price.

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NOTARIES AND JUSTICES WARRANTS PENSION

DEFENSE Cold Water Starch

WIDOWS' PENSIONS

W. N. U., OMAHA, NO. 22, 1908.

Seen Through German Eyes.

"Every tourist from our country who comes here," says a writer in the Fremdenblatt, "tells what the Americans wear, what they read, what they eat, and how they do business, but they give little information as to what the Americans drink. In the four weeks of my sojourn here I have discovered that the American, he who can lay claim to the title by virtue of a three or four-generation residence in the country, is temperate and drinks much water and comparatively

little alcohol. Much of the water is made bad by the liberal use of ice. In the great restaurants where the fashionable world assembles it is not unusual to see tables where there is no wine of any kind."

Tried and Hanged the Dog.

Because he attacked a little girl with apparently murderous intent, Jack, a big Newfoundland dog of Liverpool, Pa., was duly and deliberately hanged by the neck until he was dead, after a fair trial in which the