

# SERIAL STORY

## BLINDFOLDED

A Mystery Story of San Francisco

BY EARLE ASHLEY WALCOTT

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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. They see a man with snake eyes, which sends a thrill through Dudley. Wilton postpones an explanation of the strange errand Dudley is to perform, but occurrences cause him to know it is one of no ordinary meaning. Wilton leaves Giles in their room, with instruction to await his return and shoot any one who tries to enter. Outside there is heard shouts and curses and the noise of a quarrel. Henry rushes in and at his request the roommates quickly exchange clothes, and he hurries out again. Hardly has he gone than Giles 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. He finds a map which he endeavors to decipher. 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 permits himself to be known as Henry Knapp. Dudley, mistaken for Wilton, is employed by Knapp to assist in a stock brokerage deal. "Dicky" takes the supposed Wilton to Mother Borton's. Mother Borton discovers that he is not Wilton. The lights are turned out and a free-for-all fight follows. Giles Dudley finds himself cased in a room with Mother Borton who makes a confidant of him. He can learn nothing about the mysterious boy further than that it is Tim Merrill and Derby Meeker who were after him. He is told that "Dicky" Nahl is a traitor, playing both hands in the game. Giles finds himself locked in a room. He escapes through a window. The supposed Wilton carries out his dead friend's work with Mother Borton. He has his first experience as a capitalist in the Board Room of the Stock Exchange. Dudley receives a fictitious note purporting to be from Knapp, the forgery of which he readily detects. Dudley gets his first knowledge of Decker, who is Knapp's enemy on the Board. The forged note mystifies Knapp. Dudley visits the home of Luella, and is stricken by the beauty of Luella, his daughter.

### CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"But I suspect Mr. Knapp makes whirlpools instead of swimming into them," I said meaningly.

"Ah, Henry," she said sadly, "how often have I told you that the best plan may come to ruin in the market? It may not take much to start a boulder rolling down the mountain-side, but who is to tell it to stop when once it is set going?"

"I think," said I, smiling, "that Mr. Knapp would ride the boulder and find himself in a gold mine at the end of the journey."

"Perhaps. But you're not telling me what Mr. Knapp is doing."

"He can tell you better than I."

"No doubt," she said with a trace of sarcasm in her voice.

"And here he comes to do it, I expect," I said, as the tall figure of the King of the Street appeared in the doorway opposite.

"I'm afraid I shall have to depend on the newspapers," she said. "Mr. Knapp is as much afraid of a woman's tongue as you are. Oh," she continued after a moment's pause, "I was going to make you give an account of yourself; but since you will tell nothing I must introduce you to my cousin, Mrs. Bowser." And she led me, unresisting, to a short, sharp-featured woman of sixty or thereabouts, who rustled her silks, and in a high, thin voice professed herself charmed to see me.

She might have claimed and held the record as the champion of the conversational ring. I had never met her equal before, nor have I met one to surpass her since.

Had I been long in the city? She had been here only a week. Came from Maine way. This was a dear, dreadful city with such nice people and such dreadful winds, wasn't it? And then she gave me a catalogue of the places she had visited, and the attractions of San Francisco, with a wealth of detail and a poverty of interest that was little less than marvelous.

Fortunately she required nothing but an occasional murmur of assent in the way of answer from me.

I looked across the room to the corner where Luella was entertaining the insignificant Inman. How vivacious and intelligent she appeared! Her face and figure grew on me in attractiveness, and I felt that I was being very badly used. As I came to this point I was roused by the sound of two low voices that just behind me were plainly audible under the shrill treble of

Mrs. Bowser. They were women with their heads close in gossip.

"Shocking, isn't it?" said one.

"Dreadful!" said the other. "It gives me the creeps to think of it."

"Why don't they lock him up? Such a creature shouldn't be allowed to go at large."

"Oh, you see, maybe they can't be sure about it. But I've heard it's a case of family pride."

I was recalled from this dialogue by Mrs. Bowser's fan on my arm, and her shrill voice in my ear with, "What is your idea about it, Mr. Wilton?"

"I think you are perfectly right," I said heartily, as she paused for an answer.

"Then I'll arrange it with the others at once," she said.

This was a bucket of ice-water on me. I had not the first idea of what I had committed myself.

"No, don't," I said. "Wait till we have time to discuss it again."

"Oh, we can decide on the time whenever you like. Will some night week after next suit you?"

I had to throw myself on the mercy of the enemy.

"I'm afraid I'm getting rather absent-minded," I said humbly. "I was looking at Miss Knapp and lost the thread of the discourse for a minute."

"That's what I was talking about," she said sharply—"about taking her and the rest of us through Chinatown."

"Yes, yes, I remember," I said unblushingly. "If I can get away from business, I'm at your service at any time."

Then Mrs. Bowser wandered on with the arrangements she would find necessary to make, and I heard one of the low voices behind me:

"Now this is a profound secret, you know. I wouldn't have them know for the world that any one suspects. I just heard it this week, myself."

"Oh, I wouldn't dare breathe it to a soul," said the other. "But I'm sure I shan't sleep a wink to-night." And they moved away.

I interrupted Mrs. Bowser to explain that I must speak to Mrs. Knapp and made my escape as some one stopped to pass a word with her.

"Oh, must you go, Henry?" said Mrs. Knapp. "Well, you must come again soon. We miss you when you stay away. Don't let Mr. Knapp keep you too closely."

I professed myself happy to come whenever I could find the time, and



looked about for Luella. She was nowhere to be seen. I left the room a little disappointed, but with a swelling pride that I had passed the dreaded ordeal and had been accepted as Henry Wilton in the house in which I had most feared to meet disaster. My opinion of my own cleverness had risen, in the language of the market, "above par."

As I passed down the hall, a tall willowy figure stepped from the shadow of the stair. My heart gave a bound of delight. It was Luella Knapp. I should have the pleasure of a leave-taking in private.

"Oh, Miss Knapp!" I said. "I had despaired of having the chance to bid you good night." And held out my hand.

She ignored the hand. I could see from her heaving bosom and shortened breath that she was laboring under great agitation. Yet her face gave no evidence of the effort that it cost her to control herself.

"I was waiting for you," she said in a low voice.

I started to express my satisfaction when she interrupted me.

"Who are you?" broke from her lips almost fiercely.

I was completely taken aback, and stared at her in amazement with no word at command.

"You are not Henry Wilton," she said rapidly. "You have come here with his name and his clothes, and made up to look like him, and you try to use his voice and take his place. Who are you?"

There was a depth of scorn and anger and apprehension in that low voice of hers that struck me dumb.

"Can you not answer?" she demanded, catching her breath with excitement. "You are not Henry Wilton."

"Well?" I said half-inquiringly. It was not safe to advance or retreat,

"Well—! well—!" She repeated my answer with indignation and disdain deepening in her voice. "Is that all you have to say for yourself?"

"What should I say?" I replied quietly. "You make an assertion. Is there anything more to be said?"

"Oh, you may laugh at me if you please, because you can hoodwink the others."

I protested that laughter was the last thing I was thinking of at the moment.

Then she burst out impetuously:

"Oh, if I were only a man! No; if I were a man I should be hoodwinked like the rest. But you can not deceive me. Who are you? What are you here for? What are you trying to do?"

She was blazing with wrath. Her tone had raised hardly an interval of the scale, but every word that came in that smooth, low voice was heavy with contempt and anger. It was the true daughter of the Wolf who stood before me.

"I am afraid, Miss Knapp, you are not well to-night," I said soothingly.

"What have you done with Henry Wilton?" she asked fiercely. "Don't try to speak with his voice. Drop your disguise. You are no actor. You are no more like him than—"

"Satyr or Hyperion," I quoted bitterly. "Make it strong, please."

I had thought myself in a tight place in the row at Borton's, but it was nothing to this encounter.

"Oh, where is he? What has happened?" she cried.

"Nothing has happened," I said calmly, determined at last to brazen it out. I could not tell her the truth. "My name is Henry Wilton."

"She looked at me in anger a moment, and then a shadow of dread and despair settled over her face.

I was tempted beyond measure to throw myself on her mercy and tell all. The subtle sympathy that she inspired was softening my resolution. Yet, as I looked into her eyes, her face hardened and her wrath blazed forth once more.

"Go!" she said. "I hope I may never see you again!" And she turned and ran swiftly up the stair. I thought I heard a sob, but whether of anger or sorrow I knew not.

And I went out into the night with a heavier load of depression than I had borne since I entered the city.

### CHAPTER XIII. A Day of Grace.

Resolve, shame, despair, fought with each other in the tumult in my mind as I passed between the bronze lions and took my way down the street.

I was called out of my distractions with a sudden start as though a bucket of cold water had been thrown over me. I had proceeded not twenty feet when I saw two dark forms across the street. They had, it struck me, been waiting for my appearance, for one ran to join the other and both hastened toward the corner as though to be ready to meet me.

I could not retreat to the house of the Wolf that loomed forbiddingly behind me. There was nothing to do but to go forward and trust to my good fortune, and I shifted my revolver to the side-pocket of my overcoat as I stepped briskly to the corner. Then I stopped under the lamp-post to reconnoiter.

The two men who had roused my apprehensions did not offer to cross the street, but slackened their pace and strolled slowly along on the other side. I noted that it seemed a long way between street-lamps thereabouts. I could see none between the one under which I was standing and the brow of the hill below. Then it occurred to me that this circumstance might not be due to the caprice of the street department of the city government, but to the thoughtfulness of the gentlemen who were paying such close attention to my affairs. I decided that there were better ways to get down town than were offered by Pine street.

To the south the cross-street stretched to Market with an unbroken array of lights, and as my unwary watchers had disappeared in the darkness, I hastened down the incline with so little regard for dignity that I found myself running for a Sutter street car—and caught it, too. As I swung on the platform I looked back; but I saw no sign of skulking figures before the car swept past the corner and blotted the street from sight.

The incident gave me a distaste for the idea of going back to Henry Wilton's room at this time of the night. So at Montgomery street I stepped into the Lick house, where I felt reasonably sure that I might get at least one night's sleep, from from the haunting fear of the assassin.

But, once more safe, the charms of Luella Knapp again claimed the major part of my thoughts, and when I went to sleep it was with her scornful words ringing in my ears. I slept soundly until the morning sun peeped into the room with the cheerful announcement that a new day was born.

In the fresh morning air and the bright morning light, I felt that I might have been unduly suspicious and had fled from harmless citizens; and I was ashamed that I had lacked

courage to return to Henry's room as I made my way thither for a change of clothes. I thought better of my decision, however, as I stepped within the gloomy walls of the house of mystery and my footfalls echoed through the chilling silence of the halls. And I lost all regret over my night's lack of courage when I reached my door. It was swung an inch ajar, and as I approached I thought I saw it move.

"I'm certain I locked it," was my inward comment.

I stopped short and hunted my revolver from my overcoat pocket. I was nervous for a moment, and angry at the inattention that might have cost me my life.

"Who's there?" I demanded.

No reply.

I gave a knock on the door at long reach.

There was no sound and I gave it a push that sent it open while I prudently kept behind the fortification of the casing. As no developments followed this move, I peeped through the door in cautious investigation. The room was quite empty, and I walked in.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### LIMITED FOOD SUPPLY.

There is Not the Great Variety We Generally Imagine.

"Certain great food-staples have proved themselves within the age-long experience of humanity to possess a larger amount of nutritive value, digestibility, and other good qualities, and a smaller proportion of undesirable properties than any others. These, through an exceedingly slow and gradual process of the survival of the fittest, have come to form the staples of food in common use by the human race all over the world. It is really astonishing how comparatively few there are of them, when we come to consider them broadly; the flesh and the milk of three or four domestic animals, the flesh of three or four and the eggs of one species of domesticated birds, three great grains—wheat, rice and maize—and a half-dozen smaller and much less frequent ones, one hundred or so species of fishes and shell fish, two sugars, a dozen or so starch-containing roots and tubers, only two of which—the potato and the manioc—are of real international importance, twenty or thirty fruits, forty or fifty vegetables make up two-thirds of the food supply of the inhabitants of the world.

"Instead of wondering at the variety and profuseness of the human food supply, the biologist is rather inclined to ejaculate with the London footman immortalized by John Leech, who, when told by the cook that there would be mutton chops for dinner and roast beef for supper, exclaimed: 'Nothing but beef, mutton and pork—pork, mutton and beef! In my opinion, hit's 'igh time some new hanimal was invented!'"

### Woman Lost \$230,000.

New York.—Mrs. Arthur P. Mason of Larchmont is the woman who lost a tin box containing 196 \$1,000 bills and jewelry valued at \$40,000, while journeying to New York on the local New York, New Haven and Hartford train from her home. Mrs. Mason made this admission despite the advice of her lawyer, Benjamin F. Norris, who has tried to keep secret the name of his client. Mrs. Mason refused to go into details of the trip.

She placed the box on the seat beside her, while the suit case rested at her feet. It is hardly supposed Mrs. Mason forgot the existence of the box when she left the train at the Grand Central station. It is possible however, she was followed from her home by some crook who knew that the box contained a fortune.

### She Meant a Mantle.

Thomas A. Edison was discussing at Atlantic City the various devices for increasing the brilliance and diminishing the cost of a gas jet.

"Many of these devices have for base a mantle," he said. "You know what a mantle looks like? Then you'll appreciate a remark I overheard in a hardware dealer's."

"A young woman entered the shop and said:

"'Have you got those things for improving a gas light?'"

"'Yes, madam,' said the dealer. 'Here is a complete set, fittings, chimney and mantle, all for—'"

"'Oh, I don't want the set,' said the young woman. 'I've got the metal part and the chimney, but the little white shirt is busted. It's only one of them I want.'"

### Tool of Many Uses.

During the present army maneuvers the French troops are using for the first time an instrument which for variety of adaptation probably approaches a record. It is a kind of concave lance shaft, or gouge, about 8 inches broad at the base and with a handle about 12 inches long.

This implement is a shovel, a pointed bar, a trenching pick, a wire cutter, a wood chopper and can be used for bread and meat.—London Globe.

## MRS. FRANK STROEBE



**A Remarkable Recovery.**  
Mrs. Frank Stroebe, R. F. D. 1, Appleton, Wis., writes: "I began using Peruna a few months ago, when my health and strength were all gone, and I was nothing but a nervous wreck, could not sleep, eat or rest properly, and felt no desire to live. Peruna made me look at life in a different light, as I began to regain my lost strength. I certainly think Peruna is without a rival as a tonic and strength builder."

### SMALL THING HE FORGOT. May Have Accounted for His Proposal Being Turned Down.

Senator Beveridge described, at a dinner, an absent-minded farmer.

"The man was so absent-minded," he said, "that he couldn't open his mouth without making an arrant ass of himself."

"Once he courted a young woman. His suit looked promising for a time. Then, with a sorrowful visage, he ceased his courtship."

"Yet she seemed infatuated with you, Jabez," said I, one day when he came to me for sympathy.

"She were, too," Jabez agreed.

"Well, what could have been the trouble?"

"'Dunno,' said he. He filled his pipe. 'Dunno; but when I perposed, she turned me down cold.'"

"Perhaps your proposal wasn't ardent enough?" I suggested.

"'Oh, it was fiery,' said Jabez. 'Hot as pepper. I told her she was the only woman I'd ever loved, ever looked at, ever thought of, or—'"

"But, said I, 'you forgot, then, you were a widower.'"

"'Jingo,' said Jabez, 'so I did.'"

**Unobtainable.**  
The Doctor's Wife—Well, Jane, see your poor husband's gone at last! Didn't you give him his medicine properly?"

Jane—Ah, poor dear, how could I! Doctor said as how it was to be took in a recumbent position, an' I 'adn't one. I asked Mrs. Green to lend me one. She said she 'ad one, but it was broke! So it were no good.—The Sketch.

### WIFE WON Husband Finally Convinced.

Some men are wise enough to try new foods and beverages and then generous enough to give others the benefit of their experience.

A very "conservative" Ills. man, however, let his good wife find out for herself what a blessing Postum is to those who are distressed in many ways, by drinking coffee. The wife writes:

"No slave in chains, it seemed to me, was more helpless than I, a coffee captive. Yet there were innumerable warnings—waking from a troubled sleep with a feeling of suffocation, at times dizzy and out of breath, attacks of palpitation of the heart that frightened me.

"Common sense, reason, and my better judgment told me that coffee drinking was the trouble. At last my nervous system was so disarranged that my physician ordered 'no more coffee.'"

"He knew he was right and he knew I knew it, too. I capitulated. Prior to this our family had tried Postum, but disliked it, because, as we learned later, it was not made right.

"Determined this time to give Postum a fair trial, I prepared it according to directions on the pkg.—that is, boiled it 15 minutes after boiling commenced, obtaining a dark brown liquid with a rich snappy flavor similar to coffee. When cream and sugar were added, it was not only good but delicious.

"Noting its beneficial effects in me the rest of the family adopted it—all except my husband, who would not admit that coffee hurt him. Several weeks elapsed during which I drank Postum two or three times a day, when, to my surprise, my husband said: 'I have decided to drink Postum. Your improvement is so apparent—you have such fine color—that I propose to give credit where credit is due.' And now we are coffee-slaves no longer."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "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.