

BLIND FOLDED

By EARLE ASHLEY WAICUT

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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 possesses an explanation of the strange man 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 permits himself to be known as Henry Wilton. He learns that there is a boy whom he is charged with protecting and protecting. Dudley, mistaken for Wilton, is employed by Knapp to assist in a stock brokerage deal. Giles Dudley finds himself closeted in a room with Mother Borton who makes a confidant of him. He calls this the bureau of the mysterious boy further than that it is Tom Terrill and Darcy Meeker who are after him. Dudley, mistaken for Knapp and is struck by the beauty of Lucia, his daughter. Stammering, he is through Chinatown in a hurry to get to the rest of the party and imprisonment in a hallway. Three Chinese ruffians approach the imprisoned couple. A bottle ensues. One is knocked down. Giles begins firing. The door with an ax and the couple is rescued. Lucia thinks Giles Dudley is saving her life. In the office with no traces of the previous night's debacle. Following his instructions, Giles Dudley has a notable day in the Stock Exchange, selling Crown Diamond and buying Crown Diamond. Dudley, mistaken for Knapp, is crushed. Knapp's hated rival, Dudley, discovers that he loves Lucia Knapp. Mother Borton tells Giles Dudley that "they've discovered where 'the boy' is." The mysterious unknown woman employed by Dudley meets him by appointment with "the boy" who is turned over to Dudley with his guards and they drive out of the city. Dudley and his faithful guards come by train to the village of Livermore, as per the written instructions. The party is followed. Soon after the party is quarantined in the hotel. A special train arrives in Livermore. The "gang," including Darcy Meeker and Tom Terrill, lay siege to the hotel and endeavor to capture "the boy," who comes forward to see the "right" tricked again," cries Tom Terrill, when he sees the youngster's face. "It's the wrong boy!" Dudley and Terrill meet in battle under care of his guards. The hotel is guarded by Terrill's men who are instructed to kill the first man who tries to escape. Dudley gives the note to the one-guard and the boy is left behind and they escape. Decker is defeated. Dudley and Knapp present a coup to control the directors and declare Knapp's stock invalid.

CHAPTER XXVI.—Continued.

There was none of the sounds of riot I had expected to hear as we drew up before it. The lantern blinked outside with its invitation to manifold cheer within. Lights streamed through the window and half-opened door, and quiet and order reigned.

I found the explanation of the change in the person of a policeman, who stood at the door.

"Has there been trouble here, officer?" I asked.

"Oh, is it you, sor?" said Corson's hearty voice. "I was wondering about ye. Well, there has been a bit of a row here, and there's a power of broken heads to be mended. There's a man cut to pieces, and good riddance, for it's Black Dick. I'm thinking it's the morgue they'll be taking him to, though it was for the receiving hospital they started with him. It was a dandy row, and it was seventeen artists we made."

"Where is Mother Borton?"

"The old she-devil's done for this time, I'm a-thinking. Whist, I forgot she was a friend of yours, sor."

"Where is she—at the receiving hospital? What is the matter with her?"

"Aisy, aisy, sor. It may be nothing. She's upstairs. A bit of a cut, they say. Here, shaftness, look out for this door! I'll take ye up, sor."

We mounted the creaking stairs in the light of the smoky lamp that stood on the bracket, and Corson opened a door for me.

A flickering candle played fantastic tricks with the furniture, sent shadows dancing over the dingy walls, and gave a weird touch to the two figures that bent over the bed in the corner.

The figures straightened up at our entrance, and I knew them for the doctor and his assistant.

"A friend of the lady, sor," whispered Corson.

The doctor looked at me in some surprise, but merely bowed.

Mother Borton turned her head on the pillow, and her gaunt face lighted up at the sight of me.

"Eh, dearie, I knew you would come," she cried.

The doctor pushed his way to the bedside.

"I must insist that the patient be quiet," he said with authority.

"Be quiet?" cried Mother Borton. "Is it for the likes of you that I'd be quiet? You white-washed tombstone raiser, you body-snatcher, do you think you're the man to tell me to hold my tongue when I want to talk to a gentleman?"

Mother Borton had raised herself upon one elbow; her face, flushed and framed in her gray and tangled hair, was working with anger, and her eyes were almost lurid as she sent fierce glances at one after another of the men about her. She pointed a skinny finger at the door, and each man as she cast her look upon him went out without a word.

"Shut the door, honey," she said quietly, lying down once more with a satisfied smile. "That's it. Now me and you can talk cozy-like."

"You'd better not talk. Perhaps you will feel more like it to-morrow."

"There won't be any to-morrow for me," growled Mother Borton. "I've seen enough of 'em carved to know when I've got the dose myself. Curse that knife!" and she groaned at a twinge of pain.



"I TELL YOU NOW, MY BOY, THERE'S MURDER AND DEATH HERE!"

death before you. Do you hear? Murder and death."

She sank back on her pillow and gazed at me with a weary light in her eyes and a sly look on her face.

"I think I understand," I said gently. "I have faced them and I ought to know them."

"Then you'll—you'll quit your job—you'll be yourself?"

"I can not. I must go on."

"And why?"

"My friend—his work—his murder."

"Have you got the man who murdered Henry Wilton?"

"No."

"Have you got a man who will give a word against—against—you know who?"

"I have not a scrap of evidence against any one but the testimony of my own eyes," I was compelled to confess.

"And you can't use it—you dare not use it. Now I'll tell you, dearie, I know the man as killed Henry Wilton."

"Who was it?" I cried, started into eagerness.

"It was Black Dick—the cursed scoundrel that's done for me. Oh!" she groaned in pain.

"Maybe Black Dick struck the blow, but I know the man that stood behind him, and I'll see him on the gallows before I die."

"Hush," cried Mother Borton trembling. "If he should hear you! Your throat will be cut yet, dearie, and I'm to blame. Drop it, dearie, drop it. The boy is nothing to you. Leave him go. Take your own name and get away. This is no place for you. When I'm gone there will be no one to warn ye. You'll be killed. You'll be killed."

Then she paused, but whether from pain of body or mind I could not guess. "Never you fear. I'll take care of myself," I said cheerily.

She looked at me mournfully. "I am killed for ye, dearie."

I started, shocked at this news.

"There," she continued slowly. "I didn't mean to let you know. But they thought I had told ye."

"Then I have two reasons instead of one for holding to my task," I said solemnly. "I have two friends to avenge."

"You'll make the third yourself," growled Mother Borton, "unless they

put a knife into Barkhouse first, and then you'll be the fourth bellie," and Barkhouse—do you know where he is?"

"He's in the Den—on Davis street, you know. I was near forgetting to tell ye. Send your men to get him to-night, for he's hurt and like to die. They may have to fight. No—don't leave me now."

"I wasn't going to leave you."

Mother Borton put her hand to her throat as though she choked, and was silent for a moment. Then she continued:

"It'll be to blame if I don't tell you—I must tell you. Are you listening?"

Her voice came thick and strange, and her eyes wandered anxiously about, searching the heavy shadows with a look of growing fear.

"I am listening," I replied.

"You must know—you must know—I must tell you. The boy—the woman—is—"

On a sudden Mother Borton sat bolt upright in bed, and a shriek, so long, so shrill, so freighted with terror, came from her lips that I shrank from her and trembled, faint with the horror of the place.

"They come—there, they come!" she cried, and throwing up her arms she fell back on the bed.

The candle shot up into flame, sputtered an instant and was gone. And I was alone with the darkness and the dead.

CHAPTER XXVII. A Link in the Chain.

I sprang to my feet. But before I had covered the distance to the door, it was flung open and Corson stood on the threshold. At the darkness he wavered and cried:

"What's the matter here?"

"She is dead."

I shuddered as I stood beside him, and brought the lamp from the bracket in the hall.

Mother Borton lay back staring awfully at the mystic being who had come for her, but settled into peace as

"Step quietly," I cautioned my men, as we neared the dark and forbidding entrance. "Keep close to the shadow of the buildings. Our best chance is in a surprise."

There was no guard at the door that stood open to the street, and we halted a moment before it to make sure of our plans.

"It's a bad hole," whispered Corson. "A fine place for an ambush," I returned dubiously.

"Well, there's no help for it," said the policeman. "Come on!" And drawing his club and revolver he stole noiselessly up the stairs.

We were not two-thirds the way up the flight before a voice shot out of the darkness.

"Who's there?"

There was no more need for silence, and Corson and I reached the landing just as a door opened that let the light stream from within. Two men had sprung to the doorway and another could be seen faintly outlined in the dark.

The two men jumped back into the room and tried to close the door, but I was upon them before they could swing it shut. Four of my men had followed me close, and with a few blows given and taken the two were prisoners.

"The them fast," I ordered, and hastened to see how Corson fared. I met the worthy policeman in the hall, blown but exultant. Owens was following him, and between them they half-dragged, half-carried the man who had given the alarm.

"Aren't there any more about?" I asked. "There were more than three left in the gang."

"If there had been more of us, you'd never have got in," growled one of the prisoners.

"Where's Barkhouse?" I asked.

"Find him!" was the defiant reply.

We began the search, opening one room after another. Some were sleeping rooms, some the meeting rooms, while the one we had first entered appeared to be the guardroom.

"Hello! What's this?" exclaimed Corson, tapping an iron door, such as closes a warehouse against fire.

"It's locked, sure enough," said Owens, after trial.

"It must be the place we are looking for," I said. "Search those men for keys."

The search was without result.

"It's a sledge we must get," said Owens, starting to look about for one.

"Hould on," said Corson. "I was near forgetting. I've got a master-key that fits most of these locks. It's handy for closing up a warehouse when some clerk with his wits a-wandering forgets his job. So like enough it's good at unlocking."

It needed a little coaxing, but the bolt at last slid back and the heavy door swung open. The room was furnished with a large table, a big desk and a dozen chairs, which sprang out of the darkness as I struck a match and lit the gas. It was evidently the council room of the gang.

"This is Higgins!" said the policeman, looking around with approval; "but your man isn't here, I'd say."

"Well, it looks as though there might be something here of interest," I replied, seizing eagerly upon the papers that lay scattered about upon the desk. "Look in the other room while I run through these."

A rude diagram on the topmost paper caught my eye. It represented a road branching thrice. On the third branch was a cross, and then at intervals four crosses, as if to mark some features of the landscape. Underneath was written:

"From B—follow 1½ m. Take third road—3 or 5."

The paper bore date of that day, and I guessed that it meant to show the way to the supposed hiding-place of the boy.

Then, as I looked again, the words and lines touched a cord of memory. Something I had seen or known before was vaguely suggested. I groped in the obscurity for a moment, vainly reaching for the phantom that danced just beyond the grasp of my mental fingers.

There was no time to lose in speculating, and I turned to the work that pressed before me. But as I thrust the papers into my pocket to resume the search for Barkhouse, the elusive memory flashed on me. The diagram of the enemy recalled the single slip of paper I had found in the pocket of Henry Wilton's coat on the fatal night of my arrival. I had kept it a night with me, for it was the sole memorandum left by him of the business that had brought him to his death. I brought it out and placed it side by side with the map I had before me. The resemblance was less close than I had thought, yet all the main features were the same. There was the road branching thrice; a cross in both marked the junction of the third road as though it gave sign of a building or some natural landmark; and the other features were indicated in the same order. No—there was a difference in this point; there were five crosses on the third road in the enemy's diagram, while there were but four in mine.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"I see that they're a-goin' to uplift us farmers!"

"What do they calculate ter use—balloons or dynamite?"

\$100 Reward, \$100.

The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Chas. H. Fitch's Cure. The only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity, Chas. H. Fitch's Cure for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.

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"Naw, the pain's in me—boo-hoo!"

A Cure.

The sinner walked along the rocky road, his bare feet torn and bleeding from bruises and wounds. He met a stranger.

"Friend," he exclaimed, "I have sinned and done wrong, I must patiently suffer the most extreme agony to save myself from eternal damnation. Can you tell me some supreme test of repentance?"

"Certainly," answered the other, with an air of experience. "Go to a boarding house and live there for a year."

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Many a man lies in an effort to stand up for another.

Sloan's Liniment is the best remedy for sprains and bruises. It quiets the pain at once, and can be applied to the tenderest part without hurting because it doesn't need to be rubbed—all you have to do is to lay it on lightly. It is a powerful preparation and penetrates instantly—relieves any inflammation and congestion, and reduces the swelling.

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I closed her eyes and composed her limbs.

"She was a rare old bird," said Corson when I had done. "but there was some good in her, after all."

"She has been a good friend to me," I said, and we called a servant from below and left the grewsome room to his guardianship.

"And now, there's another little job to be done. There's one of my men a prisoner down on Davis street. I must get him out."

"I'm with you, sor," said Corson heartily. "I'm hopin' there's some heads to be cracked."

I had not counted on the policeman's aid, but I was thankful to accept the honest offer. In the restaurant I found five of my men, and with this force I thought that I might safely attempt an assault on the Den.

The Den was a low, two-story building of brick, with a warehouse below, and the quarters of the enemy, approached by a narrow stairway above.

William Knew His Fault.

But Perhaps the World Might Not Agree With Him.

In a certain village of New Hampshire there is a quaint old character known as Boss Mellin, keenly alive to the truth of the old saying, "Silence is golden." Mellin's gift in this respect approaches genius, though he was fully aware of what he deemed his shortcomings therein.

Mellin used to make mattresses for a living. One day a native of the place entered his shop and asked, "Boss, what's the best kind of a mattress?"

"Husks," was the laconic response of Boss.

Twenty years later, so runs the tradition, the same man again entered the shop, and again asked, what, in the opinion of Mellin, was the best kind of a mattress.

"Straw," said Boss.

"Straw? You told me husks was the best!"

Boss Mellin emitted a sigh. "I've always ruined myself by talkin'," said he.—Harper's Weekly.

Scarcity of Princesses.

By the birth of the little son and heir to Prince and Princess Alexander of Teck the number of unmarried English princesses is now increased to 11, and if to these are added the two sons of Prince and Princess Louis of Battenberg there may be said to be 13 princesses for whom wives will have to be found at some time. It is noteworthy that at the present time Europe is suffering from a dearth of young princesses. Of late by babies have appeared in all the royal families, and even as matters now stand, it is difficult to see how these little princesses are to be mated.