BLIND FOLDED

By EADLE ASHLEY WILCOX

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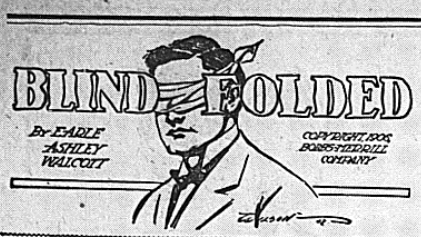

SYNOPSIS.

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. 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 secreting 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 can learn nothing about the mysterious boy further than that it is Tim Terrill and Darby Meeker who are after him. Dudley visits the home of Knapp and is stricken by the beauty of Luella, his daughter. Slumming tour through Chinatown is planned. The trip to Chinatown. Giles Dudley learns that the party is being shadowed by Terrill. 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 Terrill is seen in the mob. A newly formed mob is checked by shots from Giles' revolver. Policeman Corson breaks down the door with an ax and the couple is rescued. Luella thanks Giles Dudley for saving her life. Knapp 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 Crown Diamond and buying Omega, the object being to crush Decker, Knapp's hated rival. Dudley discovers that he loves Luella Knapp. Mother Borton tells Giles Dudley that "they've discovered where 'the boy' is." The mysterious unknown woman employer of Dudley meets 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 guards 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 Darby Meeker and Tim Terrill, lay siege to the hotel and endeavor to capture "the boy," who comes forward to see the fight. "Tricked again," cries Tim Terrill, when he sees the youngster's face. "It's the wrong boy." Dudley and Terrill meet in battle of man to man. Dudley is knocked unconscious by Terrill's assistant and awakes to find himself in a hotel room 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-eyed man. The boy is left behind and Dudley and his remaining guards make their escape horseback and by stealing a locomotive. Doddridge 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.

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 wan 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 sixteen arrists we made."

"Where is Mother Borton?"

"The cold a-be-divil'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, Shaughnessy, 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.

"Who did it?"

"Black Dick—curse his soul. And he's roasting in hell for it this minute," cried Mother Borton, savagely.

"Hush!" I said. "You mustn't excite yourself."

"There's maybe an hour left in me. We must hurry. Tell me about your trouble—at Livermore, was it?" said she.

I gave her a brief account of the expedition and its outcome. Mother Borton listened eagerly, giving an occasional grunt of approval.

"Well, honey; I was some good to ye, after all," was her comment.

"Indeed, yes."

"And you had a closer shave for your life than you think," she continued. "Tom Terrill swore he'd kill ye, and it's one of the miracles, sure, that he didn't."

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

"Well, Mother Borton, Tom Terrill's laid up in Livermore with a broken head, and I'm safe here with you, ready to serve you in any way that a man may."

"Safe—safe?" mused Mother Borton, an absent look coming over her skinny features, as though her mind wandered. Then she turned to me impressively. "You'll never be safe till you change your work and your name. You've shut your ears to my words while I'm alive, but maybe you'll think of 'em when I'm in my coffin. I tell you now, boy, there's murder and death before you. Do you hear? Murder and death."

She sank back on her pillow and gazed at me with a wearied light in her eyes and a sibyl 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 do that. I must go on."

"And why?"

"My friend—his work—his murderer."

"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, startled 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 paid him, and protected 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 moaned, 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," groaned Mother Borton, "unless they put a knife into Barkhouse first, and then you'll be the second beliike."

"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 tonight, 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:

"I'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 affrightedly at the mystic being who had come for her, but settled into peace as 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.

"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 hall.

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.

"Tie 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 forgits 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 enemy.

"This is illigant," 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 us. 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 always 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.)

Valuable Fish Catch.

The annual fish catch of England is valued at $53,960,000.

BIG PHILADELPHIA FIRE

LUMBER YARDS DESTROYED, THE LOSS BEING $750,000.

Spectacular Blaze Marked by Thrilling Incidents—Trains on Pennsylvania Railway Are Delayed.

Philadelphia.—A spectacular fire that was marked by many thrilling incidents destroyed the lumber yards of R. A. & J. J. Williams, in the northwestern section of the city Monday night, entailing a loss estimated at $750,000.

The yard is on a rectangular piece of ground at Glenwood and Sedgley avenues and Cumberland, York and Twenty-second streets and close beside the tracks of the Pennsylvania railroad. As a result of the fierce blaze southern and western trains were held up several hours, causing great inconvenience. A line of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company crosses Glenwood avenue also at the scene of the blaze. This bridge caught fire and the heat warped the rails so that traffic was tied up on the line.

While the fire was in its incipiency Harry Wilkinson, a fireman, drove chemical engine No. 45 into the yard between the big piles of lumber. The flames ate their way around the engine, and Wilkinson and a companion narrowly escaped with their lives. They could not get the apparatus away from the flames and both horses were burned to death. Wilkinson was seriously burned trying to save the animals. It is believed the fire was of incendiary origin.

ROOSEVELT AIDS HEALTH MOVE.

Promises to Make Recommendation in Next Message.

New York. — That President Roosevelt has agreed to recommend to congress in his next message the passage of a law to conserve the public health, similar to the one proposed by the American Medical association, was the statement made in an address before the New York Academy of Medicine by Dr. Charles A. L. Reed of Cincinnati, chairman of the association's committee on national medical legislation. In speaking on the campaign for national health laws, Dr. Reed said:

"On the heels of the various steps forward I am gratified to be able to assure you that the president has authorized the statement that he will formulate definite proposals and transmit them with his indorsement to the next congress. It now devolves upon the 13,000 doctors in the United States not only to back the president in his work, but to anticipate those actions by a persistent campaign in behalf of this fundamental feature of the public welfare."

NEW FARMERS' ORGANIZATION.

Society of Equity Is Formed at Indianapolis Convention.

Indianapolis, Ind.—The Farmers' Society of Equity was organized here Thursday afternoon at a convention of representatives from a number of states. The constitution of the society embodies practically all of the basic principles of the American Society of Equity, the principal change being that all delegates to the conventions of the society must be producing farmers.

The following officers were elected: J. A. Everitt of Indianapolis, president; W. E. Crellick of Travis City, Mich., vice-president; J. C. Ross of Indianapolis, treasurer. The directors are: N. N. Ashby of Sebree, Ky.; J. A. Myers of Ramsey, N. J.; R. Sherad of Keosauqua, Ia.; W. H. Mitchell of Hutchinson, Kan.; L. H. Johnson of Attica, Ind.; and F. W. Morris of Rochester, Minn.

JUMPS OVER THE FALLS.

C. A. Hengerer of Buffalo Commits Suicide at Niagara.

Niagara Falls, N. Y.—Charles A. Hengerer, son of the late William Hengerer and former vice-president of the William Hengerer Company, one of the largest department stores in Buffalo, committed suicide here Monday by jumping into the river and going over the falls.

Hengerer was connected with the Willis K. Morgan Company, a Buffalo furniture and draperies store. He was at work in the morning and appeared to be in a normal state of mind. No cause for suicide is known. He retired from the William Hengerer Company soon after the death of his father.

Victim of Crime Is Found.

Detroit, Mich.—The almost nude body of an unknown man, 35 to 40 years old, was found Thursday in a sack bound with ropes and a driving rein in Lapham's Lane, Springwells township. The man's throat was cut from ear to ear, there was a bullet hole in one temple and the back of his head was crushed in. Apparently he had been dead three weeks.

Big Lease of Grazing Land.

Winnipeg, Man.—A syndicate of Minnesota, Montana and Oregon cattlemen have leased 10,000 acres of grazing land near Chilico lake, some distance from the head of Iluite Inlet, British Columbia, and thousands of yearlings will be shipped in.

Double Tragedy in Kentucky.

Lexington, Ky.—At Heidelberg, Lee county, Sunday, Ephraim Angel and Harvey Ross engaged in a fight, and as a result Angel was shot and killed and Ross was fatally injured.

LAME BACK PRESCRIPTION

The increased use of whiskey for lame back rheumatism is causing considerable discussion among the medical fraternity. It is an almost infallible cure when mixed with certain other ingredients and taken properly. The following formula is effective: "To one-half pint of good whiskey add one ounce of Toris Compound and one ounce Syrup Sarsaparilla Compound. Take in tablespoonful doses before each meal and before retiring."

Toris compound is a product of the laboratories of the Globe Pharmaceutical Co., Chicago, but it as well as the other ingredients can be had from any good druggist.

A Difficult Task.

An old Irish laborer walked into the luxurious studio of a New York artist and asked for money to obtain a meal, as he was too weak to work.

The artist gave him a quarter and then, seeing possibilities for a sketch in the queer old fellow, said: "I'll give you a dollar if you'll let me paint you."

"Sure," said the man, "it's an easy way to make a dollar, but, but—I wonderin' how I'd get it off."

I AM A MOTHER

How many American women in lonely homes to-day long for this blessing to come into their lives, and to be able to utter these words, but because of some organic derangement this happiness is denied them.

Every woman interested in this subject should know that preparation for healthy maternity is accomplished by the use of

LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND

Mrs. Maggie Gilmer, of West Union, S. C., writes to Mrs. Pinkham:

"I was greatly run-down in health from a weakness peculiar to my sex, when Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound was recommended to me. It not only restored me to perfect health, but to my delight I am a mother."

Mrs. Josephine Hall, of Bardstown, Ky., writes:

"I was a very great sufferer from female troubles, and my physician failed to help me. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound not only restored me to perfect health, but I am now a proud mother."

FACTS FOR SICK WOMEN.

For thirty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from roots and herbs, has been the standard remedy for female ills, and has positively cured thousands of women who have been troubled with displacements, inflammation, ulceration, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, that bearing-down feeling, flatulency, indigestion, dizziness or nervous prostration. Why don't you try it?

Mrs. Pinkham invites all sick women to write her for advice. She has guided thousands to health. Address, Lynn, Mass.

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"The development of the country has made marvellous strides. It is a revelation, a record of conquest by settlement that is remarkable."—*Extract from correspondence of a National Editor, who visited Canada in August last.*

The grain crop of 1908 will net many farmers $20.00 to $25.00 per acre. Grain-raising, mixed farming and dairying are the principal industries. Climate is excellent; social conditions the best; railway advantages unequalled; schools, churches and markets close at hand. Land may also be purchased from railway and land companies.

For "Last Best West" pamphlets, maps and information as to how to secure lowest railway rates, apply to

Superintendent of Immigration
Ottawa, Canada

or to the authorized Canadian Government Agent:

C. J. BROUGHTON, Room 638 Quincy Bldg., Chicago, Ill.; W. H. ROGERS, third floor, Traction Terminal Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.; or T. O. CURRIE, Room 13 B, Callahan Block, Milwaukee, Wis.

21,372 ACRES fine land, Lincoln County, Nebraska, $5.00 acre; fourth cash; 7,264 acres, Adams County, Colorado, $15.00 acre; half cash. 11,000 acres scattered, Colorado, $4.25 acre; half cash. 2,40 acres, Albany County, Wyoming, $4.00 acre, easy terms. Delivered garments all 66. Write owner for particulars. John W. Haughman, Plains, Kansas.

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