

BLIND-FOLDED

By EARLE
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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. Dudley is 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. Hardly has he gone than Giles is startled by a cry of "Help." 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. 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. He is told that "Dicky" Nihil is a traitor, playing both hands in the game. Giles finds himself locked in a room. Dudley gets his first knowledge of Decker, who is Knapp's enemy on the Board. Dudley visits the home of Knapp and is stricken by the beauty of Luella, his daughter. He learns the note was forged. He is provided with four guards, Brown, Barkhouse, Fitzhugh and Porter. He learns there is to be no trouble about money as all expenses will be paid, the hire of the guards being paid by one "Richmond." The body of Henry Wilton is committed to the vault. Dudley responds to a note and visits Mother Borton in company with Policeman Corson.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

The four men within the room saluted me gravely and with Mother Borton's direction in mind I had no hesitation in calling each by his name. I was pleased to see that they were robust, vigorous fellows, and soon made my dispositions. Brown and Barkhouse were to attend me during daylight and Fitzhugh and Porter were to guard together at night. And, so much settled, I hastened to the office.

No sign of Doddridge Knapp disturbed the morning, and at the noon hour I returned to the room in the house of mystery that was still my only fixed abode.

All was apparently as I had left it, except that a letter lay on the table. "I must get a new lock," was my comment, as I broke the seal. "This place is getting too public when every messenger has a key." I was certain that I had locked the door when Corson and I had come out on the evening before.

The letter was from my unknown employer, and read: "Richmond has paid the men. Be ready for a move at any moment. Leave your address if you sleep elsewhere."

And now came three or four days of rest and quiet after the merry life I had been leading since my arrival in San Francisco.

In the interval I improved my time by getting better acquainted with the city. Emboldened by my body-guard, I slept for two nights in Henry's room, and with one to watch outside the door, one lying on a mattress just inside, and a new lock and bolt, I was free from disturbance.

Just as I had formed a wild idea of looking up Doddridge Knapp in his home, I came to the office in the morning to find the door into Room 16 wide open and the farther door ajar.

"Come in, Wilton," said the voice of the King of the Street; and I entered his room to find him busied over his papers, as though nothing had occurred since I had last met him.

"The market has had something of a vacation," I ventured, as he failed to speak.

"I have been out of town," he said shortly. "What have you done?"

"Nothing." He gave a grunt of assent. "You didn't expect me to buy up the market, did you?"

The yellow-gray mustache went up, and the wolf-fangs gleamed from beneath.

"I reckon it wouldn't have been a very profitable speculation," he replied. Then he leaned back in his chair and looked meditatively at the wall.

"Have you heard anything more of Decker?" he asked.

"I've heard enough to satisfy me that he's the man who got the Omega stock."

"What other deal is he in?" asked the King of the Street.

"I don't know."

The King of the Street smiled indulgently.

"Well, you've got something to learn yet. I'll give you till next week to find the answer to that question."

I was convinced from his air that he had information on both these points himself, and was merely trying my knowledge.

"I'll not be back before next Wednesday," he concluded.

"Going away again?" I asked in surprise.

"I'm off to Virginia City," he replied after considering for a little. "I'm not sure about Omega, after all—and there's another one I want to look into. You needn't mention my going. When I come back we'll have a campaign that will raise the roof of every Board in town. No orders till then unless I telegraph you. That's all."

The King of the Street seemed straightforward enough in his statement of plans, and it did not occur to me to distrust him while I was in his presence. Yet, once more in my office, with the locked door between, I began to doubt, and tried to find some hidden meaning in each word and look.

CHAPTER XV.

I Am in the Toils.

"Welcome once more, Mr. Wilton," said Mrs. Doddridge Knapp, holding out her hand. "Were you going to neglect us again?"

"Not at all, madam," said I with unblushing mendacity. "I am always at your command."

I had received a letter from Mrs. Bowser setting forth that I was wanted at the house of Doddridge Knapp, and her prolixity was such that I was unable to determine whether she or Mrs. Knapp or Luella wished to see me.

But as all three appeared to be concerned in it I pocketed pride and resentment, and made my bow with some nervous quavers at the Pine Street palace.

As I was speaking I cast my eyes furtively about the room. Mrs. Knapp interpreted my glance.

"She will be in presently." There was to my ear a trace of mocking laughter in her voice as she spoke, but her face betokened only a courteous interest.

"Thanks—I hope so," I said in a lit-

"Oh, of course, I don't expect you to tell me about that. I know Mr. Knapp, and you're as close-mouthed as he, even when he's away."

"I should tell you anything of my own, but of course, another's—"

"I understand," Mrs. Knapp, sitting with hands clasped in her lap, gave me a quick look. "But there was something else. You were telling me about your adventures, you remember. You told me two or three weeks ago about the way you tricked Darby Meeker and sent him to 'Serria City.' And she smiled at the recollection of Darby Meeker's discomfiture.

"Oh, yes," I said, with a laugh that sounded distressingly hollow to my ears. "That was a capital joke on Meeker."

"How did it turn out?" asked Mrs. Knapp with lively interest. "Did he get back?"

I decided promptly on a judicious amount of truth.

"Yes, he got back boiling with wrath and loaded to the guards with threats—that is, I heard so from my men. I didn't see him myself, or you might have found the rest of it in the newspaper."

"What did he do? Tell me about it," Mrs. Knapp gave every evidence of absolute interest.

"Well, he laid a trap for me at Borton's, put Terrill in as advance guard and raised blue murder about the place." And then I went on to give a carefully amended account of my first night's row at Borton's, and with an occasional question Mrs. Knapp had soon extorted from me a fairly full account of my doings.

"It is dreadful for you to expose yourself to such dangers."

I was privately of her opinion.

"Oh, that's nothing," said I airily. "A man may be killed any day by a brick falling from a building, or by slipping on an orange peel on the crossing."

"But is dreadful for you to court death so. Yet," she mused, "if I were a man I could envy you your work. There is romance and life in it, as well as danger. You are doing in the nineteenth century and in the midst of

thrill that came from it, it was gone. A flush passed over her face and died away as she came.

"You honor our poor house once more?" she said, dropping a mock courtesy. "I thought you had deserted us."

"Not I," said I stoutly, holding out my hand. I saw there was a little play to be carried on for the benefit of Mrs. Knapp. For some reason she had not confided in her mother. "Not I. I am always your humble knight."

I saw that Mrs. Knapp was looking at us curiously, and pressed my advantage. Luella took my hand unwillingly. I was ready to dare a good deal for the clasp of her fingers, but I scarcely felt the thrill of their touch before she had snatched them away.

"There's nothing but pretty speeches to be had from you—and quotations at that," she said. There was malice under the seeming innocence of a pretended pout.

"There's nothing that could be so becoming in the circumstances."

"Except common sense," frowned Luella.

"The most uncommon of qualities, my dear," laughed Mrs. Knapp. "Sit down, children. I must see to Mr. Carter, who is lost by the portiere and will never be discovered unless I rescue him."

"Take him to dear Aunt Julia," said Luella as her mother left us.

"Dear Aunt Julia," I inferred, was Mrs. Bowser.

Luella took a seat and I followed her example. Then, with chin in hand and elbow on the arm of her chair, the young woman looked at me calmly and thoughtfully.

"Well," said Luella at last, in a cutting voice, "why don't you talk?"

"It's your lead," said I gloomily. "You took the last trick."

"At this reference to our meeting, Luella looked surprised. Then she gave a little rippling laugh.

"Really," she said, "I believe I shall begin to like you, yet."

"That's very kind of you; but turn about is fair play."

"You mustn't do that," said she severely, "or I shan't."

"I meant it," said I defiantly.

"Then you ought to know better than to say it," she retorted.

"I'm in need of lessons, I fear."

"How delightful of you to confess it! Then shall I tell you what to do?" This was very charming. I hastened to say:

"Do, by all means."

The young woman sank back in her chair, clasped her hands in her lap as her mother had done, and glanced hastily about. Then in a low voice she said:

"Be yourself."

It was an electric shock she gave me, not more by the words than by the tone.

I struggled for a moment before I regained my mental balance.

"Don't you think we could get on safer ground?" I suggested.

"No," said Luella. "There isn't any safe ground for us otherwise."

The sudden heart-sickness at the remainder of my mission with which these words overwhelmed me, tied my tongue and mastered my spirits. It was this girl's father that I was pursuing. Oh, why was this burden laid upon me? Why was I to be torn on the rack between inclination and duty?

Luella watched my face narrowly through the conflict in my mind, and I felt as though her spirit struggled with mine to win me to the course of open, honest dealing. But it was impossible. She must be the last of all to know.

Her eyes sank as though she knew which had won the victory, and a proud, scornful look took the place of the grave good humor that had been there a moment before. Then, on a sudden, she began to speak of the theaters, rides, drives and what-not of the pleasures of the day. Suddenly she stopped with a weary look.

"There's Aunt Julia waiting for you," she said with a gleam of malicious pleasure. "Come along, I deliver you over a prisoner of war."

"Wait a minute," I pleaded.

"No," she said, imperiously motioning me. "Come along." And with a sigh I was given, a helpless, but silently protesting, captive, to the mercies of Mrs. Bowser.

That eloquent lady received me with flutter of feathers, if I may borrow the expression, to indicate her pleasure.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Dogs' Homing Instinct.

The other day, writes a correspondent, a dog was sent by carriage to Brandon station, in Norfolk, en route for London, from Buckingham hall. At Ely it slipped its collar as the guard took it out to give it water, the time was after dark on a winter evening, and the dog dashed away and could not be found.

At 6:30 on the following morning one of the stablemen at Buckingham heard a dog whining and howling under the window. It was the same dog returned. The distance from Ely to Buckingham is computed at 17 miles.

The dog is a female spaniel, and it is virtually certain that its local knowledge of the country about Buckingham on the side toward Ely was limited to a mile from the former. This would leave it an unknown tract of 16 miles to travel through the dark in a single night. By what sense was it guided?—Country Life.

Turning Points.

Look out for the period in your life when you are tempted to turn back! There is the danger point, the decisive period. All the great things of history have been accomplished after the great majority of men would have turned back.—Home Chat

EASY MONEY

By BORDEN H. MILLS

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"It isn't really a trick at all," said the dentist to his patient, the drummer, "though I don't understand it myself, to tell the truth. It's a marvelous faculty possessed by a friend of mine for knowing what's going in a place, though he may not be personally present, or have any means of communication. You can lay out here on the table an entire pack of cards, face up, and touch any one of the 52. Then step to the telephone and call up my friend, and he'll tell you what card you have touched."

"Impossible," said the patient. "I'd bed almost anything that it can't be done. It might be worked if you did the telephoning, and had some combination of words, or code of signals to use in talking to your friend, from which he could tell what card had been picked out. But if I do the telephoning—why, I'd wager a ten-spot he couldn't tell the card."

"Done," said the dentist.

He produced a pack of cards and handed them to the drummer, who shuffled them thoroughly, and laid them out, face up, in four rows of 13 cards each. At the dentist's request the drummer touched one, that chanced to be the ten-spot of diamonds.

"Now," said the dentist, "step to the phone, call 309 Cortlandt, ask for my friend, tell him that you're at my office and have touched a card, and ask him what card you touched."

The drummer did as directed, and after a moment's pause, the words came over the wire: "That was the ten of diamonds you picked out."

The money was the dentist's.

The loser pressed him for an explanation of the trick, for trick he believed it to be, but the dentist insisted that he was as much in the dark as the drummer, who thereupon left the office.

"There's a catch somewhere," said he to his friend, the credit man, to whom he related his experience, "and I'd give another ten-dollar bill to know just where."

"Well," said the credit man, "I'm not averse to making a tenner or two myself, and being forewarned, I think I can detect his little game—for it must be a game, as you say. Suppose I drop around to see your dentist friend this afternoon? I have a little filling that might just as well be done now as any other time. He'll likely get talking cards with me—I'll steer him on to it if he doesn't. I'll make a little wager with him myself, and watch him closely, and perhaps I'll see the game before it is really worked, and be able to catch him in the act. You said it was worth ten to you to know how it was done. If I meet you here at six and tell you how, is that tennor mine?"

"It is," exclaimed the drummer, provided, of course, you do not get the secret by persuading the doctor to tell you—and as for that, I'll trust to your honor."

"Done," was the reply, and they went their several ways.

Six o'clock came, and they met in the dining room.

"Well," began the credit man, "you're stung—and so am I. I went through practically the same experience that you did—picked out the ace of spades, and the dentist's friend promptly told me what card I had touched. I watched them an carefully during the whole proceedings. While I was getting 309 Cortlandt he paid no attention to me at all, but continued to read in a book he had picked up but a moment before I selected the card."

"It's certainly a most mysterious affair all the way through," was the drummer's reply, "and I'd give anything to know just how it was worked."

The two did not meet again for nearly a year, when they ran across one another on lower Fifth avenue one day, and stopped to chat, and the credit man remarked:

"By the way, do you remember how we two got fooled on that card game of your dentist's last year? That Ransome, who worked with him, must be a pretty slick one. I'd like to look the doctor up and ask him to introduce me to the fellow."

"Ransome?" exclaimed the other. "I don't remember that the name was Ransome. My memory isn't very good as to that part of the occurrence, but it strikes me it was more like Ramsay."

"No, I'm pretty sure it was Ransome," was the reply, "but of course I may be mistaken. Ramsay or Ransome, however, he was a pretty clever fellow, and we were neatly done, both of us. Lunch with me on the strength of it."

"Accordingly they adjourned to a near-by cafe, and were selecting from the dinner card when the telephone bell on the bar behind them rang. "Yes, This is 309 Cortlandt," they heard the bartender say.

They pricked up their ears on the instant. That was the very number the dentist had used in his card game.

The bartender waited a minute. "Yes, this is Mr. Roberts talking to you now," he said.

Then came another pause, and then: "That card you touched was the king of clubs. Yes, the king. Good-by," and he hung up the receiver.

"Excuse me," said the drummer, as the man turned from the phone, "but that's a queer conversation to have over a telephone. Here's the price of a good dinner for you, if you will tell us the game."

The bartender hesitated a moment, and then, accepting the proffered bill, replied:

"It's the greatest ever. I've a friend 'round in Twenty-third street who's a dentist. He gets a customer talking about tricks with cards, and tells him he has a friend who can tell what card is touched in a pack laid out face up, without being present at all, just by being called up on the phone and told that a card has been picked out. The customer gets excited about it, and nine times out of ten offers to bet it can't be done. If he doesn't make the offer himself, my friend does, and it's seldom that he isn't taken up. The guy lays out the pasteboards, touches one, and then calls me up, and I tell him what card's been touched—every time. We knock out a hundred or more some weeks, for the doc has a big practice—mostly among sporting men and other gents that think they know a good thing when they see it. I tell you, it's the greatest thing ever. 'Easy money' is no name for it."

"But," said the credit man, "I don't see it yet. How can you tell from here what card's been touched?"

"Easy," was the reply. "I have a little book here—you can see it hanging by the phone, and if you'd been watching me, you would have noticed that I looked in it before telling him what the card was. The doctor has the same thing pasted in the middle of his engagement book. It's a list of the 52 cards in the pack, and opposite the name of each card is the name of some person—the same names in his list as in mine, in the same order."

"Suppose the guy touches the queen of hearts. Doc looks in the book—that's easy, because he has opened it a moment before—maybe to put down another engagement for the patient, for all he knows. Opposite the words 'Queen of Hearts' is written the name 'Jackson.' Doc says: 'Call up 309 Cortlandt, and ask for Mr. Jackson.' The fellow does so. I answer the phone, look for Jackson in my list—there's the queen of hearts opposite. 'You touched the queen of hearts,' says I—and the money's ours."

"Cinch? Well, I should rather say. It's almost a shame to take the money."

"It is, indeed," said credit, looking sadly at drummer.

"Shame isn't the word," said drummer to credit.

"Have one on the house, gents?" said the bartender.

CRITIC OF AMERICAN "HUSTLE."

English Writer Regards it in the Light of a Huge Bluff.

It happens to be true that there is a tendency in America to talk at such length about doing things quickly that much of the time which might be spent in getting the things done is spent instead in boasting about how quickly they are going to be done. It happens to be true, also, that while ordinary "slow and conservative" people are pushing steadily forward and reaching certainly, inch by inch, toward the end of their work, Americans will very likely be explaining loudly to everybody the advantages of some invention which does the work so badly and so quickly that it all has to be done over again.

The speed of America is also very largely a matter of external appearances and of show. It is like the hurrying and scurrying of those mysterious waiters whom we have all of us seen racing about in crowded restaurants. They rush here, they rush there, these wonderful waiters; they knock over this table and upset that chair; they drop things, and fall and stumble about. And meanwhile nobody gets served, nothing gets done, and the hungry guests "look up and are not fed." A little work, they think, would be better than so much hurry.—London (England) Daily Mirror.

Why They Would Be Missed.

"I know what you'll miss most about us," said her neighbor, who was moving from the building, "our telephone, that you have been using. I shall never forget that night you called us up from somewhere where you had concluded to spend the night, that you had left your flat unlocked and were afraid there was a burglar in it. Would we go and see if there was a burglar in it?"

"Wasn't that a nice thing to ask us to do? Here I had to get out of bed, wake up the hired girl and the elevator man and the janitor and go look for that burglar in your flat! And after all the trouble he wasn't there."

"No, you'll never get such neighbors as we are again, such obliging, burglar-hunting neighbors. Never in the world!"

Decrease in English Shipbuilding.

The decrease in shipbuilding in the United Kingdom is the greatest, according to the London Financial Times, in a quarter of a century. The tonnage now under construction is 101,000 less than at the end of last quarter, and 459,000 less than that of 12 months ago.

Of Woman.

Crush the soul of a woman, and you extinguish her life and shed darkness on all who surround her. She cannot rally from pain or labor, or misfortune, if her higher nature is ignored.—John Lord.



"REALLY," SHE SAID, "I BELIEVE I SHALL BEGIN TO LIKE YOU."

te confusion. I wished I knew whether she meant Luella or Mrs. Bowser.

"You got the note?" she asked.

"It was a great pleasure."

"Mrs. Bowser wished so much to see you again. She has been singing your praises—you were such an agreeable young man."

I cursed Mrs. Bowser in my heart.

"I believe there was some arrangement between you about a trip to see the sights of Chinatown. Mrs. Bowser was quite worried for fear you had forgotten it, so I gave her your address and told her to write you a note."

I had not been conscious of expecting anything from my visit, but at this bit of information I found that I had been building air-castles which had been invisible till they came tumbling about my ears. I could not look for Miss Knapp's company on such an expedition.

"Oh," said I, with an attempt to conceal my disappointment, "the matter had slipped my mind. I shall be most happy to attend Mrs. Bowser, or to see that she has a proper escort."

We had been walking about the room during this conversation, and at this point had come to an alcove, where Mrs. Knapp motioned me to a seat.

"I may not get a chance to talk with you alone again this evening," she continued, dropping her half-banter tone, "and you come so little now. What are you doing?"

"Keeping out of mischief."

"Yes, but how?" she persisted. "You used to tell me everything. Now you tell me nothing."

"Mr. Knapp's work—" I began.

civilization what your forefathers may have done in the days of chivalry."

"It is a fine life," I said dryly. "But it has its drawbacks."

"But while you live no one can harm the child," she said. There was inquiry in her tone, I thought.

I suppressed a start of surprise. I had avoided mention of the boy. Henry had trusted Mrs. Knapp further than I had dreamed.

"He shall never be given up by me," I replied with conviction.

"That is spoken like a true, brave man," said Mrs. Knapp with an admiring look.

"Thank you," I said modestly.

"Another life than yours depends on your skill and courage. That must give you strength," she said softly.

"It does indeed," I replied. I was thinking of Doddridge Knapp's life.

"But here come Luella and Mrs. Bowser," said Mrs. Knapp. "I see I shall lose your company."

My heart gave a great bound, and I turned to see the queenly grace of Luella Knapp as she entered the room in the train of Mrs. Bowser.

Was it fancy, or had she grown paler and thinner since I had last seen her? Surely those dark hollows under her eyes that told of worry and lost sleep were not there when her brightness had chained my admiration.

"Luella!" called Mrs. Knapp. I fancied she gave a low, musical laugh as she spoke, yet the glance showed me that her face was calm and serious. "Luella, here is some one you will like to see."

Luella Knapp turned and advanced. What was the look that lighted up her face and sparkled from her eyes? Before I could analyze the magnetic