The Kingdom of The Blind

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

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SYNOPSIS:

fiances Olive Mcreton; Captain itonald and spoke to the old man. Granet, nephew of the hostess, home "You are not afraid of the German "Your own mother wouldn't know you with a wounded arm. Lieut. Conyers shells, then?" he asked. receives commission on a "mystery" ship and Major Thomson decodes a "one must live or die-it does not secret message from the battlefield. Lord Romsey receives a visitor and the matter which. For the rest, if one reflectively. conversation reveals the Cabinet Min- is to live, one must eat. Therefore ister's secret dealings with Germany. I work. Four sons I have and a me got shot yesterday," he grumbled. Thomson calls at Granet's apartments nephew away yonder," he added, wav- "Anything doing as you came over to discover whether he knows any- ing his hand southwards. "That is the ridge, Major?" thing about Lord Romsey's visitor. why I dig alone. Why do you not Granet denies any knowledge of the send us more soldiers, Monsieur so-called American chaplain. Gerald- l'Anglais?" ine evades Thomson's plea for an im- "Wait but a little time longer," ing out in his Bleriot," some one remediate marriage. He expostulates Thomson answered cheerfully. marked. "He'll be with Conyers for disclosing Admiralty The old man looked sadly at his long with a report." plans to the two girls and Granet. ruined barn. a bottle missing from a cupboard. He jour, monsieur!" view Granet's General.

CHAPTER X.

troyer that had brought him and a of the house and welcomed Thomson. "And I'm to tell you what you want Keep Minard's Liniment in the house." few other soldiers across the Channel, "Hullo, Major," he called out, "just to know," the General continued, black with darkness, at a pace which across, eh?" made even the promenade deck impos- "This moment," Thomson assented. "Well, close the door, Harewood. Out sible; the landing at Boulogne, a hive "Anything fresh?" of industry notwithstanding the dark- "Nothing to speak of," the other "It's about Captain Granet of Harness; the clanking of waggons, the replied. "We've just had a message rison's staff." Thomson began. shrieking of locomotives, the jostling in that the French have been giving The General frowned and knocked of crowds, the occasional flashing of them a knock. We've had a quiet the ashes from his pipe. an electric torch. And then the ride, time the last two days. They're bring- "Well," he asked, "what is it?" in the great automobile through the ing up some more Bavarians, we "We've reasons of our own for misty night. He rubbed his eyes and think.' looked around him. A grey morning "Do you think I could have a few meant by asking the War Office not was breaking. The car had come to a words with the General?" Major to send him back again," Thomson standstill before a white gate, in front Thomson asked. of which was stationed a British sol- "Come in and have some coffee. The General hesitated. dier, with drawn bayonet. Surgeon- Yes, he'll see you, of course. He is Major Thomson pulled himself togeth- in his own room with two of the flyer and answered the challenge.

"A friend," he answered, -"Sur- let you know when you can go in."

service."

a rough road which led across a great his wants. stretch of pastureland. On the ridge | "The General had his breakfast an puff of white smoke, passed high over within a quarter of a mile of us. of troops through the trees, soldiers son." with no sign of the men who crawled be in London to-night.' about inside like ants. He passed a One of the officers fom the other great brewery transformed into a can- side of the table smiled queerly. teen, from which a line of wagons, "London! My God!" he muttered. the valley. Every now and then Mall where it was?" through the stillness came the sharp "And very much as it was," Thomred cross floating above it, came rock- off."

They passed several small houses him." and farms, in front of each of which "Oh, chuck it." the other exclaimed was stationed a sentry. Once, from in disgust. "What about you?-the the hills behind, a great white-winged only man with an eye to a Heavenaeroplane glided over his head on its ordained gun position, as old Wattles way to make a reconnaissance. Queer- declared one day. We're all living

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old man leaned upon his spade and The story, written in 1916, begins watched as the car passed. Not a with Lady Anselman's luncheon-party dozen yards from him was a great Sole Colbert and a grill at the Savoy, at the Ritz Hotel, London. Among the hole in the ground where a shell had and a front seat at the Alhambra, beguests are Lord Romsey, a Cabinet burst, and a little further away a fore many weeks have passed, I shall Minister; Surgeon-Major Thomson, barn in ruins. The car was forced get stale-that's what'll happen to Chief Inspector of Field Hospitals; his to stop here to let a cavalcade of me." fiancee, Geraldine Convers; her bro- ammunition wagons pass by. Surgeon- "Hope you'll have your hair cut be- ing to trust the dictionary avoid him ther, a naval lieutenant, and his Major Thomson leaned from his seat fore you go back," a man from the as you would the plague; there is a

"Monsieur," the old man answered, heart."

about twelve hours later with a start. of the house stretched many wires. ded cheerily to Thomson. He had been sleeping so heavily that A sentry stood at the iron gates and "When did you leave London?" he he was at first unable to remember his passed Major Thomson after a per- asked. whereabouts. His mind moved slug- functory challenge. An officer with "Nine o'clock last evening, sir," land fell from 312 to 226 tons; in the gishly across the brief panorama of mud-stained boots and wind-tossed Thmson replied. "Rather a record United States it rose from 400 to 770 his hurried journey—the special train hair, who looked as though he had trip. We had a special down and a tons. from Victoria to Folkestone; the des- been out all night, stood on the steps destroyer over."

which had once been the dining-room that Captain Granet is a mysterious He leaned from the car for a mo- of the chateau, and in which a long ment and held out something in the table was laid. One or two staff offihollow of his hand. The man saluted cers greeted Thomson, and the man authorities, and, to be frank with and drew back. The car went on along | who had brought him in attended to

of the hills on his right, little groups hour ago," the latter observed. ers. of men were at work unlimbering "We're pretty well forward here and guns. Once or twice, with a queer, we have to keep on the qui vive. We screeching sound, a shell, like a little got some shells yesterday dropped the car and fell somewhere in the think we're going to try and give grey valley below. In the distance he them a push back on the left flank. could see the movements of a body I'll go in and see about you, Thom- however, and it was sufficiently

on the way to relieve their comrades | "Good fellow! You might tell them in the trenches. As the morning broke, to give my chauffeur something. The the trenches themselves came into destroyer that brought me over is view-long, zig-zag lines, silent, and waiting at Boulogne, and I want to

going and returning, were passing all "There is still a London, I suppose? the time backwards and forwards into Savoy and Carlton going still? Pall

crack of a rifle from the snipers lying son assured him. "London's wonderhidden in the little stretches of wood- fully unchanged. You been out long?" land and marshland away on the right. "September the second," was the A motor-omnibus, with its advertise- cheerful reply. "I keep on getting ment signs still displayed but a great promised a week but I can't bring it

ing down the road on its way to the "He's such a nut with the telefield hospital in the distance. As yet, phones," the man by his side explainhowever, the business of fighting ed, helping himself to marmalade. seemed scarcely to have commenced. | "The General positively can't spare

est sight of all, here and there were wonders, Major," he went on, turnpeasants at work in the fields. One ing to Thomson, "but if I don't get a

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other end of the table remarked. "bad spell" upon him. like that-much less your sweet-

The young man fingered his locks

"Chap who was going to cut it for

Thomson shook his head. "One aeroplane and a few shells." "That would be Johnny Oates go- der? marked. "He'll be back here before

he announced. warns his servant that a new hand has The car passed on again and sud- Thomson followed his guide into a entered the game. War Office refuses denly dropped into a little protected small back room. An officer was seatto allow him to rejoin his regiment. valley. They came to a standstill ed before a desk, writing, another was Thomson goes to the Front to inter- before a tiny chateau, in front of shouting down a telephone, and a which stretched what might once have third was making some measurements in every block of marble, so is there been an ornamental garden, but which upon a large Ordnance map nailed an ideal self in every man. Be, then, Minard's Liniment used by Physicians was now torn to pieces by gun car- upon one of the walls. The General the sculptor of your own character. riages, convoy wagons, and every de- was standing with his back to the Surgeon-Major Thomson awoke scription of vehicle. From the top fire and a pipe in his mouth. He nod-

glancing at a document in his hand.

wishing to know exactly what you

continued.

"Well, what are they?" "They are a little intangible, sir." ing men just for the moment. I'll Thomson confessed, "but exceedingly important. Without any direct evigeon-Major Thomson, on his Majesty's They passed into an apartment dence, I have come to the conclusion person and needs watching. As usual, we are in trouble with the civil you, I am trying to strengthen my

The General shrugged his should-

"Very well," he decided, "under the circumstances you have the right to know what my message meant. We sent Granet back because of a suspicion which may be altogether unjustifiable. The suspicion was there, strong for me to make up my mind that I should prefer not to have him back again. Now you shall know the facts very briefly. Granet was taken prisoner twice. No one saw him taken-as a matter of fact, both the affairs were night attacks. He seemed suddenly to disappear-got too far ahead of his men, was his explanation. All I can say is that he was luckier than most of them. Anything wandering about loose in a British uniform-but there, I won't go on with that. He came back each time with information as to what he had seen. Each time we planned an attack on the strength of that informa-Each time that information proved to be misleading and our attack failed, costing us heavy losses? Of course, dispositions might have been changed since his observations were made, but there the fact remains. Further," the General continued, filling his pipe slowly and pressing in the tobacco, "on the second occasion we had four hundred men thrown forward into the village of Ossray. They were moved in the pitch darkness, and silently. It was impossible for any word of their presence in Ossray to have been known to the Germans. Yet the night of Granet's capture the village was shelled, and those who escaped were cut off and made prisoners. Follow me, Major?"

"Yes, sir!" Thomson acquiesced. "Those are pust the facts," the General concluded. "Now on the other hand, Granet has handled his men well, shown great personal bravery, and has all the appearance of a keen soldier. I hate to do him a wrong even in my thoughts but there were others besides myself to whom these coincidences seemed amazing. We simply decided that they'd better give Granet a billet at home. That's the reason of my message."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," Thomson said slowly. "You have given me exactly the information which we desire."

The General was called away for a moment to give some instructions to

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he young officer who was sitting in a distant corner of the room with a telephone band around his head. He signed to Thomson, however, to re-

"Now that I have gratified your curiosity," he said, when he returned, "perhaps you will gratify mine? Will you tell me just how you over in England have come to have suspicions of this man?"

(To be continued.)

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Many old-fashioned women used to think the dictionary was meant solely The officer who had met Thomson for the pressing of wild flowers, and After a walk in the park with Gerald- "It is always 'wait,' " he muttered, in the garden, re-entered the room. | they are responsible for the only stain ine, Granet returns to his room to find "and one grows old and tired. Bon- "General says he'll see you at once," that ever rested on the pages of that noble, but often to much neglected

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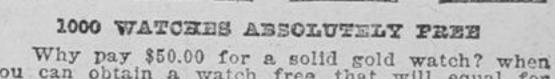
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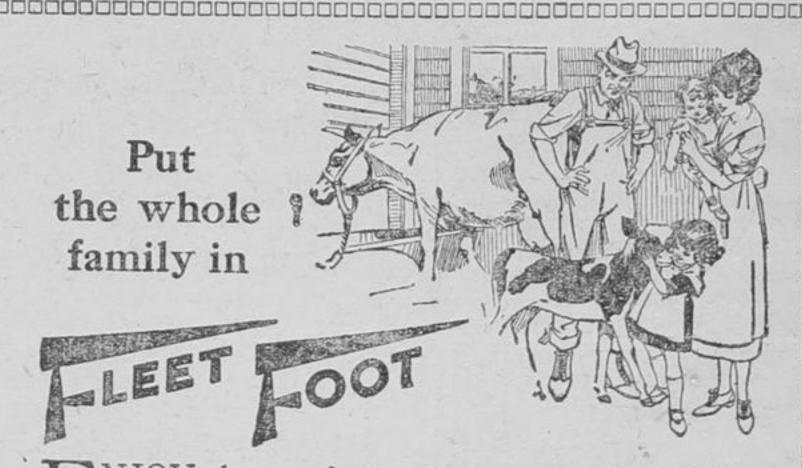
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