

The Kingdom of The Blind

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.

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SYNOPSIS:

The story, written in 1916, begins with Lady Anselman's luncheon-party at the Ritz Hotel, London. Among the guests are Lord Romsey, a Cabinet Minister; Surgeon-Major Thomson, Chief Inspector of Field Hospitals; his fiancée, Geraldine Conyers; her brother, a naval lieutenant, and his fiancée Olive Moreton; Captain Ronald Granet, nephew of the hostess, home with a wounded arm. Lieut. Conyers receives commission on a "mystery" ship and Major Thomson decodes a secret message from the battlefield. Lord Romsey receives a visitor and the conversation reveals the Cabinet Minister's secret dealings with Germany. Thomson calls at Granet's apartments to discover whether he knows anything about Lord Romsey's visitor. Granet denies any knowledge of the so-called American chaplain. Geraldine evades Thomson's plea for an immediate marriage. He expostulates with Conyers for disclosing Admiralty plans to the two girls and Granet. After a walk in the park with Geraldine, Granet returns to his room to find a bottle missing from a cupboard. He warns his servant that a new hand has entered the game. War Office refuses to allow him to rejoin his regiment. Thomson goes to the Front to interview Granet's General and has his suspicions confirmed.

CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd.)

"That," Thomson explained, "is almost a personal matter with me. Three months ago I spent the night with the Third Army Corps up by Niemen. I was there on other business, as you may imagine, but there was some hot fighting and I went out to help. I was attending to some of our fellows and got very near to the German lines. I became separated from the others a little and was groping about when I heard voices talking German within a few feet of me. I couldn't hear what they said but I could just distinguish two figures. One of them made off towards the German lines. The other, after standing still a moment, came in my direction. I took out my revolver, and to tell you the truth I very nearly fired on sight, for it would have been an exceedingly awkward matter for me to have been taken prisoner just then. Just as my finger was on the trigger, I became conscious that the man who was approaching was humming 'Tipperary.' I flashed my light on his face and saw at once he was a British officer. He addressed me quickly in German. I answered him in English. I fancied for a moment that he seemed annoyed. 'We'd better get out of this,' he whispered. 'We're within a hundred yards of the German trenches and they are bringing searchlights up.' 'Who were you talking to just now?' I asked, as we stole along. 'No one at all,' he answered. 'I didn't take the thing seriously for the moment, although it seemed to me queer. Afterwards I regretted, however, that I hadn't set myself to discover the meaning of what was apparently a deliberate lie. The next time I met Granet was at a luncheon party at the Ritz, a few days ago. I recogniz-

ed his face at once, although I had only seen it by the flash of my electric lamp. From that moment I have had my suspicions."

The General nodded. He was looking a little grave.

"It's a hateful thing to believe," he said, "that any one wearing his Majesty's uniform could ever play such a dastardly part. However, on the whole, I am rather glad that I passed in that request to the War Office. Anything more we can do for you, Major?"

Thomson took the hint and departed. A few minutes later he was in his car and on his way back to Boulogne.

CHAPTER XI.

Olive Moreton gave a little start as the long, grey, racing car came noiselessly to a standstill by the side of the kerbstone. Captain Granet raised his hat and leaned from the driving seat towards her.

"Hope I didn't frighten you, Miss Moreton?"

"Not at all," she replied. "What a perfectly lovely car!"

He assented eagerly.

"Isn't she! My uncle's present to me to pass away the time until I can do some more soldiering. They only brought it round to me early this morning. Can I take you anywhere?"

"I was just going to see Geraldine Conyers," she began.

"Do you know, I guessed that," he remarked, leaning on one side and opening the door. "Do let me take you. I haven't had a passenger yet."

She stepped in at once.

"As a matter of fact," she told him, "I was looking for a taxicab. I have had a telegram from Ralph. He wants us to go down to Portsmouth by the first train we can catch this morning. He says that if we can get down there in time to have lunch at two o'clock, he can show us over the 'Scorpion.' After to-day she will be closed to visitors, even his own relations. I was just going to see if Geraldine could come."

Granet was thoughtful for a moment. He glanced at the little clock on the dashboard opposite to him. "I tell you what," he suggested, "why not let me motor you and Miss Conyers down? I don't believe there's another fast train before one o'clock, and we'd get down in a couple of hours, easily. It's just what I'm longing for, a good stretch into the country."

"I should love it," the girl exclaimed, "and I should think Geraldine would. Will you wait while I run in and see her?"

"Of course," Granet replied. "Here we are, and there's Miss Conyers at the window. You go in and talk her over and I'll just see that we've got lots of petrol. I'll have you down there within two hours, all right, if we can get away before the roads are crowded."

She hurried into the house. Geraldine met her on the threshold and they talked together for a few moments. Then Olive reappeared, her face beaming.

"Geraldine would simply love it," she announced. "She will be here in five minutes. Could we just stop at my house for a motor-coat?"

"Certainly!" Granet agreed, glancing at his watch. "This is absolutely ripping! We shall be down there by one o'clock. Why is this to be Conyers' last day for entertaining?"

"I don't know," she answered indifferently. "Some Admiralty regulation, I suppose."

He sighed.

"After all," he declared, "I am not sure whether I chose the right profession. There is so much that is mysterious about the Navy. They are always inventing something or trying something new."

Geraldine came down the steps, waving her hand.

"This is the most delightful idea!" she exclaimed, as Granet held the door open. "Do you really mean that you are going to take us down to Portsmouth and come and see Ralph?"

"I am not going to worry your brother," he answered, smiling, "but I am going to take you down to Portsmouth, if I may. We shall be there long before you could get there by train, and—well, what do you think of my new toy?"

"Simply wonderful," Geraldine declared. "Olive told me that your uncle had just given it to you. What a lucky person you are, Capt. Granet!"

He laughed a little shortly as they glided off.

"Do you think so?" he answered. "Well, I am lucky in my uncle, at any rate. He is one of those few people who have a great deal of money and don't mind spending it. I was getting bored to death with my game leg and arm, and certainly this makes me forget both of them. Six cylinders, you see, Miss Conyers, and I wouldn't like to tell you what we can touch if we were pressed."

"You won't frighten us," Geraldine assured him.

Granet glanced once more at the clock in front of him.

"For a time," he remarked, "I am

your chauffeur. I just want to see what she'll do—to experiment a little."

From that point conversation became scanty. The girls leaned back in their seats. Granet sat bolt upright, with his eyes fixed upon the road. Shortly before one o'clock they entered Portsmouth.

"The most wonderful ride I ever had in my life!" Geraldine exclaimed.

"Marvelous!" Olive echoed. "Captain Granet, Ralph promised that there should be a pinnace at number seven dock from one until three."

Granet pointed with his finger. "Number seven dock is there," he said, "and there's the pinnace. I shall go back to the hotel for lunch and wait for you there."

"You will do nothing of the sort," Geraldine insisted. "Ralph would be furious if you didn't come with us."

"Of course!" Olive interposed. "How could you think of anything so ridiculous! It's entirely owing to you that we were able to get here."

Captain Granet looked for a moment doubtful.

"You see, just now," he explained, "I know the regulations for visiting ships in commission are very strict. Perhaps an extra visitor might embarrass your brother."

"How can you be so absurd!" Geraldine protested. "You—a soldier! Why, of course he'd be delighted to have you."

Granet swung the car around into the archway of a hotel opposite the dock.

"All right," he agreed. "We'll leave the car here. Of course, I'd like to come all right."

They crossed the cobbled street and made their way to the dock. The pinnace was waiting for them and in a very few minutes they were on their way across the harbor. The "Scorpion" was lying well away from other craft, her four squat funnels emitting faint wreaths of smoke. She rode very low in the water and her appearance was certainly menacing.

"Personally," Geraldine observed, leaning a little forward to look at her, "I think a destroyer is one of the most vicious, hideous things I ever saw. I do hope that Ralph will be quick and get a cruiser."

"Is that the 'Scorpion' just ahead of us?" Granet asked.

Geraldine nodded.

"Did you ever see anything so ugly? She looks as though she would spit out death from every little crevice."

"She's a fine boat," Granet muttered. "What did your brother say she could do?"

"Thirty-nine knots," Geraldine replied. "It seems wonderful, doesn't it?"

The officer in charge of the pinnace smiled.

"Our speeds are only nominal, any way," he remarked. "If our chief engineer there had the proper message, there's none of us would like to say what we could get out of those new engines."

He turned and shouted an order. In a moment or two they swung around and drew up by the side of the vessel. Ralph waved his hand to them from the top of the gangway.

"Well done, you people!" he exclaimed. "Hullo, Granet. Have you brought the girls down?"

"In the most wonderful racing car you ever saw!" Geraldine told him, as they climbed up the gangway. "We shouldn't have been here for hours if we had waited for the train."

"I met Captain Granet this morning by accident," Olive explained, as she stepped on deck, "and he insisted on bringing us down."

"I hope I'm not in the way at all?" Granet asked anxiously. "If I am, you have only to say the word and put me on shore, and I'll wait, with pleasure, until the young ladies come off. I have a lot of pals down here, too, I could look up."

"Don't be silly," Conyers replied. "Our dear old lady friend Thomson isn't here to worry so I think we can make you free of the ship. Come along down and try a cocktail. Mind your heads. We're not on a battleship you know. You will find my quarters a little cramped, I'm afraid."

They drank cocktails cheerfully, and afterwards Geraldine and Granet made their way back on deck.

"How any one can live in that atmosphere!" Geraldine exclaimed, taking a long breath. "If Olive weren't so fearfully in love, she'd be suffocated."

Granet paused and looked before him with a puzzled frown.

"What in heaven's name is this?" Exactly opposite to them was an erection of light framework, obviously built around some hidden object for purposes of concealment. A Marine was standing on guard before it, with drawn cutlass. Granet was in the act of addressing him when an officer ran lightly down the fore-part of the ship, and saluted.

"Very sorry, sir," he said, "but would you mind keeping to the other side? This deck is closed, for the present."

"What on earth have you got there?" Granet asked good-humoredly. "That is if it's anything a landsman may know about?"

The young officer piloted them across to the other side.

"It's just a little something we are not permitted to talk about just now," he replied. "I didn't know the commander expected any visitors to-day or we should have had it roped off."

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Anything I can show you on this deck?" he inquired politely.

"Nothing at all, thanks," Geraldine assured him. "We'll just stroll about for a little time."

They leaned over the rail together. The young officer saluted and withdrew. A freshening breeze blew in their faces and the sunshine danced upon the foam-flecked sea. The harbor was lively with small craft, an aeroplane was circling overhead, and out in the Roads several warships were lying anchored.

"I was in luck this morning," Granet asserted.

"So were we," Geraldine replied. "I never enjoyed motoring more. Your new car is wonderful."

"She is a beauty, isn't she?" Granet assented enthusiastically. "What she could touch upon fourth speed I wouldn't dare say. We were going over sixty plenty of times this morning, and yet one scarcely noticed it. You see, she's so beautifully hung."

(To be continued.)

Photographing Your Teeth.

Teeth nowadays are likely to be suspected of almost anything in the way of mischief. If you have any sort of ailment not easily accounted for, your physician tells you to consult your dentist.

Tooth-roots are often affected, or even abscessed, without attracting special attention to themselves. If that is the case, they are a source of danger. The dentist takes a few X-ray pictures, to make sure; or perhaps he sends you to an X-ray laboratory to get a complete set of "shadowgraphs" of your jaws. They are not pretty at all.

"I'm afraid that tooth will have to come out," says the dentist. Hard luck. But there is no help for it. You register resignation, and are privileged to make a choice between two methods. You may have local anesthesia, or you may take gas.

The local anesthesia is all right after it has got well started; but to produce it requires several preliminary punches with a hypodermic syringe deep into the gums. It is a painful business. When enough of the nerve-deadening stuff has been squirted into your gums, you are all right; you don't feel the yank of the forceps much.

Probably you make up your mind to try the gas next time. It is really much better, though likely to make you feel rather nervous beforehand. The operator's way of determining when you have reached the requisite degree of unconsciousness is to poke his forefinger gently into a corner of your eye. If you do not respond by screwing up the lid defensively, he picks up his forceps.

That eye reflex is not infallible. It is a good idea to ask the operator to step on the gas right hard before he uses the forceps; if he doesn't use enough of it, you may not become quite as unconscious as you want to be.

Principal Honey Plants of Eastern Canada.

Alsike and white clover stand out as far the most important honey plants of Eastern Canada, noted regions for these being nearly the whole area south of and including the Ottawa River valley, the St. Lawrence River valley, the St. John River valley, certain marsh lands in Nova Scotia, and around Lake Timiskaming and Lake St. John, especially where the soil is limestone or clay. These plants have made commercial beekeeping very profitable in many places. The better part of the great clover honey belt of North America lies within the boundary of Canada.

Other important sources of nectar in Eastern Canada are buckwheat, along the north shores of lake Erie, and down the St. Lawrence River valley almost as far as the city of Quebec; basswood, in the same general region as buckwheat, but extending farther north; several species of goldenrod and aster, particularly in the Maritime Provinces; wild radish in the Annapolis valley, N.S.; sweet clover where grown for seed in southern Ontario and fireweed and wild raspberry in the north.

The best species of goldenrod for honey are *Solidago rugosa* (wet ground), *S. squarrosa* (rocky ground), *S. puberula* (sandy ground), and *S. graminifolia*, a weed in Nova Scotia. Among honey plants of minor importance may be mentioned blueberry (throughout), milkweed, viper's bugloss and bonaset (mainly in southern Ontario).

In spring, breeding in the hive is followed by dandelions and, in the orchard districts, by fruit bloom. In the Lower Ottawa valley, if the weather is showery and then warm about the last week in May, dandelion yields nectar heavily. In the Annapolis valley fine weather also brings supplies from apple blossom.

During a recent night, fifty men and sixteen women were found sheltering under arches or wandering homeless in London streets; a similar census in 1914 showed 296 men and seventy-six women.

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The Strike of the Sunfish.

How to break a strike of sunfish may learn from Mr. W. R. MacIlraith. The situation as he describes it in Field and Stream was this: Here was Medina Lake, sixteen miles long by half a mile wide, full of submerged forests and unquestionably full of fish. But when the hot weather came they all went on strike. They simply would not bite.

I was at my wit's end. Without sunfish for bait there would be no bass; without bass there would be no fish in the pan. The little fellows held a strategic position. Seated under an old cedar, I gazed across the opal waters and thought of home. Again I was a boy bringing home the crows. Just over the worm fence of half-rotted rails that separated the pasture from the meadow the hay stood in cocks ready to be taken to the barn.

Then I had it! "Hay" had suggested "barn," and "barn" had suggested "wasps." I could break that strike, for had I not that very morning passed a nest of those hot-headed warriors? I was astonished that I had not thought of them at once, for in my barefoot days wasp grubs were known as "dead medicine" for sunfish.

When I returned with that nestful of fat grubs I expected a water carnival, and I was not disappointed. On the thin fly hook I lowered a large, fat grub toward the pool. I think the sunfish saw him coming and recognized him. He had scarcely touched the water when the fish made a rush. The first one to arrive was soon flopping on the cliff beside me, while the other fish were milling about below as if talking it over among themselves.

They swam round in groups, in pairs and singly, waiting for the next delectable morsel. I let down another fat grub into the water. There was a rush! They shouldered and elbowed one another! But of course only one fish could get it. From that time on the fun was fast and furious.

Plants That Feel Pain.

Scientists have discovered that, just as there is a circulation of the blood in man, so there is a circulation of the sap in plants. It has been discovered, too, that plants are capable of movement.

This movement shows itself in different ways. The simplest form is seen in those flowers which follow the sun in its course through the summer skies. It is due to no act of will on the part of the plant, but simply to the fact that the parts turned towards the sun grow more quickly than the rest; hence stalks are lengthened in that direction, and the plant itself keeps facing towards the sun.

When the sun has set, movements of a different kind take place. Such flowers as the evening primrose open, whilst others which have been expanded all day close their petals as darkness draws on.

As a rule, those flowers which depend for fertilization upon the action of day insects, such as bees and butterflies, close at dusk. But many flowers attract nocturnal insects—moths, earwigs, and beetles—and these have formed the habit of remaining closed all day and opening after the sun has set.

We find a still more wonderful kind of movement in the leaves of certain plants. If you look at the common clover at night, you will find that its leaves are folded downwards instead of being spread out flat—in fact, the leaves are asleep! The beet, lupin, and mimosa all take their rest at night. The last can feel pain, for if we pinch one of the leaves, those near it will curl up immediately.

The more we investigate, the more convinced we become that plants have some kind of consciousness. A leaf placed on top of an oven shows, as it is killed by the heat, all the spasmodic movements of a dying animal.

The youngest man to receive the rank of field marshal was the Duke of Connaught, who received this honor when just over fifty-two years of age.

Among the paradise fish found in China, the male blows bubbles until a sticky froth floats on the surface of the water; to the under-surface of this he transfers the eggs as soon as they are laid, guarding them from destruction by his mate.

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