

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. Granet motored the two girls to Portsmouth to visit Conyers on the "Scorpion."

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd.)

"You are fortunate," Geraldine remarked, "to have an appreciative uncle."

"He is rather a brick," Granet acknowledged. "He's done me awfully well all my life."

She nodded. "You really are rather to be envied, aren't you, Captain Granet? You have most of the things a man wants. You've had your opportunity, too, of doing just the finest things a man can, and you've done them."

He looked gloomily out seawards. "I am lucky in one way," he admitted. "In others I am not so sure."

She kept her head turned from him. Somehow or other, she divined quite well what was in his mind. She tried to think of something to say, something to dispel the seriousness which she felt to be in the atmosphere, but words failed her. It was he who broke the silence.

"May I ask you a question, Miss Conyers?"

"A question? Why not?"

"Are you really engaged to Major Thomson?"

She did not answer him at once. She still kept her eyes resolutely turned away from his. When at last she spoke, her voice was scarcely raised above a whisper.

"Certainly I am," she assented.

He leaned a little closer towards her. His voice sounded to her very deep and firm. It was the voice of a man immensely in earnest.

"I am going to be an awful rotter," he said. "I suppose I ought to take your answer to my question as final. I won't, that's all. He came along first but that isn't everything. It's a fair fight between him and me. He hates me and takes no pains to hide it. He hates me because I care for you—you know that. I couldn't keep it to myself even if I would."

She drew a little away but he forced her to look at him. There was something else besides appeal in her eyes.

"You've been the victim of a mistake," he insisted, his hand resting upon hers. "I don't believe that you really care for him at all. He doesn't seem the right sort for you, he's so much older and graver. You must forgive me, please, if I have said more than I ought—if I say more now—because I am going to tell you, now that we are alone together for a moment, that I love you."

She turned upon him a little indignantly, though the distress in her face was still apparent.

"Captain Granet!" she exclaimed. "You should not say that! You have no right—no right at all."

"On the contrary, I have every right," he answered doggedly. "It isn't as though Thomson were my friend. He hates me and I dislike him. Every

man has a right to do his best to win the girl he cares for. It's the first time I've felt anything of this sort. I've never wanted the big things before from any woman. And now—"

She turned impetuously away from him. Over their head an electric message was sparkling and crackling. She stood looking up, her hand outstretched as though to keep him away.

"I cannot listen any more," she declared. "If you say another word I shall go below."

He remained for a moment gloomily silent. A young officer stepped out of the wireless room and saluted Geraldine.

"Very sorry for you people, Miss Conyers," he announced, "but I am afraid we'll have to put you on shore. We've an urgent message here from the flag-ship to clear off all guests."

"But we haven't had lunch yet!" Geraldine protested.

Conyers suddenly made his appearance in the gangway, followed by Olive.

"What's the message, Howard?" he inquired.

The officer saluted and handed over a folded piece of paper. Conyers read it with a frown and stepped at once out on to the deck. He gave a few orders, then he turned back to his guests.

"Girls," he explained, "and you, Granet, I'm frightfully sorry but I can't keep you here another second. I have ordered the pinnace round. You must get on shore and have lunch at the 'Ship.' I'll come along as soon as I can. Frightfully sorry, Granet, but I needn't apologize to you, need I? War's war, you know, and this is a matter of urgency."

"You're not going out this tide?" Geraldine demanded breathlessly.

Conyers shook his head.

"It isn't that," he replied. "We've got some engineers coming over to do some work on deck, and I've had a private tip from my chief to clear out any guests I may have on board."

"Is it anything to do with this wonderful screened-up thing?" Olive asked, strolling towards the framework-covered edifice.

Conyers shrugged his shoulders.

"Can't disclose Government secrets! Between just us four—our friend Thomson isn't here, is he?" he added smiling—"we are planning a little Hell for the submarines."

They glanced curiously at the mysterious erection. Granet sighed.

"Secretive chaps, you sailors," he observed. "Never mind, I have a pal in the Admiralty who gives me a few hints now and then. I shall go and pump him."

"Don't you breathe a word about having been on board the 'Scorpion,'" Conyers begged quickly. "They wink at it down here, so long as it's done discreetly, but it's positively against the rules, you know."

"Right!" Granet agreed. "There isn't a soul I'm likely to mention it to."

"I'll come over to the 'Ship' as soon as I can get away," Conyers promised.

They raced across the mile of broken water to the landing-stage. They were all a little silent. Olive was frankly disappointed, Geraldine was busy with her thoughts. Granet's gaze seemed riveted upon the "Scorpion."

Another pinnace had drawn up alongside and a little company of men were boarding her.

"I only hope that they really have hit upon a device to rid the sea of these cursed submarines!" he remarked, as they made their way across the dock. "I see the brutes have taken to sinking fishing boats now."

"Ralph believes that they have got something," Olive declared eagerly. "He is simply aching to get to work."

"Sailors are all so jolly sanguine," Granet reminded her. "They are doing something pretty useful with nets, of course, in the way your brother was beginning to explain to me when Major Thomson chipped in, but they could only keep a fixed channel clear in that way. What they really need is some way of tackling them when they are under water. Here we are at last. I hope you girls are as hungry as I am."

They lunched in leisurely fashion, Olive in particular glancing often towards the door, and afterwards they sat about in the lounge, drinking their coffee. Granet had seemed to be in high spirits throughout the meal, and told the girls many little anecdotes of his adventures at the Front. Afterwards, however, he became silent, and finally, with a word of excuse, strolled off alone. Olive looked once more at the clock.

"Ralph doesn't seem to be coming back, does he?" she sighed. "Let's walk a little way down to the landing-stage."

The two girls strolled out and made their way towards the harbor. They could see the "Scorpion" but there was no sign of any pinnace leaving her. Reluctantly they turned back towards the hotel.

"I wonder what's become of Captain Granet?" Olive asked.

Geraldine stopped short. There was a little frown gathering upon her forehead. She pointed up to the roof of

NURSES

The Toronto Hospital for Incurables, in affiliation with Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, offers a three years' Course of Training to young women, having the required education, and desirous of becoming nurses. This Hospital has adopted the eight-hour system. The pupils receive uniforms of the School, a monthly allowance and travelling expenses to and from New York. For further information apply to the Superintendent.

the hotel, where a man was crouching with a telescope glued to his eyes. He lowered it almost as they paused, and waved his hand to them.

"Can't see any sign of Conyers," he shouted. "I'm waiting for the pinnace. Come up here. There's such a ripping view."

"I don't believe," Geraldine remarked uneasily, "that Ralph would like that."

They made their way to the top of the house and were escorted by a buxom chambermaid to what was practically a step-ladder opening out on to a skylight. From here they crawled on to the roof, where they found Granet comfortably ensconced with his back to a chimney, smoking a cigarette.

"This is rather one on your brother," he chuckled.

"Where did you find the telescope?" Geraldine asked.

"I borrowed it from downstairs," he answered. "Do come and have a look. You can see the 'Scorpion' quite distinctly. All the officers seem to be a joke at all if he knew that we were gathered around that mysterious structure on the upper deck. I thought at first it was a stand for a gun but it isn't."

Olive held out her hand for the telescope but Geraldine shook her head. There was a troubled expression in her eyes.

"I suppose it's awfully silly, Captain Granet," she said, "but honestly, I don't think Ralph would take it as up here, trying to find out what was going on."

Olive set down the telescope promptly.

"I didn't think of that," she murmured.

Granet laughed easily.

"Perhaps you are right," he admitted. "All the same, we are a little exceptionally placed, aren't we?—his sister, his fiancée, and—"

He broke off suddenly. A hand had been laid upon his shoulder. A small, dark man, who had come round the corner of the chimney unperceived, was standing immediately behind him.

"I must trouble you for all your names and addresses, if you please," he announced quietly.

The two girls stared at him, dumb-founded. Granet, however, remained perfectly at his ease. He laid down the telescope and scrutinized the newcomer.

"I really don't altogether see," he remarked good-humoredly, "why I should give my name and address to a perfect stranger, just because he asks for it."

The man opened his coat and displayed a badge.

"I am on Government service, sir."

"Well, I am Captain Granet, back from the Front with dispatches a few days ago," Granet told him. "This is Miss Conyers, sister of Commander Conyers of the 'Scorpion,' and Miss Olive Moreton, his fiancée. We are waiting for Commander Conyers at the present moment, and we were just looking to see if the pinnace had started. Is it against the law to use a telescope in Portsmouth?"

The man made a few notes in his pocket-book. Then he opened the trapdoor and stood on one side.

"No one is allowed out here, sir," he said. "The hotel people are to blame for not having the door locked. I shall have to make a report but I have no doubt that your explanation will be accepted. Will you be so good as to descend, please?"

Granet struggled to his feet and turned towards his companions.

"The fellow's quite right," he decided. "I am only glad that the Government are looking after things so. The Admiralty are much more go-ahead in this way than we are. I vote we have out the car and go down the front to Southsea—unless we are under arrest?" he added pleasantly, turning towards the man who had accosted them.

"You are at liberty to do whatever you please, sir," was the polite reply. "In any case, I think it would be quite useless of you to wait for Commander Conyers."

"Why?" Olive asked quickly.

"The 'Scorpion' has just received orders to leave on this evening's tide, madam," the man announced. "You can see that she is moving even now."

They looked out across the harbor. The smoke was pouring from the funnels of the destroyer. Already she had swung around and was steaming slowly towards the Channel.

"She's off, right enough!" Granet exclaimed. "Nothing left for us, then, but London."

(To be continued.)

Argentina maintains a meteorological station at an elevation of 4,000 feet above the sea.

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Some Temperature.

An officer in the medical corps of the army tells of a private who had pneumonia and had been for some time in a hospital where he had been so well treated that he was by no means ready to be discharged as "cured."

One day a doctor was taking his temperature, and while the private had the thermometer in his mouth the doctor moved on to the next bed and turned his back to the first patient.

The private saw his chance. He pulled the thermometer out of his mouth and popped it into a cup of hot coffee, replacing it, however, the moment he saw the doctor begin to turn back to his bed. When the physician examined the thermometer he looked first at the private and then back to the thermometer and gasped:

"Well, my man, you're not dead, but you ought to be!"

Tricked!

A conjurer was performing in a Durham village. Addressing a group of pitmen, he asked for the loan of a halfpenny.

The coin was produced, whereupon the conjurer showed it up. When it returned, the modest coin had taken the color of a sovereign.

Up stepped the pitman who owned the halfpenny and asked to see the coin. The conjurer placed the sovereign in his hand.

"And this is really my ha'penny?" "Certainly," was the reply.

"Well, then," said the owner, as he slipped the sovereign into his pocket and walked off, "I'll not trouble yo to change her again."

World's Longest Aerial Tramway.

The Premier Mine, in British Columbia, to tidewater, has been awarded to a Spokane company. The line will be nearly twelve miles long, with a drop of about 120 feet to the mile. The train line, bunkers, and unloading devices will cost a quarter of a million dollars.

Partnership.

"Were you and daddy good boys when I was gone?" asked the mother. "Oh, yes, mother," replied the child. "And did you treat nurse respectfully?" "I should say we did!" And did you kiss her good night every day?" "I should say we did!"

Noisy Starter.

Noise in the starter is a sure sign of trouble. This condition may be induced by broken or badly worn teeth, a bent armature shaft, a loose armature bearing or teeth badly meshed.

Every mile of unimproved highway is an opportunity to increase community wealth, which in the aggregate means national wealth. In the automobile and the motor truck we have the vehicle; the output of factory and farm gives us the load; now all we need is the roads. But a road built solely upon the principle of getting as much mileage as possible for the money does not suit the spirit of national growth. We do not want poorly built roads that will have to be torn up and rebuilt again in a few years; we need highways that will take care of the ever-increasing load that they must bear. We must build for permanence.

Minard's Liniment for Dandruff.

The Chamber of Commerce has issued special coins in aluminum and zinc of twenty-five, ten, and five centimes. Sometimes they are square or of hexagon shape, and made in nickel, iron, tin-plate, or stamped cardboard.

These discs correspond to the English tokens issued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by bankers and tradesmen when change was rare.

Woods Heavier Than Water

Wood floats. That is a fact so familiar as to need no comment. Nevertheless, there are certain woods so dense of structure, and therefore so heavy, as to sink in water.

One of them is the "mancono" wood of the Philippines—unknown to us until recently, but which, it is hoped, will serve as a substitute for the costly lignum vitae.

Lignum vitae is the wood of a tree native to the American tropics. Some of the best of it comes from Cuba. Its name, meaning "wood of life," was bestowed upon it by the early Spaniards, among whom a belief arose that it possessed almost miraculous properties as a cure for various diseases.

The best bowling balls are made of lignum vitae; also heads for golf clubs and other things requiring an extremely hard and heavy wood. But the most important use of this material is for the steering gear of ships. The propeller shafts of every warship and commercial steamship revolve in bearings of lignum vitae.

The great strength of this remarkable wood is due to the fact that its fibres are woven back and forth in layers that cross and crisscross. Its

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Admitting Your Ignorance.

We are all ignorant, high and low, great and little, wise and foolish, educated and uneducated. Some may know a trifle more than others; but as compared with the vast possibilities of knowledge the difference between ignorances is too insignificant to be of much account, says Youth's Companion. Since that is so, it might be supposed that we should all be ready to admit our deficiencies, to acknowledge at once how little we know and to be only concerned humbly and patiently to supply the gaps in our information with such makeshifts as we may. On the contrary, it is amazing how most of us toil and struggle to conceal our ignorance. No device seems too petty, no pretense too mean, if only we can cover up from others the fact that we do not know any more than they do. Sometimes life appears to be spun over with a web of artificial culture that has no solidity and no permanence.

People seem to think that it injures their authority and standing to admit frankly that they have made a mistake, that their information was incomplete and that their calculations were incorrect. Teachers are possessed with this delusion. Ministers are led astray by it. Statesmen suffer from it. Parents constantly find that it vitiates their simple and natural relations with their children. They go miles round, evade, elude, palter and prevaricate, rather than say right out that they were wrong. They do not realize that what injures our characters and our usefulness more than anything else is to make a pretense of omniscience and have it exposed as only a pretense.

The truth is that nothing secures the confidence of all men so much as the humble, frank, free, straightforward admission of ignorance. The guide we trust is he who admits that our difficulties are his difficulties and that, if he can see just a trifle farther, it is only because he has toiled more arduously and has not obscured his vision by any undue assurance of more ample view. There is nothing that we admire more than such humility in others; nothing that we are more reluctant to practice ourselves.

If the majority of us gave half the effort to remedying our ignorance that we give to concealing it, we should think more of ourselves, others would think more of us, and the world would be a more practicable place to live in.

Johnnie's Essay on the Peacock.

The peacock is a bird. The peacock is not a bird of pray. The peacock is a vain bird. Girls are vain. It is very wicked to be vain. The peacock is not like the ostrich. It wears its own feathers itself. The ostrich does not. Girls do not always wear their own hair themselves. The peacock is not like the cuckoo. It lays its own eggs itself. The cuckoo does not.

The peacock is a bird. The tail of a peacock is dreadful useful. The tail of a peacock is made into fans. There's a dreadful lot of different kinds of fans. There's baseball fans, movie fans, fan fans, fan dangoes, fan ciers, fan tails, and fans to fan with, but as for me give me an automobile!

We are coming down the inflation stairs, step by step.

Minard's Liniment for Burns, etc.

