

The Kingdom of The Blind

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.

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Synopsis of Later Chapters.

Captain Granet calls upon Monsieur Guillot at the Milan Hotel and gives him a document from the Kaiser offering France a separate peace. The plot is discovered. Conyers sinks two submarines. Granet is commissioned by his uncle, Sir Alfred Anselman, to destroy the new sub detector, made by Sir Meyville Worth of Norfolk. When calling upon Isabel Worth he is mistaken by the inventor for the captain of the guard and shown the marvelous invention.

CHAPTER XX.—(Cont'd.)

"It isn't Captain Chaimers, father," Isabel interrupted.

Sir Meyville seemed suddenly to become still. He looked fixedly at Granet.

"Who are you, then?" he demanded.

"Who are you, sir?"

"I am Captain Granet of the Royal Fusiliers, back from the Front, wounded," Granet replied. "I can assure you that I am a perfectly trustworthy person."

"But I don't understand," Sir Meyville said sharply. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to call upon your daughter," Granet explained. "I had the pleasure of meeting her at lunch at Lady Anselman's the other day. We have been playing golf together at Brancaster."

Sir Meyville began to murmur to himself as he pushed them into the boat.

"My fault," he muttered, "my fault. Captain Granet, I thought that my daughter knew my wishes. I am not at present in a position to receive guests or visitors of any description. You will pardon my apparent inhospitality. I shall ask you, sir, to kindly forget this visit and to keep away from here for the present."

"I shall obey your wishes, of course, sir," Granet promised. "I can assure you that I am quite a harmless person, though."

"I do not doubt it, sir," Sir Meyville replied, "but it is the harmless people of the world who do the most mischief. An idle word here or there and great secrets are given away. If you will allow me, I will show you a quicker way down the avenue, without going to the house."

Granet shrugged his shoulders.

"Just as you will, sir," he assented.

"You can go in, Isabel," her father directed curtly. "I will see Captain Granet off."

She obeyed and took leave of her guest with a little shrug of the shoulders. Sir Meyville took Granet's arm and led him down the avenue.

"Captain Granet," he said gravely, "I am an indiscreet person and I have an indiscreet daughter. Bearing in mind your profession, I may speak to you as man to man. Keep what you have seen absolutely secret. Put a seal upon your memory. Go back to Brancaster and don't even look again in this direction. The soldiers round this place have orders not to stand on ceremony with any one, and by tonight I believe we are to have an escort of Marines here as well. What you have seen is for the good of the country."

"I congratulate you heartily, sir," Granet replied, shaking hands. "Of course I'll keep away, if I must. I hope when this is all over, though, you will allow me to come and renew my acquaintance with your daughter."

"When it is over, with pleasure," Sir Meyville assented.

Granet stepped into his car and drove off. The inventor stood looking after him. Then he spoke to the sentry and made his way across the gardens towards the boat-shed.

"I ought to have known it from the first," he muttered. "Reciprocal refraction was the one thing to think about."

Granet, as he drove back to the Dormy House, was conscious of a curious change in the weather. The wind, which had been blowing more or less during the last few days, had suddenly dropped. There was a new heaviness in the atmosphere, little banks of transparent mist were drifting in from seawards. More than once

he stopped the car and, standing up, looked steadily away seawards. The long stretch of marshland, on which the golf links were situated, was empty. A slight, drizzling rain was falling. He found, when he reached the Dormy House, that nearly all the men were assembled in one of the large sitting-rooms. A table of bridge had been made up. Mr. Collins was seated in an easy-chair close to the window, reading a review. Granet accepted a cup of tea and stood on the hearthrug.

"How did the golf go this afternoon?" he inquired.

"I was dead off it," Anselman replied gloomily. "Our friend in the easy-chair there knocked spots off us."

Mr. Collins looked up and grunted and looked out of the window again.

"Either of you fellows going to cut in at bridge?" young Anselman continued.

Granet shook his head and walked to the window.

"I can't stick cards in the daytime," Mr. Collins shut up his review.

"I agree with you, sir," he said. "I endeavored to persuade one of these gentlemen to play another nine holes—unsuccessfully, I regret to state."

Granet lit a cigarette.

"Well," he remarked, "it's too far to get down to the links again, but I'll play you a game of bowls, if you like."

The other glanced out upon the lawn and rose to his feet.

"It is an excellent suggestion," he declared. "If you will give me five minutes to fetch my mackintosh and goloshes, it would interest me to see whether I have profited by the lessons I took in Scotland."

They met, a few moments later, in the garden. Mr. Collins threw the jack with great precision and they played an end during which his superiority was apparent. They strolled together across the lawn, well away now from the house. For the first time Granet dropped his careless tone.

"What do you make of this change in the weather?" he asked quickly.

"It's just what they were waiting for," the other replied. "What about this afternoon?"

"I am no scientist, worse luck," Granet replied impatiently, "but I saw enough to convince me that they've got the right idea. Sir Meyville thought I was the man commanding the escort they've given him,—actually rowed me out to the workshop and showed me the whole thing. I tell you I saw it just as you described it,—saw the bottom of the sea, even the color of the seaweed, the holes in the rocks."

"And they've got the shells, too," Collins muttered, "the shells that burst under water."

Granet looked around. They were playing the other end now.

"Listen!" he said.

They paused in the middle of the lawn. Granet held up his handkerchief and turned his cheek seaward. There was still little more than a floating breath of air but his cheek was covered with moisture.

"I have everything ready," he said. "Just before we go to bed to-night I shall swear that I hear an aeroplane. You're sure your watch is right to the second, Collins?"

"I am as sure that it is right," the other replied grimly, "as I am that to-night you and I, my young friend, are going to play with our lives a little more carelessly than with this china ball. A good throw, that, I think," he went on, measuring it with his eye carefully. "Come, my friend, you'll have to improve. My Scotch practice is beginning to tell."

Geoffrey Anselman threw up the window and looked out.

"Pretty hot stuff, isn't he, Ronnie?" he asked.

Granet glanced at his opponent, with his bent shoulders, his hard face, hooked nose and thin gold spectacles.

"Yes," he admitted quietly, "he's too good for me."

CHAPTER XXI.

At about half-past ten that evening, Granet suddenly threw down his cue in the middle of a game of billiards, and stood, for a moment, in a listening attitude.

"Jove, I believe that's an airship!" he exclaimed, and hurried out of the room.

They all followed him. He was standing just outside the French windows of the sitting-room, upon the gravel walk, his head upturned, listening intently. There was scarcely a breath of wind, no moon or any stars. Little clouds of grey mist hung about on the marshes, shutting out their view of the sea. The stillness was more than usually intense.

"Can't hear a thing," young Anselman muttered at last.

"It may have been fancy," Granet admitted.

"A motor-cycle going along the Hunstanton Road," Major Harrison suggested.

"It's a magnificent night for a raid," Dickens remarked, glancing around.

"No chance of Zepps over here, I should say," Collins declared, a little didactically. "I was looking at your

map at the golf club only this morning."

They all made their way back to the house. Granet, however, seemed still dissatisfied.

"I'm going to see that my car's all right," he told them. "I left it in the open shed."

He was absent for about twenty minutes. When he returned, they had finished the game of snooker pool without him and were all sitting on the lounge by the side of the billiard table, talking of the war. Granet listened for a few minutes and then said good-night a little abruptly. He lit his candle outside and went slowly to his room. Arrived there, he glanced at his watch and locked the door. It was half-past eleven. He changed his clothes quickly, put on some rubber-soled shoes and slipped a brandy flask and a revolver into his pocket. Then he sat down before his window with his watch in his hand. He was conscious of a certain foreboding from which he had never been able to escape since his arrival. In France and Belgium he had lived through fateful hours, carrying more than once his life in his hands. His risk to-night was an equal one but the exhilaration seemed lacking. This work in a country apparently at peace seemed somehow on a different level. If it were less dangerous, it was also less stimulating. In those few moments the soldier blood in him called for the turmoil of war, the panorama of life and death, the fierce, hot excitement of juggling with fate while the heavens themselves seemed raining death on every side. Here there was nothing but silence, the soft splash of the distant sea, the barking of a distant dog. The danger was vivid and actual but without the stimulus of that blood-red background. He glanced at his watch. It wanted still ten minutes to twelve. For a moment then he suffered his thoughts to go back to the new thing which had crept into his life. He was suddenly back in the Milan, he saw the backward turn of her head, the almost wistful look in her eyes as she made her little pronouncement. She had broken her engagement. Why? It was a battle, indeed, he was fighting with that still, cold antagonist, whom he half despised and half feared, the man concerning whose actual personality he had felt so many doubts. What if things should go wrong to-night, if the whole dramatic story should be handed over for the glory and wonder of the halfpenny press! He could fancy their headlines, imagine even their trenchant paragraphs. It was skating on the thinnest of ice—and for what? His fingers gripped the damp window-sill. He raised himself a little higher. His eyes fell upon his watch—still a minute or two to twelve. Slowly he stole to his door and listened. The place was silent. He made his way on tip-toe across the landing and entered Collins' room. The latter was seated before the wide-open window. He had blown out his candle and the room was in darkness. He half turned his head at Granet's entrance.

"Two minutes!" he exclaimed softly.

"Granet, it will be to-night. Are you ready?"

"Absolutely!"

They stood by the open window in silence. Nothing had changed. It was not yet time for the singing of the earliest birds. The tiny village lay behind them, silent and asleep; in front, nothing but the marshes, uninhabited, lonely and quiet, the golf clubhouse empty and deserted. They stood and watched, their faces turned steadfastly in a certain direction. Gradually their eyes, growing accustomed to the dim and changing light, could pierce the black line above the grey where the sea came stealing up the sandy places with low murmurs, throwing with every wave longer arms into the land.

"Twelve o'clock!" Collins muttered.

Suddenly Granet's fingers dug into his shoulder. From out of that pall of velvet darkness which hung below the clouds, came for a single moment a vision of violet light. It rose apparently from nowhere, it passed away into space. It was visible barely for five seconds, then it had gone. Granet spoke with a little sob.

"My God!" he murmured. "They're coming!"

(To be continued.)

His Last Day on Earth.

Blithely he went forth, singing as he went.

It was a warm summer's day, and the song of the woods and the trees, of the fields and the air, and the marshes. And of people—human beings with life and blood and all things good.

The evening wore on. Having slept the greater part of the day, he now aroused himself for the pleasant task before him. So he entered the concert-hall, humming happily to himself. The concert was just about to start. All was quiet.

Looking around him appraisingly at the motley audience, he burst forth into song—a slow, droning song in the same key for full three minutes. Then he stopped, apparently waiting for applause.

And it came! Smack!

And so the mosquito died. I am sorry, reader; I should have told you at the start that "he" was a full-grown mosquito!

Most Inconsiderate.

It is awfully inconsiderate of a man to propose to a girl when there is no moon, and she is not wearing her prettiest frock. It robs life of one of its purplest moments!

With the Help of Johanna.

"Thomas," said Mrs. Ruraldean, appearing at the door of her husband's study, "what absurd idea do you think that new gardener has in his head? I was asking him about planting the potatoes, and he declared that we could hardly expect to get a full crop without Johanna. I didn't think you would tolerate any Johanna about the place. And I left him there staring. That great, hulking man! I suppose he used to harness his wife and his cow together at the plough in Europe."

Mr. Ruraldean, with fire in his eye, went out to interview the gardener. "What is this Johanna you're telling Mrs. Ruraldean about?" he asked.

"O! was only tellin' her there's nothin' can bate Johanna for gettin' a good crop off the land."

"I don't see the need of any Johanna. If you can't—"

"Well, of course, there's sheep manure, and there's phosphate, but for real results—"

"I'm not talking about sheep manure or phosphate. What I want to know is, how about this female—Johanna?"

"A woman indade! Sure, it's this here Johanna I'm tellin' ye about." And the gardener pulled from his pocket a seedsman's catalogue.

Mr. Ruraldean looked where the grimy finger of the hired man pointed and read: "Guano in hundred-pound bags."

Tribute.

Deborah and Christopher brought me dandelions,

Kenton brought me buttercups with summer on their breath,

But Michael brought an autumn leaf, like lacy filigree,

A wan leaf, a ghost leaf, beautiful as death.

Death in all loveliness, fragile and exquisite,

Who but he would choose it from all the blooming land,

Who but he would find it where it hid among the flowers?

Death in all loveliness, he laid it in my hand.

—Aline Kilmer.

Hear, Hear!

Mr. Gasbag Jones stood on a soap-box at the corner of the street.

A huge crowd surged around him. Surely his heart should have been glad!

But he was dissatisfied.

He tried hard to be heard, but it was all in vain.

Every attempt he made to speak was interrupted by some member of the audience.

At last, stamping his foot in great anger, he belloped at the top of his voice:

"Every time I open my mouth a silly fool speaks!"

And the crowd agreed with him entirely.

No Eye for Color.

"A friend of mine," says a Britisher now in this country, "is a curate in a local suburban parish in England. Some little time back he went up to Oxford to take his master of arts degree, and the following Sunday appeared in the pulpit resplendent in his new master of arts hood. A few nights later he was dining in the house of a prominent parishioner and was amazed to hear his hostess pleasantly remark:

"Mr. Blank, that new hood of yours doesn't suit you at all. I can't imagine why you, with your complexion, chose red of all colors in the world. A myrtle green—or an old gold would have suited you much better and would have been far more effective. You men never know how to dress yourselves."

What Teacher Said.

It was a lesson on punctuation, and Jimmy was lolling asleep at his desk.

"Now," said the teacher, "if I say, 'I must leave, as I have an engagement—' By the way, what is the time? I place a 'dash' after 'engagement,' because the sentence is broken off abruptly."

At that moment she caught sight of the dozing boy.

"Now then, Jimmy, you are not listening. What was I saying?" she asked him.

"Please, Miss Smith," said Jimmy with a start, "you were telling us you said 'dash' because your engagement was broken off abruptly."

Good Advice.

"I am learning to drive a car. Have you any advice to offer?"

"Yes. You will be all right if you always proceed on the theory that the other fellow is a fool. By keeping yourself prepared for him to do the wrong thing you will always be on the safe side."

Bobby Knew.

Mother (to small son)—"What would happen if you talked to your teacher as you talk to me?"

Small boy (promptly)—"I would be expended."

Minard's Liniment used by Physicians.



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Small Potatoes.

Bethel folks had no good word to say for Hill-Farm William Hurd. His boys had patches on their seats; His shingles left his roofs in sheets; Moll Pitcher off his haystacks fed; Bill planted wheat, docks came instead.

His floors were up, his fences down; 'Twas even whispered through the town

His wife made pictures with a brush Of robin, linnet, jay and thrush. While half her hens were left to set, And the rest laid eggs where none could get.

Bill's boys were snubbed at school; at church

Poor Mrs. Bill was left in the lurch By decent women-folk who bake, Sew and scrub and butter make. In short, opinion was that Bill Was small potatoes and few in a hill.

But Thomas thought his dad a god And worshiped the very ground he trod,

For dad could whittle boats of Spain, High galleons of the Pirate Main. And Walter dreamed with deep delight

Of songs his father sang at night, Songs of another land and age, Of lace-frilled hero and velvet page. Small John imagined heaven to be

Sitting forever on daddy's knee. Should you have asked Bill's wife if she

Dreamt ever of new felicity Her dusky eyes would have leaped to flame

And seared your folly into shame.

Years go by, and folks go by, Yet no neighbor ever knows That where Bill's hungry acres lie Love's rose of Sarah richly blows.

And no one knows that Tom will ride A quarter-deck upon the sea And find a flame that will abide

While tales of heroes still shall be. No one knows that Walter's song Will bless with beauty where it rings, Will sound the centuries along

And make his memory like a king's. And John will keep the homestead sweet

With simple peace and prove again That the good God's lovely loving feet Walk still the ways of husbandmen.

—Robert P. Coffin.

Pirates in 1921.

Are the days of Captain Kidd over? It seems not. Within the last few months five ships have mysteriously failed to complete their journeys, having apparently disappeared off Cape Hatteras, and the explanation is suggested that pirates are afloat in the Atlantic.

This may or may not be true, but there is further evidence to support the theory. The schooner Carroll Deering went ashore, a wreck, near Norfolk, Virginia, with not a soul on board. There was nothing to indicate what had happened to the crew, or what had caused the catastrophe.

Shortly after, a bottle was found containing a message apparently written by the master. He said that he and his crew had been taken prisoner and removed to another vessel.

The idea that pirates are afloat on the Atlantic sounds like the fulfilment of a boy's wildest dreams; but the war let loose some queer spirits, and the theory is not an impossible one.

A Coincidence.

"Jackie," said the teacher, "can you tell me what a coincidence is?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Charlie. "We've got one in our house."

"Well, what is it?" asked the teacher.

"Twins."

Ask for Minard's and take no other.

Changing Color of Birds.

Scientists have found that the color of birds in three or four generations can be changed to white by keeping them in a white room with white surroundings and attended by persons wearing white.

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