

# 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. At midnight he prepares to carry out his plan with the aid of his accomplice, Collins.

## CHAPTER XXI.—(Cont'd.)

Collins was already on his feet. He had brightened himself wonderfully, and there was a new alertness in his manner. He, too, wore rubber shoes and his movements were absolutely noiseless. He carried a little electric torch in his hand, which he flashed around the room while he placed several small articles in his pocket. Then he pushed open the door and listened. He turned back, held up his finger and nodded. The two men passed down the stairs, through the sitting-room, out on to the lawn by a door left unfastened, and round the house to the shed. Together they pushed the car down the slight incline of the drive. Granet mounted into the driving-seat and pressed the self-starter. Collins took the place by his side.

"Remember," Granet whispered, "we heard something and I met you in the hall. Sit tight."

They sped with all the silence and smoothness of their six-cylinder up the tree-hung road, through the sleeping village and along the narrow lane to Market Burnham. When they were within about a hundred yards of the gate, Granet brought the car to a standstill.

"There are at least two sentries that way," he said, "and if Sir Meyville told me the truth, they may have a special guard of Marines out tonight. This is where we take to the marshes. Listen. Can you hear anything?"

They both held their breath. "Nothing yet," Collins muttered. "Let's get the things out quickly."

Granet hurried to the back of the car, ripping open the covering. In a few moments they had dragged over the side a small collapsible boat of canvas stretched across some bamboo joints, with two tiny sculls. They clambered up the bank.

"The creek must be close here," Granet whispered. "Don't show a light. Listen!"

This time they could hear the sound of an engine beating away in the boat-house on the other side of the Hall. Through the closely-drawn curtains, too, they could see faint fingers of light from the house on the sea.

"They are working still," Granet continued. "Look out, Collins, that's the creek."

They pushed the boat into the middle of the black arm of water and stepped cautiously into it. Taking one of the paddles, Granet, kneeling down, propelled it slowly seaward. Once or twice they ran into the bank and had to push off, but very soon their eyes grew accustomed to the darkness. By degrees the creek broadened. They passed close to the walls of the garden, and very soon they were perceptibly nearer the quaintly-situated workshop. Granet paused for a moment from his labors.

"The Hall is dark enough," he muttered. "Listen!"

They heard the regular pacing of a sentinel in the drive. Nearer to them, on the top of the wall, they fancied that they heard the clash of a bayonet. Granet dropped his voice to the barest whisper.

"We are close there now. Stretch out your hand, Collins. Can you feel a shelf of rock?"

"It's just in front of me," was the stifled answer.

"That's for the stuff. Down with it." For a few moments Collins was busy. Then, with a little gasp, he gripped Granet's arm. His voice, shaking with nervous repression, was still almost hysterical.

"They're coming, Granet! My God, they're coming!"

Both men turned seaward. Far away in the clouds, it seemed, they could hear a faint humming, some new sound, something mechanical in its regular beating, yet with clamorous throatiness of some human force cleaving its way through the resistless air. With every second it grew louder. The men stood clutching one another.

"Have you got the fuse ready? They must hear it in a moment," Granet muttered.

Collins assented silently. The reverberations became louder and louder. Soon the air was full of echoes. From far away inland dogs were barking, from a farm somewhere the other side of the road they heard the shout of a single voice.

"Now," Granet whispered. Collins leaned forward. The fuse in his hand touched the dark substance which he had spread out upon the rock. In a moment a strange, unearthly green light seemed to roll back the darkness. The house, the workshop, the trees, the slowly flowing sea, their own ghastly faces—everything stood revealed in a blaze of hideous, awful light. For a moment they forgot themselves, they forgot the miracle they had brought to pass. Their eyes were riveted skyward. High above them, something blacker than the heavens themselves, stupendous, huge, seemed suddenly to assume to itself shape. The roar of machinery was clearly audible. From the house came the mingled shouting of many voices. Something dropped into the sea a hundred yards away with a screech and a hiss, and a geyser-like fountain leapt so high that the spray reached them. Then there was a sharper sound as a rifle bullet whistled by.

"My God!" Granet exclaimed. "It's time we were out of this, Collins!"

He seized his scull. Even at that moment there was a terrific explosion. A stream of lurid fire seemed to leap from the corner of the house, the wall split and fell outwards. And then there came another sound, hideous, sickly, a sound Granet had heard before, the sound of a rifle bullet cutting its way through flesh, followed by an inhuman cry. For a moment Collins' arms whirled around him. Then, with no other sound save that one cry, he fell forward and disappeared. For a single second Granet leaned over the side of the boat as though to dive after him. Then came another roar. The sand flew up in a blinding storm, the whole of the creek was suddenly a raging torrent. The boat was swung on a precipitous mountain of salt water and as quickly capsized. Granet, breathless for a moment and half stunned, found his way somehow to the side of the marshland, and from there stumbled his way towards the road. The house behind him was on fire, the air seemed filled with hoarse shoutings. He turned and ran for the spot where he had left the car. Once he fell into a salt water pool and came out wet through to the waist. In the end, however, he reached the bank, clambered over it and slipped down into the road. Then a light was flashed into his eyes and a bayonet was rattled at his feet. There were a couple of soldiers in charge of his car.

"Hands up!" was the hoarse order. Granet calmly flashed his own electric torch. There were at least a dozen soldiers standing around, and a little company were hurrying down from the gates. He switched off his light almost immediately.

"Is any one hurt?" he asked. There was a dead silence. He felt his arm seized on either side.

"The captain's coming down the road," one of the men said. "Lay on to him, Tim!"

## CHAPTER XXII.

Granet sauntered in to breakfast a few minutes late on the following morning. A little volley of questions and exclamations reached him as he stood by the sideboard.

"Heard about the Zeppelin raid?"

"They say there's a bomb on the ninth green!"

"Market Burnham Hall is burnt to the ground!"

Granet sighed as he crossed the room and took his seat at the table.

"If you fellows hadn't slept like oxen last night," he remarked, "you'd have known a lot more about it. I saw the whole show."

"Nonsense!" Major Harrison exclaimed. "Tell us all about it?" young Anselman begged.

"I heard the thing just as I was beginning to undress," Granet explained. "I rushed downstairs and found Collins out in the garden. . . . Where the devil is Collins, by-the-by?"

They glanced at his vacant place. "Not down yet. Go on."

"Well, we could hear the vibration like anything, coming from over the marsh there. I got the car out and we were no sooner on the road than I could see it distinctly, right above us—a huge, cigar-shaped thing. We raced along after it, along the road towards Market Burnham. Just before it reached the Hall it seemed to turn inland and then come back again.

"We pulled up to watch it and Collins jumped out. He said he'd go as far as the Hall and warn them. I sat in the car, watching. She came right round and seemed to hover over those queer sort of outbuildings there are at Market Burnham. All at once the bombs began to drop."

"What are they like?" Geoffrey Anselman exclaimed.

Granet poured out his coffee carefully.

"I've seen 'em before—plenty of 'em, too," he remarked, "but they did rain them down. Then all of a sudden there was a sort of glare—I don't know what happened. It was just as though some one had lit one of those colored lights. The Hall was just as clearly visible as at noonday. I could see the men running about, shouting, and the soldiers tumbling out of their quarters. All the time the bombs were coming down like hail and a corner of the Hall was in flames. Then the lighted stuff, whatever it was, burnt out and the darkness seemed as black as pitch. I hung around for some time, looking for Collins. Then I went up to the house to help them extinguish the fire. I didn't get back till four o'clock."

"What about Collins?" young Anselman asked. "I was playing him at golf."

"Better send up and see," Granet proposed. "I waited till I couldn't stick it any longer."

They sent a servant up. The reply came back quickly—Mr. Collins' bed had not been slept in. Granet frowned a little.

"I suppose he'll think I let him down," he said. "I waited at least an hour for him."

"Was any one hurt by the bombs?" Geoffrey Anselman inquired.

"No one seemed to be much the worse," Granet replied. "I didn't think of anything of that sort in connection with Collins, though. Perhaps he might have got hurt."

"We'll all go over and have a look for him this afternoon if he hasn't turned up," Anselman suggested.

"What about playing a round of golf this morning?"

"Suit me all right," Granet agreed. "I'd meant to lay up because of my arm, but it's better this morning. We'll start early and get back for the papers."

They motored down to the clubhouse and played their round. It was a wonderful spring morning, with a soft west wind blowing from the land. Little patches of sea lavender gave purple color to the marshland. The creeks, winding their way from the sea to the village, shone like quicksilver beneath the vivid sunshine. It was a morning of utter and complete peace. Granet, notwithstanding a little trouble with his arm, played carefully and well. When at last they reached the eighteenth green, he holed a wonderful curly putt for the hole and the match.

"A great game," his cousin declared, as they left the green. "Who the devil are these fellows?"

There were two soldiers standing at the gate, and a military motor-car drawn up by the side of the road. An orderly stepped forward and addressed Granet.

"Captain Granet?" he asked, saluting.

Granet nodded and stretched out his hand for the note. The fingers which drew it from the envelope were perfectly steady, he even lifted his head for a moment to look at a lark just overhead. Yet the few hastily scrawled lines were like a message of fate:—

"The officer in command at Market Burnham Hall would be obliged if Captain Granet would favor him with an immediate interview, with reference to the events of last night."

"Do you mean that you want me to go at once, before luncheon?" he asked the orderly.

The man pointed to the car. "My instructions were to take you back at once, sir."

"Come and have a drink first, at any rate," Geoffrey Anselman insisted. The orderly shook his head, the two soldiers were barring the gateway.

"Some one from the War Office has arrived and is waiting to speak to Captain Granet," he announced.

"We're all coming over after lunch," young Anselman protested. "Wouldn't that do?"

The man made no answer. Granet, with a shrug of the shoulders, stepped into the motor-car. The two soldiers mounted motor-cycles and the little cavalcade turned away. Granet made a few efforts at conversation with his companion, but, meeting with no response, soon relapsed into silence. In less than twenty minutes the car was slowing down before the approach to the Hall. The lane was crowded with villagers and people from the neighboring farm houses, who were all kept back, however, by a little cordon of soldiers. Granet, closely attended by his escort, made his way slowly into the avenue and up towards the house. A corner of the left wing of the building was in ruins, blackened and still smouldering, and there was a great hole in the sand-blown lawn, where a bomb had apparently fallen. A soldier admitted them at the front entrance and his guide led him across the hall and into a large room on the other side of the house, an apartment which seemed to be half library, half morning-room. Sir Meyville and a man in uniform were talking together near the window. They turned around at Granet's entrance and he gave a little start. For the first time a thrill of fear chilled him, his self-confidence was suddenly dissipated. The man who stood watching him with cold scrutiny was the one man on earth whom he feared—Surgeon-Major Thomson!

(To be continued.)

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## The Latest Inventions.

For cooking small amounts of food a coal stove has been invented that is just large enough to stand in a hole of a regular stove.

Hawaiian planters have found that sugar cane tops, formerly regarded as waste material, make good stock food when properly dried.

Improvements in the United States navy's radio station at Cavite enable the transmission of messages to San Francisco without relay.

Of European invention are glass beads so formed that they fit closely together to insulate wire no matter in what form it may be bent.

For household use colored glass covers have been invented that can be placed over electric lamps to change the lighting effects of rooms.

An electric street car in Halifax, England, has been fitted up as a travelling kitchen, selling meals to persons who live along its route.

After years of experimenting a Frenchman has invented a carding machine with which kapok fibres can be prepared for weaving into textiles.

The blade of a new safety razor is a circular disk which is revolved by a spring inside the handle, controlled by a thumb piece on one side.

Porcelain money is being made in Saxony for Guatemala, which plans to experiment with it in place of the hard rubber currency now in use there.

Electric heat drawn from a light socket presses trousers after they are clamped in a new device.

A new beater of the crank-operated type can beat a single egg in a cup or whip cream in the bottle in which it is sold.

Experiments with motor snow plows have been so successful in Norway that several municipalities expect to use them to keep the roads open next winter.

Its inventor has patented a combination engagement and wedding ring, the latter part being added at the proper time to form a single piece of jewelry.

The Brazilian Government is erecting an experiment station for combustibles and mine products and will extensively test coal produced in that country.

## Hedges and Gardens on the Prairies.

Because I have seen on the prairies, and especially around Winnipeg and at such places as Indian Head, some of the finest gardens that could possibly be seen anywhere in Canada, I say the time will come when these prairies will be hedged and dotted with gardens of blooming flowers, of ripening fruits, and of delicious vegetables. They exist to-day. I may mention, especially the Dominion Forestry Branch Nursery Station at Indian Head, because that does not come under my own department; nothing could be more exquisite, more perfect than is that magnificent garden. But before the prairies can have gardens they must have hedges for their wind-breaks. Set your hedge and you may look for your garden. The hedges are coming. The Dominion Experimental Farms have far more than paid for themselves by the wide distribution which has been given to the caragana hedge which the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa, introduced from Russia.—Prof. W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist, Ottawa.

Ask for Minard's and take no other.

## Rapid Tree Growth in Southern Ontario.

At the meeting of the Council of Norfolk County, Ontario, at which it was decided to purchase a block of 500 acres for reforestation, one of the councillors gave an instance of a 25-acre lot in North Walsingham township owned by a man who lives five miles away. Seven years ago it was a sand plain, decorated only with the dry stumps of a primeval pine forest. To-day it is entirely reforested in growths ranging from fourteen feet downward. It was first fenced and each year a portion was planted to pine. The planting was done by plowing a furrow straight as might be and planting the seedlings along the furrow. The entire plot is thriving, and the first year's planting is now beginning to undergo thinning out.

London University, with a total of 20,000 students, is the largest in the world; it includes 65 institutions scattered over the metropolitan area.

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## Battles of the Eye's Rays.

When you look straight at someone else's eyes and then find it necessary to blink or turn away you are being attacked, according to Dr. Charles Russ, by a force or ray that emerges from the human eye.

He claims to have shown by experiments that this force is actually capable of setting an instrument in motion.

"The fact," he explains in the 'Lancet,' "that the direct gaze or vision of one person soon becomes intolerable to another person suggested to me that there might be a ray issuing from the human eye."

"If there is such a ray it may produce an uncomfortable effect on the other person's retina or by collision with the other person's ray."

In order to give his theory the support of some experimental evidence, he decided to try to evolve some instrument which should be set in motion by nothing more than the impact of human vision.

"Within a metal box," he writes, "I suspended a delicate solenoid (that is, magnetized wire), made of fine copper wire. His solenoid was wound upon a cylinder of celluloid and suspended by a silk fibre (unspun silk) 14 in. long.

"The box was 3 ft. by 8½ in. by 7 in., and lined with sheet aluminium. The far end of the box was closed by a sheet of window glass, and the near or observer's end was furnished with a thin glass or celluloid window which was screened by a sheet of aluminium with a slot 3 in. long and 1 in. wide.

"A conducting wire connected the silk fibre with the aluminium of the box, which was earthed. The solenoid was held steady by the magnet which naturally came to rest in the magnetic meridian."

The human eye was then brought to bear through the slot in the observing window on the suspended solenoid, and it was found that if a steady gaze were maintained on one end of the solenoid it was seen to start into motion, usually away from the observing eye. When the gaze was transferred to the true centre of the solenoid it stopped, and when the vision was applied to the opposite end of the solenoid it moved in a reverse direction.

## The Eating Test.

I suppose—and venture to hope—that one day France and Germany will forget their differences, but at the moment not a great deal of love is lost between them, and Lord Montagu of Baulieu relates an incident which is alleged to have taken place at the dinner-table of an hotel in Switzerland—that meeting-place of the nations.

A Frenchman and a German sat opposite each other.

"You are a Frenchman, I suppose?" said the German.

"Yes," replied the Frenchman. "How did you find that out?"

"Because you eat so much bread," said the German.

After a silence the Frenchman observed:

"You are a German, I presume?"

"I am; but what made you think so?"

"Well," answered the Frenchman, "you eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

"You eat so much of everything!"

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