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The Blind Man's Eyes.

WILLIAM MAC HARG EDWIN BALMER.

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CHAPTER I.

A Financier Dies.

GABRIEL WARDEN—capitalist, railroad director, owner of mines and timber lands, at twenty a cow-puncher, at forty-eight one of the pre-dominant men of the Northwest Coast—paced with quick, uneven steps the great wicker-furnished living room of his home just above Seattle on Puget Sound. Twice within ten minutes he had used the telephone in the hall to ask the same question and, apparently to receive the same reply—that the train from Vancouver, for which he had inquired, had come in and that the passengers had left the station.

It was not like Gabriel Warden to show nervousness of any sort; Kondo, the Japanese doorman, who therefore had found something strange in this telephoning, watched him through the portieres which shut off the living-room from the hall. Three times Kondo saw him—big, uncouth in the careless fit of his clothes, powerful and impressive in his strength of feature and the carriage of his well-shaped head—go to the window and, watch in hand, stand staring out. It was a Sunday evening toward the end of February—cold, cloudy and with a chill wind driving over the city and across the Sound. Warden evidently saw no one as he gazed out into the murk; but each moment, Kondo observed, his nervousness increased. He turned suddenly and pressed the bell to call a servant. Kondo, retreating silently down the hall, advanced again and entered the room; he noticed then that Warden's hand, which was still holding the watch before him, was shaking.

"A young man who may, or may not, give a name, will ask for me in a few moments. He will say he called by appointment. Take him at once to my smoking-room, and I will see him there. I am going to Mrs. Warden's room now."

He went upstairs, Kondo noticed, still absently holding his watch in his hand. Warden controlled his nervousness before entering his wife's room—where she had just finished dressing to go out—so that she did not at first sense anything unusual. In fact, she talked with him casually for a moment or so before she even sent away her maid. He had promised a few days before to accompany her to a concert; she thought he had come simply to beg off. When they were alone, she suddenly saw that

he had come to her to discuss some serious subject. "Cora," he said, when he had closed the door after the maid, "I want your advice on a business question." "A business question!" She was greatly surprised.

some result which I have suddenly felt that I haven't the right to decide entirely for myself."

Warden's wife for the first time felt alarmed. She could not well describe his manner; it did not suggest fear for himself; she could not imagine his feeling such fear; but she was frightened. She put her hand on his arm.

"You mean it affects me directly?"

"It may. For that reason I feel I must do what you would have me do."

He seized both her hands in his and held her before him; she waited for him to go on.

"Cora," he said, "what would you have me do if you knew I had found out that a young man—a man who, four or five years ago, had as much to live for as any man might—had been outraged in every right by men who are my friends? Would you have me fight the outfit for him? Or would you have me—lie down?"

HIS fingers almost crushed hers in his excitement. She stared at him with only pride then; she was proud of his strength, of his ability to fight, of the power she knew he possessed to force his way against opposition. "Why, you would fight them!"

"You mean you want me to?"

"Isn't that what you had decided to do?"

He only repeated. "You want me to fight them?"

"Of course."

"No matter what it costs?"

She realized then that what he was facing was very grave.

"Cora," he said, "I didn't come to ask your advice without putting this squarely to you. If I go into this fight, I shall be not only an opponent to some of my present friends; I shall be a threat to them—something they may think it necessary to remove."

"Remove?"

"Such things have happened—to better men than I, over smaller matters."

She cried out. "You mean some one might kill you?"

"Should that keep me from going in?"

She hesitated. He went on: "Would you have me afraid to do a thing that ought to be done, Cora?"

"No," she said; "I would not."

"All right, then. That's all I had to know now. The young man is coming to see me to-night, Cora. Probably he's downstairs. I'll tell you all I can after I've talked with him."

Warden's wife tried to hold him a moment more,

WARNING:

The story "The Blind Man's Eyes" is the most recent product of two writers, Edwin Balmer and William MacHarg.

They are said to be good workmen.

Those who recommended the story to the editors of the Courier appeared to be enthusiastic about it. This may have been because they wished to sell the Canadian serial copyright.

We have since read it, but reserve our opinion. The real judges must be the readers of the Courier.

In asking for this judgment it is necessary to warn readers of one point,—necessary in the interests of fairness.

The point is this:

If any reader objects to having his or her attention taken off the war, even for twenty minutes at a time, then "The Blind Man's Eyes" is a bad story to read.

If any one is so busy that twenty minutes twice a week means lost time and neglected work—then this story should be avoided.

This is a good story. It is ingenious. It is almost impossible to guess the ending. It is very possible that you will not wish to miss any instalment.

She was a number of years younger than he; he was one of those men who believe all business matters should be kept from their wives.

"I mean it came to me through some business—discoveries."

"And you cannot decide it for yourself?"

"I had decided it." He looked again at his watch. "I had quite decided it; but now— It may lead to