## POPPOPOPOPOPOPOPOPOPO The BLIND MAN'S EYES

By William MacHarg Edwin Balmer

ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. H. Livingstone

(Continued from last week).

CHAPTER XXII

Not Eaton-Overton.

Santoine awoke at five o'clock. The blind man felt strong and steady; he had food brought him; while he was eating it, his messenger returned. Santoine saw the man alone and, when he had dismissed him, he sent for his daughter.

Harriet went up to him fearfully. The blind man seemed calm and quiet; a thin, square packet lay on the bed beside him; he held it out to her without speaking.

She snatched it in dread; the shape of the packet and the manner in which it was fastened told her it must be a photograph. "Open it," her father directed.

"What is it you want to know, Father?" she asked. "That is the picture of Eaton?"

"Yes."

"I thought so." She tried to assure herself of the shade of the meaning in her father's tone; but she could not. She understood that her recognition of the picture had satisfied him in regard to something over which he had seen in doubt; but whether this was to work in favor of Hugh and herself-she thought of herself now inseparably with Hugh-or whether it threatened them, she could not tell.

"Father, what does this mean?" she cried to him.

"What, dear?" "Your having the picture. Where

did you get it?" "I knew where it might be. I sent

for it." "But-but, Father-" It came to her now that her father must know

who Hugh was. "Who-" "I know who he is now," her father said calmly. "I will tell you when

I can." "When you can?" "Yes." he said. "Where is Avery?"

as though his mind had gone to another subject instantly. "He has not been in, I believe, since

"He is everseeing the search for Eaton?"

"Yes." "Send for him. Tell him I wish to see him here at the house; he is to remain within the house until I have seen him."

Semething in her father's tone startled and perplexed her; she thought of Donald now only as the most eager and most vindictive of Eaton's pursuers. Was her father removing Donald from among those seeking Eaton? Was he sending for him because what he had just learned was something which would make more rigorous and desperate the search? The blind man's look and manner told her nothing.

"You mean Donald is to wait here until you send for him, Father?" "That is it."

It was the blind man's tone of dismissal. He seemed to have forgotten the picture; at least, as his daughter moved toward the door, he gave no direction concerning it. She halted. looking back at him. She would not carry the picture away, secretly, like this. She was not ashamed of her love for-Eaton: whatever might be said or thought of him, she trusted him: she was proud of her love for him.

"May I take the picture?" she asked steadily.

"Do whatever you want with it,"

her father answered quietly. And so she took it with her. She found a servant of whom she inquired for Avery; he had not returned so she sent for him. She went down to the deserted library and waited there with the picture of Hugh in her hand. The day had drawn to dusk. She could no longer see the picture in the fading light; she could only recall it; and now, as she recalled it, the picture itself-not her memory of her father's manner in relation to itgave her vague discomfort. She got up suddenly, switched on the light and, holding the picture close to it, studied it. What it was in the picture that gave her this strange uneasiness quite separate and distinct from all that she had felt when she first looked at it, she could not tell: but the more she studied it, the more troubled and frightened she grew.

The picture was a plain, unretouched print pasted upon common square cardboard without photographer's emboss or signature; and printed with the picture, were four plain, distinct numerals-8253. She did not know what they meant or if they had any real significance, but somehow now she was more afraid for Hugh than she had been. She trembled as she held the picture again to her cheek and then to her lips.

She turned; some one had come in from the hall; it was Donald. She saw at her first glance at him that his search had not yet succeeded and she

threw her head back in relief. Seeing the light, he had looked into the library idly; but when he saw her, he approached her quickly.

"What have you there?" he demand-

ed of her. She flushed at the tone. "What right have you to ask?" Her instant impulse had been to conceal the picture, but that would make it seem she was ashamed of it; she held it so Donald could see it if he looked. He did look and suddenly seized the picture from her. "Where did you get this, Harriet?" "Don!"

"Where did you get it?" he repeated. "Are you ashamed to say?"

"Ashamed? Father gave it to me!" "Your father!" Avery started; but if anything had caused him apprehension, it instantly disappeared. "Then didn't he tell you who this man Eaton is? What did he say to you?" "What do you mean, Don?"

He put the picture down on the table beside him and, as she rushed for it, he seized both her hands and held her before him. "Harry, dear!" he said to her. "Harry, dear-"

"Don't call me that! Don't speak to me that way!" She struggled to free herself from bim.

"I know, of course," he said. "It's because of him." He jerked his head



She Struggled to Free Herself From Him.

toward the picture on the table; the manner made her furious.

"Let me go, Don!" "I'm sorry, dear." He drew her to

him, held her only closer. "Don: Father wants to see you! He wanted to know when he came in; he will let you know when you can go

"When did he tell you that? When he gave you the picture?" "Yes."

Avery had almost let her go; new he held her hard again. "Then he wanted me to tell you about this Eaton.'

"Why should he have you tell me about-Mr. Eaton?"

"You know!" he said to her.

"What have you to say about him, Donald?"

"You must never think of him again, dear; you must forget him forever!" "Donald, I am not a child. If you have something to say which you consider hard for me to hear, tell it to

me at once." "Very well. Perhaps that is best. Dear, either this man whom you have known as Eaton will never be found or, if he is found, he cannot be let to live. Harry, have you never seen a picture with the numbers printed in below like that? Can't you guess yet where your father must have sent for that picture? Don't you know what those numbers mean?"

"What do they mean?" "They are the figures of his number in what is called 'The Rogues' Gallery.' And they mean he has committed a crime and been tried and convicted of it; they mean in this case that he has committed a murder!"

"A murder!" "For which he was convicted and sentenced."

"Sentenced!" "Yes; and is alive now only because before the sentence could be carried out, he escaped. That man, Philip Eaton, is Hugh-"

"Hugh!" "Hugh Overton, Harry!"

"Hugh Overton!" "Yes; I found it out today. The police have just learned it, too. I was coming to tell your father. He's Hugh Overton, the murderer of Matthew Latron!"

"No; no!" "Yes, Harry; for this man is cer-

tainly Hugh Overton." "It isn't so! I know it isn't so!" "You mean he told you he was-

some one else, Harry?" "No; I mean-" She faced him defiantly. "Father let me keep the photograph. I asked him, and he said, 'Do whatever you wish with it.' He knew I meant to keep it! He knows who Hugh is, so he would not have

said that, if-if-" She heard a sound behind her and turned. Her father had come into the room. And as she saw his manner and his face she knew that what Avery had just told her was the truth. She shrank away from them. Her

hands went to her face and hid it. She knew now why it was that her father, on hearing Hugh's voice, had become curious about him, had tried to place the voice in his recollectionthe voice of a prisoner on trial for his life, heard only for an instant but fixed upon his mind by the circumstances attending it, though those circumstances afterward had been forgotten. She knew why she, when she

had gazed at the picture a few minutes before, had been disturbed and frightened at feeling it to be a kind of picture unfamiliar to her and threatening her with something unknown and terrible. She knew the reason now for a score of things Hugh had said to her, for the way he had looked many times when she had spoken to him. It explained all that! It seemed to her, in the moment, to explain everythingexcept one thing. It did not explain Hugh himself; the kind of man he was, the kind of man she knew him to be-the man she loved-he could not be a murderer!

Her hands dropped from her face: she threw her head back proudly and triumphantly, as she faced now both Avery and her father.

"He, the murderer of Mr. Latron!"

she cried quietly. "It isn't so!" The blind man was very pale; he was fully dressed. A servant had supported him and helped him down the stairs and still stood beside him sustaining him. But the will which had conquered his disability of blindness was holding him firmly now against the disability of his hurts; he seemed composed and steady. She saw compassion for her in his look; and compassion-under the present circumstances-terrified her. Stronger, far more in control of him than his compassion for her, she saw purpose. She recognized that her father had come to a decision upon which he now was going to act; she knew that nothing she or anyone else could say would alter that decision and that he would employ his every power in acting

upon it. The blind man seemed to check himself an instant in the carrying out of his purpose; he turned his sightless eyes toward her. There was emotion in his look; but, except that this emotion was in part pity for her, she could not tell exactly what his look expressed.

"Will you wait for me outside, Harriet?" he said to her. "I shall not be

long." She hesitated; then she felt suddenly the futflity of opposing him and she passed him and went out into the hall. The servant followed her, closing the door behind him. She stood just outside the door listening. She heard her father-she could catch the tone; she could not make out the words-asking a question; she heard the sound of Avery's response. She started back nearer the door and put her hand on it to open it; inside they were still talking. She caught Avery's tone more clearly now, and it suddenly terrified her. She drew back from the door and shrank away. There had been no opposition to Avery in her father's tone; she was certain now that he was only discussing with

Avery what they were to do. She had waited nearly half an hour, but the library door had not been opened again. The closeness of the hall seemed choking her; she went to the front door and threw it open. The evening was clear and cool; but it was not from the chill of the air that she shivered as she gazed out at the woods through which she had driven with Hugh the night before. There the hunt for him had been going on all day: there she pictured him now. in darkness, in suffering, alone, hurr, hunted and with all the world but her against him!

She ran down the steps and stood on the lawn. The vague noises of the house now no longer were audible. She stood in the silence of the evening strained and fearfully listening. At first there seemed to be no sound outdoors other than the gentle rush of the waves on the beach at the foot of the bluff behind her; then, in the opposite direction, she defined the undertone of some far-away confusion. Sometimes it seemed to be shouting. next only a murmur of movement and noise. She ran up the road a hundred vards in its direction and halted again. The noise was nearer and clearer-a confusion of motor exploclattered louder and louder and leaped nearer rapidly and rose above the rest, the roar of a powerful motor-car racing with "cut-out" open. The rising racket of it terrified Harriet with its recklessness and triumph. Yes: that was it: triumph! The faroff tumult was the noise of shouts and cries of triumph; the racing car, blaring its way through the night, was the bearer of news of success of the search

Harriet went colder as she knew this; then she ran up the road to meet the car coming. She saw the glare of its headlights through the trees past a bend in the road; she ran on and the beams of the car's headlight straightened and glared down the road directly upon her. The car leaped at her; she ran on toward it, arms in the air. The clatter of the car became deafening and the machine was nearly upon her when the driver recognized that the girl in the road was heedless and might throw herself hefore him unless he stopped. He brought his car up short and skidding. "What is it?" he cried, as he muffled the engine.

"What is it? What is it?" she cried in return. The man recognized her. "Miss San-

toine!" "What is it?" "We've got him!" the man cried. "We've got him!"

"Him?" "Him! Hugh Overton! Eaton, Miss Santoine. He's Hugh Overton; hadn't you heard? And we've got him!"

"Got him!" "Where is Mr. Avery?" he demanded. "I've got to tell Mr. Avery." She made no response but threw herself in front of the car and clasped a wheel as the man started to throw

to him. He looked in the direction of the house, shut off his power and leaped down. He left the machine and ran on the road toward the house. Harriet started the car and turned it back in the direction from which it had come. She speeded and soon other headlights flared at hers-a number of them; four or five cars, at least, were in file up the road and men were crowding and horsemen were riding beside them.

She rushed on so close that she saw she alarmed them; they cried a warning; the horsemen and the men on foot jumped from beside the road and the leading car swung to one side; but Harriet caught her car on the brakes and swung it straight across the road and stopped it; she closed the throttle and pulled the key from the starting



"You Have Been Hurt Again, Hugh?" She Managed Steadily.

mechanism and flung it into the woods. So she sat in the car, waiting for the captors of Hugh to come up. "Where is he?" she asked them.

'Where is he?" They did not tell her; but reply was unnecessary. Others' eyes pointed hers to Hugh. He was in the back seat of the second machine with two men, one on each side of him. She

stopped at the side of the car where

he was and she put her hand on the

edge of the tonneau. "You have been hurt again, Hugh?" she managed steadily.

"Hurt? No," he said as constrainedly. "No." The car started, and she sat silent. with her hand still upon his, as they

CHAPTER XXIII

went on to her father's house.

The Flaw in the Left Eye. Santoine, after Harriet had left the library, stood waiting until he heard the servant go out and close the door. "When did you learn that Eaton was Hugh Overton, Avery?" he asked.

"Today."

"How did you discover it?" "It was plain from the first there was something wrong with the man," Avery replied: "but I had, of course, way of placing him until he gave himself away at polo the other day. I saw that he was pretending not to know a game which he did know; when he put over one particular str ke I was sure he knew the game very well. The number of men in this country who've played polo at all isn't very large, and those who can play great polo are very few. So I sent for the polo annuals for a few years back; the ones I wanted came to the club today. His picture is in the group of the Spring Meadows club; he played 'back' for them five years ago. His name was under the picture, of course."

"I understand. I am glad to know how it was. One less certain of your sions and voices; and now one sound fidelity than I am might have put another construction on your silence; one less certain, Avery, might have thought that, already knowing Eaton's identity, you preferred instead of telling it to me to have me discover it for myself and so, for that reason, you trapped him into a polo game in Harriet's presence."

For a moment Santoine paused; the man across from him did not speak, but-Santoine's intuition told himdrew himself together for some shock. "Of course," said Santoine "knowing who Eaton is gives us no aid in

determining who the men were that fought in my study last night?" "It gives none to me, Mr. Santoine,"

Avery said steadily. "It gives none to you," Santoine re-

peated: "and the very peculiar behavior of the stock exchange today, I suppose that gives you no help either. All day they have been going down, Avery-the securities, the stocks and bonds of the properties still known as the Latron properties. Without apparent reason, they have been going down and that gives you no help either. Avery?

"Yet you are a very clever man; there is no question about that. I have even found it worth while at times to talk over with you matters -problems-which were troubling me; to consult with you. Have I not?"

"Very well; I am going to consult with you now. I have an infirmity, as you know, Avery; I am blind. I have just found out that for several years-for about five years, to be exact: that is, for about the same length of time that you have been with memy blindness has been used by a certain group of men to make me the agent of a monstrous and terrible injustice to an innocent man. Except in his gear. He cried to her and for my blindness-except for that, tried to get her off; but she was deaf Avery, this injustice never could have



Very Well: I Am Going to Consult With You Now, I Have an Infirmity, As You Know, Avery; I Am Blind."

been carried on. If you find a certain amount of bitterness in my tone, it is due to that; a man who has an infirmity, Avery, cannot well help being a little sensitive in regard to it. You are willing I should consult with you in regard to this?"

"Of course I am at your service, Mr. Santoine." Avery's voolce was harsh and dry.

The blind man was silent for an instant. He could feel the uneasiness and anxiety of the man across from him mounting swiftly, and he gave it every opportunity to increase. He had told Eaton once that he did not use "cat and mouse" methods; he was using them now because that was the only way his purpose could be achieved.

"We must go back to the quite serious emergency to which I am indebted for your faithful service. Five years ago the American people appeared perfectly convinced that the only way to win true happiness and perpetuate prosperity was to accuse, condemn and jail for life-if execution were not legal—the heads of the important groups of industrial properties. Just at that time, one of these men-one of the most efficient but also, perhaps, the one personally most obnoxious or unpopular - committed one of his gravest indiscretions. It concerned the private use of deposits in national banks: it was a federal offense of the most patent and provable kind. He was indicted. Considering the temper of any possible jury at that time, there was absolutely no alternative but to believe the man under indictment must spend many succeeding years, if not the rest of his life, in the federal penitentiary at Atlanta or Leavenworth.

"Now, the man was in complete control of a group of the most valuable and prosperous properties in America Before his gaining control, the properties had been almost ruined by differences between the minor men who tried to run them; only the calling of Matthew Latron into control saved those men from themselves; they required him to govern them; his taking away would bring chaos and ruin among them again. They knew that. Just before he must go to trial. Latron himself became convinced that he faced confinement for the rest of his life; then fate effectively intervened to end all his troubles. His body, charred and almost consumed by flames-but nevertheless the identified body of Matthew Latron-was found in the smoking ruins of his shooting lodge, which burned to the ground two days before his trial."

Avery was hunched in the seat watching the blind man with growing conviction and fear.

Santoine went on: "A young man was shown to have followed Latron to the shooting lodge: a witness appeared who had seen this young man shoot Latron; a second witness had seen him set fire to the lodge. The young man-Hugh Overton-was put on trial for his life. I, myself, as a witness at the trial supplied the motive for the crime; for, though I had never met Overton, I knew that he had lost the whole of a large fortune through investments recommended to him by Latron. Overton was convicted, sentenced to death; he escaped before the sentence was carried outbecame a fugitive without a name who if he ever appeared would be handed over for execution. For the evidence had been perfect-complete; he had shot Latron purely for revenge, killed him in the most despicable manner. For there was no doubt Latron was dead, was there, Avery?"

"None," Avery said huskily.

"That was the time you came into my employ, Avery, recommended to me by one of the men who had been closest to Latron. I was not connected with the Latron properties except as an adviser; but many papers relating to them must go inevitably through my hands. I was rather on the inside in all that concerned those properties. But I could not myself see the papers; I was blind; therefore I had to have others serve as eyes for me. And from the first, Avery, you served as my eyes in connection with all papers relating to the Latron properties. If anything ever appeared in those papers which might have led me to suspect that any injustice had been done in the punishment of Latron's murderer, it could reach me only through you. Nothing of that sort ever did reach me, Avery. You must have made quite a good thing out of it." "What?"

"I say, your position here must have been rather profitable to you, Avery; I have not treated you badly myself, recognizing that you must often be tempted by gaining information here from which you might make money; and your other employers must have overbid me."

"I don't understand; I beg your pardon, Mr. Santoine, but I do not follow

what you are talking about." "No? Then we must go a little further. This last year a minor reorganization became necessary in some of the Latron properties. My friend, Gabriel Warden-who was an honest man, Avery-had recently greatly increased his interest in those properties; it was inevitable the reorganization should be largely in his hands. During his work with the Latron properties, Warden-the honest man, Avery-discovered the terrible injustice of which I speak.

"I do not need to draw your attention, Avery, to the very peculiar condition which followed Warden's death. Warden had certainly had communication with Overton of some sort; Overton's enemies, therefore, were unable to rid themselves of him by delivering him up to the police because they did not know how much Overton knew. When I found that Warden had made me his executor and I went west and took charge of his affairs, their difficulties were intensified, for they did not dare to let suspicion of what had been done reach me. There was no course open to them, therefore, but to remove Overton before my suspicions were aroused, even if it could be done only at desperate risk to themselves.

"What I am leading up to, Avery, is your own connection with these events. You looked after your own interests rather carefully, I think, up to a certain point. When-knowing who Eaton was-you got him into a polo game, it was so that, if your interests were best served by exposing him, you could do so without revealing the real source of your knowledge of him. But an unforeseen event arose. The drafts and lists relating to the reorganization of the Latron properties-containing the very facts, no doubt, which first had aroused Warden's suspicions-were sent me through Warden's office. At first there was nothing threatening to you in this, because their contents could reach me only through you. But in the uncertainty I felt, I had my daughter take these matters out of your hands.

"That night, Avery, you sent an unsigned telegram from the office in the village, almost within twenty-four hours my study was entered, the safe inaccessible to you was broken open, the contents were carried away. Do you suppose I do not know that one of the two men in the study last night was the principal whose agents had failed in two attempts to get rid of Overton for him, whose other agentyourself, Avery-had failed to intercept the evidence which would have revealed the truth to me, so that, no longer trusting to agents, he himself had come in desperation to prevent my learning the facts? I realize fully, Avery, that by means of you my blindness and my reputation have been used for five years to conceal from the public the fact that Matthew Latron had not been murdered, but was still

alive!" Santoine heard Avery get up; he stood an instant and tried to speak, but his breath caught nervously; he made another effort.

"I didn't have anything to do with convicting Overton, or know anything about it until that part was all over; I never saw him till I saw him on the train. I didn't know Warden was

going to be killed." "But you were accessory to the robbery of my house last night and, therefore, accessory to the murder of Wallace Blatchford. Last night, too, knowing Overton was innocent of everything charged against him, you gave orders to fire upon him at sight and he was fired upon. And what were you telling Harriet when I came in? You have told the police that Overton is the murderer of Latron. Isn't that so the police will refuse to believe anything he may say and return him to the death cell for the sentence to be executed upon him? The law will call these things attempted murder, Avery."

The blind man heard Avery pacing the floor, and then heard him stop in

"What is it you want to know, zir?" "Who killed Warden?"

"John Yarrow is his name; he was a sort of hanger-on of Latron's. I don't know where Latron picked him up." "Was it he who also made the at-

tack on the train?" "Yes." "Who was the other man on the

train—the one that claimed the felegram addressed to Lawrence Hillward?" "His name's Hollock. He's titular

owner of the place on the Michigan shore where Latron has been Living. The telegram I sent night before last was addressed to his place, you know. He's been a sort of go-between for Latron and the men-those who knew -who were managing the properties. I'd never met him, though, Mr. Santoine, and I didn't know either him or Hollock on the train. As I said, I wasn't in the know about killing Warden.'

(Concluded next week).

The Maiden's Prayer. "Dear Lord, I ask nothing for myself! Only give mother a son-inlaw.'

-The "Watchman" gives all the news while it is news.