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GIRL OF GRIT

BY MAJ. ARTHUR GRIFFITHS.

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CHAPTER VI.

PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY OF WILFRIDA FAIRHOLME.

S. S. Chattahoochee, July 17 .- Although still harassed and oppressed by hideous anxiety, I want, in this my first moment of leisure, to set down clearly and fully the strange events that have occurred since that memorable evening in Prince's Gate. I have been in a whirl ever since. But I have forgotten nothing. Every act, every thought is indelibly fixed in my memory from the moment that I realized

Forget! I shall never forget that afternoon when the American detective brought me the news. What an odd creature he was. Fery much overdressed, with a sort of company manner voice, which didn't disguise his Yankee accent or tone down his awful Americanisms. I know now that the poor wretch was honest and straightforward, but I could not get over my repugnance to him at first.

And so when we got to the very house and drew quite blank I made up my mind that the man was an arrant impostor. Nothing fell out as he said. "His boy would be on the watch." There was no boy. He was quite certain of the house into which Willie had been carried. The police broke in. There was no Willie Wood.

The whole thing was humbug. I felt convinced of it and said so, only to regret it directly after. It could not be quite humbug. or. if it was, Roy, dear Willie's lovely dog, was in it, too, for Roy had certainly smelt him out in the cellar where we found the awful apparatus and things, and I ought to have known that a dog's instinct is always true. But I was very short with Mr. Snuyzer and left him in a huff. It was a mistake, of course, for it was losing a chance. The man might be useful, and after all he was the only one who. whether the right or the wrong one, had any sort of clew. That was good old Sir Charles Collingham's opinion and Colonel Bannister's, the big official, chief constable or assistant commissioner or something whom the general brought with him to Hill street. I found them there closeted with mother. who had heard all about it from them. She was rather in a limp condition. dear mother, having quite failed to take in the situation and unable to say or suggest anything.

The colonel-he was rather a cross looking, middle aged man, with square cut, short whiskers and a bristling gray mustache-took me sharply to task for letting the American slip, and I should have been offended at his tone, but I knew I had been wrong.

"From what you tell us he had no doubt been in communication with Captain Wood yesterday, and he would have saved us some time and trouble if we had him under our hand now. He must be hunted up," said the colo-

"Your people know him at Scotland Yard. He was there today, and they sent him on to the United States consulate. He told me that himself," I said.

"They will know him at the consulate probably. I will send there to inquire," said the colonel, making a short

"And Captain Wood's man knows bim. They came here together this afternoon."

"And for the matter of that so do I," added Sir Charles. "Not much, of course, and he's an uncommon queer looking chap. But the fellow seems honest and straightforward."

"Unless the whole thing is a put up job," remarked the police colonel, with



"He must be hunted up," said the colonel. a meaning smile, "a scheme to throw you off the scent of these papers which you say are so important, Sir

"By George, they are that," the general broke in. "Don't you see? It is probably a trumped up story about the plot against Wood simply to cover the

theft of the papers." "But Captain Wood has gone. He

has been carried off." I said. "'Gone,' yes," sneered the colonel, "but 'carried off.' How do we know that? It's not the first time a young gentleman has disappeared for four and twenty hours or more. Who knows all the ins and outs of Captain Wood's affairs and private move-

as came this afternoon-Mr. Snoozerbut he's got a dirty scrub of a boy with

"Joe." I cried. "Show them up here. Harris. Yes: bring both of them, of course. We shall hear something now."

Mr. Snuyzer came up to the drawing room at a run. I'm sure. He was almost at Harris' heels. The boy Joe lagged a little behind and stood abashed at the door, and Roy, who by constitution hated all boys, especially ragged ones, took this hesitation as suspicious and gave an ugly growl, with a show of his fierce teeth. The collie, I should mention, had never left me since he was brought to Hill street.

"Look yar. What did I tell you, miss?" began the detective, coming straight at me and talking rather excitedly. "I never thought to show myself here again, but, by thunder, it was too strong for me. I've got the pride of my business, and I wanted you to see I was right to believe in Joe. Now. speak out, young squire."

I must say I thought well of the boy from the very first. He was an apple cheeked, healthy looking, bullet headed urchin, with clear, china blue eyes. very wide open just then in astonishment, I think, not fear. He did not care one bit for the dog, but faced him sturdily, stooping as if to pick up a stone, with a "Would you-br-r-r, lie the next move. If I follered it, I'd find down, will you." that sent the collie, still growling, under the sofa.

"How was it. Joe? Won't you sit said just to encourage him, and he asked nothing better than to tell his story. and taking his seat at the very edge of a chair after dusting it he began:

"It was this way, mum-miss. When he-Mr. Snuvzer there-set me on the nark, I mean watch, this morning, I held on to the job close for a matter of three hours and never saw nothing. Worn't no move at all in the house till about 11 o'clock, when a trap comes down the road and pulls up at the garden gate. The coachman he was in an old blue coat and silver buttons, bad hat-half a crown an hour businessregular fig. But inside was a dona-a real lady, you understand, dressed up to the knocker. I saw her get out"-

"Would you know her again?" we asked, all of us, in a breath.

Joe nodded his head.

"I couldn't see her face at first, she'd got a thick veil on. But afterward I got my chance, as I'll tell you directly. She was a snorter, too, real jam, and no mistake, a lady, like as I've seen at the music 'alls." "When did you see her face?" asked

the colonel, rather disdainfully.

"In the carriage, wheh I was a-setting right opposite her. I'll come to that. But first of all I must tell you how it was. You see, the dona she wouldn't go right into the garden at first. She kept at the gate spyinglike, watching the house and doubting, as I fancied, she ought to go in. Then she made a dash forward for the front door, but before she reached the steps some one came down, a man"-

"Would you know him again?" "Rather, in a thousand. He was a little black muzzled chap, with a skin like a pickled walnut, and be came out all in a hurry, as though he had

been watching for her. "He waved her back, but she stuck to it, and they must have had words. for I see'd him take her by the wrist and pull her out toward the carriage.

"I was crouched close under the wall, for I'd sneaked up at the back of the carriage to spot what I could, and I was just by the door when the small chap opened it and was forcing the dona to get in.

"'I will not go, Papir' (Pepe), she says, 'not until I have heard what you have done to him. There was to be no violence. You promised that, and I wish to be sure. I must know,' she for you.' 'says, 'that he ain't come to no harm.' she says.

"With that the little fellow gives her a great shove. I think he'd 'a' struck her, but just then he caught sight of me.

"'Why, in the name of'-some foreign gibberish-'where have you dropped from? What brings you 'anging about 'ere?'

"I tried to stall him off by axing him to buy a box of matches, but he cut up very rough and wanted to lay saw the lady, the same dona, was there 'old of me, saying he'd call the police and give me in charge for loltering thing, a figure of a man it might 'a'and all that. But I checked him and been, all wrapped up in rugs and blanslipped through his fingers-'twasn't kets and things. Might 'a'been a dead difficult-and ran up the road.

"After I had been caught out," Joe went on, "for which I'm very sorry, sir, I judged I'd better keep off a bit if was to do any more good.

"It was time, too, now they'd dropped on to me, to send word to the office what was up; that they was a-moving down here. I was a-making for the nearest postoffice to send a wire, when, from where I was, I saw the carriage drive straight into the garden.

"The road was clear, so I crept back, keeping out of sight and scrouging inside the pillars of the next gate, where At that moment Harris, the butler, I'd got my eye on what went on. The came up with a card. "Gentleman asks | carriage was nowheres to be seen. if he can see you most particular, Same | They must have took it right inside on.

the stables, for the coachhouse doors was open."

"That was to get Mr. Wood away." said the American detective.

"How do you know that? You don't even know that he was there at all." sneered the colonel.

"Hah! You wait. Guess you'll see," retorted Mr. Snuyzer. "I believe the carriage came on purpose, or they were uneasy at seeing the boy. Suspected something; some one had got wind, some one was on the track and wanted to clear out."

"All pure conjecture," said the colo-

"Anyway, they did remove him," argued Snuyzer.

"If he was ever there," retorted the colonel. "Well, well. Go on, Joe. Did you see anything more of the brougham?"

I asked. "Did I, mum? Of course I did. That's what I was waiting for. It was half an hour or more afore it come out again. And there was three chaps come'd out first, a-laughing and a-talking. I heerd one of em say. 'Not much fight about him now.' T'other says, 'He went like a sheep.' 'A dead un,' says another. 'Mutton, you mean.'

"Oh! had they hurt him? Oh, Sir Charles!" I burst in, finding great difficulty in restraining myself.

"No, miss," put in the American very kindly. "I've told you they've no cause to hurt him as I look at it. He's too precious to them, besides. Fire ahead.

"The carriage, it was druv out fast through the gate into the road and what I'd do and quick too. You'd told got to see the thing right throughme, sir, to watch the house and if any one come out to let you know. Well, I judged they'd all come out, so anyways where they'd all gone to.

"So with that I scribbled a message on the gate, case you comed down and down? Let's hear what happened." I missed me, and I started running all, I knew to catch up the carriage. I picked it up long way this side of the bridge, although I was near baked and done brown. But I hitched on to the back part like as I've done a thousand times afore and rode like a gentleman all the way up the 'Ammersmith road out in a jiffy. right into Kensington.

"There one of your blooming interfering coves wot sees me on my perch gives the office to the man a-driving. who rounds with his whip and gives



It's you, is it? Aha! This is the second time I've caught you spying. me wot for. I held on for all the cuts of the cord, though they stung like hot nettles. I was pretty well slashed all over, when all at once the jarvey stops his 'osses, and before I could climb

down a feller-the same little black faced moocher-came and copped me right where I sat behind. He was awful mad. "'You devil's spawn! It's you, is it?

Aha! This is the second time I've caught you spying. Tell me who sent you, or by'-some foreign talk-'I'll do

"But mum was the word with me. I wouldn't 'a'let on if he'd cut me to ribbons. 'Chuck it.' I said, 'chuck it or call the coppers. If I've done wrong, it's for them to pick me up, not you. I'll answer to them.'

"He didn't much like the talk of the police. I could see that. They might want to know more about him than he chose to tell. That settled him, I think, for he dragged me up to the carriage door, opened it and shoved me in. I and by her side a big bundle of someun. Then the feller began talking foreign again to the dona, and she answered back the same, and there was a great shindy.

"It was all about me. I guessed that. And the end was that the feller hoisted me on to the front seat and

said to me mighty sharp: "'You stick there. Don't move. If you try to get out, I shall see you from the box, and you won't get far even if you don't break your neck leaving the carriage. Watch him, Susette. She's responsible for you, my lad, and she knows what I'll do to her if you play any tricks.'

"With that he left us, and we rolled

"'Who sent you?' asked the dona directly he'd gone. 'Do you come from his friends?' She nudged the bundle alongside. 'Do you know Captain Wood?"

"Ha, you see!" interposed the American. "You bet that was our man hid up among those rugs."

The others were compelled now to admit the fact, and they did so ungrudgingly. As for me, my heart was beating fast, for I felt that at last I had come upon the track of my love.

"What did you tell her? Go on, my good boy." I said breathlessly.

"You see, miss, I'd never heard tell of no captain, but I wouldn't let on." Joe continued. "The boss 'ere had only told me to watch, saying it was a cross job, but he mentioned no names. So I ups and asks, 'Is that Mr. Wood?' and I could 'a' sworn that the bundle moved, and there was struggling like in-

"Gagged, of course," put in the Amer-

Joe went on. "'Anyway, I am his friend, she says. 'I don't mean he shall come to harm. And I want him'-the bundle moved again-'him and others to know that, and I'd like you to tell em so when you get out of this mess.' 'When'll that be?' I asks, a little bit on the hump, you know. 'Now, if you're game to hop out. I'm not a-going to stop you,' and she was for turning of the handle then and there.

"But I considered a bit, and the thought came in my head that now I'd got 'ere I had ought to stick 'ere. There was the gentleman opposite me-as I judged—and if I was to do any service straight on for London. I had to settle to him 'twasn't by cutting away. I'd where they took him, what they did to him, who and what they were."

"You're a brave lad," I said, stretchwas bound to let you know, and I'd ing out and shaking hands with him, an idea that the carriage'd help me to and indeed I should have liked to hug him, dusty and dirty as he was.

"Thank you kindly, miss," he answered shyly, and went on. "The only way out of it was to say I was afeard to jump. The cove on the box was a-watching me, I says, and a lot more. Then the carriage settled it by turning into some yard, a private place it looked like, but they gave me no time to spy, for the feller from the box came down directly we stopped and had me

"''Ere,' he says, 'we've got first to do with you. Lay hold on him.' Then two other chaps grabs me by the arms and rushes me head down, jam, ram, straight into a dark hole that smelled of moldy straw and garbage some sort of cellar-where they locked a door on me, and I was laid up in limbo

like a rat in a trap. 'It took me half an hour or so to shake myself together. First thing that gave me heart was a streak of daylight up atop of the calaboose, and when I struck a match I found it comed through an old iron grating, which I soon overhauled. 'Tworn't set so tight that I couldn't soon loosen a brick, although I tore my bands a bit before I got the thing right out. Then I'd a job to lift myself up by my arms, but I'm strong in the arms, and by and by I scrambled through that gratingthat's what tore my clothes-and out on to the yard above. It was the one as we'd druv into-a stable yard at the back of a tall house all shut up. windows shuttered, blinds down. No one at home, you'd say. The stables was empty-no horses, helpers, no traps. I couldn't find that the stables joined on to the house neither, but I judged it was better not to hang about too long or they'd be copping me again. So I makes for the yard doors. They was only barred on the inside, and I got out right enough into the back lane. That's about all. I comed on then straight to you, sir, to make my report."

"You were in a monstrous hurry." said Colonel Bannister. "Why didn't you mark down the house, the neighborhood, the exact spot?"

Mr. Snuyzer took his part. "Joe knows his business; yes, sir, as well as the best professionals. Tell us,

"The stables was in Featherstone mews, No. 7. To make sure I chalked something on the doors. The stables was at the back of Featherstone Gar- over the more I hungered to get inside dens and belonged, I should say, to that house in Featherstone Gardens,

No. 7." In a few minutes more we had started in cabs-1 in a hansom with Sir Charles-straight for Featherstone Gardens. Roy came with us. We were the first to arrive, but the others had gone round, escorted by Joe, to the back of the house so as to verify the mews and the situation exactly. When they joined us at the entrance of the gardens, Colonel Bannister, who now took the lead, dismissed the cabs and taker. There was no one else in the said in his brief, ordering sort of way: | house. He swore to that, and we soon

might create a scandal. The whole drew every room, ransacked every corthing may be a mistake. I'll take this ner, turned out every cupboard, but lad first. He may perhaps identify nary soul was to be found. They'd all somebody, and then we shall be entitled to act."

yes, indeed, Colonel Bannister, I shall He shrugged his shoulders, and we

three, with Roy close at my heels, soon make him worth keeping till we could stood on the doorstep of No. 7. The get some corroboration." house was all shut up, the chain was while some one inside fumbled with it that they had taken him?" and several bolts.

it ajar. He was of very respectable that they have taken him out to sea appearance, with white hair under a in a steamer. The steam yacht Fleurblack skullcap, and wore a decent blue de-Lis, auxiliary screw, 274 tons regan old servant in a good family. "May terday at 3 p. m. I've been there and

"We wish to see your master," said the colonel promptly.

"I am afraid that is impossible, sir." replied the man civilly. "The family at 3 p. m. yesterday. They knew her have gone out of town. The duke left well there. She was waiting, ready for yesterday for Spain."

"The duke?" "The Duke of Tierra Sagrada. He your card I will see that it is sent on to him, or any letter. I have his address."

"In Spain?" mosa, St. Sebastian. They have gone him to the ship. She staid on shoreto the seaside. No, please"-this was to me, for I was quietly trying to get her, and could hardly be persuaded to

strict against dogs."

"Call him back, Miss Fairholme, at once," said the colonel in a tone which I resented, but he cut me quite short. This farce has gone far enough. I wash my hands of it. Good night"this to the old manservant as we walked away. "And if you will be guided by me, Miss Fairholme, you will do the same. It's all humbug from first to last, I give you my word. I do not believe one syllable of this story, except perhaps about the papers and even then I am not quite satisfied. for they were sent to Captain Wood in the dispatch box. That we know"-"But not at Captain Wood's re quest." I said hurriedly.

"His man thinks not, and I admit the box was not specifically mentioned in the letter, but the letter said papers, and the expression was seemingly one that Wood used, for the man, as a matter of course, sent the dispatch box."

"But what do you imply?" "Just this, that Captain Wood intended to keep out of the way-for reasons I do not presume to conjectureand while out of the way to go on with his work. He'll turn up in good time. take my word for it, and will give his own explanation of his absence. It may not be absolutely satisfactory, his excuse may be bad, but he will make one, and you will have to take it or leave it," were the cynical police colonel's last words.

I hated and loathed him for taking this view, and I turned my back on him. Sir Charles did not console me, for he was thinking more about the official papers than Willie's disappear-

"By the Lord Harry, we shall be in Queer street if they don't turn up," he said with much emphasis. "Wood or no Wood, we've got to get them, or there will be a jolly row; a cabinet question, egad, and the devil's own complications. The matter can't rest here. So cheer up, Miss Frida. We'll

"Why, certainly," added Snuyser, colonels, and this one is not so almighty clever. I've got to get on the inside track of this business, and I'll do it yet, you bet your bottom dollar."

It was kind of them, but I would not be consoled. When I got to Hill street, I crept up to my room, very sorrowful and sick at heart, and cried myself to

Next morning while I was dressing they came and told me that Mr. Snuyzer had called. He had something important to tell me, and was rather in a hurry.

"Captain Wood's not in that house." began the American abruptly, when got down stairs. "How do you know? Why are you

so sure?" I asked. "Haven't the smallest doubt of it. know, because I went right through the house last night, every single room."

"What! Did they let you in?"

"No, miss; I broke in-burglary you call it in this country. I believe, and you may give me into custody if you please. But the detective that's not good enough to break the law on an occasion as well as break into a house and stand the racket had better give up the business."

The man's audacity staggered me. was quite terrified, but I liked him for

"You see, miss, I can't afford to stick at trifles. My professional reputation is at stake, and the more I thought it and this is how I worked it: First I set a close watch on the house, front and back, and found before midnight that no one had gone either in or out. I reckoned that there were not very many of them, and we mustered half a dozen, two of them practiced 'crooks'professional burglars, miss. We got into the house right enough-the crooks | Spottiswoode, who died early in the managed that-in half an hour. First thing was to lay hands on the care-"We can't all go up to the house. It saw that he was speaking truth, for we

cleared out but this one critter. So I same name as himself, who lives somewent back to him and threatened his "And me, please," I added. "Oh, life. He was very stiff, but a revolver is a mighty fine persuader, and presently he outs with the story; lies maybe, maybe truth, but good enough to

"What was his story? Anything on the door, and we waited a long time about Captain Wood? Did he admit

"You bet he did. Told us the whole "Well, what is it?" asked an old man game from first to last. The first we who at last opened the door, but held knew pretty well before; the last is and white striped jacket, the type of ister, cleared from Victoria dock yesverified it this morning."

"Already?" "Yes," he went on. "The yacht Fleurde-Lis, Chapman master, left the dock well there. She was waiting, ready for sea, fires banked, blue peter flying, waiting only for her owner, and left her berth directly he was got on board. is my master, sir. If you will leave He was an invalid, came in a carriage to the dock side and nad to be carried on board wrapped up in blankets."

"Ah! Joe was right then." "A lady helped him, thought to be "Certainly, sir. Cass Huerta Her- his wife, but she did not accompany very much upset, they told me who saw Roy past him into the house—"that re-enter the carriage. But a gentleman dog mustn't come in. My orders are at last made her, and they drove away



'So I went back to him and threatened

his life." together. So the parties have split up. One lot are afloat with their prisoner, meaning, I've no doubt, to keep him away at sea, incapable of interfering. while the others carry on their spoliation in New York. That's how I figure

it now," said the detective shrewdly. "I dare say you're right," I interrupted him hastily. "But surely these speculations will not help us. We've got to give chase to that yacht. How is it to be done?"

"You see, she has a tremendous

start." "No auxiliary screw can do more than eight or ten knots, I believe. Mother and I were in the Mediterranean last year with one of the best. Let us hire something faster. There must be plenty of steamers. I will pay any price gladly."

"Then we have no idea of what ourse the Fleur-de-Lis has taken." "There are signal stations all along the coast, I believe. We hear of ships being reported every hour almost, as

long as they are in sight of land." "She will fly no signals and will certainly get out of sight of land."

"Oh, dear. dear!" I said, almost crying with rage. "You only make difficulties. It's too terrible to think of. Is there nothing you can suggest? 'we don't depend entirely on police Have you no advice to give? I shall go and consult Sir Charles Collingham. He is a man in authority, and can help. I believe. I shall tell him what you have discovered."

"Well, miss, let's each go our own way. But, see here. Take this. I've noted down a description of the Fleurde-Lis just as I got it from the dockyard. It's the only guide you'll have in tracing her, for she won't fly her

number, you bet." TO BE CONTINUED.

THE GRAVE OF ANNIE LAURIE.-It has just been discovered that the grave of Annie Laurie, the heroine of the world famous ballad, has remained for all these years without a tombstone. Many people are under the delusion that Annie Laurie was merely a figment of the poet's brain; but this was not so. She was the daughter of Sir Robert Laurie, and was born in Maxwelton House, which stands on the "braes" immortalized in the song. Her birth is thus set down in the Barjorg

manuscript: "At the pleasure of the Almighty God, my daughter, Annie Laurie, was born upon the 16th day of December, 1682 years, about 6 o'clock in the morning, and was baptized by Mr. George, minister of Glencairn."

Maxwelton House is still full of memories of this winsome girl, and in the drawing room there still hangs her portrait. Her lover and the author of the original song was young Douglas of Fingland; but whether he, as is common with lovers of poetic temperament, did not press his suit sufficiently or whether she wished a stabler husband, she gave her hand to a prosaic country laird, her cousin, Mr. Alexander Ferguson. They lived the rest of their lives at Craigdarroch House, five miles from Maxwelton, and when she died Annie was buried in the glen of the Cairn. Lady Scott present year, was responsible for the modern version of the song .- St. James

ONE BLACK SHEEP IN EVERY FAMILY. One of the stories that the late Senator Palmer was fondest of telling had to do with an aged gentlewoman bearing the where down on the eastern shore of Virginia, in the county where Senator Palmer's grandfather was born. One of the sent or's Washington friends happened to meet the old lady down there, and asked her if she were not a kinswoman of his. She did not know, but thought perhaps he might be. The gentleman was of Virginia descent, was he not? And in the United States

senate? Yes, she was quite sure he was a kinsman. Was he in the army?" she asked. "Yes," answered the senator's friend. 'he was in the army and a general."

The old lady was positive that he was a relation. "But," went on the friend, "he was a general in the Union army."
The old lady's face fell, but she ral-

ited.
"Well," she said, "you know there's

a black sheep in every family.'