



One of the senior clerks came to me directly.

"What can we do for you, Mr. Snuzzer? Want an introduction to the metropolitan police? Why, certainly. Beekon it's no use asking what you're after? Big case?"



The woman called him a dreadful dog and tried to stop him.

Wood could not be lying injured in a street off the Harrow road and walking about Great St. Helen's. I wanted no more proof of foul play.

"We are acting for Captain Wood. Case of attempted fraud. They've soon found he's fair game. But what brought him here, if I may ask?"

"Some question of legal powers. Granting attorney to representatives in New York, assigning certain properties by deed to trustees. Legal business. The law, you know, requires the signature to be given in the presence of the United States consul."

"You saw Captain Wood, did you, yourself?"

A GIRL OF GRIT.

BY MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS.
COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY F. FENNO & CO.

secutors to ascertain what they were doing and work to counteract and defeat them.

Three of them, at least, I had heard of, thanks to my friend at the consulate, two by name and clear identity. The third should be discovered through the other two.

My next moves were clearly and imperatively marked out for me. As I passed along the Strand I called in at Norfolk street. No sign from Joseph, so all was presumably without change in the Strathallan road. Next to Charles street.

Time was getting on. Close on 3 p. m., and nothing done as yet in Mr. Wood's behalf. I was impatient, eager to act for him, and yet I knew I must proceed regularly. The man Savory had returned, and I knew by his face that he had drawn blank in Laburnum street. Of course no Mr. Wood was there. I did not require to be told that. Savory was also satisfied now, a good deal on the evidence of the collie dog which he had taken with him.

"Master Willie was nowhere on the premises. Roy will answer for that. I told him to go look, although the woman of the place it was a sort of second rate lodging house called him a dreadful dog and tried to stop him. Roy's teeth helped him to quest right through the house."

"Fine fellow. We'll take him with us to look for Mr. Wood. Eh, Roy?"

He was like a Christian, that dog, for he made friends at once, wagged his tail and put his nose in my hand. When Savory added on some gibberish with a flourish, Roy, who had been first howled and yelped, then ran up and down the hall entry like a mad thing.

"Where are we going, sir?" asked Savory, growing respectful as he recognized my authority.

Wood did his writing business. The general fell upon the papers and turned them over with much haste and excitement. Then he turned to Savory and said in the same peremptory tone:

"Where is the dispatch box from my office sent here last night? I don't see it. Fetch it, will you?"

"But it went to the captain this morning. Sir Charles, with his portmanteau and other things."

"Great powers! How could it when you don't know where he is?"

"If you will permit me to explain, I here put in, although I wonder I went on, for I saw clearly on his face that he thought me an interfering nonentity altogether beneath his contempt. But as I told my story his manner changed, his look of utter incredulity and amazement gave way to one of absorbed interest and by the time I had finished he had thrown himself into the nearest armchair with a loud and prolonged whistle, an evident let off to his disturbed feelings."

"Then he sprang to his feet and walked up and down the room like a mad man, talking to himself aloud."

"It's not possible. It's too preposterous. I cannot, ought not, to believe it. But yet, by the Lord Harry, strange things do happen."

"Then he pulled up short and faced me as if I were a criminal and a tough. 'I suppose you are to be trusted? Who and what do you call yourself? You haven't dreamed all this? You weren't drunk last night?'"

"I am a water drinker, Sir Charles Collingham, and take it from choice hot, according to my physician's rule. I replied severely. 'You, I conclude, from your title, are a British army officer, but I do not consider you are a gentleman to make such aspersions.'"

"Come, come, don't lose your temper. I never do it's a mistake. In business, and you haven't told me yet who you are and what you have to do with Captain Wood."

and raced up stairs in a businesslike way and evidently quite at home in the place.

By and by he came down again, followed by about the brightest, smartest and sweetest young creature I had seen since my last Sunday walk on Fifth Avenue after church.

"It's not in my line to say what she wore, but I think it was a tailor made garment, and it fitted her like a glove. All I could see were her flashing eyes and the red lips apart as she tackled me sharply."

"Of course you are from Captain Wood? This is his dog. What have you to tell me? Quick! Explain. Where is he himself?"

"I wish, madam, I could tell you that for certain, but I cannot. The fact is the captain is—"

"Here! Step in here." She opened the door of a room, showed me a chair, then took her stand on the hearthrug, with her arms behind her back, and said:

"Let me have the whole story or as much as you know of it. Make haste, please."

She still stood erect and fearless, showing great mastery over herself, as I told briefly and quickly all I knew. Except that the color came and went, that her cheek was now crimson, now blanched a creamy white, that her eyes glittered with the tears she still resolutely kept back, this brave child suffered no sign of emotion to escape her at the peril of her lover.

"Well, what have you done?" she asked imperiously. "What do the police say?"

I began to explain.

But miss, she also hunted, hallooing on the collie dog with a "Go look, Roy," worry, worry, worry, which drove the beast nearly mad. He hunted and quested through the house with a short, snapping bark, as if he was rounding up a sheepfold, and it was he, marvelous animal, who led us into the basement, into a sort of cellar between the front parlor and the kitchen.

Here he raced round and round like a thing possessed, yelping furiously. The place was all black darkness. No windows, not a glint of daylight. But some one struck a match and lit a bullseye, and we could make out what there was there. One big, long table, a kitchen table, with seats on each side, and at the end a strange thing that told its own story.

It was a sort of wooden erection something between a scaffold and a bulkhead, two great upright timbers, wedged in tight between the ceiling and the stone floor—might have been a support, pillarlike, for the roof or ceiling, but we could see it was meant to make some one fast to—a pair of stocks, you might say, or a whipping post. And so it had been used, no doubt. For there were a long chain and padlock hanging between the uprights just over a low bench that served as a seat for whoever was held there a prisoner.

This was where the collie raged about most fiercely, sniffing, scenting, hunting to and fro, always under the encouraging voice of missy, who shouted, "Lu-lu-lu, good dog, find him, then. Where is he? Out with him, Lu-lu."

Of course his master had been there. None of us had a doubt of that, any more than of the plain fact that he was not there now. We looked at each other blankly, after a bit, hardly knowing what to do or say next, till miss stamped her pretty foot and cried, "Well?"

"I have my suspicions," began the sergeant, knocking his hands together rather jovially, till the dust flew out of his white lisle thread gloves. "It's not all fair and square. I shall make a report to that effect and await instructions."

"Pshaw!" interrupted miss. "And meantime Mr. Wood may be murdered. I shall offer a reward of £500 to whoever finds him, but it must be within the next 24 hours."

"Now you're talking," I said heartily, "and I don't see we gain much by staying here. The cage is empty, and we've got to follow the birds wherever they fly about."

"If you'll excuse me," said the sergeant, who had got mighty eager when he heard of the reward, "the most proper course, as I see it, is to start from this house. Whose is it? Who took it? Likewise who put up this apparatus, and why? When those questions are answered by the neighbors, house agents, tradesmen and such like, we may come to lay our fingers on them as is responsible for this here business."

"You had better do all that, then," said the general, very discontented, "and I shall go to New Scotland Yard to the fountain head. There's more in this than you duffers seem to think. We want the best man they've got, a real detective, to take up the case."

ory from the moment that I realized my loss.

"Forget! I shall never forget that afternoon when the American detective brought me the news. What an odd creature he was. Very 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 sniffed 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. Snuzzer and left him in a luff. 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, must whiskers and a bristling grey moustache—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 colonel.

"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 note.

"And Captain Wood's man knows him. 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



"Of course you are from Captain Wood? This is his dog."



"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 Charles."

"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 movements?"

At that moment Harris, the butler, came up with a card. "Gentleman asks if he can see you most particular. Same as came this afternoon—Mr. Snuzzer—but he's got a dirty scrub of a boy with him."

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

Mr. Snuzzer 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.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Dr. Bull's COUGH SYRUP

Cures a Cough or Cold at once. Croup, Whooping-Cough, Bronchitis, Grippe and Consumption. Quick, sure results. Dr. Bull's Pills cure Constipation. 50 pills 10c.

Geo. Engert & Co., COAL.

Principal Office and Yard, Telephone No. 306 Exchange Street.