One of the Garrison;

Or, A Mysterious Affair.

CHAPTER VI.-(Cont'd)

your knowing. Indeed, you would hardly understand it if I told you. I must bid you good day now, for I have stayed with er to him I could see that he was a you too long. Remember, I count upon you as one of the Cloomber garrison stranger, and from his dusty clothes and

"One other thing, sir," I said, hurriedly, for he was turning away; "I hope that you will not be angry with your daughter for anything which I have told you. It was for my sake that she kept it all

"All right," he said, with his cold, inscrutable smile. "I am not such an orge in the bosom of my family as you seem to think. As to this marriage question, I should advise you as a friend to let it drop altogether, but if that is impossible I must insist that it stand over completely for the present. It is impossible to say what unexpected turn of events may take. Good-bye!" He plunged into the wood and was quickly out of sight among the dense plantation.

Thus ended this extraordinary interview, in which this strange man had begun by pointing a loaded pistol at my breast and had ended by partially ac- his ear, which by no means improved his knowledging the possibility of my becom-ing his future son-in-law. I hardly knew his figure was stalwart, and his fur cap whether to be cast down or elated over it. On the one hand he was likely, by keeping a closer watch over his daughter, to prevent us from communicating as freely as we had done hitherto. Against as freely as we had done hitherto. Against tramp that I had ever fallen in with. this there was the advantage of having obtained an implied consent to the renewal of my suit at some future date. On the whole, I came to the conclusion as I walked throughtfully home that I had

improved my position by the incident. But this danger-this shadowy, unspeakable danger-which appeared to rise up at every turn, and to hang day and night over the towers of Cloomber! Rack my brain as I would I could not conjure up any solution to the problem which was not puerile and inadequate. One fact struck me as being significant. Both the father and the son had assured me, independently of each other, that if I were told what the peril was. I would hardly realize its significance. How strange and bizarre must the fear be which can scarce be expressed in intelligible language. I held up my hand in the darkness before I turned to sleep that night, and I swore that no power of man or devil should ever weaken my love for the woman whose pure heart I had had the good fortune

CHAPTER VII.

In making this statement I have pur- forward until it was within a foot of my I know a man there called Ghoolab posely couched it in bald and simple lan- own. "How much d'ye think that slash Shah." guage, for fear I should be accused of coloring my narrative for the sake of effect. If, however, I have told my story with any approach to realism, the read-with a tulwar is worth? And my foot undertone, and a malicious grin overspread the face of the species. Their effect upon the general was exer will understand me when I say that ever the wind comes round to the east— traordinary. He fairly staggered back by this time the succession of dramatic what's the market value of that? Would from the gateway, and his yellow counincidents which had occurred had arrest- you take the lot for a dirty forty pound | tenance blanched to a livid mottled gray. ed my attention and excited my imagin- a year-would you now?"

Tor a moment he was too overcome to ation to the exclusion of all minor topics. "We are poor folk in this part of the speak. At last he gasped out, "Ghoolab How could I plod through the dull rou- country," I answered. "You would pass tine of an agent's work, or interest my- for a rich man down here." self in the thatch of this tenant's bothy "They are simple folk and they have or the sails of that one's boat, when my simple tastes," said he, drawing a black mind was taken up by the chain of events pipe from his pocket and stuffing it with which I have described, and was still busy seeking an explanation for them? Go where I would over the countryside I could see the square white tower shooting out from among the trees, and beneath that tower this ill-fated family were watching and waiting, waiting and watching—and for what? That was still leves so that it would puzzle either Afwatching—and for what? That was still layas so that it would puzzle either Afthe question which stood like an impas- ghans or British to stop 'em. What's that sable barrier at the end of every train secret worth in St. Petersburg, I wonder!" of thought. Regarded merely as an ab- "I'm ashamed to hear an old soldier stract problem, this mystery of the Heatherstone family had a lurid fascination about it, but when the woman whom tion about it, but when the woman whom the woman who were with the woman whom the woman who was the woman whom the wo I loved a thousandfold better than I did Rooshians had been game to take it up. myself proved to be so deeply interested Skobeloff was the best of the bunch, but in the solution, I felt that it was impos- he's been snuffed out. However, that's neisible to turn my thoughts to anything else ther here nor there. What I want to ask My good father had received a letter from the laird, dated from Naples, which told us that he had derived much benefit told us that he had derived much benefit until it had been finally cleared up. from the change, and that he had no in- town that he lived somewhere down this tention of returning to Scotland for some way."
time. This was satisfactory to all of us, "He for my father had found Branksome such an excellent place for study that it would have been a sore trial to him to return to the noise and tumult of a city. As to my dear sister and myself, there were, as I have shown, stronger reasons still to make us love the Wigtownshire moors.

In spite of my interview with the general reasons of it—I took occasion at least twice states and satisfy the states of the speech was lost that I pointed out the gate he set in hopping down the road. His mode of progression was the most singular which I have ever seen, for he would only put his right foot to the ground once in to walk toward Cloomber and satistic beself that all was well there. He worked
gun by resenting my intrusion, but he
had ended by taking me into a sort of
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had ended by taking me into a sort of
his right foot to the ground once in
every half-dozen strides, while he worked
so hard and attained such a momentum
with the other limb that he got over the half confidence, and even by asking my ground at an astonishing speed. I was so assistance, so I felt that I stood upon a surprised that I stood in the roadway different footing with him than I had gazing after his hulking figure until the done formerly, and that he was less like- thought suddenly struck me that some ly to be annoyed by my presence. In- serious result might come from a meetdeed, I met him pacing around the in- ing between a man of such blunt speech closure a few days afterward, and his and the choleric hot-headed general. I manner toward me was civil, though he therefore followed him as he hopped along made no allusion to our former conver- like some great clumsy bird, and oversation. He appeared to be still in an ex- took him at the avenue gate, where he treme state of nervousness, starting from stood grasping the ironwork and peering time to time, and gazing furtively about through at the dark carriage-drive behim. I hoped that his daughter was right | yond. in naming the 5th of October as the turning-point of his complaint, for it was round at me and nodding his head in the evident to me, as I looked at his gleam-direction of the Hall. "He's a deep old ing eyes and quivering hands, that a man dog. And that's his bungalow, is it could not live long in such a state of among the trees?" nervous tension.

I found on examination that he had had the loose rails securely fastened so as to block up our former trysting-place, and though I prowled round the whole long line of fencing, I was unable to find to stand any nonsense.' any other place where an entrance could be effected. Here and there between chinks of the barrier I could catch glimpses of the Hall, and once I saw a roughlooking, middle-aged man standing at a window at the lower floor, whom I sup- either seen us or been attracted by ourposed to be Israel Stakes, the coachman. There was no sign, however, of Gabriel or of Mordaunt, and their absence alarmed me. I was convinced that, unless they were under some restraint, they would have managed to communicate with my sister or myself. My fears became more and more acute as day followed day without our seeing or hearing anything of them. One morning-it was the second day of



ASK YOUR DEALER.

October-I was walking toward the hall, "There would be nothing gained by hoping that I might be fortunate enough to learn some news of my darling, when I observed a man perched upon a stone dilapidated appearance he seemed to have come from a distance. He had a great hunch of bread on his knee and a clasp knife in his hand, but he had apparently just finished his breakfast, for he brushed the crumbs off his lap and rose to his feet when he perceived me. Noticing the great height of the fellow, and that he still held his weapon, I kept well to the other side of the road, for I knew that destitution makes men desperate and that the chain that glittered on my waistcoat" might be too great a temptation to him upon this lonely highway. I was confirmed in my fears when I saw him step out into the center of the road and bar

"Well, my lad," I said, affecting an ease which I by no means felt, "what can I do for you this morning?" The fellow's face was the color of mahogany with exposure to the weather, and he had a deep scar from the corner of his mouth to was cocked on one side so as to give him

Instead of replying to my question he eyed me for some time in silence with sullen, yellow-shot eyes, and then closed his knife with a loud snick. "You're not a beak," he said: "too young for that, I guess. They had me in chokey at Paisley and they had me in chokey at Wigtown, but by the living thunder if another of them lays a hand on me I'll make him remember Corporal Rufus Smith! It's a darned fine country this, where they won't give a man work, and then lay him by the heels for having no visible means of subsistence.' "I am sorry to see an old soldier so reduced," said I. "What corps did you serve

"H Battery, Royal Horse Artillery. Bad cess to the service and every one in it! Here I am nigh sixty years of age, with a beggarly pension of thirty-eight pound ten-not enough to keep me in beer and baccy.'

"I should have thought thirty-eight been in the Terada Pass. pound ten a year would have been a nice help to you in your old age," I remarked. words had been a pistol-shot. "What"Would you, though?" he answered with what d'ye mean?" he stammered. a sneer, pushing his weather-beaten face

"He lives in that house over there,"

"He's a sly old fox," he said, looking

"That is his house," I answered; "but I should advise you to keep a more civil tongue in your head if you intend to speak with the general. He is not a man

"Right you are. He was always a hard nut to crack. But isn't this him coming down the avenue?'

I looked through the gate and saw that it was indeed the general, who having voices, was hurrying down toward us. As he advanced he would stop from time to time and peer at us through the dark shadow thrown by the trees, as if he were irresolute whether to come on or no.

"He's reconnoitering!" whispered my companion with a hoarse chuckle. "He's afraid-and I know what he's afraid of. He won't be caught in a trap if he can help it, the old un!" Then suddenly standing on his tiptoes and waving his hand through the bars of the gate, he shouted at the top of his voice, "Come on, my gallant commandant! Come on! The coast's clear, and no enemy in sight." This familiar address had the effect of

reassuring the general, for he came right for us, though I could tell by his heightened color that his temper was at boiling point. "What, you here, Mr. West?" he said, as his eye fell upon me. "What is it you want, and why have you brought this fellow with you?"

"I have not brought him with me, sir," I answered, feeling rather disgusted at being made responsible for the presence of the more putable-looking vagabond beside me. "I found him on the road here, and he desired to be directed to you, so I showed him the way. I know nothing of him myself."

"What do you want with me, then?" the general asked sternly, turning to my companion. "If you please, sir," said the ex-corporal, speaking in a whining voice, and touch-

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ing his moleskin cap with a humility which contrasted strangely with the pre- the corporal; I am the master and you vious rough independence of his bearing, are the man. Now, don't let me have to 'I'm an old gunner in the queen's service, remind you of that again.' er, or give me any other place as happened to be vacant.

"I am sorry that I cannot do anything brandy, you shall have an allowance and for you, my man," the old soldier and no more. We are not deep drinkers at swered, impassively.

"Then you'll give me a little just to help me on my way, sir." said the cring-nothing yourself, sir?" asked Corporal ing mendicant. "You won't see an old Rufus Smith. comrade go to the bad for the sake of a "Nothing," the general said, firmly. few rupees. I was with Sale's brigade "Well, all I can say is, that you've got in the Passes, sir, and I was at the second taking of Cabul."

General Heatherstone looked keenly at the supplicant, but was silent to his ap-

"I was in Ghuznee with you when the walls were all shook down by an earthquake, and when we found forty thousand Afghans within gunshot of us. You ask me about it, and you'll see whether I'm lying or not. We went through all this when we were young, and now that we are old you are to live in a fine bungalow, and I am to starve by the roadside. It don't seem to me to be fair." "You are an impertinent scoundrel," said the general. "If you had been a good soldier you would never need to ask for help. I shall not give you a farth-

"One word more, sir," cried the tramp, for the other was turning away; "I've The old soldier sprang round as if the "I've been in the Terada Pass, sir, and

Shah!-who are you who know Ghoolab Shah?"

"Take another look," said the tramp; 'your sight is not as keen as it was forty

The general took a long, earnest look at the unkempt wanderer in front of him, and as he gazed I saw the light of recognition spring up in his eyes. "God bless my soul!" he cried. "Why it's Corporal Rufus Smith."

"You've come on it at last," said the other, chuckling to himself. "I was won-dering how long it would be before you knew me. And first of all just unlock this gate, will you? It's hard to talk through a grating. It's too much like ten minutes with a visitor in the cells.' The general, whose face still bore evidences of his agitation, undid the bolts with nervous, trembling fingers. The recognition of Corporal Rufus Smith had, I fancied, been a relief to him, and yet he plainly showed by his manner that he regarded his presence as by no means an

"Why, corporal," he said, as the gate swung open, "I have often wondered whether you were dead or alive, but I never expected to see you again. How have you been all these long years?"

"How have I been?" the corporal answered gruffly. "Why I have been drunk for the most part. When I draw my money I lay it out in liquor, and as long

as that lasts I get some peace in life. When I'm cleaned out I go upon tramp, partly in the hope of picking up the price of a dram, and partly in order to look

"You'll excuse us talking about these private matters, West," the general said, looking round at me, for I was beginning to move away. "Don't leave us. You know something of this matter already, and may find yourself entirely in the swim with us some of these days." Corporal Rufus Smith looked round at me in blank astonishment. "In the swim with us!" he said. "However did he get there?

"Voluntarily, voluntarily," the general explained, hurriedly sinking his voice. "He is a neighbor of mine, and he has volunteered his help in case I should ever

This explanation seemed, if anything; to increase the big stranger's surprise. "Well, if that don't lick cock-fighting!" he exclaimed, contemplating me with admiration. "I never heard tell of such a thing.

"And now that you have found me, Corporal Smith," said the tenant of Cloomber, "what is it that you want of me?" "Why, everything: I want a roof to cover me, and clothes to wear, and food to eat, and above all brandy to drink." "Well, I'll take you in and do what I can for you," said the general slowly. "But look here, Smith, we must have discipline. I'm the general and you are

sir, and knowing your name by hearing | The tramp drew himself up to his full it in India I thought that maybe you height and raised his right hand with would take me as your groom or garden- the palm forward in a military salute. "I can take you on as gardener and get rid of the fellow I have got. As to

more nerve and pluck than I shall ever erv."

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have. I don't wonder now at your wind ning that cross in the mutiny. If I was to go on listening night after night to them things without ever taking a drop of something to cheer my heart-why, it would about drive me silly." (To be continued.)

"What is your name, little boy?" "Willoughby Walton Waggles, ma'am.'' "Some day you'll have a lovely monogram on your station-



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