



The Siege of the Seven Suitors

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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I had forgotten my eavesdropping in the clump of raspberries on the day of my arrival. Certainly Wiggins had been decidedly in the race then, and my heart thumped in resentment as I recalled her own message, or compact of encouragement, which I had borne to Wiggins at the Prescott Arms.

"I will tell you something, Mr. Ames. This afternoon, as I drove from the station I came round by the lake merely to cool my eyes on the water, and I saw Mr. Wiggins and my sister seated on a wall in an old orchard. They were so busily engaged that they did not see me. At least, he did not, but I think Hezekiah did."

"Hezekiah," I answered, relieved by the nature of her disclosure, which could not but prejudice Wiggins' case. "Hezekiah is fond of orchards. I dare say this was the same one in which I had a charming talk with her myself. Doubtless she was amusing herself with Wiggins just as she did with me. She finds the genus homo entertaining."

"She is the dearest girl in the world—the sweetest, the loveliest, the brightest. Mr. Wiggins has treated her outrageously. He has taken advantage of her youth and susceptible nature."

"His punishment is sure," I answered complacently. "Hezekiah laughed when I mentioned his name. And you frown today at the thought of him."

"Aunt Octavia is coming," she remarked, feigning at once a careless air, but I was content that she let my remark pass unchallenged.

Miss Octavia's entrances were always effective. She appeared tonight charmingly gowned, but the bright twinkle in her eyes made it clear that no matter of dress could affect her humor or spirit. She greeted me, as she always did, as though our acquaintance were a matter of years rather than of days. I even imagined that she seemed pleased to find me back again. She asked no questions as to my day's occupations, but as we went in to dinner sallied forth cheerfully upon a description of her own activities.

"After I had baked my required quota of pies this morning I sought recreation at the traps. The stable boy who has been pulling the string for me having struck work, it most providentially happened that I espied Lord Arrowwood hanging on the edge of the maple tangle beyond the barn. I summoned him at once and put him to work managing the traps for me, finding him most efficient. He seemed extremely despondent, and after I had satisfied myself that two out of three was not an impossible record for one of my years, I brought him to the house and made tea for him. I left the room for a moment—I had taken him into the kitchen, where, during the incumbency of the regular cook I hardly dare venture myself, and he made himself comfortable quite near the range. The pies on which I had been engaged all morning lay cooling near him. I had composed twenty-nine pies—I am an excellent mathematician and I could not have been mistaken in the count. What was my amazement to find after his lordship's departure that one pie was missing!"

"His lordship was doubtless hungry," I suggested. "Even nobility must eat. I passed Lord Arrowwood in the highway early this morning, sitting upon a stone, with sundry items of hand baggage reposing beside him. I have rarely seen any one so depressed. Now that the little matter of the servants has been adjusted, we must have a care lest the newly arrived phalanx, which Providence so kindly sent to you today, is not stamped by any further manifestations of the troubled spirit of the unfortunate Briton who was hanged on the site of this house."

"Mr. Ames," replied Miss Octavia impressively, "that matter is entirely in your hands."

"But if I could see the plans of this house I should be better able to grapple with his ghostship."

I had thrown this out in the hope of eliciting some remark from her touching the Swedish maid's visit to Pepperton's office, but Miss Octavia met my gaze unflinchingly.

"You are a clever man, Mr. Ames, and I have every confidence that you will not only solve the mystery of the library chimney, but find the ghost that switched off the lights on the stair last night. I prefer that you should accomplish these feats without any help from the plans. I myself have no suggestions. I am gratified that you are meeting the emergencies that have arisen here with so much determination, but it is what I should expect of the son of Arnold Ames of Hartford. Opportunity is all that any of us need to find ourselves truly great, and if in the ordinary course of our lives the gate does not open freely we are justified in picking the lock. When I determined

to seek adventures in my old age, I resolved that I should miss no chance and that I should be prepared for any beckoning of the hand of fate. An odd fancy struck me at the beginning of my new life that Boston would some day be the starting point of some interesting experience. This has not yet developed, but in order that I may be prepared for anything that may occur I keep a blue silk umbrella constantly checked at the Parker House. The presence of the little brass check in my purse is a constant reminder that Boston may one day call me."

A discussion of the Parker House umbrella followed, Cecilia and I joining, and it proved so fruitful a topic that it carried us to our coffee.

Three suitors were announced a little later, and I slipped away without excuses, while Miss Octavia and Cecilia adjourned to the library.

The ghost, I had sworn, should not hallow me another night.

As I crossed the second floor hall I passed the Swedish maid walking toward Miss Octavia's room. I was somewhat annoyed to find on looking over my shoulder to make sure of her destination that she, too, had paused, her hand on Miss Octavia's door, and was watching me with interest. She vanished immediately, but to throw her off the track I went to my own room, closed the door noisily and then came out quickly and ran up to the third floor.

Bassford Hollister's mysterious exit had lingered in my mind as the most curious incident of the eventful Friday night. Having been baffled in my effort to get hold of the architect's plans, my thought now was to await in the upper part of the house a repetition of the various phenomena that had so puzzled me. By the process of exclusion I had eliminated nearly every plausible theory, but if the ghost manifested himself with any sort of periodicity (and the hour of the chimney's queer behavior had been mine) I was now prepared to meet him in the regions he had chosen for his exploits.

I had a pretty accurate knowledge by this time of the position and function of all the electric switches between the lower hall and the fourth floor, but I tested them as I ascended, glancing down now and then to make sure I was not observed. From the sound of voices in the library I judged that most of Cecilia's suitors must now have arrived, and so much the better. I argued, for, with Miss Octavia and her niece fully occupied, I could the better carry on my ghost hunt above stairs.

At a quarter before 9 I switched off the lights on the third and fourth floors and established myself at the head of the stairway and quite near the trunk room door. This door I had opened, as I fancied that if Bassford Hollister were at the bottom of the business he would probably wish to find his way to the roof again. So far as I was able to manage it the stage was in readiness for the entrance of the goblin.

The clock below struck 9, and almost upon the last stroke I heard a sound that set my nerves tingling. I crouched in the dark, waiting. Some one was coming toward me, but from where? The bottom of a well at midnight was not blacker than the fourth floor, but the switch lay ready to my hand and my pockets were stuffed with matches of the sort that light anywhere. The stairways were all carpeted, as I have said, and yet some one was ascending bare treads, lightly and with delays that suggested a furtive purpose. Meanwhile, as a background for this unreality, murmurs of talk and occasional laughter rose from the library.

This concealed stairway, wherever it was, could not be of interminable length, and I had counted, I think, fifteen steps of that strange ascent when it ceased. I heard a fumbling as of some one seeking a latch, and suddenly a light current of air swept by me, but its clean fresh quality was not in itself disturbing. I stooped and struck a match smartly on the carpet and at the same time clicked the switch. I should say that not more than ten seconds passed from the moment the soft rush of air had first advertised the opening of a passage near me until the hall was flooded with the glow of the electric lamps overhead. My match had also performed its office, but, finding the electric current behaving itself normally, I blew it out. What I saw now interested me immensely.

In the solid wall near the stair and almost directly opposite the trunk room a narrow door had swung outward—a neat contrivance, so light in its construction that it still swayed on its concealed hinges from the touch of the hand that had released it. How it had opened or what had become of the prowler who had unlatched it remained to be discovered. It seemed impossible that whoever or whatever had climbed the hidden stairway had descended, nor had I been conscious of a ghostly passing as on the previous night. I had only my senses to apply to this problem, and their efficiency was minimized for a moment by fear.

The opening in the wall engaged my attention at once, and I was stilled by the thought that here was a practical matter susceptible of investigation. I stepped within the door and lighted a candle, and just as the wick caught fire I clicked a switch somewhere and out went the hall lamps. But, having, so to speak, put my foot to the mysterious stair, I would not turn back, and I continued on down the steps.

Great was my astonishment to find that I had apparently stepped from a new into an old house. The stair treads were worn by long use, the plaster walls that enclosed them were battered and cracked, and I seemed to have plunged from the glory of Hopefield into some dim lost passage of a

domicile of another era that lay within or beneath the walls of the Manor. As I slowly descended, holding high my candle, I recalled, not without a quiver, the story of the British soldier whose tradition or superstition linked to the site of Miss Hollister's property.

At the foot of the stair I found two rooms, one on either side of a small hall, and these also were clearly part of an old house that seemed to be somehow merged into the Hollister mansion. I remembered now that the mansion stood wedged against a rough spur of rock and that the front and rear entrances were upon different levels, and it was conceivable that the back part of the mansion might enclose these rooms of an earlier house occupying the same site. Why they should have been retained was beyond me.

Through the carefully preserved windows, many pained and quaint, of these hidden rooms the infolding walls of the new house were blank and black.

One door only remained in this shell of the old house, and I hastened to fling it open, still lighting my way with a candle. Before me lay the coal cellar, at which I had merely glanced on the morning after my installation at Hopefield. I now began to get my bearings. I remembered two iron ladders in the cemented surface of an area on the east side of the house where fuel was deposited, and, mounting a few steps that were of recent construction and had evidently been built to afford communication between the remnant of the old house and the subterranean portion of the new, I found to my relief and satisfaction beneath one of these openings a short ladder, through which the court might be reached. Here, then, the manner of ghostly ingress was illustrated by perfectly plausible means. The lid of the coal hole was entirely withdrawn, and a bar of moonlight lay brightening upon a pile of anthracite at the foot of the ladder.

(To Be Continued.)

Constipation Cured.

Dr. King's New Life Pills will relieve constipation promptly and get your bowels in healthy condition again. John Supsic, of Sanbury, Pa., says: "They are the best pills I ever used, and I advise everyone to use them for constipation, indigestion and liver complaint." Will help you. Price 25c. Recommended by F. G. Fricke & Co.

DEATH OF J. C. HANNA AT OSKALOOSA, IOWA

From Saturday's Daily. A message was received yesterday afternoon by A. W. White, announcing the illness of J. C. Hanna, at Oskaloosa, Iowa, and for his daughter, who has been here since the death of Mrs. Henry Eikenberry, to return home, and she departed on No. 2 last evening for Oskaloosa. A few hours later a message was received announcing that Mr. Hanna had passed away, and that the daughter would not be able to reach there in time. Mr. Hanna, in company with a son, left here last Wednesday morning, having been here for the Eikenberry funeral, and at that time the gentleman appeared in the best of health, and the message of his death came as a very severe shock to his relatives here, who did not dream he was even sick. The funeral will occur Monday at his late home.

Sister Marie Geraldine of the Dominican Order of Nuns is in the city for a few days to visit friends. Sister Geraldine is a former resident of this city, and as Miss Marista Cagney was very prominent in Catholic circles here before taking the veil.

Wonderful Skin Salve. Bucklen's Arnica Salve is known everywhere as the best remedy made for all diseases of the skin, and also for burns, bruises and boils. Reduces inflammation and is soothing and healing. J. T. Sossaman, publisher of News, of Cornelius, N. C., writes that one box helped his serious skin ailment after other remedies failed. Only 25c. Recommended by F. G. Fricke & Co.

Better than Spanking!

Spanking will not cure children of wetting the bed, because it is not a habit but a dangerous disease. The C. H. Rowan Drug Co., Dept. B 1063, Chicago, Ill., have discovered a strictly harmless remedy for this distressing disease and to make known its merits they will send a 5c package sealed, wrapped and prepaid Absolutely Freely any ready of the Journal. This remedy also cures frequent desire to urinate and inability to control urine during the night or day in old or young. The C. H. Rowan Drug Co. is an Old Reliable House. Write to them today for the free medicine. Cure the afflicted members of your family, then tell your neighbors and friends about this remedy.

How Lincoln Managed Sumner.

Writing on "The Arbitration of the Alabama Claims" in the Century, Colonel William Conant Church says: "Grant had none of the tact in dealing with Senator Sumner that Lincoln, master of men, had shown in his intercourse with that sensitive statesman. Sumner, who occupied roomy quarters in an old fashioned house diagonally across Jackson square from the White House, prided himself on making the best tea in Washington. When Lincoln had a point to gain he would saunter across the square and ask Sumner to make him a cup of 'that delicious tea.' The two would gossip over their tea like two 'gild wives,' and not until the president rose to go did he refer to the subject on his mind. Then he would say, 'Sumner, such and such a bill is coming up in the senate tomorrow, and I count upon your support for it.' 'Had he introduced the matter directly the natural disposition of the senator to differ might have resulted in persuading him into opposition to a measure concerning which he had no determined opinions.'"

Fifteenth Century College Ways.

The Oxford undergraduate in the early fifteenth century, in order to obtain his B. A. degree, studied the logic of Porphyry and Boethius, something of Aristotle, and enough of arithmetic to enable him to find Easter. Three years more were usually spent in studying geometry, astronomy and astrology. He lived in college. His allowance of money was 1 shilling a week. His breakfast was a piece of bread and a pot of beer at dawn. His dinner was eaten at 10 in the morning. He was given one suit of clothes yearly. Three times a year each student was required secretly to tell the masters of the misbehavior of his fellows, who then received "competent castigation." The rules laid down by De Wykeham prohibited visits to taverns or "spectacles," the keeping of dogs, the playing of chess and other "noxious and illicit sports, shooting with arrows or other missiles, dancing, running, wrestling or other incivilities and inordinate amusements."—St. James' Gazette.

A Watch, a String and an Almanac.

Suppose you were in an open boat on the ocean with a nautical almanac, a piece of string and a watch that had run down and were entirely ignorant of your whereabouts. How could you find out where you were?

The question may puzzle you, but don't put forward an answer as silly as the following reply to the question as to how many times you can subtract 10 from 1,000,000: "As often as you like."

But to return to the boat, the watch, the string and the almanac, set the watch going. With the piece of string measure at arm's length the distance between the sun and the horizon and ascertain its ratio to the length of the arms. This will give the sun's altitude at various times by the watch, and the latitude and moment of noon can be found approximately in the same way.—New York Sun.

Holy Wars by Moslems.

There has been no universal war by Moslems on unbelievers since the early days of Mohammedanism. It has been supposed that only the caliph, an office now claimed by the sultans of Turkey, can order a general war or jihad, but as the Persians and the Moors, who are Mohammedans, do not acknowledge the spiritual authority of the Ottoman sultan and look to their own rulers for their cue in such case, it is not at all likely that there will ever again be a jihad. Holy wars have been proclaimed by the mahdists, as was the case in the Sudan in 1882, when "Chinese" Gordon was murdered at Khartoum, but there has been no general war between the followers of the prophet and the infidel dogs since the early times when Mohammed was establishing his power.—Argonaut.

Verboosity, Ocity and Oosity.

She was a young woman, famous for her command of the English language, also equally well known for having people follow her wishes. She visited a friend and described her plans. The friend, made garrulous by embarrassment, declined to fall in with the proposition and floundered around for half an hour in a sea of excuses and explanations. This was too much for the girl with the command of language. She ended the interview with this stinging denunciation: "Verboosity, idocity, hideosity!"—Popular Magazine.

The Surest Way.

"Is there any way you can suggest by which we can cure her of her infatuation for him?" "Oh, yes; that's easy. Just—" "I mean without letting her marry him?" "Not that I know of."—Houston Post.

Much In Little.

"Pop, what does multum in parvo mean?" "Multum in parvo, my son, is Latin and means—er—well, haven't you ever seen a fat woman in a bathing suit?"—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Effective.

"I've got a new attachment for the family piano," said Mr. Grumbler, "and it's wonderful." "What is it?" "A lock and key."

Sensible Advice.

Bill—What are you carrying a cane for? Jim—I'm having a deuce of a time for water on the knee. Bill—Why don't you try wearing pumps? Lippincott's.

BLIND PHYSICIAN HAS GREAT SKILL

Gets Patient's Exact Pulse Count Without a Watch.

CAN DIAGNOSE BY TOUCH.

Gives Exact Temperature by Feeling Skin and is Expert on Diseases of Heart and Lungs—Was Graduated at Head of His Class—Paid His Way Through School by Canvassing.

A blind person whose achievements rival those of Helen Keller is Dr. Jacob W. Bolotin, who has been appointed attending physician of the Tuberculosis hospital at Dunning, near Chicago. Dr. Bolotin is the only blind man who has ever taken a full four year course in medicine and passed the present Illinois examination for the practice of medicine and surgery. He is twenty-five years old.

Besides his qualifications for the regular school of medicine he is also licensed to practice osteopathy, massage and medical gymnastics. Here are a few of the wonderful things this young man does:

Gives exact temperatures of patients by feeling of the skin.

Gives exact pulse count without use of a watch.

Diagnoses tuberculosis infected chests by touch.

Lectures regularly before students of two medical colleges and talks for from three to six hours without using notes.

Makes his way all over the city without a guide.

Has examined over 3,500 patients for the city and county and less than fifty of them knew he was blind.

Uses the touch system in typewriting, yet he cannot write his own name with a pen or a pencil.

Keeps a loose leaf book as well as any business bookkeeper.

Was Typewriter Salesman.

Dr. Bolotin was graduated from the Illinois State Hospital for the Blind at Jacksonville when he was fourteen years old and for several years traveled all over the United States as a typewriter salesman.

Nobody would believe just by looking at him that he is blind, he is so different from other blind men. His first question to his interviewer is:

"Are you here for a charitable purpose—to help a blind man? If you are don't come in."

All his life he has maintained that a blind man can do anything any other man can do and that the hardest part is to overcome public prejudice and convince others this is true.

Before the farewell handshake the interviewer is laughing over funny poetry and some funny stories, just as the nurses at Dunning laugh over them every Wednesday when the blind physician appears. He is a favorite there. They make a special apple pie for him—and he's mighty fond of apple pie—every time he comes.

"Yes, I have just received word of my appointment," said the doctor after he had been named for the post. "This is my first real success, and I am happy. It has been a long, hard fight. And I want to say this of President McCormick of the county board—he has done in one minute something that will benefit blind people of all time. He has opened another pathway by which the blind may convince the public that they are just as capable as those who see."

Then the physician, who is rapidly receiving recognition as an expert in heart and lung diseases, told how he is better off in some ways than the average man.

"Reads" Under the Covers.

"Why, on cold winter nights I take a Braille system book (this has the touch system of reading) to bed with me and read all night long under the covers and without burning the midnight oil. If I care about time I need but reach over to my table and touch the face of the clock.

"What have I done in medicine? Well, during the last year I have spent much time in the municipal tuberculosis clinics. In fourteen months I have examined 3,500 patients, and less than fifty of them know I am blind.

"During the last nine months I have examined every patient at Dunning and every one that has come and gone. I go there alone every Wednesday and have learned something of half a dozen languages from the patients."

Dr. Bolotin graduated from the Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery at the head of his class, paying his way by selling typewriters "on the road" during vacations. Of the 600 students he could name nearly 500 after shaking hands with them.

He passed his state examinations by dictating to three stenographers.

He gives instruction on diseases of the heart and lungs before juniors of Jenner Medical college and sophomores of Hering Medical college.

Minister Fishing, Service Delayed.

The pastor of a church in Middletown, Conn., went fishing before church time and had such good luck that he was half an hour late in getting back for the morning service. He carried his rod and reel to church with him and put them behind a bench until the service was ended.