



HEZEKIAH

CHAPTER VII.
I Meet Hezekiah.

WIGGINS asked me to luncheon, and on the way back to the inn, after inquiring my plans for returning to town, he proposed that I delay my departure until the following day. What he wanted, and he put it bluntly, was a friend at court, and as I had seemingly satisfied him of my entire good faith and of my devotion to his interests he begged that I prolong my stay in Miss Hollister's house, giving as my excuse the condition of the chimneys of Hopefield Manor. He brushed aside my plea of other engagements and appealed to our old friendship. He was taking his troubles hard, and I felt that he really needed counsel and support in the involved state of his affairs. I did not see how my continued presence under Miss Hollister's roof could materially assist him, and the thought of remaining there when there was no work to be done was repugnant to my sense of professional honor, but he was so persistent that I finally yielded.

While we ate luncheon I sought by every means to divert his thoughts to other channels. After we were seated in the dining room four other men followed, exercising considerable care in placing themselves as far from one another as possible. A few moments later a motor hummed into the driveway, and we heard its owner ordering his chauffeur to return to town and hold himself subject to telephone call. This latest arrival appeared shortly in the dining room and, surveying the rest of us with a disdainful air, sought a table in the remotest corner of the room. Others appeared, until eight in all had entered. The presence of these men at this hour, their air of aloofness and the care they exercised in isolating themselves interested me. They appeared to be gentlemen. They were, indeed, suggestive of the ampler metropolitan world, and one of them was unmistakably a foreigner.

While Wiggins appeared to ignore them, I was conscious that he reviewed the successive arrivals with every manifestation of contempt. One of these glum gentlemen seemed familiar. I could not at once recall him, but something in his manner teased my memory for a moment before I placed him. Then it dawned upon me that he was the third man I had met in the field overlooking the garden after my eavesdropping experience the day before. I thought it as well, however, not to mention this fact, or to speak of the man I had seen so grimly posted in the midst of the cornfield. I was an observer, a looker on, at Hopefield, and my immediate business was the collecting of information.

"Will you kindly tell me, Wiggy, who these strange gentlemen are and just what has brought them here at this hour?"

"I know them—they are guests of the inn. Most of them were more or less companions in our procession across Europe last summer. The one in the tan suit is Henderson—you must have heard of him. The short dark chap of atrabillious countenance is John Stewart Dick, who pretends to be a philosopher. As for the others—"

He dismissed them with a jerk of the head. My wits struggled with his explanation. It is my wish to reduce information to plain terms.

"Are these gentlemen, then, your rivals for the hand of Miss Cecilia Hollister? If so, they are a solemn band of suitors, I must confess."

"You have hit it, Ames. They are suitors, assembled from all parts of the world."

"Nice looking fellows, except the chap with the monocle, who has just ordered rather more liquor than a gentleman should at this hour."

"That is Lord Arrowood. I have feared at times that Miss Octavia favored him."

"Possibly, but not likely. But how long is this thing going to last? If you fellows are going to hang on here until Miss Cecilia Hollister has chosen one of you for her husband I shudder for your nerves. I imagine that any one of these gentlemen is likely to begin shooting across his plate at any minute. Such a situation would become intolerable very quickly if I were in the game and forced to lodge here."

"I hope," replied Wiggins with heat, "that you don't imagine these fellows can crowd me out. I've paid for a month's lodging in advance, and if you

The Siege of the Seven Suitors

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

Copyright, 1910, by Meredith Nicholson

will stand by me I'm going to win."

"Spoken like a man, my dear Wiggins! You may count on me to the sweet or bitter end, even if I pull down all the superb chimneys with which Pepperton adorned that house up yonder."

He silently clasped my hand. A little later I telephoned from the inn to my office explaining my absence and instructing my assistant to visit several pressing clients, and I instructed the valet at the Hare and Tortoise to send me a week's supply of linen and an odd suit or two.

At about 3 o'clock I left Wiggins in first rate spirits and set out on my return to Hopefield Manor.

I made a wrong turn on leaving the Prescott Arms, and I came out presently near Katonah village. I got my bearings of a shopkeeper and started again for Hopefield Manor, but the mid-afternoon was warm, and the hills were steep, and as Miss Hollister's admirable cob showed signs of weariness, I drove into a fence corner and loosened the mare's check. On a sunny slope several hundred yards above the highway lay an orchard, advertised to the larcenous eye by the ruddiest of red apples. Not in many years had I robbed an orchard, and I felt irresistibly drawn toward the gnarled trees, which were still, in their old age, abundantly fruitful.

I drew down a bough and plucked my first apple, tasted and found it good. At my palate's first responsive titillation something whizzed past my ear, and following the flight of the missile, I saw an apple of goodly size fall and roll away into the grass. I had imagined myself utterly alone, and even now as I looked guiltily around no one was in sight. The apple had passed my ear swiftly and at an angle quite un-Newtonian. It had been fairly aimed at my head, and the law of gravitation did not account for it. As I continued my scrutiny of the landscape I was addressed by a voice whose accents were not obnoxious. Rather, the tone was good natured and indulgent if not indeed a trifle patronizing. The words were these:

Soup of the evening, beautiful soup!

It was then that, lifting my eyes, I beheld, sitting lengthwise of the wall, with her feet drawn comfortably under her, a girl in a white sweater, bareheaded, munching an apple. There was no question of identity. It was the girl whose head behind the cashier's grill of the Asolando had interested me on the occasion of my second visit to the tea room. In soliciting my attention by reciting a line of verse she had merely followed the rule of the tea room in like circumstances. The casting of the apple at my head possessed the virtue of novelty. While I tried to think of something to say I pecked at my own apple, but kept an eye on her. She concluded her repeat calmly and flung away the core.

"I mentioned soup," she remarked. "The courses are mixed. We have partaken of fruit. Are you fish, flesh, fowl or good red herring?"

"Daughter of Eve, I will be anything you like. I'm obliged for the apple, and I apologize for having entered Eden uninvited."

"It's not my Eden. Nobody invited me. But it's not too much to say that these apples are grand."

"I'm glad we're both in the same boat. I'm a trespasser myself. I don't even know the name of the owner. But if you have had only one apple two more are coming to you if you follow Atlanta's precedent."

"I don't follow precedents, and I've forgotten the name of the boy who threw the apples in the race. It doesn't matter, though. Nothing matters very much."

Her hands clasped her knees. Her skirt was short, and I was conscious that she wore tan shoes. She continued to regard me with lazy curiosity. She seemed younger than at the Asolando. Not more than eighteen times had apples reddened on the bough in her lifetime. She was even slenderer and more youthful in her sweater than in the snowy vestments of the Asolando. Her hair, which in the glow of the lamp at Asolando cash desk had been golden, was today burnished copper and was brushed straight back from her forehead and tied with a black ribbon.

"I quite agree with your philosophy. Nothing is of great importance."

"So it's not your orchard?" she asked. "The thought flatters me. I own no lands nor ships at sea. I'm a chimney doctor, and if necessary I'll apologize for it."

"You needn't submit testimonials. I take the swallows out of my own chimneys."

"That requires a deft hand, and I'm sure you're considerate of the swal-

lows."

"You may come up here and sit on the wall if you care to. I saw you driving in a trap. I hope your horse isn't afraid of motors. Motors speed scandalously on that road."

"I am not in the least worried about my horse. It's borrowed. As you remarked, this is a nice orchard. I like it here."

"If you are going to be silly you will find me little inclined to nonsense."

"Shall we talk of the Asolando? I haven't been back since I saw you there, and yet—let me see, isn't this your day there?"

She seemed greatly amused, and her laughter rose with a fountain-like spontaneity and fell, a splash of musical sound, on the mellow air of the orchard. She had changed her position as I joined her, sitting erect and kicking her heels lazily against the wall.

"Mr. Chimney Man, something terrible happened just after you left that afternoon. I was bounced, fired—I lost my job."

"Incredible! I'm sure it was not for any good cause. I can testify that you were a model of attention—you were surpassingly discreet. You repelled me in the most delicate manner when I intimated that I should come often on the days that you made the change."

"The sad part of it was that that was not only my last day, but my first! I had never been there before, except for a nibble now and then when I was in town. But I couldn't stand it. It was like being in jail—in fact, I think jail would be preferable. But I'm glad I spent that one day there. They dispensed with my company because I remarked to one of the silly girls who are making the Asolando their lifework that I thought the English pre-Baphaelites had carried the dish face rather too far. The girl to whom I uttered this heresy was so shocked she dropped a teacup—you know how brittle everything is in there—and I came home. You were really the only adventure I got out of my day there. And I didn't find you entirely satisfactory."

"Thank you, Francesca, for these confidences. And having lost your position you are now free to roam the hills and dream on orchard walls. Your scheme of life is to my liking. I can see with half an eye that you were born for the open and that the walls of no prison house can ever hold you again."

She nodded a dreamy acquiescence. Then she turned two very brown eyes full upon me and demanded:

"What is your name, please?"

I mentioned it.

"And you doctor chimneys? That sounds very amusing."

"I'm glad you like it. Most people think it absurd."

"What are you doing here? There's not a chimney in sight."

"Oh, I have a commission in the neighborhood. Hopefield Manor. You may have heard of Miss Hollister's place."

"Of course, every one knows of her."

"And now that I think of it, it was she about whom you asked in the Asolando that afternoon. You wanted to know what she said about the tea room."

"I remember perfectly."

She was quiet for a moment, then she threw back her head and laughed that rare laugh of hers. "You might let me into the joke."

"It wouldn't mean anything to you. I have a lot of private jokes that are for my own consumption."

"Your way of laughing is adorable. I hope to hear more of it. In the Asolando you repulsed me in a manner that won my admiration, but I venture to say now that, if you roam these pastures, I am the grass beneath your feet, and if yonder tuncful water be sacred to you I sit beside the brook to learn its song."

"You talk well, sir, but from your tone I fear you can't forget that we met first in the Asolando. That day of my life is past, and I am by no means what you might call an Asolando. I don't seem to impress you with that fact. I'm a human being, not to be picked like a red apple, or trampled upon like grass, or listened to as though I were a foolish little brook. I'm greatly given to the highway, and I prefer macadam. I like asphalt pavements, too, for the matter of that. I should love a motor, but lacking the coin I pedal a bicycle. My wheel lies down there in the bushes. You see, Mr. Chimney Man, I am a plain spoken person and have no intention of deceiving you. My name was Francesca for one day only. It may interest you to know that my real name is Hezekiah."

"Hezekiah! Then you are Cecilia's sister and Miss Hollister's niece?"

"Gully."

"And you live—"

"Over there somewhere beyond that ridge." And she waved her hand vaguely toward the village and laughed again.

"Pray tell me what this particular joke is. It must be immensely funny," I urged, struggling with these new facts.

"Oh, it's Aunt Octavia! She will be the death of me yet. You know the girl who waited on Aunt Octavia that afternoon took all that artistic nonsense as seriously as a funeral, and she told me after you left, with the greatest horror, that Aunt Octavia had asked for a cocktail. That laugh rippled off again to carry joy along the planet trails above us. "But you know," she resumed, "that Aunt Octavia never drank a cocktail in her life and wouldn't. She doesn't know a cocktail from soothing sirup. She pines for adventures. She is just like a boarding school girl who has read her first romance of the young American engineer in a South American republic shooting the insurgents full of

tortillas and marrying the president's dark eyed daughter. She reads pirate books and is crazy about buried chests and pieces of eight. And they say I'm just like her. She is the most perfectly killing person in the world." Hezekiah laughed again.

(To Be Continued.)

LOUISVILLE Courier.

The little son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Neuman is reported ill.

Mrs. Francis Palmer and three children of Oklahoma are visiting the former's sister, Mrs. Henry Stander and family.

In a letter to Louisville friends Miss Minnie Lehnhoff reports that her brother-in-law, Attorney W. C. Frampton, has purchased a large Packard touring car and they expect to visit their friends in this vicinity in the near future.

Mrs. J. D. Ferguson of Lincoln has received word from Colorado that her daughter, Mrs. Frank Ivers, whose serious illness we chronicled some time ago, is convalescing. This will be pleasing news to her many Cass county friends.

Mrs. Louis Stohlmacher and family of Omaha are visiting at the home of Mrs. George Stohlmacher. At the time of the cyclone in Omaha Mrs. Stohlmacher's little daughter was in a hospital which was destroyed, so she brought her to the country to recuperate.

There was but little interest taken in the village election last Tuesday. The license ticket won out by a good majority. The vote was as follows: Funke, 102; Reichart, 99; Twiss, 8; Palmer, 83. Nine ballots were thrown out on account of an error, the voters using their pencils too freely. 128 votes were cast in favor of Sunday base ball and 48 against.

W. F. Diers received a message Thursday morning announcing the death of Dr. Harry Diers at the home of his parents at Gresham. The young man passed away at 6 o'clock on Thursday morning. He was about 27 years of age. The funeral will be held on Saturday at 10:30 a. m. Mr. and Mrs. Diers left Friday to be in attendance.

NEHAWKA News.

George Reynolds, who lives over south of Plattsmouth, was in town a few hours Tuesday.

Mrs. George McReynolds and daughter, Lena, who have been in California during the winter, came home yesterday.

Joe West of Belvidere, Neb., was here for several days this week visiting his brother, D. C., and family, and other friends.

The Alford and Fleshman places were visited Sunday by scores of people in automobiles, buggies and afoot, curious to see just what a tornado could do in the way of destruction.

Monday was the thirty-fourth time Dave West had celebrated his sixteenth birthday, and Miss Gladys came up from the city to help him celebrate it. His brother, Joseph, was also here.

Tom Kivett is having his share of bad luck. Last July a team of mules got to cutting monkey shins around him and broke a bone in his foot. It was a bad fracture and Tom limped for a couple of months. Monday he was trying to drive some unruly hogs and had the same bone in the same foot broken. He has our sympathy.

At a meeting of the ladies of this vicinity Saturday afternoon it was decided to give a public dinner at the Nehawka house for the benefit of those most needy one who lost through the storm Wednesday. The dinner was given and netted the ladies over \$85. A committee of 5, 3 women and 2 men, were to decide as to the disposition of the funds.

Last Friday just at the noon hour a ripple of excitement stirred the town, hardly quiescent from the effects of the storm the Sunday before. Andrew Sturm, on his way to dinner, discovered that Vilas Sheldon's house was apparently on fire and spread the alarm as he ran. Those who gathered discovered it was only a bad case of flue burning out, but it looked like a fire for a few minutes.

A lazy liver leads to chronic dyspepsia and constipation—weakens the whole system. Doan's Regulets (25c per box) act mildly on the liver and bowels. At all drug stores.

The Celebrated Percheron Stallion

Jaloux

Jaloux is a beautiful black Percheron, weighing 1950 pounds, foaled March 5, 1909 bred by M. Durand, Department of Orne, and imported by E. J. Heisel, Fremont, Iowa, in October, 1911, and is recorded in the Percheron Society of America, No. 81875. Jaloux has a splendid record, a strong pedigree, and is an excellent foal getter.

Jaloux will make the season of 1913 as follows: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of each week at the barn of Henry Ragoos, five miles southeast of Louisville; Thursday Friday and Saturday at Wm. Wettenkamps, two miles west of Mynard.

TERMS—\$15.00 to insure colt to stand and suck. Care will be taken to prevent accidents, but will not be held responsible should any occur.

August Klemm

EAGLE Beacon.

Martin Herman left for Staplehurst, Neb., Monday evening, having resigned his position as clerk at W. P. Yoho's.

William Oelschlager left Tuesday for McMullen county, Texas, to look after land interests. He expects to be gone about fifteen days.

Several friends surprised W. P. Yoho last Friday evening by coming in and spending the evening in a pleasant manner, the occasion being in honor of his birthday.

Mrs. Franke is having a nice four-room cottage built on the lots just north of Fred Spahnle's where she intends to make her future home. John Root completed the foundation this week.

Ed Carr is having his home north of town remodeled into a modern farm residence. Jess Johnson is doing the work. We understand that Mr. Carr will install a gas light system.

Mrs. N. J. Vinson returned home from Palmyra Tuesday afternoon. Mrs. Vinson recently underwent an operation at the hospital in Syracuse, and her many friends will be pleased to learn that her condition is greatly improved.

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Setz of Plattsmouth visited the first of the week at the home of Mrs. Setz's mother, Mrs. A. H. Vandlingham. They left Thursday and will make short visits at Talmage and Omaha before returning home.

Just before going to press we were informed of the marriage of Mr. August Bergman and Miss Mamie Price, Wednesday, April 2, at Lincoln. They returned to Eagle Thursday night, after having taken a short trip to Omaha.

ELMWOOD Leader-Echo.

Floyd L. Woolcott and family moved into the Oehlherking home in West Elmwood the first of the week.

A handsome baby daughter arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Schlanker Saturday morning.

Miss Matilda Meisinger came out from Plattsmouth Tuesday for an extended visit with her sister, Mrs. George Stoehr.

Mr. and Mrs. George Winkler are rejoicing over the arrival of a bouncing baby boy at their home Saturday night.

Dick Wall of Omaha, who is afflicted with rheumatism, was brought to the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Rob Wall, Sunday.

Adolph Rosenkoetter is building a fine new cottage on his property in the northwest part of town. James Durbin is the contractor in charge.

Andrew Hettrick returned this week from his several months' sojourn in the Dakotas. He will assist his parents, who moved a short time ago to their farm, southwest of town.

Grandma Turner wishes us to express her thanks to the members of the Workman lodge for the large bouquet of beautiful flowers sent to the bedside of Grandpa Turner. We are sorry to learn that "Uncle John" is no better at this writing.

The Journal for typewriter supplies.

UNION Ledger.

Abe L. Becker had a shipment of stock on the South Omaha market Tuesday morning.

Let us feed you food cooked before your eyes while you wait, at Hop's short order room.

Miss Jessie Todd and her guest, Mrs. Tracy, of Pawnee City, returned Monday from a few days' visit with friends in Omaha.

James B. Beckner and wife arrived on the Monday midnight train from Wausa, Neb., being called to Nehawka on account of the serious illness of their daughter, Mrs. Charles Hanson.

C. H. Dysart and wife and Amos McNamee went to Omaha on the Monday morning train, and Mrs. Dysart remained there for treatment in the Methodist hospital. She has not been in good health for some time, and it is hoped she will be benefited by the treatment in the hospital.

Frank Larsh, a former resident of this vicinity, now located in the city of Portland, Oregon, showed his generous spirit by sending to W. R. Cross a \$5 check and requested that it be added to Union's donations for aid of tornado sufferers. Mr. Cross turned the check over to the Commercial club and it was used as directed.

Surveyors were here Monday to measure a 90-acre tract of the DuBois farm south of town, the tract, which is the northeast part of the farm, having been purchased by Henry Ruhman, a former resident of this vicinity, but living the past few years in Denver. We are informed that Mr. and Mrs. Ruhman expect to return in the near future to make their home here.

An Avoca bank check that had evidently been carried some distance by the tornado of March 23, was found Sunday by Milt Ervin on the hill northwest of where the Alford home was destroyed. The check is dated Nov. 3, 1911, given by Jas. F. Fleshman for \$25, payable to Nancy Carsten, and cashed at the Bank of Avoca. It is a memento of the great tornado, and if the owner desires he may have it by calling at this office, otherwise we will add it to our collection.

The block on the south side of Main street that was burned out December 6, 1909, will present a better appearance, the workmen now being busy on the Pierson bank building and the Barton barber shop building, and they are to be rushed to completion as rapidly as possible. Material is arriving for the erection of the new school building, which will cost \$41,000 exclusive of the heating plant and furniture, and W. B. Banning, the contractor, will soon have a force of men at work on the hill.

Dr. H. Thomsen, dentist, of Plattsmouth, will make Union one day of each week for the purpose of looking after the dental work of this community. He will be in Union on Saturday of each week, beginning January 4, 1913, until further notice.

Heh! Heh! Heh!—Scratch! Scratch! Scratch. The more you scratch, the worse the itch. Try Doan's Ointment. For eczema, any skin itching. 50c a box.

A Want Ad in the Journal will bring what you want.