



The Siege of the Seven Suitors

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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HEZEKIAH

CHAPTER X. I Meet a Playful Ghost.

It was not yet 10 o'clock, and I was dismayed at the thought of being left to my own devices in this big country house, at an hour when the talk at the Hare and Tortoise usually became worth while. I sat down and began to turn over the periodicals on the library table, but I was in no mood for reading.

The butler appeared and offered me drink, but the thought of drinking alone did not appeal to me. I repelled the suggestion coldly, but after I had dropped my eyes to the English review I had taken up I was conscious that he stood his ground.

"Beg pardon, sir."
"Well?"
"His a bit hod about the chimney, sir."

The professional man in me was at once alert. The chimney's conduct was inexplicable enough, but I was in no humor to brook the theories of a stupid servant. Still, he might know something, so I nodded for him to go on.

He glanced over his shoulder and came a step nearer.

"They say in the village, sir, that the 'ouse is 'aunted."

"Who say it, James?"

"The liveryman told the coachman, and the 'ousemaid got hit from a seamstress. Hit's werry queer, sir."

"Rubbish, James. I'm amazed that a person of your station should listen to a liveryman's gossip. There's the chimney, it's working perfectly. Some shift of air currents causes it to puff a little smoke into this room occasionally, but those things are not related to the supernatural. We'll find some way of correcting it in a day or two."

"Werry good, sir. But begging pardon, the chimney 'ain't hall. Hit walks, if I may so heppress hit."

"Walks?" I exclaimed, sitting up and throwing down my review. "What walks?"

"You 'ear hit, sir, hin the walls. Hit goes right through the solid brick—most hunaccountable."

"You hear a mouse in the walls and think it's a ghost! But you forget James, that this is a new house, only a year or so old, and spooks don't frequent such places. If it were an old place it might be possible that the creaking of floors and the settling of walls would cause uneasiness in nervous people. The ghost tradition usually rests on some ugly fact. But here nothing of the kind is present."

"Hit was one of 'is majesty's horriblers, sir," he answered hoarsely.

It flashed over me that this big stolid fellow was out of his head; but sane or mad he was clearly greatly disturbed. It was best, I thought, on either hypothesis to speak to him peremptorily, and I rose, the better to deal with the situation.

"What nonsense is this you have in your head? You're in the United

"But this 'ere country used to be Henglish, you may recall, sir. The story the coachman got hin the village goes back to the hold times, sir, when the colonies was hin rebellion, if I may so call hit, sir, and 'is majesty's troops was puttin' down the rebellion hin these parts. Some American rebels chased a British soldier from hover near White Plains to these 'ere woods as they was then, and they 'anged 'im, sir, right where this 'ere 'ouse stands, if I may make so free."

"You'd better go to bed, James. And don't encourage talk among the other servants about this ghost. I know something about the building of houses, and I'll give these walls a good looking over. Good night."

I made myself comfortable for an hour, smoking a cigar over an article on English politics, and while I read a big log placidly burned itself to ashes. I found the switch and snuffed out the library lights. When I had gained the second floor I turned off the lights in the hall below, and as I looked down the well to make sure I had turned the right key, the third floor lights suddenly died and I was left in darkness. This was the least bit disconcerting. I was quite sure that the upper lights had remained burning brightly after the darkening of the lower hall, so that it was hardly possible that the one switch had cut off both lights.

Standing by the rail that guarded the well, I peered upward, thinking that some one above me was manipulating another switch, but the silence was as complete as the blackness. I was about to turn from the rail to the wall to find the switch, but at this moment, as my face was still lifted in the intentness with which I was listening, something brushed my cheek—something soft of touch and swift of movement. As I gripped the rail I felt this touch once, twice, thrice. Then my hand sought the wall madly, and with so bad an aim that it was quite a minute before I found the switch plate and snapped all the keys. The stair and the halls above and below me sprang into being again, and I stood blinking stupidly upward.

Though I was in a modern house thoroughly lighted by electricity I cannot deny that this incident, following so quickly upon the butler's story, occasioned a moment's acute hair raising, accompanied by an uncomfortable tremor of the legs. As already hinted I lay no claim to great valor. As for ghosts I am half persuaded of their existence, and, after witnessing a presentation of Hamlet, always feel that Shakespeare is as safe a guide in such matters as the destructive scientific criticisms.

There were various plausible explanations of the failure of the lights. Some switch that I did not know of, perhaps in the third floor hall, might have been turned, or the power house in the village might have been shifting dynamos. Either solution of the riddle was credible. But the ghostly touch on my face could not be accounted for so readily. Leaving the lights on, I continued to the third floor and examined the switch and sought in other ways to explain these phenomena. My composure returned more slowly than I care to confess, and I think it was probably in my mind that the ghost of King George's

dead soldier might be lying in wait for me, but I saw and heard nothing. The doors of the unused chambers on the third floor were closed, and I did not feel justified in trying them. The servants were housed on this floor at the rear of the house, and a door that cut off their quarters proved on examination to be tightly locked.

The fourth floor was only a half story, used for storage purposes. The roof was gained, I recalled, by an iron ladder and a hatchway in a trunk room. I ran down to my room and found a candle, to be armed against any further fickleness of the lights, and set out for the fourth floor. I had changed my coat and with a couple of candles and a box of matches started for the roof. My courage had risen now, and I was ready for any further adventure that the night might hold for me. Miss Hollister and Cecilia were both in their rooms, presumably asleep. The servants doubtless had their doors barred against ghostly visitors, and the house was mine to explore as I pleased.

I think I was humming slightly as I mounted the stair, which, in keeping with the general luxuriousness that characterized the furnishing of the house, was thickly carpeted even to the fourth floor. I was slipping my hand along the rail and mounting, I dare say, a little faintly as I screwed my courage to an unfamiliar notch when suddenly, midway of the first half and just before I reached the turn where the stair broke, the light

failed again with startling abruptness. This was carrying the joke pretty far, and instantly I clapped my hand to my pocket for the box of safety matches, dug it out and then in my haste dropped the lid essential to ignition and stooped to find it.

The stair had narrowed on this flight, and as I sought with futile eagerness to regain the box lid I could have sworn that some one passed me. Still half stooping, I stretched out my arms and clasped empty air, and so suddenly had I thrown myself forward that I lost my balance and rolled downward the space of half a dozen treads before I recovered myself. I was badly scared and hardly less angry at having missed through my own clumsiness the joy of grappling with the ghost of one of King George's soldiers. But the matches having been lost in the pitch darkness of the stair, I could get my bearings again only by clinging to the stair rail until I found the second floor switch. I should say that two full minutes had passed between the loss of the matches and my flashing on of the lamps. From top to bottom the lights shone brightly. But no one was visible, and I heard no sound in any part of the house.

As I began to analyze my sensations during the temporary eclipse of the lights I was conscious of two things. The being, human or other, that had passed me had been light of step and fleet of motion. There had been something uncanny in the ease and speed of that passing. I was without conviction as to its direction, whether up or down, though I inclined to the former notion for the reason that the employment of a concealed switch above seemed the more reasonable argument. And a faint, an almost imperceptible scent, as of a flower, had seemed to be a part of the passing. Mine is a sensitive nostril, and I was confident that it did not betray me in this.

I gathered up my matches and started again for the roof. The trunk room door opened readily, as on my morning inspection of the chimney pots, but as I glanced up I saw that the hatch was open. Through the aper-

ture shone the heavens, a square of stars and bright with the moon's radiance. Pocketing my matches, I ran nimbly up the ladder.

I had been surprised to find the hatch open, but it is not too much to say that I was greatly astonished by what I saw on the moon flooded roof. There, midway of a flat area that lay between the two larger chimney pots, two persons were intently engaged, not in ghostly promenade or posturing or even in audible conversation, but in a spirited bout with foils. I stood with head and shoulders thrust through the opening, staring at this unusual spectacle and not sure but that after all my eyes were tricking me.

"Touche!"

It was a woman's voice, faint from breathlessness. She threw off her mask and dropped her foil and with a most human and feminine gesture put up her hands to adjust her hair. It was Cecilia Hollister in a short skirt and fencing coat!

Her opponent was a man, and as he, too, fung off his mask I saw that he was a gentleman of years. I was about to withdraw when the stranger swung round and saw me. His sudden exclamation caused the girl to turn, and as a reasonable frankness has always seemed to me essential to a nice discretion I crawled out on the roof.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Hollister, but if I had known you were here I should not have intruded. The vagaries of the library chimney have been on my mind, and I was about to have another peep into yonder pot."

She stood at her ease, with one hand resting lightly against the inexplicable chimney in question and still somewhat spent from her exercise.

"Father," she said, turning to the stranger who stood near, "this is Mr. Ames, who is Aunt Octavia's guest."

The light of the gibbous moon enabled to discern pretty clearly the form and features of Mr. Bassford Hollister. And I find, in looking over my notes, that I accepted as a matter of course the singular meeting with my hostess' brother. I had grown so used to the ways of the Hollisters I already knew that the meeting with another member of the family at 11 o'clock at night on the roof of this remarkable house gave me no great shock of sur-

prise. He was tall, slender and dark, with fine eyes that suggested Cecilia's. His close trimmed beard was slightly gray, but he bore himself erect, and I had already seen that he was alert of arm and eye and nimble of foot.

"Father and I have fenced together for years," said Cecilia. "My sister Hezekiah does not care for the sport. As you have already seen that my Aunt Octavia is an unusual woman, given to many whims, I will not deny to you that at present my father is persona non grata in this house. I beg to assure you that nothing to his discredit or mine has contributed to that situation, nor can our meeting here tonight be construed as detrimental to him or to me. In meeting my father in this way I have in a sense broken faith with my Aunt Octavia, but I assure you, Mr. Ames, that it is only the natural affection for a daughter that led my father to seek me here in this clandestine fashion."

Cecilia had spoken steadily, but her voice broke as she concluded, and she walked quickly toward the hatchway. Her father stepped before me to give her his hand through the opening.

I withdrew to the edge of the roof while a few words passed between them that seemed to be on his part an expostulation and on hers an earnest denial and plea. He passed her the foils and masks, and she vanished, whereupon he addressed himself to me.

"I had learned from both my daughters of your presence in my sister's house, and I had expected to meet you sooner or later. This is a strange business, a strange business."

He had drawn out a pipe, which he filled and lighted dexterously. The flame of his match gave me better acquaintance with his face. He leaned against the serrated roof guard with the greatest composure and drew his pipe to a glow. I had not forgotten my encounter with the ghost on the stair, and as I waited for him to speak I was trying to identify him with the mysterious agency that had tampered with the lights and passed so ghostly a hand across my face in the stair well. I could hardly say that there had not been time for either Bassford Hollister or his daughter to have reached the roof after my experiences on the stair, and yet they had been engaged so earnestly at the moment of my appearance at the hatchway that it was improbable that either could have played ghost and flown to the roof before I reached it. And, eliminating the ghost altogether, I had yet to learn how Bassford Hollister had gained entrance to the house. It seemed best to drop speculations and wait for him to declare himself.

(To Be Continued.)

Local News

Miles Standish in Town.
From Friday's Daily.
Charles Warner motored in this morning from his home near this city and attended to some business matters.

Lig Brown came up this morning from his home near Rock Bluffs to attend to some matters of business.

J. D. Shrader and wife of near Murray were in the city today for a few hours attending to some business matters.

Adam Kaffenberger of near Cedar Creek was in the city today for a few hours attending to some business matters.

A. B. Fornoff of Cedar Creek was in the city yesterday for a few hours attending to some business matters with the merchants.

William Starkjohn returned this morning on No. 3 from Gathenberg, Neb., near which place he has some extensive land interests.

Mrs. O. A. Nystrom returned to her home in Omaha yesterday afternoon, after being here for several days in attendance at the wedding of her sister, Miss Ida Johnson, and Mr. W. E. Backstrom.

Mrs. Charles Thornberg and daughter, Miss Alice, of Sioux City, who were here attending the golden wedding of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. August Tartsch, returned home this afternoon.

Mrs. W. H. Venner and daughter, Miss De Ella, of the vicinity of Mynard, were shopping in this city yesterday and called at this office and ordered the Semi-Weekly Journal sent to them.

President H. A. Schneider and Secretary E. H. Wescott of the Commercial club were passengers this morning for Omaha, where they will spend the day doing a little boosting, although it is reported Henry may drift out to Thirteenth and Vinton streets, where Pa Rourke holds forth.

For rheumatism you will find nothing better than Chamberlain's Liniment. Try it and see how quickly it gives relief. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

FOREST ROSE—The best flour on the market. Give it a trial.

73 ANNUAL TOUR THE ORIGINAL

YANKEE ROBINSON

ENORMOUS 3 RING CIRCUS

UNITED WITH TEXAS BILL'S WILD WEST

EXHIBITING UNDER THE LARGEST CANVAS EVER CONSTRUCTED
3 Rings, 1000 People, 2 Trains of Cars, 2 Herds of Elephants, 300 Circus Artists
\$1,000,000 Invested, \$4,270 Daily Expenses, Seats for 10,000 People

CAPT. BUCK'S 20-PERFORMING SEA LIONS-20 MOST STARTLING ACT EVER SHOWN IN AMERICA

GREATEST RIDING SHOW EVER EXHIBITED
ALBERT DAVENPORT, Champion Bareback Rider of the World.
FRED and BESSIE COSTELLO, World Champion Jockey Riders.
MARIE DAVENPORT, and MRS. MINNIE SWEENEY, Acknowledged Champion Lady Principal Fourtimes.
RALPH HOWSER, England's Famous Jockey.

300-REAL CIRCUS ARTISTS-300
50-REAL FUNNY CLOWNS-50
10-ROYAL TOKIO JAPANESE-10
"BLACK DIAMOND," THE BALL-ROOM HORSE
Ross Ashcraft's High-School Horses
FAMOUS WIZARDETTE WIRE FAMILY

KONGO—Largest Beast that Walks—Larger than Jumbo
LARGEST ELEPHANT ON EARTH.
LARGER THAN JUMBO.
10 KEEPERS TO GUARD HIM.

POSITIVELY EXHIBITED WITH YANKEE ROBINSON.
THE BIGGEST BRUTE THAT WALKS THE EARTH.
10 KEEPERS TO GUARD HIM.

"Alice," The Famous Bear Girl
Finest Horses Ever Exhibited

THE PARADE TELLS THE STORY 101 STARTLING NEW FEATURES FOR 1913

Yankee Robinson, Texas Bill, Kongo, The Largest Elephant on Earth, The World's Greatest Bareback Riders, including Albert Davenport, Fred and Bessie Costello, Marie Davenport, Mlle. Sweeney, Ralph Howser, Ross Ashcraft's High-School Horses, Capt. Buck's Sea Lions, Pustina's Zouaves, together with 300 Circus Artists, Comedians, Cowgirls, Cossacks, Indians, Mexican Bull Fighters, and the Greatest Band of Bucking Broncos ever exhibited.

Two Shows—Circus and Wild West—For One Admission
WILL POSITIVELY EXHIBIT RAIN OR SHINE

Advertisement for Yankee Robinson Circus and Texas Bill's Wild West. Includes details about the parade, ticket prices, and showtimes.

Plattsmouth, Neb., 5th - MONDAY, MAY -
Reserved seats on sale day of show at Weyrich & Hadraba's drug store

Miles Standish in Town.
From Saturday's Daily.
Miles Standish of Garnet, Kansas, arrived in the city this morning and will spend Sunday with his friends and relatives, being a guest at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John McNurlin. He says everything in Kansas is looking fine this year and the farmers are busy planting corn. From here he will go to Langdon, Missouri, where he recently purchased a farm, to look after some business matters. His son-in-law and daughter are now living on the Missouri place, and on this trip he may buy another place near the Journal acknowledges a pleasant call from him this afternoon.

Why He Was Late.
"What made you so late?"
"I met Smithson."
"Well, that is no reason why you should be an hour late getting home to supper."
"I know, but I asked him how he was feeling, and he insisted on telling me about his stomach trouble."
"Did you tell him to take Chamberlain's Tablets?"
"Sure, that is what he needs."
Sold by F. G. Fricke & Co.

Cyclone Loss Paid Promptly.
We, the undersigned School Board, of School District No. 5, in Cass county, heartily recommend the State Farmers' Mutual Insurance Co., and James Dvorak, their agent, for their fair treatment in our loss by cyclone, which occurred on Easter Sunday, and was promptly adjusted by James Dvorak. We have received our check for \$400.00 to our entire satisfaction. Signed:
G. F. Smith,
Arthur N. Sullivan,
S. D. Fitchorn,
School Board, District No. 5.

Drive Sick Headaches Away.
Sick headaches, sour, gassy stomach, indigestion, biliousness disappear quickly after you take Dr. King's New Life Pills. They purify the blood and put new life and vigor in the system. Try them and you will be well satisfied. Every pill helps; every box guaranteed. Price 25c. Recommended by F. G. Fricke & Co.

Eggs.
Pure bred Plymouth Rock, 75c per 15; \$4.00 per 100. Phone 1-1, Route 2.
C. L. Wiles.

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 Ragos, five miles southeast of Louisville; Thursday Friday and Saturday at Wm. Wettenkams, 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

For rheumatism you will find nothing better than Chamberlain's Liniment. Try it and see how quickly it gives relief. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

FOREST ROSE—The best flour on the market. Give it a trial.

August Klemm



"They say in the village, sir, that the 'ouse is 'aunted."

States, and there aren't any majesty's soldiers to deal with. You forget that you're not in England now."