

The Siege of the Seven Suitors

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

Copyright, 1910, by Meredith Nicholson

CHAPTER XVI. Lady's Slipper.

AS I recall it she was very much at her ease. She sat on one foot and the other beat the trunk lightly. She was bare-headed, and the candle light was making acquaintance with the gold in her hair. She wore her white sweater, as on that day in the orchard, and with much gravity, as our eyes met, she thrust a hand into its pocket and drew out a cracker. I was not half so surprised at finding her there as I was at her manner now that she was caught. She seemed neither distressed, astonished nor afraid.

"Well, Miss Hezekiah," I said, "I half suspected you all along."

"Wise chimney man! You were a little slow about it though."

"I was indeed. You gave me a run for my money."

She finished her cracker at the third bite, slapped her hands together to free them of possible crumbs and was about to speak when she jumped lightly from the trunk, bent her head toward the door, and then stepped back again and faced me imperturbably.

"And now that you've found me, Mr. Chimney Man, the joke's on you after all."

She laid her hand on the door and swung it nearly shut. I had heard what she had heard. Miss Octavia was coming upstairs. She had exchanged a few words with the Swedish maid on the second floor landing, and Hezekiah's quick ear had heard her. But Hezekiah's equanimity was disconcerting. Even with her aunt close at hand she showed not the slightest alarm. She resumed her seat on the trunk, and her heel thumped it tranquilly.

"The joke's on you, Mr. Chimney Man, because now that you've caught me playing tricks you've got to get me out of trouble."

"What if I don't?"

"Oh, nothing," she answered indifferently, looking me squarely in the eye.

"But your aunt would make no end of a row, and you would cause your sister to lose out with Miss Octavia. As I understand it, you're pledged to keep off the reservation. It was part of the family agreement."

"Mr. Ames, if you are ghost hunting in this part of the house—"

It was Miss Octavia's voice. She was seeking me and would no doubt find me. The sequestration of Hezekiah became now an urgent and delicate matter.

"You caught me," said Hezekiah calmly, "and now you've got to get me out, and I wish you good luck, and, besides, I lost one of my shoes somewhere, and you've got to find that."

In proof of her statement she submitted a shoeless, brown stockinged foot for my observation.

"The one I lost was like this," and Hezekiah thrust forth a neat tan pump rather the worse for wear. "I was on the second floor a bit ago," she began, "and lost my slipper."

"In what mischief, pray?"

"Mr. Ames," called Miss Octavia, her voice close at hand.

"I wanted to see something in Cecilia's room, so I opened her door and walked in—that's all," Hezekiah replied.

"Wicked Hezekiah! Coming into the house is bad enough in all the circumstances. Entering your sister's room is a grievous sin."

"If, Mr. Ames, you are still seeking an explanation of that chimney's behavior—"

It was Miss Octavia, now just outside the door.

"Don't leave that trunk, Hezekiah," I whispered. "I'll do the best I can."

Miss Octavia met me smiling as I faced her in the hall. She had switched on the lights, and my candle burned yellowly in the white electric glow.

Miss Octavia held something in her hand. It required no second glance to tell me that she had found Hezekiah's slipper.

"Mr. Ames," she began, "as you have absented yourself from the library all evening I assume that you have been busy studying my chimney and seeking for the ghost of that British soldier who was so wantonly slain upon the site of this house."

"I am glad to say that not only is your surmise correct, Miss Hollister, but that I have made great progress in both directions."

"Do you mean to say that you have really found traces of the ghost?"

"Not only that, Miss Hollister, but I have met the ghost face to face—even more, I have had speech with him!"

Her face brightened, her eyes flashed. It was plain that she was immensely pleased.

"And are you able to say from your encounter, that he is in fact a British subject, usually haunting this house



HEZEKIAH

in America long after the Declaration of Independence and Washington's farewell address have passed into literature?"

"You have never spoken a truer word, Miss Hollister; but, by means which I am not at liberty to disclose, I have persuaded him not to visit this house again."

"Then," said Miss Hollister, "I cannot do less than express my gratitude, though I regret that you did not first allow me to meet him. Still, I dare say that we shall find his bones buried somewhere beneath my foundations. Please assure me that such is your expectation."

"Tomorrow, Miss Hollister, I shall take pleasure in showing you certain hidden chambers in this house which I venture to say will afford you great pleasure. I have tonight discovered a link between the mansion as you know it and an earlier house whose timbers may indeed hide the bones of that British soldier."

"And as for the chimney?"

"And as for the chimney, I give you my word as a professional man that it will never annoy you again, and I therefore beg that you dismiss the subject from your mind."

I saw that she was about to recur to the shoe she held in her hand and at which she glanced frequently with a quizzical expression. This, clearly, was an issue that must be met promptly, and I knew of no better way than by lying. Hezekiah herself had plainly stated on the morning of the long, eventful day, when she walked into the breakfast room in her aunt's absence and explained Cecilia's trip to town, that it was perfectly fair to dissimulate in making explanations to Miss Hollister—that, in fact, Miss Octavia enjoyed nothing better than the injection of fiction into the affairs of the matter of fact day. Here, then, was my opportunity.

"Miss Hollister," I began boldly, "the slipper you hold in your hand belongs to me, and if you have no immediate use for it I beg that you allow me to relieve you of it."

"It is yours, Mr. Ames?"

A lifting of the brows, a widening of the eyes, denoted Miss Octavia's polite surprise.

"Beyond any question it is my property," I asserted.

"Your words interest me greatly, Mr. Ames. As you know, the grim hard life of the twentieth century falls upon me, and I am deeply interested in everything that pertains to adventure and romance. Tell me more, if you are free to do so, of this slipper which I now return to you."

I received Hezekiah's worn little pump into my hands as though it were an object of high consecration.

"As I am nothing if not frank, Miss Hollister, I will confess to you that this shoe came into my possession in a very curious way. One day last spring I was in Boston, having been called there on professional business. In the evening I left my hotel for a walk, crossed the common, took a turn through the public garden, where many devoted lovers adorned the benches, and then strolled aimlessly along Beacon street.

"I was passing a house which I have not since been able to identify exactly, though I have several times revisited Boston in the hope of doing so, when suddenly and without any warning whatever this slipper dropped at my feet. All the houses in the neighborhood seemed deserted, with windows and doors tightly boarded, and my closest scrutiny failed to discover any opening from which that slipper might have been flung. The region is so decorous and acts of violence are so foreign to its dignity and repose that I could scarce believe that I held that bit of tan leather in my hand. Nor did its unaccountable precipitation into the street seem the act of a housemaid, nor could I believe that a nursery governess had thus sought diversion from the roof above. I hesitated for a moment, not knowing how to meet this emergency. Then I boldly attacked the bell of the house from which I believed the slipper to have proceeded. I rang until a policeman, whose speech was fragrant of the Irish coast, bade me desist, informing me that the family had only the previous day left for the shore. The house, he assured me, was utterly vacant. That, Miss Hollister, is all there is of the story. But ever since I have carried that slipper with me. It was

in my pocket tonight as I traversed the upper halls of your house, seeking the ghost of that British soldier, and I had just discovered my loss when I heard you calling. In returning it you have conferred upon me the greatest imaginable favor. I have faith that some time, somewhere, I shall find the owner of that slipper. Would you not infer from its diminutive size and the fine, suggestive delicacy of its outlines, that the owner is a person of aristocratic lineage and of breeding? I will confess that nothing is nearer my heart than the hope that one day I shall meet the young lady—I am sure she must be young—who wore that slipper and dropped it, as it seemed, from the clouds at my feet there in sedate Beacon street, that most solemn of residential sanctuaries."

"Mr. Ames," began Miss Hollister instantly, with an assumed severity that her smile belied. "I cannot recall that my niece Hezekiah ever visited in Beacon street, yet I dare say that if she had done so and a young man of your pleasing appearance had passed beneath her window one of her slippers might very easily have become detached from Hezekiah's foot and fallen with a nice calculation directly in front of you. But now, Mr. Ames, will you kindly carry your candle into that trunk room?"

The foundations of the world shook as I remembered the compact by which Hezekiah was excluded from the house and realized what her impending discovery would mean to Cecilia, her father and the wayward Hezekiah too. But I was in for it. Miss Octavia indicated by an imperious nod that I was to precede her into the trunk room, and I strode before her with my candle held high.

But the sprites of mystery were still abroad at Hopefield. The room was unoccupied save for the trunks. Hezekiah had vanished. Instead of sitting there to await the coming of her aunt, she had silently departed without leaving a trace. Miss Hollister glanced up at the trapdoor in the ceiling, and so did I. It was closed, but I did not doubt that Hezekiah had crawled through it and taken herself to the roof. Miss Octavia would probably order me at once to the battlements, but worse was to come.

"Mr. Ames," she said, "will you kindly lift the lid of that largest trunk?"

I had not thought of this, and I shuddered at the possibilities.

She indicated the trunk upon which Hezekiah had sat and nibbled her cracker not more than ten minutes before. Could it be possible that when I lifted the cover that golden head would be found beneath? My life has known no blacker moment than that in which I flung back the lid of that trunk. I averted my eyes in dread of the impending disclosure and held the candle close.

But the trunk was empty, incredibly empty! My courage rose again, and I glanced at Miss Octavia triumphantly. I even jerked out the trays to allay any lingering suspicion. Why had I ever doubted Hezekiah? Who was she, the golden haired daughter of kings, to be caught in a trunk? She had slipped up the ladder while I talked to her aunt and was even now hiding on the roof, but it was not for me to make so reasonable a suggestion. Miss Octavia might press the matter further if she liked, but I would not help her to trap Hezekiah.

Miss Hollister did not, to my surprise and relief, suggest an inspection of the roof. She nodded her head gravely and passed out into the hall.

"Mr. Ames, if I implied a moment ago that I doubted your story of the dropping of that tan pump from a Beacon street roof or window, I now tender you my sincerest apologies."

She put out her hand, smiling charmingly.

"Pray return to the occupations which were engaging you when I interrupted you. You have never stood higher in my regard than at this moment. Tomorrow you may tell me all you please of the ghost and the mysteries of this house, and I dare say we shall find the bones of that British soldier somewhere beneath the foundations. As for that trifling bit of leather you hold in your hand, it's rather passe for Beacon street. The next time you tell that story I suggest that you play your game of drop the slipper from a window of Rittenhouse square, Philadelphia."

Hezekiah on the roof was safe for a time. Miss Octavia's gentle rejection of my Beacon street anecdote and her intimation that Hezekiah had been an unbidden participant of the comedy of the ghost had been disquieting, and in my relief of her abandonment of the search I loitered on downstairs with my hostess. I wished to impress her with the idea that I was without urgent business. Hezekiah would, beyond doubt, amuse herself after her own fashion on the roof until I was ready to release her. As I had quietly locked the trunk room door and carried the key in my pocket I was reasonably sure of this. Humility is best acquired through tribulation, and as Hezekiah sat among the chimney crooks nursing one stockinged foot and waiting for me to turn up with her lost slipper it would do her no harm to slobber the bitter fruit of repentance with another biscuit.

(To Be Continued.)

It would surprise you to know of the great good that is being done by Chamberlain's Tablets, Darius Downey, of Newberg Junction, N. B., writes, "My wife has been using Chamberlain's Tablets and finds them very beneficial and doing her lots of good." If you have any trouble with your stomach or bowels give them a trial. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

PENTECOST NOT GREAT JUBILEE

Still Greater Blessings Coming, Says Pastor Russell.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

What the Day of Pentecost Signified. It Was but a Foretaste of Greater One to Come—Why It Came When It Did—Why the Greater Blessing Will Come, and When—Are There Signs That It Is Near?—Times of Refreshing—Times of Restitution—"I Will Pour Out My Spirit Upon All Flesh."



PASTOR RUSSELL

Boston, Mass., May 11. — Pastor Russell gave two addresses here, under the auspices of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION. We report one of these, from the text: "Upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit. After this I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh."—Joel 2:28, 29.

The Pastor called attention to the fact that he had transposed the two parts of this text to make their meaning more apparent. He declared that the Prophet unquestionably taught two outpourings of the Holy Spirit, only one of which has yet come. The one generally commemorated today by Catholics and Episcopalians is the first of these—the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on God's faithful servants and handmaids. The second one is not to be upon the same class, but upon all flesh—not upon the Elect, but upon all mankind, the non-elect.

The Pastor remarked that Pentecost was a Jewish festival celebrating the harvest. On that day, nearly nineteen centuries ago, God poured out His Holy Spirit upon His waiting servants and handmaids, in the upper room at Jerusalem. That event was important, not only to those who then participated, but to all of God's people from then until now. Prior to that day of Pentecost, no one except Jesus had ever received spirit begetting—the Holy Spirit of sonship. Prior to that date, God held all humanity at a distance from Himself, declaring that because they were sinners He could not accept them as sons, that first their sins must be atoned for.

Pastor Russell pointed out that this alienation from God had continued for more than four thousand years before Jesus came. Adam was called a son of God, but after him no one was styled a son of God until Jesus. During all that time, Abraham alone was styled a friend of God, because of his devotion, his faith. But a friend is not a son, and none other than Abraham had even so high a title as friend.

The Jews had the honorable title of servants of God, attaining that through the Law Covenant, under Moses.

Not only do the old Testament Scriptures not refer to the Jews as sons of God, but the Jews themselves have never claimed such a relationship. On the contrary, after Jesus had received the Holy Spirit and had begun His ministry, He spoke of Himself as being the Son of God, and this the Jews resented, taking up stones to stone Him. They declared it blasphemous to claim so close a relationship to Jehovah. Again, we read of the disciples before Jesus' death, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."—John 7:39.

From these testimonies of the Bible, the Pastor deduced that it was necessary for Jesus to finish His sacrifice for sins, and to ascend on High, into the presence of Jehovah God, and present the merit of His sacrifice on behalf of the Household of Faith, before the Apostles or any of the Church could be recognized of God. The desire which Jesus had awakened in their hearts was that they might become His footstep followers in doing the Heavenly Father's will—even to the extent of laying down their lives for the Truth, for righteousness. And so His disciples declared that they had left all to follow Him.

Before leaving them, Jesus admonished that they should not attempt to begin their work until after receiving the Father's recognition of them as sons. He said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on High." While He was with them, He breathed upon them and gave them of His Holy Spirit and power, by which they healed the sick, cast out demons, etc. But when He left them they had not this power, or authority, and must wait until the Father gave it to them directly, even as He gave it directly to the Lord Jesus, at the time the Holy Spirit came upon Him at His baptism.

"When Pentecost Was Fully Come."

For ten days the Apostles and other faithful brethren tarried, praying in the upper room, waiting for the promised demonstration of Divine acceptance that would indicate to them that Jesus had appeared in the presence of God, and had made satisfaction for their sins, and that the Heavenly Father had accepted Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf, and by the begetting of the Holy Spirit would recognize them as sons of God—not as human sons, however. The sonship to which Jesus

and the Church have been begotten during this Gospel Age is on a far higher than human plane—far above the angelic, also. St. Peter explains that our begetting is to the "Divine nature."—2 Peter 1:4.

Without the begetting there could be no ultimate birth to the Divine nature in the resurrection. Thus it was with Jesus. He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, quickened by the Spirit, and gradually developed during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry. But He was not born of the Spirit until His resurrection, as we read: "He was the First-born from the dead"—"the First-born amongst many brethren." The Church are begotten of the Holy Spirit under the same Covenant of Sacrifice, that if faithful they may attain to the same Spirit birth by a similar resurrection.

St. Peter explains that while the gift of the Holy Spirit was from the Father, it would not come to the Church direct, as though ignoring the Lord Jesus. He says of Jesus, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed this forth." (Acts 2:33). Again he says, "Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." (1 Peter 3:22). The Pentecostal blessing, therefore, was a double atonement. It proved that Jesus as the great Redeemer accomplished, in a manner pleasing to the Father, the work the Father gave Him to do. It proved that those who received the Spirit were accepted as sons of God, their original sin being canceled through the merit of Christ's sacrifice.

And although the miraculous manifestations of God's favor have not been repeated during this Age, we know that all of the same class are participants in the same blessing. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again." (1 Peter 1:3). While we are required to "Walk by faith and not by sight," nevertheless our faith has its sure footing in that original Pentecostal manifestation. We, as well as the Apostles, can realize that the sacrifice of Jesus was acceptable to the Father, and that we have been accepted through our Redeemer as members of His Body, which is the Church.

It is because the Church is one Body, although of many members, that no repetition of Pentecost has been necessary. As soon as we by consecration come into the one Body, we are sharers in all the blessings that belong to that Body, the start of which came on the memorable Pentecost Day. "By one Spirit ye were all baptized into one Body, which is Christ." Jesus the Head of the Church, the Messiah, first got His blessing, which was completed on the plane of glory. Then He made application of His merit for all those who desire to become members of His Body, of the Bride of Christ.

This was the foundation necessary for Divine acceptance of the Church. On this basis, the gathering of the Church has progressed for now nearly nineteen hundred years. Soon, we believe, it will be completed. The last member proving faithful and passing beyond the veil, the Body will be complete in glory—united to the Head, or under the other figure, the espoused virgin Church, united to her Lord, will be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

The Greater Jubilee.

Pentecost represents to the Church liberation from the thralldom of sin and death, as well as introduction into the family of God. Thus it signifies the beginning of all the blessings which the people of God have known as the fruits of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love, joy, peace—fellowship with God and our Lord Jesus Christ.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

Nevertheless, the Pastor explained, those wonderful blessings are not complete. The resurrection—that glorious change from imperfections in the flesh to perfection on the spirit plane—will be the consummation of all the Church's hopes, and that consummation, although near, we believe, has not yet been attained.

God has purposely deferred the secondary outpouring of His Holy Spirit—that upon the world, "all flesh"—until the establishment of His Kingdom. That will be a great Jubilee. It was, by Divine appointment, typified in Israel's experiences. During the fiftieth year, every Israelite was set free from bondage and debts of every kind, and had a fresh start. Thus was pictured how during Messiah's glorious reign as Mediator of the New Covenant, God on account of Jesus' sacrifice will cancel the sins of the whole world, and grant release from all weaknesses, and assistance back to the fulness of Divine favor. In other words, the Jubilee of Israel typified the coming Times of Restoration of all things, when Jesus the Head and the Church the Body, as The Messiah, will reign for a thousand years, for the purpose of blessing all the families of the earth and uplifting them out of sin, weakness, depravity, mental, moral and physical.

Oh, what a Jubilee that will be! No wonder St. Peter, in describing it and telling us that it will begin at the second coming of Jesus, also tells us that it will be Times of refreshing from the Divine presence! It will be the world's Pentecost. The Holy Spirit will then be poured out upon all flesh.

We are not to understand, however, that it will be done unconditionally. Rather, we may surmise that the conditions upon which it will be open to all flesh will be that only those who desire the blessing will receive it. But who would refuse such a favor when fully enlightened respecting it, when fully aware of its import and possibilities?

We cannot, of course, know in advance how this outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh will be manifested

at the beginning. We merely assume that the first manifestation will be in connection with these worthy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets. They have already been tested and proven loyal to God. They have merely been waiting, "sleeping" until the completion of the Gospel Church. As St. Paul says, they cannot be perfect, nor enter upon their reward until we first are perfected and enter upon our higher reward, as the Spirit Kingdom.—Hebrews 11:33, 40.

The Elect and the Non-Elect.

Our text is in full harmony with all the Scriptures in indicating that God has special blessings for His Elect—His servants and handmaids of this Gospel Age. Not only do these receive the Holy Spirit first, but to them its manifestation is different from what it will be with the non-elect, by and by. As already pointed out, the Holy Spirit fits and prepares the Church for glory, honor and immortality on the spirit plane. But the Holy Spirit's operation upon the world in the next Age will be totally different. Then its work will be the perfecting of all who will of the human family—an earthly blessing.

We are not to forget that God was as well pleased to make Father Adam an earthly being, perfect, in His own image and likeness, a little lower than the angels, as He was pleased to make the angels of a higher order, in His own image and likeness. The Church, now being begotten of the Holy Spirit to the Divine nature, is to be far above angels, but it is the same Holy Spirit which operated in all God's creative work, whether of angels or of men, or of the Church of the First-born.

Adam undoubtedly had the Holy Spirit of God in his perfection. Mankind in general, during the thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom, will be receiving more and more the Holy Spirit of God. Its operation in them will be the perfecting of their flesh. Thus the Lord declares it, "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 11:19.) The Scriptures speak of Adam in his perfection as crowned with glory and honor, and set over the beasts of the field, as earth's underlord, or king, responsible only to the Almighty. (Psalm 8:4-9.) Sin disarranged all this, as we have seen, but God has provided the Redeemer. His work of a thousand years, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the world of mankind, will result in bringing all the willing and obedient back to human perfection—to that which was lost in Adam, and redeemed at Calvary.

What This Does Not Mean.

This does not mean, said the Pastor, that the Holy Spirit will be forced upon any; but merely that God's Spirit will be available to all flesh, even as in the present time it is available to all His servants and handmaids, in proportion to their love and zeal. So the world's progress back to perfection will depend largely upon their appreciation of the call of God and of the privileges extended to them.

"The gift of God is everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This gift will not be given to any except to those who demonstrate their desire for it, on God's terms. The wicked will not be granted everlasting life at all. On the contrary, we read, "All the wicked will God destroy." "It shall come to pass that every soul that will not obey that Prophet [Messiah] shall be destroyed from amongst the people."

Neither does this great generosity on God's part in the forgiveness of sins and provision for the return of humanity mean that sins of the present life will go unnoticed. We may be sure that it is because we are incompetent to judge as respects the guilt and responsibility of others that the Lord has so strenuously guarded His people, saying, "Judge nothing before the time." We may be sure, therefore, that any judgment we might form, or other men might form, would be more or less defective, proportionately different in God's judgment.

In God's judgment respecting wickedness, we perceive that He takes into account all the circumstances—the ignorance, the superstition, the hereditary talents and weaknesses, etc. From God's standpoint any transgression of His Law is sin, but the seriousness of the sin depends upon the wilfulness with which it is committed. The Lord will deal justly with all of our race; and the Church, associated with Him in glory and in the work of judging, will then be fully competent for that appointed work. So we read, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"—1 Corinthians 6:2.

The Scriptures, therefore, warn everybody, " whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." This indicates that our words, our thoughts, our deeds, all have a bearing upon the future life. While only the spirit-begotten are yet on trial for life or death eternal, nevertheless the world's words and deeds have either an elevating or degrading influence upon their consciences. Accordingly their opportunity in the future will find them either lower or higher, with more or less steps to retrace, in order to attain the perfection of character in the flesh.

Surely all who rightly appreciate the Church's Pentecost of nearly nineteen centuries ago will rejoice to see the Divine arrangement for the world's Pentecost, under Messiah's Kingdom. Nor can it do harm to let the Truth be known. The lack of the knowledge of the Truth and creedal misrepresentations have doubtless led many to despair, and robbed others of peace as well as joy. By these means the Heavenly Father's character has been slandered. It is time to tell the world about the Love of God. It is time that Christians should remember that it was not fear that drew them to God, but, as St. Paul declares, "The love of Christ constraineth us."—2 Corinthians 5:14.