

# THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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NO. 36

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## STORIES FOR IDLE HOURS



### When the Cyclone Struck

By A. E. RANSOM

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THE keen gray eyes of the elder man searched the blue ones on the opposite side of the gate. In them was a certain honesty strongly tinged with a look of relief.

"I can't tell you how much obliged I am, Mr. Reame," the young man said. "I couldn't help but feel that now this trouble has come you wouldn't want me around."

"I've lived right here on this farm for fifty-six years," replied Reame, "and there's no one above ground who can say that I ever asked man, woman or child to take part in any of my quarrels."

The young man nodded. "There isn't many men who can say that."

"It isn't that I've anything against your father in this affair," continued

Reame. "But for nearly sixty years I've watched the birds build their nests in those trees. I climbed those hickories for nuts when I wasn't bigger than a pint of elder, and it's been to those maples that I've looked for the first signs of sap. Maybe they're not mine. I don't know. I've always supposed they were, and they shouldn't be cut down without a fight to save them."

Out from the house down to the gate where the men were talking came a girl, dressed all in pink, a soft, fluffy pink which reminded one of a cloud at sunrise, while her hair lay piled above her head in a great mass of golden light. She gave the young man a simple nod of greeting while passing a hand through her father's arm. Her presence seemed to bring a constraint upon the recipient of the nod, for he spoke with a diffidence not noticeable before.

"I supposed when we bought our place that the trees belonged to us, and when you said they were your property father had the land surveyed. The decision was that the trees were on our land or, of course, father would never have touched them. They are grown so large that the field is practically useless because of their shade. Nothing will ripen there."

"I've had surveys made myself," came Reame's ready response. "It has been done three times in my certain knowledge and each time in my favor. Besides, I offered to buy the field of your father, not because I cared for the land, but to preserve the trees."

"He doesn't want to sell"—the eyes of the young man were on the girl in pink—"and I presume the only way out is to let the courts decide. Father says just what you do—that the quarrel need not in any way interfere with us young folks. I'm sorry that it can't be settled in some other way, but it won't make any difference with the friendship of our families."

"Do you think our families are on your father's land, Ben Holcomb?" demanded the girl suddenly.

"I should not have cut one of them down if I did not, Vinnie," he replied in surprise.

"It's just like killing an old friend." Her face was cold, but tears were in the voice which held so much of protest. "I used to build my playhouse under that one, and I've spent many an hour in the crotch where the tree and her father at the gate. On to where he had seen the figure in pink. She must have taken refuge somewhere. What if—He could not get beyond the 'if.' She must be found. Soon it ceased raining, and on he kept, stumbling over uprooted trees, fallen branches, jumping over pools of water, calling her name over and over again; back through the woods, this time in another direction.

"Vinnie! Vinnie!" Suddenly in answer to his call he heard a response, faint and far off. He called again and looked around. The field was level. Nothing was in sight. But the call came again, this time with more distinctness. Then he saw her. She was walking the floor, white with terror and anxiety over Vinnie. She had not been seen since leaving him and her father at the gate. On to where he had seen the figure in pink. She must have taken refuge somewhere. What if—He could not get beyond the 'if.' She must be found. Soon it ceased raining, and on he kept, stumbling over uprooted trees, fallen branches, jumping over pools of water, calling her name over and over again; back through the woods, this time in another direction.

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Of late the grinding of alfalfa feed has become quite an industry in the middle West. The growth in that section is due to the fact that alfalfa is quite a staple crop. Alfalfa meal is being put on the market under various trade names. The various brands have been found, on examination, to come up to their guarantee in every case. No manufacturer has made any attempt so far to adulterate or misrepresent them. This fact has brought alfalfa meal very much in demand in the middle West.

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