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The Siege of the Seven Suitors

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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SYNOPSIS

Hartley Wiggins is in love with Cecilia Hollister. His friend Arnold Ames meets an elderly lady at the Asolando tea rooms.

She is Cecilia's Aunt Octavia, an eccentric woman of wealth. She invites Ames to Hopefield Manor. Ames is fascinated by Francesca, a tea room girl.

Ames sees Wiggins meeting Cecilia secretly at Hopefield Manor. Aunt Octavia is a great believer in the potential influence of No. 7.

Ames sees mysterious men watching the house. He hears of Hezekiah, Cecilia's sister. Wiggins calls upon Cecilia. The chimney smokes mysteriously.

The house is said to have a ghost. Cecilia tells Ames she is in deep trouble and asks him to urge Wiggins not to call upon her again.

Wiggins regards Ames as a rival. Aunt Octavia dislikes Wiggins because his ancestors were Tories. Wiggins is interested in both Cecilia and Hezekiah. Cecilia has nine suitors.

Ames meets Francesca in an orchard and learns that she is Hezekiah. They see nine silk hats cross a stile.

Aunt Octavia shows Ames the pie pantry. Cecilia fears Hezekiah loves Wiggins. Her nine suitors call.

Cecilia rejects Professor Hume and makes a record in her silver book. The butler tells Ames a British officer's ghost haunts the house.

Ames finds Cecilia and her father, Bassford Hollister, fencing on the roof. Hollister is there unknown to Aunt Octavia.

Hollister vanishes mysteriously through the hall wall. Hezekiah tells Ames she is prohibited from visiting Hopefield Manor.

Ames seeks plans of the house, but finds Aunt Octavia has just secured them. Cecilia's suitors are jealous of Ames.

Ames assures Cecilia that Hezekiah is not in love with Wiggins. Ames makes another effort to catch the ghost.

CHAPTER XI.

My Befuddlement Increases.

"YOU must understand, Mr. Ames, that my daughters, both of them, are very dear to me," said Bassford Hollister. "It is the great grief of my life that, owing to matters beyond my control, I have been unable to care for them as I should like to do. This being the case, I have been obliged to allow them to accept many favors from my only sister Octavia. This, in ordinary circumstances, would not be repugnant to my pride, but my sister is a very unusual person. She must do for my children in her own way, and while I was prepared, in agreeing that they should accept her bounty, for some whimsical manifestation of her eccentric character, I did not imagine that she would go so far as to shut me out from all knowledge of her plans for them. That, Mr. Ames, is what has happened."

His voice rose and fell mournfully. He puffed his pipe for a moment and continued:

"There is now something forward here which I do not understand. I have an idea that Octavia has contrived some preposterous scheme for choosing a husband for Cecilia that is in keeping with her odd fashion of transacting all her business. I do not know its nature, and by the terms of her agreement Cecilia is not to disclose the method to be employed to me—not even to me, her own father. You must agree, Ames, that that is rather rubbing it in."

"But you don't assume that your daughter is not to be a free agent in the matter? You don't believe that some unworthy and improper man is to be forced upon her?"

"That, sir, is exactly what I fear."

"You will pardon me, but I cannot for a moment believe that Miss Hollister would risk her niece's happiness even to satisfy her own peculiar humor. Your sister is a shrewd woman, and her heart, I am convinced, is the kindest. Among the suitors now camped at the Prescott Arms there must be some one whom your daughter approves, and I see no reason why he should not ultimately be her choice. Now that you have broached the matter, I make free to say that one of these suitors is an old friend of mine, Hartley Wiggins by name, and that he is a man of the highest character and a gentleman in the strictest sense."

He had been listening to me with the greatest composure, but at the mention of Wiggins' name he started and nervously clutched my arm.

"That man may be all that you say," he cried chokingly, "but he has acted infamously toward both my daughters. He is a rogue and a most despicable fellow. He has flirted outrageously with Hezekiah while at the same time pretending to be deeply interested in Cecilia."

"But, my dear sir, is it not possible that you do him a great wrong? May it not be the other way round that Hezekiah is trifling with Wiggins' affections? He's a splendid fellow, Hartley Wiggins, but he's a little slow, that's all. And between two superb young women like your daughters a man may be pardoned for doubts and hesitation. The thing is bound to straighten itself out."

He tossed his head impatiently.

"Has it occurred to you that Octavia's interest in this Hartley Wiggins may be due to a trifling and immaterial fact?"

"Nothing beyond his indubitable eligibility."

"Then let me tell you what I suspect. Both his names contain seven letters. My sister is slightly cracked as to the number seven. I swear to you my belief that the fact that his names contain seven letters each is at the bottom of all this. Incredible, my dear sir, but wholly possible.

"Then, such being the case, why doesn't she show her hand openly? You send conjecture far when once you entertain so absurd an idea."

"You think my assumption unlikely?" he asked eagerly.

"I certainly do, Mr. Hollister. You may as well assume that, as Wiggins is specially favored in the number of letters in his singularly prosaic and unromantic name, it is Miss Hollister's plan to keep him dallying seven years."

He seized me by the arm and forced me back against the battlements, then stood off and eyed me fiercely.

"You speak of serving and of service! Will you tell me just why you are here and what brings you into this affair? What are you doing in my sister's house, where I have to come like a thief in the night to see one of my own children?"

I hastened to declare my profession and that I had been summoned by Miss Hollister to examine her chimneys. I could not, however, tell him that until my arrival the chimneys had behaved themselves admirably.

"You've admitted your friendship for this Wiggins person—that's enough," he said when I had concluded. "I advise you to leave the house at once. I tell you he's got to be eliminated from the situation. Understand that I do not threaten you with violence, but I will not promise to abstain from visiting heavy punishment upon that fellow. And you? A chimney doctor? I am a man of considerable knowledge of the world, and I say to you very candidly that I don't believe there is any such profession."

"Then let me tell you," I replied, not without heat, "that I am a graduate in architecture. I am your sister's guest, and as she is perfectly competent to manage her own affairs I shall stay here as long as it pleases her to ask me to remain. And now, one other matter. How did you gain this roof tonight, when by your own admission you are not on such terms with your sister as would justify you in entering it openly?"

The moonlight did not fail to convey the contempt in his face, but I thought he grinned as he answered quietly:

"You don't seem to understand, young man, that you are entitled to no explanations from me. You strike me as a singularly fresh young person. It would be a positive grief to me to feel that my conduct had displeased you. And now, as the night grows chill, I shall beg you to precede me into the house by the way you came."

"But first," I persisted, "let me ask a question. It is possible that you yourself have some preference among your daughter's several suitors, Mr. Hollister. Would you object to telling me which one you would choose for Miss Cecilia?"

"Beyond question the man for Cecilia, if I have any voice in the matter, is Lord Arrowood."

"Arrowood!" I exclaimed. "You surprise me greatly. I saw him at the inn, and he seemed to me the most insignificant and uninteresting one of the lot."

"That proves you a person of poor gifts of discernment, Mr. Ames." And his tone and manner were quite reminiscent of his sister's ways, and his further explanation proved him even more worthily the brother of his sister.

"As I was obliged," he began, "owing to an unfortunate physical handicap, to abandon my art, that of a marine painter, I have given my attention for a number of years to the study of the Irish situation. I met Arrowood by chance in the highway yesterday, and I found that he holds exactly my ideas, which favor Irish independence." This certainly had the true Hollister touch.

"And so," Bassford Hollister concluded, "I naturally incline toward Arrowood, though he is so poor that he was obliged to come over in the steerage to continue his wooing of my daughter."

He let himself down into the dark trunk room, waited for me courteously and walked by my side to the stairway, both of us maintaining silence. I was deeply curious to know how he had entered and whether he expected to go down the front way and out the main door. We kept together to the third floor hall. I could have sworn to that. Then suddenly, just as we reached the stairway, out went the lights, and we were in utter darkness. I smothered an exclamation, clutched my matches and struck a light, and as the stick flamed slowly I looked about for Bassford Hollister. But he had vanished as suddenly and completely as though a trap had yawned beneath us and swallowed him. I found the third floor switch, and it responded immediately, flooding the stair well to the lower hall, but I neither saw nor heard anything more of Hollister.

Astounded by this performance, I continued on to the lower floor to have a look around, and there, calmly reading by the library table, sat Miss Octavia!

"Late hours, Mr. Ames!" she cried. "I supposed you had retired long ago."

"Pardon my troubling you, but may I inquire, Miss Hollister, how long you have been sitting here?"

The clock on the stair began to strike 12, and she listened composedly to a few of the deep toned strokes before replying.

"Just half an hour. I thought some one knocked at my door about an hour ago. The lights were on and I came down, saw a magazine that had escaped my eye before and here you find me."

"Some one knocked at your door?"

"I thought so. You know, the servants have an idea that the place is haunted, and I thought that if I sat here the ghost might take it upon himself to walk. I confess to a slight disappointment that it is only you who have appeared. I suppose it wasn't you who knocked at my door?"

"No," I replied, laughing a little at her manner, "not unless it was you who switched off the lights as I was coming down from the fourth floor. I have been studying this chimney from the roof. I know something of the ways of electric switches, and they don't usually move of their own accord."

"Your coming to this house has been the greatest joy to me, Mr. Ames. I should not have imagined in a chance look at you that you were psychical, and yet so it is clearly. And I am sure you that I have not touched any switch since I left my room. It was unnecessary, as I found the lights on. And I acquit you of rapping, rapping at my chamber door. It gives me the greatest satisfaction to assume that the house is haunted, and at any time you find the ghost I beg that you will lose no time in presenting me."

She wore a remarkable lavender dressing gown and a nightcap such as I had never seen outside a museum. As she concluded her speech, spoken in that curious lilting tone which from the beginning had left me in doubt as to the seriousness of all her statements, she rose and, still clasping her magazine, made me a courtesy and was soon mounting the stair.

I heard her door close a minute later, and then, feeling that I had earned the right to repose, I went to my room and to bed.

I slept late and on going down found the table set in the breakfast room. Miss Octavia entered briskly, her slight figure concealed by a prodigious gingham apron.

"Good morrow, merry gentleman," she began blithely. "The most delightful thing has happened. Without the slightest warning, without the faintest intimation of their dissatisfaction, the house servants have departed, with the single exception of my personal maid, who, being a Swede and therefore singularly devoid of emotion, was unshaken by the ghost rumors that have sent the rest of my staff scampering over the hills."

She lighted the coffee machine lamp in her most tranquil fashion and begged me to be seated.

"I have already breakfasted," she continued, "and Cecilia is even now preparing you an omelet with her own hand. I beg to reassure you as my guest that the departure of the servants causes me not the slightest annoyance. Cecilia is an excellent cook, and I myself shall not starve so long as I have strength to crack an egg or lift a stove lid. And besides, I still retain my early trust in Providence. I do not doubt that before nightfall a corps of excellent servants will again be on duty here. Very likely they are even now bound for this place, coming from the wet coasts of Ireland, from Liverpool and from lonely villages in Scandinavia. I hope you will testify to the fact that I faced this day in the cheeriest and most hopeful spirit."

"Not only shall I do so, Miss Hollister," I replied, trying to catch her own note, "but it will throughout my life give me the greatest satisfaction to set your cause aright. To that extent let me be Horatio to your Hamlet."

"Thank you, milord," she returned, with the utmost gravity. "And may I say further that the incident gives the stamp of authenticity to my ghost? I was obliged to pay those people double wages to lure them from the felicities of the city, and they must have been a good deal alarmed to have left so precipitately. You must excuse me now, as it is necessary for me to do the pastry cook's work this morning, that individual having fled with the rest, and it being incumbent on me to maintain my fee simple in this property, to make a dozen pies before high noon. But first I must visit the stables, where I believe the coachman still lingers, having been prevented from joining the stampede of the house servants by the painful twinges of gout."

With this she left me, and I began pecking at a grapefruit. It had been in my mind as I dressed that morning to play truant and visit the city. It was almost imperative that I take a look at my office, and I had resolved upon a plan which would, I believed, give me the key to the ghost mystery. If Pepperton had built that house he must know whether he had contrived any secret passages that would afford exists and entrances not apparent to the eye. It would be an easy matter to run into the city, explain myself to my assistant and get hold of Pepperton. My mind was made up, and I had even consulted a time table and chosen one of the express trains.

CHAPTER XII.

I Play Truant.

AS I sat at the table absorbed in my plans for the day my nerves received a sudden shock. I had heard no one enter, yet a voice at my shoulder murmured casually:

Hast thou seen ghosts? Hast thou at midnight heard—

It was the voice of Hezekiah, I knew before I faced her. She wore a blue sailor waist, with a broad red ribbon tied under the collar, and a blue tam-o'-shanter capped her head. She bore a tray that contained my omelet, a plate of toast and other comforts incidental to a substantial breakfast, which she distributed deftly upon the table.

"How did you get here?" I blurted, my nerves still out of control.

"The kitchen door, sir. I had ridden into the garden, and, seeing Aunt Octavia heading for the stables and Cecilia at the kitchen window, I pedaled boldly in. Cecilia wanted to borrow my bicycle, and, being a good little sister, I gave it to her. She also said that you required food, so I told her to go and I would carry you your breakfast. I shall skip myself in a minute. You may draw your own coffee. Mind the machine. It tips if you are not careful."

She went to the window and peered out toward the stables.

"May I ask, daughter of kings, where your sister has gone so suddenly?"

"Certainly! She's off for town to chase a cook and a few other people to run this hotel. I heard at the post-office that the whole camp had deserted, so I ran over to see what was doing. And just for that I've got to walk home."

"But your aunt said that Providence would take care of the servant question. She expected a whole corps of ideal servants to come straying in during the day."

"Cecilia hasn't Aunt Octavia's confidence in Providence, so she's taking a shot at the employment agencies. She has left a note on the kitchen table to inform Aunt Octavia that she had forgotten an engagement with the dentist and has gone to catch the 10:18."

"That, Hezekiah, is a lie. It isn't quite square to deceive your aunt that way," I remarked soberly.

Hezekiah laughed.

"You absurdity! Don't you know Aunt Octavia yet? She will be perfectly overjoyed when she comes back and finds that note from Cecilia. She likes disappearances, mysteries and all that kind of thing. But it is barely possible that you will have to wash the dishes. I can't, you see, for I'm not supposed to come on the reservation at all—not until Cecilia has found a husband. Isn't it perfectly delicious?"

"All of that, daughter of kings! I think that as soon as I can regain confidence in my own sanity I shall like it myself. But"—and I watched her narrowly—"you see, Hezekiah, there is really a ghost, you know."

Her divine laugh bubbled mellowly. She had walked guardedly to the window and turned swiftly with a mockery of fear in her face.

"Aunt Octavia approaches, and I must be off. But that ghost, Mr. Chimney Man—when you find him please let me know. There are a lot of things I want to ask some reliable ghost about the hereafter."

With this she fled, and I heard the front door close smartly after her. An instant later Miss Octavia appeared and asked solicitously how I liked my omelet.

"The coachman has been telling me a capital ghost story. He believes them to be beneficent and declares that he will under no circumstances leave my employment."

She sat down and folded her arms upon the table. For the first time I believed that she was serious. There was, in fact, a troubled look on her sweet, whimsical face. It occurred to me that the loss of her servants was not really the slight matter she had previously made of it.

"Mr. Ames, will you pardon me for asking you a question of the most intimate character? It is only after much hesitation that I do so."

I bowed encouragingly, my curiosity fully aroused.

"You may ask me anything in the world, Miss Hollister."

"Then I wish you would tell me whether—I can't express the dislike I feel in doing this—but can you tell me whether you have seen in the hands of my niece Cecilia a small, a very small, silver backed notebook."

"Yes; I have," I answered, greatly surprised.

"And may I ask whether—and again I must plead deep concern as an excuse for making such an inquiry—whether you by any chance saw her making any notation in that book?"

I recalled the silver bound book perfectly, but had attached no importance to it, but if Cecilia's fortunes were so intimately related to it as Miss Hollister's manner implied, I felt that I must be careful of my answer. I was trying to recall the precise moment at which I had entered the library the preceding evening after Hume's departure, and while I was intent upon this my silence must have been prolonged. I felt obliged to make an answer of some sort, and yet I did not relish the thought of conveying information that might distress and embarrass a noble girl like Cecilia Hollister. Something in my face must have conveyed a hint of this inner conflict to Miss Hollister, for she rose suddenly, holding up her hand as though to silence me. She seemed deeply moved and cried in agitation:

"Do not answer me! The question was quite unfair—quite unfair—and yet I assure you that at the moment I made the inquiry I felt justified."

She retreated toward the door as I rose, and then, with her composure fully restored, she courtesied gracefully.

"Luncheon here will be a buffet affair today, as I shall be engaged with matters of pastry. I'm sure, however

"Can I give you a lift?"

that you will find employment until dinner time, when my house will be fully in order again."

I intended that this should be a busy day, so without making explanations I went to the stable, told the coachman I wished to be driven to the station and was soon whizzing over the hills toward Katonah.

I wondered how Wiggins and the other gentlemen at the Prescott Arms were faring. My question was partially answered a second later as we passed the road that forked off to the inn. On a stone by the roadside sat Lord Arrowood, desolately guarding a kit bag and a suit case. He was dressed in a shabby Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers and sucked a pipe.

I bade the driver pause and greeted the nobleman affably.

"Can I give you a lift? You seem to be bound for the station, and I'm taking a train myself."

"No, thanks," he replied sharply. "They're a lot of bounders—bounders, I say!"

"Ah! Of whom do you speak, Lord Arrowood?" I asked, glancing at my watch.

"Those scoundrels at the inn. They have thrown me out—thrown me out—me!"

"Hard lines, for a fact, but if you are interested in trains—

"I refuse to leave the county!" he shouted. "If they think they're going to get rid of me they're mistaken. Bounders, I say, bounders!"

He uttered this opprobrious term with great bitterness and crossed his legs, as though to emphasize his permanence upon the bowlder. Patience on a monument is not more eternally planted. He seemed in no mood for conversation, so I sped on, with no time to lose.

I gained the step of the chair car attached to the 10:18 with some loss of dignity, the porter yanking me aboard under the conductor's scornful eye. The Katonah passengers were still in the aisle, and as I surveyed them I saw Cecilia take a seat in the middle of the car. She was just unfolding a newspaper when I moved to a seat behind her and bade her good morning.

The look she gave me in turning round had in it something of Hezekiah's quizzical humor. This interested me, because I had not previously seen any but the most superficial resemblance between the sisters. Her cheeks were aglow from her sprint on the wheel.

"We are both truants. You must have breakfasted in a hurry to have caught this train."

"Not all. I enjoyed a brief conversation with your sister, and after she had gone your aunt came back and lingered for a moment."

"She told you, I suppose, that Providence would look after the servant question. I'm going to assist Providence a little."

"You become the vicaress of Providence? I admire your spirit."

"It's mere self preservation. Aunt Octavia would have me chained to the kitchen if I didn't do something about it."

She had permitted me to settle with the conductor, and when I had completed this transaction I found that she had drawn from her purse the little silver booklet about which Miss Octavia had inquired so anxiously. She raised her eyes with the faraway look in them.

"Can you tell me how to spell Arrowood—is it one or two w's?"

"One I think the noble lord uses."

She seemed to write the name, and I saw her counting on her fingers, touching them lightly on the open page of the book.

Then she dropped it into her purse, which she thrust back carefully into her pocket. She sighed and was silent. I gave her in detail the story of the ghost, and my recital seemed to amuse her greatly.

"You thought it was Aunt Octavia herself at first, then you thought I was the spook, and now you are not fully persuaded that it is not my father. I will take you into my confidence this far—that I don't know how father got into the house last night. He wrote a note asking me to meet him on the roof and bring the foils. That was not unlike him, as he is the dearest father in the world, and his whims are just as jolly in their way as Aunt Octavia's. I was sure that Aunt Octavia had retired for the night, so I changed my dress and carried the foils up through the trunk room. I had hardly reached there before my father appeared. The whole situation—my being there and all that—has distressed father.

"You think," she asked, "that those lights couldn't have winked out twice by themselves while you were on the stairway?"

"I am positive of it. And somebody—a being of some sort—passed me on the stairway. It might imaginably have been you."

"But I tell you positively it was not."

"Then it might have been your father. A man who can enter a house at will might easily play any manner of other tricks. His disappearance after I had gone down into the house with him was just as mysterious as the ghost."

"It was natural for father not to want you to know how he got in. The motive for that would be the fact that he is not supposed to see me or communicate with me in any way."

"It must have occurred to you that there is one member of the Hollister family we haven't mentioned in this connection."

"If you mean Hezekiah"—

"None other!"

"If Hezekiah or my father should be caught in the house while I am there just now we should all pay dearly for it. Believe me, this is true. Some day you may know the whys and wherefores; at present no one may know. But why should Hezekiah wish to prowl about there at night—to assume for a moment that she is doing it?"

Her manner was wholly earnest. It was plain that she had entered into some sort of compact with her aunt, and no doubt the arrangement was in the characteristic whimsical vein of which I had enjoyed personal experience. I did not wish to press Cecilia for explanations she might not be free to make, but I ventured a suggestion or two.

"Hezekiah may be entering the house and playing ghost for amusement, merely in a spirit of childish rebellion against the interdiction that forbids her the house. That is quite plausible. Hezekiah being the spirited young person we know her to be. And it may amuse her, too, to plug the chimneys at a time when her sister is enjoying the visits of suitors. Without quite realizing that such was her animus, she may be the least—the very least bit jealous!"

Cecilia flushed, and her eyes flashed indignantly. She bent toward me eagerly.

"Please do not say such a thing! You must not even think it!"

"She may be a little forlorn, alone in your father's house over the hills at times when you are surrounded by admirers, and it is my assumption from what I have learned in one way and another of your flight abroad last summer that some of these gentlemen now established at the Prescott Arms are known to her."

"Oh, all of them, certainly."

"And Hartley Wiggins among the rest?"

"That, Mr. Ames, is most unkind," she declared earnestly. "She has told me that she was not in the least interested in Mr. Wiggins."

"And she told me the same thing, but I do not feel sure of it. But what if she is? You are not really interested in him——?"

She did not vouchsafe any reply to my statement, but changed the subject abruptly. My description of the ghost had taken considerable time, and we were now at the end of our journey.

"I count on finishing my errand and taking the 2:07," she remarked.

"That's a short time to allow yourself. I've heard that it's a dreary business chasing the employment agencies."

"Not if you know where not to go. If you'll get me a machine of some sort I'll be off at once."

"I fear I shan't conclude my own business so soon, but if you will honor me at luncheon"—

"Sorry, Mr. Ames, but it's out of the question. I hope to see you at dinner tonight. And please"—

"Yes, Miss Hollister"—

"Please remember that you are Aunt Octavia's guest and don't annoy her by failing to appear at dinner. You know you haven't fixed that chimney yet."

Her smile left me well in the air. I stood staring after the very commonplace cab as it rolled away with her, my mind whirling chaos of emotion. The crowd jostled me impatiently, for other people, not breathing celestial ether from an hour of Cecilia Hollister's society, were bent upon the day's business.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHARACTER.

We have all of us known women whose lives sweetened and beautified all with whom they came in contact.

Perhaps it was a mother or a wife, perhaps only a neighbor.

There was no preaching about it, possibly little of reproof or admonition. Yet her unselfishness made all less selfish, her graciousness made all more gracious.

Such a life is a light set upon a hill. Its influence none can measure. To many it may prove a suggestion, a hope, an inspiration, who never mention the fact. Possibly they do not even recognize it at the time. Yet the good work is done.

The writer has in mind one such. Her name does not here matter. To give it might seem personal.

This woman has a husband and six children, to whom she faithfully ministers.

Yet, though her time is so fully occupied, this does not prevent her from being a present help in time of trouble to her neighbors.

We will call this lady Mrs. B. because that is not the initial of her name.

Recently one of Mrs. B.'s neighbors was at death's door. The doctors had little hope.

The neighbor's three little children were taken into Mrs. B.'s home, who had ample mother love for three more.

After being at the very doorway of the other country the neighbor began almost miraculously to recover. She herself believed it was through the prayers and helpful suggestions of Mrs. B., but she was admonished to tell no one.

At about the same time another neighbor fell ill, and Mrs. B. also waited upon her.

All three women belong to the same church. The following Sunday the minister prayed not only for the sick, but for those attending them and telling them simply of God as an ever present help.

No one had any doubt as to whom was meant.

During all her labors Mrs. B. found time to attend to her church duties, to her little clubs and to be interested in the affairs of her town and the outside world.

"I was sick and ye visited me."

There are saints in our common life. They make their whole communities richer and better for their presence.

"Let your light so shine."

The beauty of all this is that I personally know every word of it to be true.

DUAL PURPOSE OR MILK SHORTHORNS

When a farmer has decided to make cows his money making stock the question arises, What breed shall he keep? In the first place, no farmer need have two or more breeds of cattle on the same farm, writes H. W. Avery in American Agriculturist. Let him select the breed that suits him best and start in with a pedigreed herd, small or large, as circumstances may dictate, or, if he cannot afford the pedigreed females, use a pedigreed bull on a good cross of the breed desired; then, having made his start, stay with the breed as long as he farms. There is no great difference among the breeds. Each one fills its own place, and locality to a large degree will determine the breed to be selected. There can be no doubt of the value of the general purpose cow, and as long as farmers make money breeding it the type will not be abandoned.

A cow that will give a profitable amount of milk and make good beef in time, except when she is in flush of milk, is a paying investment for the general farmer. Also a farmer wants a regular breeder. It is for these reasons I chose dairy Shorthorns, and I have paid off the mortgage as the result of my choice. All of my cows give upward of 8,000 pounds of milk a year and breed large, healthy calves. In my herd is a two-year-old with a record of 10,395 pounds of milk. This same heifer was second in a butter fat contest at Syracuse, 1910, all breeds competing.

The minute a cow is not wanted in the herd she will bring from $50 to $80 as beef, which makes a considerable item so long as the cow has been up to that time a profitable milker. The Shorthorn is hardy and does not require a large amount of grain, being a great forager and consumer of silage and straw.

Only One Accepted.

"Father, did mother accept you the first time you proposed to her?"

"Yes, my dear, but since then any proposal that I have ever made she has scornfully rejected."—Detroit Free Press.

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