

# THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

VOL. XXXIX.

GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, MAY 15, 1913.

NO. 14

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Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. E. W. Grove's signature is on each box. 15c.

## The Siege of the Seven Suitors

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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### SYNOPSIS

Hartley Wiggin is in love with Cecilia Hollister. His friends and Ames meets an elderly lady at the Asolo tea room. She is Cecilia's Aunt Octavia, an eccentric woman of wealth. She invites Ames to her home. Ames is fascinated by Francesca, a tea room girl.

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

Ames sees mysterious man watching the house. He hears of Cecilia's, Cecilia's sister, Wiggin's, and Ames' visit to the chimney smoke mysteriously.

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

Wiggin regards Ames as a rival. Aunt Octavia disbelieves Wiggin because his ancestors were Tories. Wiggin is interested in both Cecilia and Heskiah. Cecilia has nine suitors.

Ames meets Francesca in an orchard and tells her she is Heskiah's. They see nine suitors.

Cecilia rejects Professor Hume and makes her last appeal to Heskiah's ghostly father. Heskiah vanishes mysteriously through the hall wall. Heskiah tells Ames she is young and beautiful.

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 Heskiah is not in love with Wiggin. Ames makes another appeal to Heskiah's ghost.

I helped him to his feet and bent over the stair rail leading down to the third floor. Evidently our strange transactions beneath and above had not disturbed the assembled suitors and their hostess, but in common decency Lord Arrowood must be disposed of promptly. There was no doubt about that.

"I was an ass to try it," muttered his lordship, pulling his tie into shape. "And now I want to get out. I want to go away from here."

He was tugging at the belt of his Norfolk coat, and something between it and his waistcoat evidently gave him concern. Our conversation was carried on in half-whispers. He was so crestfallen that if it hadn't been for the necessity of maintaining silence I should have laughed outright.

"Out with it, my lord. What have you stuck in your coat?"

"They're bounders, all the rest of 'em," he asserted dogmatically, "but I believe you to be a gentleman."

"I thank you, Lord Arrowood, for your kind words of confidence. Open your coat! I declare that even if I will lift a bit of the Hollister plate I will let you go."

Reluctantly, shamefacedly and still breathing hard from his late exertions, Lord Arrowood of Arrowood, Hants, England, obeyed me. There were five buttons on the close fitting jacket, and the loosening of every succeeding one seemed to give him pain. Then, with his head slightly lifted as though in disdain of me, he held out for my observation a pie, in the pan in which it had been baked. The top crust was browned to a nicety. Its edges were crisp and flaky, and in spite of the fact that I had so lately dined sumptuously at Miss Hollister's hospitable board, at sight of this alluring pastry I experienced the sharp twinges of aroused appetite.

"Now you have it, and I hope you are satisfied," said Lord Arrowood. "I gladly allow me to retire by the way-gate."

"First," I replied, sobered by the gravity of his manner, "I would interest me as a student of character to know just what species of pie lured you to this burglarious deed."

"I have reason to think," he answered, "that it is a pie of the variety known as 'the old lady's pie.' I saw the coal hole open and ladder beneath, and the rest of it was easy. If you and the other chap hadn't chased me all over the estate I'd been off with my pie and no harm done. The old lady's innane, you know, and has no manner of use for pies. The house is haunted in the bargain. When you had about winded me down in the cellar and cut me off from the ladder and chased me up here the ghost took a hand, and if you hadn't tripped me and laid me out the spirits would certainly have called me, O Lord, what a night!"

"You are sure you speak the truth when you say that the coal hole was open and that you found the ladder there when you came?"

"No manner of doubt of it. As I have already said, I believe you to be a gentleman, and between gentlemen certain confidences may pass that wouldn't be possible between a gentleman and those cattle down there."

long, and a promptly nung myself upon him.

My prisoner's resistance engaged my best attention a moment, but when I had sat upon his legs and got him of his struggling hands some one stole softly by me. My prisoner, too, heard and was attentive. Not only did I experience the same sensation as on the previous night of a passing near by, but I was conscious of the same faint perfume, as of a flower scent half caught in a garden at night; that had added to my mystification before.

Then without the slightest warning the lights flashed on and a door closed somewhere, but it was not the hidden one leading down into the remnant of the old house, for my prisoner's head and shoulders lay across its threshold.



"Bounders, I say, Bounders!" he gasped.

He sighed deeply, bringing his dazed wits back to him, and I found myself gazing into the blinking eyes of Lord Arrowood.

"Bounders, I say, Bounders!" he gasped.

"In the circumstances, Lord Arrowood, I should not call names. Will you tell me what you mean by running through this house in this fashion? Stand up and give an account of yourself, or your chimney you will wait until doomsday."

So spoke John Stewart Dick, taking his vengeance of me with my client and hostess. I might have forgiven him, but I could not forgive Hartley Wiggin.

"He doesn't know any more about chimneys than the man in the moon," my old friend was saying between coughs.

And then quite unmistakably I smelt smoke, and bending farther over the rail and peering down the stair well I saw smoke pouring from the library into the hall. It seemed to be a greater volume tonight than at previous times, and the faintest gleam of light was filling the lower hall and rising toward me. I ran quickly to the third floor, to the chamber whose fireplace was served by the library chimney. The lights in the third floor hall winked out as I opened the door. I heard a step behind me and a gasp, the resumed her seat on the trunk, and her head thumped it tranquilly.

"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 peevishly shut. I 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 Heskiah's quick ear had heard her. But Heskiah's equality was disconcerted. Even with her aunt close at hand she showed not the slightest alarm. She resumed her seat on the trunk, and her head 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."

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

"But your suit would make me 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."

"If I wanted to see a 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 Heskiah became now an urgent and delicate matter.

"You caught me," said Heskiah calmly. "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 Heskiah thrust forth a neat tan pump rather the worse for wear. "It was on the second floor a bit ago," she began, "and lost my slipper."

"In what mischief, pray?"

tries are sacred to Heskiah. My impressions of Heskiah are the pleasantest, and I cannot allow you to intervene between her and the pie I hold in my hands. If you will accompany me below I will undertake to gain access to the pie-vant, return this pie to its proper place and hand you at the foot of the ladder an apple pie in place of it. I deny say it never will be missed, but from what I know of Heskiah any trifling with her appetite would be a crime indictable at common law."

His lordship seemed reassured, and we were about to descend by the concealed stair when he arrested me.

"Mr. Ames, you are a gentleman and possess a generous heart. We understand each other perfectly, and as I have every reason to believe that my suit is hopeless I ask the loan of \$5 until I can confer with my friend, the British consul at New York. I shall sail at once for England."

He stepped down before me into the dark stairway, and I closed the door after me and followed him. I found my way to the pie pantry without difficulty, returned the gooseberry pie to its proper shelf, chose an apple pie and gave it, with a five dollar note, to Lord Arrowood.

At the bottom of the ladder he pressed my hand feelingly and expressed his gratitude in terms that would have touched a harder heart than mine. Then, having closed the coal hole and hidden the ladder under a pile of wood, I resumed my pursuit of the ghost.

I lighted my way with a candle through the lost chambers of the old house, up the hidden stairway and out into the fourth floor hall again. The old stair, I found on closest observation, led to the second to the fourth floor, and below this had been placed with lumber carefully preserved from the earlier house. There was nothing so strange, after all, about the hidden stairway, though I was convinced that this had been no idea of "Pepper's," but that he had merely obeyed the orders of his eccentric client, the umbrella and dyspepsia cure millionaire.

I had no sooner let myself through the secret door into the upper hall than I was aware of a disturbance in the library below. I heard exclamations from the men, and as I ran down the hall I saw that Miss Octavia's voice rose above the tumult.

"We must have patience, gentlemen. Chinamen are subject to moods just like human beings, and we are fortunate in having in the house a gentleman who is an expert in such matters."

"If you wait for that man to mend your chimney you will wait until doomsday."

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ed. 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, unobtrusively haunting this house in America long after the Declaration of Independence and Washington's farewell address have passed into literature?"

"I have never spoken a truth," said 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 things 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 have lived the bones of that British soldier."

"And as for the chimney?"

"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 Heskiah's words little by little, and she was so kind as to give me an object of high concentration.

"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, but which 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 closed, and I did not check my scrutiny failed to discover any opening from which that slipper might have been flung. The region is so desecrated and acts of violence are so foreign to its dignity and repose that I could scarce believe that I held that bit of leather in my hand. It took me several minutes to penetrate into the street scene 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 checked 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 asserted, 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 do not think I have ever since benefited by taking these tablets."

For sale by all dealers.

A railroad is building toward Boone and the town is getting ready for it. A board of trade has been organized and a cleanup day appointed.

Lame back is usually caused by rheumatism of the muscles of the back for which you will find nothing better than Chamberlain's Liniment. For sale by all dealers.

Polk county will issue \$100,000 of bonds to be expended on public roads and bridges. The bonds are issued by authority of an act of the last General Assembly.

Constipation Cures. Dr. King's New Life Pills will relieve constipation promptly and get your bowels in a healthy condition again. John Supic of Sanbury, Pa., says, "They are the best pills I ever used, and I recommend them for constipation, indigestion and liver complaint." Will help you. Price 25c. Recommended by Graham Drug Company.

The county commissioners of Cumberland have decided to have their meetings opened with prayer.

Best Medicine For Colds. When a druggist recommends a remedy for colds, throat and lung troubles, you may feel sure that he knows what he is talking about. C. Lovar, druggist of Marion, Ohio, writes of Dr. King's New Discovery: "I know Dr. King's New Discovery is the best remedy I have ever used for colds, throat and lung troubles. It cured my wife of a severe bronchial cold after all other remedies had failed." It will do the same for you if you are suffering with a cold or any bronchial, throat, or lung cough. Keep a bottle on hand all the time for everyone in the family to use. It is a home doctor. Price 50c. and \$1.00. Guaranteed by Graham Drug Co.

CHAPTER XVI.  
Lady's Slipper.

A S-I recall it she was very much at her ease. She sat on one foot and the other bent 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 was at her manner now that she was caught. She seemed neither distressed, astonished nor afraid.

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

"I beheld Heskiah!"

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

"It 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 forward 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 peevishly shut. I 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 Heskiah's quick ear had heard her. But Heskiah's equality was disconcerted. Even with her aunt close at hand she showed not the slightest alarm. She resumed her seat on the trunk, and her head thumped it tranquilly.

hah 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 Heskiah 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 possibility."

She indicated the trunk upon which Heskiah had sat and nibbled her cracker not more than ten minutes before. Could it be possible that when I lifted the cover that golden bead would be found beneath? My life has known no blinder moment than that in which I thought 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 in triumph. I felt jerked out the trays to relay any lingering suspicion. Why, had I ever doubted Heskiah? 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 protest, the matter further if she liked, but I would not help her to trap Heskiah.

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 passé 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."

Heskiah on the roof was safe for a time. Miss Octavia's gentle rejection of my Beacon street anecdote and her intimation that Heskiah had been an unblinded participant of the comedy of the ghost had been disquieting, and in my relief of her abandonment of the search I loitered on downwards with my hostess. I wished to impress her with the idea that I was without ulterior business. Heskiah 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 by the means of a goodly fortune, and among the chimney crew nursing one stockinged foot and waiting for me to turn up with her lost slipper it would do her no harm to nibble the bitter fruit of repentance with another.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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