

THE SIEGE OF THE SEVEN SUITORS

lamb is ancient, we declare it to be of Wiggins's shepherding. It is the way of our humor to hold Wiggins responsible for things. His good nature is usually equal to the worst we can do to him. He is the kind of fellow that one instinctively indicts without hearing testimony. We all know perfectly well that Wiggins's ranch is a wheat ranch.

Wiggins is an athlete, and his summers in the West and persistent training during the winter in town keep him in fine condition. As I faced him to-night in our favorite corner of the Hare and Tortoise dining-room, the physical man was fit enough; but I saw at once that he was glum and dispirited. He had through many years honored me with his confidence, and I felt that to-night, after we got well started, I should hear what was on his mind. I hoped to cheer him with the story of a visit I had by chance paid that afternoon to the Asolando Tea-Room; for though Wiggins is a most practical person, I imagined that he would be diverted by my description of a place which, I felt sure, nothing could tempt him to visit. I shall never forget the look he gave me when I remarked, at about his third spoonful of soup:

"By the way, I dropped into an odd place this afternoon. Burne-Jones buns, Rossetti mac-