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SOLITARY ISLAND

A NOVEL.

By REV. JOHN TALBOT SMITH.

CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

Florian had reason to be troubled over the prospect of losing her. She loved the truth, and seemed to have little trouble in following it. He often smiled as he thought with what gentle but firm persistence Ruth would push him and the whole world aside if they stood between her and the truth. So it was with her as she took up the study of the Catholic faith when Florian had made his proposal for her hand. The traditions of Clayburgh and the spite of her neighbors were brushed aside like cobwebs. In the same way her study not having proved satisfactory and convincing, she was ready to give up Florian and remain steadfast in her former indifference. Such a nature may look hard at the glance, but though uncommon it is quite consistent with the deepest tenderness and the strongest passion.

Florian thinking of these things as he rowed across the bay grew more and more troubled, and finally lost courage. He would not press her to a final decision that night. A little strategy and tact ought to be used even with so sincere a woman. A soft wind was rising, and the mist that floated on the river was shaken apart to let the stars shine through like silver ornaments. Growing stronger it made great rents in the mist, which remained open long enough to show the dark mass of an island or the lights on shore.

"I am so glad you have come!" cried a soft voice from the shore, almost before he touched it. He jumped out, drew up the boat, and clasped the hand outstretched to him. "You are always so, Ruth," he said, with some reserve in his tones. "What is the trouble?"

"Come inside and I'll tell you." And they went into the sitting-room together.

"I have heard from my father," she said when they were seated. "And his head is on his shoulders still, and no one has the reward!" murmured Florian regretfully.

"Oh! what silliness." She rose and went to the window. "Those spies infect the house from morning till night. I wouldn't like to have them hear us."

"Spies!" shouted Florian, rising, with a resolution in his face as plain as if he had spoken it.

"Oh! no, you mustn't," pleaded Ruth. "Wait till you hear what is to be done, and then you may go after the spies if you want to."

"Spies! In this country?" he repeated, with hot indignation. "No, Ruth, I shall not wait an instant."

"But remember, you imperil my father's liberty by interfering now," said Ruth; "and it was to have your help in saving him that I sent for you to-night."

"Oh!" said Florian. "I shall wait."

"Scott, that queer hunter, came to me after sundown," Ruth began, "and told me that my father was hiding in a cave among the islands, and was anxious that I should send him some money. Scott was to bring it, but I told him—"

"That you would get me to do it instead," Florian interrupted, "and bring him some news and help him to get out of the country."

"Not at all," said Ruth, "but that I would go myself, for I know how he wishes to see me; but I will need help to rid myself of those spies."

"That is it," said Florian, with a rising color and sparkling eyes. "That is pleasant. You are a good general, Ruth; you know how to select your means and how to dispose of them. What execution these will do!"

He held out his stout wrists, and she smiled.

"I think we shall need head-work more than wrist-work."

"One shall supplement the other," said Florian. "When are we to begin?"

"At once, of course," she answered. "Oh! it is to be a night adventure," murmured Florian, with a sudden dash towards the window. The fog was gone and the wind was freshening rapidly. Dull clouds obscured the sky, but the faint starlight, shining down in broken beams, showed ugly whitecaps playing across the black waters.

"It will be a rough night."

"Ah! but we shall not be out all night," said Ruth; "and for an hour this wind will be no stronger. But we must not delay, and I must get over to-night."

"What a girl! When she will, she will, you may depend on't." If we can only give trouble to the spies! Well, wrap up and we are off."

He went out to get the boat ready, a common yacht of ordinary size, and presently Ruth, in a pretty costume, joined him.

"This is a stiff breeze," said Florian, "just right for a short sail. If but Linda were with us!"

"Excuse me," said a voice in the darkness, "but I am anxious to cross to Grindstone. If you are going that way I would be highly obliged if you would permit me to accompany you."

Ruth pressed Florian's arm as a man came out of the gloom.

"We are very sorry," answered Florian, with much roughness, "but it is impossible. We do not know you. He is a fool," he added in an undertone. "Any one could understand that dodge."

"I am very well known at the hotel," said the stranger. "Mr. Johnston would consider it a personal compliment if you could oblige me."

"Oh! that's another thing," said Florian. "Jump in." And to Ruth's chagrin and astonishment, the stranger entered, the boat was pushed off, and in an instant they were scudding like a bird over the angry bay.

Florian, though not a humorist, had a keen appreciation of the humorous side of events and men, and after his very proper refusal to admit the stranger into the boat, it occurred to him that a joke would not be out of place in the midst of a serious adventure. Therefore he changed his mind, and though taken up with the little vessel, could afford a silent laugh at his future intentions.

The spy, if such was his character, could hardly be a keen man or at all fitted for his office. Florian had a reputation for keenness, and delighted to play off that quality against its counterfeit, rejoicing, as youth and vanity ever does, in the display of power. The boat flew very rapidly over the water—in fact, the wind was almost too much for the vessel, as some wild seas, which partly drenched the stranger, plainly showed.

"Quite a rough night," said he, by way of destroying a very awkward silence.

"One of those nights that bring no one out without a reason," said Florian.

The stranger relapsed into silence, as if the cut had reached him. Ruth began dimly to perceive that Florian had an object in his strange action towards the spy.

In half an hour they were at Round Island, and the boat shot lightly into a sheltered cove.

"Here you are, sir. Come, Ruth," said Florian, and he swung the boat to the shore. "Make that rope fast at the bow, and jump on again," he added in a whisper.

The stranger landed, the bow swung round, Ruth was already aboard, and with a light shove the boat was far enough out to catch the wind.

"Excuse me," called the stranger, "but I am not quite sure of my way."

"Keep away from the water," said Florian, "and you're all right. Good night, sir. I am happy to have obliged Mr. Johnston."

"Thank you," came very dubiously from the deserted stranger, and a light laugh from the amused young people floated back to him.

"I am sorry," said Ruth, "to put him in so sad a plight."

"Faugh!" cried Florian in disgust. "I could scarcely keep from punching his head. Don't waste your sentiment, Ruth; keep it all for me."

"Pray be silent, Florian. You are not usually so silly, and this is not the time for extravagance."

"Not the time! What wind and waves, and cloud and sky are full of it!" cried he with enthusiasm, and would have said more, but that, entering into a narrow channel which had the full sweep of the wind, he felt constrained to turn all his attention to the vessel.

Not a small portion of the waves which broke in their path found a lodging place in the boat; and as they emerged from the channel into a broad bay where the shifting winds had full play, the little craft began to heave, and between altering their course and dodging seas they were a long time getting to their destination. It was with great satisfaction Florian sailed under the lee of a

pretty island not more than a mile distant from the Canadian shore.

"This is the place," said Ruth; "we are to look for a projecting rock, a house, and a light."

"That is, you want Scott's oratory, hermitage, ranch, or whatever you please to call it," he replied.

"Cabin is a good word, for I fancy the hunter is not a man of much prayer."

"He ought to be, in this solitude." And Florian fell silent, overcome, perhaps, by the majesty of those scenes through which he was gliding. All at once a light and a rock burst upon their view, and the hunter himself stood on the shore to welcome them in the darkness.

"This is a stiff breeze," said Florian, "just right for a short sail. If but Linda were with us!"

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"That is, you have never seen any."

"Father," murmured Ruth, slipping into her father's outstretched arms, as that gentleman entered, followed by Scott. The hermit smiled approvingly on the scene still, looking at Florian, he seemed suddenly and strangely overcome, and shuffled awkwardly into a corner.

"I have it," thought Florian; "he had a daughter, and this scene recalls many a painful one."

"Florian, a thousand thanks," said the squire, shaking hands violently with the youth, his face purple with emotion, restrained because the hermit had forbidden him to roar. "She is yours, and you will guard her when I'm far away on the billows."

"On your pillow?" cried Florian.

"Why—"

"On the billows, sir!" said the squire. "No tricks, sir; I can't stand them now. I mean, when I am sailing for sunny France take care of her."

"I'll go with you," whimpered Ruth beginning to cry and patting his white head.

"Ay, that's right," said the squire. "Pat away. You may not know what a costly piece of furniture that head of mine is now with two governments after it. You'll come with me? Not at all. You'll stay here with Florian and go to France on your bridal tour. I'll have a place for you. I'll be the thorn of those two rascally governments. I'll be lonely, I know, but I'll make up for it by fight. There, there, little girl, just sit down and get sensible again. You don't happen to have a pipe, Florian? This man here don't smoke—not even fire in him for that."

"Here you are," said Florian, producing the article. "Not smoke!" he thought. "Why, I did not notice the absence of tobacco. Two points acquired."

Ruth made strenuous efforts to recover from a fit of sobbing, and her father lighted his pipe. Under its soothing influence he grew melancholy.

"When I'm in France, Florian—"

"But you're not there yet, sir, and we don't intend you shall go."

"Nonsense! You don't know the malice, the devilish what-d'ye-call-it, of those two governments. If we fail, said Mackenzie to me, 'we're damned'—politically I mean. What's the use? I must go. I'm cut out for an exile; I feel it all over me, along with the rheumatism, since I began jiggling around these confounded islands. Here that sigh? It attacks me regularly night and day."

Ruth smiled.

"That's right, dear," said he. "I know what you're thinking of—that it will take many sighs to make the old man give up the last one. They may search and persecute, but I won't lose a pound of flesh for 'em. No, sir!"

"What do you think, Scott?" said Florian to the hermit. "Isn't there some way to get the squire out of this muddle?"

"Muddle, sir!" thundered the squire in a crescendo which sank to a whisper at the warning gesture of Scott.

"You mean revolution."

"I beg your pardon," said Florian, "—revolution."

"There is but one way that I know of," replied Scott modestly.

"You! What do you know about it?" said the squire roughly. "Why, Florian, what can any one think of a man who says that it takes as much power in Almighty God to knock a thing into nothing as it did to take it out of nothing? He says that and swears by it. Don't you, sir—don't you?"

"Third point," muttered Florian. "He studies philosophy."

"What I was thinkin'," said Scott, heedless of the squire, "this young man might go down to the governor of the State and just settle the matter in a quiet way without much talk—"

"Certainly! That ends it—a boy settles a revolution."

"No, no, papa," said Ruth. "He means that Florian shall bear your submission—"

"I'll never submit! Well, go on."

"To the governor, and may be he will accept it, and you will not have to go so far away and leave me alone."

"That's the hardest part of it—leaving you, dear; but what can I do—what can I do?"

Scott beckoned Florian and the two went outside.

"You see," said the hermit, "as far as I can learn, this country ain't so much against the squire as he thinks. It's my opinion that if some friend went to the governor and said, 'Here, there ain't no earthly use in drivin' an old man out of his own house because the British lion is roarin'; s'posin' he gives himself up, wouldn't the government kind-a pardon him and let him stay at home while he keeps quiet?'—that would

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settle the hull business, I think."

"I think the same," said Florian.

"We'll persuade him to give me the authority to treat for him, and you will be kind enough to keep him for a few days until I return."

"In course, in course; he's welcome as long as he stays."

"You have a nice place about here," said Florian, desiring to draw him out. "A little lonely, perhaps."

"Somewhat, but I like it," answered the man simply. "I couldn't stay in your towns now, and there isn't another place in the world I'd exchange with just at this moment."

"You have not had much experience in towns?"

"A good deal," said Scott, reflectively; "but not for a long spell. I crammed a pile of fact into a short spell and got tired mighty soon. It's always the way, even here, I notice, though you don't get tired so quick nor you don't stay that way long. When I get all out of sorts, be it night or day, I walk out on this island and that's enough for me. I'm quieted right off, and me and everybody in the world seems suited one to 't'other. I look at them stars a-shinin' and a-twinklin' so easy and careless up thar, and then I see 'em looking the same in the water, with a little tremble."

Florian had waked the hermit into a quiet enthusiasm, which showed itself only in the quantity of his words; for as to animation of gesture or look, there was none. He thought it a fair opportunity to put a few leading questions. "I do not wonder at such feelings," he said; "for I have often thought that such a life would be a second paradise."

"It is, it is," interrupted Scott earnestly. "I declare to you I never knew what happiness really was till I lit on this place."

"But its disadvantages are so many," continued the youth. "and loneliness is the first. Then when sickness overtakes you, or feebleness, the comforts of companionship, and particularly of religion, are wanting."

"Well, about religion I can't say much," taking the youth by the arm and beginning to walk up and down. "For I don't s'pose I've got a good bit of it. I don't care for the comforts of companionship. I have never suffered half as much from loneliness

feelin's here as in the world. There's nothin' stands between me and God but this, boy"—and he beat his body. "And God is here," he added reverently, "and who can say that he is lonely with such a beln' round? I can't. I found out when I was like you that you've got to be alone most of the time. Those you think most of are very near, but they only show you that you can't git any mortal man or woman as near your heart as you want. God only can fold you right up and satisfy you; and he's all I want or expect."

"Then he has no particular religion," thought Florian; "now to see if he has any relations. You are right in what you have said," he remarked aloud, "and I feel the force of every word. But a man must suffer to be educated to the practice of such ideas."

"A little—not much." And Scott was silent.

"I have often thought of trying it for a time," said Florian—"this life. I love these scenes so. I love the beautiful solitude of such a night as this—a solitude so full of voices that but for their harmony you might think yourself among men. But old ties are hard to break. You, perhaps, had no such ties to hold you to the world."

"I had my ambitions," said Scott, "but a breath blasts those foolish things. I had a few hearts bound to mine kind—a strong, but death makes short work of such. Ne, of course I mightn't have had as many as you, but I had enough, I reckon; but still I got over 'em, and they never trouble me now."

"No relations, probably," thought Florian; "no religion. How did he come here? is the next question, and what are his expectations? How did you happen to get a liking for this kind of life, Scott? Was it very hard at first?"

"No, it was never hard. I was kind of broken up and took to it for health's sake; then I stayed in it, and I'm goin' to stay in it till the end, if I can. Some morning they'll be lookin' for me and they'll find me dead. 'I'll be buried thar, I trust, whar the old house stands—unless," he added playfully, "the angels of the island bury me quietly themselves, for I love 'em well, as they know."

"You are deserving of such a burial," said Florian; "no man has ever paid such honor to nature as you have in this section. I would like to be present when they bury you."

"The world doesn't come in to such funerals," Scott answered, laughing; "so you needn't expect to. Hadn't we better go in now and try to win over the old man?"

"One moment, Scott. I am going to ask a favor of you which you must grant me. I like this solitude and I like you. Will you permit me to come here sometimes and stay a week with you, and fish and hunt and talk with you? It will only be for a short time, as I will soon be going off from this place."

The hermit listened with patience to this bold request.

"I don't invite any one here," he said reservedly; "but if you want to you kin come on conditions. You're not to talk about me to any one as long's you live; and as to your comin', remember I don't invite any one, and they can't come too seldom."

Without waiting to receive Florian's thanks for so concise and negative an invitation, he went hastily into the cabin. Ruth had reconciled her father to the proposition of an Embassy of peace to the governor, and from considering the woes of exile the hearty squire had passed to the contemplation of a homely yet safe future, while he was ready with all sorts of advice for his young ambassador.

"Don't stoop, Florian—don't yield an inch. They'll be glad enough to listen to you when they hear your message. I'd rather an older man should go; but you have the ability, and 'twill be an opening for you. You'll get acquainted with the noise, and a slight hint that you are related to me won't do any harm. A good deal may come of it. Revolutionists are the style of this age, and you reflect some of the glory. Mackenzie won't like it. He'll be in jail and I'll be out; but, pshaw! why didn't he have gumption enough to see his own roe in Canada? I did my share on this side. I'll be blest if I'll do any more."

"That's the way I look at it," Scott began.

"I don't want you to look at it," snapped the squire. "Get do you know about the matter? Get correct ideas of Almighty God before you dabble in politics."

"Good advice," said Florian, "if politicians themselves will follow it."

"Well, about religion I can't say much," taking the youth by the arm and beginning to walk up and down. "For I don't s'pose I've got a good bit of it. I don't care for the comforts of companionship. I have never suffered half as much from loneliness

(To be Continued.)

WEAK TIRED WOMEN
 How many women there are that get no refreshment from sleep. They wake in the morning and feel tired than when they went to bed. They have a dizzy sensation in the head, the heart palpitates; they are irritable and nervous, weak and worn out, and the lightest household duties during the day seem to be a drag and a burden.

MILBURN'S HEART AND NERVE PILLS

are the very remedy that weak, nervous, tired out, sickly women need to restore them the blessings of good health. They give sound, restful sleep, tone up the nerves, strengthen the heart, and make rich blood. Mrs. C. McDonald, Portage la Prairie, Man., writes: "I was troubled with shortness of breath, palpitation of the heart and weak spots. I got four boxes of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills, and after taking them I was completely cured."