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ROSE ISLAND

By Lilian Leveridge

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Organist of St. John's.

"Angel-voices, ever singing
Round Thy throne of light,
Angel-harps, for ever ringing,
Rest not day nor night:
Thousands only live to bless Thee,
And confess Thee,
Lord of might!

"Yea, we know that Thou rejoicest
O'er each work of Thine.
Thou didst ears and hands and voices
For Thy praise design;
Craftsman's art and music's measure
For Thy pleasure
All combine."

—Rev. F. Pott.

RUTH CAMERON was locking the school one afternoon after four o'clock dismissal when the minister drove up to the gate. "I thought I would be just about in time to pick you up," he said, after they had exchanged greetings. "I am going your way. Will you ride?"

Being tired after a strenuous day's work, Ruth gratefully accepted the invitation.

"Now, Miss Ruth," Mr. Scripture began briskly, after a little desultory conversation, "I came to talk business with you to-day."

"Business! With me!" she exclaimed, in evident surprise.

"Yes," he returned, smiling. "I came to offer you the position of organist of St. John's Church."

"Organist of St. John's Church!" she echoed in bewilderment. "Why, Mr. Scripture, there is no organ."

The minister laughed. "I have taken you by surprise," he said. "Now, let me explain. Yesterday I was present at the reading of Mr. Stratton's will. I don't think you ever

met him, did you? For years he has lived on a little farm away back among the hills. He 'kept to himself,' as the saying is, and, apart from necessary errands to Hillsdale or Marysville, he seldom went anywhere. Yet, though he lived five miles from the church, he and his wife were seldom absent on Sundays, until a few years back, when Mrs. Stratton's health began to fail. She died a year ago, and he himself has been ailing ever since. He was an odd man in many ways, but had some sterling qualities of character that more than atoned for his eccentricities. He has always been a staunch and loyal son of the Anglican Church—a little bigoted, perhaps, but that we must forgive. He won the reputation of being a 'close-fisted' man, but the revelation of the fact that he had amassed quite a considerable hoard came as a surprise to many.

"Now I am coming at last to the point. His will provided a very generous legacy to be expended on a good organ for St. John's Church, and the best Anglican organist procurable. The organ has already been sent for, and now the point at issue is—will you be the organist, Miss Cameron?"

Surprise, pleasure, and a trembling distrust of her own powers, mingled in one bewildered flush on Ruth Cameron's face. "Mr. Scripture," she stammered, "I—I—don't think I am musician enough. If I could only play better—"

"That's all right, Miss Ruth. Do the best you can, and work faithfully to improve yourself, and nobody will complain."

"Mr. Scripture, if there were no one else—but there's Mr. Macbeth. He is a good musician—far better than I—and he comes quite regularly to our church. Why not ask him?"

"That is not in our power. Mr. Stratton in his will was very clear and very emphatic that no one but a member of the Anglican Church should play the organ bought with his money. We forfeit everything if we do not accept his conditions. Mr. Macbeth is, as you say, a good musician, and probably might not object to being our organist; but he is not an Anglican. He holds some exceedingly narrow views, which he is fond of airing, and I think Mr. Stratton heartily disapproved of him. I think probably that is the reason of the condition stated in his will. He was, as I told you, an odd man. The organist chosen according to his wishes—and perhaps I might add, his wisdom—is to receive a salary of fifty dollars a year."

"Salary! Mr. Scripture, if I play I don't want to be paid for it. I would much rather give my small services freely. There is so little that I can do."

Mr. Scripture smiled. "The choice of that does not rest with you," he said. "We are bound to carry out Mr. Stratton's behest to the letter. Now, there are other things to discuss, and I am rather short of time. I want you to give me a definite answer in five minutes—or less."

With watch in hand and still a lingering smile on his lips, the minister drove on in silence, and at the end of the five minutes received the answer he sought—"I'll do the best I can."

"Thank you," he replied. "That is one point settled. Now we must arrange for a choir. I shall announce a meeting of the young people a week from to-night. The organ will probably be here by that time. Then we can choose the best singers to form a choir."

To this Ruth agreed. They were by this time at Mrs. Thompson's gate, and, refusing an invitation to tea, the minister turned around and went back to Hillsdale.

"I wish he had stayed to tea," Mrs. Thompson said as she watched his buggy disappear up the lane.

"I guess the poor chap's afraid to," suggested Mr. Thompson.

"Afraid! Afraid o' what?"

"Chickens."

"Well, he needn't be. I been makin' lemon pies to-day, and the boys jest brought in a lovely mess o' trout. But it's jest my luck. When I'm ready for company nobody ever comes, and when they does come—"

Ruth did not catch the close of the sentence. Her heart was lifted far above such mundane matters as lemon pie and fried trout—and spring chicken. Often she had dreamed of filling the post of church organist. Was her dream so soon to become a reality? She heard again the minister's parting words, "I know I can depend on you, Miss Ruth," and determined to prove herself worthy of the trust.

(To be Continued.)

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Boys and Girls

Dear Cousins,—Last week I didn't write to you at all, and this week I'm only going to write a bit of a letter because I am busy just now trying to do two days' work in one so I can be off into the country for a whole day. I'm writing this a whole week ahead of time, so when it gets to the Editor so far in advance, I expect he'll wonder what's happened. I suppose the country will look beautiful with this snow on the ground, and I also am expecting it to be cold, so I am looking out a great collection of coats to wear.

I haven't been in an aeroplane yet, but I've been the next thing to it, in fact, I was on one this week, but it was just standing still in a room where the flying men are shown how to control it. I climbed up and had a look inside; I saw the levers that work those two wicked little machine guns mounted in front, while the Major explained how you aim your whole aeroplane, not your guns, when you want to shoot, and while he told us they can shoot 450 times a minute each, while the propeller goes round 900 times a minute! Can you imagine it? It made me dizzy to think of it. We saw other men, too, learning how to mend a shot-hole in the wing, and they have to patch it just as though they were patching a frock,—and their stitching is beautiful, too; then they varnish it all over, and there you are!

I could tell you a lot more if I'd time, but I haven't a second longer to spare, so I must say goodbye.

Your affectionate Cousin
Mike.

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