

SOLITARY ISLAND A NOVEL BY REV. JOHN TALBOT SMITH

CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

"That is he," said Barbara; "he is a Russian, a count, and holds first rank at the embassy. He is handsome, witty, good-humored, talented, and his voice speaks for itself."

When they entered the room the Russian count was leaving the piano and, as he came forward at the lady's bidding, Florian recognized the young man whom he had seen in the hotel in conversation with the stranger.

"Count Vladimir Behrenski—the Hon. Florian Wallace."

The gentleman bowed low, and, with a graceful lightness and presumption that took one's heart by storm, offered his hand and warmly pressed Florian's.

"Now you are already friends," said Barbara, leaving them, "and you shall be rivals in my good graces!"

"There are so many," said the count, "Mr. Wallace, I have been desiring to know you this long time, since it came to me that I saw in you a wonderful resemblance to a noble Russian family—a family of royal connections, in truth. The likeness is very clear and very exact."

"You surprise me," said Florian, who was not at all surprised. He thought of saying, "You flatter me," but he believed, with true republican sternness, that facts lay the other way. "It would interest the noble family, I am sure, to know an American citizen honored them by personal resemblance."

"Your resemblance is so very close and exact to the Prince Louis of Cracow," the count said meditatively. "If there were Russians here acquainted with him they would take you for him, but that his hair is light."

"I may be an offshoot, count. My mother came from Ireland, and no doubt Russians emigrated thither some time. We are descended from princes, I know."

"Yes, the Irish are a princely race, more so than other Europeans—the island being small, I think, and the word prince having a wide application. You were born in this country, sir?"

"Oh yes, and nursed and educated into Yankee notions."

"They are very elastic, these Yankee notions," said the count. "Would you call the pretty hostess, Mrs. Merriam, a Yankee notion?"

"The term is hardly used that way," Florian answered, hesitatingly, at this rather ridiculous application. "But you seem to think Mrs. Merriam of an elastic disposition."

"She is a fine woman, delightful; but it is hard for us to understand her. We know two classes of women in Europe—the very good, the very bad. It is easy to tell at once the class. Not so with your American ladies. Your code of manners is elastic. It is a Yankee notion."

"Purely," said Florian, uneasy at the drift of the count's remarks, "it would hardly suit the Russian climate."

The count shook his head and laughed at the idea. "Yet it is very amusing at first. There is a fine uncertainty about it, and it sharpens the faculties wonderfully."

earnest; but Vladimir was smiling carefully at a dame passing. "You look as if you were beginning to feel that ennui which pleasure-seekers suffer from."

"I?" cried the count, starting. "That is the last thing which will reach this effervescent soul of mine. It is the presence of grave greatness like yours which throws a shadow over me. I am always gay. Ah, Mr. Wallace, living on ambition as you do, it is not to you a real pleasure to be always gay. You are up and down as the game goes. I am always up."

"How about the little monitor here?" said Florian, tapping his breast. "Does conscience never trouble you with the thought that up-ness here means down-ness somewhere else?"

"Never. My conscience is my slave. It belongs to me. Shall it dare speak without permission? But tell me, sir, will you accompany us to-morrow to the services of Strongford's death? He was a Methodist, but you are not so strict, so bigoted, as to refuse so plain a favor. Will you not come?"

"If you wish it, count. I am not so bigoted or so narrow."

He stopped, his face whitened and his jaw fell. At the window near which they stood appeared the cold outlines of the haunting face, its cruelty outlining itself so sharply and suddenly on the pane as to overwhelm him with terror. He recovered himself speedily, but did not finish the sentence.

"What's the matter?" said the count, with much sympathy. "Oh! a weakness of mine," said Florian. "You will excuse me for a time, count, until I have recovered myself."

The count bowed, and Florian went silently out into the garden and strode along the bare walk, hot from anger one moment, shivering from terror the next. It was plain the face was haunting him, and for what purpose? Why he more than another, and why should he be compelled to such a display of emotion by the mere sight of a face seen a dozen times in a few weeks? He could not explain it, but he was determined to put an end to it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The railroad depot at Clayburg was the hot-house of the most interesting news of the town, where the male gossips and the notable men assembled before train-time to discuss business and public matters, and catch the first sight of the very few strangers whom destiny's wave threw upon the Clayburg shore. The most inveterate loafers at the station were Billy Wallace and Squire Pendleton. When threatening rheumatism did not interfere, or absence from the town, the two veterans might be seen, the one coming down from the square house on the hill, and the other turning the curve of the bay, at precisely one-half hour before the train was due, or to depart, both in their everyday clothes; the squire rolling pompously along, as became a stout man of historical fame, and Billy making up for his diminutiveness by the erectness of his body and the general majestic severity of his manner, both conscious that when they walked forth in silent power the whole town walked also, or at least looked on. So invariable was this custom that the dwellers along the route, and particularly those concerned with meddling, never looked at the clock, but "Maria, tea-time! Billy Wallace is just comin' down the hill," or "Sally, you'd better wind the horn and call in the men, for I see Squire Pen'lton roundin' the p'int," made up for the stroke of time-keepers. Among the rising generation, whose respect for the fathers of the town was misty, they were known as the "time-keepers," "the twin clocks," "train-starters," and other appropriate names which never reached the ears of the worthy gentlemen; otherwise there would have been havoc in the ranks of the rustic youth, the squire insisting most particularly on being paid that respect which his position demanded, and punishing the want of it with severity. On a spring evening, when the fishermen were beginning to appear with early catches, or when a few hotel men and laborers arrived to open up hotels and prepare for the summer season, all the town assembled there and hemmed and hawed on the platform while the light of day faded behind the islands and the red water changed into grey



A Fearful Case.

THORNTON, Ont., Nov. 29, 1899. For five years I had been suffering from falling sickness and my case was a bad one. Doctors did not do me a particle of good, but Pastor Koenig's Nerve Tonic cured me at once of that dreadful disease. The first bottle convinced me that it would do all you claim for it. I used to have as many as seven fits a day, would fall just where I stood and sometimes cut my face so severely that my own folks would hardly know me. I had much headache and pains in my body that I often wished I were dead. I could not get work from any account of my sickness, but now I am able to do a full day's work. My comrades that used to shun me are friends again, and I am as well as I ever was, and have only Pastor Koenig's Nerve Tonic to thank for my health. I am willing to answer all enquiries or letters concerning this great remedy, and urge those similarly afflicted to try it and receive its benefits. BERT HOPE.

FREE A Valuable Book on Nervous Diseases and a Sample Bottle to any address. For patients also get the medicine free. Prepared by the Rev. FATHER KOENIG, of Fort Wayne, Ind., since 1876, and now by the KOENIG MED. CO., CHICAGO, ILL. Sold by Druggists at \$1.00 per bottle, \$10.00 per dozen. Agents in Canada—THE LYMAN BROS. & CO., LTD., TORONTO; THE WYOMING CHEMICAL CO., LTD., MONTREAL.

or was covered with mist. It was not rare to see Pere Rougevin or Mr. Buck or the Methodist minister sauntering in and out among the groups. Pere Rougevin was more at home there than either of the other clergymen, and his short figure reserved smile, and right-handed gesture were noticeable in every group as he passed from one to another and exchanged witticisms or the newest stories with those inclined. The pere had an inveterate fondness for a story and a love of interesting bits of gossip. He was fond of striking people and curious people and people with a history, and, as a consequence, of gratifying those propensities, he was a most interesting talker, a capital story-teller, and never called your attention to a person or thing without having a queer incident to relate in its connection. For instance:

"Do you observe, sir," he would say to the stranger, "that stout, florid, imposing old man yonder whom you just heard called squire? You do, of course. Well, he was concerned in the late Canadian rebellion, was hunted by the two governments, and a reward offered for his head," etc., etc.

"That graceful shaft which you see on the hill in the distance covers the grave of a very sweet girl who died here some years ago. I merely mention it because her brother is the famous New York politician, Hon. Florian Wallace, an old pupil of mine." And then at your desire you were treated to a faithful and vivid description of the most interesting points in Florian's history. Having a wide extent of mission, he might be said to have the gossip of four counties at his disposal; and he was, when he allowed it, the center of a group whose ears tingled with delight as they heard the news of the day, local and universal, served out so delicately and so expressively, and with a flavor of ingenious and witty comment to brighten the dish. The squire was a source of awe to all his little world, and his ponderous voice, as he referred for the one thousandth time to the occasion when the two governments were "after my head," could be heard over all sounds and brought every ear in that direction. As a sort of echo Billy sat beside him with his eyes blinking and winking, jerking out sharp, short notes of approval or confirmation. Billy was the best moral support the squire could find, for he swore to everything which that bald sinner asserted.

"If it isn't so," the squire would say with a series of expletives, uttered in a low key when the clergymen were present, "may I be eternally married to every widow in the county."

"I'd swear to it," Billy would cry, "on my life."

"And two is testimony, gentlemen," was the squire's last invaluable remark, which clinched the matter legally for all time.

On one particular evening in April—it was very cold, too, but the sun was shining—the usual crowd were standing about the station in wait for an evening train. As it rattled into the depot the loungers ranged themselves along the platform in the most favorable positions for seeing the passengers alight, the squire visible, by his tall form and glowing face, over every other soul, and Billy exalted for the moment on a barrel. No strangers were among the passengers, who were town residents or people already too well known to raise a ripple of excitement. The disappointment was too common, however, for people to feel or express any surprise, but the squire gazed the conductor on the railroad which ran between Utica and Clayburg without so much as a new importation.

"There was one," said the conductor, "quite a man, too, but he got off at the far end of the car."

"That's the sort of a devil we want to see," said Billy, running off down the platform; but there was no trace of the stranger.

"Oh! we'll see him, if he stays long enough," said the squire musingly. "I was just thinking, as the train came in, how you and I would look and feel if Florian was on it."

"Don't speak of it," said Billy. "And what an almighty jam of people would stand here, and what screaming and hurrying, and hand-shaking and speechmaking! I declare, Billy, I think it would throw you and me into apoplexy."

"Wouldn't want to be here at all," said Billy. "Certainly—apoplexy. Couldn't stand it, ye devil—couldn't stand it."

And he poked the ticklish squire, and grew red in the face from laughing. The squire laughed, too. "It just tickles me to think of it," continued he, "and I know him since he was a child so high; and he coming back a Congressman, and a big gun in politics, with prospects of better things before 'him. Why, I'd just go mad."

In order to give proper vent to his feelings, the squire swore considerably—for there was no one in the immediate vicinity save habitues not to be scandalized—until a second glance showed Pere Rougevin in the dim nearness. An eloquent jerk of the thumb to Billy and a grimace showed the little man the cause of his sudden silence, and the pere, coming over in a casual way, asked if he were not to call on him that night to have a game of checkers, and would he not leave now with him, which was a polite way of preventing the scandal of further swearing.

"Yes" as you say," humbly replied the squire. He was stunned and conscience-stricken, for the pere had never before heard so much wickedness issue at one burst from his respectable mouth.

Left to himself, Billy began to parade the platform in deep meditation. The lamp with its strong reflection was shining at the door, and he passed and repassed the line of the light stopping at times to blink at the curious scientific phenomenon of a thing you could not look at steadily. Out on the water a few patches of twilight were still burning like expiring lamps, and a few forms walked and talked in the gathering darkness, while trainmen and officials rolled in the freight and hurried bad language at the bad boys. It was after a few turns up and down the platform that Billy became aware of a gentleman's presence a few feet distant whose outline impressed with a sense of strangeness. His face could not be seen, although it was turned towards Billy, and he was idly leaning against the building. With the boldness customary to townspeople Billy walked up to him, bade him good-evening, made remarks on the weather, asked if he was going to stay, and could he be of any use to him; to some of which the stranger did not reply, at the rest merely grunted—grunted so meanly and impolitely that only one consideration prevented Billy from knocking him down, which was the fear of his being an acquaintance playing a dodge on him. He resumed his walking, and noticed that the gentleman was observing him closely, whereupon he turned abruptly and went home. He was half way up the street when it occurred

to him that this might be the traveler who had eluded them by stepping off at the rear end of the train; and he turned back at once, determined to see his features and be able to point him out to the squire next morning. Billy was a rapid walker, and has he had walked up the hill in the heat of indignation, so he rushed back again in the heat of curiosity, and rushed upon the stranger standing unconcernedly under a lamp-post, looking around him. He turned his gaze on Billy. It may have been the unexpectedness of meeting him that puzzled the old gentleman's faculties, for he stopped in confusion, gasped out "The devil!" faintly, and fled with the idea that the stranger was in pursuit.

Mrs. Winifred, sitting calmly in the back parlor sewing, and weaving in a tear with an occasional stitch as she thought of the gay voices that made the night pleasant years ago heard the door open and shut violently, and saw Billy as in a vision appear and throw himself in a chair exhausted, with the sweat on his brow and his face wrinkleless from terror. Nothing alarming in Billy's appearance ever provoked alarm in Mrs. Winifred, and she continued her sewing without comment or question.

"Divill! divill!" Billy kept muttering until his breath came back to him. Behind her, but some distance to her left, was a window looking out into the garden, and opposite to the window hung a mirror so placed that, without seeing herself in it, Mrs. Winifred could see the window, whose curtain was only half down. In one casual glance at the mirror she saw outlined against the darkness behind the window a white, peculiar face. Mrs. Winifred was a queer woman in some of her moods, as the present instance will show. She dropped her eyes immediately on her work, in fear that her senses were misleading her; and when she was certain of the place, the hour, the work in her hands, and the very stitches, she looked again. There was the face still, ugly, pale and cruel—the very face that had so disturbed Florian during the winter in Washington. She could see nothing else but it. A feeling of horror began to creep over her, a nervous dread that the terrible sight would direct its glances to her; but she was so fascinated and terrified, and doubtful of herself, that she did not venture to move, only sat there staring and fearing and waiting like a criminal until it disappeared.

Mrs. Winifred had a nervous time of it for an hour or two when it came to locking doors, closing shutters, examining rooms, closets, and those terrible spaces under beds. She saw nothing to cause her further fright, however, and slept at least two hours in fitful dozing.

It became known the next day that a foreign gentleman was stopping at the hotel known as the Fisherman's Retreat; and this was the first piece of information which was hurled at Billy when he made his appearance next morning to institute inquiries as to the stranger with the mysterious countenance. He could speak but very little English, and seemed to be a sort of Dutchman, and to all appearances impressed the people very favorably. He came into the office while they were discussing his probable antecedents, and at once fixed his eyes—greenish, unpleasant eyes—on the wrinkled face. It was more than Billy could stand without an explosion, and he went away hastily, and as long as the man was in the town contemplated him at a distance.

The mysterious stranger made himself acquainted, by sight at least, with all the villagers, and was more talked about than if he were the president. One day he would spend his time wandering about the docks, watching the boats or the stormy waves; another he would be seen in this or that quarter staring, simply staring.

Pere Rougevin, reading his weekly



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Freeman after dinner, was moved to look out the window by a passing shadow, and saw the stranger's face the very first moment; thinking it a very disagreeable one and not willing to show it any courtesy. The stranger was looking at the church—a plain, homely affair not worth inspection—but it pleased him so much that he came in to ask by signs for permission to enter. The pere spoke to him in French, German and English, but he shook his head, muttering very few syllables.

"You are a Russian," said the pere; and the man made a dubious gesture which was translated as an affirmative by the light that spread into his stolid, unpleasant face. The priest went out with him, and he looked over the church solemnly, examining some parts curiously, and with a bow withdrew when he was satisfied, following the pere into the house, with many signs expressing his gratitude before he left.

"I think we had better look to our valuables while he is in town," said the priest to his servant; "he would not hesitate to murder us, I fear, for it is seldom one sees so ugly a countenance."

And so Mrs. Buck thought when it first fell under her sharp glances. She had heard the reports in town about the mysterious stranger, and was desirous of seeing him. Her desire was gratified, one morning, as she stood on the veranda coaxing her young son for his airing. A stranger came down the street, and stopped pleasantly to smile on the pretty boy defying his mamma so bravely and so wickedly. Young Florian received the advances with great distrust, which, after one glance at the stranger, she had no wish to banish. Shallow as she was the venom expressed in it pierced her; and as she did not look again at him, the man stood ostensibly coaxing the child, with his eyes greedily devouring every line of her fair face. When Florian junior began to yell his distrust to the air the man retired, and Mrs. Buck was furnished with matter for three days of speculation as to who and what he was.

Coming down the road one fair morning in time to meet the train, Squire Pendleton's ponderous glances rested sorrowfully on the marble shaft which bore Linda's name, and then brightened a little at sight of a stranger examining the monument and the grave. Who could this be? The squire had heard of the newcomer and the mystery that surrounded him, and this he felt to be the man. What was he doing there? Around that grave, too! He came down the road as the squire passed, and gave that gentleman an opportunity to put on his most awe-inspiring, Mackenzie-rebellion look, and to roll forth a sonorous good-morning, to which no answer was given, nor did the great personage seem to inspire him with any respect.

"I said good-morning, sir," he repeated with restrained force; and the stranger, beginning to understand the drift of his remarks, bowed and smiled effusively, but said nothing.

"Foreigner, I suppose," thought the squire, with contempt. "Lucky for you that you recognized my greeting, or it would have been all the worse for us two. I saw you surveying that pretty monument on the hill," continued he without unbending, and flinging mentally all sorts of epithets at the man's disagreeable looks. "Nice stone; beats Italian marble all to smash; wears well for the climate. After next election we don't import any more stone oh! no. Cut and carved by home talent. In a century or so we shall discount your sculptors fifty per cent. We've got the money and the brains, but we need time—time."

This was what the squire called tall-talk, and was bestowed only on foreigners who looked like sneerers at republicanism. But the stranger granted something like "pah!" in answer to the tall-talk.

(To be Continued.)

BLOOD HUMORS

PIMPLES Many an otherwise beautiful and attractive face is sadly marred by unsightly blotches, eruptions, flesh worms and humors. Their presence is a source of embarrassment to those afflicted, as well as pain and regret to their friends.

Many a cheek and brow—cast in the mould of grace and beauty—have been sadly defaced, their attractiveness lost, and their possessor rendered unhappy for years. Why, then, consent to rest under this cloud of embarrassment? There is an effectual remedy for all these defects, it is,

BURDOCK BLOOD BITTERS

This remedy will drive out all the impurities from the blood and leave the complexion healthy and clear. Miss Annie Tobin, Madoc, Ont., writes: "I take great pleasure in recommending your Burdock Blood Bitters to any one who may be troubled with pimples on the face. I paid out money to doctors, but could not get cured, and was almost discouraged, and despondent of ever getting rid of them. I thought I would give B.E.E. a trial, so got two bottles, and before I had taken them I was completely cured and have had no sign of pimples since."

Burdock Blood Bitters has been manufactured by The E. Milburn Co., Limited, for over 25 years, and has cured thousands in that time. Do not accept a substitute which unscrupulous dealers say is "just as good." "It can't be."