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SOLITARY ISLAND 4

CHAPTER XV .- Continued.

These were the only incidents of These were the start of the play which have any bearing on the play which have any bearing on the story. Except for the accidental resemblance of these two persons And Mrs. Merrion perceived from tal resemblance of these two person to living characters, and of the first me to his own home, there was nothing in the play that indicated any knowledge on Paul's part of Clayburg and its people. But the it to her father, who was delighted watched its continuance with little interest afterwards, and scarcely smiled when, at the close of the last act, the delighted audience called for the author and heaped upon him their mighty applause. Nor did he ever visit the theatre again, although the successful play ran for three months. It aroused an overruling emotion in his heart. His love for Ruth at the sight of her apparently living before him, awoke old slumbering passion, and had a dangerous effect on his disposition for many a month afterwards.

> 14 14 14 14 14F CHAPTER XVI.

> > RUTH,

While the years were passing with peace of heart none the less assurafter much suffering. When Florian presence a very keen, almost unendurable pain. She would perhaps have found it impossible to bear. paration, when it had first become plain to her that she could not acwould be a violation of her conscience to permit her children to be She was very calm in announcing her determination Florian, because the scene had a life of gentle calm that nothing had supposed, her strict conscientionce had for him. His appearance to-morrow in Clayburg, pleasure to her, not an occasion of have been for him. He had fallen into that ridiculous position which her children baptized in the Episcoa rejected lover finds it so hard to pal communion, for it was such assume, that of the trusted friend of bother to have some members of the the woman he would have made his family going one way and others wife. Often she visited the grave on the other, and what did it matter in the hill, and wept bitter tears over the end, since they were all bound this one sorrow of her life. It seem-for heaven? Mrs. Winifred, placid this one sorrow of her life. It seemed so hard to believe Linda was as ever, yet with a sad, hungry look edead. The whole scene was instinct in her pious eyes, and a funny unwith her presence. Hers had been the earliest laugh to greet the matters as usual and never allowed spring, and hers the first tears that one hair out of its place on either the soming of the long and dreary self-possessed as formerly, however, winter. Even when she had been and often looked a little wild at dead two years many said: "It seems mention of Linda or Florian, often rang the bell for dinner and waited forgatfully for the gay laugh and odd that Linda Wallace is not here to see this or do that; she was always first and always gayest"; and ight, step that sounded for so many years in the outer hall. Sara always spoke affectionately of Florian. Not would have disturbed the sweet sleep of the girl? and who would have called thee back, Linda, from the feeling, or any lasting feeling, but smile of God, even if they had the had behaved so properly when he power? power ?

The report which reached Florian that Ruth had devoted herself to literary effort was true, and of late she began to reap so much and profit from her venture that a idea had been presented to her an outsider for consideration which took her fancy very much. relative and her husband had visited Clayburg the previous summer, ar urged on Ruth the propriety of cor ing to New York during the win-ter, or at any time that suited her convenience, and making the ac-quaintance of the literary celebrities. of the day.

"We have them all at our recep-tions," said Mrs. Merrion; "and we are so gratified to hear them speak of you in terms of high praise. You will receive an ovation, and think of the pleasure and profit it would be to you to hold sweet converse with them."

"Well, Barbara," said Buth, who ought her relative's adjectives at the silly often, "your offer is mpring and I shall consider it dur-

think of leaving Clayburg at sent. Next year, perhaps, I

the unnecessary emphasis on "sweet" that Ruth was laughing at her. However, Ruth thought deeply on the matter and finally proposed play had a bad effect on Florian. He with the idea of being in Florian's neighborhood for a time, and suggested shutting up house at once and setting off on their journey. Ruth suggested the advisability of consulting some of their friends, and the squire was for consulting the whole city, so that she found it ne cessary to name Mr. Wallace and Pere Rougevin as a council of ad-

> "That's it," said the squire. "I'll arrange a whist-party for this after-noon and invite them over."

A party of that description was a dreadful trial for Ruth, who had the hardest part of the work to perform and was not enamored of its pleasures, whereupon she announced her intention at dinner of making ome calls during the remainder of the day, and of leaving the management of the party to the squire. He was relieved perhaps, for his congenial soul often went a little beyond tumultuous flight for Florian, one the limits of prudence, and the mild woman was enjoying in Clayburg a reproach in Ruth's eyes was hard for him to endure. The prospect of a ed and real that it had been won clear field cheered him; and he was kind enough to recommend that she went Ruth had found the loss of his might take tea with Mrs. Wallace, and he would drive over after her at nine o'clock. To which Ruth consented and went away early, but that the battle had been fought spending a few minutes with Mrs.

and won long before their actual se- Winifred while waiting for the stage which crossed daily to Wolfe Island Mrs. Buck was there, and Mr. Buck, cept the Catholic faith. Both had as immaculate as ever, and a junior agreed that to marry under such cir- Buck with so strong a resemblance stances would be folly, since to his father and such an enormous Ruth was as convinced as he that it head that people would laugh at the child, and say witty things about his taking the pulpit some day and beought up in any other faith than no one being the wiser for his father's absence. The members of the to family were on very good terms while Billy was absent, and called on ready been enacted in imagination each other amicably during favorable many times, but after his departure intervals. But there were many she fought a new battle with her-awkward departures an the part of self, winning quietly and passing into Mr. and Mrs. Buck when Billy, suddenly returning by the front door, seemed able to disturb. As Florian forced them to hasty flight by the back door. He was bitterly opousness had swept from her heart posed to Sara and her husband still every vestige of himself and the love and had called his grandson a "devilish little heretic" on meeting him ance to-morrow in Clayburg, with with his nurse. He might have been or without a wife, would have been a won over, perhaps, had Mrs. Buck won over, perhaps, had Mrs. Buck remained faithful to her religion, but regret and expectation, as it would Sara found it more convenient to sit under Mr. Buck's ministry and have

wailed the death of the flowers and side of her head. She was not so

DOES YOUR HEAD

Feel As Though It Was Being Hammered? As Though & Would Crack Open?
As Though a Million Sparks Were
Flying Out of Your Eyes?
Horrible Sickness of Your Stomach?

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could not help himself, not rushing with uplifted axe on his brother-in law nor making any scenes. She had named her boy Florian in honor of him, and thought what a pity it was with his fine talents he should be so bound by his religion. "For in this no real advancement so long as he remains a Catholic. Now, Anglicanism was so much like the Catholic faith, there was no real difference in the two save a mere trifle of acknowledging a Pope, that if he could be persuaded to look into the matter and see how much to his vantage it was to become an Episthen with father and mother to join them, and Linda in heaven, it would be a veritable end of a romance. Why, Florian might even believe in the Pope and say nothing about it to any one."

"That's silly," said Mr. Buck mild-

"So are you, my dear," answered Mrs Buck gently; "and you are no judge."

"Seemingly Mr Buck wished to insinuate—" began Mrs. Winifred. "He shouldn't insinuate, seemingly," said Sara.
"Of course not, my dear," assent-

ed the mother meekly. Mrs. Buck was evidently monarch

of all she surveyed, her father being "I never could understand," said

Sara, "how it just ended between Florian and you, Ruth?" "I couldn't acknowledge the pope," said Ruth, gravely, and Mr.

Buck hid a smile behind his motherin-law, leaving it there, apparently, to be resumed at leisure. "How foolish, dear ! It would have been so pleasant for you and me to

be living here together, married. For

the life of me I can't see why people make so much fuss about reli-gion. I never could." "So Florian told us," said Ruth; 'he said you were always of that gay disposition that would wear a cross as gracefully as a bible, and

be happy with a Mormon or a Mussulman." "Just so," Sara replied, impressed with such a compliment and desirous of letting Mr. Buck see her indifference. "Florian was a good judge, too. I always feel sorry I acted so cross with him. I think it wore on him."

"Very much," said Ruth, and Mr. Buck resumed his smile and deepened it into a laugh, which he pre-tended was for baby.

The stage came along at that moment, and stopped at the door. Mrs.

ne was engaged this afternoon, Ruth explained.

Mrs. Winifred grew uneasy and fidgety for some moments after this announcement, but soon recovered and expressed her willingness favor Ruth similarly at any time. It vas a bitter cold day, and the open sleigh in which they were seated af forded a fine view of the vast stretches of ice that lay away from them for miles, and of the Islands between, sullen and gloomy like lifeprisoners in Siberia. When they reached the island they left the stage at the house of a friend, and procured another conveyance to take hem eastward to the narrow channel opening into Eel Bay., They crossed the ice on foot to a dark crossed the ice on foot to a dark wood, where a few maples with dead leaves clinging to the bare branches made a great stir like the clucking of many skeletons. Through this they went by a path evidently frequented of late, and so besten down as to make the wood passable, and snally they came out on a bluf which showed them the hermit's house a short distance of, with a

light in the window. It was cloudy and gloomy day, and Scott was at home, with a bright fire burning in the chimney-place and his solitary candle lit, while Izaak Walton lay open at a well-thumbed page that brought back a fresher me-mory of the brightness and sweetness of what had once been before the gloomy winter. He was sur-prised at the appearance of the two women, but politely invited them to sit down and remove their wraps, while he put a fresh log on the fire and showed a bachelor's feverish desire to set things in order. Ruth was in the habit of calling on him as often as she thought her sence would not be too intrusive, but she had never disturbed his re treat during the winter, and perhaps he thought this visit a freak of inquisitiveness. Mrs. Winifred was uneasy, and made wretched attempts to seem monplace and ordinary, looking about her with the air of meek terror that used to provoke the anger of Linda and Florian because of its ludicrous side. Ruth and the her-

mit paid her no attention. "It was a mere notion, you know." the girl was explaining to Scott, as she sat in the blaze with her hands clasped over her knee, "for I could have waited until you came to town country," said she, "he can hope for idea seized me like an apoplexy, and and explained it to you then; but an I must come down without delay. I have not seen you for a long time, and I was and am thinking of going to New York." She was look ing at him very closely as she said this, for she was sure the hermit would accuse her in thought of going after Florian, and would look at her once with his keen blue eyes. copalian she was sure he would. And He was as interested as if she had stated her destination to be Timbuctoo.

"It's a fine place, New York," said, quietly; "but why need all the blood rush to the heart?"

"It must all pass through said she, taking up the figure with a smile, "or else be cast aside! And do you know, at this very hour the playing whist this matter at home ?-for if I go father goes too."

"Sartinly; you'd scarcely go alone I guess they'll be apt to settle your goin' very well, if there's much punch in the matter."

fred, "there are none of them hard drinkers"; for she wished to remove any bad impression from the hermit's mind, and she looked at him sideways timidly. But he never turned his eyes toward her.

"You see," said not go to stay, but only to make a few friends among the great thinkers and writers and poets. be something to know them, would it not ?"

"O yes! it does one good to meet a great person, I think; but, they needn't be all bookish folks. There are great people in the garrets and cellars of a big city, an' in the work-shops."

"You were never in a great city," said she, and repented of the words immediately, for she did not see how much like a question it was unanswer that," she broke in. "It was see you agini" not meant to pry into your affairs. you think? Is it wise to go? I have won a little fame by writing, and I would so like to know great minds Then there are great doctors of theology and eminent Catholics there. Who knows but that I might get

some light from them." He shook his head, and smiled a

change. I dunno as great minds will help you much; mostly it's the lit- right even when they mean to. When

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cellars, and hunt up little minds, and a time, an' I'm no wiser than other see the great people too.'

"Them fine writers an' thinkers, said Scott seriously, "have a mighty high opinion o' themselves, an' look at a religion pretty often in queer ways. They kind o' handle it as a jeweler handles a watch. They've got the secret o' the thing, an' don't think much of it. They give ye a doubt about it sometimes, unless ye get the 'umble ones that thinks more o' their neighbor than they do o' themselves. I've met some of 'em fishin', an' they were too green for anything. They didn't like to be

"Then, would you say go, Scott?" she persisted.

told so, either."

"Would I say go? Well, if great minds is the only trouble, an' religion, why, yes, go."

Somehow she was not so satisfied with his answer, and sat staring into the fire. Was there anything else that should trouble her save religion and the great minds? There was the rush and whirl of polite society, but it never could entangle her, and then-Florian. She looked squire, the pere, and Mr. Wallace are at Scott. He was reading Walton, discussing and Mrs. Winifred was watching him shyly as a curiosity. Why should he have put in the if? Did he think the old trouble would begin again? She was not afraid of herself; but then what security was there Florian? She had often wondered "Seemingly," ventured Mrs. Winiif he had given up the old love as completely as she had, and, knowing his fond disposition, feared he had not. Would not her presence excite

> Ruth, "I would found that Mrs. Winifred felt called upon to say something. "From what I've heard of big cities," said she, "seemingly nothing troubles the girls there but their dress and beaux."

it more violently and more hopeless-

ly, and was this what the hermit

meant? The silence grew so pro-

"Yes," said Scott, looking at her with an expression of severe reproach in his eyes, which puzzled Ruth, "beaux?"

"Do you think my presence, Scott, would annoy Florian?"

"I do," said the hermit, as if he had been expecting the question. "I think he never got over losin' you, til it was uttered. "Pray do not an' it would kind o' stir him up to

> "Is that a good reason for me to other place ?'

"Not if ye care nothin' for him." And seeing she did not perceive what injury her presence could be to Florian, he went on a little hurriedly, as if it annoyed him to speak these things: "I know he's kind of hoped agin' hope that ye'd come to him some time, as he'd like, an' make up. It's been a help to him a long time, an' kept him out. or leastwise from gettin' away from the right. Politicians." he added, seeing that her look suggested a doubt as to Florian's get. "It's a time of doubt with you," said the hermit, "and that means and wrong so mixed up with their an' wrong so mixed up with their own likin's, that they don't allus do help you much; mostly it's one the finds out ye re not in it.

the minds do God's work, an' bring him any more, there won't be any him any more, there won't be any knows Well. I'll visit the garrets and holdin' to him. God only knows when he'll stop."

"I don't think you're quite correct in that," said Mrs. Winifred, with a boldness that frightened herself. "Florian, seemingly, was always one of the strict kind."

"Mebbe," said the hermit, resuming his book, while Ruth looked her absolute doubt of Scott's inferences eloquently.

"How do you know I'll refuse?" said Ruth, saucily.
"That's so," smiled Scott. "You can't know a woman two minutes at

"Well, I'll follow your advice"the hermit had not given any, and looked at her-"and go. I'll avoid Florian, and see the great and the little minds of the great city, and pick up, perhaps, some grace that's lying for me there like money in a bank.'

The hermit studied her attentively with his great blue eyes.

"Did it ever strike you." said he coldly, "that you might be playin" with grace, just as a man does with a stubborn fish amusin' hisself?"

"No," she interrupted loudly, and with such indignation that Mrs. Winifred uttered a faint cry. "Do not accuse me of that, Scott-never, never accuse me of that "

He resumed his air of meek indiference at once.

"Yet, how do I know," she said, humbly, "what sins I may or not be guilty of? But in this matter I have been so much in earnest, so very much in earnest, and except in my methods I can find no blame."

She had no more to say, and Scott read his book in a way that politely invited their departure.

"Will you excuse me for one moment?" she said; "I am going to take a view of the river from the boulder before I go."

She went out and stood on spot where Florian had knelt and prayed of mornings during his treat, and dreamed and chatted evenings. The scene was like buried beauty of that happy time. risen from its grave in white ghastly cerements, and the weird wind-moan through the evergreens gave a voice to the forlorn ghost. Would it ever look otherwise to her again? Could she ever gaze upon the summer scene that in time would banish this pale spectre of the dead with the same calm and joy and sweetness as when beside her stood Florian and Linda?

"If I cannot," said she, with, oh, such a heavy sadness, "then change of heart will not be for the bet-

When she came back, after ten minutes of looking and thinking and sighing, Mrs. Winifred was putting on her wraps, a trifle pale and tired, and very confused and frightened from her tete-a-tete with the herremain away from New York or any other place?' behind him and his chin in the air. as if an inspiration had seized him. But Ruth put no emphasis on such things, and bade him good-by with a promise of seeing him again when she had come to a firm and conscientious determination. He came with were out of sight.

"Can you conceive anything more lonely?" said Ruth: "that solitary man standing in such a solitude and going back through that gloomy wood to his home. How does stand it ?"

"I think him a saint," said Mrs. Winifred so emphatically that Ruth looked at her in surprise

On their way across the bay cutter came skipping along at a fieres rate, and from behind a pile of buffaloes and furs Pere Rougevin's smiling face looked out as he stop-ped to greet them.

"Nothing decided in the "I hain't no pretensions to bein' a prophet." he said, after a silence, "but it'll surprise me if Flory don't a silence, invincible in whist. A sick-call took "but it'll surprise me if Flory don't propose to ye again down thar, an offer to take ye jist as ye stand, atheist or Protestant, an' git mad enough to do wild things when ye refuse."

"How do you know I'll refuse?"
said Ruth, saucily.

"That's so," smiled Scott. "You

(To be continued.)