

SOLITARY ISLAND A NOVEL BY REV. JOHN TALBOT SMITH

CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

These were the only incidents of the play which have any bearing on the story. Except for the accidental resemblance of these two persons to living characters, and of the first scene to his own home, there was nothing in the play that indicated any knowledge on Paul's part of Clayburg and its people.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUTH.

While the years were passing with tumultuous flight for Florian, one woman was enjoying in Clayburg a peace of heart none the less assured and real that it had been won after much suffering. When Florian went Ruth had found the loss of his presence a very keen, almost unendurable pain.

ing the winter. But I could not think of leaving Clayburg at present. Next year, perhaps, I may go down and hold "sweet" converse with your literary stars.

And Mrs. Merrion perceived from the unnecessary emphasis on the "sweet" that Ruth was laughing at her. However, Ruth thought deeply on the matter and finally proposed it to her father, who was delighted 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 necessary to name Mr. Wallace and Pere Rougevin as a council of advice.

"That's it," said the squire. "I'll arrange a whist-party for this afternoon 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 some 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 the limits of prudence, and the mild reproach in Ruth's eyes was hard for him to endure.



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light in the window. It was a 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 memory of the brightness and sweetness of what had once been before the gloomy winter.

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 and explained it to you then; but an idea seized me like an apoplexy, and 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."

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

"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 until it was uttered.

"I understand," said she. "I know to what you refer. Well, I have prayed and prayed, and yet light will not come. I have tried to be content with Methodism and I can't, nor can I find rest in any other faith."

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cellars, and hunt up little minds, and see the great people too.

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

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

"From what I've heard of big cities," said she, "seemingly nothing troubles the girls there but their dress and beaux."

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

"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 of these things.

"I don't think you're quite correct in that," said Mrs. Winifred, with a boldness that frightened herself.

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

"I hain't no pretensions to bein' a prophet," he said, after a silence, "but it'll surprise me if Flory don't propose to ye again down thar, an' offer to take ye list 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.

(To be continued.)

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