

THE ISLAND OF REST.

THERE, that is finished, and if I write another paragraph for the next month, may I—

"Eh? What's that you're growling about, George? Were you addressing your remarks to me, or to some sympathetic being immaterialized to all eyes, save your own?"

Mr. George Stanley gave a perceptible start, and a quick glance in the direction of the speaker, but vouchsafed no reply, until, one by one, the closely-written pages of his manuscript were hung upon the hook. Then, with a sigh of relief, and a nonchalance that was characteristic, he answered—

"Neither, my dear Mac. Not having noticed your entrance, I was unaware of your presence; and as for immaterialized beings—no, thank you, none of them for me. Give me something material and animate; something tangible to all the senses; give me, for instance—"

"Yes; don't hesitate; speak right out; tell me who she is, and if it be in the power of mortal to give her to you, I'll do it."

"Give me, for instance, a rest."

"What do I hear? Slang, from the lips of the dignified, the august, Stanley? What next?"

"See here, Mac; there is no slang about it; I want rest; I must have rest. It is three years since I had a month to call my own, and I have reached the limit of human endurance. I have scratched away with this faithful old pen of mine, until not a thought, not an idea, not a shadow of original conception is left in my impoverished brain. My

bones ache, my temples throb, my nerves quiver, and my entire being languishes for rest, for relief, for oblivion, for anything that will take me out of the treadmill routine of editorial drudgery. I'm quite serious, Mac, and you needn't look at me as though you think me bereft of my wits. Reason still hangs to her throne, but threatens to let go her hold if I remain here twenty-four hours longer. So I hang up my pen, I take down my hat, I make my adieu, and if my shadow falls athwart your threshold again within a month, may I be—"

Just then a gust of wind, with ill-advised officiousness, interposed and closed the door with a "bang," behind the retreating form of Mr. George Stanley, and whether or not he added the finishing word, or words, to his last sentence, can never be known with any degree of certainty.

"George! I say, George! Wait a moment; only a moment," shouted Mr. Thomas McGrew, hurrying out into the corridor, and leaning far out over the baluster. But the hollow echo of retreating footsteps was the sole response.

"What spirit of unrest has taken possession of the fellow?" mused Mr. McGrew, half owner and sole manager of a flourishing weekly publication, known as *The Champion*.

"He can not possibly be serious. He would not leave me here to wrestle with the paper for a whole month alone. Whew! The bare thought starts the cold sweat at every pore. Why, I'd get swamped on the first issue. No, no; George is a good fellow, and steady as