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"Flowers of the Valley,"

OR
MABEL HOWARD,
OF THE LYRIC.

CHAPTER XXI.

MABEL HOWARD, OF THE LYRIC. Presently, as the music began a waltz, her father came across the room, as if looking for her. "Do you want me, papa?" she said, and the circle round her opened to admit him. "It's rather late," he said, with a well-bred little yawn. "I'm thinking of going home to bed. That is all. The duchess will take care of you, Lillian." As he spoke he looked at her meaningly, and she drew her arm from her partner and slipped it within her father's. "I'll go with you to the door," she said, and looking back over her shoulder, she added, archly, "Am I not a good child? What is it, papa?" she said, when they had got clear of the crowd and stood in one of the rooms leading to the staircase. "You want to say something to me?"

Lord Foyle formed the word "yes!" with his lips. He was a tall, thin man from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head; but there was a look in his eyes and about the clear-cut lines which made people, when they saw him first, grow reserved and cautious. It was not a cunning look exactly, but it just stopped short of it. "He has come!" he said, smiling, and waving his hand to some one in the distance even as he spoke.

"I know it. I have seen him. And if I had not, I should have heard of him," she added, with a little scornful smile. "They watch him as cats do a mouse!" "A mouse worth a million, and master of Knighton Revels is worth watching," he said, in a low, clear, musical voice. "He is here, and I have been talking to him. Prepare yourself for a disappointment!"

"A disappointment?" she said, and the faint blush color sped out of her cheek. "I cannot understand—I have said as much all through—why you should feel so confident," he went on. "He has paid you some attention, I admit, but I am an old friend of his—about the only intimate he has in society—"

"Did I ever say that I was confident?" she said, almost inaudibly. He shrugged his shoulders. "You gave me that impression. Perhaps the wish was father to the thought, for you know how much importance I attach to this—your success with him. Frankly, Lillian, I am at my last tether. Your marriage with Heron Coverdale would be my salvation. Ah, Lovelace, how do you do? No, my daughter is not going; we are only taking a stroll."

"I know it. Do you think I do not know it?" she said through her closed teeth. "And do you think that, knowing it, I would not move heaven and earth to bring it about? You call me confident. I am not confident; but—she paused—"if I cannot win him, which of these can I with a pride which was almost sublimed in its audacity, and she waved her fan toward the crowd."

He nodded. "Yes, you are beautiful. I am proud of your beauty. Heaven knows; and, as you say, if any one— But he is most difficult. I told you to prepare for disappointment. He has just told me that he is going to leave London. He says that he is not ill, and yet he looks worn and haggard. If I did not know that he neither drinks nor gambles, I should say—"

"Leave London?" she said, and the short, white, even teeth caught at her

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about as valuable an advertisement for the Lyric as he could have desired. Meanwhile, Iris, quite unconscious of the stir she was making, went on working steadily. The belief that a person can be transformed into an actor in one night and take the world by storm without having had any experience or tuition in stage business has been exploded long ago. The young ladies who play Juliet for the first time without any rehearsals and achieve brilliant successes exist only in fiction, and are not to be met with in real life.

Mr. Stapleton was quite well aware of this, and he strove might and main for opportunities for giving Iris as many rehearsals and lessons as possible. "The Imprisoned Princess," as the new opera was rather stupidly called, was put off for a month, and rehearsals were held every day. Iris worked hard, too, at home. The music was not difficult, and she learned it very quickly, but the acting was a very different matter, and this she studied day and night, almost unceasingly.

She and Paul spent hours practicing the various scenes in which she appeared, and he would limp about the room, taking the part of the prince and rehearsing the various scenes with her. His confidence in her success never wavered for a moment; indeed, it grew hour by hour, and often when Iris would say, with a smile: "Paul, what will you do when I break down and the people take to hissing instead of applauding—will you be very sorry?" he would retort: "You break down? I know you will not. I know it as surely as if the night were over, and you were standing, bowing, with your hands full of flowers."

"Why do you feel so certain?" Iris asked, gravely. "People often break down on their first appearance, Paul." "It is true!" he reiterated. "And then they go to look at the sticks and incapables, and some who are not sticks and incapables; but they are nervous or self-conscious. Now, you are not a stick, Mabel."

"Thanks!" she said, with a laugh. "If I could only feel sure of that!" "You can act!" he almost shouted. "Do you think I do not know—I, who have watched actors night after night? Everything you have got to say you say as if there was a point to it, and then you walk and move to the part. Why, if you were to act it in a dumb show they would know what you meant."

"Oh, come Paul!" Iris remonstrated, with a laugh at his fervor. "It is true!" he reiterated. "And then the way you move—why, it is a delight to see you cross the stage." Iris shook her head, smiling. "Paul, you see me through rose-colored spectacles. Now, if you would give out a pair of them to each of the audience..."

"They won't want any rose-colored spectacles," he retorted. "And then, there's your voice—you'll admit I can't be mistaken there, Mabel? I shouldn't flatter you on that point." "No, Paul," admitted Iris, quietly. "I think I may get through the songs, perhaps."

"Yes, you'll get through them," he said, with a confident smile; "that is, if the audience will let you. It's my opinion that they will be such a storm of applause at the first verse that you will have to wait, but you'll get through them eventually!" "Your song will be a success, Paul, at any rate; I feel no uncertainty about that," she said, for the composer of the opera had acknowledged the beauty of Paul's setting to the song, and it had been put in the place of the original.

"If it should, it will be owing to your singing it, Mabel, dear," Paul said, with a faint smile. "And if that succeeds, as it will—I don't care very much for my part in the business—yes, I do!" she added, quickly, as an expression of pain crossed Paul's pale face. "Yes, I will succeed for your sake, and Mr. Stapleton, and Mrs. Berry, and all who have put such trust in me."

"Oh, now you talk yourself, Mabel!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "Once you begin to look at it in that way, you are bound to be successful! And—oh, Mabel, think of it—all London will be ringing with your praises; you will be rich and famous, and—oh, Mabel, how happy we shall be!"

"Iris turned her face away, that he might not see the sad smile which rose to her lips. Happy! What happiness could there be for her, who had lost father, name, and home?"

But if it could not bring her happiness, how could she bring it to another? At the great night approached, Mr. Stapleton, who had naturally been anxious, grew more complacent and cheerful; and his confidence was shared by the company generally. Iris was not like most theatrical novices, flighty and self-reliant, but so painstaking and modest that their sympathies, already enlisted on her behalf by the way in which she had come forward to help them, were strengthened.

"(To be continued.)"

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By a Lighthouse-keeper.
Lonely as our life is, there is no lighthouse-keeper who would change places with any "landlubber" he knows, for his work has a peculiar fascination for him.
Now is beginning the really trying time for the keepers, especially those on the outlying lights, such as the "Wolf," at Penance, or the "Bishop," guarding the approach to the Scilly Islands. The Trinity House tenders have made their first autumn tour with stores and provisions and the long winter months ahead will bring them up most really hard work.
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Did Caesar Smoke?

About thirty years ago potshards of pipe bowls as thick as a man's thumb were found in the course of the excavation of a Roman Castle in the vicinity of Hanan. The bowls were made of grey clay, and browned by heat. Subsequently, numerous fragments of what were evidently clay pipes were unearthed in the ruins of Roman settlements in Switzerland and at August-on-Rhine, or Augusta Raurorum, as it was called by the ancient Romans. Careful examination proved that the potshards were parts of clay pipes much like the clay pipes of the present-day Dutch fishermen, the only difference being that the stem of the Roman pipe was very short, and probably a thick straw was used as a mouthpiece. Some of the excavated pipe bowls have hinges, indicating that the Romans used pipes with covers. There arises the question, "What did the

Romans smoke?" It is possible that inhalation of the smoke of certain plants was as common in the ancient Roman Empires as the use of so-called patent medicines is to-day in this country, and the people, by-and-by, became accustomed to smoking aromatic narcotics, like lavender, to while time away. The fact that smoking pipes were excavated in ancient Roman castles in Switzerland and Germany indicates that barbarian mercenaries in the Roman army adopted their southern masters' custom. During the migration of the nations, smoking, like other customs of civilized ancient times, was lost in Europe, to be revived more than a thousand years later when Spaniards carried tobacco from America to the old continent.



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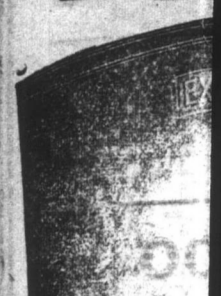
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