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"Flowers of the Valley,"
OR
MABEL HOWARD, OF THE LYRIC.

CHAPTER XXII.
BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS.
Mrs. Berry smiled cheerfully at her, and nodded encouragingly.

"Don't be nervous, my dear," she said, "and all will be right. On the other hand," she added, conscientiously, "don't be too confident. The public is a fickle monster, and hard to please, and there is no predicting with any certainty. The 'Imprisoned Princess' may be a failure, and then even your sweet voice will not save us."

Altogether it was an anxious time for Iris, and it would have been more so but for Paul's unceasing and never-flagging belief in her success.

One afternoon a big box came, and on opening it they found it contained the dresses for the princess. They were very beautiful and costly—Mr. Stapleton was "mounting" the piece regardless of expense—and Iris put them on for Paul's criticism.

The boy stood and stared at her as she swept across the room in the handsomest of the costumes—one of white satin, trimmed with pearls—and his face flushed as he exclaimed:

"Oh, Mabel!"

That really seemed to be all he could say; but his admiration and delight were increased when Iris exchanged the bridal dress for the peasant's short skirt and laced bodice.

"I don't know what I like best, Mabel!" he said. "I dare say the people will like the grand dress of white satin; but you look—I can't tell you how you look in that pretty country dress!"

There was another of plain black, which she was to wear in the prison, and even for that Paul had a word or two of admiration.

"It doesn't matter what you wear, Mabel!" he said, at last; "everything seems beautiful, directly you put it on!"

"I shall ultimately be clothed in vanity as a garment, if you do not put a curb on your compliments, Paul," she said.

The admiration of the company, when she wore the costumes at a dress rehearsal, if not quite so forcibly expressed as Paul's, was none the less decided.

"Even if she could not sing or act a little bit, she wouldn't be altogether a failure," said Mr. Stapleton in confidence to his stage manager; "but, seeing that she can do both and extraordinarily well, Miss Mabel Howard is going to realize a very big hit, Thompson," and Mr. Thompson cordially agreed with him.

At last the eventful night arrived. There had been no rehearsal that day, so that Iris might rest before the trying hour; and she and Paul sat down to a cup of tea—or, rather, Iris sat, while Paul limped up and down in a state of excitement. She was excited, too; but as yet there was no trace of nervousness—that might come; and she begged the boy to take some rest and quiet himself.

"I can't keep quiet!" he said, with an apologetic laugh. "I shouldn't feel half so excited if I were going to play, or if I had composed the opera—"

"As you will some day, Paul!"

"No, but it's because it lay on, Mabel, dear, who are going through it all! And yet I know it is all right!"

They went down to the theatre, and at the stage door found Mr. Stapleton waiting for them.

Notwithstanding his experience and self-confidence, the manager looked rather pale and anxious, but he smiled and nodded.

"Here you are, then! Come early! That's right! There isn't a seat left in the house, of course; we could have filled Covent Garden, it's my opinion. Perhaps we will some day; eh, Miss Howard?" and he laughed. "Don't feel nervous, eh? No, you don't look it! As for Paul, why, Paul's just off his balance!" and he laid his great hand on the boy's shoulder. "Go down, now, both of you! Paul, keep with her as long as you can!"

"I can see she relies on you far more than any one."

"No one loves her half so well!" murmured Paul, inaudibly.

There was a considerable amount of

bustle and stir behind the curtain, and a continual hurrying and scurrying in the dressing-room lobbies, and Iris met with many curious looks, but also many kindly greetings, as she made her way to her own room.

She found Mrs. Berry there, already dressed for her part.

"I thought you wouldn't mind if I came to help you, my dear," she said. "You have got a good dresser, I know, but at times like these one likes to have an old hand to speak a word to. I don't forget my first appearance, Miss Howard!" and she smiled.

"This may be my first and last!" said Iris. "I feel, now, that I shall not be able to open my mouth, or to move when the time comes!"

"And when the time comes you will feel very differently," said Mrs. Berry, with quiet confidence.

Paul remained until Mrs. Berry declared it was time for Iris to dress, and turned him out, and as he went he took Iris' hand and pressed it.

"Don't think of anybody but me, Mabel!" he said. "Just speak and sing to me. I shall not take my eyes off your face all the time. Remember every minute I shall be there. Act and sing as you act and sing to me at home, and—well, I will answer for the rest," and he raised her hand to his cheek and pressed it against it lovingly.

Iris' eyes filled with tears.

"If only for his sake, I hope all will go well," she said.

"The boy has the heart of a child—it is so tender," said Mrs. Berry. "And so true!" murmured Iris.

Presently, while she was dressing, she heard a dull, heavy sound, and stopped to listen.

"What is that?" she asked.

"That is the people coming into the house, my dear," murmured Mrs. Berry.

"My judges have arrived," said Iris, gravely.

The bustle and noise increased. Mr. Stapleton's and the stage manager's voices were heard above the din; then the stamping of feet from the front of the house.

"They are getting impatient; it is time the curtain was up," said Mrs. Berry. "Let me have one long look at you, my dear," and her keen eyes examined Iris from head to foot.

Then she nodded and smiled.

"I don't want to make you vain, my dear," she said; "but you have one thing, at least, that the public will have the sense to appreciate—good looks! My dear, you look beautiful, very beautiful!"

"You are worse than Paul," said Iris, smiling. "You forget that you are praising your own handiwork!" and she pointed to the powder and paints.

Mrs. Berry shook her head and laughed.

"No, my dear, all the powder and paint could not have done for you what nature has. I wonder how long it will be before your photographs are in the shop windows!"

"Many years and never," said Iris, quietly.

At this moment the sound of the orchestra turning up reached them, and a moment or two afterward the band broke into the overture.

A faint flush rose to Iris' cheek, and Mrs. Berry, who watched her closely, laid a hand upon her arm.

"You are not—frightened, Miss Howard?"

Iris shook her head.

"No, not frightened, but I feel as if—as if I had disappeared, gone into space, and some one else stood here in my place," and she looked down at her dress, and even at her hands and feet, with a strange wonder.

Mrs. Berry poured out a glass of wine, but Iris declined it, and again Mrs. Berry nodded approvingly.

Presently they heard the callboy calling the names of the characters who appeared in the first scene, then there sounded a sharp little bell, and immediately afterward there was the roar and clap of applause.

"The curtain is up," said Mrs. Berry, "and they are clapping the scene—it is pretty—and that's a good sign. They are evidently in a good humor."

Mr. Stapleton knocked at the door, and on Mrs. Berry opening it, thrust in his head.

"All ready, and all right, eh?" he asked, coolly; "for once the curtain was up, nervousness, if ever it took possession of Manager Stapleton, disappeared."

"All ready and all right," said Mrs. Berry.

"Then that's all right," he said. "Now, Miss Howard, don't you be in the least afraid, I tell you—and I know something of this business. I believe—that you are going to hit them hard—hard, I say!"

Iris murmured a word of thanks for his encouragement, and he disappeared.

A moment afterward the callboy called her name, and Mrs. Berry's and they went up to the wings together.

"One last word, my dear," said the kind-hearted woman. "Don't be hurried. Walk slowly, speak slowly, and sing slowly to begin with, and—don't look at anything—you won't be able to see much through the haze from the footlights, but don't try. Now, then."

Her cue had come. The moment she had been looking forward to and sometimes dreading; the moment that had haunted her, by anticipation, sleeping and waking, had arrived.

She looked up, saw through the haze the sea of faces, eager, expectant, stern, as it seemed to her—then advanced slowly into their sight.

(To be continued.)

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Just Folks

EXPERIENCE.

This much I know, a friend or two Can compensate for twenty foes, And summer with her skies of blue Makes up for every storm that blows. What, though the failures hurt and sting And fill man's days with dark distress, The better troubles all take wing Before the joy of one success.

This much I've learned, always to smile Is not within the power of man. There shall be days when 'Zou reville And failures haunt his fondest plan; And yet if those who knew him best Rejoice in him and gladly share His days of trial and of toils, He need not falter or despair.

Friends seldom travel with the throng, 'Tis not the many who are true. The thoughtless see the little wrong And not the good man tries to do; And whether he shall rise at evening's close— That one staunch friend makes up for all The hate and anger of his foes.

Fashions and Fads.

The flare of a Russian blouse of blue serge is emphasized by embroidery. New sports jumpers feature the low waist-line encircled by a patent-leather belt.

Fur is being used around low waist-lines, for shoulder straps, and even as sashes.

A dance frock of orchid taffeta has its overskirt outlined with leaves of purple velvet.

Indoor Life

Spending more time indoors makes women far more subject to constipation than men.

The liver becomes sluggish and torpid, the bowels constipated and the system poisoned by impurities.

If you would get away from the myriads of ills which result from constipation, it is only necessary to use Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

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Indoor Life

Different Cuts of Meat.

To learn and become familiarized with the different cuts of meat is something which should interest every economical housewife.

An excellent steak comes from the flank. The flank steak weighs from two to two and half pounds. Butchers do not cut it. The fibers are long, but the connective tissue, which holds the fibers together is largely upon the outside. The butcher draws a sharp knife across the steak in both directions on both sides, and in this way cuts through the tissue, making the steak more tender and palatable. The flank is a boneless steak.

The top of the round is used for Hamburg steak.

In the hind quarter of the beef, besides the rump, round, loin and flank, there is the hind shank, which is the choice soup meat and is excellent for broths.

In the fore quarter, besides the ribs, there are the chuck, plate and fore shank. The chuck consists of the fifth-rib roast, the chuck steaks, the clod and the neck. The plate consists of the brisket, navel and rib ends. The fore shank or shin is excellent for soup stocks and stews. A little study will enable every housewife to remember these different cuts.

The neck is used for stews, pot roasts, Hamburg steak, broths and beef loaf. Beef loaf from the neck and chuck is a cent or two cheaper than that from the plate and flank and is just as good.

The chuck contains the fifth-rib roast, which resembles the prime-rib roast in regard to proportions of meat and bone, but is an inferior piece for roasts and steaks. It should be used for stews and beef loaf.

The shoulder clod is usually cut without bone and is excellent for pot roasts or beef a la mode.

The brisket or breast is used for boiling and cornings—the finest piece of corned beef comes from the brisket. The cross ribs are used for cornings and are excellent for pot roasts. The plate is used for cornings also, and makes a good piece of boiling beef. The navel is also corned.

Besides using the flank for steaks it makes an excellent piece of braising meat; it fits for "mock ducks" and similar culinary dishes. From the rump comes the choice large roast. It may also be used for braising and makes a most nourishing stew or pot roast.

The top round makes a fine pot roast, and is used for round steak.

Hamburg steak and for braising. The second-out round is tougher and is used for dried beef.

The wide armhole of a coat-dress may be balanced by a wide hanging cuff of dyed lamb.

Long panels feature deep fur bands which swing to and fro over a crepe underdress.

Three Cuts Are Unlucky.

You must never take three pieces of any cut food on your plate at one time, nor must you ever offer three pieces of cut food to anyone at one time. There will be bloodshed if you do, according to old Japanese superstition. Why? Well, three pieces is Mi Kire, three cuts, and it may also be, in the spoken language, Mi wo kiru, in another infection, meaning "to cut the body." Somewhat far-fetched, but it holds strong sway in the minds of every Japanese. Furthermore you must never cut only three baby dresses out of one piece of material. One "tail" the usual length of baby goods will make exactly three baby dresses, and leave a small remnant. This remnant, if you wish the baby you are sewing for not to suffer from grievous body wounds, you will cut into some part of another dress the peckband, the belt, or anything you please, so long as the entire cutting from the piece is more than Mi Kire, "three cuts." The curious belief, a sympathetic magic is strong in every walk of Japanese life, and in every set of daily existence.

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will never be achieved

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In the recent

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The situation is

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