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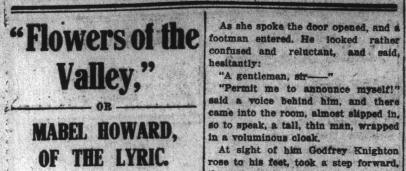
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CHAPTER III. "You have spoilt it, Felice," she visitor with a white, set face. said. "Your love of truth is greater that your desire to please me "Quite the man to notice the effect his ap-

more Italian than I think. "The signorina has the beauty of the them with a smile upon his face, Ttalian voice, but she has the English heart," said the woman, quietly; "and she is a daughter of a great English I t was by no means an usly face.

gentleman." Iris should speak again, then slowly trous, indeed; a dark mustache, with she said.

lided from the room. Iris sat beside the window for some but the smile revealed almost too conwided from the room. time, then she got up and went to the

herself at the piano and began to sing. air she was singing, and, with a gesture of impatience and a flush of anthe piano.

> CHAPTER IV. A FRIEND FROM ITALY.

The day wore on, the candles were fight in the drawing-room, and God-Frey Knighton sat with a book in his No wonder that Lord Montacute I did not expect you."

half the men in the country were at

"Iris, this is Signor Ricardo, an old tend, as I flave said, from Italy." "From the sunny south, from the nd of beauty!" remarked Signor teardo. "From your land, Miss Iris! ther's"—he paused and smiled etly upon the stern face of his st-"and your mother's." Iris held out her hand, and the sigor, taking it in his long, white ingers, bowed over it until his lips simost touched it. Then he drew himself to his full height, flung his cloak open, and re-arding Godfrey Knighton with a steady smile, said:...

"My friend, you look admirable; Miss Iris is—ah, bah! I have no words, and your place—well, it is magnificent, princely! I cannot express the joy I eel at being with you! And you did not get my letter?" "No," said Godfrey Knighton. "But 'm pleased to see you," he haded,

ootman entered. He looked rather I'm ples onfused and reluctant, and said, slowly. "Our dinner is almost ready. Will you go to your room?" and he "A gentleman. sir____" moved toward the door, but the signa "Permit me to announce myself!" stretched out his hand and laid it on aid a voice behind him, and there the sleeve of the squire's dress coat. came into the room, almost slipped in, "No!" he said, with a smile. "You so to speak, a tall, thin man, wrapped shall not incommode yourself! The

in a voluminous cloak. servants shall show me my apart At sight of him Godfrey Knighton ments! No ceremony, my dear Knigh rose to his feet, took a step forward, ton; remember, I am an old friend! then, staggering slightly, let ais hand The squire stood still and signed to fall upon the edge of the table, and a footman, and the signor, bestowing clasping it tightly stood regarding the a smile and a reverential bow upor Iris, was ushered out.

Iris was too engaged in looking at Irish waited until the door losed, then turned to her-father. different-almost!" That means I am pearance had upon her father, and "What a strange person!" she said the main stood for a second regarding half-laughting, and yet with a singular south; she has the Italian eyes, the which, taken with the face itself, profeeling of uneasiness and dislike. "Ricardo! Ricardo," Godfrey Knighton replied, his eyes fixed on the door

It was by no means an ugly face. She paused for a moment, to see if ris should speak again, then slowly with eyes black and lustrous, too lus-"I never heard you speak of "I never heard you speak of him,"

"No. I have not seen him, heard of him, for years!" he said, speaking spicuously a set of white teeth that, slowly and gravely, his face set darkin contrast with the blackness of the ly and sternly. "I knew him years For a few minutes she worked at the in contrast with the blackness of the in and sterniny. If knew him years ago in Italy-a long while ago! Ho did crayon sketch, then, dropping the the stood for that helf-minute of me-a certain service. I could not crayon sketch, then, dropping the charcoal with a little grimace, seated suspense, Iris noticed unconsciously refuse to receive him.

that the ungloved hand was white as Iris regarded him with surprise. But, just as the young's man's face so his face seemed to mingle with the hat which it held, and came across the hat which it held hat which it held hat which it held hat whi room with the hand extended. ly and sadly.

"Ah, Knighton!" he exclaimed, in a The squire moved uneasily and turnnoyance on her face, she rose and shut low and not unmusical voice, and, with ed his face still further from her. an accent which Iris knew at once to "Iris," he said, and his voice sound-be Italian. "It is a surprise, is it not? ed harsh and strained, "you have al-You did not expect me! You are over- ways been a good and dutiful girl." joyed-like me-at our meeting! My "Father!" she murmured, surprised, and waiting.

Godfrey Knighton took the out-stretched hand, and the visitor instant-and loving. Listen to me. This man, Iris usually came down half-an-hour before it rang, and the squire looked ly laid his other on the top of his for it rang, and the squire looked ly laid his other on the top of his host's. ed to talk of-of the past. You will before it rang, and the squire looked at the door now and again, for to-night she was late. But presently she came in, and his face cleared somewhat as she was late. But presently here the period of the man had produced, he was not overjoyed to see him. "No, you will not encourage him?"

No wonder that Lord Montacute wanted to marry her! No wonier that helf the men in the country were at



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those dogs of the post office would her feet! Then he sighed, and, laying down the book, regarded her with the old, half-stern expression. "You haven't told me about your ride

this morning, Iris! he said. She was expect you! But what matters? The standing, fastening a bracelet which more unexpected the pleasure, the had escaped Felice's keen eyes, and greater the joy! Is it not?" and he her lashes quivered a little. "Did you | flashed his black eyes upon Iris. "so far?"

"No; I was going to the Holt, but I did not even get as far as that," she in between them, but he recovered said, and once again resolved to tell himself in an instant. him all. She opened her lips, but at that moment there was the sound of he said, slowly and distinctly. carriage wheels on the drive, and the "Ah, yes! an old friend!" murmur

UD. "Who can that be?" he said. "I don't know. Are you expecting

any one?" she asked. "No," he replied, still listening "Perhaps it is one of the trades men's carts," she said, with a smile

"If so, I don't envy them the scolding gardener."

your daughter? It is so? I am de- extent and thoroughness. to introduce me! I loathe each mo- will stay long."

to him and put her hand on his arm mislay my letter! I said 'Baptiste, as she replied: your good friend Knighton will not "You know I will not." have received your note-he will not "Good, good!" he said. "Yes, I can

ust you." There was a silence for a moment then Iris said: "Will he stay long?" As he spoke, Godfrey Knighton made

The squire frowned. a movement almost as if he would step "How can I tell! You would not have me send him away? He has

ome a long distance-from Italy, I "This is an old friend of mine, Iris, xpect."

"Send him away?" she laughed. As if anybody would be "sent away" from squire, whose cars were quick, looked ed the visitor, flashing his smile upon her. "Knighton, I am right in guess- the Revels by Godfrey Knighton, ing that this charming young lady is whose hospitality was Arabian in its

lighted! Do me the honor, Knighton, "No, no," he said. "I don't think he

ment that keeps us strangers," and he Then he went to the table and took made Iris a swift, subtle kind of bow. up the book she had laid down, as if the conversation were concluded, and With stern, set face, Godfrey Knighthey will get from Herrocks, the ton looked from one to the other, then Iris stood and waited for the reapearance of the guest. he said:

> was in evening dress, and short as the me had been he had evidently made his toilet with some care. "I have kept dinner waiting! Par on!" he said, spreading out his hands. "It is all the fault of your trains! I thought English trains were always punctual! Miss fris will xtend her forgiveness to a traveler!' The dinner gong sounded at this oment, and Godfrey Knighton adanced to offer his arm to Iris as asual, but the signor glided in between them.

In a few minutes he came in. He

"Not so!" he said, in a silky voice "It is my privilege as a visitor! Miss Iris will honor hor father's old friend with her arm."

Iris laid the tips of her fingers on the ignor's arm, and he led her into the

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Godfrey Knighton drew bark, and By the light which fell from the shaded lamp over the table, Irish re-garded the signor with more curiosity an she had bestowed upon him in he drawing-room

the drawing-room. Certainly he was anything but ugly, or even plain. His dark hair was closely cut; there was scarcely a line in the clear, oval face. He might be of any age between five-and-twenty and forty. Looking at him carefully. Iris saw that he had a scar on the right temple, but it had not disfigured his face, and it only showed itself when he smiled

(To be cont

nen he smiled.