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"Flowers of the Valley,"

OR
MABEL HOWARD,
OF THE LYRIC.

CHAPTER XI. A STORY OF SHAME.

"In despair of telling you, gentlemen, how beautiful she was! She was like the star that shines above all others in the evening sky! She was lovely! She was a great singer! She was the prima donna, the first lady of the opera, and there was a great fame before her! Ah, yes, she would have been one of the noted ones of the earth, there is no doubt! Well, gentlemen, I loved this lady."

"Principally for the sake of her salary," thought Clarence Montacute.

"And I did hope to win her for myself. One night I saw Godfrey Knighton at the opera. It was for the first time! He was fond of music, that I knew; but he was not fond of mixing in a crowd, and he had kept away from the opera and the concerts. But I met him there one night, and Floretta Corsini sang. It was in one of her great parts, and that night she excelled herself. I was in the stalls, and I looked up at the box in the great and rich Englishman sat, and I saw his stern face soften and grow pale, and his eyes moisten, and from that night, whenever Floretta Corsini appeared, there sat the rich Englishman in his box. You understand, gentlemen?" and the signor shrugged his shoulders.

Mr. Barrington nodded quietly.

"He was fascinated," he whispered, "just like a young boy."

Godfrey Knighton, the stern and reserved Englishman, had fallen—what you call it?—head and ears in love with the Signorina Corsini, of the Italian opera!

He paused and wiped his lips, looking furtively from one to the other.

"Ah, well! One night the signorina was going to her carriage, after the opera, and there was a crowd waiting so eagerly that they discomfited her, and she dropped the roll of music which she was taking home to practice. Godfrey Knighton was close by, and he stooped and picked up the roll. But by that time the signorina had entered her carriage and—poof!—she was whirled away. Can you not guess what happened, gentlemen?"

"There was a moment's silence."

"It was a dreadful, a cruel blow! For a time I thought Godfrey Knighton would go mad! I nursed him, gentlemen, through his illness; and the signorina's sister, who lived with them, and who was a second mother to the little child; and, gentlemen, now comes the point of my poem! It was during the illness of Godfrey Knighton that I, Baptiste Ricardo, discovered from his ravings that he and the signorina were not married!"

"It is a lie! An infamous lie!" he exclaimed, indignantly.

"The signor sprang to his feet, white with passion, but Mr. Barrington held up his hand.

"One moment," he said, sternly. "Lord Montacute, I beg that you will remain silent! Signor Ricardo, do I understand you to state that this lady, Floretta Corsini, the mother of this little girl, was not Mr. Godfrey Knighton's lawful wife?"

"Certainly, that is what I state!" responded Ricardo, glowering darkly at Clarence; then he forced a smile, a sinister smile. "After all, his lordship's indignation was not unnatural! It is the first time he has ever heard of an Englishman committing such a base-ness; of course, yes!"

Clarence flushed, but he was too agitated on Iris' account to retaliate, or even resent the sneer.

"You state this as a fact, Signor Ricardo?" said Mr. Barrington; "and do you wish us to infer that the child was—?" he paused; it seemed a sacrifice to mention her name—"was Miss Iris Knighton?"

Mr. Barrington remained silent.

"The next day the rich Englishman called at the signorina's lodgings, where she was living with her sister. Now, the signorina, though a great and divine singer, and a popular idol—they worshipped her!—was as good and innocent as a child. Yes, as a child! Godfrey Knighton spent an hour with her. She liked him—he came again. Presently he got into the habit of conducting her to the theatre and back to her house. Then she would walk in the green lanes round the city with him. Ah, well; people began to talk! But she knew not that she was doing wrong, and he—the signor—paused, and his face grew dark—"he was like all great, rich men! He thought that the world and all that it contained of beauty was just made for him! That was all! I saw how things were going. I saw that I, Baptiste Ricardo, would lose my beautiful Floretta, and I went to her! I told her what the world was saying, and showed to her the precipice upon which she was standing. Ah, well!—he paused and stretched out his hands—"she just went white as a sheet, and pointed to the door. What was I to do next?"

Mr. Barrington regarded him in grave silence.

"The next thing to do was what every man of honor would do," continued the signor, touching his breast. "I went to Godfrey Knighton, the proud and rich Englishman, and I challenged him to the duel. He laughed at first in his haughty fashion; then he said, with a shrug of his shoulders, 'If it will give you any pleasure to fight with me, Signor Ricardo, why I haven't the heart to balk you; but I think it only fair to tell you that I am quite plain—why, yes, for I have cause!—was clear and bright, and our two figures stood out against the sky like black statues. I fired and missed; Godfrey Knighton fired and—hit! See, gentlemen, and he pointed to the scar which, as he smiled, shone white and livid on his temple. 'That is where Godfrey Knighton's bullet hit me. They carried me off, and for weeks I lay between life and death.'"

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As the two men listened, the thought sprang into the minds of both that it would have been anything but a misfortune for the world if the signor had crossed over to death!

"At the end of that time I went back into the world to find—what I might have expected! Floretta Corsini had disappeared, and, of course, Godfrey Knighton had disappeared also. They had gone together, no one knew where!"

He paused, and Clarence Montacute wiped the perspiration from his forehead. An awful foreboding was taking possession of him, and all his thoughts—his heart—were with the girl whom he thought was upstairs in her room. If he could but have guessed that Iris was standing, white and motionless as a statue, behind the curtain, within a few feet of them, listening in a dull, dreamy horror to every word that fell from the man's lips, what would he have done?"

Pale and motionless, Iris stood and listened. At first the signor's words fell upon her ear without conveying any meaning; but gradually she gathered that he was telling the story of her father's life in Italy, and, with an aching heart, she listened more intently. To connect this Floretta Corsini with herself did not occur to her. She was simply some one her father had known and loved—that was all. No foreboding such as had fallen upon Clarence Montacute had touched her—as yet. The awful moment had not yet come.

"I sought them everywhere," continued the signor, with a long sigh, "and at last I found them. It was months—a year and more—since they had fled. I found them living in a pretty little cottage on the hills."

"Wait!" said Mr. Barrington. "The name, please, Signor Ricardo?"

"Certainly!" responded the signor. "I wish to conceal, to keep back, nothing. The name of the village was Trivoli."

Mr. Barrington wrote the name among his notes.

"And the date, please, signor?"

The signor pulled out a pocketbook and tore out a leaf.

"Here is the name and the date," he said, with some frankness. "Observe, gentlemen, that I wish to conceal nothing! No, I resolved that I would tell you everything! You know the English law better than I do, you are both men of honor, and friends of my poor friend, Godfrey Knighton, and I trust you," and he stretched out his hands with a gesture of confidence.

"Pray proceed," said Mr. Barrington, grimly.

"Well, I found them living there together, perfectly happy, away from the world, and all in all to each other. There was a little girl there—a little baby."

Clarence started, and took half-a-step toward the signor; then stopped, and, breathing hard, regarded him sternly.

"A little baby girl," continued the signor, "a charming little thing, their daughter. They were so happy! They received me—me, Baptiste Ricardo—with such frankness that the enmity died out of my heart, and I became the friend of the great, rich Englishman."

He paused, and looked furtively at the two men, for Mr. Barrington had exchanged glances with Lord Clarence.

"Yes, it is true. I see what you think—and it is true. I was not rich, and Godfrey Knighton was generous enough to help me. Bah! I said I would conceal nothing, and I will not! He gave me of the gold which Heaven had blessed him with and deprived me of. Well, gentlemen, all went happy as a lizard in the sun, until one day the signorina caught cold. She was not strong—ah, no—she caught cold, and—she shrugged his shoulders and gesticulated with his white hands—"and she died!"

"There was a moment's silence."

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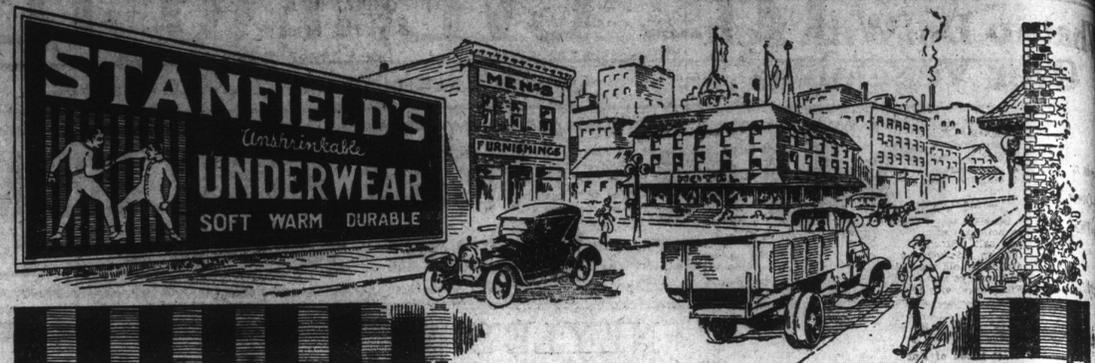
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Hag of the Dribble.

THE EERIE GHOST OF WALES.

Though there is no exact counterpart to the Irish Banshee, the Welsh possess a ghost, the Gwrach y Rhibyn, or Hag of the Dribble, that is very similar.

It sometimes appears in the guise of a man, though more often in that of a woman, and is said to foretell the death of the person outside whose house it makes its demonstrations.

According to those who claim to have seen it, the phantom has long black teeth, hawk withered arms, something resembling wings, and very white cheeks. It is usually rather vague and shadowy, though at times it would seem to be quite vivid and real.

It generally comes in the stillest hours of the night, howling and wailing round the cottage of the doomed person in hollow, far-away tones.

A Dreadful Laugh.

A perfectly authentic case of the appearance of this apparition took place recently near Cardiff.

A farmer on a visit to an old friend was aroused at night by a series of fearful screams, accompanied by a wailing in a long flowing gown in his room.

Much alarmed, he got out of bed and, throwing open the window, called out, but the only reply was a dreadful laugh, followed by another series of screams, and he then saw, floating apparently in mid-air, a figure resembling a very aged woman, with long, dishevelled hair, tusk-like teeth, and a startling white face. She was enveloped in a long flowing gown of black.

While he was staring at her, too alarmed and fascinated even to move, she crossed the road and disappeared through the "closed" entrance of the house opposite. The old farmer then got back into bed, and in the morning learned that the owner of the house which the Gwrach y Rhibyn had entered, had died the very hour the manifestations had occurred.

Farmer Failed to Return.

Another case occurred a few years ago near Barmouth. The wife of a farmer was sitting in her parlor with the children one evening, waiting for

the return of her husband from market. The night was very dark, but she was unusually calm and still, not a breath of air anywhere. As the hours passed and he did not arrive, she began to grow rather anxious, and was straining her ears listening for him, when from afar off, quite suddenly, came a curious moaning, wailing sound unlike anything she had hitherto heard.

Increasing in volume, it gradually came nearer and nearer until finally swept past the window, dying ominously away in the distance, and accompanied, so she fancied, by the dark, shadowy outlines of something almost too grotesque to be human.

He Was Quite Dead.

"Whatever was that, mother?" one of the children asked, when there was once again silence. Striving to conceal the emotion in her voice, for the horror of some impending catastrophe had come over her, she answered: "Oh, that was only a bird." "A bird," the child replied. "Well, I'm sorry, mother, for the bird that made a noise like that." A few seconds later one of the farm servants came into the room white and trembling. "Hahn! we better go and look for the master," she said. "The Gwrach y Rhibyn has just passed by the house, and I saw it turn round and look in at us."

The farmer's wife was unconvinced. But when they went to look for the farmer they eventually came upon him lying on the ground near the cross roads. He had been thrown from his horse, and was quite dead.—Tit Bits.

A jade green Jersey hat is embroidered in heavy white silk and has a scarf to match fringed deeply in white. The woman who wears an all-white costume carries a colorful handkerchief to introduce a note of contrast.

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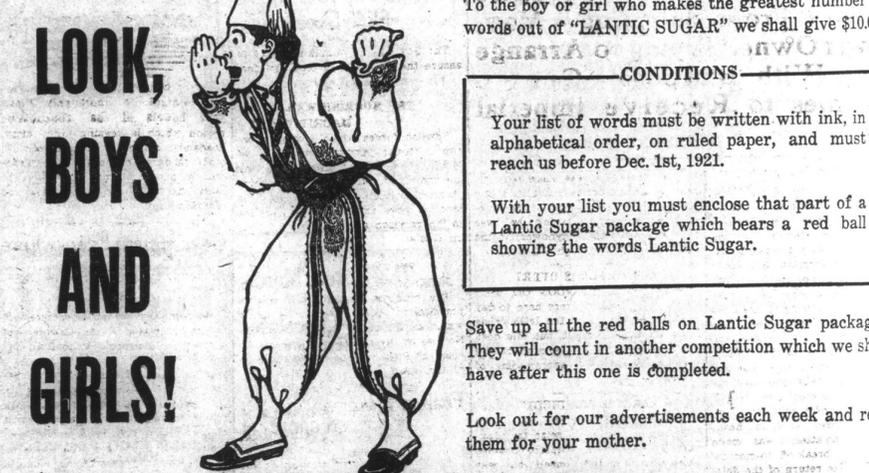
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Treating Animal Wounds.

It is a mistake to constantly wash wounds on farm animals. Nature tends to heal such wounds by forming a protecting crust or scab, under which new tissue is built up to fill the space or gap and form a scar. The latter is termed cicatricial tissue and

Home-made, but Has No Equal for Coughs

Makes a family supply of really dependable cough medicine. Easily prepared, and saves about 5¢.

Vegetables Vary in Food Value.

Vegetables vary a great deal in their special food values, usually according to the part of the plant they come from. The "leaf" vegetables like lettuce, spinach, Swiss chard, cabbage, asparagus, celery and greens of all kinds are rich in mineral salts. Cauliflowers, too, have this property, and tomatoes like most fruits contain a large proportion of valuable tonic acid. The "root" vegetables are entirely different in composition. The root being the storehouse of food for the plant, such vegetables as potatoes, parsnips, carrots, beets and salsify are rich in either starch or sugar or both. At the same time some of these, carrots especially, contain a lot of iron, which is the reason for their being recommended to give color to the complexion and for any anemic condition, where the blood of the vegetable is

Fads and Fashions.

Shirtings and bindings of grosgrain ribbon are used on a black crepe dress. A costume blouse of red crepe de chine is worn over a skirt of black velvet.

Two smart rosettes of black feathers trim a hat of black velvet.

The smart costume blouse reaches to the hem of the slip over which it is worn.

An interesting cape is made of stripes of serge put together like a sunburst.

A charming restaurant gown of the silk-net has glittering sequins of black jet.

Did this ever happen to you?

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