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"Flowers of the Valley,"

OR
**MABEL HOWARD,
OF THE LYRIC.**

CHAPTER IX.
THE LAST OF GODFREY KNIGHTON.

The table was laid, the butler and footmen hovering about; and after arranging the flowers in a vase, Iris took her seat opposite the urn.
The signor softly hummed a little air and rubbed his hands.
"Mr. Knighton—his he not down?" he said, in a tone of surprise.
"My father is not up yet," said Iris. "He was very tired last night, and not well. I am afraid I have told his valet not to disturb him," she sighed.
"Soh! I am sorry!" murmured the signor. "Yes, I do remember that he did not seem well. It is the weather; these cold winds and hot sun, they are trying and dangerous. I myself feel upset. And Iris, looking at him as he spoke, saw that the pallor which she had noticed was more marked than it had been in the garden. The English climate," he went on, as he took his place, "is, with all its charming varieties, rather pernicious. Tut, tut! I am sorry my friend, your father, is not well. Yes, I myself noticed that he seemed pale and—what shall I say—worried. Is it not so?"

Iris sighed.
"It is quite true; and yet, what could there be to worry her father into an illness?"
"Do you think it would be well to send for the doctor?" suggested the signor.
Iris started and turned pale at the idea.
"Oh, no, no! You don't think my father is really ill?" she said, with quick apprehension. "He is only tired, and—and has overdone himself."
"Yes, yes. No doubt that is it," assented the signor, hastily, as if he regretted having mentioned the doctor. "As you say, he is only tired; he will be down directly, no doubt, and will laugh at us for our fears." And the signor laughed himself, but in so spiritless a fashion that Iris looked at him with a vague feeling of awe and dread.

A strange heaviness weighed upon her; the house seemed unusually quiet; the servants appeared to move about with even less than their usual bounds. She could eat nothing, and made pretense with a piece of toast and her cup of coffee that the signor might not be embarrassed. But Signor Ricardo's appetite seemed anything but in its usual robust condition, and Iris noticed that his hand shook as he raised his coffee cup to his lips, so that the spoon rattled in the saucer.
"I think it is cold this morning," he said, as if in explanation. "Your pretty flowers must thank you for bringing them into this warm room, Miss Iris."

But the butler brought the post bag and laid it beside the signor's plate.
"We shall have to wait for our letters this morning, Signor Ricardo," said Iris, with a faint smile. "My father has the key of the bag on his bunch."
The signor set down his knife and fork suddenly, then smiled and nodded.
"As for me, the delay is nothing," he said, cheerfully. "I do not expect any letters; my friends are bad correspondents. But, see! I think the bag is unlocked," he added.
Iris took it up. It was unfastened.
"The postmistress must have forgotten to lock it," she said; "she does so sometimes. My father keeps one key, and she the other."
"I understand," said the signor.
"There is one for you, Signor Ricardo," she said.
The signor looked astonished; then shrugged his shoulders and smiled as the butler brought the letter round to him.
"Soh! My friends have not forgotten me," he said, pleasantly. "I wonder who it is from? My good friend the Count of Vichio, I suspect. He is at the court of my king, Miss Iris, where I am well known, and—dare I say it?—of some slight consequence."
He opened the letter as he spoke, and his face grew whiter as he read.
"Yes," he said. "It is from my dear friend, the count. He wishes me to return; he is good enough to say that poor Baptiste Ricardo is missed by his gracious majesty. But, no, dear count, much as I would like to see you, I cannot tear myself away from this most charming spot and my dear old friend, your father, Miss Iris."

The count, whatever his influence at court, was rather sparing both of his stationery and his words, for the letter contained one sentence only, and was written on half a sheet of rather dirty note-paper.
"Baptiste, have a care; the hawks are on the wing!—A friend."
But, ominous as the sentence was, the signor smiled and nodded over it, and put it away in his pocket with an air of pleasure and gratification.
"How delightful it is to hear from one's friends!" he murmured, pleasantly. "How welcome is the idle gossip about the places and the people one knows far away. The count is an excellent writer, excellent!"

The door opened as he was expatiating on the epistolary merits of the fetid count, and the signor started.
But it was only the head groom presenting himself as usual for orders.
"Your master is not down yet, Fenn," said Iris. "Signor Ricardo, will you have a horse or a carriage to-day?"
An ardent, burning desire seized upon Ricardo to say "Yes!" and to ride or drive away from the place for the next twenty-four hours, but he suppressed it.
"Thanks, my dear young lady; but I will wait until—until my good friend, your father, come down. He may have some plans for me."

Fenn bowed and withdrew, and the breakfast proceeded. Iris sat with a sad look in her eyes, a vague sense of ill and misfortune oppressing her.
"—I think I will go up and see if my father is awake," she murmured, more to herself than to the signor; but he heard her, and rose with a suddenness that seemed unasked for.
"—For Heaven's sake!" he exclaimed.—"I mean, would it be well to wake him?" he broke off suddenly. "There is nothing like a good sleep for the weariness my friend is suffering from."
"But it is getting late!" said Iris, still more to herself than to him. "I—I think I will go up to him."
"—Pardon," said the signor, softly, laying his hand upon her arm. "Allow me to go."
"—But why should you go?" said Iris, opening her eyes.
"—I—I—" stammered the signor. "Oh, it was merely to save you the trouble of ascending the stairs, my dear young lady."
Iris smiled half-sadly.
"That is not much trouble," she said, absently. "But I think, after all, I will not go—yet."
"—Quite right—quite right!" said the

Simonds saws
We make and temper our own steel which gives the teeth of Simonds saws a toughness and hardness which ensures their keeping their sharp cutting edge under severest usage.

signor, approvingly, and fervently wiping his forehead; "It is not well to break a man's sleep when he has reached the age of my dear friend, father."
"—But my father is not old!" said Iris, half-amused, half-annoyed, by the signor's solicitude. "He is only middle-aged, Signor Ricardo."
"—True, true," he admitted; "but still—"

He stopped abruptly, for the door opened and Felice entered.
She did not even glance at the signor, who started and turned away as she entered, but walked straight up to Iris.
"—Will the signorina come up to her room with me?" she said.
Iris looked at her with faint surprise.
"—Come upstairs? Why, Felice?" she asked.

"I have something to say to the signorina," said the woman.
Her face was very pale, and her eyes so completely covered by her lids that nothing of the pupil could be seen. Her manner, too, was marked by a deep, set constraint, which made her voice utterly expressionless and mechanical.
"—Is anything the matter?" said Iris, her hand going to her heart.
"—No, no!" said Felice quickly, but still in the same dull, mechanical manner. "Come with me, please."
"—I am sure something is the matter!" said Iris. "Of course I will come with you."
As she moved to the door, Felice drew back to let her pass, and then gave one direct, searching and threatening glance at the signor.

He met her eyes with a stolid stare, then shrugged his shoulders and turned to the window.
Five, ten minutes passed, then there came the sound of hurrying feet, and voices speaking in sharp accents of alarm and terror. The signor, standing alone by the window, shook like a leaf.
"—Peste!" he hissed between his teeth. "They have found him!"
The next moment Lafont, the valet, burst into the room.
"—For Heaven's sake, signor!" he exclaimed, "come at once!—my master—!" he stopped, panting, and pointed to the ceiling.
The signor struck an attitude of astonishment.

"What do you say?" he said. "What has happened?—your master?"
"—Heaven help us!" said the terrified man. "My master, Mr. Knighton, is dead, sir!"
Signor Ricardo had been waiting for it all the morning, but when the word was uttered it struck him almost as if he had not known it already.
"—Dead!" he exclaimed, and the terror that shone in his white face and staring eyes might well have been mistaken by the servant for surprise.
"—Dead!"
"—Yes, sir! For Heaven's sake, come upstairs! I—I was the first to find him! I—I went in to call him, not thinking that he should be so long; he was always up so early, signor, and—and not hearing him, I—I went in. The door was always unlocked, sir, and—and I saw him on the bed as he lay now—dead, stone dead! my poor master!" and the tears sprang into his eyes.

"Where is the doctor?" demanded Ricardo.
"—I have sent for him, sir," said the man; "I sent for him as I came downstairs. Oh, my poor master! my poor young mistress!"
"—Your young mistress! Ah, yes!" murmured the signor, "she is indeed your young mistress now! All this is hers—hers now of a surety!"
The man looked at him half-amazed and half-indignant.
"—Who thinks of such things now?" he said. "Poor, dear young lady! It will kill her. Come upstairs, sir!"

Reluctantly, and with a very white face, the signor followed Lafont upstairs, and the two entered the still chamber.
There lay Godfrey Knighton of the Revels, last night lord of the manor of Beavertley, now lord only of six feet of mother earth!
Kneeling by the bed, with her cheek lying on the cold hand, was Iris, her eyes fixed with a dazed horror on the white, still face; beside her, her hand resting on the girl's head in an attitude of loving protection and devotion, stood Felice. All about the house there rose a dull, hushed murmur and stir, but in that chamber peace reigned triumphant.

The signor advanced on tiptoe, his eyes carefully avoiding the dead man's face; but Felice heard the step, and, raising her hand, stopped him with a gesture and pointed to the door.
The signor hesitated not a second, but pressing his hands to his eyes, as if overwhelmed with grief, stole out, and the door closed upon the dead man, his daughter, and the woman watching over her.
But as he went down the stairs there rose a wild, heart-rending cry, and the words, "Father! Father!"
(To be continued)

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Telegram Specials

Just before closing we received a shipment of the following items which one of our most experienced buyers have been bargaining for for some time. He wires us that they represent the lowest price in modern times at which these goods were ever disposed of by the manufacturers. We will sell them to you as the best Telegram Special we have had.

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1000 yds. Wool Serge Remnants in Fawn, Red, Black, Blue and Grey; 2 to 10 yard lengths. Worth three times our price.
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Men's Winter Hose
In every color, style and weight. Many of these are just shown for the first time. Some of them are very specially priced. Here are today's offerings.
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Beautiful large patterns in all the colors imaginable. Real thing for children's winter dress.
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Ladies' and Children's Winter Caps
Made of splendid heavy Tweeds, dark patterns, heavy knit ear cover, strong bib. Will outwear any cap on the market; in Grey, Blue, Brown and Black.
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