



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

CHAPTER VI
(Continued.)

Iris, as she went through the hall in her habit half an hour afterward, paused a moment at the library door, and knocked. Instead of hearing her father call out, "Come in!" she heard him walk across the room and unlock the door.

"Oh, is it you?" he said, and his face cleared of the frown which it had worn, as if expecting some one else.

"Yes, dear," she said. "Did you think it would be any one else?"

"I thought it might be Signor Ricardo," he said. "What is it, Iris?"

"Will you come with me for a ride, father?" she asked.

He thought a moment and glanced toward the table. Her eyes followed him and she saw a large sheet of yellow paper or parchment spread out on the writing slope.

"Not this morning, dear," he said. "I am busy."

"Will you not? It is such a lovely day."

He shook his head.

"No, dear, I cannot. I have a great deal to do," and he sighed. "Go and enjoy yourself," and he touched her cheek with his hand carelessly.

She bent forward and kissed his forehead, and as he went back into the room, she heard him lock the door after him. It struck her at the time as strange; the squire was not in the habit of locking himself up, seeing that there was no one in the whole place, excepting Iris, who would dare so interrupt him. Was it against Signor Ricardo he had locked the door, and why?

She asked herself this question as she rode out of the lodge gates with a strange feeling of uneasiness; but the afternoon was, as she had said, lovely, the sun shone as if it were in the month of July, and Snow was in such excellent spirits that her mind was too occupied in keeping him in order and listening to the songs of the birds to ponder over the question for long.

Reaching the heath she pulled up for a second to decide in which direction she would ride, and turned Snow's head in the opposite way to that which she had taken yesterday; but after riding a few yards she pulled up again, and with a heightened color galloped off toward the Holt, although when she had started she had firmly resolved.

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He stared at her for a moment, then placidly moved a little away and returned to his dinner.

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Still thinking of him, she mechanically rode through the gate which they had had so much trouble in getting through yesterday, and slowly pacing toward the brook, pulled up at the spot from which she had taken the scarf.

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With a sigh of annoyance she touched the rein to turn Snow, when she saw the man of whom she was thinking sitting on the bank a few yards behind her, his eyes fixed upon her with an intense and eager expression.

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Lord Coverdale sat as motionless as herself, as if waiting to see whether she would honor him by recognizing him; the seconds grew to minutes, then she bowed coldly and turned as if to go.

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LETTER FROM MRS. WAKELIN

Tells Remarkable Story of Sickness and Recovery.

Toronto, Ont.—"I suffered greatly from weakness, seemed to be tired all the time, and had no ambition to do anything or go anywhere. My nerves were in bad shape, I could not sleep at night, and then came a breakdown. I read of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound in the newspapers and several of my friends advised me to use it, and it surely put new life into me. Now I am quite able to do all my own work, and I would strongly advise every suffering woman to give Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a trial."

Mrs. CHARLES WAKELIN, 272 Christie St., Toronto, Ont.

The makers of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound have thousands of such letters as that above—they tell the truth, else they could not have been obtained for love or money. This medicine is no stranger—it has stood the test for more than forty years.

If there are any complications you do not understand write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (Incorporated), Lynn, Mass.

"I thought you had one in your injured arm" she said.

He laughed.

"It was too slight a token. It has vanished already—not the arm, but the injury. It was only a scratch."

"I hope you will find your scarf," she said after a pause, during which a shyness seemed creeping over her, which was altogether novel and strange to her. "It was a long way to ride for it—"

"From Glossop? Yes," he said; "I came from Glossop." He glanced at the cob with a smile. "And I came fast. The fact is I had intended starting for Fraxa this afternoon, but—" he stopped and hesitated—"but the country looked so beautiful, and I wanted to see this brook again; to carry with me a good, distinct impression of the place where I so nearly lost my life, and you so bravely saved it."

Iris's eyes dropped beneath his earnest, ardent gaze.

"And have you got the distinct impression?" she said, trying to speak carelessly.

He nodded, and looked round.

"Yes; if I live to be a hundred I shall not forget it; not a tree or a gate; no, I shall not forget it, in a low voice. 'You know it well; it is a favorite ride of yours?'"

"Yes," she assented.

"I am glad of that," he said softly. "I shall like to think that you may come here sometimes—"

He stopped.

"It was time for her to go now; the afternoon was getting later; there was no excuse for lingering in this kind of confidential conversation with a stranger, although she had plucked him off the horns of a bull; but still Iris sat leaning forward slightly, her reins held lightly in her hands, her eyes fixed dreamily upon the brook.

Suddenly a curiosity seized her; she wanted to know whether he knew who she was.

"Did you call at the farm and borrow a hat yesterday?" she asked, speaking in the most careless manner.

"No," he answered concisely. Then he looked up at her. "Do you know why I did not?"

She smiled and shook her head.

"Do you know why I elected to go to Glossop bare-headed, and risk 'em taken up as a tramp or a lunatic? Can you not guess?"

"I am very bad at conundrums," she said indifferently. "I have not the least idea. Why?"

"I will tell you," he said slowly, and with a faint red in his bronzed cheeks. "I did not go to the farm because I should not have been able to resist temptation."

Iris laughed softly.

"To steal the chickens?"

"No," he said; "but the temptation to ask who you were."

The color flooded her face, then left it in its ordinary warm ivory whiteness.

"You see," he went on in a low voice, "when you had refused to tell me your name, I felt that it would scarcely be honourable to learn it from any other source. I said to myself, this lady has almost said, 'I do not wish you to know who I am,' and the least I could do in return for saving my life was to obey your lightest wish."

Iris examined the gold handle of her riding whip minutely.

"Was I not right?" he said.

"And you have asked no one?" she said, instead of answering him.

"I have asked no one," he replied, slowly and earnestly, "and I will ask no one. Until you choose to tell me your name, I elect to remain in ignorance. I said 'elect,' but—but I am not content."

Iris smiled.

"Your lack of curiosity is admirable," she said, and her eyes flashed with a spark of girlish mischief; "it would be a pity to cut short such a virtue."

"You mean that I am to remain in ignorance still?" he said gravely.

She inclined her head and smiled.

"Yes! introductions should be properly made. Ours would be the informal."

He made a little gesture of disappointment.

(To be continued.)

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"I was thinking of myself when I spoke of Fate," he said gravely. "This morning I had no idea of coming here."

"Why did you come?" she asked, and could have bitten her tongue out the next moment for having done so.

His eyes, which had been fixed on her face, dropped suddenly, then he looked up as he replied:

"I came after a belonging of mine. I left a scarf here yesterday."

Iris kept the color out of her face, and was even guilty of looking round as if in search of the lost article.

"A scarf?"

"Yes. It wasn't a very valuable one," he said, with a laugh, "but, acting on the principle of 'waste not, want not,' I thought I would come and see what had become of it."

"And you have not found it?"

He laughed again.

"Alas! no. It has either become the sport of the winds, or at this moment decks the neck of some ploughboy. He would be welcome to it, but for one reason."

"And what may that be?" asked Iris, leaning forward a little in her saddle, and regarding him with the calm, dreamy eyes, which acted as magnets on the souls of those who looked into them.

"Well," he said, after a slight hesitation, "I wanted it as a memento of yesterday's adventure."

Iris's cheeks grew pink, and she smiled.

ed that she would not go anywhere near the scene of her adventure.

Arrived at the field in which she had fought the bull, she rode up to the hedge and looked over. Her foe of yesterday was placidly cropping the grass and merely stopped for a second to look up at her as tamely and indifferently as if he had been a heifer.

Some mischievous impulse, of which, no doubt, she would afterward be ashamed, prompted her to leap the hedge and she did so and rode up to him.

He stared at her for a moment, then placidly moved a little away and returned to his dinner.

"I was right," she said to herself; "he does know me." And a wish arose that the stranger she had rescued could have been present to acknowledge it.

Still thinking of him, she mechanically rode through the gate which they had had so much trouble in getting through yesterday, and slowly pacing toward the brook, pulled up at the spot from which she had taken the scarf.

With a dreamy thoughtfulness, a look of strange perplexity and unrest, she sat and looked down at the stream.

What had come to her? Why had she, who had so firmly resolved that she would not come near this place for at least a month, ridden here to-day?

With a sigh of annoyance she touched the rein to turn Snow, when she saw the man of whom she was thinking sitting on the bank a few yards behind her, his eyes fixed upon her with an intense and eager expression.

The color dyed her face, then left it pale. She kept her eyes fixed straight before her, trying to decide whether she should notice him or not. At a little distance stood a cob tied to a tree, and from the look of the animal he had been ridden at a god pace.

Lord Coverdale sat as motionless as herself, as if waiting to see whether she would honor him by recognizing him; the seconds grew to minutes, then she bowed coldly and turned as if to go.

He raised his straw hat—he was still in flannels—and came toward her, the intent, eager look changed to one of keen pleasure, and as it seemed, gratitude.

As he approached, Iris, surveying him with her dark, clear eyes, thought that he looked even handsomer than he had done yesterday. The white flannels and his straw hat suited him, and the eager smile lent an additional charm to the frank, clear-cut face.

Her heart beat wildly—why, she knew not—but she looked the image of calmness and self-possession.

"Good-afternoon," he said, raising his hat again. "We are fated to meet, it seems."

"We have met again," replied Iris, with a faint smile; "but I don't think Fate has much to do with it; this is a favorite ride of mine."

He nodded.

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THE SAD OPTIMIST.

The most determined optimist is a moments man when he sighs and mutters to himself, "I wish that life is not all pie;" and ere he's from his grouch uprist, he's shed brine from his eyes.

The most resolved of Sunny Jims has moments of despair; he falls to dance on buoyant limbs, he seats himself to swear, and wearily he wipes his gins, and rinds his beard, and hair. I would not give a playhouse for any whirling gent who always hums a cheerful tune and never makes lament; he shows he is a loosed loon, devoid of sentiment. The optimist has gloomy days when he can't frame a song, for everywhere he turns his gaze he sees so much that's wrong, sees virtue halt on stony ways, while crime is going strong. But since he is an optimist, he fights the gloomy view; he taps himself upon the wrist and says, "This will not do! There never was so dense a mist. The sun could not break through! And all the evils I behold are doomed to pass away, and virtue, shod in shining gold, again, will have her day; then why lament and rant and scold, and flop my ears and bray?" The optimist sees good advance, though progress oft is slow; and if he is, by any chance, immersed in tears of woe, he soon emerges from his trance, his teardrops cease to flow.

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