

ROSE LEAVES AND DOWN

By Mildred Caroline Goodridge.

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"Oh, man!—do you want to do some work?"

It was little Flo Duncombe, a pretty child of eight years, who shouted the words at a young man passing the fenced-in garden where she stood with her sister, Iola.

The latter, eighteen and beautiful, was rather sorry that her impetuous



"I— I Needed Some Assistance."

companion had so familiarly called the passer-by "man"—for he was a man, indeed—straight, athletic, bronzed and carelessly dressed, but under the surface the clear eyes and intelligent face proclaimed the gentleman.

"Work, little one?" smiled the stranger, pausing and at one glance

at the lovely face of Iola, becoming interested. "I am always glad to work. What is it?"

"Rose leaves and down!" chattered Flo excitedly, important and eager.

"I fear my little sister has been presumptuous," spoke Miss Duncombe, going nearer the picketed fence. "I—I needed some assistance."

"And I am glad of an offer of work," declared the young man promptly, doffed his cap, cleared the fence at a bound and stood awaiting orders.

Miss Duncombe showed a puzzled, irresolute expression in her fair face. She could not quite estimate this brisk, willing stranger. He carried a portfolio under one arm. Was he a canvasser? He did not look it. Iola could not exactly analyze him and as she regarded him there was a pleased look on his face, as though he read her thoughts and was whimsically pleased to act the man of mystery. Iola was obliged to say something to relieve the unnatural strain of the situation.

"The work is less arduous than tedious and painstaking," she said and she led the way towards an ornate summer house. It was quite a complete structure of itself, being supplied with doors and windows, but these so arranged that in summer time they could be lifted out of view, making of the pagoda-like edifice an open air pavilion.

As she neared its door the young man instantly understood the allusion of little Flo to rose leaves and feathers. The walls were formed of rough plastering. To every minute projection of this attached myriad particles of soft flimy down. The light feathery fragments covered the furniture, the pictures, ledges, cobwebs in the corners. A miniature snowstorm seemed to have broken loose. Outside beyond an open window a line of laurel bushes were deluged with the down.

Upon a stand in the center of the