

THE USURPER

By this time he hated the very name of Neville Lyman, and yet he felt as if compelled to make one more effort to find him.

He resolved that he would spend just one more month in the search, and then, successful or unsuccessful, would go to Audrey and say, in the latter case:

"I have done my best to restore your friend to you and have failed. I will not hold you to your implied promise—you are free; but I love you still, and if you can return me a thousandth part of that love, be my wife!"

He went next morning to Sylvia's hotel to wish her good-by, and found her and Mercy consulting over an open letter.

Sylvia handed it to him with a smile. "I am glad you have come," she said. "Here is an offer from the manager of the London Opera. Shall I accept it or not?"

Lorrimore emitted a low whistle as he read the terms. "Certainly, it is a grand offer. At this rate you will be a millionaire, my dear Sylvia," he said. "I wonder what you will do with your money," and he smiled.

Sylvia smiled, then she sighed and looked away. If Jack had been alive there would have been no need for that question.

"Give it to Jack," would have been her answer. "Sylvia finds a way of getting rid of a great deal of it easily enough," said Mercy. "I sometimes think that all the poor in Paris—"

Sylvia laid her fingers on Mercy's lips. "No tales out of school!" she exclaimed, laughing. "But, indeed, I often ask myself the same question. And here is some more, and a very large sum. Shall I go?" she asked, as meekly as a ward addressing her guardian.

"Yes," I suppose so," Lorrimore replied, with a faint sigh. How he wished he could go to London and be near Audrey! "I suppose so. It is a very good offer, and you were bound to go to London sooner or later. They will be delighted with you there, Sylvia."

"Do you think so?" she said, modestly. "Sometimes I'm afraid when I think of it, and yet—she paused a moment, then went on softly—"I shall be glad to see England again. It is like home, though. I left it when I was such a little girl that I scarcely remember it."

"You and your brother left it together," said Lorrimore, gently. "He had always avoided mentioning 'her brother,' and he spoke now very hesitatingly and softly.

that it is what he calls in capital humor." Sylvia sighed. "Every one is so kind and indulgent. I am not afraid of them," and she moved her hand toward the stage. "It is not—I can scarcely tell what it is. But do not mind me. I shall forget all about it directly I go on and begin to sing."

The manager himself came to the dressing room when her "call" time came, and amidst a breathless silence she moved in sight of the audience. A curious murmur of satisfaction and admiration rose, which swelled into a burst of delighted applause at the end of her first solo.

Mercy was waiting for her at the dressing room and noticed that Sylvia was, though outwardly calm, still a little agitated. "How beautifully you sang to-night, dear!" she said, kissing her. "I wish you could have heard the delighted remarks of the people at the wings. I think it will be the greatest success you have yet had."

Sylvia nodded. "And yet I trembled so that—did you see any of the people in the house, Mercy?" "Before she could reply the manager knocked at the door in a flutter of excitement to tell her that the house was calling for her to come on before the curtain."

But Sylvia refused. "Oh, no, no," she said, panting a little. "Not yet, I must rest. Oh, please not yet; let them wait till the opera is finished—they may not want me then!" "The word and wish of a prima donna was law, and the manager retired disappointed, and yet marveling at the young lady's modest humility. It was something startlingly novel in his experience."

Sylvia repeated her question. "Did you notice any one, Mercy?" "No, dear," replied Mercy. "I had only eyes for you—as usual. Who was it you wished me to see?" "No one I know," said Sylvia. "There is a lady sitting in the second box on the second tier on the right hand side. She is the most beautiful creature I have ever seen."

"There are a great many beautiful women in the house to-night," said Mercy. "I dare say, but I have only seen this one distinctly. She is with another lady, rather older than herself—her mother, I suppose. I could scarcely take my eyes off the younger one; it is such a sweet face! And do you know, Mercy, dear, that I seemed to be singing and playing at her, and for her alone?"

She watched me as closely as I watched her, and at first, I mean when I first caught her raised my eyes to the box. I fancied that she started and looked coldly and angrily at me." "Oh, but that's impossible, Sylvia," said Mercy. "It's not like you to be so fanciful."

Sylvia laughed softly. "I think, but—well, I suppose I am fanciful tonight." "Was there no one else in the box?" asked Mercy. "One or two gentlemen, I think," said Sylvia, indifferently. "But they were at the back in the shadow, and I could not see them. I wish you would find out who she is, Mercy. Not that I should know her name, even if I heard it, for I know no one—no one—here in England!"

When they went up for the great jewel scene Mercy managed, a moment or two before Sylvia went on, to address a question to the famous Mephistopheles who had been singing the praises of Signorina Stella to an excited and enthusiastic circle of fellow actors.

"Will you tell me the names of those ladies in that second box, please," she said. "He swept her a bow and looked across the house." "Oh, yes," he said. "One is Lady Marlow, the Viscountess Marlow; and the other is the charming Miss Audrey Hope."

Mercy started, thanked him and whispered to Sylvia: "Her name is Audrey Hope." "Sylvia only had just time to nod, then glided on the stage." "And as she did so she raised her eyes directly to the sweet face which had so attracted her, and felt certain that Audrey's eyes met hers with a certain kind of significance, with something more than the curiosity and perhaps admiration with which one of a large audience regards a player."

CHAPTER XVIII. Directly after he had seen the announcement of the appearance of Signorina Stella, Sir Jordan booked a box. The report he had read to Audrey might be true or false; but true or false, Lord Lorrimore was in some way connected with the new and famous opera singer who had taken the world by storm, and Jordan knew that Lord Lorrimore could not be far off. There was no time to lose. He would like Audrey to see her arrival and decide matters before Lorrimore could arrive on the scene.

mind that would induce her to listen to him to-night. At the moment that evening the success of Signorina Stella was assured from the very opera she was welcomed by the crowded house. She sang gracefully, artistically, divinely, and of all who beheld her—no one was more charmed than Audrey Hope. Yet she could not resist a feeling of jealousy when she thought of Sir Jordan's kind—that, for admiration of this operatic beauty, Lorrimore had forgotten her, Audrey.

The curtain arose for the last act, and as Sylvia came on Audrey leaned forward in an attitude of complete attention, and the eyes of the two women met and seemed to linger on each other with an exchange of admiration and even sympathy, which was singular when one comes to think of it.

Sylvia, as she had said to Mercy, played and sang to the beautiful girl in the box above her, and inspired by the rapt attention, and admiration in Audrey's eyes, she surpassed herself in the last act, and brought down the curtain to a storm of cheering which was prolonged until the manager brought her on again.

Audrey had leaned forward so far that her arms were resting on the velvet edge of the box, and as Sylvia passed just beneath the curtain, she dropped it at Sylvia's feet. The vast audience recognized the spontaneity of the action and applauded enthusiastically. (To be continued.)

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OUR JUVENILES. PUNISHMENT FOR ADULTS WHO ENCOURAGE JUVENILE CRIME. What J. J. Kelso Says About It—Men Responsible for Many Boys Committing Crime—Bill Dealing With the Matter Before the Government.

Speaking of juvenile delinquencies, Mr. J. J. Kelso, superintendent of neglected and dependent children of Ontario, says: "In nearly every case where boys commit crime it will be found on close investigation that there is some adult who is responsible. The child is punished, but the really responsible person goes free. Not long ago two boys were arrested for breaking into a store and stealing tobacco and cigars. They were placed in jail, and, their guilt being clearly established, were committed to the reformatory. After the trial, however, the boys told how they had been bribed to commit the crime by a man who had received and disposed of the goods. The authorities were informed of this, and the man was arrested and sent to the Central Prison for a year. The sentence of the boys was reversed, and they were allowed to return home under supervision, with the result that they have been doing well since that time."

About a year ago a similar case was brought to my attention, in which a boy of fifteen was arrested for stealing a large quantity of goods from his employer. He was put up to do this by an elderly man of apparent respectability, who received and disposed of the stolen property. Pending trial, the boy was kept in jail, while the man was granted bail, and when the trial came on the man, through legal and other influence, was able to escape, while the boy given a sentence of imprisonment."

Only a few days ago the magistrate at Toronto Junction committed a boy of ten to the reformatory for stealing, and is credited with the making the remark: "If I could only send some of the parents to jail they might look after their children better." There is a general feeling throughout the country that there should be a more careful inquiry into the offences of children, so that the punishment could be placed on the right shoulders.

In a bill now before the Dominion Government relating to juvenile delinquency, there is the following clause: "Any person who knowingly or willfully encourages, aids, causes, abets or connives at the commission by a child of a delinquency, or who knowingly or willfully does any act producing, promoting or contributing to a child's being or becoming a juvenile delinquent, whether or not such person is the parent or guardian of the child, or who, being the parent or guardian of the child and being able to do so, willfully neglects to do that which would directly tend to prevent a child being or becoming a juvenile delinquent, or to remove the conditions which render the child a juvenile delinquent, shall be liable on summary conviction before a juvenile court of a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year, or to both fine and imprisonment."

In my opinion the passage of such an amendment and its vigorous enforcement is badly needed.

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