DAVID WESTLAKE'S ULTIMATUM

(Continued from page 12.)

in an exquisite gown of silk upon which gleamed here and there costly clusters of jewels. They were both laughing merrily as the figure in the travelling coat moved forward. He stopped beside them, and, touching the girl's arm, whispered only one word in a trembling voice—"Nursie!"

The girl looked at him, and immediately her gaiety vanished. The merry smile disappeared, and the rosy features blanched white. She uttered no word, but, as if compelled by some superhuman agency, rose and followed David Westlake out of the room and into the waiting motor-car. So

ed David Westlake out of the foom and into the waiting motor-car. So quickly did the whole incident pass that Sir Frank Gilbert never spoke, but, as he found himself alone with the eyes of all turned upon him, he slipped on his coat and quietly left

Meantime the car containing David Westlake and Mabel Hamilton sped on through the streets. For a few seconds neither spoke, but all at once the man spoke and said sternly, "Have you nothing to say to me, Mabel?" She hung her head for a moment and then raised her face with a forced smile as she stammered, "Why—I am glad to see you back again, David; but why—why didn't you let me know? I would have met you at the station, or at Liverpool."

He laughed scornfully and turned his face away as he retorted bitterly, "Would you really have given up the supper at the Savoy to come and meet

supper at the Savoy to come and meet me?"

The shot went home, and the girl sank back upon the cushions trembling and ashamed. She did not answer his question, and the silence remained unbroken for several painful moments. Then the man seized her hand, and drew her to him. His eyes gazed searchingly into hers as he whispered: "Do you still love me?"

She looked at him with fear in her eyes, and answered, brokenly: "Yes, yes! But I don't understand. What do you mean? What is wrong? You look so white and worn and strange."

Closer he pressed her to him until their lips met, and then, as she shrank back into the corner of the car, quivering with the passion which his kiss aroused, he whispered hoarsely: "Do you love me, Nursie? Will you come back with me to New York on Saturday—away from all this mad life that is dragging you from me?"

Her eyes fell before his gaze as she murmured: "No, no—I cannot. It is impossible."

He sank back in his seat without a word, and then he caught hold of the

murmured: "No, no—I cannot. It is impossible."

He sank back in his seat without a word, and then he caught hold of the speaking-tube and shouted to the driver: "To the Hotel Metropole." The car turned at the next corner, and as it sped back into the centre of the city David Westlake took the hand of the girl beside him, raised it to his lips, and kissed it passionately. "I am going back by the Franconia on Saturday, Mabel," he said. "I think you know why I want you to come with me at once. Think over it, and decide as you like, but remember, if you do not come with me, you will neither see me nor hear from me again."

/Just at that moment the hotel was reached, and, with a last glance at the trembling, white-faced girl whom he loved, David Westlake opened the door and swung out into the street. "Drive this lady to Kensington Park Road," he said, quietly; and, as the car moved off, he lifted his hat and walked on into the hotel.

It was a bleak, murky night, and as

It was a bleak, murky night, and as the Franconia crept down the Mersey towards the sea few passengers remained on deck. On the promenade only one figure was to be seen—a man who, heedless of the thin drizzling rain which was quickly soaking through his coat, walked restlessly up and down. Once he stopped to light his pipe, and as the tiny flame flared up it threw into prominence the features of David Westlake—features which had impressed upon them the marks of a wild despair. He moved to the side, and, as the great liner swung steadily out to sea, looked

CALABASH

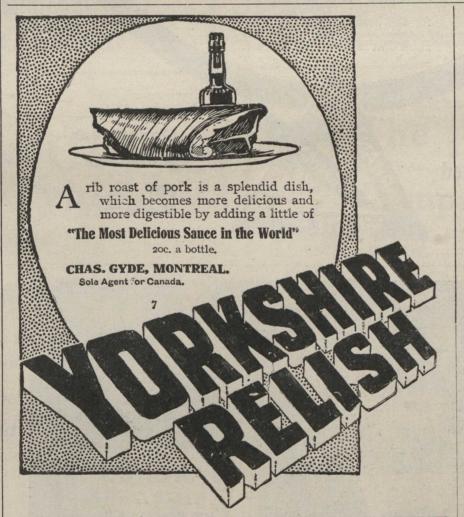
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