

THE USURPER

Then he walked out of the room as if he could not bear to hear or say more. But before he started on his last search he arranged Sylvia's and Mercy's journey to England with his usual care and foresight. Sylvia had her own maid and a courier, and the orphan of Lord Hope might have traveled with the state of an empress if she had been so minded.

Mercy had decided that they would be quieter in lodgings than in a hotel, and the courier had engaged some comfortable rooms in Bury street, St. James.

Here she was waited upon by the great London manager, who was rather startled to find the famous prima donna so young and so quiet, and so sad looking.

For the first two or three days she and Mercy amused themselves in the intervals between practice and rehearsal in going about the great city, which Mercy seemed to know quite well. They saw most of the famous sights, but Sylvia enjoyed the park, with its throng of beautifully dressed men and women, and was quite unconscious that she and Mercy drove round the ring, in the modest hired brougham that all eyes were bent upon her own beautiful face. One afternoon on their way home, they passed down Park lane and South Audley street and Sylvia, who had turned to Mercy to make some remark, was surprised to see that she had turned deathly white, and was trembling.

"Oh, what is the matter, Mercy?" she asked, anxiously.

"Nothing—nothing," said Mercy, evidently struggling for composure. "It was only something—"

She stopped as if she did not wish to say any more, and Sylvia, looking round anxiously, could see nothing to alarm her companion. A tall, thin gentleman with a pale, thoughtful face, had just passed them, but he had not glanced at their carriage, and there was no one else at that moment near.

Sylvia stole her hand into Sylvia's still trembling one.

"Are you—better now, dear Mercy?" she asked.

Mercy smiled at her in her sad, resigned way.

"Yes, Sylvia; don't be alarmed. I shall not be taken that way again, and she set her lips firmly.

The night of Sylvia's first appearance arrived, and she admitted to Mercy that she was rather nervous.

"I don't know why," she said with a little tremulous sigh, as Mercy arranged the simple dress in which Marguerite first appears; "but to-night I feel as if—don't laugh, Mercy; but there, you never laugh! Perhaps it would be better for me if you did! But do you think anything were going to happen?"

"Something will happen; a very great success," said Mercy. "The manager tells me that the house is crammed, and that it is what he calls in capital humor."

Sylvia sighed.

"Yes," she said. "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 wings and took her down to 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 came on and raised my eyes to the box, I fancied that she started and looked coldly and angrily at me."

"How generous you are!" he murmured. "Most women would have hated her, but you—"

Audrey hung her head, her eyes still fixed on the stage where Sylvia had just been standing.

"I do not hate her," she said, more to herself than to him, and there was a faint tone of wonder in her voice.

"Nor despise him?" he whispered. "No, you are too noble; but I—well, I will not speak of my contempt for the man whose constancy is so poor a thing. Audrey, I at least am constant. Though you send me away from you, my heart will remain with you, and forever. Have you no pity in that gentle heart of yours for me? Audrey, dear, I hope! Will you not say one word and make me the happiest man in the world?"

As he spoke, his hand glided toward hers, and took it softly and hesitatingly.

She was in a quiver of excitement and emotion; her heart was throbbing with the pain of looking on at the triumph of the beautiful girl who had won Lord Lorrimer; she was, in short, just in that condition when a woman turns for consolation to the nearest and most persistent of her lovers, and—she let her hand remain in his!

When Sir Jordan bade her adieu that evening the light of triumph still glowed in his eyes; then they took a keen and calculating expression, and, calling a cab, he told the man to drive him to the office of a well-known society paper.

"There must be no chance of drawing back, my timid Audrey," he muttered. "I knew I should win; but luck has favored me. Whether there is anything in this rumor of an engagement between the young opera singer and my Lord Lorrimer, it has never occurred to me. There must be no drawing back! He drew a long breath. "I am safe now! With the Hope estates and money I can defy even—the worst!"

In less than an hour the paragraph announcing the engagement of the Right Hon. Sir Jordan Lynne, Bart., M. P., and Miss Audrey Hope was in type.

There was the usual excitement behind the scenes when a great and extraordinary success had been scored, and Sylvia stood the centre of congratulatory crowd, and received all the kind speeches with her sweet, modest smile.

She held the bouquet Audrey had dropped to her, and she sat in her dressing room while Mercy changed her stage costume for the plain, comfortable attire of an unprofessional life, with the bouquet still lying before her, and her eyes fixed on it dreamily.

At length they were ready to depart, and they made their way to the stage entrance where the brougham was waiting. The manager and two or three of the principal actors were waiting to assist the great prima donna to the carriage, and they stood with uplifted hats as the brougham drove off.

The streets were still crowded, and before the carriage had passed the grand entrance it pulled up.

"There must have been a tremendous crush," said Mercy. "The people have not all gone yet."

Sylvia leaned forward to look out, but fell back again with a cry of terror.

"Ah! look!" she exclaimed.

Mercy, whose heart had leaped into her mouth at the wall of fear, looked out, but the brougham had moved on, and was going along rapidly.

"What is it? What did you see?" she asked.

Sylvia was lying back with her hand pressed against her heart, her breath coming painfully, her face white with terror.

"Didn't you see?" she panted at last.

"No, I saw nothing," replied Mercy. "Tell me what it was, dear! Come, Sylvia, this is unlike you! Be calm, dear."

"Yes, yes!" she breathed. "Don't be frightened! You did not see her, did you? See whom? I saw no one I knew; there was a crowd. Who was it, Sylvia?"

A shudder shook her.

"Lavarick!" she whispered.

Mercy started with surprise.

"Oh, no, dear," she said, soothingly. "That man here in London! It is impossible; it was your fancy!"

"No—no; it was not fancy," Sylvia replied, a tremor in her tones. "I am sure it was Lavarick!"

CHAPTER XIX.

Mercy would not leave Sylvia that night, but slept beside her, holding the girl in a loving embrace, and trying to soothe and reassure her. At times Sylvia shook and trembled, and at others she cried quietly, for the sight of Lavarick had not only terrified her, but recalled Jack's death, so that she was tortured by fear and sorrow at the same time.

"My dear, dear child!" Mercy whispered, lovingly. "Even supposing you were not mistaken, and I think you must have—"

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 beneath her in front of the curtain, Audrey raised her bouquet and dropped it at Sylvia's feet. The vast audience recognized the spontaneity of the action and applauded enthusiastically.

Sylvia was startled for a moment, then as the manager picked up the bouquet and handed it to her, she raised it to her lips, and her eyes to Audrey's face.

Jordan took Audrey's cloak from the back of the chair and held it for her, and as he did so he saw that the hands she put up to take it were trembling.

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"My dear, dear child!" Mercy whispered, lovingly. "Even supposing you were not mistaken, and I think you must have—"

A burst of sobs stopped her utterance. Mercy pressed her close to her heart.

"My poor child! What shall I do? What an idiot! What can I say to comfort you? Shall I speak to anyone in the morning, go to the police, and tell them to watch him?"

"No, no," replied Sylvia. "Do not interfere with him. Perhaps he did not see me. And yet I felt his evil eye glaring at me as I looked out. No, let him alone, Mercy. He—he may not have seen me, and—perhaps he will go away, crowd, Lavarick cannot harm you now."

From girlhood to middle life the health and happiness of every woman depends on her blood. If her blood is poor and watery she becomes weak, languid, pale and nervous. If her blood supply is irregular she suffers from headaches and back-aches and other unspeakable distress which only women know. At every stage of a woman's life Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are her best friend, because they actually make the rich red blood which gives health and strength and tone to every organ of the body. They help a woman just when nature makes the greatest demand upon her blood supply. Mrs. H. Gagnon, who for twenty years has been one of the best known residents of St. Roches, Que., says: "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have been a blessing to me. I was weak, worn out and scarcely able to drag myself about. I suffered from head-aches and dizziness, my appetite was poor and to attempt housework left me utterly worn out. I slept badly at night and what sleep I got did not refresh me. For nearly three years I was in this condition and was constantly taking medicine, but found no benefit from it. One of my neighbors who had used Dr. Williams' Pink Pills with much benefit, advised me to try them. I did so, and the whole story is told in the words 'I am well again.' There are times yet when I take the pills for the troubles which so many women suffer from."

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"Make Good."

Make good. Cut out "if" "could" and "should," and start in to saw wood. You can still have the best things in life, like the rest of the men who've achieved themselves. You've believed in yourself. You're deceived. If you think fortune comes with a rattle of drums and a fanfare of state. To hand yours on a plate. That's the way. That she visits to-day. You must get out and rustle and bustle and hustle; You need all your muscle, for you've got to tussle. Plunge into the fight. Hit to left and to right, and keep crashing and smashing. Don't let up your striking. Till things meet your liking. For God's sake stop halting—Instead, do some manfully. It makes the world better. To look at a quitter; Fate scowls when she sees A grown-up on his knees. A man with his health In a mine mined with wealth Full of unexploded holes. Why, the freckled-back toads Have the sense to keep jumping—And here you are frumping! Come, now, strike your gait—It isn't too late. There's no such thing as fate! Drop that fool talk of "luck," Get a grip on your pluck, And buck. Begin. To grin. And win. —Herbert Kaufman in June Every-body's.

Worth Knowing.

Even when the oven is quite right and the pastry has been made moderately rich, a woman will feel dissatisfied at the appearance of a pie, because she misses the rich brown gloss that she has seen in the pastry made by practical cooks. To obtain this gloss she needs a wrinkle. It is produced by egg wash. An egg is beaten up with a little sugar and a small quantity of milk is added. With this wash the pie is brushed over after the pastry has been finished.

One often hears complaints that the boiler rusts and ironmolds the clothes. To prevent this, as soon as the boiler is emptied rub well over with soap. This helps to make suds for the next boiling. To keep mice away from pantries and cupboards sprinkle cayenne pepper on the shelves. In boxes and wardrobes put lumps of camphor among the clothes, for mice dislike the smell of it. The camphor must be renewed every now and then, for it evaporates in the air.

For easy boot cleaning brush the boots free from dust, then with a bit of rag rub a little glycerine well into the leather. Let nearly dry, then rub with a soft brush. If rubbed after wearing with a velvet covered pad or duster they will retain their polish for days and the glycerine helps to keep the leather a good color and to make it soft and comfortable to wear.

Leather Shoes for Horses.

In some districts of Australia horses are shod with leather instead of iron, says Harper's Bazar. This plan is employed only in regions where the ground is permanently covered with grass or fine sand, and gives the feet better support. In a country such as Australia, where a horseman may experience great difficulty at a critical moment in finding a horse shoe, such an innovation is a useful novelty. With extra shoes, whose weight is a trifle, and which can be fitted without trouble, it is practicable to travel without fear of the horse losing its shoe and being injured. Though the latter shoe is more expensive than the iron shoe, the higher price is repaid by the superior advantages.

"Chance shapes our destinies," quoted the Wise Guy. "The some of us have mighty poor shapes," commented the Simple Mug.

The End of the Play.

The play is done—the curtain drops. The snow falling to the prompter's bell; A moment yet the actor stops, And plucks a hair from his earwell. It is an irksome word and task; He shows, as he removes the mask, A face that's anything but gay.

One word, ere yet the evening ends; Let's close it with a parting rhyme, And pledge a hair to each young friend, As fits the Merry Christmas time; Oh, life-wide scene you, too, have parts, The fate ere long shall bid you part; Good-night! with honest gentle hearts A kindly greeting go away!

Good-night!—I'd say the griefs, the joys, The triumphs and the sorrows of boys, Are but repeated in our age; We hope your love, than those of men, Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen years—'Tis played o'er again.

I'd say we suffer and we strive Not less nor more as men and boys, With grizzled beards at forty-five, As erst at twelve in corduroys, And plead a hair from each young friend, As fits the Merry Christmas time; Oh, life-wide scene you, too, have parts, The fate ere long shall bid you part; Good-night! with honest gentle hearts A kindly greeting go away!

And in the world, as in the school, I'd say how fate may change and shift, The prize be sometimes with the fool, The race not always to the swift; The strong may yield, the good may fall, The great man be a vulgar clown, The knave be lifted over all, The kind cast pitilessly down.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill, Let your old and accept their part, And bear it with an honest heart. Who loses or no with the loss—Go, lose or conquer as you can; But if you fall, or if you rise, Be each, pray God, a gentleman. William Makepeace Thackeray.

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Clover Seed a Profitable Crop For the Farmer

(Press Bulletin.)

As was predicted a year ago, there has been a decided shortage of clover seed this spring. A little crop in Europe, the United States and Canada caused the stocks for this spring's trade to be abnormally low, and this resulted in unusually high prices for good seed.

At present the indications are that the foreign exporting countries will not produce more than an average crop of clover seed, and the Ontario supply is likely to be short. In some sections of Ontario the clover crop was seriously affected by draught last season, and the amount available this year for seed production may be limited. Much the same conditions prevail over a considerable portion of the clover seed producing area of the United States; so that unless the yield from the areas which were not seriously affected by the adverse weather conditions last season is exceptionally heavy, a shortage of seed for next spring's trade is more than probable.

In view of the conditions cited, the advisability of utilizing every available clean field, or part of field, for clover seed purposes is urged.

In growing clover and grass seed for the market, it is important to bear in mind that the standard of purity demanded in the Canadian trade is higher than it was a few years ago. The demand for seed of first quality has substantially increased. The result of this demand for seed of good quality has been that the seed grower finds impure seed an almost unmarketable commodity, while the production of good, clean seed has grown to be a remunerative industry. Hence the necessity of taking every possible precaution against the presence of noxious weed seeds.

The first step in the production of good clover and grass seed is to procure the cleanest possible seed. If this is used on clean land and is followed by a thorough system of weeding in the field, the product will be clean. The field weeding is of prime importance, although it is often overlooked. When we remember that every growing weed, if allowed to mature, will produce from 10,000 to 50,000 seeds, it will be readily understood that the removal of these plants must make a great difference in the market value of the seed.

With red clover the best results are obtained by pasturing or cutting the first crop early. This allows a stronger second growth for the seed crop and also lessens the danger of damage from the clover seed midge. If the clover is pastured, the stock should be turned off early in the season and the field mowed, in order to cut down the weeds and produce an even second growth.

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