

She Would Be a Lady

CHAPTER IX.

Though Eva could never have guessed the truth, Lilas Lampier was indirectly the cause of Mrs. Westbrook's changed feelings towards herself. Miss Lilas, had, in her own shady world, become a decided success. She had remained with the Barnams until a more wealthy and more enterprising circus proprietor had offered her such terms that she could afford to break faith with her first master, and accept the bribe held out to her.

This man, in his turn, was thrown over for another, still better able to help her up the ladder of success, and so the fair false one got on step by step, and now she is the leading actress at the Palladium, a theatre that ladies seldom frequent, but where a lovely face, a magnificent figure and a good powerful voice, suitable for opera bouffe, will always insure a crowded house, particularly when the possessor of these qualities is backed up by a rich patron.

Lilas had all these claims to constant employment at the Palladium. She could dance and she could sing; few women before the public could rival her in beauty, and the Duke of Dullborough lavished wealth and jewels upon her, as though his own resources were unlimited and inexhaustible.

Not being a young woman troubled with any sensitive notions on the score of virtue you might reasonably suppose that Lilas de Lampier, as she styled herself, had few desires ungratified, but this was not the case.

She would be a lady, and though nothing on earth could make her one in the same sense that Eva Randolph was, she gradually acquired the conviction that if she married a gentleman no one could deny her the social recognition which she coveted.

The duke would not marry her if he could, and there was the disagreeable fact of there being one Duchess of Dullborough already, to preclude even a hope in that direction, so what was she to do to attain her purpose?

When she began to think seriously of matrimony, Lilas realized for the first time that, although beset with innumerable admirers, there was not one among them who ever thought of giving her that plain gold ring which signifies so much.

No pure love and no great passion had touched the heart of this utterly selfish girl, until one night at a boisterous supper party she met Mr. Westbrook. She recognized him in a moment. She remembered his face and his name, and she recollected how in turning to admire him, she had once walked with little Freddie into the river.

In those days he was the handsomest man she had ever seen, and now, looking at him among so many, and after the thousands she had since met, she decided still to give him the palm.

But he seemed ill at ease in the company in which he found himself, and yet there was a certain air of impatience and defiance about him that suggested to her quick intelligence that he had been thwarted or disappointed, and might be ready to perpetrate any piece of recklessness.

To the disgust of many of her admirers, Lilas showed a marked preference for Mr. Westbrook, and when the party broke up, she gave him her address and invited him to call and see her.

It is needless for us to follow Lilas in her subsequent career for the next few months, except in so far as it regards others in whom we are interested.

But a marked change came over the actress. For the first time in her life she knew the meaning of the word love. Not love in its purest form, but love turned to passion, and a craving desire to make the loved one her own at any and every cost.

Love made Lilas timid and almost modest. She meant that Ernest Westbrook should marry her, and she played her game with such consummate skill that she stood a very good chance of winning.

He had heard the tales that were in everybody's mouth about her, but how could he credit them when she was always so modest and retiring in her relations with him?

She asked him questions about his home and his mother, she narrated little incidents of her past, and at length she recalled herself to his recollection as she had once been and implied in a more subtle way than if she had openly avowed it that even in those days she had admired and loved him.

Only once had he stopped her abruptly, and quickly changed the subject when she talked about the past, and that was when she casually expressed some curiosity as to what had become of Eva Randolph.

"She is an artist," he replied, curtly.

"Oh! then, I'll engage her to paint my portrait," said Lilas, in a tone that implied that Eva must feel honored by receiving such a commission.

But the expression of Westbrook's face and the tone of his voice stung her to the quick, as he remarked, somewhat sarcastically.

"I would spare myself the inevitable mortification which must follow such an offer, if I were you."

"What do you mean?" she demanded, hotly.

"If you do not know, I cannot tell you," was the reply. "But I must say good-bye; my mother expects me."

"And Eva Randolph is waiting, I suppose," exclaimed Lilas, with a burst of jealous vehemence.

"No; I have not seen Miss Randolph for some months," he replied coldly.

Then he went away feeling that for a time he had had quite enough of this beautiful fury.

But the story got abroad—it was originally set afloat by herself—that Mr. Westbrook was engaged to marry Miss Lilas de Lampier, and the news reached the ears of Mrs. Westbrook.

She knew the actress well by reput-

ation, and she regarded her as a disgrace alike to her profession and her sex.

The idea that her own son should marry this creature transported the proud woman with passion, and she indignantly denied it could be possible.

But when she herself asked Ernest about it he answered moodily:

"I don't know whom I shall marry. I have only loved one woman and she refused me; I don't care much what happens next."

"But surely you could never entertain the notion of making an abandoned creature, whose very name has become a by-word of shame, your wife?" asked Mrs. Westbrook, with undisguised horror.

Her son answered evasively, and then observed:

"She is very beautiful. Have you seen her?"

"No; how should I see such a creature?" was the angry question.

"Easy enough, by going to the Palladium any night," was the careless reply. "I'll take you, if you like."

Mrs. Westbrook's heart felt nigh unto bursting with rage and indignation. But she curbed herself; her son was beyond her control, and she had also an unpleasant consciousness that she had in a great measure brought this new danger on herself.

If she had only refrained from interference when he had evinced a partiality for Eva, this last deplorable condition of affairs could never have come about.

When she spoke again, it was in a hesitating tone, and she asked:

"Might you not have been mistaken; might not the girl you loved have doubted herself when you asked her to marry you? It is not the first time of asking that is always successful if a woman is worth winning."

"I don't care to be refused twice," was the curt reply.

And then he left the room; the subject was as painful as it was distasteful to him.

"How I am punished!" moaned the unhappy mother, when she found herself alone. "Eva would have been a wife for him of whom I might be proud. But that abandoned wretch! I pray that the grave may close over my head before she bears my name and makes me childless; for I will never see or speak to him again if he brings this shame upon me."

But this passion wore itself out, and at length, Mrs. Westbrook began to think how she could save her son from this disgraceful alliance.

Eva was her only resource and her only hope.

To go to the Longfords was the first thing Mrs. Westbrook did the next morning, and she learned from them that Eva had already returned to England—had, indeed, been back a fortnight.

Mrs. Westbrook understood the situation directly. Eva did not intend to seek her out. The girl was offended, and must be conciliated. In a moment the astute woman of the world had made up her mind what to do.

"To-morrow will be her birthday," she observed, sweetly, to Mrs. Longford. "Please don't say anything about this visit of mine, I want to surprise her."

Shortly afterward she took her leave.

"I will go with Ernest to that theatre," she said to herself, as she leaned back in her carriage; "and I will take Eva. The best plan will be to ask her to dinner, without telling him she is coming. If he still loves her, perhaps things will come right without further trouble; but if he sees the two women together, then surely he must be delivered from the toils of that brazen Circe at the Palladium."

Mrs. Westbrook carried out her plan to the letter. She duly informed her son that very evening of her desire to visit the Palladium, and requested him to secure a private box for the next night.

In the morning she sent the carefully-concocted invitation to Eva, which we have seen, but not having received any answer to it when the dinner time was approaching, she began to get nervously anxious about the success of her scheme, and at length dispatched her own maid in a hansom cab with another letter still more earnestly entreating the girl to come to her.

This was successful, the messenger, and the guest returned together, but Eva's heart fluttered like an imprisoned bird as she took Mrs. Westbrook's hand and asked:

"Did he know that I was coming?"

"No; he does not know that you are in London; I have been much to blame, Oh, Eva!" she added, as she heard her son's step on the stairs, "win him if you can; save him for both of us."

Before the astonished girl could reply the door opened and Ernest Westbrook stood before her.

CHAPTER X.

Lilas Lampier is at her very best to-night. The opera bouffe, in which she takes the leading part, has been placed on the stage and got up with the principal object of showing off her voluptuous grace and beauty in the most effective manner possible.

Never was she in better form for her work, and never did she feel more confident of triumph. Ernest Westbrook has not yet proposed to her, but she feels very certain that he will do so. Only this morning he told her that his mother was coming to the theatre in the evening to see her act. He did this, perhaps, to put her on her guard, so that she might not indulge in any of the impromptu witticisms and seductive glances with which she often embellished her art.

At any rate, she took the hint and she almost wished she could have selected some other piece in which the proud lady might first see her, for

she felt very certain that she would be sharply criticised, and she knew that Ernest would be indirectly influenced by his mother's opinion, however much he might try to persuade himself that he was not.

Many times during the early part of the evening Lilas glanced up at the empty box which she knew Ernest Westbrook had secured. Why was he so late? Why did he not come? She was getting impatient and very cross.

Every day of her life she was becoming more and more infatuated with this man who hovered about her, and yet held back from saying or doing anything that could compromise him. She had, for his sake, dismissed all her other admirers, including even the duke, who could not be easily replaced.

At last, when the evening is fully half over, she sees the curtains of the empty box move, and her heart throbs with proud satisfaction, for she feels that Ernest is watching her at last.

She cannot look at him for a few seconds, for her part demands her exclusive attention; but when she can turn her eyes toward the box, she sees that there are two ladies there, both of whom she intensely gazes at her.

Who can they be? One she recognizes as his mother, but the other is scarcely older than herself, and she never heard him speak of a sister.

The box in which the Westbrooks sit is near one side of the stage, and when Lilas can approach it without attracting observation, she looks up at the fair oval face that looks down steadily and almost sadly upon her.

Where has she seen that girl's face before? In a moment it flashes upon her, and in the same glance the recognition is mutual. Eva sinks back with an expression of horror; while sudden jealousy and hatred transform the sweet face of Lilas Lampier into that of a raging fury.

Only for an instant, however. She is far too good an actress to let her own feelings spoil her part; and, as though to show the prudes who watched her that she did not value their opinions, but defied them, she gave herself greater license than she had ever done before. She must make Ernest Westbrook her slave by intoxicating his senses, or she would lose him altogether; for some subtle instinct told her that Eva was her dangerous rival.

Between the acts Lilas expected that Ernest would come behind the scenes, as usual, to speak to her; but he did not; neither did he throw or send her a bouquet and he seemed to take no more notice of her personally than any other woman upon the stage.

"I will speak to him to-night," she thought, passionately; "he will chose between her and me. I will be second to none in his heart, or he shall go, and I will forget him."

With this determination, she wrote a hurried scrawl, as she stood in one of the wings, and sent it round to Mr. Westbrook's box. Ernest received it as he and the two ladies were leaving, and he thrust it unopened into his pocket.

A very little of the Palladium was enough for Mrs. Westbrook—still less had been too much for Eva; and as soon as she had recognized Lilas as one of the companions of her childhood, her great anxiety was to get away as quickly as she could.

She had often wondered what had become of the girls with whom she used to play, but she had never for a moment suspected that the woman she had heard spoken of as the modern Daliah was the Lilas Lampier who used to stagger about Westbrook under the burden of Mrs. Flood's big baby. Of the danger that Ernest was in from this siren she had no suspicion. Mrs. Westbrook had not found an opportunity for telling her, and now she deemed it prudent not to do so.

Ernest had been surprised to meet Eva in his mother's drawing-room, and there was some awkwardness on both sides when she offered him her hand and uttered the commonplace greeting that she hoped he was quite well.

Ernest refused to accept the olive branch, and determined more recklessly than ever that he would marry Lilas Lampier, and thus show Eva that she could not play fast and loose with him at her leisure. His mother divined his thoughts and resolved still to save him.

She left the dining room with Eva, but she returned alone a few minutes later, and approaching her son, and laying her hand on his shoulder, said:

"Ernest, I have something to confess, though you may blame me bitterly for what I have done. I made Eva refuse you; I exacted it as the price of all kindness to her. She went away because I believed she loved you, and she is only here this evening by my entreaty. It was for your sake I did it. But I fear I acted unwisely."

"Very unwisely," replied her son, sternly, rising to his feet, and looking coldly in her face. "But having sent her away, why have you brought her back again?"

"Why?" gasped his mother. "You know why; surely it is not too late?"

"Do you mean to go to the theatre to-night?" he asked, moodily, ignoring the question.

"Yes; I told Eva you would take us," she replied, stung to the quick by his seeming indifference to her feelings and wishes.

"Very well; let me know when you are ready to start," he replied.

And then she left him, with the terrible fear in her heart that her submission had come when submission was useless. Ernest Westbrook sat over his wine much longer than usual, though he did not help himself freely from the decanter.

For a time he sat frowning at the vacant seat opposite him, and then he broke out into a harsh laugh. These women seemed to be playing with his heart as they would with a tennis ball quite regardless of anything he might suffer.

He was angry with his mother, but he was still more angry with Eva. If

she had really loved him, would she have refused to become his wife for no other reason than because his mother desired her to do so. No, he could not believe it; rather, perhaps he would not.

And thus he sat brooding, until a servant came to tell him that the carriage was at the door and the ladies were ready.

To Be Continued.

ELECTRICITY ON THE FARM.

A Complete Plant Operates Affairs on a New York State Farm.

On a farm of 350 acres in the State of New York there is a complete electric plant which produces the current for lighting and heating as well as for supplying the power for other operations connected with the farm. All the mechanical energy is supplied by nature, and the cost and maintenance of the plant are inexpensive. It has demonstrated that electricity used for manual labor is a success. The farm land is situated on both sides of a good sized stream, on which are two falls—one 60 feet and the other 180 feet high, and these furnish the power. One motor of 10 horse power runs a mowing machine, another a threshing machine, and a third works a 44 inch saw for cutting logs. The farm house is brilliantly-lighted and well heated by electricity. The kitchen is supplied with an electrically heated cooking stove, and in the laundry, the flat irons are heated by the same power. In the dairy the churns and other appliances all have electric motor attachments. The grounds are lighted by several arc lamps, and the use of these in the barns greatly facilitates the work and lessens the danger of fire.

SOME MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

In Siberia a bride, on entering her husband's house, must be prepared to show her skill in cooking. She is expected to give a dinner prepared with her own hands, as a test of the education she has received. If she pleases her guests it is taken not only as a proof that she is well qualified for her new position, but that her family is a worthy one, since her parents have trained their daughter so successfully.

There is another land where thrift is expected of the young folks. In Holland, says the Rev. E. G. Hardy in the Quiver, a girl is bound to ask her future husband if he can afford to pay the wedding fees.

In Norway, however, things are quite so promising. The Norwegians are always trying to put the best foot foremost, and they do it in reference to marriage as well as in reference to other matters.

It is said that a young man once went out to seek a wife, and came to a farmhouse where there was more wit than money. The only thing of which the farmer could boast was one new sleeve to his coat. This must be made the most of.

"Pray take a seat," he said, hospitably. "But this room is shockingly dusty," and so saying, he went about wiping tables and benches with his new sleeve, while he carefully kept the old one behind him.

His wife possessed one new shoe, and one only, but she made the most of it by pushing the furniture in place with it and keeping the other hidden beneath her skirts. "It is very untidy here," she said. "Everything is out of place."

Then they called to the daughter to come and put things to rights. But the only new thing she possessed was a cap. So she kept putting her head in at the door, and nodding and nodding.

"For my part," she said, "I can't be everywhere at once."

Thus they all tried to make the young man believe that the household was well-to-do.

One cannot but think that the methods of Siberia and Holland are most likely to lead to happiness in the end.

BRIEFLY MENTIONED.

Nervous people, and those with weak hearts, should abstain from coffee.

The nutritious value of dried beef is said to exceed largely that of fresh.

Mormonism is to-day the predominant religion in five of the western states.

According to Liebig, the alkali in asparagus develops form in the human brain.

A mixture, in equal parts of linseed oil and vinegar, will do wonders in cleaning furniture.

The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor now has 56,062 branches, with 3,363,720 members.

At present Australasia is the largest producer of wool in the world, with Russia second, the Argentine Republic third and the United States fourth.

The Bank of Spain now holds \$12,700,000 more gold than it held a year ago, and \$41,700,000 more silver. Its note circulation meantime has increased \$21,800,000.

Among the Voegas peasants children born at the new moon are supposed to have better hung tongues than others, and those born at the last quarter to have keener reasoning powers.

The value of rubies below the weight of one carat ranges from \$10 to \$40 per carat, while stones of greater weight than four carats are of such exceptional occurrence as to command fancy prices.

Exerciating Pains

THE VICTIM A WELL-KNOWN AND POPULAR HOTEL CLERK.

After Other Medicines Failed He Was Cured by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills—Every Dose Counted in the Battle of Pain.

From the News, Alexandria, Ont.

There is no more popular hotel clerk in Eastern Ontario than Mr. Peter McDonnell, of the Grand Union Hotel, Alexandria. At the present time Mr. McDonnell is in the enjoyment of perfect health, and a stranger meeting him for the first time could not imagine that a man with the healthy glow and energetic manner of Mr. McDonnell could ever have felt a symptom of disease. There is a story, however, in connection with the splendid degree of health attained by him that is worth telling. It is a well known fact that a few years ago he was the victim of the most excruciating pains of rheumatism. Knowing these facts a News reporter called on Mr. McDonnell for the purpose of eliciting fuller particulars. Without hesitation he attributed his present sound state of health to the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. "I am" said he 33 years of age, but three years ago did not expect to live this long. At that time I was connected with the Commercial here and as part of my duties was to drive the busses to and from the C. A. R. station. I was exposed to all kinds of weather and subjected to the sudden extremes of heat and cold. Along in the early spring I was suddenly attacked with the most terrible pains in my limbs and body. I sought relief in doctors and then in patent medicines, but all to no purpose; nothing seemed to afford relief. For two months I was a helpless invalid, suffering constantly the most excruciating pains. My hands and feet swelled and I was positive the end was approaching. My heart was affected and indeed I was almost in despair, when fortunately a friend of our family recommended the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I began using them in May 1896, and had taken three boxes before I noticed any change, but from that time every dose counted. The blood seemed to thrill through my veins, and by the time I had finished the fifth box every trace of the disease had vanished. Ever since then I have been working hard and frequently long overtime, but have continued in excellent health. Whenever I feel the slightest symptom of the trouble I use the pills for a day or so and soon feel as well as ever. I feel that I owe my health to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and never lose an opportunity of recommending them to others suffering as I was.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves, thus driving disease from the system. Avoid imitations by insisting that every box you purchase is enclosed in a wrapper bearing the full trade mark, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. If your dealer does not keep them they will be sent postpaid at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

LITERARY REMINISCENCES.

The Works of the Late Charles Dickens, Esq.

"Oliver Twist," who had "All the Year Round," seen "Hard Times," in "The Battle of Life," and the story of his narrow escape from "The Wreck of the Golden Mary," from which he was almost miraculously saved by "Our Mutual Friend," and esteemed companion, "Nicholas Nickleby," having become as familiar as "Household Words," has just finished reading "A Tale of Two Cities," to "Martin Chuzzlewit," during which time "The Cricket on the Hearth," has been incessantly chirping, whilst the musical tones of "The Chimes," from "Master Humphrey's Clock," in the ivy-mantled tower of an adjoining church were faintly heard, when "Seven Poor Travellers" commenced singing "A Christmas Carol" opposite "Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings." "Barbary Rudge," who had been busy arranging "The Pickwick Papers," then arrived from the "Old Curiosity Shop," with some "Pictures from Italy," and "Sketches by Boz," to show "Little Dorrit," who was learning her lesson out of "A Child's History of England," and occasionally perusing a manuscript "New Testament for Children," kindly lent to her by the talented author; when "David Copperfield," who had been taking "American Notes," entered and informed the company that the "Great Expectations" of "Dombey and Son," regarding Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy, had not been realized; and that he had seen "The Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," taking "Somebody's Luggage," to "Bleak House," in a street that has "No thoroughfare," where "The Haunted Man," who had just given one of "Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions," to "An Uncommercial Traveller," was brooding over the "Mystery of Edwin Drood," which has caused such a commotion at "Mugby Junction."

ENGLAND'S DEAD LETTERS.

Out of 2,486,800,000 letters that passed through the British postoffice last year, there were as many as 8,500,000 which the officials managed not to deliver. In those opened at the Dead Letter Office property of the value of \$3,600,000 was found.

Trust that man in nothing who has not a conscience in everything.—Sterne.