

## Lillian Was Miserable on the Stage

by Walter L. Wilson, M.D.

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On one of the great theater circuits, there appeared a bright, happy dark-haired girl, who by her dancing and singing had won the hearts of many. She appeared to never have a care. She was attractive in appearance, delightful in conversation, and radiated happiness to those whom she met. This was Lillian in the public eye and on the stage.

In the dressing room and in the hotel Lillian was quite a different girl. There she frequently wiped the tears from her eyes; deep sighs would come from her heart. Sometimes after the performance, she would retire to her room, throw herself across the bed, and sob out her sorrow of heart.

Lillian's husband was afflicted with tuberculosis. He had been on the stage with her at various times and as a team they were in much demand. Now Willard was lying on his back, wasting away with that dreaded white plague, while Lillian was seeking to pay the bills by appearing in an individual sketch. It seemed most convenient for Willard to remain in Kansas City for medical treatment, for Lillian was frequently in and out of this center as she filled her engagements. As her husband continued to grow worse, the darkness in Lillian's heart became a greater burden, until she felt that she could hardly continue on the stage in her hypocrisy.

One day her distress was so great that at the close of her afternoon performance she asked the stage hands if there was any down-town church where she might go to find relief from the distress of her heart. They replied that they did not know of such a church, for they were not church-going men. One of them volunteered the information that there was a factory down on Seventh street where there were a lot of religious people who gave away tracts and Bibles. Perhaps she could get some help there. She immediately accepted the suggestion and found her way down to our plant.

From my desk in the private office, I observed a lady entering the sales-room, weeping as she came. I went out at once, and

said to her: "May I serve you in some way, my friend? I notice that you are weeping over some sorrow, and it would be a pleasure indeed if we might help you to bear it."

"I heard up at the theatre from one of the stage hands that you people had Bibles and gospel tracts, and probably would help me. Have you the time to listen to my story?"

"Yes, indeed," I replied, "it will be a pleasure to do so."

We retired to a private room in which conference meetings were often held and where prayer to God was made daily. Here, when we were seated, she told me the story of blighted hopes, thwarted ambitions and the dying husband.

Matthew 11:28 was brought to my mind at once by the blessed Spirit of God as the passage which this young woman needed. I was delighted to see how the Holy Spirit had been working in her heart through the past years, on and off the stage. How blessed it is that He will work anywhere and will touch lives in every situation! He had given Lillian to see the utter emptiness of all that this world offers in the way of pleasure and popularity. Her husband was out of the race. Her own heart was broken. Her future was filled with darkness.

"Let me read you this verse, Lillian," I said: "'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' This is what your heart desires. This is what Christ is waiting to give you. He wants you to come directly to Him for His pardoning grace and His saving blood. 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,' is what we read in I Timothy 1:15. He came to save you. In saving you, He will give you rest. Would you not like Him to take away your sins and relieve your heart of your burden?"

"Yes," she replied. "My heart is just over burdened. It seems I can carry on no longer. I am at my wits end and do not know which way to turn. I am not getting very much for my work on this circuit, and the illness of Willard takes it all as fast as I can get it. It is getting harder and harder for me to dance and sing with a smile on my face."

"Will you not read this verse again, Lillian," I inquired, and at the same time handed her my Bible opened at Matthew 11:28.

She made no reply, but read the verse. Over and over again she read it. The words seemed to entrance her. The call seemed to attract her. I could see that the person of Christ and the rest which He was offering to her troubled heart was enticing her to His side.

Quietly she bowed her head in her hands and meditated on the passage. I remained quiet also, waiting to see what the Spirit of God would do to her heart. While waiting, I asked the Holy Spirit to reveal the Lord Jesus to Lillian's heart and to lift the load from her shoulders. I felt that He would not begin a good work in her and not finish it. While I was still praying, she spoke from her burdened heart, and said: "I will come to the Lord Jesus Christ today; I want His rest; I need His peace; I need Him. How glad I am that He has invited me to come. I will lay the burden at His feet and will trust Him with my soul."

"Lillian, is Christ Jesus your own Saviour now?" I asked. "Have you really taken Him? Do you believe that He died to save you and is living now to forgive you? If you do, let us kneel together while you tell Him so. He is in Heaven and can hear every word you say. Would you like to tell Him what you think of Him?"

She seemed eager to do so, as she replied: "Yes, if you will tell me how."

I answered, "We will kneel together and I will tell Him that I am bringing you to Him by faith for His pardon and forgiveness; then you will tell Him that you are coming to trust Him. He is the living Saviour on His throne in Heaven and will hear all that you say to Him."

We were soon on our knees in prayer. I told the Lord Jesus how glad I was to bring this lost sinner to Him for His salvation and redemption. Having finished, I said, "Now Lillian, you tell the Saviour what you think of Him."

She did so, and said: "Jesus, I come to You to be saved. I know You came to save sinners, and I want You to save me. You said that if I would come to You, You would give me rest. I believe You will, and so I do come to trust myself to You. Won't you bless Willard also? He doesn't know You and he is dying. Do save my husband. Do help me to tell him about You in such a way that he will believe." Her weeping closed the prayer, and we

arose from our knees to rejoice in the wonderful peace of God.

Let us ever be looking for troubled souls among those who are in the amusement world. Their hearts are heavy. They are not always in private what they are in public. Let us always be on the alert to find those who want help from heaven.

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