

# AN INTIMATE STUDY OF Lillian Russell THE WOMAN



She Is, Say Her Friends,  
the Best Known and  
Least Known Personality  
in America.

## MY CREED.

- I BELIEVE that all beauty is a gift from God and that it is given to all women.
- I BELIEVE that every woman should be beautiful from the cradle to the grave.
- I BELIEVE that a beautiful physique must contain a broad mind and sweet spirit of charity.
- I BELIEVE that beauty of form and feature can be cultivated in every woman until she is made to "blossom like the rose."
- I BELIEVE in the sane, normal woman who realizes that to live life at its fullest she must be beautiful—physically, mentally, and spiritually.
- I BELIEVE that the earnest, intelligent women of all ages will subscribe to this creed, for as education and culture grow, into the heart of every woman must come a greater desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful.

LILLIAN RUSSELL.



BY IDAH McGLONE GIBSON.

It is probable that Lillian Russell is known by face and fame to more men, women, and children than any other woman in the United States today. She has been on the stage thirty years, and during that time has had more stories told and written of her than any other American actress. Indeed, with the exception of former President Roosevelt, possibly no other individual, either man or woman, has occupied so large a space in the newspapers. In the largest compilation in this country of playbills, clippings, autograph letters, and photographs anent the people of the stage, Lillian Russell's name, like that of Abou Ben Adhem in the poem, "leads all the rest."

Lillian Russell unquestionably is the beauty of this age. For thirty years she has been the standard to which all other beautiful women have been compared, and for thirty years almost every week some one has been hailed as the second Lillian Russell—thousands of these "seconds" have dropped out of sight, but "The American Beauty" has blossomed to greater perfection as the years rolled on.

It is impossible for Miss Russell to go into public places often. She is so well known from her pictures that she is always subjected to the comment and inquisitive gaze of every one about her. This was illustrated recently at a clubhouse in Chicago, where Miss Russell was dining with some friends. She sat at a table by one of the windows looking toward the lake, and during the dinner nine-tenths of the people who were there made an excuse to walk around the veranda to gaze at her. When she left the table she was obliged to walk between two solid ranks of curious women, who stood about her motor until she drove away. Every woman wanted to see Miss Russell at close range and decide for herself if she is as beautiful as reported.

## Beauty in Way a Handicap.

Every one who knows Lillian Russell intimately is her friend and admirer, and any one of her intimates will tell you that in some ways her beauty has been a handicap to her as a singer and an actress, because for some peculiar reason no one will give a beautiful woman credit for brains and Miss Russell's mind compares favorably with her pulchritude.

It is probable that her girlish loveliness secured her a hearing with Tony Pastor when she ran away from her mother's apartment and applied for a place on the bills at his music hall; her melodious voice, however, made her immediately one of his best drawing cards.

The unique combination of superlative beauty, splendid voice, enthusiasm, and freshness of youth, artistic temperament, and a large bump of common sense is responsible for Lillian Russell's success; the

beauty for which she is famous never would have compassed it alone.

Her professional career reads like a fairy tale. For twenty years she was the idol of the comic opera world when there was real comic opera upon the American stage, and all this time the people who write stories of the stage were predicting that soon she would be superseded by some other prima donna. In 1896 an enthusiastic critic in the middle west said of her when she appeared in his town as "The American Beauty": "Can any one solve the charm of Lillian? What is there about this fascinating woman who holds the audience as it were in a spell? Beautiful, yes; Father Time himself seems to have fallen a victim to her seductive charms. He has passed her by, nor even touched ever so lightly those bewitching lips that can smile a man to heaven or perdition; those dimples that grow more enticing as the years go round; those languorous eyes with their unfathomable velvet depths that have an added luster—fascinating, she is in every way more deliciously charming than ever."

## Throne Hers for the Occupying.

And in 1897 Nym Crynkle, the then caustic New York dramatic writer, wrote: "Few women have received the popular worship in the same degree as Lillian Russell. It can hardly be said that she erected an ivory throne of her own and occupied it; she found it erected at her professional birth and discovered with placid surprise that she was seated on it. 'Stay there and permit us to look at you,' was what the mob shouted at her. Lillian Russell, in her early career was as nearly ideal as nature could make her. To the average eye she was unadorned loveliness. It was the abeyant girliness, the blossomy promise of a summer of womanhood. She did not do anything; she just was, with a filling prophecy of function. Her face was the most valuable trade mark in the business."

Sounds like a requiem, does it not? Well, Miss Russell was not ready to have the flowers of friends sent to her professional obsequies just then, and in 1898 the New York Sun, which had contained her first notice, from which Miss Russell declares that she obtained an engagement at Pastor's. I slipped out the first evening and sang my little song. My mother thought I was with one of my girl friends, and, of course, no one of my relatives or friends dreamed that the name Lillian Russell had been taken by little Helen Louise Leonard as her pseudonym. A few days afterward I saw in the New York Sun my first notice, which contained these words: "Lillian Russell, a very lovely little English girl, who promises to be more beautiful." I remember how my heart thumped as I went to the glass and looked earnestly at myself, for I tried to decide why the critic had said it.

Then and there I took inventory of all my features, and if today I am what the newspapers and the public call me, it is because at that moment I determined to cultivate every charm God had given me, as I realized it would be a great asset to me in the coming years.

Because my friend, the public, has labeled me "the American Beauty," my name perhaps has been taken in vain oftener than that of any other woman in the United States. Nearly every one who has had a cosmetic to sell has proclaimed the fact that by its use alone Lillian Russell has retained her rose tinted complexion. Every dermatologist in the country has hinted that he has performed wonders in the way of surgical operations upon my face. In fact, the stories have grown to such ridiculous proportions that I have been said to have had layers of flesh cut out of my face, and other awful as well as impossible operations performed.

I want to say right here at the beginning of my campaign for greater womanly beauty that I never have had any cosmetic surgery of any kind, neither have I tried one-hundredth part of the "beauty stunts" that have been attributed to me. I do not wish to say anything derogatory to any other person's method of beauty culture; any of them might

first realized she perhaps had more than her share of good looks, said: "Lillian Russell certainly is a radiant creature. She is the most beautiful woman known to the stage of this or any other country. She is the one woman who does not rail at Mother Age and Father Time; she defies both, and does it with laugh on her pretty lips. She refuses to grow old, and as a result keeps her hold on the public's tickle heart. For more than twenty years she has been a New York favorite, and promises to be a favorite for the next twenty years."

When she sang in the winter garden at Berlin she was accorded an ovation. Then came the wonderful engagement at Weber & Fields, during which it was quite as necessary for the out of town guest to see Lillian Russell at "the little music hall" as to see Grant's tomb or the Metropolitan museum.

## Ability as Actress Stands the Test.

At the end of the engagement at Weber & Fields' Miss Russell's voice showed the strain of constant singing in the smoke laden atmosphere of the music hall. It was then that this woman, of whom every one said she held her place upon the stage because of her beauty, showed that she could act comedy with verve and humorous touch, which brought her admirers in shoals to see Lady Teetotum. Since then she has been a money making star in straight comedy all over the country. This, of course, is well known to any one who is at all interested in the annals of the theater and makes her the best known woman in America today.

There is another side of Lillian Russell, however, which is not known except to her most intimate friends. In these days when every possible personal story is pounced upon by the press agent and the theatrical interviewer to make a newspaper reader's holiday, of course the woman who is most written about has the most lies told about her. Most likely if all the people who "have shook the hand that shook the hand of Sullivan" were to come forward and tell the truth, they would know Lillian Russell intimately, and in proof, relate some episode in which they and the actress figured, the Russell contingent would outnumber the others ten to one.

During the last of Miss Russell's engagement at Weber & Fields' I used to drop in at her dressing room often, and sometimes I would stand in the foyer and listen to her and her friends talking about the show and the players. One evening I was

attracted to a great big chap who was shouldering his way through the crowd. He was a typical Third avenue bruiser and masquerade-looking in purely an animal way. Hanging on his arm was a little mouse-like woman, wizen and colorless, and as she came near me I heard her say in rather a wistful voice, "Miss Russell is beautiful."

There was an assenting grunt from the man at her side. Then her eyes brightened as she snuggled up a little closer and chirped, "And to think you gave her up for me."

## Some Men Just Can't Help It.

"I am sorry I was late, dear," said a man near me in the hotel corridor, as he met a young woman who evidently had been waiting for him long. "I have been riding with Miss Russell. I did not want to, but just could not get out of it. You know that I would rather be with—"

and they trailed off of my hearing. I really had to smile, for the man had just come down in the elevator with Miss Russell and myself.

I presume there are more doddering old men who claim to have been Miss Russell's first sweetheart "when we were boys and girls together" than there are members at the "I Knew Her When Club."

Women have told me that they know Lillian Russell intimately, that she is at least 60 years old, has been married from six to eight times, and is a grandmother—all of which is absolutely untrue. To settle the question of Miss Russell's marriages here and now, one might say that her first husband was John Brahams, her second and the father of her only child, Dorothy, was Edward Solomon; her third, with whom she lived only a short time, was John Chatterton, known to the stage as Sig. Perugini.

I do not think there is any woman who cares less for the speech of people than Lillian Russell. She has often said, "What any one says of me cannot make me any different than I am. They cannot add one day to my age, nor give me nor take away an extra husband. It is not Lillian Russell about whom they

are talking, and of whom they know nothing, but of the woman they think is Lillian Russell."

One evening in New York I sat behind a rather convivial theater party. Beside me was a well set up, dapper man, with clear, fresh complexion and white hair. As Miss Russell came on the stage to sing one of the men in the party in front of us made some flippant remark about the actress' supposedly bohemian habits. The comment was so loud that we could not help hearing it, and when he had finished the gentleman who sat beside me bent forward and touched the speaker on the shoulder.

## Beauty Itself Confutes Slander.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but I would like to tell you that everything you have said about Miss Russell is untrue. Any woman who can show such unrivaled beauty, such splendid health, clear voice, bright eyes, and other evidences of a sane normal life confutes such comment as yours the moment you look at her. Gentlemen, I am William Muldoon, whose business, as you know, is that of patching up the physiques of broken down and worn out humanity. That woman before you is the best example of the highest type of physical American womanhood I have ever seen; she must have lived and be living according to the laws of health. I do not know Miss Russell and have never spoken to her, but I cannot allow these untruths of nature and natural laws to go unrebuked."

Miss Russell is a great devotee of the pagan philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, and she puts his teachings into every day of her life. No one is more charitable than she to the members of her own profession. While in Chicago the last time she declined a business engagement that might have meant much to her to go to one of the hospitals where a sick friend was lying. "I would not disappoint one who was sick for anything, and I told him I would go to see him this afternoon," she said. Within an hour afterward she gave her manager a check for \$30 to send to a negro servant who had been in her family and who now was in want.

These incidents are only a few of those which Lillian Russell's friends tell whenever her name is mentioned. She is a woman of big brain and broad charity. I never have heard her say an unkind thing of any one in the many years I have known her; I never have known her to turn down a real appeal for help; I never have known her to attempt anything that she did not carry forward with success, because she works hard at anything she undertakes. She will be able to tell a great many interesting things to women in regard to conserving beauty, as she is a womanly woman as well as the most beautiful woman I ever have known.

## LILLIAN RUSSELL REVEALS HER BEAUTY SECRETS.

(Continued from first page.)

to obtain an engagement at Pastor's. I slipped out the first evening and sang my little song. My mother thought I was with one of my girl friends, and, of course, no one of my relatives or friends dreamed that the name Lillian Russell had been taken by little Helen Louise Leonard as her pseudonym. A few days afterward I saw in the New York Sun my first notice, which contained these words: "Lillian Russell, a very lovely little English girl, who promises to be more beautiful." I remember how my heart thumped as I went to the glass and looked earnestly at myself, for I tried to decide why the critic had said it.

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be quite as good as mine, but I want to impress upon the readers of THE TRIBUNE the honesty of purpose in what I am going to tell them. For the first time I am going to tell the methods by which I have cultivated those attributes which perhaps have made me better known than any other woman in America. Of course, every woman must have certain creams, unguents, salves, perfumes, toilet waters, and other cosmetics upon her toilet table. The woman who prides herself upon not using these generally "looks the part." I am going to give every woman who wishes it the regimen by which I take care of my own person. In other articles I shall tell exactly the requisites of the toilet table, the time that should be spent upon good grooming, and my own well tested recipes will be at the command of every woman who cares for them, as well as advice on all subjects pertaining to beauty of woman in its broadest sense.

You will find that my methods are simple. Cleanliness of body and mind, plenty of fresh air and exercise, combined with simple diet—is the platform upon which I have built the good health and beauty attributed to me.

Doubtless this will sound peculiar to that part of the laity who think the life of an actress one round of "wine and song," but I hope to make every woman who reads this department from day to day understand that beauty comes only from sane living. Cosmetics cannot make one's face beautiful unless the mind is beautiful as well. It is thought which lights up the perfect features and shows the matchless complexion at its best, and please do not forget this: if you are as careful of your complexion as you are of your Sheffield plate, it will be matchless.

In her heart, every woman longs for beauty, but, notwithstanding all that has been written on the subject the last few years, most women try, in a most blind and aimless way, to acquire it. Those who have brains seem still to cling to the

idea that to think about one's physical self is trivial, if not disgraceful. Isn't it about time to get over the idea that there is anything disgraceful about our bodies? They are the most wonderful machines known to man, and that they keep in more or less good condition, despite all the neglect they receive, is the most marvelous thing about them. Indeed, it has been demonstrated again and again that to think well, to hold fast to truth and justice, one must have a healthy body as well as an alert mind.

Perfect health always is beautiful in a certain rugged fashion, but just as the face of nature is beautiful by cultivation, so every person can be improved by giving thought to his or her appearance. This is the most beautiful world conceivable, and men and women as its highest type of life should be the most beautiful things we see. The charms of nature are fostered by every art known to man, why then should woman, who at her best is the loveliest work of God, consider it trivial to enhance her physical charm in every way?

It is perfectly natural to be attracted to that which pleases the eye. It often has been said we choose our friends because of their fine appearance; we keep them because of their virtues. In other words, physical beauty is our introduction to our friends, but we must have spiritual beauty, and every person can be improved by giving thought to his or her appearance. This is the trinity which is essential to real womanly beauty. You cannot separate the physical from the spiritual; when you do, death intervenes. You cannot separate the mental from the physical; when you do, insanity follows in its wake.

It is the trinity—flesh, brain, spirit—which makes womanly beauty. Consequently, I am going to try to get the brain woman to pay more attention to her physical self, and the frivolous little woman who thinks only of her person to cultivate her brain—and both to remember that kindness of heart and sweet charity are necessary if one would be truly beautiful.



LILLIAN RUSSELL AT 18



ONLY ONE OF THE FAVORITE OLD TIME PICTURES



LILLIAN RUSSELL AT 19



LILLIAN RUSSELL AT 20



LILLIAN RUSSELL AT 22



LILLIAN RUSSELL AT 24



HER PROFILE AT 28



LILLIAN RUSSELL AT 30