

# The LAPSE of ENOCH WENTWORTH

By ISABEL GORDON CURTIS  
Author of "The Woman from Wolverton"  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLSWORTH YOUNG

COPYRIGHT, 1914 BY F. G. BROWN & CO.

### SYNOPSIS.

Enoch Wentworth, newspaper man, and Andrew Merry, actor, after the guests at a poker party depart, play a last hand, the stakes to be absolute control of the future of the loser. Wentworth wins and they decide to keep the matter secret. Dorcas, Enoch's sister, becomes interested in Merry. Knowing of his shortcomings from her brother she tries to arouse the actor's ambition. He outlines the plot of a play he has had in mind and the girl urges him to go to work on it. When he completes the play and reads it to Wentworth the latter demands it as the forfeit of the bond won in the poker game. Wentworth interests Oswald in the play and preparations for staging it are begun. Dorcas suspects her brother of having stolen the play from his friend, Merry, who was to have played the leading part, disappears.

### CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Before the middle of October all the parts were in rehearsal except two. An Englishwoman, Zilla Paget, was crossing the Atlantic to play "Mrs. Esterbrook." Oswald refused obstinately to give "Cordelia" to any actress that Wentworth suggested.

"We must close with somebody mighty quick," said Enoch, when Oswald had turned down Katherine Dean.

"Miss Dean is not even to be thought of," answered the Englishman decisively. "She's beautiful, but where's her feeling, her intelligence? I eat watching her face—the light fell strong upon her while you talked. There's absolutely nothing to her but beauty."

"She can act," insisted Wentworth. "I've seen her act. It isn't acting we want in 'Cordelia.' The woman who plays 'Cordelia' must have feeling, tender, compassionate understanding, dignity, with a young face—not a face into which youth is painted."

"'Cordelia' must have beauty." "We may get both. I am not searching for 'Cordelia' among the stars; I have hopes of finding her among the unknowns."

"That's a risky proposition," said Wentworth impatiently. "'Cordelia' is a big part. Why, it's almost leading business—it ought to be in rehearsal now."

"Wait a few days," suggested Oswald. "Now, tell me, when is Merry to show up? He should have been here a week ago. Can't you wire him today?"

"I'll do it right away." Wentworth tossed his hat on his head and left the office. He drew a long breath, when he stepped out on the sidewalk, and looked anxiously up and down Broadway as if hoping to see Merry approach with his nonchalant stride. He paused for a moment to light a cigar, then started at a brisk gait down the street. He was accosted here and there by a friend. Each one offered congratulations. He was in no mood for that sort of thing. A block further ahead he saw Phillips of the Herald in the moving throng. There would be no escaping him. He jumped on a downtown car, and a few minutes later he was at the Battery. He stepped off and crossed the square. The tide was coming in and a stiff breeze blew off the ocean.

He seated himself on a bench and watched the spray dash over the pier. Throngs came and went, but Enoch did not see them. His mind was centered desperately upon one anxiety: Merry must be found. He had felt so certain that the actor might appear at any moment that he had allowed Oswald to think he knew where he was. He reported him half-sick, trying to recuperate, and hating the worry of a lawsuit with an angry manager, which Oswald was trying to settle out of court. He assured him that the comedian was letter perfect in his part; all he needed was to appear at late rehearsals. The strain, however, was telling on Wentworth. He had grown nervous and irritable. Oswald saw traces of it, but laid it to anxiety over the preparations for his play.

Dorcas realized the change in her brother and felt it keenly. She contrasted the care-free, generous, gay Enoch as he had been a month ago, with the man who had aged suddenly, who was growing morose, fretful, uncommunicative, and impatient over trifles. Day after day she saw less of him. His plea was hard work, so the girl was left to her own devices. She had few friends in the city. She spent the fall days in long, solitary walks, and her mind dwelt constantly on Merry. Her brother scarcely mentioned the play to her. She read news of it in the papers. Through them came the information that Enoch had relinquished journalism and was working on the production of a new play by a new author. She drew a long breath of relief over that announcement. She felt sure Enoch would do full justice to Merry when the time arrived. She was too proud to ask questions. Her brother had always taken her completely into his confidence; she was certain he would do so again when the toll and worry were over.

Wentworth watched her closely. He realized how she felt his reticence and change of feeling; her every glance told it. He wondered frequently what the thoughts were that she did not put into words. In every woman he

had admired for beauty, intellectual or heart qualities there had been imperfections which were temperamentally feminine. Dorcas was different. Sometimes he fancied it might be caused by her seclusion from the world during girlhood. Then he remembered a few of her girl friends he had met. In each of them he had seen some petty deceit or frivolity which, manlike, he accounted a typical feminine vice. Dorcas was different in heart and intellect. She resembled stalwart men he had known.

He sat with his eyes fixed on an ocean steamer moving majestically up the harbor. When her whistle shrieked in response to a salute, Wentworth rose with a start and glanced sharply about him. He felt that some one was watching him. His eyes met the gaze of his sister. She sat on a nearby bench staring at him, a newspaper in her lap and her hands clasped listlessly over it.

"Why, Dorry! How long have you been here? Did you call me?" "I did not speak to you," she answered quietly. "When I laid down my paper a minute ago you sat there."

He did not offer to take a place beside her, though she moved to make



His Eyes Met the Gaze of His Sister.

room for him. His face flushed hotly when his glance fell on the headlines of a paper that lay in Dorcas' lap.

"Have you seen the story about yourself in the Times?" "Of course I have," answered Enoch impatiently. "It was not my doing. Oswald insisted on it. Every paper is clamoring for news. We reproduce the play the first week of December." "The paper speaks of you alone. Merry isn't given credit for even suggesting the plot. His name is not mentioned."

Wentworth's brow wrinkled into an ugly scowl. "How could he be mentioned? He can't be found—anywhere."

"Mr. Oswald said yesterday he was in the Catskills, ready to come on at a moment's notice."

"I wish to God he were!" cried Wentworth desperately. "Why don't you tell Mr. Oswald the truth?"

"Dorcas, you're a child. You don't understand that I am up against a harder proposition than I can meet."

"It seems to me, Enoch," said the girl slowly, "if you had not—"

She did not finish the sentence. She had turned her eyes away from her brother and stared at the multitude of craft in the bay, jostling each other as vehicles do on Broadway.

"Had not what?" he insisted. She met his eyes calmly and they wavered before her own. "I mean if you had not made a false start—if you had gone into this honestly—everything would have come out happily."

Wentworth did not answer. "I can't feel, Enoch, that Merry has had fair play."

The man stamped his foot impatiently. "Help me to find him, then. Things will straighten out if he puts in an appearance. Come, let us walk home. It's too chilly for you to sit here."

Dorcas rose and folded the paper which lay on her lap. She kept up with her brother's long strides through the crowd that thronged Broadway. After a few minutes' silence he asked suddenly: "How did you happen to see Mr. Oswald yesterday?"

"He called at the house."

"About what?"

"On business. He has asked me to play 'Cordelia.'"

"It might have occurred to him to consult me!"

Wentworth stopped for a second. Dorcas was not looking at him—her eyes were turned straight ahead on the bustling street.

"Why didn't he speak to me first?" he persisted.

"I don't know. I can't decide what to do. I would say 'yes' if I could talk it over with Andrew Merry."

"I have told you point-blank you are not to go on the stage."

"You know how I feel about it." Dorcas spoke quietly. "You remember, I told you it was the only work I ever cared to do."

"When did Oswald suggest this?"

"Several weeks ago. He has talked with me about it more than once."

"He might have taken me into his confidence," snarled Wentworth. "He knew how you felt about it. Besides, Enoch," the girl's voice trembled, "besides—lately I have not known whether you cared anything about my affairs."

Wentworth did not answer until they turned into the quieter region of Waverly place.

"Don't sit in judgment on me, Dorry," he pleaded. "When the trolley gets swung back on its pole and things begin to run without constant switching, I'll return to the old routine. Have a little faith in me. I have nobody in the world except you."

Dorcas flung away the paper which she was carrying and tucked one hand into her brother's arm.

"It's a bargain?" he asked, looking down at her with a smile.

"It's a bargain," she answered. "About 'Cordelia,' Dorry, do as you please. I cut loose when father planned my future, and did what I wanted to. A girl, I suppose, has the same rights, especially if she's a girl who can be trusted—implicitly."

When he unlocked the door, Dorcas passed in before him. As he shut it behind him she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him. Wentworth held her for a moment in a close, affectionate grasp. On the hall table lay a note addressed to Dorcas, also a telegram for Wentworth. He tore it open and stood for a minute deep in thought.

"Enoch, I have an invitation here from Mr. Oswald to see Nazimova tonight. Do you mind if I go?"

"No. Give Oswald a message from me. I shan't have time to see him before I leave."

"Leave for where?"

"For Montreal. I put a detective on Merry's track. He has almost laid his hand on him. Tell Oswald I will bring Merry back with me in two days at the latest."

"Oh!" cried Dorcas radiantly, "then everything will be righted!"

"Everything will be righted," repeated her brother.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### The Broad Line.

"Miss Wentworth, what does 'Hilda in The Master Builder' mean to you?" asked Grant Oswald during the first lull of quiet they met after leaving the theater. Their cab had been held up in a Broadway blockade and the street became suddenly still. "She means something, I mean, first, last, and all the time, deals in parables. Six people whom I know, intelligent people, have six different interpretations of 'Hilda.' I am curious to know what she stands for to you."

Dorcas turned her candid gray eyes to his.

"I see only one thing—conscience. She appears when the 'Master Builder,' by one cruel, unjust, selfish action, is bound to go down to the depths. Nothing can save him but his conscience. 'Hilda' is his conscience, of course."

"That is my interpretation exactly. It is a wonderful play!"

"It is a wonderful play." She pointed to a crowd on the sidewalk. "What is that string of men?" she asked. Their cab had been moving step by step for half a block. Again it came to a standstill.

"It's the bread line. Had you never seen it before?"

"No. Who are the men?"

"God knows!" answered the Englishman, with a thrill of compassion in his voice. "They are a lot of half-frozen, starving, human wreckage, who have been waiting there for an hour to get a loaf of bread."

Dorcas lowered the carriage window and gazed out. Oswald watched her. The girl's face mirrored her feelings so keenly he could feel what was passing in her mind. Her lips quivered and tears hung on her lashes. She could not trust herself to speak.

"I shall never forget how that pitiful line appealed to me the first time I saw it," the man continued, "although I had known the poor of London since boyhood. This homeless, famished, orderly column, growing and growing as one man after another comes creeping from his burrow to hold a place, was too much for me. I stood watching it from that corner," he pointed across the street, "night after night. I used to try to help. In a few cases I did manage to put a man on his feet. The task was generally hopeless, except that I could satisfy the hunger of the moment. During hard winters in New York I have seen the line grow till there were hundreds in it. Sometimes it goes down Tenth street and around the corner."

Dorcas turned to look at him. Tears stood in her eyes and her lips quivered.

"I understand," he went on. "You are wondering why we, well clothed, fed and sheltered from the wind, are here, and they are—there. I do not know. It is a problem as old as the world itself. All we can do is to help individually, man to man."

Dorcas gazed west back to the bread line. Oswald sat in thoughtful silence.

"Don't think me sacrilegious, Mr. Oswald," she confessed, "but when I see such misery it makes me wonder if the Eternal himself has a conscience." She sat watching the line of patient, pallid men. Stragglers crept up to join it from every direc-

tion. "I simply cannot imagine a God who—Mr. Oswald!" She grasped his arm with a half-stifled scream and laid her trembling hand upon his.

"What is it?" asked her companion, rising. "What frightened you, Miss Wentworth?" He stared past her out into the street. The block of vehicles had begun to move. They were again driving slowly down Broadway.

"Nothing," she answered quickly, "nothing but a chance resemblance. I thought I—saw some one whom I once knew. It must have been a mistake."

The Englishman glanced at her curiously. She began to chat about the play and other things. She was trying to forget whatever had startled her. She said "Good-by" at the door of her home. Oswald realized that she was eager to have him go. As he drove away he tried to recall anything which could have happened. A woman of her poise would not be disturbed by a trifle.

Dorcas shut the street door and ran upstairs to her brother's study, where the 'phone stood. She searched distractedly through the directory for the address of a livery from which occasionally she called a cab. The name had escaped her. She stood for a moment trying in vain to recall it, then she rang the bell. Her wait seemed endless before the old servant appeared.

"Jason," she cried impatiently, "who is Mr. Wentworth's livery man?"

"Costello, missy."

"Stay here a minute," she said as she paused for central's answer. Then she stooped to the 'phone.

"Send a cab, please, to 26 Waverly place, immediately."

She turned again to the old servant.

"Jason," she asked, "you have waited on Mr. Merry when Enoch brought him here—sick—haven't you?"

"Deed I has, missy. Many's de time Marse Enoch en I's done all sorts ob waitin' on him, when he's done been sick, perfectly misable, missy. Yo'-all don't know how misable."

"Can you help tonight? I may bring Mr. Merry back with me—miserable."

"Deed I can," cried the old man, with eager sympathy. "Yo' des leeb him to me. Lawdy! I tink ez much ob Marse Andrew mos' as I do ob yo'-all. He's been mighty good to me."

"Thank you," said Dorcas gratefully. "I am not sure whether he will come, but in case he does, be ready for him. He may want a hot bath and supper. Have a cheerful fire; it is bitterly cold outdoors."

She turned and ran downstairs when she heard the rattle of wheels on the street below.

"Don't yo' want me to go wid yo', missy?" suggested Jason. "Hit's powerfu' late fo' a lady to be goin' round New York alone."

"No; I would rather have you here waiting for our return."

"Tenth and Broadway," she directed, as the cabman shut the door. He pulled up at her signal opposite the bakery. The place was closed, and the bread line had dispersed, and the quiet gray of early morning had begun to creep over the street. Occasionally a cab dashed past or a trolley went on its clamorous way, but there were few stragglers to be seen. Here and there a man on foot walked briskly, as if a shelter waited him somewhere. On the sidewalk stood a tall policeman. Dorcas studied his

face for a moment, then she beckoned him. He came instantly to the cab window.

"Is this your beat every night?"

"Every night this week," said the man in blue.

"The men in the bread line have dispersed. Do you know where they go?"

"Where they go, lady?" The policeman smiled. "I couldn't tell you no more where they go than if they were rabbits scurrying to their holes."

Dorcas shivered. "Are they absolutely homeless—on such a night as this?"

"A good share of them are." The man spoke with little interest. The misery in the streets of New York was an old story to him.

"Do the same men come to the line night after night?"

"A man has to be mighty hungry when he stands an hour or two waiting for a hunk of bread. If his luck turns he drops out. Still, I've seen the same faces there every night for a

month. Are you a settlement lady?" he asked respectfully.

"No." The girl's face flushed. "I thought tonight when we were passing that I saw some one in the bread line I knew, somebody we can't find."

"That happens many a time."

"Do you think," Dorcas asked eagerly, "there would be any chance of his being here tomorrow night?"

"The likeliest chance in the world. If a man's wolfish with hunger—and you'd think some of them were wolfish the way they eat—there's a heap of comfort in even a mouthful of bread and a cup of coffee."

"If I should come tomorrow night—"

"I'll give you any help you want," said the officer kindly, as Dorcas hesitated.

"I don't believe I'll want help. The only thing is—I wish to do it as quietly as possible. It is altogether a family affair."

"I understand. You'll find me here."

"Thank you. Good night," said Dorcas gratefully.

"I didn't bring Mr. Merry tonight, Jason," she said, when the old servant opened the door for her; "but tomorrow night I think he will come."

The following day seemed to Dorcas the longest she had ever lived through. The weather was crisp and cold. She went for a long walk, treading for the first time a tangle of streets in the vicinity of the docks. It was a part of the city which belongs to the very poor. She searched everywhere for one figure. Poverty, famine, and hopelessness seemed to create a family resemblance among men, women, and children. Still—she found nowhere the man for whom she looked. When she reached home at noon she felt tired physically and mentally. She had spent an almost sleepless night. As she dropped off in a drowse she dreamed of finding Merry, of bringing him back to the world where he belonged, of setting his face towards fame, happiness, and an honorable life.

Not a thought of love—the love of a woman for a man—stirred in her heart. She had forgotten her brother's question. There was something singularly childlike about Merry. With his magnetism was blended a strange dash of the maternal instinct in Dorcas the first time they met.

From morning till night she waited anxiously for news from her brother, but none came. She realized that he was on the wrong clue, but he had left no address, and Dorcas could merely wait. After her walk she lay down to rest on the library couch. A few minutes later she was sleeping peacefully as a child. When Jason came in he closed the shutters noiselessly and covered her with an afghan. The city lights were ablaze when she woke. She waited impatiently for the hours to pass. The policeman had told her it was of no use to come to his corner until eleven or later; it was past midnight when the bread was dispensed. The clock struck eleven when a carriage Dorcas had ordered stopped at the door. Jason hovered anxiously about her.

"You must put on yo' big fur coat, missy, please." He was trying constantly to manage her as he had done when she was a little girl.

"Jason, I don't need it; I'm perfectly warm."

"Yo' do, sure ez yo' breathin', missy, he cold' fo' November. Yo'-all 'll freeze ez yo' don'."

"All right," laughed the girl, and she slipped her arms into the wide sleeves. "Just to please you, Jason—remember that—not because I'm cold. Now," she added, "don't get nervous if it is an hour or two before I return. I shall be quite safe. Mr. Merry will come back with me tonight, I know. Have everything as cosy and cheerful as possible. And—Jason—I've got my key. I'll ring when I want you. Don't bother about opening the door." The girl's intuition told her that Merry might have fallen to such low estate that it would hurt for even the old servant to see him. The negro understood.

"I know, missy, I'll do ez yo' say—but fo' de Lawd's sake do take care ob yo'se'f. What could I say to Marse Enoch if anyt'ing happened to missy?"

"Nothing's going to happen, good old Jason," cried the girl, as she ran down the steps.

The officer was waiting at the corner. He beckoned the cabman to pull up where an electric light would not shine into the carriage, then he stopped for a minute at the window.

"I'll stay near by and keep my eye on you. When you see your party, signal me. I'll give your cabby the order, and he can drive around a block or two and take you up Tenth street. Then slip out and get your—your—friend that way. There ain't no chance of him seeing you come up behind, as he would if you crossed the street."

"Has the bread line begun to gather yet?" she asked.

"Hardly, ma'am. There's a few stragglers hangin' round. Them that come first get the first chance, of course, only it's a nasty night to wait outdoors with an empty stomach."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

What She Didn't Understand.

"Here's a curious item, Joshua!" exclaimed Mrs. Lemington, spreading out the Billville Mirror in her ample lap. "The Nellie E. Williams of Gloucester reports that she saw two whales, a cow and a calf, floating off Cape Cod the day before yesterday."

"Well, ma," replied old Mr. Lemington, "what's the matter with that?"

"Why, it's all right about the two whales, Joshua, but what bothers me is how the cow and calf got way out there."

## KEEP "IN FORM"

This really means keeping the digestion good, the liver active and the bowels free from constipation. You are then ready to "play the game" to win. For any disturbance in the digestive functions

## HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

has been proven very helpful. You should try it, but insist on getting HOSTETTER'S

A Pre-Established Harmony. "Mr. Brown's started his garden. I saw him planting his seeds this morning."

"That reminds me; it's time I turned the chickens loose."

### SUCCEEDS IN CANADA

An interesting and successful American farmer, Lew Palmer, of Stavely, Alta., passed through the city today. Mr. Palmer came from Duluth, Minn., just ten years ago, and brought with him four cows and three horses—and that was his all. He homesteaded in the Stavely district, and today has 480 acres of land, \$3,000 worth of implements, 34 Percheron horses, made \$1,000 out of hogs last year, raised 7,000 bushels of wheat, 6,000 bushels of oats, 12 acres of potatoes, and 18 tons of onions. His farm and stock is worth \$30,000, and he made it all in ten years.—Exchange—Advertisement.

Dr. Elliot on Education. Dr. Elliot says: "The practise of England and America is literally centuries behind the precept of the best thinkers upon education." Is it not humiliating that an American is forced to make such an admission concerning our most vital American institution?

What can be done? How can this wasteful school system be speedily remedied so that it fills its real function and sends out into the world, boys and girls developed according to their individual talents as far as those talents permit? It is a big question, but in my next article, I propose to outline a rational, practical system of public education which will serve those ends.—Pictorial Review.

For Real Speeding. "Pop," said inquisitive Ignats, "how fast can a horse go?"

"Well," replied father, "a mile in two minutes and four seconds is considered good speed. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I was just thinking," replied Ignats, "what a shame it was that Paul Rovere, Tam O'Shanter, and John Gilpin didn't have motorcycles."

Sometimes Faster. Patience—This paper sees the heart of a man sitting down beats 71 times a minute.

Patrice—I suppose it all depends who he is sitting alongside of.

Most of us hope for the best, and then wish we had hoped for something better.

HER MOTHER-IN-LAW. Proved a Wise, Good Friend.

A young woman out in Ia. found a wise, good friend in her mother-in-law, jokes notwithstanding. She writes: "I was greatly troubled with my stomach, complexion was blotchy and yellow. After meals I often suffered sharp pains and would have to lie down. My mother often told me it was the coffee I drank at meals. But when I'd quit coffee I'd have a severe headache."

"While visiting my mother-in-law I remarked that she always made such good coffee, and asked her to tell me how. She laughed and told me it was easy to make good 'coffee' when you use Postum."

"I began to use Postum as soon as I got home, and now we have the same good 'coffee' every day, and I have no more trouble. Indigestion is a thing of the past, and my complexion has cleared up beautifully."

"My grandmother suffered a great deal with her stomach. Her doctor told her to leave off coffee. She then took tea but that was just as bad. She finally was induced to try Postum which she has used for over a year. She traveled during the winter over the greater part of Iowa, visiting, something she had not been able to do for years. She says she owes her present good health to Postum."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Postum now comes in two forms: Regular Postum—must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages.

Instant Postum—is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. 30c and 50c tins.

The cost per cup of both kinds is about the same.

"There's a Reason" for Postum. —sold by Grocers