

The LAPSE of ENOCH WENTWORTH by ISABEL GORDON CURTIS Author of "The Woman from Wolverton" ILLUSTRATIONS by ELLSWORTH YOUNG

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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 sends 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 is asked to play "Cordelia," the leading part in the play. She expostulates with her brother for taking all the credit for the piece and ignoring Merry. Dorcas recognizes Merry among the down-and-outs in a bread line.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

Dorcas glanced at the handful of men cowering in a shadowed corner. A sudden fear seized her, the feminine terror of midnight streets.

"You don't imagine," she whispered, "that I shall have any trouble? It is possible I am making a mistake in the man. Are there dangerous characters among them?"

"Not exactly dangerous," said the officer slowly. "If they're dangerous it's from hunger. It ain't once a year you find a crook in the bread line. It's too easy to spot them, waiting as they do for an hour or two in that light."

"Thank you," said the girl. She crouched behind a half-drawn curtain in the shadow of the carriage, watching eagerly the gathering of homeless, hungry men. They began to creep toward the bakery from every direction, most of them with a shambling step that told of ill-hod feet or shamed reluctance to beg for food. The skies had been lowering for hours, and just before midnight the first storm of the winter came down. It began with keen, dry needles of ice, but they stung and froze, for the wind drove them in merciless, piercing furies. The lolling men crowded together and turned their faces sullenly from each furious cloud of sleet. Hunger was bitter enough without the storm. Dorcas watched through misty eyes. She wondered at the still patience of the throng. Below her in a basement a warm red light burned, and through an open door the wind blew the fragrance of boiling coffee across the street. She saw a man thrust a slim white-faced boy into a shelter between the wall and himself.

"If I were starving I couldn't be patient and courteous," she thought.

"What do you want, Miss Dorcas?" he asked quietly.

"I want to talk with you," answered the girl. "Do get in, please—out of the storm."

Merry handed her in, then followed and shut the door. "I cannot go home with you," he announced stubbornly.

"Enoch is away. He's in Montreal, and there is nobody at home except Jason and me. I have so much to say to you," she cried appealingly. "We can't talk driving through the streets on such a night as this."

Merry stared at her for a minute with dogged obstinacy in his gaze.

"Won't you come?" urged the girl impetuously. Her color deepened and an eager light shone in her eyes.

"There is so much I want to say. We shall be quite alone. You can trust Jason. Afterwards you may go away—if you wish—and I will promise never to attempt to find you. I will try to forget you."

Merry stretched out his hand and touched her arm, leaning forward until his face was close to hers. "Miss Dorcas, don't say that. Since I left you that night on Juniper Point I have lived a lifetime of happiness and horror and remorse. One thing alone has saved me from going over the brink of the precipice, simply one thing. He lifted his eyes to hers. "The one thing," he repeated, "that I could not fling away was the memory that you trusted me, that you believed in me, and were waiting for me to make good."

"I trust you now," cried the girl, her voice breaking into a sob. "I am still waiting for you to make good. Won't you come home with me?"

The cab stopped in front of the Waverly Place home. Merry followed her reluctantly up the steps. She paused for a moment while she adjusted the key in the lock.

"Would you mind seeing Jason?" she asked hesitatingly. "He can help you with dry clothes. He will be as glad to see you as I am."

"Ring for him," answered Merry quietly. "Jason and I are old pals."

Half an hour later Merry walked into the library where Dorcas was waiting for him. It seemed as if the mere resumption of clean, comfortable clothing, even though hunger still marked him, had given the man fresh valor, new dignity.

He laughed nervously. "It is a rejuvenation, isn't it?" he asked as he glanced at himself in the mirror. "Jason unearthed some duds I once left here."

Jason was an excellent valet, and a hot bath, a shave, and fresh raiment had made a man of Merry. The look of fair hair which habitually fell over his forehead made him look almost boyish, although his face was pallid and careworn.

"I have eaten nothing since morning," Dorcas said. "I told Jason to serve supper here, on a little table beside the fire, where it is cosy and cheerful."

Merry dropped into a chair. He wondered if the intense enjoyment of the good things of life was pure sensu-

ousness. The odor of hot coffee, the sight of a daintily set table, the radiance of a coal fire, the glow of red-shaded lights, and the storm shut out doors brought a tingling pleasure which seemed like mere animal gratification. He shivered for a moment as he listened to the storm. He wondered what had made it possible for him to brave homelessness and hunger and squalor. Looking back on it he realized he had borne it as a man lives through pain under the power of an anesthetic. The misery of his mind had dulled the sordid wretchedness of mere existence.

To Merry that supper was a festival, not wholly because it was the satisfying of ravenous appetite, but because it was the crisis in his life. Dorcas sensed that if her own hunger was real, Merry would not feel that she was feeding a famished outcast. Jason beamed upon them in sheer enjoyment when he brought in full dishes and carried away empty ones. Dorcas was light-hearted and gay, as happy as they had been during their first acquaintance at the shore. For a moment, while Merry drank his coffee, the memory of a few horrible weeks intruded on the present.

"Miss Dorcas," he began abruptly. "Why did you—"

She stretched out her hand appealingly.

"Don't bring in why—now. We are so comfortable. I don't ask for an explanation—I don't want to give any. Can't you see I'm in Happy Valley for a little while? I am so glad to have you here again."

Merry smiled into her eyes. "I'll obey you, bless your gentle heart!"

The girl rose and reached to a shelf behind her for a box of cigars. Merry lit one, lounged back in a cushioned chair, and puffed rings of smoke towards the red fire. They sat in silence after Jason had carried away the dishes. Their quiet was broken when the clock struck one. The man started.

"Miss Dorcas, you wanted me here to talk. I cannot rob you of a night's sleep."

"I am as wide awake as a cricket. I slept all the afternoon."

"First of all," Merry asked gravely, "how did you find me? Scores of men and women passed me day after day, people I have known for years. Not one of them recognized me."

"They were not searching for you."

"You were?" Dorcas nodded.

"How did you find me?" he persisted.

"Last night on my way home from the theater with Mr. Oswald our cab stopped in a block, and it was opposite where—that line of men stood. I was looking at them when I saw you pull down your hat. When Mr. Oswald left me here I drove back to Tenth street, but the line had dispersed. I went again tonight—just hoping."

"Who is Mr. Oswald?" asked Merry abruptly.

"Don't you know? Haven't you been reading the papers? Mr. Oswald is the man who is putting on your play."

"My play?" Andrew dropped his half-smoked cigar on the table.

"Your play," repeated Dorcas in a quiet tone. "They have been searching everywhere for you to play 'John Esterbrook.' Enoch is in Montreal now, looking for you."

Merry laughed harshly.

The girl clasped her hands together. "Mr. Merry, tell me, are you and Enoch no longer friends?"

Andrew picked up his cigar and puffed it until the red spark revived. Then he laughed again. "We are not exactly friends. Has he told you anything?"

"Yes, he told me—only it seemed so strange, so hard to believe after our talk that day at the point, that somehow I cannot understand it."

Merry watched her keenly. He was throbbing a temptation to tell everything that had come between him and the sunshine of existence. He felt sure of the girl's sympathy; he knew she would understand. He had begun to realize his own dependent nature. First there had been his mother, then for years he had leaned upon Enoch's strength and friendship. When he was left alone it was outer darkness. Every fiber of his being longed not so much for redress as for understanding and sympathy.

"Miss Dorcas, I will begin at the day when I left you and—"

Suddenly he realized he could not tell the story of Enoch's disloyalty to her. "Miss Dorcas, I need your help—terribly."

"I am ready to help you in any way I can," she answered quietly. She knew he was nursing himself to a confession, and she understood what an ordeal it was to the man. She crossed the room and laid a paper before him, pointing to the bold headlines stretched across the top of a page. The words fairly leaped at Merry.

TREMENDOUS SURPRISE Enoch Wentworth the Coming Dramatist.

He read on down through the column. Fellow journalists had banded together to give Enoch a royal introduction. Merry's name was not mentioned, though there was frequent reference to a famous star, who had the leading part in consideration. Oswald was referred to as a newcomer in the ranks of New York managers. His lavish production of Wentworth's drama was described in figures approaching prodigality. Merry read through to the last sentence, then the paper fell to the floor and he buried his face in his hands.

While Dorcas watched, her heart ached for him. It was hard to hold in check the soothing touch she would have given to a woman or to a child. "Oh!" she said in a piteous whisper, "it was a mistake."

He did not answer or lift his head from his hands.

"I pleaded with Enoch. I told him it was all wrong, terribly wrong, for him as well as for you; that when you returned he must set things straight. I told him it was not even collaboration; it was wholly and distinctly your play, yours alone."

"Collaboration?" repeated Merry perplexedly, raising his eyes.

"He told me everything," cried the girl hurriedly. She was trying to save him the full confession of his downfall. She did not wish to listen to it.

"Everything!" repeated Merry incredulously.

"Yes, everything. Oh! if you had come back only two or three days ago things would have been different."

He rose abruptly and crossed to the window.

"Miss Dorcas," he did not turn to look at her, "what was the worst

of it?"

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It was her husband who finally brought home RUB-NO-MORE. Now she's enthusiastic about it. She had intended to buy RUB-NO-MORE WASHING POWDER. But overlooked it. Don't you overlook it.



RUB-NO-MORE WASHING POWDER is a sudless dirt remover for clothes. It cleans your dishes, sinks, toilets and cleans and sweetens your milk crocks. It kills germs. It does not need hot water.

RUB-NO-MORE Washing Powder RUB-NO-MORE Carbo Naphtha Soap

Five Cents—All Grocers The Rub-No-More Co., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

W.L. DOUGLAS SHOES. Men's \$1.25 to \$2.50. Women's \$1.25 to \$2.50. Includes an illustration of a man's face and a list of shoe styles.

AGAINST WOMEN'S POCKETS

New York Newspaper Gives Eight Reasons for Its Opposition to Proposed Move.

- 1. Because pockets are not a natural right. 2. Because the great majority of women do not want pockets. 3. Because whenever women have had pockets they have not used them. 4. Because women are expected to carry enough things as it is without the additional burden of pockets. 5. Because it would make dissension between husband and wife as to whose pockets were to be filled. 6. Because it would destroy man's chivalry toward woman if he did not have to carry all her things in his pockets. 7. Because men are men and women the women. We must not fly in the face of nature. 8. Because pockets have been used by men to carry tobacco, pipes, whisky flasks, chewing gum and compromising letters. We see no reason to suppose that women would use them more wisely.—New York Tribune.

A German economist, Professor Wolf, estimates that by 1920, if the present tendency continues, Germany's birth rate will be the lowest in Europe.

Many a woman's idea of a good husband is one who can carve without getting any spots on the tablecloth.

No man thoroughly believes in himself unless he has absolute confidence in his liver.

Ready-Cooked —from Your Grocer. Post Toasties. come from the ovens to your table in tightly sealed packages—ready to eat when opened—with cream, good milk or fruits. Every crisp flake of this attractive food represents the best part of choice white Indian corn— Perfectly cooked, delicately flavoured and toasted to an appetizing golden "brown." Post Toasties are made for your pleasure and nourishment. Sold by Grocers