

The LAPSE of ENOCH WENTWORTH

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

SYNOPSIS

Enoch Wentworth, journalist, and Andrew Merry, actor, play a hand at poker, the stakes absolute control of the future of the loser. Wentworth wins. They decide to keep the matter secret. Dorcas, knowing from her brother, Enoch, of Merry's shortcomings, tries to arouse his ambition. Andrew outlines the plot of a play he has had in mind and she urges him to go to work on it.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"Here is the second act," said Wentworth brusquely. "I imagine it will suit you. The changes are exactly what you suggested."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Opening Night. Dorcas stood motionless in the wings, with Merry beside her, leaning against a table. The curtain had fallen on the third act of "The House of Esterbrook."



A Look of Consuming Hatred Flitted Across His Face.

"Come," said Merry; "we must go out again." "Again?" whispered the girl. "Yes," Merry smiled; "this time the two of us alone."

"The two of us—alone." There was a low, tender thrill in Merry's voice. He took her hand and led her out upon the empty stage. The curtain was lifting slowly.

A new cry came from the clamorous house. Some one was shouting for the author. Dorcas hid her hand upon Merry's arm. "They want you," she cried. He smiled and shook his head.

"I don't wonder you're all done up, Missy. I've got de fines' supper ready for you 'er ebber see."

She pushed an armchair close to the hearth and dropped into it wearily. She realized that she was very tired. She had not thought of nerves or body during the long weeks of rehearsal.

tonight; the papers will tell you so in the morning. Good night. God bless you!" "Good night," the girl shivered for a moment. It was intensely cold, and she drew a fur coat close to her chin.

"Missy," he cried, "yo' certly done us proud. My soul! I couldn't er b'lieved de baby I toted yeans en yeans oga ud ebber a' lived to act ez fine ez yo' done. I used to play I was yo' black mule. I reckon y' don't member, honey, ridin' mule on ol' Uncle Jason's back, do yo'?"

"You know what I mean?" He saw her chin tremble. In spite of her anger she was on the verge of tears. "When people were calling for the author, how did you dare to go out and take the applause? Have you no conscience, no honor left?"

She began to live over again the last few hours and drew a long breath as she remembered the strangling terror

which laid hold of her before she made her first entrance. When she heard her cue she felt dumb, crippled, almost blinded for one moment. The smile on Zilla Paget's face, as she stepped from the wings, stung her into action.

The recollection of a bit of gossip had flashed to her memory: Zilla Paget had prophesied that her "Cordelia" would be a dead failure. Before the end of that second act the intense loathing and scorn which Merry had put into her lines became real.

"Alice," she whispered, "help me to dress as soon as you can. And Julie, ask Dugald to get a carriage. I want to go home."

While Dorcas sat gazing into the red caves of the coal fire she went over each situation in the play, step by step. Once she buried her face in the folds of her shawl; her cheeks were throbbing hotly. She felt Merry's kiss burn upon her lips.

"Dorcas," he cried, "why did you rush home? Everybody was waiting to congratulate you. You lifted people off their feet; I swear, you took me off mine! The critics went wild over you and wanted to interview you. Tomorrow you'll be the talk of the town."

Everything that had blurred life seemed to vanish. It was wonderful that in a few hours the dreams of a lifetime should have come true. The girl laughed. Her heart had suddenly grown light.

He stood beside her with a proud smile upon his lips. "Dorcy, you're a queer proposition. Any other girl would have had her head turned by the triumph tonight. Why, child, in three hours you climbed straight onto a pedestal that many women work half a lifetime to reach. Even then they often miss it."

"Suppose," Dorcas suggested, "we have a little spread right here. I can order a hot dinner sent in. It's a wretched night—what do you say?"

"I should have been the happiest girl in the world tonight, almost foolishly happy. There was a pitiful quaver in her voice. "I feel now as if I were disgraced. Men have gone to

the penitentiary for stealing—less than you did." Wentworth laughed scornfully. He tossed his cigar into the heart of the fire and turned upon Dorcas in sudden rage. "Stealing is not a nice word."

"It is nice enough for what has happened." "Do you know," asked Wentworth with grave deliberation, "what did happen? Has Merry ever taken you into his confidence about this transaction?"

"I understand," Dorcas answered quietly. "I understand it is perfectly useless to appeal to a conscience which is dead."

CHAPTER XV.

Master Robin Tully. When the curtain dropped on the last act at a Saturday matinee, Dorcas paced on the way to her dressing-room and glanced out at the stage door. Rain was lashing the street in furious, wild-blown torrents.

"I used to wonder how it would feel to be famous. Of course I am not famous yet," said Dorcas quickly; "I am merely one of the people you hear of in passing. Still, I cannot grow accustomed to the queer experience of seeing my name blazoned on every house-top when I ride on the L, or finding my picture in papers and magazines. People stop on the street to stare at me; occasionally they whisper my name to some one who is with them."

"It's the way of the world," the other woman answered. "A little of it came into my own life."

"Suppose," Dorcas suggested, "we have a little spread right here. I can order a hot dinner sent in. It's a wretched night—what do you say?"

"Listen," said Dorcas to the waiter, who stood ready to take their order; "bring us consommé, boiled salmon, celery, cucumbers, and sliced tomatoes, potatoes, string beans, roast chicken, lettuce, almond meringue pie, coffee, and—is that all?" she asked of Julie who stood peering over her shoulder.

"Well, let me think." The child paused. "There's Dick—Dick would do anything for us. He's only a call boy, but he's nice. Then there's Robertson. He loaned us the chairs and table. Robertson's the nicest man in

the Gotham—almost. We could have had Brunton, but she's just going out. Then there's Mr. Merry. I believe," she added decisively, "I would rather have Mr. Merry than anybody."

"How do you know Mr. Merry is in?" "He is," cried Julie. "He called me into his dressing-room when I passed and gave me these." She unclasped her hand to show three caramels squeezed into a sticky lump.

"I used to plan to be a waitress when I was grown up," said the child, while she gathered plates neatly on a tray. "That was before I went on the stage. Playing the little 'Cordelia' is nicer than being a waitress."

"I know that. I would be quite happy to be 'Cordelia' with you, even if I didn't get any money for it. Of course, though, it's lovely to get my salary envelope once a week, and to have nice rooms at Mrs. Billerwell's, and all we want to eat, and clothes and shoes. I am growing rich—I have a bankbook!"

"When I have two thousand I am going to buy a little house out in the country. Mother and I picked it out one day when Miss Dorcas took us driving. We will keep chickens and a pony and a cow, and have cherry trees and radishes and pansies in the garden."

"Oh, Mother," cried the child impetuously. "I never thought of keeping boarders before!—only we can't charge Mr. Merry much."

"Oh, that would be lovely!" Julie laid down a chicken bone she held between her fingers to clap her greasy little hands joyfully. Merry was telling a ridiculous adventure which had once befallen him on a snowbound train when he was interrupted by a timid knock at the door.

"Hullo, David Copperfield, where did you come from?" cried Merry. "That isn't my name." The child had a soft English accent. "I have heard of 'David Copperfield,' but I'm not 'David,' sir, my name is Robin Tully."

"Come in, Master Robin Tully," said Merry, "and have dinner with us." The child stared at them steadily but did not move. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

WESTERN CANADA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

PETROLEUM, NATURAL GAS, COAL AND FARM LANDS. The developments that have taken place recently in the oil and gas fields of Western Canada have added another to the many previous evidences that have been produced, showing the great wealth that has been an unknown asset for so many generations.

The latest reports from the oil-fields at Calgary show that there is a production there that would appear to equal the best paying fields on the continent. Experts have been on the ground for some time. It is said that one of the wells is able to produce 3,000 gallons an hour. If this is so there are but about a dozen wells in the world of greater production.

With the grain fields covering these hidden riches it is no wonder that a continued range of optimism is to be seen everywhere. Early reports of seeding of all grains being successfully completed all over the country are followed by reports of excellent and strong growth everywhere. During the first week in June most of the wheat had reached a growth of from twelve to twenty inches, with the most even appearance, almost universally, that has been seen for years.

Barley, a favorite with the hog raisers, had taken good root, and was crowding oats for a first place, as to length of shoot. Cultivated fodder grasses are getting great attention, as a consequence of the inclination to go more largely into mixed farming, and the raising of hogs, cattle and horses. The weather is reported fine, just what is needed, and if present favorable conditions continue, the grain crop of Western Canada for 1914 will be the largest average in the history of the country.—Advertisement.

Gladstone's Domestic Rule. Mr. Gladstone once said that he had solved the domestic problem in this way: "Whenever Mrs. Gladstone insists I submit; and whenever I insist she submits." He didn't say, however, whether they took turns about insisting and submitting. Marriage is a failure when one of the parties insists on being the insister and doesn't take turns in submitting to the submitter.

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