

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

CHAPTER XXIV—Continued.

"Why," she cried suddenly, "the date was May 29, last year; that was two days after I came home from the convent." Her forehead knitted into a puzzled frown.

"Then afterwards," she raised her head with a quick gesture, "we went to Juniper Point. There you told me about your play—and you went away to write it?"

"She paused, waiting for Merry to answer. She did not raise her eyes. Her head was bent as if she took the shame of her brother upon her own shoulders."

"Yes," the man spoke in a slow whisper. "Then you came back, with the play finished, and read it to Enoch, and he—he claimed it—because he held this against you?" She laid a trembling finger upon the sheet of paper.

"Yes," Dorcas sat perfectly still with her arms lying on the desk. Merry bent over and gently touched her cheek.

"Oh!" she shrank away from him with a shuddering cry. "Oh, how could you let him do such a thing! It was so cruel, so inconceivably cruel, so shameful, so unjust! It was such a mistake! Why did you let my brother do such a thing?"

"I don't know," Merry spoke abruptly.

"Tell me why you let him do it," persisted the girl.

"I don't believe I can explain—to you." There was a hopeless tone in the man's voice. "For a while it seemed to me like a poker debt. Women cannot understand a poker debt."

"No, I cannot understand," confessed Dorcas. Then she went on hurriedly: "Was that your only reason?"

"No, I felt that way at first. Then—it seemed foolish. One night I determined for a minute to set myself free, to get the play back, and to make you understand. It was the night—that night—when you took me home—when you found me in the—when you gave me new courage and a fresh outlook on life—when you made a man of me."

Dorcas rose and stood facing him with her eyes searching him. "Why didn't you do it?" she asked.

"Because," said Merry unsteadily, "do you remember you—no, I—I—asked you—when a man had fallen as low as I had if he had anything left that would pull him to his feet. You said, 'Yes, so long as he has honor, there is no end of a chance for him.'"

"Oh!" cried Dorcas aghast. "Oh, to think that I should have put that in your way!"

"Put what in my way? Dearest, that night I came around the corner—I had been wandering in the desert. Suddenly I found sunshine, I found love and hope, I found you. That night—when you went away—I began to understand that it was the most wonderful chance God ever put in a man's way."

An instant later his arms were about her and she felt his kiss upon her cheek.

"Don't," cried Dorcas. "Don't!" She freed herself from his clasp and held him away from her. "Can't you understand, don't you see, Andrew, after what Enoch did to you, that I cannot be your wife?"

"You cannot be my— He stared at her in bewildered dismay.

"Yes, that is what I mean," she whispered tremulously. "Don't you understand? How could I marry you with the thought of this horrible wrong constantly between us? I could never forget it. Remember it was Enoch, my brother—don't you understand?—my brother—who did this! How could you go on loving me and—"

"Remember—it was your brother who saved my life," said Merry passionately. "How could I go on loving you, dearest? How could I go on loving you? I could go through hell for you, and yet I confess I would rather be with you in heaven." He flushed and his face grew grave. "You are mine—all mine—and I am yours, so wholly and truly yours that I have grown to think of this world as merely one spot—one little spot—where we can make a home and I can have you beside me—for the rest of my life."

CHAPTER XXV.

In the Daylight.

Wentworth's chamber was dim as twilight when Merry entered. The outer world lay white and breathless under a dazzling sun, and the sudden change to a darkened sickroom for a moment made Andrew grope vaguely on the threshold. As his eyes became accustomed to the dusk he saw a white-gowned nurse standing beside the bed. Under the sheet lay the motionless outline of the man's long body, the head wound with swamy bandages. Merry's hands gripped together convulsively. The nails cut into his palms and an ache which hurt tugged at his heart. Wentworth's chamber held memories for him: he thought of nights when he had lain helpless upon that same bed and Enoch had taken care of him in a lumbering fashion. During these days he had seen the rugged face grow wan from want of sleep; still for him a smile always lit the stern features.

Suddenly, as the last remnant of an old sob sloughs off, every fragment of hatred, of resentment at injustice, of pain and rebellion which for ten months had been warping his nature

and clouding his life fell away from Merry's heart. The love, the implicit confidence, even the boyish dependence upon the older man, came flooding back into his soul like a high tide. All that had stood between him and Wentworth seemed unimportant compared with the vital fact that they had been and still were friends.

When the nurse beckoned he stole noiselessly across the floor. She pointed to a chair by the bedside. "He has dozed off," she explained in a low whisper. "He asked for you just before he went to sleep. I told him you were coming. Sit here so that he can see you when he wakes up."

Merry dropped into the chair. He began to see perfectly through the gloom. Wentworth's grim, gaunt face had started him for a minute. The eyelids were closed, with depths of shadow below them. The man's dominating nose stood out like a silhouette against the white pillow. The mustache had been shaved away and lines, chiseled by days and nights of pain, wrinkled about the quiet mouth. Merry sat staring at the haggard face with a dull, tugging hope in his soul, which he could not voice even to Dorcas. He wanted time—time enough to tell Enoch that the old enmity was dead, that the old love was alive, strengthened by new ties. A spasm of pain ran through the sick man's face, wrinkling the pallid forehead and twitching the lips. Merry looked up at the nurse. She read the question in his eyes.

"No," she whispered, "he is going to live. His brain is clear now. He has a great constitution. That was the only thing that saved him." The woman had a strong, intelligent face and her manner was full of calm conviction. She was not young and must have watched over many a battle between life and death. She knew! Merry sighed with relief and peace of mind, even with a mad throbbing joy. The thought of Dorcas and the future came with the conviction that there was still time to take up the old bonds of love and to begin life again.

The face upon the pillow moved and Enoch's eyes opened slowly. Recognition flashed into them, then a smile crept about the lined mouth. "Enoch!" The young man dropped on his knees beside the bed, his fingers stole under the sheet and caught in a strong grasp the hand which he had thought was slipping from his reach.

Wentworth's eyes held a breathless question. "You were not hurt?" he whispered.

"No, old man; no. I didn't have a scratch. You took it all. You saved my life, as you have done more than once, and, Enoch, you understand—we are back where we stood in the old days, with everything forgotten."

"No, go on with your sewing. I like to see your hands fly with that bright silk between your fingers. Men have an idea that women are one-sided creatures. They are mistaken. You sew beautifully, and yet, while you stitch, I think of your 'Cordella.'"

It was the first time since his accident that Wentworth had mentioned the theater or business of any sort. Dorcas began to trace out the pattern she was embroidering with the point of her needle. Her fingers trembled. She spoke without looking up.

"You haven't cared to hear about business, Enoch. There are some things you may want to know, since you are strong again. Mr. Oswald sailed for England a fortnight ago. He hated to go, leaving you before the critical point was passed, but the Strand Theater offered open time for August and it had to be attended to. He is rehearsing an English company now for 'The House.'"

"Didn't he want you for it?" asked Wentworth.

"Yes; but I should not have gone even if you had been well. He has given 'Cordella' to Miss Embury, an English girl. He says she will play it beautifully. We are to open here on the twentieth of October. The whole company has been re-engaged. Mr. Oswald said he did not believe you would care to make any changes. There is only one new member—Helen Capron will play 'Mrs. Esterbrook.' Miss Paget went to London three weeks ago."

Dorcas did not raise her eyes while she spoke. The silk thread had knotted and she sat disentangling it with her needle.

"Dropped on His Knees Beside the Bed." everything buried, buried so deep that neither of us will ever give it another thought."

The thrill of warmth over that strongest of all things human—a broken friendship made warm and secure again—ran like the vigor of transfused blood through the veins of the sick man. Happiness flashed into the wan face and his feeble strength returned Merry's grip.

Andrew laughed aloud. "You understand, Enoch, we are friends—friends that nothing can separate again as long as life lasts."

The wistfulness of gratitude dimmed the eyes of the sick man. "As long as life lasts! That won't be a great while, boy," he whispered huskily; "only now—it is all right—and it seems different. I felt like a coward little while ago. You remember that writing chap who died lately? He said something just before he went. I thought of it this morning—I'm afraid to go home in the dark—wasn't that what he said? I felt lonely—and I know—"

"Listen, Enoch," Merry spoke with a tone of passionate conviction. "Look here, old man, you're not going home in the dark, not yet. You've got thirty or forty years before that homegoing." He turned imperatively to the nurse. "Push back the curtains, won't you? Push them away back. There's a glorious sun shining—let it in."

The woman understood. She ran up a curtain and flung back the shutters. The room grew suddenly white and radiant.

"There!" cried Merry. "Talk of going home in the dark? See how the sun is shining! Go home in the dark, the idea!" A pathetic eagerness flashed into the eyes of the man on the bed. The glare of the sunshine showed clearly the wan and ghastly shadows in the bandaged face.

"She says," the actor pointed over his shoulder at the white-gowned nurse, "she says you are out on the highroad—coming back to stay with us—indeedly, you understand, Enoch? She knows. Don't you?" He looked into the woman's face with ardent pleading in his eyes.

She smiled and nodded. She was the embodiment of health and vigor. Her stalwart body and her wholesome rose face were pleasant for sick eyes to look upon. "Yes, you've come back," she said emphatically. "When the doctor left an hour ago he said we had pulled you safely around the corner. Now all the job I have out for me is to see you are kept quiet and patient and happy."

"Yes, happy—that's the biggest part of the prescription," repeated Merry with a laugh.

"The sick man looked up. The confession in his eyes was pathetic. "It seems ages since I was happy, Roy."

"Well, you're not going to be allowed to think, even to think of past ages. You've only to lie there and get well. It is our business—a sort of job cut out for Dorcas and me—to keep you happy. See?"

"I see," whispered Enoch. The flicker of a smile stole into his face. It brought peace and a pale, eager hopefulness, as if a thought of restitution and atonement was dawning in the man's soul. The nurse lowered the curtain and blotted out the radiance which flooded the room.

"The doctor has ordered quiet," she whispered, "and sleep—as much sleep as possible."

Merry rose and laid his hand on Wentworth's forehead. "You hear her orders, old man?" He laughed gaily. "It's no use running full tilt against the nursing profession. Each one of them thinks she knows it all! But I'm not going to say 'Good-by.' I mean to hang around here from dawn to dark and drop in every time I can sneak past her—or the doctor!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Moral Lesson.

Occasionally during Enoch's convalescence Dorcas found him listening to common noises about the house with a feverish anxiety which was half-terror.

"I don't know what he wants," said the nurse one day. "I wish I could find out. The doctor orders me not to bring up any subject that might disturb him. There's something on his mind, something that harasses him. Yesterday I stood on the stair speaking to Mrs. Volk and I left him asleep. When I went back he was leaning on his elbow and his eyes were fixed on the door as if he dreaded seeing some one come in. He asked who the woman was I had been talking to. His temperature had gone up. I wish I knew what he is worrying about."

"I think I understand," said Dorcas. She returned to the sickroom carrying a bit of needlework. An eager smile came into her brother's eyes when she opened the door. He lay propped up with pillows. She sat down beside his bed. "Shall I read?" she asked.

"No; go on with your sewing. I like to see your hands fly with that bright silk between your fingers. Men have an idea that women are one-sided creatures. They are mistaken. You sew beautifully, and yet, while you stitch, I think of your 'Cordella.'"

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"As soon as you are able to travel we are going to take you away some where. This city is hot." Enoch stared out at the window. "Who is 'we'?" he questioned. "A wave of scarlet crept across the girl's face."

"Andrew Merry has offered to help care for you until you are quite strong again," she answered without raising her eyes.

There still were gray shadows in his face and wan hollows and wrinkles about his mouth. His hair had whitened at the temples. Physically the man had changed, but a new tranquility had begun to smooth away lines of worry and care in the colorless face.

"And begin life over again?" he asked.

"Yes," said the girl gently. A pathetic eagerness came into his face; then it grew still with the gravest of faces.

"The doctor has ordered quiet," she whispered, "and sleep—as much sleep as possible."

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CHAPTER XXVII.

When Andrew Comes, I Want to See Him Alone.

ity of a man who had almost touched hands with death. Into the wrinkles about his mouth crept the old dogged determination, tempered by a humility which Dorcas had never seen before. She flung her work aside, dropped on her knees, and drew her brother's face close against her own.

"Dorcy," he said after a long silence, "when Andrew comes I want to see him alone."

"Send him up, won't you—and do you mind if he comes alone? Afterwards I want you."

The girl hesitated. "Of course. But do you think you are strong enough to visit much?"

"I spoke to the doctor this morning and he said talking would not hurt unless I got excited. Andrew isn't an exciting fellow."

"You're looking uncommonly well for a sick man," said Merry when he entered the room a few moments later. "So do you, boy!" Enoch's eyes crinkled with a smile. "You look happy—tremendously happy."

"Of course, I am tremendously happy. Why shouldn't I be tremendously happy? I never saw a more glorious day; I have you back, well and strong, the same staunch old friend you always were; I've signed a contract for next season in figures which would have given me dizzy spells five years ago, and—"

"And—" A pathetic eagerness came into Enoch's face.

"Why, bless my soul, isn't that enough to set the average human on transcendental stiles?"

"Andrew, you're half angel!" cried Wentworth. There was a quaver in his voice.

"Half angel, you ridiculous old muddle head!" Merry smiled in his engaging way. "There's no surplus of angel fiber in any man—angels are feminine." The comedian's eyes became grave for a moment. "Still, I might have been gadding about on wings today if it hadn't been for you. Your courage—"

"Courage!" Wentworth started as if he had been struck. "Andrew, never use that word about me again! It wasn't courage that made me snatch you from death. Oftentimes men who in cold blood are utter cowards leap forward and rescue some one from death. That isn't courage! He paused, as if a word had escaped him. "It is blind, instinctive impulse—the natural impulse you find even in a savage."

Wentworth paused for a minute with a haunted look in his eyes. "He claims that the morals of every human being are molded during the first twenty years of his life. Into a fairly decent career there comes occasionally—for the life of me I can't remember his technical name for it—about call it a moral lesson. Some sin which a man has committed, and you might say lived down, before he was twenty, crops out again years after and it conquers him. Each time he may repent and turn over a new leaf. The world looks on him not as an Admirable Crichton perhaps, but as a tolerably good fellow. Then suddenly, without the ghost of a warning, even after he imagines he has outgrown the tendency to that particular sin, there comes a temptation, and he goes under as if his backbone was gristle. He falls as quick as that!"

Wentworth paused for a moment and snapped his fingers. "Curious, isn't it?" he added.

"It certainly is curious," agreed Merry.

"When the career of this murderer was brought to the light of day, they found that once when he was a school boy, and again when a friend stole his sweetheart, he might have committed murder if weapon had been at hand. The third time a gun lay close to his elbow."

Andrew Merry did not speak, but sat watching Enoch with bewilderment in his eyes.

"I am going to tell you about two lessons which occurred in my own life. There was a third—you know about that one yourself."

"That is yours," he explained. "You will find there every cent of royalties from 'The House.' It was banked apart from my private account. It grew amazingly during the spring. You are a wealthy man."

Andrew opened it and glanced through the pages. He looked bewildered for a moment.

"Jeh! What can I do with so much money? I swear, Enoch, I don't care a penny for being a wealthy man except—"

Wentworth did not answer. He was staring at a slip of paper he had drawn from the yellow envelope. "You remember this, Andrew?" he asked abruptly.

Merry nodded. He caught a glimpse of Wentworth's name and his own upon the slimy thing they had called the bond. Enoch leaned back against the pillow and began to destroy the paper with slow deliberation, tearing it across and across until it was reduced to a heap of flakes which fluttered down into the hollow of his gaunt palm. He shook them into the envelope and handed it to Merry, who took it without a word and slipped it between the leaves of the bank-book.

"If you can trust me, boy, until the right time comes and I reach the right place, I will make full restitution before the world."

"Don't, old man, let us bury this now and forever. Good God! isn't it restitution enough to have saved my life?"

"No," Enoch spoke with swift passion, "no, it isn't restitution. Don't stand in my way. You have to humor sick men, you know. Besides, I want to lay my soul bare to you now, Andrew. Had I been a Catholic I should have done it to a priest long ago, I suppose."

"Go, ahead, Enoch, I'll listen," he said gently.

Wentworth turned in bed and clasped his hands around one bent knee. "Years ago," he began brusquely, "I was wandering about in the Tennessee mountains on an assignment when I fell in with a chap who taught psychology in Yale. He was nothing wonderful, but his science was fascinating. Time and again, since those days, I have planned, if I could find the leisure, to go into psychology and study the thing out. Still, any man who knocks about the world as I have done learns to puzzle things out for himself. There must be something alluring, though, to be able to reduce the promptings of one's own soul to a science and then to work out a problem in yourself. Don't you think so?"

"I should imagine so. Still, it's an unopened book to me," Merry admitted.

"We used to sit and talk every night around the campfire, I remember once this young MacGregor explained to me why a man we had both known committed murder. He killed his wife first, the horror-stricken, shot himself. It's a common enough story of the week, but it came close to us because we had both known the fellow well. He was a decent, quiet, cheerful citizen, with a genial, kindly way about him. His taking off seemed a mystery. None of us had even seen him angry. Suddenly he turned into a flaming fiend, a murderer, and a suicide. Nothing but insanity or the Yale man's theory explained it."

"What was his theory?"

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Fundamental Principles of Health By ALBERT S. GRAY, M.D. WALKING TO BE WELL.

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Insomnia, "biliousness" and "rheumatism" are a trinity of widely distributed troubles inextricably associated in the public mind with "brain work," food and indigestion. As is usually the case in conclusions reached through purely empirical channels, the association is substantially correct, but the theory for the correction of the distressing conditions is wrong.

Probably the most destructive idea we have is that for every physical distress there exists some miraculous remedy, our problem as we see it being solely to find the man wise enough to determine correctly the cause of our trouble and advise the proper remedy—and in our belief it must always be something to take, to rub in, or to squirt into our bodies through a hollow needle.

The energy spent in work and heat is derived from the potential energy stored in the food, and throughout the entire process neither matter nor energy is either gained or lost. The fundamental principles of the conservation of energy and of matter hold good in all living things as they do in inorganic nature. All energy taken in must be balanced by work done and heat given off.

Food taken into our bodies does not for the most part pass through as fuel alone, but also serves to build up complex living material, which in turn is perpetually breaking down again into nonliving matter. There is a double process continually going on in metabolism—a building up into higher and higher compounds in the making of which energy is absorbed, and a corresponding breaking down of these higher compounds into simpler ones and into waste products, during which process energy is freed. For these reasons we cannot live on carbon foods alone; at the present time combinations of sixteen elements that we know and undoubtedly some that we do not yet know are necessary to maintain the human body and are therefore foods. Hence multitudes are starving in the midst of plenty and we make futile efforts to cure the result.

From this brief survey it will be seen that human life is a highly complex proposition and that if we desire to remain in the life current it is advisable that we give the matter some personal thought and learn not to interfere so recklessly with the fundamental requirements.

We have noted that work is essential to all animal life, and man is no exception to the rule. This brings us to the point of our subject—the physiology of the walk. The muscles in every part of the body are tensely stretched between the point of origin and insertion, and in general are in opposing sets and maintained in a balanced state of tension by a continuous contraction kept up by the action of the nervous system.

Muscle is elastic, a small force being sufficient to change its shape, but when the distorting force is removed it returns completely to its original shape, provided the distortion has not passed the limits of elasticity. Muscles remain at rest indefinitely until stimulated to contract, and when we desire to contract a muscle certain changes occur in our brain; these set up changes in the nerves passing to the part and the muscles contract.

By means of the encephalon, an instrument which enables the response of a muscle to stimuli to be recorded, it is shown that the continued action of the nerve muscular mechanism leads to fatigue; that if a muscle be "voluntarily" or reflexly stimulated, again and again, it finally ceases to react. Fatigue is due to the accumulation of the products of the activity of the muscles, and it may be induced in a normal animal by injecting into it the blood from an animal which has been fatigued; muscular fatigue, in brief, generates poison and blankets the energies just as the ashes from one fire may be used to bank or smother another fire.

This explains to the discerning why clumsiness, slovenliness and feebleness of purpose are characteristic of certain postures, and why alertness, thoroughness, self-confidence and freedom all proclaim themselves in the carriage and in the act of walking. Not only does our character influence

our walk, but our walk will influence our character. Insomnia is frequently due to some form of auto-intoxication from indigestion; "biliousness" is indigestion, and so-called "rheumatism" is usually due to overstrained muscles and uneliminated waste products in the circulation. Our brain action and our digestion are governed by our physical habits, and if we are not engaged in physical labor then we must walk or play; some form of muscular activity is absolutely necessary for the continuation of life.

QUESTIONS OF FOOD. Whatever supplies nourishment to organic bodies—anything that sustains, nourishes and augments life; anything that will supply the material required to repair the waste accompanying the vital processes—is food.

Beginning with pins, needles and buttons, everything we as infants can lay hands on that is not too large, and in the emergency of having nothing else available, even our own fingers and toes, are shoved into our mouths and a strenuous effort made to swallow them under the promptings of an instinct we know as appetite.

Appetite has its origin in body needs, and inasmuch as the body is continuously consuming energy appetite manifests two strong characteristics: periodic recurrence and organic necessity.

The average individual attributes far too much importance to the question of diet. Hence we have the countless fads—vegetarianism, red meat, white meat, fruit and nut diet, buttermilk drinking, no breakfast, one meal a day or six meals a day.

Experts divide foodstuffs into six groups: Water, carbohydrates, proteins, fats, refuse and ash. The two divisions of "refuse" and "ash" are persistently and exasperatingly ignored as having little if any meaning and are not considered of any significance or importance by most food "experts." The "refuse" division consists of the bones of meat and fish, shells of shellfish, skin of potatoes, apples, pears and peaches, the bran of wheat and of other cereals. Not only are these two divisions ignored, but stupid chemists and pathologists are not wanting who assert that "we are profoundly ignorant as to the actual processes of digestion, therefore we should not give much consideration to mineral contents," etc.

Acting on this authority, some alleged "experts" emphatically state this "insoluble refuse" is either unnecessary or even injurious, forgetting that there is a class of "insoluble substance" demonstrating a property of matter well known to science and now generally and very profitably used in the manufacturing industries under the name catalysis.

A catalyst is a thing which may lie in a vessel seemingly inert and yet by its mere presence dictate what shall or shall not take place therein. A small quantity of a catalyst will bring about the transformation of enormously large quantities of substance which lie in its presence, and at the end of the reactions the catalyst will have the same physical and chemical properties as it had in the beginning of the action.

All the enzymes (digestives) are catalyzers. Pepsin, yeast, diastase, rennet, trypsin, ptyalin, zymase, amylase and undoubtedly others we do not yet know exert a profound influence on living things about us. Many of these ferments are found in grains and in saliva and the other digestive juices and in every cell of our bodies