of Forsyth's death to the Tribune."

giveness in his eyes.

Neither of the men spoke for some

minutes. When Merry turned, Went-

worth lay staring at him with a prayer for pity, comprehension, and for-

"I want you to understand one thing," pleaded the older man. "When

you called my bluff that morning and

I wrote that bond, I was innocent of any thought of injury to you. I don't

know what was in my mind. It was

nothing in the world but an idle fancy.

I told you so at the time. I did not

dream that you could write a play. If

anyone had told me you were capable

of turning out 'The House of Ester-

brook' I should have laughed at him.

Then that day, when you came and

read the manuscript-I had just given

up all hope, as I did with the oration

on Caesar. I had been tolling for

years and years on a play. There

was one-it had seemed to me like a

great plot-but I had begun to realize

that labor does not mean everything.

You want inspiration, or genius or art

-or something, and I didn't have it."

if in an attempt to remember some-

thing. "I was trying to think of

something Ellen Terry wrote on the

back of a photograph she once gave

after fifteen years' labor, perhaps, La-

bor! Why, I thought it was all inspir-

ation. No, labor and art are the

bor alone won't land the prize. You've

"Terry wasn't altogether right. La-

foundation; inspiration-a result.

"When am I to be an actress? Well,

me. It ran like this:

proved that, Boy."

Enoch paused, wrinkling his eyes as

The LAPSE of ENOCHWENTWORTH Sir ISABEL GORDON CURTIS And the Woman from Wolvertons" THE WOMAN FROM Wolvertons

TLLUST RATIONS BY ELLSWORTH YOUNG

CHAPTER XXVI-Continued.

Across the pale face of the invalid swept a wave of scarlet; then he began to talk slowly and hesitatingly. "I was in a Southern academy the first time it happened. I must have been seventeen or thereabouts. Prizes were to be given for a public oration and people were coming from everywhere to hear us. The governor was to address us. My father was a lawyer, one of the big lawyers of the state. He went to this school when he was a prize. His heart was set on my winning it. I tolled and tolled over that speech; it was about the death of Julius Caesar. 1 can remember, as I lay awake nights staring out into the darkness, how the speech came throbbing in my brain. I could never write, though, as I declaimed it to myself in the still dormitory. I used to go out into the woods and try to write. One day I gave up. I sat huddled against a stone wall which ran down the hill, dividing a pasture from the forest. There was a tall pine over my head and the crows were calling from the

top of it. I can see the place yet." Enoch lifted his eyes and turned to meet the steady glance of the man who sat beside the bed.

"Do you want to hear the story out?" he asked bluntly. "Yes-if you are bound to tell it." "It isn't an easy task to set the stark-naked soul of man before another's gaze, especially when it's a man's

own soul; but I've been over this, step by step, during these bedridden days, and I'll feel better when it's out of my system."

'Are you sure?" Merry spoke gent-

"Yes, sure." The reflective tone had gone from Enoch's voice. It was emphatic. "Out there in the sunshine," he continued, "I realized what defeat meant. I knew my oration was merely a babble of senseless words; there was not a throb in it. Besides, I knew that I could not make it better. Suddenly, on the quiet hillside, I heard a voice close beside me."

There was a long pause. Wentworth turned his eyes from Merry and stared out at the window. A trumpet vine climbed over the back of the Waverly Place house and one scarlet blossom hung vivid between him and the sun-

"Say, old fellow," said Merry in a low voice, "you and I are friends, closer friends than we ever were. What's the use of raking up old memories if they hurt. The story of something you did when you were in swaddling clothes doesn't count. Drop it!"

"It does count," answered Wentworth stolidly. "I tell you it does count. It is the only thing that explains what I did-when you called my bluff. I have lain here—I've had days and nights with nothing to do but to

"What's the Use of Raking Up Old Memories?"

think and to analyze things. Why, old man, I haven't had a chance like this for years before. Let me tell you my story; it's interesting even if it isn't much to my credit."

"All right, have your own way." "I sat there in the shadow of the wall listening. It was young David Ross practising his oration. Dave I reached the miserable little town in came of what the niggers called 'po' white trash,' but he had ambition and headquarters. I hurried to the telegenius and was working his way through school like a man. He had chosen the death of Caesar, as I had. crouched there, scarcely breathing; I was afraid he would hear me and I looked at it half-dazed. It came from stop. His speech was great! As I sat looking out over the valley I could sent them no story; they were hungry see the Roman warrior while he stood as vultures for news. As soon as I there in the Senate, down and out, hooted at and reviled, yet haughty and defiant, facing the enemies who had once been his friends. I began to quietly. sob, as a boy does in a shamed, husky,

choked fashion. Suddenly a thought came to me. I leaped over the wall and held before Dave a new twentydollar gold-piece father had given me

that morning. It bought his oration." Wentworth paused as if in an embarrassment of shame, Merry watched

"I feel-even now-the reluctant

grip with which Dave held on to those sheets of blurred foolscap. I never gave a thought to what I had done. Every moment for twenty-four hours was needed to commit Dave's speech boy, and he had carried off the cration to memory. My father, proud and happy, gave me another twenty-dollar gold-piece. I carried it to Dave. He refused it, turning his back on me with angry scorn. Twenty years later I met him again. He had gone to congress and was blasting his way

upwards toward fame. I was assigned to interview him. He remembered me instantly. For a moment he stared at me from head to foot, then he turned away without a word and never touched the hand I offered him. My God! how that hurt!" A shiver went through the man's body. "That happened twenty-five years

in the Balkan mountains where the

blamed barbarian Turks go tearing at

each other's throats once in so often.

The world looked on, waiting for a

story of war. I had none to tell, noth-

ing happened but a skirmish or two

once in a while. There was nothing

a man could make into a story. It

was a wretched campaign. Young

Forsyth, of the Tribune, and I hung

together through it for months, living

like stray dogs, sick to death of our

job, and ready to throw it up at any

moment. One morning at daybreak

we were awakened by shooting. We

scrambled from the cave where we

had slept and looked down into the

valley. We were in the very heart of

a battle, and these savages were climb-

ing over the rocks with their cutlasses

flashing. They shrieked like maniacs.

the bullets went flying about our

heads. I crept back to the hole among

the rocks where we had spent the

night. I couldn't see what was hap-

pening; I didn't want to see. Death

me. It was the most hellish din of

battle I ever listened to. I had turned

coward. I lay there with every tooth

in my head chattering. A nice con-

fession for a man to make, eh?" asked

into his chair. "Hold on, Enoch, I

swear you're not fit for this sort of

thing! Your temperature will go up,

keep still. I want to finish my story.

Forsyth, the intrepid young fool, went

creeping along the face of the cliff.

He had never seen a battle before. I

called to him to lie low, but he never

heeded me. Through a crevice in the

rock I saw him stretch his head over

the chasm and crane his neck, then

plunge down and begin to write as if

and tried to drag him in beside me.

He fought like a wildcat, so I went

back to shelter. The bullets pinged on

the rocks all around me. Suddenly I

somebody called my name in a hoarse

shout. It was Forsyth. 1 crept out.

He stood on a cliff above me, clutch-

ing at his throat, then he toppled and

tell. He came plunging down over the

clutched so tight in his hand that I

tore a corner from one page as I took

it from his fingers. I buried him right

"After a little while the battle fiz-

little torch I read Forsyth's story. It

was tremendous-perfectly tremen-

dous-perfectly tremendous! It read

like inspired stuff. I had never

dreamed the fellow had such a vocab-

ulary. And he lay there close beside

me, asleep-under the damp, warm,

soft earth. I had a fit of the horrors.

I put out my light, stuffed the pages

of writing in my pocket, then went

doubling and twisting down those wild

mountains, dodging the enemy's camp-

fires and their infernal bullets, until

the valley we two men had our

graph office to send out Forsyth's story

to the Tribune, with the news of his

death. I was waiting to get the wire

when somebody handed me a cable.

my own paper, crazy because I had

could get a wire I sent out Forsyth's

"Under his name?" asked Merry

story."

"Damn the nurse. I'm fit enough;

Merry half rose then dropped back

Wentworth with a grim smile.

then the nurse-'

echoed all around and above

other human being."

"I don't know," said Merry vaguely. ago," said Merry hesitatingly. "You "I do." The man's pale face flushed. "When you dropped in on me, eager can't lay up a boyhood sin against a man. He changes—he's almost anas a young victor for a laurel wreath. I knew as surely as if a judge had passed sentence on me that my years "No, he isn't," answered Wentworth and years of toll meant nothing but doggedly. "I want to show you that waste paper. Then, suddenly, as temptthe psychological fellow was in the ation had clutched at me twice before right. That was my first fall from in my life, came a revenous desire for grace; but there was a second lesion. fame—the fame that another man had It was worse, worse even than-than labored for and-" what I did to you, Merry. I was out

"I understand," cried Merry. There was a thrill of compassion in his voice. "Now, dear old man, let's forget it. The one thing I can never forget is that you have raked me from the depths more than once. I might have been worse than dead today if it hadn't been for you."

"You never descended to the depths I did," said Wentworth abruptly.

"Sin-my variety of it or yours-is nothing but the difference in a man's taste. His palate dictates what he will eat. There is a moral palate, and if you go on slaking your appetite, there's a weakening of the moral tissue. Isn't that what your psychologists call it? If it had not been for you, Enoch, I might have been worse than dead today." Merry uttered the last sentence in an undertone. "I have a feeling, though, that I can never go so low again, because-"

He sat silent for a minute. Wentworth's eyes were fixed upon him like an insistent question. "Because fore the footlights tonight; it is an tween newspaper men, like a warm-Enoch," he went on in a steady voice, explanation. It is a-confession." because Dorcas has promised to be my wife."

"Oh!" cried Wentworth quickly. "Oh, thank God for that!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Behind the Curtain,

It was a wet night in October. A line of carriages moved slowly over the shining asphalt to the door of the Gotham. Grant Oswald stood in a corner of the foyer watching the throng pour in.

"This beats your first night in London, doesn't it?" queried a newspaper man who stood beside him. "Yes," acceded the Englishman.

'The first night or any other night." "Wentworth's escape from death was a great ad-if you look at it that way. he were mad. Once I speaked out He had a close call."

"Yes." Oswald spoke absently. That morning he had arrived from London. Although he was the least curious of men, he felt as if the peoheard a low, gurgling, awful cry and ple from whom he had parted four months ago were living in a different atmosphere. Before the ship docked he had discovered a group waiting to welcome him. Dorcas was there, her beautiful face glowing with happiness. rocks until he reached my feet. He He watched her untie a gray scarf was dead, stark dead, when I pulled from her hat and wave it. Merry him into the cave. His notebook was stood beside her, but the girl's hand was clasped inside her brother's arm. Wentworth was wan and thin. Across his temple gleamed a wide red scar. Merry lifted his hat when he caught sight of Oswald and the wind tossed zied down to a stray shot or two. That down, almost into his eyes, the wavy night under the gleam of a sputtering lock of long fair hair which proclaimed his calling. Alice Volk stood in the group, with Julie jumping impatiently beside her. Little Robin clasped her hand, while he searched for the ship with his sightless eyes.

With a courteous "Good night" Oswald left the man and walked into the theater, where a gay, chattering crowd streamed past him. The throng was so dense that he was pushed into a corner. When the overture began he moved toward the rail and took his place among a group of men who had not been able to buy seats. He found Singleton, of the Times, at his elbow.

"Hullo," said the young editor heart-"I'm glad to see you back and glad you've come back to such a house. Why, it's one of the biggest 1 ever saw in New York. You fellows began his confession. Then his eyes must be raking in the shekels.

"It does look that way," Oswald smiled. "I don't knew how long it will hold out. The play has aiready gone far beyond my expectations."

"It ought to last through several seasons. Generally a drama that pulls at the heart strings has a clutch on

at his friend with guilt and shame in sides, you've a great card in your Miss | fore their eyes; a life-an blood dame his eyes, then he turned away. "No. Wentworth, to say nothing of Merry. She's out of sight. Why, I've run in. I signed my own name to it. I sent it to my own paper. I wired the news heaven knows how often, for that third act. I can't think of any big actress who could get as much out of that situation as Dorcas Wentworth does. There are minutes when it doesn't seem as if the girl were acting-she lives the character from start to finish."

"I believe you are right." acknowl-

edged Oswald. Before the third act began the house settled down to that silence which means intense anticipation. When the curtain fell, the applause rose to a deafening clamor. One player after another appeared to take an encore. Last of all came Dorcas. She stood on the stage alone, smiling and bowing. Her face was radiantly happy. When the curtain dropped, the applause began again. Wentworth appeared, leading Merry by the hand. The face of the older man looked pal-

Oswald Was Watching the Throngs

lid and the red scar cut lividly across his forehead. A stillness fell upon the house. It seemed to Oswald as if the people waited intently for some unusual event.

Enoch Wentworth raised his hand with a gesture which was strangely dramatic for a man who was neither an actor nor an orator. Like a flash Oswald remembered a day when he sat watching a prisoner at the bar. The man had been condemned to death; a moment later, with a stifled cry of terror, he stretched out his arm for mercy and sympathy.

"Ladies and gentlemen." Went worth began, in a voice which was low, but so marvelously distinct that each syllable carried to the farthest seat in the house, "this is not a curtain speech-you have not called me be- two. I am told there is a bond be-

strength to go through an ordeal. He felt the curious scrutiny of a thousand eyes. "It is a confession," he repeated slowly, "a confession which has been long delayed-"

He never finished his sentence. Merry stepped forward and laid his hand upon the man's arm with a clinging grasp which was full of affection, even while it pushed Wentworth aside. "Allow me." Then he laughed.

so long been friends of mine, this is it. His confession is a big story in my confession, late in the day, as my itself." friend Wentworth suggests, but it is mine. He was simply breaking the news to you that I wrote 'The House of Esterbrook."

He hesitated for a moment, then Enoch touched his arm as if in protest. Merry smiled and gently put him aside. A whisper of startled surprise ran through the house, followed by a moment of hush, then applause. It subsided slowly. During the tumult men and women who kept their eyes upon the stage saw Wentworth turn as if pleading vehemently. Merry answered with a few decisive words, then he stepped down to the foot-

lights. "We have saved this confession. ladies and gentlemen," he began gravely, "not to create a sensation or to further advertise the play, but each one of you must realize how the public distrusts a jack-of-all-trades. Many of you doubted the ability of a Merry Andrew to touch human emotion ever so lightly, and came that first night with eager curiosity to see him in the character of 'John Esterbrook.' How much more would you have hesitated if you had known that this same Merry Andrew was the author of the play? Hence the secret, to deceive you until an honest verdict had been rendered. Tonight I release my friend Enoch Wentworth from the role he has carried for ten months. I also wish, before you, to acknowledge a large indebtedness to him. For years he has been the truest friend a man ever had. He has believed in me, encouraged me, and to his untiring labor you are indebted for much of the perfect detail which has carried 'The House of Eastabrook' to success."

The audience saw Wentworth stare as if in utter amazement when Merry grew misty, and when the young actor turned to him with an affectionate smile, he gripped the hand held out to him as a man does when he cannot put love or gratitude into words. Across the footlights men and women realized vaguely, through the strange human insight we call intuition, that some empty co er of the world. "No." Enoch lifted his head, looked the purse strings of the public. Be another drams was being played be-

where the feelings of strong men were deeply stirred.

"Good Lord!" said Singleton. Oswald turned with a start as if he had been aroused from sleep. The newspaper man stood at his elbow with a look of blank astonishment in

"What's back of all that?" he asked. "I can understand that Merry wrote the play, I've known Enoch Wentworth for years, and I was never so staggered in my life as the first night when I saw 'The House of Esterbrook.' I went to the office afterwards to write my stuff and I sat for ten minutes-dumb, stupid-trying to figure out how Wentworth, the Enoch Wentworth I knew, could have written it. How long have you known this?"

"I have known it," answered Oswald quietly, "just as long as you

"Then I'm right," cried Singleton. "I knew Merry was lying when he stood there on the stage giving us that bluff about Wentworth carrying the secret for him. Merry wrote it all right. I might have guessed it long ago. I say, do you know there's a devil of a big story back of all that?" Qswald's face grew stern.

"You see I know both of the men so well," went on Singleton eagerly. Why, they were a regular David and Jonathan pair ever since I met them first. Enoch was forever setting Merry on his pins. The actor would go off, Heaven knows where, throw over a part, and drop off the edge of the world. I don't believe he dissipated exactly; he simply tossed his money away and went downhill. Wentworth would hunt him up and drag him back where he belonged. He straightened up suddenly when he began to play 'John Esterbrook.' You can't even pull him into a poker game now. I guess I took the winnings at the last game he stood in for. That night I had a great mind to hand the money back to him. We said 'Good-by' about daylight. He looked pessimistic and glum. No, he wasn't glum either; Merry never gets glum. He had a down-and-out, don't-give-a-damn expression that morning. I can see him yet. Suddenly he disappeared again. When he came back Wentworth and he cut each other dead. That Paget woman affair began, then Wentworth saved Merry's life. Why, it's a tremendous story!"

Oswald turned abruptly. Something in his quiet gaze made Singleton shift his eyes with a start of guilt. "I want to say a word to you," the Englishman's voice was stern, "and I want you to repeat what I say to every man in your fraternity. There may be a big story somewhere behind this-I cannot tell. If there is, if an enmity or a misunderstanding did exist, if there was a wrong done, or if anything lies behind these two men which we do not comprehend, leave it to them. They have buried it. Don't turn ghoul," he pleaded, "and dig it up. simply to make a curious, heartless world buy your paper for a day or Enoch paused as if mustering longed to that brotherhood; he does yet-remember that."

Singleton stretched out his hand with an impulsive gesture. "Thank you, Mr. Oswald. You're a good deal of a man. I never knew you before. We all need a jog on the elbow once in a while. A newspaper man grows a buzzard when a story is in the air He forgets how the other fellow feels. I'll pass the word around. I can promise you that not a man among us will "Good people, one and all, who have do anything but take Merry's word for

"Thank you," said Oswald with a cordiality which few men had seen in the dignified Englishman.

He stood talking with a group who gathered about him at the close of the play, eager as Singleton had been to discuss Merry's dramatic confession, when an usher interrupted them. "Mr. Oswald, you're wanted back of the scenes," said the boy.

Under the white glare of electricity a little group stood on the half-dismantled stage. The people in the cast were there-property men, the call boy, electricians, ushers, and the humblest employe of the house. The actors still wore their stage garb and make-up. Dorcas' hand was linked in her brother's arm. For a moment Oswald stood watching her. Her face was flushed, her eyes shone, she seemed transfigured by happiness.

Merry stretched out a welcoming hand to Oswald. "We've been waiting for you, Oswald, to round out our circle," he cried gally. "I had a Scotch grandmother. When she reached the western wilderness and built a home. she made her husband carve over the chimney-piece: 'We're a' sibb tae ane aniether here.' Once, when I was a little boy, she explained it to me. I understood. The English language won't translate these words, but they mean that there's nobody here but the best of friends. Because we are a' sibb tae ane anither here tonight I want to break a secret to you. It is a more wonderful secret than the news gave to the audience."

Merry looked about him with a quick, boyish smile. "I used to say I could not make a curtain speech to save my life. Tonight I feel as if I were blossoming out. I seem capable of speeches behind the curtain as well as in front. I suppose happiness makes an orator of a man." He laughed joyously. "But-to my secret. This dear lady, whom you all love and honor,

has promised to be my wife." He held out his hands to Doreas and caught hers, then he drew her into his arms as if they stood alone in

THE END

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HUBBY GOT THE GOODS, BUT—

't Was in the First Flush of the Honeymoon, and He Says "Never Again!"

"Never again," was the conclusion of a story told by a young bridegroom of the month, after he related his efforts to please his bride by fulfilling her every wish.

Sitting in his office a few days after the wedding he received a telephone call which was something like this: Dearie, I do so hate to trouble you. but I have run out of lace for that dress I was making, and I can't finish it until I have another yard. Can't you stop at the store and get some as you come home-Oh, I can tell you what it is like-just four leaves, then a sprig, then four leaves, then a sprig. and so on-it's just two threads over an inch wide."

He hung up the receiver and mopped his brow. He walked by the store twice, finally entered and approached the lace counter. She was pretty, but he had been married only a week and was busy repeating in his mind: 'Four leaves, then a sprig."

Well, after looking at 500 samples of lace, I got it, but-."-Indianapolis

No Airs About Her. "Airs!" exclaimed the proud mother, and shook her head vigorously. "My Elsie, for all her learning, hasn't any more airs, so to speak, than her poor

"Then she won't turn up her nose at her old friends?" queried the visitor. "La, no!"

"How refreshing! Most girls who go through college nowadays will hardly

look at you after they're graduated." "Well, they ain't like my Elsie, that's all I can say," retorted Elsie's ma. "She's become a carnivorous reader, of course, and she frequently importunes music. But stuck up-my Elsie? Not a bit. She's unanimous to everybody, has a most infantile vocabulary, and what's more, never keeps a caller waiting while she dresses up. No, she just runs down, nom de plume, as she

Hot In the Superlative. A preacher was describing the Bad Place to a congregation of shellbacks.

"Shipmates," he said, "you've seen the molten iron come running out of the furnace, sizzling and hissing, like some kind of snaky, horrible monster. Well, shipmates-"

The preacher pointed his forefinger at the awed shellbacks.

"Well, shipmates," he said, solemnly, "they use that stuff for ice cream in hell."

Missed It. "So Jack is engaged, is he? And is Fanny the bride-to-be?" "No. She's the tried-to-be."

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