THE LAPSE OF ENOCH WENTWORTH

By ISABEL GORDON CURTIS,

Author of "The Woman from Wolvertons"

CHAPTER V.—(Cont'd.)

He dropped lightly upon his knees in front of Wentworth when he finished.

"I await thine orders, most grave and reverend seigneur." Then he laid his fingers upon Wentworth's arm and looked up with an expectant smile.

Enoch wrenched his arm free and rose awkwardly to his feet. The comedian drew back with a startled expression, as if fear struggled with bewilderment.

"You, see," Enoch's lips were perfectly colorless, "Your mental ability is pledged to me."

Merry started at him, curious and perplexed.

"It is your mental ability which I claim now," Enoch said deliberately.

Andrew spoke in a coarse whisper. "I don't understand."

"I demand your play!"

"You demand my play? To sell?"

"No; of course not." Wentworth jerked out the words abruptly. "Why should I want to sell? I want to produce it—as mine, as one—I have written."

Merry moved toward him with an agony of terror in his eyes. "You want to take from me my one complete effort, my one ambition, my everything—the work which is making a man of me, on which I have toiled steadily for weeks? You would do that!! Do you understand—while I wrote I scarcely stopped to eat or sleep? When I did sleep I dreamed of it and—"

He stopped, too much affected to trust his voice. He laid one hand over the other as if to still himself, for he was trembling.

Wentworth stood looking at the younger man. Something cold and relentless crept into his eyes. He laid his hand on Merry's arm.

"Let me talk to you, Andrew."

"Talk! Talk! You damned thief!!" He pushed Enoch aside with quick repulsion. His face was blazing with wrath. He went trampling about the room in a vague heedless, half-blinded fashion. A thought seemed to strike him abruptly. He wheeled around suddenly and faced the man beside him.

"Why in the devil's name, Enoch, should you do this? Have I ever done you one cruel, disloyal act in all my life?"

Wentworth did not answer. He returned the terror in Merry's eyes with a cool, stubborn glance.

"Did you have this hellish plunder scheme in mind when you drew up that bond?" he asked unsteadily. "What did you have in mind when you made me your slave?"

"I don't know—exactly." Wentworth turned such a straightforward gaze upon Merry that he realized the man was speaking the truth. "As I told you that night, and I am telling the truth, it was nothing but a fancy of mine. When you came to me with this," Enoch's hand dropped on the manuscript which lay upon the table "you came with a great temptation; it was too much for me."

"Evidently," cried Merry. His tone was withering in its scorn. He seated himself and hi[illegible]ned fiercely upon Wentworth. [illegible] muscles of his cheek twitched as regularly as a pulse.

"The play is mine." Enoch seemed to have grown strangely cool and impervious to contempt or anger. "The play is mine," he repeated; "it is the due and forfeit of my bond."

The eyes of the actor narrowed and he laughed savagely.

"Take your pound of flesh," he cried "What will you do with it?"

"Everything we had planned." Enoch's voice was calm. "Give it a big production, advertise it as a play never was advertised before, and build up your fame as an emotional actor."

"What, will you not play the convict?"

"I! Of course not. There is only one actor in America who can play 'John Esterbrook.'"

Andrew rushed across the room in a blind fury. He stretched out his hand and dealth Wentworth a stinging blow across the mouth. "That actor won't play it. Do you understand?"

Wentworth lifted his arm fiercely, then it dropped nervelessly by his side. The veins rose in his neck and forehead like taut cords. He stood staring at Merry, who strode about the room in ademoniac fury.

"God! You're not a man You're a damned, low-down, scurrilous blackleg. And to think of you standing there, looking me in the face—God!" Merry raised his hand again as if to strike, then he dropped it by his side, shuddered, and dashed across the room. He picked up his hat and turned to the door.

"Where are you going? asked Enoch sternly.

"I'm going straight to—hell."

He lifted his gloves from the table. Beside them lay the manuscript of his play. He stretched out his hand and turned his eyes on the other man, watching him as a thief might, who fears being caught in an act of robbery.

"Take it," cried Enoch. "I have a copy of it, a copy in my own handwriting."

Merry stood fingering the pages.

"What do you propose to do with your—swag?"

"Call it by a decent name. It belongs to me. Money does not count with me in this transaction. You may take all the royalties. I want nothing but the authorship of the play."

"Nothing but the authorship—" Merry's glance was a malediction.

He dropped the pages and tossed his hat upon his head. Wentworth watched him curiously. The outer shell of the man had changed. His clothes, immaculate an hour ago, looked disheveled. A lock of fair hair strayed down over his forehead, his linen had a battered appearance, the white hyacinths drooped from his buttonhole like blossoms which had been touched by frost. He stood for a moment with the door-knob in his hand staring at Wentworth, who returned his gaze with a cold, ruthless scrutiny. Merry's eyes fell before them. It was the first palpable concession to Enoch's stronger will.

"Good-by," he said with an unsteady laugh. He closed the door behind him. Wentworth turned to the table, lifted the manuscript and stood glancing through the closely scrawled pages. Then he crossed the room, dropped it upon the mantel, and watched until each gray ash became a filmy atom of dust.

CHAPTER VI.

"Jason, this is nobody I know." Wentworth sat staring at a card his man laid before him. He knitted his brows querulously. "Make him understand that I'm engaged."

"He's terrible masterful, Marse Enoch," said the darky apologetically; "he's boun' he'll see yo', He's a gentleman all right. I don' believe I kin git rid ob him easy."

"Tell him I can spare ten minutes."

Jason ushered the visitor into Wentworth's library. He was a tall distinguished man, with a fine, highbred face. His manners were exceeeingly gracious, yet simple

"I don't believe, Mr. Oswald, I've met you before," said Enoch.

"You haven't." Grant Oswald smiled cordially. "Your man tells me you have exactly ten minutes to spare. I'll go straight to business. I'm an Englishman. I have been in New York for three weeks. I want to invest money in something along the theatrical line."

"Oh!" Enoch looked up sharply. "Andrew Merry mentioned you."

"Yes, I spoke to Merry one night on the elevated. He's one of your few American actors whom I admire. If a play could be found that fitted him—he spoke of having one—I'm willing to venture a hundred thousand dollars on its production."

"A hundred thousand! That would be a production worth while!"

"But—remember—only if the play appeals to me. I've been studying theatrical business since I was a younger. I never threw money away on it."

"If you can stay I will read you the play now."

"My ten minutes are up." The Englishman smiled.

"This work can wait. Excuse me a minute." Wentworth lifted a head of clippings and copy which littered his table. Then he walked to the safe and knelt before it. He had just opened the door and laid his hand upon the manuscript when the door opened and Dorcas ran in. Jason followed, carrying a suit case. For a minute Wentworth forgot the visitor in his inner room.

"Bless my heart, I'm glad to have you back," he cried. "Never in all my life have I seen you look so well."

She held him at arm's length and gazed at him critically. "I wish I could say as much for you, Enoch. You look decidedly seedy. I've got to stay right here. I'm the only one who can manage you."

"I beg your pardon, Dorcas, I've a guest here." Her brother led her to the inner room and introduced his caller to her.

"Mr. Oswald and I were having a business talk, Dorry—not exactly business either. You may stay if you wish and hear a play. I was just going to read to him. If he likes it he will star Andrew Merry in it."

"Oh!" A glow of anticipation shone in the girl's eyes. She laid her coat and hat on the window seat and dropped into a low chair beside her brother. Once or twice she patted him affectionately on the shoulder. The Englishman watched her. There was vivid admiration in his eyes, but Dorcas did not see it. Her only thought was of the happiness in store for Merry.

Wentworth laid the pages of manuscript on the table and cleared his throat. Oswald sat ready to bestow a business-like attention upon the reading. When Enoch lifted the first page his visitor asked: "May I know who wrote the play?"

"Ah!" said the Englishman. He noticed the startled look on Dorcas' face. It escaped her brother, who set turned half way from her.

Wentworth began to read. He was an excellent reader; his enunciation was slow and distinct. The story quickly unfolded itself in strong, vivid language. Grant Oswald, who was an ardent student of dramtic literature, fell immediately under its spell and listened with intent quiet.

The minds of both men were so vitally concentrated upon the drama that they were scarcely conscious of a movement when Dorcas crept from her low chair to the window seat. She lay back against a pillow, gathered the folds of a silky portiere around her, and stared down at the square. She heard her brother's voice in fregments. Those fragments were always the words of the girl, Cordelia, or of the father fallen to pitiful estate,. She clasped her hands together with such a grip that it numbed her fingers. A strange pain and a horrible suspicion were seeping through her body and burning in her veins. Outwardly she was inert.

Suddenly she was awake again, wide awake, tingling with life and emotion listening to her brother's vibrant voice The day of release had come for John Esterbrook. He tood with halting, tremulous steps, fearful at the sight of the world he had left twenty years before, hiding his eyes from its tumult. Then Cordelia ran to meet him—young, hopeful, loving and eager, Dorcas forgot the horror and doubt which had swept her down for a moment, she was thinking of nothing but the play. It was greater, more human, than she had dreamed of that day when Andrew and she walked home over the beach at Juniper Point. Her eyes grew wet with pity, then she smiled happily as life ceased to be a problem for Cordelia. Love had come, and the father turned to work out what was left of a future.

(To be continued.)

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The Farm Home Grounds.

During 1915, an agricultural survey was conducted by the Commission of Conservation on 400 farms in Ontario. In answer to the question "Are the grounds around the house neat?" it was found that 53 per cent. of the replies were in the negative. In travelling over Canada one cannot but be impressed by the general untidiness and the absence of plan or system in the planting and care of the farm home grounds.

Clean-up and Arbor Day campaigns, conducted each spring in many of our towns and cities, should be extended to rural communities. The first question the farmer asks is: "What will it cost?" feeling that he cannot afford it. It will cost a little time in planning and work in planting, but these will be well repaid by the added attraction and consequently increased value of the farm. In many parts of Canada trees and shrubs for planting can often be secured from the wild. Nothing is better for home planting than the common trees from the surrounding woodland; no shrubs purchased from an agent are superior to those native to the district, and no purchased vines can surpass some of those growing wild, such as the Virginia creeper, bitter sweet or the wild grape. Many of the choicest wild flowers, when transplanted to the flower border, often flourish more than in the wild. Yet in spite of the ease with which these attractions may be obtained, many farm home grounds are unplanted, untidy and unattractive All that is needed to make them really beautiful is a little planting and care.

The morning glories, used to beautify the cabin, were planted by the housewife. In fact, it is usually the woman who takes an interest; the man is too busy with the crops to bother with such things.—F.C.N. in Conservation.

Try Alfalfa Again.

Although it is now generally admitted that alfalfa is the one best feeding crop for live stock, and despite the fact that it has been proved suitable to nearly every district in Ontario, many farmers refuse to give the plant a trial on their farm, while others give up trying to grow it after making a very feeble effort for success.

Those who wish to excuse themselves for neglecting to even try alfalfa say that it interperes with their rotation, is hard to break up if once established, and is not suited for pasturing; while those who give up trying to grow the crop say that their land is unsuited for it.

The first reason given for not sowing alfalfa is perhaps the best, but it is not a very good reason at that. Alfalfa is known to improve with the length of time that it occupies a field, but even if the third or fourth year are sacrificed to maintaining a rotation the whole benefit of the crop is not lost; and what cuttings are made in the first few years of its life are equal, if not superior, in value to cuttings of any other crop in the same period.

As for the trouble of breaking up a field of alfalfa, this only occurrs in very old fields; and the fault found by the plowman—that the roots run his plow out—is often due to the occurrence of an odd plant of alfalfa that comes as a surprise after the plow has been running through light or poor sod for some time.

The third reason for objection to alfalfa cannot be very well maintained by many who make it, because the crop is so valuable as hay, and is capable of producting so many cuttings in a season that other ground than he alfalfa field may well be given over to pasture and the alfalfa crop used for soiling if the Summer feed is insufficient.

The Contented Cow.

There is a firm, whose business it is to supply milk to city consumers, who make a specialty of advertising that their milk is drawn from contented cows. There is a lot in this for the farmer to consider. Mlik production bears close relationship to nervous condition. An excited cow will not readily "let down" her milk, as everybody knows. Excitement is an intimation that she may require her energies for self-preservation, and the milk making process adjourns its activities to allow her to meet the apprehended emergency.

Annoyance in any form produces some degree of worry, irritability, and consequently excitement. Keep the cows contented, and functional activity in milk secretion will be the more generous.

Hence it is that dogs, unusual odors, vitiated air, sudden chills or draughts of air, irregular feeding or watering, noise, roughness in handling, all help to decrease the milk yield. Keep the animal quiet and contented, in well ventilated but quiet quarters, feed regularly, and act in a kindly and gentle manner when about the cattle.

The War on Smut.

The prevalence of smut in the Ontario grain crop last season induced many farmers to treat their seed before sowing this spring. One druggist in a small town told a representative of this paper before seeding started that he had sold 200 pounds of formalin and expected to sell 75 pounds more before the season was over. This is significant, especially where his sales of this material amounted to very little in 1915. There are farmers in the Province who have treated their seed for the past ten or fifteen years annually, and without fail, and the results have well repaid them for their trouble. We have also known of farmers who have never treated for smut, and their grain has become so badly infested and their threshings so dirty that the neighbors refuse to assist them at threshing time Fruit growers are obliged to spray in order to produce a marketable commodity, and the time may come when farmers generally will be obliged to treat their seed grain in order to prevent severe loss. Anyway, it is a precaution that costs little except labor and trouble, and, not knowing what the season will be like, it will probably pay to make it an annual practice just as is the seeding isself.—Farmer's Advocate.

Harrow or Roller?

There is often a considerable difference of opinion as to whether a field of grain should be harrowed or rolled in the spring, and if it is to be both harrowed and rolled, whether the rolling or the harrowing should be performed first. The proper method of procedure is really determined by the state of the soil. If the soil is lying very light and open on the surface, then the rolling is the best, for it will consolidate the soil round the plants; but in nearly every case the rolling should be followed by a light harrowing with a chain harrow or a set of very light seed harrows, so that the top half inch or so shall be again broken up. When the soil is inclined to be solid, then rolling is generally a mistake, and should not be undertaken unless it is necessary to smooth the surface somewhat or press in the stones in anticipation of harvest. Rolling is very seldom really required unless the land is quite light on the surface.

Little Potato Disease.

The Little Potato disease causes little potatoes as big as a pea or a little larger to form on the potato stems, and no potatoes form on the roots. The reason is that this disease closes up the pores in the stem so the starch made in the leaves cannot go back to the roots to form potatoes. Potatoes affected with this disease have small spots on the surface made up of germ masses, that look like a little soil stuck on the surface. The difference comes out when one tries to remove the spots. They do not come off while soil will. This disease is also called Russet Scab and Rhizoctonia. It is best not to use affected potatoes for seed. If they must be used first treat for two hours in a solution of 4 ounces corrosive sublimate to 30 gallons of water. (Corrosive sublimate is now four dollars a pound.)—D. G. M., North Dakota Experiment Station.

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When the Prince of Wales got short leave to go to Buckingham Palace to say "good-bye" to his parents and brothers and sister before going to the front, Prince John asked him: "What are you going to do when you get there, David?" (David being the name by which he is called at home).

"David" rubbed his chin and smiled. "I think I'll grow a beard for one thing," he answered.

Figuratively speaking, the Prince of Wales has "grown a beard" since the war began—that is to say, he has ceased to be a boy and has become a man. The change is very apparent to all who come in contact with him. Always inclined to seriousness, he has taken his share in the war very seriously indeed. His staff work has included carrying despatches, acting as interpreter, superintending the making of trenches, and duty as assistant transport officer, and he has been in imminent danger of death scores of times.

There is nothing aggressive about the personality of "P. W.," but he has a quiet way of standing no nonsense.

One day at the front he was on duty watching transport wagons being filled Packages were being thrown up to the man in the wagon, whose duty it was to count them out loudly, pausing as each fresh 25 packages were reached. The man in the wagon, "tried it on" with the Prince; to save himself trouble he started calling out "25" when he should have been saying "20." But it did not work.

"Twenty-five already?" said the Prince blandly. "I make it 20. One of us is wrong Just unload the whole wagon and begin from the beginning again."

The world can get along without you but that's no reason for not trying to be one that the world doesn't want to get along without.

When a mother begins to tell her children how smart their father is, they look at her as reproachfully as if they thought she was losing her mind.

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Note: Another prominent Physician to whom the above article was sumitted, said: "Bon-Opto is a very remarkable remedy. Its constituent ingredients are well known to eminent eye specialists and widely prescribed by them. The manufacturers guarantee it to strengthen eyesight 50 per cent in one week's time in many instances or refund the money. It can be obtained from any good druggist and is one of the very few preparations I feel should be kept on hand for regular use in almost every family."

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"Sarah," said her mistress during the dinner hour, "will you go down to the basement and get the catsup?"

Sarah departed, and a few minutes later the family heard a great shooing and scampering of feet. Shortly after Sarah came breathlessly into the dining room and said to her astonished mistress "They're up, mum."

"What are up?"

"The cats, mum."

Vocal Bravery.

"My voice is for war."

"But are you willing to offer the rest of yourself?"