THE LAPSE OF ENOCH WENTWORTH

By ISABEL GORDON CURTIS,

Author of "The Woman from Wolvertons"

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued).

"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 throttling 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 nerving 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 the 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 it 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 such 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 thing straight. I told him it was not even collaboration; it was wholly and distinctly your play, yours alone—"

"Collaboraion?" repeated Merry, perplexedly, raising her 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 tree 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 thought you had of me when Enoch told you—what happened?"

The girl paused for a minute before she answered. "I thought you were—weak."

"Weak?" The man repeated the word as if trying to comprehend its meaning.

"You should not have allowed Enoch to stand as the author of your play, no matter what the circumstances were. He is not happy over it to-day. His nature seems to have changed. He is not easy to live with even. Oh, I wish it had never happened."

Merry waited in silence.

"Things must come right, even if this lie has been told." She pointed at the paper which lay at her feet. "There is one way. You can play the convict so wonderfully that people must realize that you yourself created the part."

"I shall never play the convict." Merry's voice was slow and resolute.

"Oh!" cried Dorcas, "who can? Why, I thought your heart was set on the character."

"It was—once."

"I cannot understand."

The man did not attempt an explanation.

"Andrew Merry," she hesitated as if searching for words which would not wrong her brother, "did Enoch do you any—any injustice?"

She waited for an answer during an infinitely long silence, so it seemed to her. Then the actor spoke abruptly.

"No. As I look back on it now, I went into it with my eyes open. I simply learned that there is no way to gauge human nature."

Again there was silence. Dorcas was trying to understand, trying to be loyal to her brother, even while her heart, aching with unspoken sympathy, turned to Merry."

"Why don't you want to play 'John Esterbrook?'" she asked quietly.

"I don't suppose I have a decent reason, except that when I—gave up the play I lost all interest in it. 'John Esterbrook' is no more to me to-day than 'Silas Bagg.'"

Oh!" cried the girl aghast. "How you have altered""

"I have." Merry spoke in a hoarse whisper. He returned to his chair by the fire and bent to warm his fingers by the blaze. There was another long silence. Dorcas was the first to break it.

"Even if it were against your inclinations, would you do something to make some one very happy, some one who believes in you—who cares a great deal for you and about your future?"

Merry spoke gently. "Miss Dorcas, I'm afraid you are mistaken. There is nobody in the world to care."

She rose to her feet and, leaning on the mantel, glanced down at him with eyes from which embarrassment had suddenly fled.

"One person cares very much. I do. I have set my heart on your success. You have a great future—won't you work for it? Besides, I am selfish." Her eyes shone with eagerness. "I want to play 'Cordelia.' Mr. Oswald has offered me the part. I have studied it. I could play it to-morrow if you would be my teacher."

Merry turned with a quick gesture as if to push temptation away from him." "Don't!" he cried. "Ah, Miss Dorcas, don't go into stage life!"

"I shall go into it sooner or later." She spoke with a quiet determination. "I feel sure I can play 'Cordelia;' besides, it would be so much easier to make a beginning with Enoch and Mr. Oswald and you."

Merry rose and paced for a few minutes about the room, then turned to the window and gazed out at the deserted city. The sleet of midnight had changed to a raging storm. The wind drove the snow in sudden flurries, piling it in drifts across the square.

"Miss Dorcas," he said, "come here."

The girl crossed the room. "Why, she cried, "it is a fearful night!"

"Yes. It's a fearful night for the homeless. Do you know where I might have found shelter to-night if it had not been for you? Perhaps there's a hallway somewhere that I could have slipped into, and for an hour or two the police would have left me undisturbed. I might have found an empty bench on a ferryboat, or—the Bowery missions are open; only before one can make up his mind to seek a lodging there, they are filled to suffication."

Dorcas shivered.

"If I had known during these weeks that anybody cared—or believed in me—perhaps I should not have gone so far down the hill. I did not dare even to hope that you thought of me again."

"Andrew," said the girl, "I care so much that I cannot tell you. Some queer strain in my nature makes me happiest when I have some one to care for. Girls at the convent used to come to me in all sorts of difficulties; the ones I loved best were the ones who needed me most. They called me 'Little Mother.'"

"'Little Mother,'" repeated Merry; then he laughed huskily. If the girl had known men she would have seen absolute famine for love, for sympathy and human understanding in the eyes that were bent upon her.

"I take back what I said a few minutes ago, Miss Dorcas, about the stage being no place for you. Women like you are needed there."

"Thank you," she said with a happy smile. "Won't you come back? Such an opportunity is waiting for you. Besides, I could never play 'Cordelia with anyone but you, and you must be my teacher."

Merry did not answer immediately. Dorcas had grown accustomed to the long pauses in their conversation and waited quietly. When he looked up their eyes met—his pleaded with her during one speechless moment for all his shortcomings, for shirked responsibilities and failures.

"Mis Dorcas," he said, "when a man has lost hope, ambition, his faith in human nature and everything that makes life worth while, if he has gone down into the depths and still has the desire come to take up life again, is there any quality left that will help him?"

"Yes," Dorcas moved as if by sudden impulse and laid her fingers upon the man's arm; "he has honor. So long as one is a man of honor, there is no end of a chance."

"A man of honor." As he repeated the words his face paled suddenly. It was the same attribute which Enoch had accorded to him.

Dorcas watched him intently, her eyes full of eager anticipation. She could see him undergo some strange mental struggle. When he looked at her, his face had changed. Instead of apathy there were lines of grim determination about his mouth.

"Miss Dorcas," he said slowly, "make 'Cordelia' the woman you are yourself. I am weak and broken now, as 'John Esterbrook' was; still a chance came to me at the end. I will do the best I can—if you stand by me."

Dorcas stopped for a second. With a caressing touch she swept the lock from his forehead. "I promise to stand by you," she whispered. "Good night."

CHAPTER X.

"Do you mind if I am atrociously frank with you?"

It was Grant Aswald who spoke. Enoch Wentworth and he sat far back in the darkened orchestra at the Gotham, watching a rehearsal.

Wentworth nodded, but turned a startled glance upon the man beside him.

"Simply because I know how powerful your play is, I want to suggest a touch that will make it stronger."

"What?"

"Understand, this is not criticism. If you don't think well of it we'll never mention it again." Oswald approached the subject diplomatically. He had begun to discover a strangely uneven temper in Enoch. There were days when he stood upon the heights of triumphant anticipation, then came intervals when everything and everybody were at odds.

"What did you think of changing?"

"It is not changing," Oswald spoke thoughtfully. "What I have in mind is elaboration. You have made 'Cordelia' a loyal, tender woman, but the mother ought to be more of a foil to her. She is cruel now, vain, selfish and deceitful but—she is not bad enough. When it can be done, I believe in choosing an actress who has something in common with the role she is to play. Character comes out every time, even in acting. Don't you agree with me?"

"To a certain extent."

"Of course, in cases of downright genius it is different. There is Merry. If we accept tragedy, I believe he could portray any character from gayest comedy to intense emotion. I predict for your sister's 'Cordelia' a success that will stir New York to enthusiasm, but she could never play anything but a sweet, true-hearted woman. No matter how hard she tried, she would fail in the part of a false, unscrupulous adventuress. Do you see what I am driving at?"

"I think I do."

"When you read your play to me and 'John Esterbrook's' wife took shape before my eyes, Zilla Paget came to my memory. I asked you then to reserve the part for her, because, if I can judge human nature, she is the woman's prototype."

"Miss Paget must be a fiend incarnate if 'Mrs. Esterbrook' is not bad enough for her."

"I'm not as merciless as that" Let me tell you what I judge her by. Season after season she was cast in London companies for women of the lower type or of bad morals. Sometimes she was a cold-blooded, scheming adventuress, or a creature so cruel, so heartless and unwomanly that she seemed a defamation of the sex. Miss Paget was making a name for herself when an idiotic manager cast her as a sweet, refined, home-loving woman. I never sat through such a pitiful failure. She played it for two nights, then she was thrown aside. She had a long run of hard luck. Managers forgot how remarkably she had played bad woman. The failure as a good woman was laid up against her."

"I thought she had a tremendous succes last winter."

(To Be Continued).

HOW COINS WEAR OUT.

Loss of Weight That Occurs Is Doubtless Caused by Abrasion.

In the latest report of the British mint, Sir Thomas K. Rose, a well-known metallurgical expert, calls attention to the effect of grease derived from the sweat of the fingers, or from other sources, in accelerating the wear of coins, which is usually attributed entirely to abrasion. Sir Thomas says that the fatty acids of the grease have a corrosive action upon the metal. Copper in particular, even if present only in small quantity as an alloy for gold or silver, is converted into an oleate, stearate, or other salt. Haagen Smit of the Utrecht mint, found by analysis that the dirt on a bronze coin contained thirty-six per cent. of copper in the form of powdered compounds of the fatty acids. When the coin is handled the dirt is in part detached, and the coin undergoes a loss of weight. Gold or silver is not readily converted into salts, but removing the copper leaves the less easily attacked metals in a spongy form that offers little resistance to abrasion. In new coins the rapid loss of weight that occurs is doubtless caused at first by abrasion, but when the rough edges have been removed, chemical action may prove to be of the first importance in the succeeding deterioration.

Oriental Courtesy.

A year or two ago, says Pearson's Weekly, a distinguished European diplomat paid an official visit to the Sultan of Morocco.

During the audience the diplomat noticed with some surprise that not one of the three clocks in the audience chamber was going. Very delicately he mentioned to the Sultan that his clocks had all stopped, and hinted that he would like to present him with one that would be more reliable.

The Sultan thanked him.

"But my clocks are excellent timekeepers," he added with a smile. "They were all going until just before you came; but I had them all stopped, as I did not desire, during Your Excellency's all too brief visit, to be reminded of the flight of time!"

Marriage is indeed a failure when love grows cold before the bride gets all the rice out of her hair.

The Value of Underdrainage.

What has struck me most of late is the value and importance of tile drainage, and how little farmers avail themselves of the opportunity of improving their land in this manner. I will quote a few particular instances of the effect of tile drainage that I have come across.

Our farm has a certain amount of tile-drains where they are most needed, but has by no means a thorough system. They were put in before my time at the rate of about one drain a year. A field we had in corn last year was always wet on the south side when the rest of the field was fit to work, and consequently was seldom worked up well, and, on account of this and its low-lying condition, never raised more than half a crop. A few years ago a five-inch drain was put through it, and although this did not drain it thoroughly, this part of the field always raises one-third better crops. Last year was wet and we had the field in corn. At one time, on such a year, there would have been practically nothing on this strip but the tile did the business, and it went 100 bushels to the acre and the rest of the field about fifty.

Another field was in oats last year and seeded down to alfalfa. There are several drains running across the field, but at quite a distance apart. When I mowed the field I received an object lesson. A few rods on each side of the tile drains there was a fine, thick crop, but farther away, the alfalfa was badly winter-killed and hardly worth cutting. If the field had been thoroughly under-drained it would easily have yielded two loads per acre. As it was it barely went a load to the acre and almost all of that came from over the tile drains.

We intended to put two fields in oats this year. There were both good fields and of similar soil. One is well underdrained, the other has no drains in it. The drained field was fit early, worked up nicely, and was one of the first sown in the vicinity. The other field was wet and stayed wet until it got too late for oats, so we decided to plow it and plant it in corn. The weather suddenly changed to the other extreme and became hot and dry. We were finishing another corn field and by the time we were ready to plow this field it was too hard and remained so until it was too late for corn. So in this instance lack of tile drainage meant the loss of a crop. These are just a few of many similar personal experiences in this line.

Now, I may be wrong in making such a general assertion, but from my personal experiences tile-drainage means at least one-third better crops, or an increase in production of 33 per cent. Now by a recent law in Ontario a farmer without sufficient funds can, I believe, borrow up to $1,000 from the township for the purpose of tile drainage, and be charged interest on it in his assessment, together with his other drainage taxes, at the rate of 6 per cent. If he can invest this money at a profit of 33 per cent., and only pay 6 per cent. for it what better investment could he desire? Why is he so slow to avail himself of this golden opportunity?—Reginald Jukes, in Farmer's Advocate.

Cow Comfort in Summer.

How stables have been generally designed with the object of keeping cows comfortable in winter only. This may have been all right in the past, but conditions are rapidly changing in the dairy industry, and it is becoming quite as necessary to proide for stable comfort in summer as in winter. The practice of milking in the barn is now common, and will become more so as the use of the milking machine increases. Instead of throwing green feed over the pasture fence to the cows we now have the summer silo and feed them in the stable. As dairy methods improve the fly nuisance claims more attention, and every one knows that flies bother the cows less in a cool, dark place than in the open sunlight. On most good dairy farms the cows are kept in for at least a part of the day in the warm months, and this should not be lost sight of when stables are built or remodelled.

The chief consideration in providing for summer comfort is to have a continuous stream of fresh air passing through the stables. The prevailing wind in this country is from west to east. In order to catch the most of this the stable should lie north and south. with the windows in the east and west side. This arrangement agrees with the winter demands for lots of sunshine. The windows should be entirely removable. Ventilating shafts and feed shutes shrould be made so that they will carry off a maximum amount of warm air. The stable fixtures should be such as to offer the minimum obstruction to the free circulation of air This is one of the chief advantages I see in metal stable fixtures. At night when the cows are out everything should be kept open so as to provide for a complete change of air before they are put in again the following day. Cows kept in a cool, well ventilated stable for a few hours each day during the hot summer months will show their appreciation in an increased milk flow.—"Dairyman" in Farm and Diary.

To Prevent Overheating.

Horsemen will soon need to be on their guard against overheating. Most cases of overheating can be prevented by keeping a few simple things in mind.

Give at least a pailful of water to each horse about 10 o'clock, and again at 3 or 4 o'clock on a hot day.

Be very careful with a horse that is a little out of health, if you are working him on a hot day.

Look out for a horse that after sweating freely suddenly stops sweating. Put such a horse in the shade as soon as possible and give a moderate drink.

Do not put a horse not in good condition for hard work, in the centerof a four-horse team in hot weather.

Work carefully on a hot day when the atmosphere is moist and heavy.

A horse can hardly get too hot to water, but one must regulate the amount by the temperature of the water.

In case of an attack of overheating the horse should be taken to the shade as soon as possible. A treatment of the surface of the body, particularly of the head, with cold water should be given until the temperature is within a degree or two of normal. Stimulants, such as whiskey or brandy, well diluted, should be given as early as possible.

In most cases it is better to plan to avoid over-heating than to plan to treat the horse for it.—M. H. Reynolds, University Farm, St. Paul.

GUNS ON SNOWCLAD PEAKS

Difficulties of War Preparations in Mountain Regions.

A description of the difficulties which have been overcome by the Italians on that part of the front where the fighting takes place on mountain peaks coated with eternal snow is given by a correspondent of the London Daily Mail.

The villages in the lower ground behind the front have been aroused from their accustomed appearance of sleepy comfort. In their streets are swarms of soldiers on their way to the front or back from it for a holiday. Thousands are camping out in the neighborhood of the villages or billeted on the inhabitants. Constant streams of motor vehicles rumble through the villages on their way up the steep road, bearing ammunition, food and supplies of all sorts to the batteries, trenches and dugouts on the peaks.

The road over which these vehicles travel was before the war a mere hill path—now the military engineers have transformed it into a modern road "graded, metalled and carried by cunningly devised spirals and turns three-quarters of the way up the mountains."

The correspondent says:

"It is a notable piece of military engineering, but it is not merely that. It will serve as an artery of commerce when it is no longer needed for the passage of guns and army service wagons. There is nothing temporary or makeshift about it. Rocks have been blasted to leave a passage for it and solid bridges of stone and steel thrown across rivers.

"Because the Austrians started with the weather gauge in their favor, being on the upper side of the great ridges, it was necessary for the Italians to get their guns as high as they could. The means by which they accomplished these tasks were described to me. They would seem incredible if one had not ocular demonstration of the actual presence of the cannon among these inaccessible crags.

"There are some of them on the ice ledges of the Ortler nearly 10,000 feet above the sea level, in places which it is by way of an achievement for the amateur climber to reach with guides and ropes and porters and nothing to take care of but his own skin. But here the Alpini and Frontier Guides had to bring up the heavy pieces, hauling them over the snow slopes and swinging them in midair across chasms and up knife edged precipices, by ropes passed over timbers wedged somehow into the rocks. I was shown a photograph of a party of these pioneers working in these snowy solitudes last winter. They might have been a group of Scott's or Shackleton's men tailing in the Antartic wilderness."

By means of a suspension railway made of wire rope with sliding baskets stretched across chasms of great depth, oil, meat, bread and wine are sent up, for the soldier must not only be fed, but must be fed with particular food to keep the blood circulating in his body in the cold air and chilling breezes of the snowclad peaks. Kerosene stoves in great numbers have been sent aloft to make the life of the mountaineer soldiers more comfortable.

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A NOTED ECCENTRIC.

Earl of Sandwich Believed He Possessed Psychic Healing Power.

The death of the Earl of Sandwich has removed an interesting figure in English life. The Earl, who was nearing his seventy-seventh birthday, was known for his eccentricities. He believed he possessed psychic healing powers and had been able to cure many mental and physical illnesses.

After the South African war he had some sixty wounded officers brought to his home, where he served in the capacity of both nurse and physician, and announced that he was gratified at the success he obtained. His patients ranged from dwellers in palaces to those in the lowliest walks of life and included a Hindu monk, who was treated in his monastery; a Mohammedan, who was treated in the mosque he served, and a Hindu princess, who was brought 600 miles by her husband to Lord Sandwich.

He announced the possession of healing powers before the University College of London two years ago. At the time he said he had never failed in his treatment of sufferers. He said he could not explain his power, but knew the results and expressed the belief that many persons possess the same gift without being aware of it.

The Earl was fourth in descent from the peer, who, by ordering a writer to place a piece of meat between two slices of bread and bring it to him as he sat at cards, gave the sandwich to the world.

He was for long an ardent admirer of Mme. Melba, and it has been said that the singer could have been the Countess of Sandwich if she had so desired. The Earl never married. Some years ago in protest against the custom among women of wearing their hats at luncheon he ordered his servants to wear their hats while serving the meal.

With the death of the Earl an American woman, formerly Miss Alberta Sturges, daughter of the late William Sturges, becomes Countess of Sandwich. Her husband, the new Earl, is George Charles Montagu, a nephew of the late holder of the title.

The cynic is a man who thinks everything he doesn't approve can't possibly be worth while.

For many years past the population of Germany has been increasing at the rate of about 900,000 a year. In 1871 the population was 41 millions, and by 1910 it had risen to almost 65 millions.

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