THE LAPSE OF ENOCH WENTWORTH

By ISABEL GORDON CURTIS,

Author of "The Woman from Wolvertons"

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd).

"I don't blame you," Oswald smiled. "I can't imagine why we made such a blunder. Merry puts it just the way you do."

"Thank you, Mr. Merry." Dorcas turned to the actor with a grateful smile. "I am ready to go with you any time to see Mrs. Volk."

Dorcas had a new insight in Merry's character when she found how his friends held him in esteem. There was not a touch, in Mrs. Billerwell's greeting, of hero worship or deference to the man who had won fame. It was merely a droll blend of loving devotion and motherly tyranny.

Merry jumped to his feet when Mrs. Volk entered with Julie clinging shyly to her gown. Dorcas felt instantly a throb of sympathy and warm friendship. Merry had told her something of the pitiful story on the way uptown.

"You said once, Miss Dorcas," he reminded her, "that you were never so happy as when you had some one to mother. Alice Volk needs mothering I doubt if she has a friend in the world except Mother Billerwell and myself. Mrs. Billerwell is pure gold, but Alice needs a woman like you."

Half an hour later they waited on the platform of an L station for a downtown train. They had scarcely spoken since leaving the Harlem house. Merry realized how deeply the girl's heart had been stirred. They entered the train and took a seat together in silence. She sat gazing at the city below. Then she turned suddenly.

"Little Julie is to begin rehearsals to-morrow morning," she said. "The mother made only one condition; they are to be known under another name. She is in terror lest her husband finds them.'

"That's all right, but do you think the child can play the small 'Cordelia'?" asked Merry anxiously.

"You can do anything you wish with that child. She has a soul and sweetness, and she understands. There is something in her—we call it magnetism in older people—which will reach across the footlights and grip every man and woman in the audience. The child will help me wonderfully. Now I won't have to create a new 'Cordelia' when I come on the stage. My 'Cordelia' is simply the little girl grown older and wiser, with more love for her father and a larger knowledge of life."

"You understand perfectly."

"You and I ought to understand 'Cordelia' if any one could."

Dorcas sat in silence while they rushed over the lighted city with its insistent glimpses of sordid life, Merry saw her chin tremble once and her eyes grow misty; then she spoke suddenly: "She must have lived through awful experiences."

"Alive Volk has seen the very depths. She suffered more than misery and neglect; there was actual brutality. I knew her before Volk came into her life. She played with the first New York company I was in. She was the gayest little creature then you can imagine—a whimsical, laughing, care-free, happy child."

"Gay!" Dorcas spoke incredulously. "The gaiety has gone."

"It has been wrung out of her."

"I never had a real woman friend except the sisters at the convent," said Dorcas. "I think Alice Volk and I will be friends. We can help each other."

"Each other? I had not thought of it in that way. Your friendship will mean a great deal to her. It is like reaching out a hand to ome one who is drowning.'

"Alice Volk is different from any one I ever met. When little Julie ran out to speak to you, I followed her. The mother laid her hand on my arm, drew me back into the room, then she closed the door and kissed me. She did not say a word. Any other woman would have kissed me while I was saying 'Good-by,'—before you and Mrs. Billerwell. She does unexpected things that cannot help drawing one to her."

"Poor soul!" said Merry.

The conductor entered, shutting the door behind him with a crash. "Twenty-third street!" he called.

"Let us get off and have dinner somewhere," suggested the actor. "I want to talk to you—for hours."

CHAPTER XII.

Dorcas and Merry paused for a moment before a flight of steps which led up to what had once been a fine private residence. Its exclusive days were past; it was beckoning with all garish blaze of light to every passerby. Through the open door came strains from the overture to "William Tell."

"What a queer place," said the girl"

"You can't realize its queerness until we are inside. The crowd that gathers here is as motley as any you find in New York."

Dorcas ran lightly up the steps. The cafe, shabby and weatherbeaten out-doors, was bizarre inside. At the farther end a daub of painted canvas attempted to create the illusion of sunlit fields. Against it rose a theatrical apple tree. A hundred electric lights blazed inside crimson apples on its widespread branches. Under it, at a huddle of tables, people were dining vociferously. The place shrieked its antagonism to the civilized ceremony of feeding. Humanity dug its elbows into one another while it handled knives and forks, and screamed its conversation. The rooms reeked with a hundred odors of highly-seasoned food and tobacco smoke. It was a bewildering blend of light and smells and noise. Dorcas followed Merry through the labyrinth to a small table in a silent corner, hedged about with palms.

"I come here time and again," confessed Merry after they were seated. "I love the place; the crowd is so interesting. People let themselves loose in a coop like this; they enjoy life frankly."

"I should think they did." Dorcas laughed gaily.

Across the room a party of college lads were humming a ragtime song in utter inharmony to the orchestra's music. Corks were popping amid the rattle of dishes and silver while laughter in a hundred tones, and the languages of all the old Latin races, were blended in the strange babel.

"It's a droll little world," said Merry."

Dorcas pulled off her gloves and sat smoothing them between her fingers.

"I remember," Andrew gazed about him in a reminiscent mood, "one season I was tied up with a summer production, and it was horribly lonesome in New York. There was not a soul in our company I wanted to fraternize with. Enoch was West. I used to come here night after night and work myself into a light-hearted mood. I had a part I hated. I did not go on until the second act, so sometimes I stayed here until half-past seven. The place waked me up. I got into a queer humor while watching people. Before it wore off I used to dash to the theatre, as one acts when you are overpowered with sleep, and try to get to bed before you go wide awake again. Usually I don't have to hammer my self into the disposition for work. When I am cast for some role that makes one fairly snort with impatience, it is horribly hard to feel like it. If I get a human character, I love it.'

"Like 'John Esterbrook?'"

"Yes, like 'John Esterbrook'. Miss Dorcas," Merry went on eagerly. "I went tramping yesterday—alone. I found myself within sight of another state before I pulled up. I was—heaven knows how many miles from anywhere, I thrashed things out with myself. I'm going to make 'John Esterbrook' the biggest thing that has struck New York in years."

"Dorcas laughed. She felt foolishly happy.

"I am so glad," she said.

"It's up to me to do the best I can; I owe it to you," there was grim determination in Merry's voice; "to you and Oswald, he's a prince of a good fellow; now Alice Volk and the child come into it."

"And yourself."

"Yes, myself. If I succeed, it means retieving more than you imagine."

"And you will confess you wrote the play?"

"Not—yet."

"Why?"

"Miss Dorcas," Merry's voice had a tone of entreaty in it. "I want to ask one thing of you. I ask it because your faith in me is so great and uplifting. Drop the authorship of the play. I cannot explain, I cannot fight the thoughts you have of me. You said once, 'I believe in you.' Do you remember?"

Dorcas looked at him with steadfast eyes and nodded.

"Go on believing. It's the kindest thing you can do for me, and—for Enoch."

Their eyes made a compact though no word was spoken.

They lingered over strange dishes that came and went. Food seemed merely a circumstance, an excuse for being alone and together. They felt curiously isolated, for the noise made a retreat for them as silence does. A sudden lull fell on the babel of sound. The orchestra, which had rested for a few minutes, began again—not one of its long overtures, but a prelude to the florid music in an Italian opera. Through the murky atmosphere a woman's voice shrilled out with rare sweetness.

Dorcas rose to her feet for a second, searching for the singer; then she seated herself with her back to the table. The crash of dishes, the rattle of silver, and the popping of corks continued, but tongues were stilled except for one voice. It was singing the tremendous aria from "Frnani." The girl drew a long breath as the last note died away into silence then she turned eagerly to Merry.

"Who is she?"

"I'll tell you in a minute."

She turned again to look at the singer, who stood crushed into a narrow balcony which was crowded to discomfort by a piano and four musicians. The woman was absurdly fat and absurdly gowned. Years ago, in the palmy days of a concert tour, she had swept upon the platform in a robe of burnt orange velvet splashed gorgeously with silver lace and scintillating embroidery. It had seen years of service, then grown tawdry, unfashionable, soiled, and grotesquely queer. It reminded Dorcas of the stately poor in the last stage of shabbiness. The woman's straw-colored hair was gathered into a ridiculous pompadour. Across the dining room, through murky waves of tobacco smoke, the girl could see careworn wrinkles about the woman's eyes. The vivid scarlet of her cheeks was pitifully false, false as the whiteness of her vast, bare shoulders. Again she began to sing, something which came thrilling from the wonderful throat with perfect coloratura. She threw back her head and tilted her face till Dorcas saw only the profile. For one moment the gross lines disappeared; instead came a glimpse of beauty and picturesqueness,a dignity which belonged to the days of youth and power, the royal days of a singer.

The room rang with an encore, then came a shriek of command. "Dance!" shouted the group of students in a corner.

"Oh!" cried Dorcas piteously. "oh! how can they do it?"

The musicians huddled themselves and their instruments closer together, indifferently as if it were part of every night's program. The pianist struck a few bars of some tinkling thing in a musical comedy, then the singer began to sway her huge body. There was no space for her feet to move. She sang to the accompaniment, but the physical effort made her wheeze. The orchestra dashed into a tripping chorus, and the enthusiasm of the guests waxed high. Cheers were intermingled with laughter and screams of derision.

"Oh!" cried Dorcas, "oh! the shame of it!"

(To be continued).

GETS BIG FAMILY PRIZE.

Paris Woman Raises 19 Children—Seven Boys at Front.

Etienne Lamy, member of the French Academy, has recently given $100,000 to found prizes for the largest families among the peasants of France. He has suffered more criticism for limiting his prizes to Catholic families than praise for his generosity. As long ago as 1841, a philanthropist, M. de Reverdy, founded a prize, $600 every second year, to be given to the most deserving family in the city of Paris.

This prize has just been awarded to Mme. Deviercy, a widow, aged 66, who has raised a family of fifteen (eight boys and seven girls) out of the nineteen born to her. She has provided for their needs by selling vegetables from a pushcart.

Mme. Deviercy was born in Paris and her husband, a mason, died soon after the birth of her nineteenth child. One of her boys is paralyzed, but the other seven are at the front, as are two of her sons-in-law. The youngest, belonging to the class of 1916, has just been invalided from Verdun. He has been at the front fourteen months and has been cited in the order of the day. Another son has also been cited and a third was wounded. The prize winner has already twenty-eight grandchildren, one of her sons having supplied fourteen.

Whipping does not always separate a boy from his bad habits.

ON THE FARM

Growing Buckwheat.

Buckwheat is the least common of the grains. Probably because of the fact that it has been overshadowed by other crops more universally grown, buckwheat has, until recently, been given but little attention by experiment stations and consequently the crop has been quite frequently grown in a very haphazard way. Buckwheat has been called a "poor land" crop. It is true that buckwheat will frequently produce a profitable crop onland too poor to produce either oats or rye profitably, but it will do still better if given good treatment. In fact, the New York Experiment Station finds that "buckwheat when grown on poor land responds well to moderate dressings of even low grade fertilizer and many farmers who do not use fertilizer on other crops find it profitable to purchase it for buckwheat."

Soil Requirements.

Buckwheat is well suited to light well-drained soils, such as sandy and silt loams. It needs but little lime, growing well in acid soils without lime, where alfalfa and red clover could not succeed. The plant seems unusually active in taking plantfood from poor and rocky soils. It needs alarger proportion of phosphoric acid and potash than of nitrogen, since large growth of straw is not desired so much as profuse bloom and early filling of seeds.

When to Plant.

Under the most favorable conditions, buckwheat will mature in 10 weeks, but the average time is about 12 weeks. It does best when seeded late, but is very sensitive to cold and is killed by the first heavy frost. The aim should be to bring the crop to maturity just before frost. In the latitude of southern New York this means that the crop should be planted about the first week in July.

Buckwheat should be sown on land prepared as for corn. It is an excellent crop to sow where corn has been planted, but where a stand has not been secured. Best results are obtained where the land is plowed early, but fairly good results can be obtained by sowing immediately after plowing if the land is well prepared.

Buckwheat is usually seeded at the rate of three to five pecks per acre. If a drill is used and the seed is of good vitality, as little as three pecks may be sufficient if the soil is fertile. It is best to use a grain drill, but good results can be secured by broadcasting the seed and harrowing it in.

Three varieties of buckwheat are commonly grown—Japanese, Silver Hull and Common Grey, the first two being the most generally used. Japanese has a dark-colored seed, while the Silver Hull has a smaller seed, glossy or silvery in appearance. These two varieties are of about equal value, when yields are considered.

Because of its plantfood requirements and the exceedingly short season of growth, manure has not been found satisfactory as a fertilizer for buckwheat. Fresh manure contains a larger percentage of nitrogen than it does of phosphoric acid, just the reverse of what buckwheat needs.

For most profitable results on stony and sandy soils under normal conditions about 200 to 300 pounds of a fertilizer containing one to two percent ammonia, ten to twelve percent phosphoric acid and two to four percent potash should be applied at time of seeding. On loam or other soils rich in organic matter, use less ammonia. Buckwheat, unlike other grains never straightens up after it once falls. Potash makes the stalks strong and prevents lodging. Under present abnormal conditions a fertilizer analyzing about one percent of ammonia, eight percent phosphoric acid and one percent potash may be substituted or the potash may be omitted entirely in which case the phosphoric acid should be increased somewhat.

One grower says, "I like to raise buckwheat because it is the only grain for which I can buy fertilizer on a 90-day note and pay for it out of the crop it makes.'

Buckwheat blooms for three weeks or longer and the grain ripens as unevenly. This often causes quite a loss during a wet harvest season or from early frosts. Phosphoric acid causes grain to form and hastens maturity, hence an available supply of this plantfood hastens ripening, thus preventing loss from early frosts and exposure ordinarily caused during wet seasons while waiting for all the grain to ripen.

The farmer does not need expensive machinery for harvesting the buckwheat crop. An old-fashioned cradle, although it requires hard labor, does the harvesting well. The drop reaper, however, is one of the most satisfactory machines for harvesting. Cutting is begun as soon as the first blossoms have disappeared, or often just before the first frost is expected. Buckwheat will mature its seed in a few days, if, after cutting, the crop is left in loose bundles where they are dropped from the cradle or reaper. It should then be set up in small shocks and tied near the top with some strands of the straw bent upward from the sides of the shocq. The cut buckwheat is usually left in the field in the shocks until threshing time, when it is drawn in and threshed either with the flail or by machinery.

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The farmer need generally have no fear of this crop being damaged by either insect enecies or fungous diseases, as the buckwheat plant is but little affected by either. It is an excellent crop for destroying weeds and for renovating and putting the soil in fine mellow condition, and when properly handled could be grown with profit on many more farms.

Hot Weather Rules.

1. Load lightly, and drive slowly.
2. Stop in the shade if possible.
3. Water your horse as often as possible. So long as a horse is working, water in small quantities will not hurt him. But let him drink only a few swallows if he is going to stand still. Do not fail to water him at night after he has eaten his hay.
4. When he comes in after work, sponge off the harness marks and sweat, his eyes, his nose and mouth, and the dock. Wash his feet but not his legs.
5. If the thermometer is 75 degrees or higher, wipe him all over with a damp sponge. Use vinegar water if possible. Do not turn the hose on him.
6. Saturday night, give a bran mash, lukewarm; and add a tablespoonful of saltpeter.
7. Do not use a horse-hat, unless it is a canopy-top hat. The ordinary bell-shaped hat does more harm than good.
8. A sponge on top of the head, or even a cloth, is good if kept wet. If dry it is worse than nothing.
9. If the horse is overcome by heat, get him into the shade, remove harness and birdle, wash out his mouth, sponge him all over, shower his legs, and give him two ounces of aromatic spirits of ammonia or two ounces of sweet spirits of nitre, in a pint of water; or give him a pint of coffee warm. Cool his head at once, using cold water, or, if necessary, chopped ice, wrapped in a cloth.
10. If the horse is off his feet, try him with two quarts of oats mixed with bran, and a little water; and add a little salt or sugar. Or give him oatmeal gruel or barley water to drink

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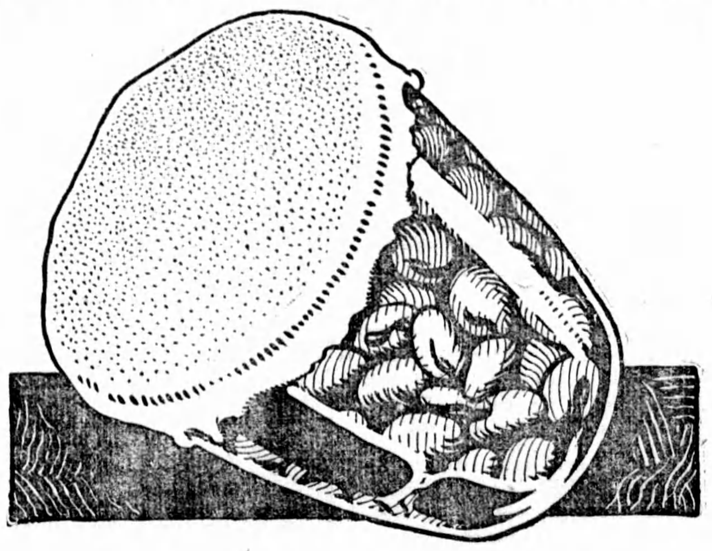

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