THE LAPSE OF ENOCH WENTWORTH

By ISABEL GORDON CURTIS,

Author of "The Woman from Wolvertons"

CHAPTER XIV.—(Cont'd).

"Enoch must not go out there alone," she protested in a low voice. "He must not do it. You should be with him. It is the last chance he has to make restitution. He will never, never do such a thing as this!"

"Listen," she heard Merry's whisper clearly through the din. "Dear, it does not matter. What does anything matter? The play is a success. You believe in it. I did it—for you. What do I care about the people out there? They are nothing to us."

"Oh!" cried Dorcas, "oh, I will go and tell them myself. They must know!"

She darted toward the edge of the drop curtain, then she stopped. A silence had fallen, not only upon the house, but behind the scenes. Stage hands who had been dragging properties about stood motionless. A shiver crept over the girl. She felt Merry lay his hand on hers with a steadying clasp that seemed to quiet her. She could hear Enoch speaking. He had a strong, vibrant voice. Every one behind the scenes was listening and understanding except herself. His voice brew blurred as faces in the audience had been. She turned to glance at Merry. Once a look of consuming hatred fitted across his face, and his lips grew pallid as gray ashes.

Dorcas pulled away from his clasping hand and ran to her dressing-room. She was choking with sobs. She felt her fingers tingle where Andrew had touched them, and there was a look of terror in her eyes.

Alice Volk sat waiting for her in the dressing-room. Little Julie jumped to her feet when Dorcas entered. The girl did not speak, but clasped the child to her bosom.

"Alice," she whispered, "help me to dress as soon as you can. And Julie, ask Dugald to get a carriage. I want to go home."

The woman kissed the girl's neck as she unbuttoned her gown. It has been an awful strain. I know all about it—but Miss Dorcas, your future is made."

The child returned in a minute. "Mr. Wentworth has a carriage ordered. Dugald says will you go with him?"

"No," cried Dorcas; "tell Dugald I'll be ready in ten minutes. I am going home alone."

Merry stood waiting at the stage entrance when she went out. He had heard Julie deliver the message. "Good night, Miss Dorcas," he said. "Sleep well. Remember, everything is all right. I owe it to you, I owe you more than you understand. You made good to-night; the papers will tell you so in the morning. Good night. Godbles you!"

"Good night." The girl shivered for a moment. It was intensely cold, and she drew a fur coat close to her chin. The cabman drove quickly, for the streets were emptied of vehicles. Along Broadway the theatres were dark.

Jason stood waiting to open the door when the girl ran up the steps. His dusky old face was one grin of delight. He had just returned from the theatre and was growing impatient for the triumph of a homecoming.

"Missy," he cried, "yo' cert'ly done us proud. My soul! I couldn't er b'lieved de baby I toted yeahs en yeahs oga ud ebber a' lived to act ez fine ez yo' done. I used to play I was yo' black mule. I reckon yi' don' 'member, honey, ridin' mule on ol' Uncle Jason's back, do yo?' En dar yo' was, honey, a-workin' me up till I 'clar to goodness I mos' cried my ol' eyes out. When Marse Enoch come out en made dat speech folkses hollered en got to der feet clappin' en bangin' sticks on the floor, I 'clar to de Lawd dar wa'n't a prouder ol' darky in New York den Uncle Jason."

Dorcas began to laugh and cry at once.

"I don' wonder yo's all done up, Missy. I's got de fines' supper ready fo' yo' yo' ebber see."

Dorcas was too unnerved to eat. She swallowed a cup of coffee and nibbled at the good things Jason had prepared. Then she went upstairs and began to undress. She brushed her hair, plaited it in two long braids, and slipped into a gray kimono, which folded itself about her in sheeny waves. The coffee had driven sleey away. She tossed a shawl about her shoulders and ran down through the silent house to the library. Wentworth often read there until long after midnight, and a coal fire was burning brightly.

She pushed an armchair close to the hearth and dropped into it wearily. She realized that she was very tired. She had not thought of nerves or body during the long weeks of rehearsal, with the incessant study, the multitude of detail, and the strange irregularity of life.

She began to live over again the last few hours and drew a long breath as she remembered the strangling terror which laid hold of her before she made her first entrance. When she heard her cue she felt dumb, crippled, almost blinded for one moment. The smile on Zilla Paget's face, as she stepped from the wings, stung her into action. There was scorn in it, and cruelty smoothed over by a sweet, beguiling perfidy, which aroused in the girl a sudden hate that she had never felt in her life before. The hatred made her forget everything except her part.

The recollection of a bit of gossip had flashed to her memory: Zilla Paget had prophesied that her "Cordelia" would be a dead failure. Before the end of that second act the intense loathing and scorn which Merry had put into her lines became real. The woman understood. She shrank with a terror which was scarcely simulated during the girl's denunciation of a mother who had lost all claim upon a child for love or respect. Seven times the curtain rose and fell upon the two women. Once a volley of hisses was hurled at Zilla Paget, and she smiled in happy triumph. Oswald and Merry stood in the wings watching the act. The intensity which Dorcas threw into her part stirred both men strongly, as it did the audience. They had anticipated womanly sweetness and tenderness, but they had not gauged her emotion to the depths.

"I never dreamed she could do anything like this," said Oswald slowly.

Merry did not speak. He had caught Zilla Paget's subtle smile. He knew there was more than acting in the scene.

While Dorcas sat gazing into the red caves of the coal fire she went over each situation in the play, step by step. Once she buried her face in the folds of her shawl; her cheeks were throbbing hotly. She felt Merry's kiss burn upon her lips. There had been no real kisses at rehearsal. The trust and love and gratitude with which the broken old convict turned to his child seemed real for a moment; she felt it when the actor touched her lips. Then she had fallen sobbing into his arms. She heard the audience sob with her. When she turned to glance aside through half-blinded eyes, she met the derisive smile of Zilla Paget, who stood in the wings. There was jealousy in her scorn. Her part was over for the night; she was dead to people in front. They had forgotten her, in spite of the applause she had won a half hour before. It hurt her vanity.

Dorcas came out of her reverie with a start. The door behind her closed, and Enoch walked in. His face was glowing with eager, impetuous triumph, his cheeks were flushed, and his eyes shone. He stooped suddenly to kiss his sister. She did not speak. It seemed years since she had seen him in such a mood.

"Dorry," he cried, "why did you rush home? Everybody was waiting to congratulate you. You lifted people off their feet; I swear, you took me off mine! The critics went wild over you and wanted to interview you. To-morrow you'll be the talk of the town."

Everything that had blurred life seemed to vanish. It was wonderful that in a few hours the dreams of a lifetime should have come true. The girl laughed. Her heart had suddenly grown light.

"Enoch, I cannot make myself believe it."

He stood beside her with a proud smile upon his lips. "Dorry, you're a queer proposition. Any other girl would have had her head turned by the triumph to-night. Why, child, in three hours you climbed straight onto a pedestal that many women work half a lifetime to reach. Even then they often miss it."

Enoch bent and lifted her face till her eyes looked into his. "There were minutes," he said fondly, "when I actually questioned whether it was the little sister herself or not."

Dorcas had never seen her brother so strangely excited. She wondered for a moment if he had been drinking, but she saw it was the intoxication of sudden success, not of wine. He paced about the library, talking, laughing, building a thousand plans for the future. The girl watched him curiously. It was a strange transition from the sullen silence of months. The Enoch of light-hearted boyhood days had returned.

"You have a great future, Dorry." He stopped abruptly and his voice grew grave. "There is one thing I want to say. Don't," he hesitated and began to pace the room again, as if choosing his words carefully, "don't make a hero of Merry. He did well to-night. I have seen him set the whole town talking as he did in 'Esterbrook' then topple back and go down, away down."

Dorcas rose from her chair and tossed the long braids of hair over her shoulders. Her eyes and cheeks were blazing. Wentworth's face grew inexorable. "Enoch," she cried, "how dare you say such a thing—to me?"

"What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean!" Her saw her chin tremble. In spite of her anger she was on the verge of tears. "When people were calling for the author, how did you dare to go out and take the applause? Have you no conscience, no honor left?"

"Merry got as much applause as one man could stand." He looked at her with dogged defiance.

"That makes you none the less—a thief."

Enoch did not answer. He pulled a cigar from his vest pocket, lit it, and began to smoke. He did not flinch before his sister's gaze.

"I should have been the happiest girl in the world to-night, almost foolishly happy." There was a pitiful quaver in her voice. "I feel now as if I were disgraced. Men have gone to the penitentiary for stealing—less than you did."

Wentworth laughed scornfully. He tossed his cigar into the heart of the fire and turned upon Dorcas in sudden rage. "Stealing is not a nice word."

"It is nice enough for what has happened."

"Do you know," asked Wentworth, with grave deliberation, "what did happen? Has Merry ever taken you into his confidence about this transaction?"

"Merry has never said one word against you—to me."

"Then reserve your judgment until he does. If you were to ask him, and if he played fair, he would tell you that it was a straight, honest bargain, a bargain bought and paid and signed for. Merry, with all his failings, is no welcher."

"Bought and paid and signed for?" repeated the girl in slow bewilderment. "How could you buy and pay for something conceived by another man's brain and written by another man's hand?"

"That is my business, wholly," answered Enoch coldly. "It is an affair no woman would understand." He paused to light another cigar; then he turned to Dorcas with such authority as he had never used to her before. "I want to say one thing before you leave the room. It is about the question of the authorship of this play. It is not to be brought up again at any time between us. Do you understand?"

"I understand," Dorcas answered quietly. "I understand it is perfectly useless to appeal to a conscience which is dead."

(To be continued).

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LESS INSANITY DURING THE WAR

WHAT AN IRISH ALIENIST HAS TO SAY.

Presents Remarkable Picture of the Tonic Value of Great Conflict.

An interesting sidelight on President Wilson's remark about the world going mad is given in the annual report of Dr. William Graham, of Belfast, one of the most highly reputed Irish alienists. Dr. Graham presents a remarkable picture of the tonic value of war. He says:

"It has become common practice since August, 1914, to say the world is growing mad, and there is a widespread popular notion that the distress and agony of a conflict so terrible as the present one must end in a profound disturbance and alienation. Yet the fact is indisputable that insanity, like corns, has lessened during the period of the war."

Improve Health of Men.

So far as the future is concerned, Dr. Graham is equally encouraging. He says: "There are solid grounds for the hope that, especially although exclusively among women, we shall find a great diminution in those neurotic disorders that form a part of the mental abnormality of thousands of men who have gone, or are preparing to go, to the front, who have all their life been subject to the bondage of neurasthenic weakness and incapacity of psychasthenic fears or hypochondriac fancies. They have never known what it is to live, but at the country's call they have flung from off them the spell of ancient inhabitations and long established impracticalities and have gone forth to face wounds and death. Only when summoned to possible surrender of life have they learned how wonderful life really is. The physical regime under which these men are compelled to live can have nothing but the best effect on those subject to its discipline.

Women Learn of Life.

"Especially significant is the change coming over the lives of women of the middle classes. These sheltered daughters of the merchant, of the professional man, victim of mid-Victorian traditions of gentility, are now falling into line with their sisters of the higher and the humbler social ranks, and are discovering that life is something greater than the latest novel or a game of tennis, or even the tepid gossip of the church sewing meeting. Idleness and ennui have lost their hold. Healthy and unselfish activity is now the prevailing fashion among war-enfranchised women. It has set them free from the benumbing conventionalities that threatened to stifle their psychic energy, and so far it has contributed to the soundness of mind and nerve among the mighty sociological forces which the present world conflict set in motion."

LOSES EYE ON FIRST AIR TRIP.

British Flier, Maimed, Shoots Foe, Lands, Cables Mother.

An army medical officer back in London from the front reported the case of a Royal Flying Corps observer whose eye was shot out. A German airman got a shot at him on his first trip into the air over the German lines.

"It sounded as if some one were playing a mandolin when the bullets came through the wires of our machine," he said.

One missile gouged out his eye and embedded itself in the frontal bone. Despite the injury the observer let go with his machine gun and drove off the enemy.

The pilot brought the machine back to the British lines and helped the observer to walk to the causuality station, where he cheerfully asked that his mother be informed that he was "slightly injured."

Huns Across the Sea.

The distributor of bread and meat cards—his wife and dog.

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PRACTICAL FARMING

Can Rust Be Prevented?

There is no way of treating the seed or spraying the crop so as to prevent rust. It is impossible to control rust entirely, but loss from rust may be reduced considerably by acting upon the following suggestions:

1. Destroy as far as possible the Common Barberry (Berberis vulgaris) and the Buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartics) growing in Ontario. Rust may cause serious loss in districts where these shrubs are not found, but, when they are present, they do undoubtedly tend to increase the amount.

2. See that fields on which grain is to be grown are well drained. Rust is nearly always worse on poorly-drained land. Such land remains colder longer in the spring, and hence the germination and early growth of the grain are retarded. In wet seasons also grain ripens more slowly on poorly-drained land. This slow development of the crop and the excessive moisture provide the conditions most favorable for the development of rust.

3. Endeavor to have the crop mature as early as possible. This can be done to some extent by early seeding in a well-prepared seed bed.

4. Avoid those varieties of grain which give poor returns and are also badly injured by rust. See table at end of this article provided by Prof. Zavitz, of Guelph, showing the extent to which different varieties are attacked by rust.

5. Do not mix varieties of seed grains, the following is th eresult of varieties of oats, but use only pure seed of one variety to secure uniform ripening.

6. Treat all seed grain to prevent smut, as plants infected with smut are very subject to rust, which may get started on them and then spread to healthy plants.

7. Sow only sound, plump grain. This can be secured by the careful use of the fanning mill. Shrivelled grain is very likely to have been produced by badly rusted plants.

8. On rich soils be careful in the use of manures containing large amounts of nitrogen, such as barnyard manure and nitrates. Such manures on rich soil produce an excessively rank growth, which invites rust.

9. Rotation of crops, proper manuring, thorough cultivation, freeing the fields from weeds, and all such farm practices which tend to promote healthy growth and the proper maturing of the grain lessen the chances of rust causing serious loss.

In connection with the rusts of frains, the following is the result of experiments conducted by Prof. Zavitz at the Ontario Agricultural College in carefully testing different varieties of farm crops. The following table gives the average of five years' results (1910-1914 inclusive) in number of days in reaching maturity, in yield of grain per acre, and in per cent, of rust on the straw of each of eight varieties of oats, three varieties of six-rowed barley, and ten varieties of winter wheat: use of a quick-acting fertilizer on the fields in the fall, just as soon as general infestation becomes apparent, with the idea that the fertilizer will so quicken the growth of the wheat plant that is shall acquire powers of resistance and recuperation which will enable it to withstand the attacks of the fly, and which also will send it into the winter season well prepared to withstand the cold weather.

The fertilizer which should be used for this purpose is one which shall have from 2 to 3 per cent, of ammonia, in order that a quick and vigorous growth of the plant may be assured. The result is that the plant tillers more freely, and even after suffering some damage from the fly, it will send up head-producing stems in the spring. There is nothing wonderful or mysterious behind this method; merely the taking advantage of the productive capacity of a fertile and enriched soil. In fact, it is so eminently commonsense that it ought to make an appeal to every farmer. The plan especially commends itself, for it promises not alone comparative immunity from Hessian Fly damage, but as well it holds out the very best assurance of an increased yield of wheat, and that, after all, is what every farmer is working for.—Canadian Farm.

Feeding Fat into Milk.

It is popularly supposed that the quality of milk depends on the feeding of the cows. This is not the case. So long as a cow is not fed in such a way as to derange her general health, change of food has very little permanent effect on the quality of her milk. A sudden change may impair her milk slightly for afew days, but as soon as she is accustomed to her new diet her milk returns to the normal. Very succulent grass does not produce inferior milk unless it deranges the health of the cow by causing her to scour, and this is commonly avoided by giving the cow two pounds or three pounds per day of cotton seed meal.

Professor Wood of Cambridge University, England, writing in the Cambridge Chronicle says:

"The following observations show that a too watery diet is more likely to reduce the quantity of milk than to impair its quality. Aherd of cows feeding on watery grass in August were given two pounds of cotton seed meal per head per day, and their milk weighed and analyed. Some of the cows then had their cotton cake replaced by 28 pounds of wet brewer's grains, a watery food reputed to produce a pious flow of milk of inferior quality. As a matter of fact, the change was found to have decreased the flow of milk and to have increased the percentage of butter fat from 3.38 per cent. to 3.46 per cent."

The idea that water may be put into the milk by giving the cow a watery diet assumes that the cow is a mere machine, an assumption which is entirely at Variance with all our knowledge of the physiology of the secretion of milk, and with all the results of carefully recorded experience. A cow is very much a live animal; she makes or intends to make her milk for her calf and as a matter of fact she can be actually starved of food for some time before the quality of her milk is seriously affected.

The Fall Hogs.

It pays to keep a sharp lookout for the fall litters.

There is profit in the fall litters if they are properly cared for; if neglected, they can be worse than a dead loss.

Get the early pigs ready for the early market.

Utilize the fallen fruit with the grain ration to help make rapid growth.

Every pound gained now, costs less than when colder weather comes.

The price of bacon and all pork products should convince any one that it does not pay to neglect the pigs.

Separate the pigs and put the larger, stronger ones together.

Give the smaller ones extra care and watch them catch up.

The big ones rob the smaller ones and keep them back.

Be sure the hogs have no lice on them.

Pigs that have lice will not grow. use some good spray, regularly, until lice are all gone.

A good scrubbing with soap and water will often start growth in a thriftless pig.

Whole oats scattered on a clean platform will help to grow strong bone. Sweep the hulls off the platform every day.

Called.

"My country calls me!" exclaimed the emotional patriot.

"It shouldn't have been necessary to call if you have any useful service to perform. You ought to have been on the job."

The Lesser Evil.

Old Grump—Why doesn't Ethel marry that young idiot? I am getting blame tired of his coming here so much.

His Wife—I believe I'd prefer to have him come here—if she marries him he will stay here.