

The LAPSE of ENOCH WENTWORTH

By ISABEL GORDON CURTIS
Author of "The Woman from Wolverton"
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLSWORTH YOUNG

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(Continued)
through the pages. He looked bewildered for a moment.
"Jeh! What can I do with so much money? I swear, Enoch, I don't want a penny more for being a wealthy man."
"You did not answer. He was sitting at a slip of paper he had drawn from the yellow envelope. "You remember this, Andrew," he asked abruptly.

Merry nodded. He caught a glimpse of Wentworth's name and his own name in the story they had called the bond. Enoch leaned back against the pillow and began to destroy the paper with slow deliberation, tearing it across and across until it was reduced to a heap of flakes which fluttered down into the hollow of his gaunt palm. He shook them into the envelope and handed it to Merry, who took it without a word and slipped it between the leaves of the bank-book.

"If you can trust me, Boy, until the right time comes and I reach the right place, I will make full restitution before the world."
"Don't, old man, let us bury this now and forever. Good God! isn't it restitution enough to have saved my life?"

"No," Enoch spoke with swift passion, "no, it isn't restitution. Don't stand in my way. You have to humor sick men, you know. Besides, I want to lay my soul bare to you now, Andrew. Had I been a Catholic I should have done it to a priest long ago, I suppose."

"Go ahead, Enoch, I'll listen," he said gently.
Wentworth turned in bed and clasped his hands around one bent knee. "Years ago," he began busily, "I was wandering about in the Tennessee mountains on an assignment when I fell in with a chap who taught psychology in Yale. He was nothing wonderful, but his science was fascinating. Time and again, since those days, I have planned, if I could find the leisure, to go into psychology and study the thing out. Still, any man who knocks about the world as I have done learns to puzzle things out for himself. You have to humor sick men, you know. Besides, I want to lay my soul bare to you now, Andrew. Had I been a Catholic I should have done it to a priest long ago, I suppose."

"I should imagine so. Still, it's an unopened lock to me," Merry admitted.
"We used to sit and talk every night around the campfire. I remember once this young MacGregor explained to me why a man we had both known committed murder. He killed his wife first, then, horror-stricken, shot himself. It's a common enough story, you read it in the papers every day of the week, but it came close to us because we had both known the fellow well. He was a decent, quiet, cheerful citizen, with a genial, kindly way about him. His taking off seemed a mystery. None of us had even seen him angry. Suddenly he turned into a flaming fiend, a murderer, and a suicide. Nothing but insanity or the Yale man's theory explained it."

"What was his theory?"
Wentworth paused for a minute with a haunted look in his eyes. "He claims that the morals of every human being are molded during the first twenty years of his life. Into a fairly decent career there comes occasionally—for the life of me I can't remember his technical name for it—I should call it a moral lesion. Some sin which a man has committed, and you might say lived down, before he was twenty, crops out again years after and it conquers him. Each time he may repent and turn over a new leaf. The world looks on him not as an Admirable Crichton perhaps, but as a tolerably good fellow. Then, suddenly, without the ghost of a warning, even after he imagines he has outgrown the tendency to that particular sin, there comes a temptation, and he goes under as if his backbone was gristle. He falls as quick as that!"

Wentworth paused for a moment and snapped his fingers. "Curious, isn't it?"
"Certainly is curious," agreed Merry.
"When the career of this murderer was brought to the light of day, they found that once when he was a school-boy, and again, when a friend stole his sweetheart, he might have committed murder if a weapon had been at hand. The third time a gun lay close to his elbow."

Andrew Merry did not speak, but sat watching Enoch with bewilderment in his eyes.
"I am going to tell you about two lesions which occurred in my own life. There was a third—you know about that one yourself."

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. Prizes were to be given for a public oration and people were coming from everywhere to hear us. My father was a lawyer, one of the big lawyers of the state. I went to this school when I was twelve, and he had carried off the oration prize. His heart was set on my winning it. I talked and talked over that speech; it was about the death of Julius Caesar. I 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 declared it to myself in the still dormitory. I used to go out

into his chair. Then, on, Enoch, I swear you're not fit for this sort of thing! Your temperature will go up, then the nurse—"

"Damn the nurse. I'm fit enough; 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 be low, but he never needed 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 he were mad. Once I sneaked out 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 heard a low, gurgling, awful cry and somebody called my name in a hoarse shout. It was Forsyth. I crept out. He stood on a cliff above me, clutching at his throat, then he toppled and fell. He came plunging down over the rocks until he reached my feet. He was dead, stark dead, when I pulled him into the cave. His notebook was 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 there."

"After a little while the battle fizzled down to a stray shot or two. That was the end of it."

"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 the corner of the foyer watching the throng pass by.

"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 one," he said at that way. 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 people 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. He watched her until a gray scarf from her hat waved it. Merry stood beside her, but the girl's face 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 down, almost into his eyes, the way of long hair which protruded from his collar. 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 any, cheering 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, at the times, at his elbow. Hence the secret to receive 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 lover of gratitude into words. He has believed in me, encouraged me, and to his untiring labor you are indebted for much of the perfect detail which carried "The House of Eastabrook" to success. He has helped me in the dark hours when success in my profession seemed to be something I could never achieve. When I have been dragged down by the devils of despair his was the hand that lifted me up and with kindly deeds and encouraging words has kept me striving for the place which at last seems to be not entirely out of reach. I need not speak of his last great proof of his friendship for me, you all know how he almost lost his life in saving me from almost certain death. Good people, I owe much to Andrew Merry, and it is a great pleasure to acknowledge it in this public manner."

The audience saw Wentworth stare as if in utter amazement when Merry began his confession. Then his eyes 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 humor insight we call intuition, that another drama was being played before their eyes: a life-and-blood drama, where the feelings of strong men were deeply stirred.

"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 his eyes. It passed quickly, however; he was a trained newspaper man, all his news instincts were aroused, and he was on the track of a story. Here was something he must get to the bottom of. He sensed a mystery and was immediately on the alert for anything that might give him a clew to start on.

His paper must have this big story. It was big, he was sure of that. He turned suddenly to the man at his side.

"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 Eastabrook.' I went to the office afterward 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 have."

"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?" Oswald's face grew stern.

"You see I know both of the men," he 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

"You never descended to the depths I did," said Wentworth absently. "He sat silent for a minute. Wentworth's eyes were fixed upon him like an insistent question. "Because Enoch," he went on in a steady voice, "because Dorcas has promised to be my wife."

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

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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 downward-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 Paquet woman affair began, then Wentworth signed Merry's lie. 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 emnity 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 aghoul," he pleaded, "and dig it up, simply to make a curious, heartless world buy your paper for a day or two. I am told there is a bond between newspaper men, like a warm-hearted brotherhood. Wentworth belonged 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 hazy when a story is may be 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 do anything but take Merry's word for it. His confession is a big story in itself."

"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 employee 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 transfused by happiness.

Merry stretched out a welcoming hand to Oswald. "We've been waiting for you, Oswald, to round out our circle," he cried gaily. "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 anither 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 I gave to the audience."

Merry looked about him with a quick, boyish smile. "I used to say I could not make a certain 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 on the stage. I suppose happiness means an order 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 Dorcas and caught hers, then he drew her into his arms as if they stood alone in some empty corner of the world.

THE END

if the people waited intently for some news. There was a tenseness in the quiet that prevailed in the audience that seemed to forecast something dramatic. It equalled in intensity the interest with which the most telling climax of the play had been received. The very air of the theater seemed to be side by side in the center of the stage seemed to promise a sensation.

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 on the bench. 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," Wentworth began, in a voice which was low but so marvellously distinct that each syllable carried to the farthest seat in the house, "this is not a curtain speech—you have not called me before the footlights tonight; it is an explanation. It is a confession."

Enoch paused as if mastering strength to go through the house, followed by 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. "Good people, one and all, who have so long been friends of mine, this is my confession, late in the day, as my friend Wentworth suggests, but it is mine. He was simply breaking the news to you that I wrote 'The House of Eastabrook.'"

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 footlights.

"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 even 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 a play which hence the secret to receive 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 lover of gratitude into words. He has believed in me, encouraged me, and to his untiring labor you are indebted for much of the perfect detail which carried 'The House of Eastabrook' to success. He has helped me in the dark hours when success in my profession seemed to be something I could never achieve. When I have been dragged down by the devils of despair his was the hand that lifted me up and with kindly deeds and encouraging words has kept me striving for the place which at last seems to be not entirely out of reach. I need not speak of his last great proof of his friendship for me, you all know how he almost lost his life in saving me from almost certain death. Good people, I owe much to Andrew Merry, and it is a great pleasure to acknowledge it in this public manner."

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



Oswald Was Watching the Throne Pour In.



Merry Stretched Out a Welcoming Hand.

Your Liver is Clogged up

That's Why You're Thro'-Out of Sorts—How to Appetite.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS
They will put you right in a few days.
They do not hurt.
They are pure.
They are safe.
They are reliable.
Small Pills, Small Dose, Small Price.
Genuine and Low Signature
Carter's

Synopsis of Canadian Northwest Land Regulations

Any person who is the sole head of a family, or any male over 18 years old, may homestead a quarter section of available Dominion land in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta. The applicant must appear in person at the Dominion Lands Agency or Sub-agency for district. Entry by proxy may be made at any agency on certain conditions, by father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister of intending homesteader.

Duties: Six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each of three years. A homesteader may live within nine miles of his homestead on a farm of at least 80 acres solely owned and occupied by him or by his father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister.

In certain districts a homesteader in good standing may pre-empt a quarter section alongside his homestead. Price \$3 per acre.

Duties: Must reside upon the homestead or pre-emption six months in each of six years from date of homestead entry (including the time required to earn homestead patent) and cultivate fifty acres extra.

A homesteader who has exhausted his homestead right and cannot obtain a pre-emption may enter for a purchased homestead in certain districts. Price \$3 per acre. Duties: Must reside six months in each of three years, cultivate fifty acres and erect a house worth \$200.

W. W. CORY,
Deputy of the Minister of the Interior.
N. B.—Unauthorized publication of this advertisement will not be paid for.

NOTICE OF SALE

To Charles Edmonds of Newcastle in the County of Northumberland and the heirs of Florence Edmonds deceased and all others whom it may concern:

Take notice that there will be sold at Public Auction in front of the store of George Stables in the Town of Newcastle in the said County of Northumberland on THURSDAY the twenty second day of July next at twelve o'clock noon.

All that piece or parcel of land and premises situate lying and being in Newcastle aforesaid and bounded and described as follows: Commencing at a stake fifty feet from intersection of road running in front of the said lot and Creek running towards the river thence along the said road fifty feet in an easterly direction to a stake thence on a line at right angles to the said road one hundred feet to a stake on the rear line of front lots thence westerly along the rear line of front lots fifty feet to a stake, thence at right angles to the said road one hundred feet to the said road being the place of beginning and being the same lands conveyed to the said Florence Edmonds by James Donohoe by Indenture bearing date the 22nd January A. D. 1910, as by reference to the said deed will more fully appear.

The above sale will be made under and by virtue of a power of sale contained in an Indenture of Mortgage bearing date the 22nd day of January A. D. 1910 read made between the said Charles Edmonds and Florence Edmonds of the first part and the said George Stables of the second part.

Default having been made in the payment of the monies secured by the said Indenture of Mortgage.

Terms cash

Dated this fifteenth day of April A. D. 1915

E. P. WILLISTON,
Solicitor for the Mortgagee
GEORGE STABLES
17-3mos. Mortgagee

NOTICE

The interesting serial "Fedora" which began some time ago on this page, but was held over for a reason, will be continued next week.

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Minard's L'niment Lumberman's Friend.