The LAPSE of ENOCH WENTWORTH BY ISABEL GORDON CURTIS

Author of "The Woman from Wolvertons" ILLUSTRATIONS by ELLSWORTH YOUNG COPYRIGHT, 1914 BY F.G. BROWNE & CO.

'Yes Missy' There was a fremor Dorcas stood gazing at him steadily, lthough a quiver in her chin belied

the bravery you with me," she pleaded. "If you do I shall weaken. I do not know where I am going myself. I have nowhere to take you. I shall miss you terribly, you understand that. But you must stay here and look after Enoch and the couse and everything. You are needed here as you never were in your

Missy. I'll sleep anywhar. A corner

"Uncle Jason, do you remember the story you have told about mother leaving you to care for Enoch and Sometimes I think of that day. wheeled mother out on the piazza where the locust trees were in bloom. and I almost believe that you did not tell me, but that I remember it my-

"Yes, honey." The tears rolled down the negro's wrinkled face. "She called to Lucy to bring yo' out. Yo' wan't nuffin but er little pink face en two doubled-up fists dat wan't ez big ez a

The old man paused to wipe his eyes with a red bandanna handker-

"And she said?" continued Dorcas. The girl was trying to smile.

'She said, 'Promise me, Jason, ez long ez yo' lives, to care fo' my baby, long ez yo' lives, to care fo' my baby, my sweet little gal baby, she'll never remember she saw her mother. Take care ob her, Jason, ez if de Lawd hisself had gib her in yo' charge.' I promised, honey," the husky voice died away in a sob; "I called de Lawd to witness right thar dat I'd look out fo' yo' all my life ez well ez an ol' fo' yo' all my life, ez well ez an ol' darky could do."

"You have done it, Uncle Jason." Dorcas took the sooty hand between her palms. "If mother could know how faithfully you have filled your promise—and somehow I feel, Uncle Jason, that she does know—she would say that you have the whitest soul God ever put into a black body.

"Oh Lawdy, Missy, can't I come wid yo'? I don' need no money. Yo' needn't pay fo' me anywhar—"

"Jason, you blessed old saint, it isn't money I am considering. I have plenty of money. Mother left Enoch in your care as much as she did me. have told me that."

The negro bowed his head solemnly. "Won't you stay with him?" Jason pointed to the inner door of the vestibule. "Honey, what's a-goin'

to happen? Do yo' reckon dat Marse Enoch's a-goin' to marry dat—pus-'Jason, I don't know. Only you

must stay here."
"I will." The old servant spoke with slow impressiveness. "'Eore de

Lawd, I will, Missy."

She ran down the steps. Jason followed to close the carriage door when she entered. As they moved away, Dorcas leaned out to glance at the home which had been hers since school days ended. She caught a glimpse of Enoch through the dusk. He was leaning from the library window. The room behind him gleamed white with a blaze of electricity. Be-Her arms reached above her head to pin back waves of shining yellow hair. The cabman pulled up his horses and looked through a window in the

"You didn't tell me, lady, where "Drive me to the Gotham Theater," said Dorcas; "then I wish you to take this little boy to Harlem."

CHAPTER XX.

An Everyday Miracle.
That night, when the curtain fell upon the third act, Dorcas turned eagerly to Merry. "You are my friend?" she whispered.

'Miss Dorcas," the actor's voice was profoundly grave, but his eyes smiled, "I would bestride the whirlwind or set y foot upon a cyclone for you."
The girl lifted her eyes with a swift

glance. She remembered the line-it was one the actor used to speak in "The King at Large."

"I believe you would." Her voice was low and impetuous. "I need a

riend, a strong, patient, wise friend, as I never did in my life before."

"Miss Dorcas, you make me wish this moment that I were a Samson and a stomon. I am not strong or very wise, but I am patient, and there is

no task upon God's earth that I would not try to do for you. You believe me, "It you?" The crimson blood flushed into her

" Her voice was scarcely aud-

ible. The curtain began to ascend for an encore. "Come to Mrs. Billerwell's tomorrow night. I am going there to stay with Alice over Sunday. I need your help."

He regarded her curiously for a mo-

ment.
"I will come," he answered gravely.
Then he took her hand and led her

down to the footlights
On Sunday evening Dorcas sat staring down into a crowded street of Harlem. Under the vivid glare of electricity the city looked sordidly It was a strange contrast to her home. The house at Waverly Place had retained much of its stately old-time dignity and its outlook upon the three-shaded square was quiet and pleasant. Upon Harlem's sidewalk throngs of children romped and shrieked in the midst of a city's din. girl's eyes, "that woman has come to

from the air. Knots of women sa talking on doorsteps or they leaned out to gossip from adjacent windows. It was the hour for Sunday night suppers and a rush of business had begun in delicatessen stores. Strange odors crept in at the open window, a blend of garlic with stewed meats, pungent pickles, and cosmopolitan

A gilt clock on the mantel struck seven. Dorcas rose, opened the door, and stood listening. On the lower floor she heard a door slam. She was the street from everyday household bustle. She heard Mrs. Billerwell give an order to a servant, then Julie laughed merrily, and a light footstep



Yo'. Missy.'

paring a room for her. She heard the girl slam a window and begin to move furniture about, while castors squeaked rebelliously. Then she fell to sweeping, and Dorcas counted absently each quick scuff of the broom. Once the maid dropped it and the stick fell on the floor with a startling rap. Occasionally her dragging foot-steps clattered across a bit of bare floor or she paused to thump the pil-lows vigorously. Dorcas was roused from her reverie by the imperative call of the telephone. She listened while Mrs. Billerwell answered it. Then the doorbell rang and she heard about the dim room in search

matches to light the gas. She was still in darkness when he tapped at the

corner beside the window. A glimmer of light from a street lamp fell upon

never seen before.

"Miss Dorcas," he began with grave nothing heroic about me. I doubt if I could fight a duel. It makes me shiver even to touch a pistol-but l am ready to stand up to be shot at it will make things easier for you. "I believe you would," said Dorcas

with an unsteady laugh.
"I swear I would," he assured her with simple gravity. The girl felt

"There will not be any shooting, and I don't know exactly what you can do for me. I don't even know what to ask you to do. I thought of turning could come to you more easily.

"Thank you for saying that." An eager happiness flushed into the man's face which seemed to warm each fea-

Dorcas stood before him trembling my brother as I do-to sit in judgment him or to discuss him, even with u. You love Enoch, or rather—you did once?" she asked quickly.

"Since things went wrong between you," Dorcas hesitated for a moment, 'since that time he has changed; you annot realize how he has changed kept thinking that the old happy lays would come back."

days would come back."

She stopped short and Merry's brows wrinkled into lines of perplexity. "What has happened? What can

do to help you?" "Yesterday," she began hurriedly, when I went home after the matinee, fason stood waiting in the vestibule or me. He did not say a word, but knew that something had happened. pushed him aside and ran upstairs. could think of nothing but that forehead. Enoch had been taken ill. As I passed the hall rack I noticed the queer um brella Miss Paget carries. It has a tiger's head for a handle—you remem-berst? Even in my anxiety I thought how strange it should be there. When I reached the library she sat beside

the fire, reading a magazine.' "Where was Enoch?" "In his little study, with the door

to talk to me."
"What did she want?"

stand. I think that Enoch hates her."
"Then why is she there?"

"I do not know."
"He didn't explain?" He looked like a thunder cloud. She talked. She said she had come to live in our house. Her clothes

were unpacked. She has taken the spare room. Her things, a lorgnette, and a scarf and gloves were scattered about the library."
"Enoch must be—insane!"

"Oh!" cried Dorcas. Sudden horror flashed into her face. "Oh! you don't

"No. I'm a beast to have frightened you. It is not that. Enoch is as sane eyes searched his face with a piteous scrutiny. "You know. Won't you tell

"I think it is-" The man hesitated for a word which would not hurt. "Yes, he has changed. He is not the same old Enoch. I cannot account for this. He promised me faithfully to drop her

"Months ago. He has kept his promise until now. I know he has. The strange part of it is, the woman her-self hates him. She says vile things about him.

"To you?" not to me!" cried Merry quickly. "She never speaks to me. We have reached the freezing point in our acquaintance.

Dorcas rose and walked to the winlow with her hands clasped tightly

Ever since I was a little girl there was Enoch. I never had anybody else be-longing to me, only I never missed them, for I had him."

She stretched out her hands as a forever. child might have done and raised her face to the man beside her as if in appeal for help and guidance. He took her fingers between his own with a swift grasp, caught her in his arms,

"Dorcas, tell me, tell me the truth.

Their eyes met, and the girl understood. A bewildering happiness which of the overture ceased, transfigured life throbbed through her "Has Mr. Wentworth eart and body. Merry's face was uminous, his eyes shone, he seemed transfigured, in one abrupt moment, a telegram.
from a listless visionary to a man—
alive with manly vitality.

a telegram.
"No. sir;
Nobody has

Dorcas heard the moments ticked out by the little gilt clock on the man-Time did not count. The world piness meant, a happiness which closed a door upon every intolerant thing in the world. She remembered how in the play she had simulated, night after night, the joy of a woman as she met her lover. She had spent

days in working up that sembiance of radiant gladness. She had played the scene many times to an outburst of appleuse, now she smiled, it seemed so ticket for a dollar?" he asked.

"Sure," cried the boy emphatically. Andrew put his fingers under her chin, raised her face, and looked into fer yerself? They're fifty cents, if

her eyes.
"Doarest," he asked, "are you sure -sure that you love me?

"Yes," she whispered.
"Listen, don't answer for a minute. I want you to understand. I would not be satisfied unless I have everything. I want you to trust me, to be lieve in me, and to love me as a wom-an like you could love a man. One night, months ago, I had it in my heart to ask you this. That night I felt like a man who, lonely and cold. tramps through the streets of a city



Caught Her in His Arms and Kisse

yourself. You know the night I mean. when you pulled me out of hell and set my feet on the high road. Then you might have given me pity, per-haps—"

Dorcas interrupted him. She put up her hand and pushed aside the lock of hair which had strayed over his

"I do not think, then, it would have been pity—alone," she confessed. He took her in his arms again. man ought to have pride and manlitouch of pity. And yet, I have wanted

and gentler. Next door the servant, who was still at work, sang a lilting Irish ballad. Through it ran a con-

with a quick gesture.

"Yes," Dorcas laughed. "I can go on trusting you indefinitely." "Don't," he cried, "don't say—indefi-nitely. I want you now, darling, and—

CHAPTER XXI.

From the Top Gallery.
On the same night that Zilla Paget took up her residence in the Wentworth home Grant Oswald sat beside his desk, dictating letters to his sec-retary. He listened while the tinkle

he asked when an usher entered with

"No, sir; we're watching for him. Nobody has seen him."
"Ask him to come here as soon as

he arrives."
None of the employes of the Gotham recognized a man beside the stair of the upper gallery, where a steep iron railing jutted out upon the side street. The rain fell softly and he was ily. muffled to the chin in a drab overcoat. A felt hat was drawn over his eyes. He emerged suddenly from the shadow to lay his hand upon the arm of a

yet git in line at the window."

The boy thrust the slip of paste board into Wentworth's hand, seized the money, and fled to take his place at the end of the line which straggled Enoch waited until a throng becan

to press its way up the steps. He pulled his hat down close about his forehead and the rim fell to his eyes.
When he reached out his hand to the attendant at the door, the man did not appealing loneliness which he had, looking into firelit, happy homes. That a tide of human beings and make cernight I wanted your love, your faith— tain that each one had paid his way.

and glanced at the gray coupon, then he passed to an end seat in the third row. He laid his hat upon the floor, pulled off his damp coat, and waited for the curtain to rise. Although the clatter of voices about him was insistent, he heard them like a dull jargon. Once he rose to allow two girls with their escorts to pass, then seated himward, watching the musicians clamber through a low door below the stage. The leader lifted his baton and the overture began. A man who pushed unceremoniously past aroused Enoch from his listless mood. He turned and stared at a girl who sat beside him. The lines on her wan face were etched, not by the years she had lived, but by a girlhood spent in airless places amid the roar of mechinery.

He sat watching her with an impassive stare. A dreamy look crept into her face. The orchestra began to play an inconsequential thing in which there was the trip of dancing feet and a sway of lithe bodies. He could see the lines smoothing out in her careworn face. Her ungloved fingers beat Then her hand went out in an unconscious caress to the thin, shabby lad who sat beside her. He clasped it and turned to her with an eager smile.

tense stillness, which was never disturbed by the fustle that occasionally ran through the orchestra. The story of the play had grown old, threadbare During the first act the girl and spoke in a tremulous whisper:

Her eyes were bent with hatred and scorn upon Zilla Paget, who stood looking down at Merry. His guilt had been discovered. He sat beside a table ness enough," he said passionately, "to with his face hidden in his outwant his wife to love him without one attretched arms, while the wife hurled upon him a torrent of bitter contume you so long. I have not a host of friends, like some men. I am lonely stifled sob. Little Julie clasped his Life has been so empty for me. I want a home, where a wife is waiting to welcome me, and little children deer. locked. He came out when she began a home, where a wife is waiting to to talk to me."

a home, where a wife is waiting to wind upon her mother. Wentworth had seen the woman in a towering He lifted her hand and kissed it. "You passion; now she threw herself into would think me a foolish follow if I the fury of her role as she had done confessed the dreams I have had. I in real life, where the floor like a

close to my heart as I do now. I have been dreaming foolish dreams like these," he laughed tremulously, "since that night in November, and I have scarcely dared to hope that you even believed in me."

Dorcas smiled into his eyes. "I have thand and he had helped by main at hand and he had helped by main at helped by main at hand and helped by main at helped by main a Dorcas smiled into his eyes. "I have always believed in you. I never lost faith in you or in your genius for one moment. And," she paused as if making confession, "I have loved you for a long time, ever since that night, the same night, when you came back and I was so happy."

"That night," said Andrew, "was the miracle moment of my life."

"Was it so wonderful as that?" she whispered.

at hand and he had helped by main strength to hold a mutilated soldier while the surgeon amputated a shattered bone. The agony of a groan, which the man tried to stifle, haunted wentworth for months. Some time in his life Merry must have heard such a sound and was repeating it. Then the woman upon the stage laughed.

"Damn her!" whispered the lad, who sat holding the girl's hand.

"Was it so wonderful as that?" she whispered.
"When I think, dearest, of what you have stood for to me, it is a miracle."
"It is an everyday miracle!"
"There are no everyday miracles," said Merry. Then he kissed her again.
She turned away from him to stare out at the window again. On the side walks the rush of city life went on tumultuously. Half an hour before she had thought the street sordid and ugly. It had changed. The street lights, now clear and white, were circled about by lovely halos. The voices of the children were sweeter and gentler. Next door the servant,

whispered the girl by his side.

"Sweet?" repeated her escort.

"She's a peg higher 'n sweet. She's game, game clear to the spine. The peroxide liddy's a bruiser. I'm aching

Irish ballad. Through it ran a constant iteration of "My own sweet lad."

"Dorcas," Merry spoke hesitatingly,
"you said you trusted me?"

"I do." The girl raised her head
"The girl raised her head runty little carcass with one swipe."

dow with her hands clasped tightly together. There were grave questions to be decided and burdens to be lifted —strange, unaccustomed burdens. She began to speak in a strange, toneless voice.

"I cannot explain now," he began. "I cannot ask you to be my wife until tain fell on the second act Zilla Paget something which looks like an utter tangle has been straightened out Can you go on trusting, even if I cannot explain?"

Ever since I was a little girl there was "Yes," Dorcas laughed. "I can go ber sweep the house with a triumphant."

red of murder in it tore at his heart. He rose, tossed his coat across his arm, groped beneath the chair for his hat, then he slammed down the seat and went out. On the stair he me

"Mr. Wentworth," cried the boy. Mr. Oswald wants to see you in his

office about some bookings."

Enoch descended without answering him. He paused once to push his enter the office; instead, he turned and walked down Broadway. The rain had ceased, the sky was clear, and the stars were shining. He tramped on heedlessly. He realized, suddenly that he was far down town in the business heart of the city. Overhead hung the sign of an old-fashioned ho-He opened the swinging doors

"I want a room," he said peremptor-

"I don't give a damn about price I want a room where it is quiet, where there is a good bed, and where I can sleep as if-as if I were dead.'

CHAPTER XXII.

Facing the Situation Enoch had never been a drinking nan. The sight of drunkenness had frequently aroused in him a species of stomachic revolt; therefore mere physical repulsion had done much to keep him from one form of debauchlation that followed his sister's departure he turned to whiskey as the sufferer from insomnia seeks relief in an opiate. It did not bring ease, howabout in a dull, half-sickened stupor, hating himself and the world. One night, in a lonely room of the hotel where he had taken refuge, he sat in the darkness for hours thinking; then like a flash he saw himself. It seemed dren to live with her. Their first ento him that for a second a shutter—somewhere, perhaps in some remote lobe of his brain—had flashed open and he saw not only his present condition, but his future. It was not a A half-empty bottle of whiskey stood

at his elbow. He stared at it for a minute with a scowl, as if it were an at his elbow actual enemy. A feeling of nausea crept over him. He lifted it, carried it to the wash-bowl, and poured the liquor down the drain-pipe. aid the empty bottle on a tray and set it outside the door. He filled his pipe with tobacco, pulled a chair to the window, sat down, and stared at the lights of the city. He fell int one of his introspective moods. He began to trace backward every step he had taken since the day he exacted the forfeit of Merry's bond. He fel like a vessel which had slipped it. moorings and had been unmercifully buffeted by one tempest after another Each one had done its work so ruth lessly that he was a human derelic left swamped and scuttled. The phras "a human derelict" stuck obstinatel in his brain; it described him vividly Already he had had more than hi deserts. The vengeance of Zilla Page was the last straw. The woman image flashed before his eyes; heard her satanic laugh and saw

The curtain rose. People who sat close under the roof listened with a en-haired lovliness as he had slammed en-haired lovliness as he had slammed the door and left his home.

Wentworth gritted his teeth savage ly, then he looked at his watch. It was close to midnight. He went downstairs, paid his bill, ordered a carriage, and drove to the Waverly Place house. As he stood fitting the key noiselessly into the lock his hear beat tumultuously for a second two. He opened the door strained and passed through the vestibule. The dimly in the hall, as Jason always left it until his master returned. He his hat on the rack, stole upstairs to his own room, switched on the electricity, and glanced about. He locked the door and undressed swiftly. Ten minutes later he was sleeping the death-like sleep which follows complete exhaustion of brain and body.

He did not wake till noon. Jason
answered his ring. The old negro en-

tered with hesitating steps.
"Good morning," said his master.

Jason, do you know how a guest lives room, his mail is brought to him, he goes and comes without a word being spoken to him by anyone in the house. You understand?

"Yassir."
"I wish to have that sort of service in my home until—your mistress re-turns. If it is necessary, engage an-other servant to look after your duties. I want you to wait on me exactly as I have explained. You can do it, Jason?" "I'll be mighty glad to do it, Marse

Wentworth returned to the theate took up his duties as if nothing had happened. His associates greetee

ne feit as if a drop curtain had fallen between him and the world where his men shrank away from him even while Zilla Paget made no secret of her

change of residence. She flaunted the news of it abroad and Wentworth's lapse from the conventionalities of life nade a nine-days gossip in theatrical circles. It even agitated moralities which had been esteemed lenient. The reason back of the intensity of feeling was not, in every case, shocked virtue, but Dorcas was loved, while the Englishwoman was held in universal contempt and hatred.
Curiosity threw out its dragnet

among the people in the company, who watched Wentworth go and come among them day after day, treating Miss Paget with an aversion which was colder than anything doled out to her by the players at the Gotham

tell you, it's a pose with Wentworth," said John Breen, the man who played the ignitor



"I've Been Looking Everywhere for

scornfully. "Wentworth hates Paget worse than any of us do, and that is going some. I've watched them togoing some. I've watched them to-gether. She knows he hates her, even if she is living alone with him under the same roof. He's afraid of her. I've seen it in his eyes when he didn't don't miss my guess there's blackmail or something like that back of it. She's fit for it. Wentworth's a goat in some way that we're not on to It was several days after his return to business before Enoch met his sis-

ter. He heard in a casual way that she had rented an apartment and had taken Alice Volk with the two chil-They came face to face in the fover. Enoch said "Good morning" and held out his hand. The girl held it for a second, looking up into his face with eager wistfulness. smile broke over Enoch's haggard face, then he glanced backward as the glass door behind him slammed, and Zilla Paget came rustling in

his office. The jaded look in his eyes had changed to shuddering hate. Dor-cas passed out to join the throng on Broadway. She felt chilled and lonely She did not realize that the sun was shining.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Parting of the Ways.
"All I have left to say, Wentworth, is this—we have come to a crossroad and you must choose between two paths: either cut that woman out of your life or don't expect to take your place among decent citizens."

There was a look of discomfort and anxiety in Grant Oswald's pale, high-bred face while he spoke, although his voice was emphatic. Enoch did not answer. He moved restlessly in his chair once or twice, lifted a program that lay on his desk, and ran his eyes through its pages. Oswald paused as if waiting for a reply.
"I can't understand your infatuation

Wentworth," he went on; "the woman degenerates every day of her life. God knows," a bitter tone crept into his voice, "I feel culpable for even bringing her across the ocean. Then I ought to have let her go when I spoke of it a month or two ago. She was bound to do mischief, only I never dreamed that you would fall into her clutches. I warned you."

Enoch sat in sullen stillness, with his eyes fixed on a calendar which hung above the desk.

"I wish." Oswald's tone was almost wistful, "that you would at least talk it over. I think I can deal with the woman if anyone can. I have always treated her with a certain stand-offishness that she resents. She has tried. more than once, to cross the line I drew. She didn't succeed, and it galls her. I never put into words what I think of her. She understands, however, that I recognize her value dramatically, while personally—to me— she is offensive. If she has you in The Army of Constipation CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS ...

her power, won't you tell me? I would never gs beyond these walls. She knows that I know her story. Low as she has sunk, she realizes that it is not what the world would call a creditable story. I can handle her

A gleam of relief and hope drifted for a moment across Wentworth's face. Then he laughed nervously and the sullen frown returned to his eyes. He rose and began to pace the office floor with nervous footsteps. "Won't you trust me?" pleaded Os

worth, for you as well as for your gentus. I would do it for your sister, if for no other reason. There is time enough yet to pull away, but," he spoke abruptly, "it won't be long. The woman has dragged more than one man to the gutter or to-suicide.' Wentworth laughed disagreeably.

'Well, it won't be suicide," he an-"Don't be too sure. When a man who has always had a fair amount of self-respect begins to lose it, he usu-

ally faces two alternatives; that is, unless he has a solid anchor in his Enoch lit a cigar and began to

"Evidently it is useless to talk. What passes my understanding is how any man can turn out a woman like

your sister to give shelter to Zilla Paget. I hate to say it, Wentworth, you will set me down as a cad, but I prefer to have a separate office. I am willing to take the little back room. or you can. One suits me as well as the other." "Certainly." Wentworth leaped to

I'd hate to thrust my society upon anyone who does not care for it."
"It is not your society I mean wholly. I object to Miss Paget dropping



Dropped an Armful of Books on His

in here as she did today. Don't hurry,

I did not mean that-"I don't care what you meant. I can make the change at once." Enoch's voice was churlish. He began to drag volumes from the bookcase beside him and heap them upon the top of his desk. "You made yourself tolerably plain, don't spoil it with politeness." He pulled the papers from pigeonholes in his dosk and tossed them about in loose piles, dropping some in the waste basket and bundling oth-

Oswald's pen was traveling slowly across a sheet of paper when some one tapped softly at the door. Merry entered. Enoch did not turn his head. The actor seated himself beside Os-

wald's desk. when you 'phoned," he explained. have been arranging for a funeral. It's one of those funerals which have

no great string of carriages."

"George Volk." Oswald laid down his pen and stared at Merry. "George Volk! he drift back to America?"

"Nobody seems to know anything about him. It's a mercy though; it sets Alice free. "How did she take it?" asked the

Englishman quickly. "I haven't told her yet."
"Where did he die? The last time you heard of him was in England.

(To be Continued) Ignorance of the law is no excuse but if everybody knew all the law, the lawyers would starve.