

MR. A. B. COPP, ex M. P. P.

KINGARTH

Kingarth, Dec. 1.—The snow was of short duration but the people seemed to enjoy it while it lasted and were sorry to see it go.

Mrs. London and little daughter of Fredericton, are guests of Mrs. McKen at Kingarth Hotel this week. Miss Jennie Reid spent last week with her friend Miss Helen Kilburn. Mrs. Barry Kitchen who has been to St. John for a visit has returned home.

Mr. Henry Veysey is spending this week with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Veysey at Fosterville.

There seems to be an epidemic of chicken-pox in this district especially among the school children.

Miss Helen Kilburn who has been visiting her aunt Mrs. Gregg at Welsford has returned home.

The construction work on the St. John Valley Railway seems to be about completed, and people are naturally looking forward to the regular trips of a passenger train which has been promised for some time.

The Lapse of Enoch Wentworth

B.

ISABEL GORDON CURTIS

Author of "The Woman from Wolverton"

Illustrations by Ellsworth Young

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side of the wall a servant was preparing a room for her. She heard the girl slam a window and begin to move furniture about, while castors squeaked rebelliously. Then she felt 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 footsteps clattered across a bit of bare floor or she paused to thump the pillows 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 Merry's voice. She began to grope about the dim room in search of matches to light the gas. She was still

in darkness when he tapped at the door.

Andrew seated himself in a shadowy corner beside the window. A glimmer of light from a street lamp fell upon the girl's face. In her eyes was an appealing loneliness which he had never seen before.

"Miss Dorcas," he began with grave gentleness, "what can I do for you? You know me fairly well. There is nothing heroic about me. I doubt if I could fight a duel. It makes me shiver even to touch a pistol—but I am ready to stand up to be shot at if 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 deeply moved.

"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 to Mr. Oswald at first. I didn't. I felt I 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 feature beneath the surface.

Dorcas stood before him trembling and irresolute. "It is so hard—loving my brother as I do—to sit in judgment on him or to discuss him, even with you. You love Enoch, or rather—you did once?" she asked quickly.

Merry nodded.

"Since things went wrong between you," Dorcas hesitated for a moment, "since that time he has changed; you cannot realize how he has changed. Still, we were together and alone, and I kept thinking that the old happy days would come back."

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

"Yesterday," she began hurriedly, "when I went home after the matinee, Jason stood waiting in the vestibule for me. He did not say a word, but I knew that something had happened. I pushed him aside and ran upstairs. I could think of nothing but that Enoch had been taken ill. As I passed the hall rack I noticed the queer umbrella Miss Paget carries. It has a tiger's head for a handle—you remember it? 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 locked. He came out when she began to talk to me."

"What did she want?"

"Andrew," the tears sprang to the girl's eyes, "that woman has come to live in our home."

"To live in your home!" Merry's voice had an incredulous tone in it. "Enoch has not—married Zella Paget?"

"I do not know. I cannot understand. I think that Enoch hates her."

"Then why is she there?"

"I do not know."

"He didn't explain?"

"No. He looked like a thundercloud. 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 think—that?"

"No. I'm a beast to have frightened you. It is not that. Enoch is as sane as you are."

"Then what has changed him?" Her eyes searched his face with a piteous scrutiny. "You know. Won't you tell me?"

"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—for keeps."

"Months ago. He has kept his promise until now. I know he has. The

strange part of it is, the woman herself hates him. She says vile things about him."

"To you?"

"No, 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 window 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 don't know what I'm going to do. Ever since I was a little girl there was Enoch. I never had anybody else belonging to me, only I never missed them, for I had him."

She stretched out her hands as a 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, and kissed her.

"Dorcas, tell me, tell me the truth. Do you love me?"

Their eyes met, and the girl understood. A bewildering happiness which transfigured life throbbed through her heart and body. Merry's face was luminous, his eyes shone, he seemed transfigured, in one abrupt moment, from a listless visionary to a man—alive with manly vitality.

Dorcas heard the moments ticked out by the little gilt clock on the mantel. Time did not count. The world had changed. She realized what happiness 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 semblance of radiant gladness. She had played the scene many times to an outburst of applause, now she smiled, it seemed so pale and ineffectual to her today.

Andrew put his fingers under her chin, raised her face, and looked into her eyes.

"Dearest," 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 believe in me, and to love me as a woman 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 looking into firelit, happy homes. That night I wanted your love, your faith—"



Caught Her in His Arms and Kissed Her.

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, perhaps—"

(To Be Continued.)

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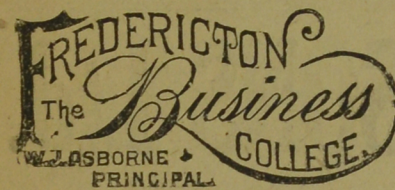
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