

A Word With Subscribers

ar misconception that in times of War a newspaper makes money. As a matter of fact, any newspaper which tries to do its duty by its subscribers, loses money during war-time. This is true of The Daily and Semi-Weekly Mail. Both of these papers, in spite of their tremendous increase in circulation, are not making any profit out of the war. This being the case, we have to ask our subscribers who are in arrears to be good enough to REMIT. If we are properly doing our duty toward you as a subscriber, we have to ask that you will carry out your duty to us by remitting promptly any amount that may be owing to us.

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The I apse of Enoch Wentworth

ISABEL GORDON CURTIS

Author of "The Woman
from Wolverton"

Illustrations by Ellsworth Young

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I was afraid he would near me and stop. His speech was great! As I sat looking out over the valley I could see the Roman warrior while he stood there in the Senate, down and out, hooted at and reviled, yet haughty and defiant, facing the enemies who had once been his friends. I began to sob, as a boy does in a shamed, husky, choked fashion. Suddenly a thought came to me. I leaped over the wall and held before Dave a new twenty-dollar gold-piece father had given me that morning. It bought his oration."

Wentworth paused as if in an embarrassment of shame. Merry watched him in silence.

"I feel—even now—the reluctant grip with which Dave held on to those sheets of blurred foolscap. I never gave a thought to what I had done. Every moment for twenty-four hours was needed to commit Dave's speech to memory. My father, proud and happy, gave me another twenty-dollar gold-piece. I carried it to Dave. He refused it, turning his back on me with angry scorn. Twenty years later I met him again. He had gone to congress and was blaspheming his way upwards toward fame. I was assigned to interview him. He remembered me instantly. For a moment he stared at me from head to foot, then he turned away without a word and never touched the hand I offered him. My God! how that hurt!" A shiver went through the man's body.

"That happened twenty-five years ago," said Merry hesitatingly. "You can't lay up a boyhood sin against a man. He changes—he's almost another human being."

"No, he isn't," answered Wentworth doggedly. "I want to show you that the psychological fellow was in the right. That was my first fall from grace; but there was a second lesion. It was worse, worse even than what I did to you, Merry. I was out in the Balkan mountains where the blamed barbarian Turks go tearing at each other's throats once in so often. The world looked on, waiting for a story of war. I had none to tell, nothing happened but a skirmish or two once in a while. There was nothing a man could make into a story. It was a wretched campaign. Young Forsyth, of the Tribune, and I hung together through it for months, living like stray dogs, sick to death of our job, and ready to throw it up at any moment. One morning at daybreak we were awakened by shooting. We scrambled from the cave where we had slept and looked down into the valley. We were in the very heart of a battle, and these savages were climbing over the rocks with their catlasses flashing. They shrieked like maniacs, the bullets went flying about our heads. I crept back to the hole among the rocks where we had spent the night. I couldn't see what was happening; I didn't want to see. Death shrieks echoed all around and above me. It was the most hellish din of battle I ever listened to. I had turned coward. I lay there with every tooth in my head chattering. A nice confession for a man to make, eh?" asked Wentworth with a grim smile.

Merry half rose then dropped back into his chair. "Hold 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 lie low, but he never heeded 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



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

night under the gleam of a sputtering little torch I read Forsyth's story. It was tremendous—perfectly tremendous—perfectly tremendous! It read like inspired stuff. I had never dreamed the fellow had such a vocabulary. And he lay there close beside me, asleep—under the damp, warm, soft earth. I had a fit of the horrors. I put out my light, stuffed the pages of writing in my pocket, then went doubling and twisting down those wild mountains, dodging the enemy's campfires and their infernal bullets, until I reached the miserable little town in the valley we two men had our headquarters. I hurried to the telegraph office to send out Forsyth's story to the Tribune, with the news of his death. I was waiting to get the wire when somebody handed me a cable. I looked at it half-dazed. It came from my own paper, crazy because I had sent them no story; they were hungry as vultures for news. As soon as I could get a wire I sent out Forsyth's story."

"Under his name?" asked Merry quietly.

"No," Enoch lifted his head, looked at his friend with guilt and shame in his eyes, then he turned away. "No, I signed my own name to it. I sent it to my own paper. I wired the news of Forsyth's death to the Tribune."

Neither of the men spoke for some minutes. When Merry turned, Wentworth lay staring at him with a prayer for pity, comprehension, and forgiveness in his eyes.

"I want you to understand one thing," pleaded the older man. "When you called my bluff that morning and I wrote that bond, I was innocent of any thought of injury to you. I don't know what was in my mind. It was nothing in the world but an idle fancy. I told you so at the time. I did not dream that you could write a play. If anyone had told me you were capable of turning out 'The House of Esterbrook' I should have laughed at him. Then that day, when you came and read the manuscript—I had just given up all hope, as I did with the oration on Caesar. I had been toiling for years and years on a play. There was one—it had seemed to me like a great plot—but I had begun to realize that labor does not mean everything. You want inspiration, or genius or art—or something, and I didn't have it."

Enoch paused, wrinkling his eyes as if in an attempt to remember something. "I was trying to think of something Ellen Terry wrote on the back of a photograph she once gave me. It ran like this:

"When am I to be an actress? Well, after fifteen years' labor, perhaps. Labor! Why, I thought it was all inspiration. No, labor and art are the foundation; inspiration—a result."

"Terry wasn't altogether right. Labor alone won't land the prize. You've proved that, Eoy."

"I don't know," said Merry vaguely. "I do." The man's pale face flushed. "When you dropped in on me, eager as a young victor for a laurel wreath. I knew as surely as if a judge had passed sentence on me that my years and years of toil meant nothing but waste paper. Then, suddenly, as temptation had clutched at me twice before in my life, came a reversionary desire for fame—the fame that another man had labored for and—"

(To Be Continued.)

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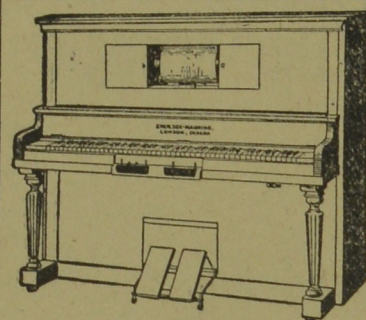
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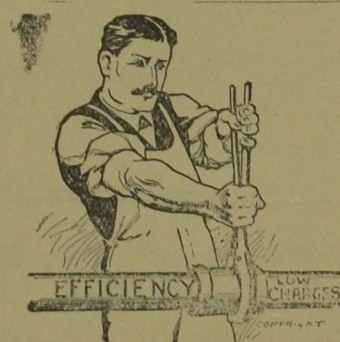
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