

The Redemption of David Corson

By CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS

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CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

Now that the confidence of Peepeta had been secured, David's part in this drama became comparatively easy. He listened to the brief conversation in which by a well-constructed chain of fictitious reasonings the judge riveted upon the too eager mind of the child-wife the conclusion that she was free. When this arch villain had concluded his arguments every suspicion had vanished from her soul, and as he rose to depart she took him by the hand and bade him a kindly and almost affectionate farewell. "Do not afflict yourself with this painful memory," she said gently.

"I shall not need to afflict myself," he replied; "my memory will afflict me, for I am as guilty as if the result had been what I had expected; and if in the coming year you find a moment now and then in which you can lift up a prayer for a man who has forfeited his claim to mercy, I beg you to devote it to him who from the depths of his heart wished you joy. Good-bye."

With many assurances of her pardon, Peepeta followed him to the door and bade him farewell. When she returned to David her face was luminous with happiness, and although he had begun already to experience a reaction and to suffer remorse for his successful infamy, it was only like a drop of poison in the ocean of his joy.

"Did I not tell you that all would be well?" she cried, approaching him and extending both her hands. "But how sudden and how strange it is. It is too good to be true. I cannot realize that I am free. I am like a little bird that hops about its cage, peeps through the door which its mistress's hand has opened, and knows not what to think. It wishes to go; but it is frightened. What shall it do, David? Tell it! Shall it fly?"

"I also am too bewildered to act and almost too bewildered to think," he said, with unaffected excitement and anxiety, for now that the time and opportunity for him to take so momentous a step had come, his heart failed him. It was only with the most violent effort and under a most pressing necessity that he pulled himself together and continued:

"The little bird must fly, and its mate must fly with it. There are too few hours before daylight and we must not lose a single one. But are you sure that you are quite ready? Is your mind made up? Will you go with me trustfully? Will you accept whatever the future has in store?"

She took his in her strong arms, printed her first kiss upon his lips, and said: "I will go with you to the ends of the earth; I will go with you through water and through fire! The future cannot bring me anything from which I shall shrink, if it lets us meet it hand in hand!"

And so they went, and they gathered together the few necessities of a sudden journey, stole out of the quiet building and hurried away to a lively stable. In a few moments they were rattling down the rough cobble-stone pavement to the river. The ferryman, who had been retained for this very purpose, pretended to be asleep. They aroused him, drove onto the platform of his primitive craft and floated out upon the stream. As the boat swung clear of the shore they heard music issuing from the cabin windows of a steamer under whose stern they were passing. It was the "Mary Ann." They listened. The music ceased for a moment and a deep voice called out "B-b-bravo! Another song!"

They recognized it instantly, and Peepeta pressed close to the side of her lover.

"You hear it for the last time," he whispered.

The swift current seized the boat, twisting it hither and thither till it seemed to the now trembling fugitive a symbol of the stream of tendencies upon which he had launched the frail bark containing their united lives.

"I wonder if I am strong enough to stem it?" he asked himself, as the boat grated on the beach.

"Can we find a minister who will marry us at this time of night?" David said to the ferryman, although he had been careful to ask this question before.

"Two blocks south and three east, second door on the right hand side," he answered laconically, as he received the fare.

Such adventures passed often through his hands and their ways were nothing new. The fugitives drove hurriedly to the designated house, knocked at the door, were admitted and in a few minutes the final act which sealed their fate had been performed.

CHAPTER XI.

When he awoke the next morning from a revel, the doctor crawled back to the hotel as best he could, his head throbbing with pain, his wits dull and his temper wild. Stumbling up the long flight of stairs which seemed to him to reach the sky, he burst open his door and entered the room. It was empty. Peepeta was nowhere to be seen. It took him some moments to comprehend that he did not comprehend. Then he called, "Peepeta! Peepeta!"

The silence at first bewildered, then aroused him, and crouching the corridor he entered David's room. It, too, was empty. He was now thoroughly astonished and awake. Recrossing the hall he once more entered his room and began in earnest to seek an explanation of this mystery. It did not take him long, for on the table were lying the jewels in which he had invested his profits and which he had placed to Peepeta—and beside them a piece of paper on which he slowly coiled out these startling words:

"I have discovered your treachery and fled."

PEEPEETA.

He drew his hand across his eyes, took a piece of his cheek between his thumb and first finger and pinched it to see if he were awake, then read the words again, this time aloud: "I have discovered your treachery and fled, Peepeta." "Treachery?" he said. "What t-t-treachery? Whose t-t-treachery? Fled? Fled with whom, fled where? I wonder if I am still d-d-drunk?"

At last, and almost with the rapidity of a stroke of lightning, the whole mystery solved itself. It flashed upon his mind that Peepeta had abandoned him, and in company with the man he had so implicitly trusted. The serpent he had nourished in his bosom had at last stung him! Tearing the paper into shreds, and stamping upon the floor, he cursed and raved.

A purpose shaped itself instantly in his mind, and he began its execution without delay. He made no confidant, took no advice; but having smoothed his ruffled clothing and combed his disheveled hair so as to excite no comment and provoke no question, he passed through the hotel corridor and office, greeting his acquaintances with his accustomed ease, and made his way to the livery stable. He went at once to the stalls where his famous team was accustomed to stand, and to his astonishment and delight found his horses both there.

"Tom," he said to the hostler, "did you hire a horse and b-b-bugy to a young couple last night?"

"I did not," answered the surly groom.

"I am in no mood for trifling. Out with it, you scoundrel!" he cried, seizing him by the throat.

With a sign of terror the groom indicated his readiness to come to terms, and the doctor relaxed his grip. Still trembling, he told the truth.

"Do you know which road they took?"

He waved his hand toward Kentucky.

"Put a saddle on Hamlet—no, on Romeo," he ordered, tersely.

The groom entered a box stall and let out the black beauty. The doctor glanced him over and smiled. And well he might, for every muscle, every motion betokened speed, intelligence, endurance.

The pursuer made a single stop on his way to the river and that was at a gun store, from which he emerged carrying a pair of saddle bags on his arm. In the holsters were two loaded pistols.

He smiled as he mounted, having already consummated vengeance in his heart. Once across the river and safe upon the Louisville pike, he loosened the reins. The horse, whose sympathetic heart had already been imbued with the spirit of his rider, shook his long black mane, plunged forward and pounded along the hard turnpike. His hoofs—sharp, sonorous, rhythmic—seemed to be crying for vengeance; for hoof-beats have a language, and always utter the thoughts of a rider.

The forests, hills and houses flowed past him like a river. Occasionally he halted an instant to inquire of some lonely traveler if he had seen a horse and buggy passing that way, but he was cunning enough to conceal his anxiety and to hide his joy as every answer made him more certain that he was on the trail of the fugitives.

The road was perfectly familiar. He had traversed it a hundred times, and now having to inquire the way he had only to remember and to reflect. An undercurrent of speculation had been flowing through his mind as to where he should overtake the fugitives.

For a mile or two the road was perfectly straight and the rider, shading his eyes, glanced along it. In the distance a moving object attracted his attention, and as he gazed at it, long and strainingly, the terrible smile once more wreathed his white lips. There were only two things present to his consciousness—the carriage upon which he was swiftly gaining, and the fierce smiting of the horse's hoofs which seemed to be echoing the cries of his heart for vengeance.

He swept, nearer, nearer, nearer, and his brain reeled; he forgot his discretion and his plan.

A face appeared above the top of the buggy, and looked back. It was his foe. With a howl of rage, he snatched a pistol from the holster and fired. The bullet went wide of the mark and the next instant he saw the whip-lash cut the air and descend on the flank of the startled mare. The buggy lurched forward, and for an instant drew rapidly away. Overwhelmed by the fear that he might be baffled in his vengeance, he drew the other pistol and fired again more wide of the mark than before.

He flung the smoking weapons into the road, and again drove the spurs into the steaming sides of his horse. There could be no doubt as to the result of the chase after that. The half-maddened animal was overhauling the fugitives perceptibly at every enormous stride, and in a few moments more shot by the buggy and up to the head of the terrified mare. As he did so, his rider reached out his left hand and caught the mare by her bridle, reined up his own horse and threw both of the animals back upon their haunches.

In another instant the two men stood confronting each other on the road, the quick black and terrible, the Quaker white and calm. Not a word was spoken, and like two wild beasts emerging from a jungle they sprang at each other's throats. They were odd-

ly, but not unequally, matched, for while the doctor was short, thick-set and muscular, but clumsy and awkward like a bear, David was tall and slim, but lithe and sinewy as a panther. Locked in each other's arms, they seemed like a single hideous monster in some sort of convulsion. As it was impossible for them in this deadly embrace to strike, they wrestled rather than fought, and bit with teeth and tore with hands with equal ferocity.

At the instant when the two infuriated men seized each other in this deadly grip, Peepeta fainted, while the terrified mare backed the buggy into the bushes by the roadside. Romeo, snorting and pawing the ground, sniffed at them a moment as is profoundly concerned at their strange maneuvers, then, turning away, began to crop the rich blue grass in entire indifference to the results of this mad quarrel between two foolish men.

The combatants surged and swayed back and forth along the dusty road, tripping and stumbling in vain efforts to throw each other to the ground. Their danger lent them strength, and their hatred skill. At last, after protracted efforts, they fell and rolled over and over, now one on top, now the other. Suddenly and as if by a single impulse changing their tactics, their right hands unclasped and began to feel for the other's throat. A sudden slip of David's hold permitted the doctor to turn him over, and sprawling across his breast he pinioned him to the earth. The great hand stole toward the throat of his prostrate foe and fastened upon it with the grip of an iron vise.

The beautiful face turned pale, then grew purple. This would have been the last moment in the life of the Quaker had not his right hand, convulsively clawing the road, touched a piece of broken rock. It was as if a life-line had swung up against the hand of a drowning man. The exhausted youth untwisted the grip of the iron hand, flung off the heavy body, mounted upon it, crowded the great head with its matted hair and staring eyes down into the dust, seized the stone with his right hand, raised it, and struck.

The effect of the blow was two-fold—paralyzing the brain of the smitten and the arm of the smiter. Across the forehead of the quack it left a great gaping wound like a bloody mouth. A death-like pallor spread itself over his countenance, the lids dropped back and left the eyes staring hideously up into the face above them.

David's arm, spasmodically uplifted for a second blow, was suspended in air. He did not move for a long time; and when at length his scattered senses began to return he threw down the stone, rose to his feet and exclaimed in accents of terror, "I have killed him!"

He could not overcome the fascination of the lifeless face and wide-staring eyes. They drew him towards them; he stooped down and felt for the pulse, which was imperceptible; laid his hand upon the heart, but could not feel it beat; he raised an arm, and it fell back limp and lifeless.

Suddenly one elemental passion gave place to another. Horror had displaced anger, and now in its turn gave way to the instinct of self-preservation. He looked toward the carriage and saw that Peepeta had fallen into a swoon. "Perhaps she has not seen what has happened," he said to himself, and a cunning smile lit up his pale face.

Stooping down, he seized the loathsome object lying there in the dust of the road and dragged it off into the thick shrubbery. Stumbling along, he came to a hollow made by the roots of an upturned tree. Into this he flung the thing, hastily covered it with moss and leaves, and stood staring stupidly at the rude sepulchre. He experienced a momentary feeling of relief that the hideous object was out of sight; but the consciousness of his guilt and his danger soon surged back upon him like a flood. In such moments the mind works wildly, like a clock with a broken spring, but sometimes with an astonishing accuracy and wisdom.

(To be continued.)

The Family Pair.

The wiggly stillness of the study period was broken by a slamming door, and a thin boy in dirty, ragged clothes slouched across the room. Half-way to the teacher's desk he drew, "Pa wants that you should let Jim go home right now." As Miss Davis looked a little doubtful, he added, "He kin come back right away."

The permission given, the two badly soiled, half-starved sons of the most shiftless family in the district shuffled down the stairs. Very shortly Jim returned, wearing a pleased and important smile on his pathetic little face.

"I come as soon as I could. Pa's brother's dyin' to Poplar," he announced, cheerfully. "That's why pa wanted me."

"But you weren't gone long—you didn't stay home. I can't see why you went at all," answered the bewildered Miss Davis.

"Why, pa's goin'," explained Jim. "Yes, but what has that to do with you?" asked the teacher.

"Pa had to have his suspenders," was Jim's matter-of-fact reply.

Salted Him.

"These summer girls would rather, waltz than eat," remarked the hotel clerk.

"Think so?" inquired the proprietor. "They say so themselves."

"Then I guess I'll add a waltz or two to the dance program and cut a couple of courses off the dinner bill."

—Louisville Courier Journal.

Breaking It Gently.

Her—Richard! Why on earth are you cutting your pie with a knife?

Him—Because, darling—now, understand, I'm not finding fault, for I know that these little oversights will occur—because you forgot to give me a can opener.—Cleveland Leader.

The blessed work of helping the world forward happily does not wait to be done by perfect man.—George Eliot.



Weeds and Flowers.

The big dahlias in mother's garden were withered by the frost, even the little red asters were dull and wilted, and Philip and Doris Grant looked about anxiously, for it was father's birthday, and they had thought out a nice surprise for him. They wanted to put a border of flowers all round the dinner table, so that when he came in he would ask, "Who did that?" And then mother would say, "The children."

Back of the garden was a field which sloped down to the brook, and the children walked slowly across the field. They had nearly reached the brook when Doris called out, "Look! Look, Philip!" and pointed toward a bunch of fine yellow blossoms.

"Those are weeds!" said Philip. "Just yellow weeds. They grow everywhere, by the road and all along the brook."

"But they are as fine as the garden blossoms," said the little girl. "Probably they don't want to be weeds. Perhaps it's just like some children who don't have anybody to love them, and have to grow up where they can. You know Aunt Sue told us about children that didn't have homes; and I guess weeds are just blossoms that don't have gardens."

"They're pretty," agreed Philip. And then they began picking the yellow blossoms.

That night, when Mr. Grant came in to dinner, he looked at the table with the lovely sprays of yellow blossoms all about it.

"Well, well," said father, "I'm glad you selected goldenrod. I think it ought to be our national flower."

"What is a national flower?" asked Philip.

"It is a flower selected by the people of a country as their floral emblem," explained Mr. Grant. "Just as each nation has a flag of its own."

Doris's face was full of delight. "I told you weeds were just as good as their blossoms were lovely," said Doris.—Youth's Companion.

Another Kind of Address.

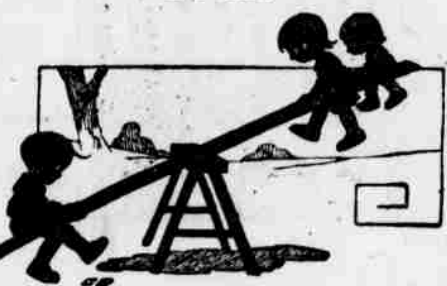
A man named Brown was invited to speak at a town meeting, and when he seated himself on the platform and looked over the program he discovered that his name was the last one. Considering himself somewhat of an important personage, this fact made Mr. Brown exceedingly angry, and during the entire meeting he sat and thought over the insult.

The speakers during the evening were unusually stupid and by the time Mr. Brown's turn came the audience was paying scant attention.

The master of ceremonies finally stood up to introduce the last speaker, saying as he did so, "Ladies and gentlemen, my esteemed friend, Mr. Brown, will now favor us with his address."

"Certainly," said Mr. Brown, springing to his feet, his face purple with indignation. "My address is Claremont street, Seattle, Washington. Now, good-night, I'm going home!"

See-saw.



See-saw, see-saw; away up in the air! See-saw, see-saw; going everywhere. See-saw, see-saw; visiting the moon. See-saw, see-saw; coming back so soon! See-saw, see-saw; Mary, Tom and Joe. See-saw, see-saw; to the clouds do go. See-saw, see-saw; hear their glad songs. As they see-saw, see-saw all day long.

Teddy, Terry and Tommy.

TEDDY. When I grow up I think I'll be a soldier, strong and brave; With all my might I'll fight for right, That none may be a slave.

TERRY. When I grow up I think I'll be a sailor bold and true; I'll learn the sea from A to Z, And own a ship and crew.

TOMMY. When I grow up I think I'll be— Oh, dear, I've made no plan! Well, anyway, I guess I'll say I'll simply be a man. —Chicago News.

An Alphabet Story.

Each person must write a story in twenty-six words, every word to begin with a different letter of the alphabet in its natural order. For instance: A brilliant creature discoursed every Friday, giving her interpretations jocosely. Kindly lawyer, Mr. Norton, objected, professing quite rudely some trumpery unbeliefs, varied with (e)xalted yells—Zounds!

This may be varied by using the letters backward, from Z to A. For the best (or least bad story) some humorous trifle can be presented.

Floral Decorations.

Jennie is only five, and her brother Rob is six; so, of course, she asks all sorts of questions, and he always answers them.

The other day she heard some one

talking about "Floral Decorations" and immediately asked Rob what it meant. "Why don't you know even that!" exclaimed Rob scornfully. "Why, floral decorations are rugs or carpet or matting, or anything else you use to decorate the floor!"

Ball on Horseback.

For this game half the players must be mounted on the backs of the other half. Catch-ball is then played in the ordinary way, the riders doing the throwing and catching whilst the steeds do their best to help them by running to where the ball seems likely to fall.

The stronger boys should be the horses and take the smaller ones for riders.

WAGNER TO HIS FIRST WIFE.

Letters of Great Musician Throw Light on His Unhappy Life.

The musical world, says the book reviewer of the London Morning Post, is once more indebted to Ashton Ellis for contributions to the Wagner literature. The subject of his latest volume is the letters written by Richard Wagner to his first wife Minna, the name by which he called the actress Christine Wilhelmine Planer, to whom he was married at the age of 23 at Magdeburg in 1836. Minna Wagner died in 1866, after she had been separated from her husband for about four years. It is a question whether she was ever united to him in that bond of sympathy and interest which should exist between husband and wife. The whole story is extremely sad and painful. When promoted from the post of choromaster at Wurzburg to that of conductor at Magdeburg in 1834 Wagner met Minna Planer, who was engaged at the theater as an actress for juvenile parts. She was in reality his senior by three and a half years, although she claimed to be of the same age. The marriage itself was inauspicious, for it took place while Wagner was out of an engagement. The wife very soon began to exercise an influence over her husband. Had she been a woman of intellect and education, or possibly of insight and sympathy, matters might have been different, but she was, Mr. Ellis tells us, the daughter of a mechanic and brought up in a degree of ignorance that did not permit of her acquiring a knowledge of how to write until she had reached maturity.

The letters, of which there are 269 in the two volumes, unfold a very unhappy story of willful misunderstanding and wild imaginings on the part of Wagner's unsympathetic wife. In fact, save for the light they throw on the character of a great man, they would be but the reopening of a chapter of extreme sadness. They show an unflinching spirit of consideration and forgiveness on the part of Wagner—perhaps too much consideration and forgiveness for the shortcomings of a nature like that of Minna Wagner. Apart from the fact that the letters are addressed to his wife they contain much detail hitherto lacking with regard to the early days, and herein we must consider that their value lies. As a record of the relations between husband and wife, the one with his way to make along a difficult path of his own creating, and the other determined beforehand to oppose him at every step, it is all almost too painful. The student of physiognomy will, however, find an explanation of Minna's nature in the portrait given in the second volume, and will be able to judge from the portrait of Wagner himself which prefaces the first volume how unlikely it was that there could ever be perfect accord between the two natures.

A Native Product.

Sometimes the thought that is most labored for proves most elusive. Many persons who believe that they can say what they mean are surprised by this discovery in trying to compose a concise, effective letter, or advertisement, or after-dinner speech, or even a telegram. The commonplace inscriptions which may often be read on medals, and public monuments and tombstones, were no doubt chosen after much thought, and in despair of the inspiration that failed to come.

The inhabitants of a French village built a bridge. It was a fine structure, and ought to be decorated with a suitable inscription. The brightest minds of the village grappled with the problem, but nothing quite expressed the pride and satisfaction of the townspeople.

The tablet that was finally put up read, "This bridge was made here."

Appreciation.

The Lady Fare—You cannot cheat me, my man. I haven't ridden in cabs for twenty-five years for nothing. The Cabbie—Haven't you, mum? Well, you've done your best.—New Zealand Free Lance.

Did Not so Regard Himself.

"You're always kicking about the high price of things. I suppose you are one of the ultimate consumers we hear so much about."

"No, sir, I'm one of the ultimate cough-uppers!"

Eggs-actly.

Fuddy—I see there's a paper called "The Red Hen."

Duddy—Started by some Nestor of journalism, I suppose.—Boston Transcript.

A Sad Tale.

Once a young fellow named T8 Asked K8 if she'd be his m8. "I'm sorry to sta8. I'm married," said K8. And such was the young fellow's f8 —London Tit-Bits.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



1760—Henry Ellis, the retiring governor of Georgia, took his departure for England.

1772—First town meeting held in Boston.

1774—Declaration of Rights by the American Congress.

1785—Last session of the old Continental Congress opened in New York.

1791—Thomas Johnson of Maryland appointed an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court.

1803—President Jefferson notified Congress of the war with Morocco.

1811—An encounter with the Indians took place near Terre Haute, Ind.

1815—Ionian islands placed under the protection of Great Britain.

1822—A convention at Columbia, S. C., passed resolutions to nullify the tariff acts of Congress.

1822—Marriage of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd at Springfield, Ill.

1852—Franklin Pierce elected President of the United States.

1854—Russians attacked the British at Inkerman.

1855—First railroad wreck in Missouri occurred on the Missouri Pacific at the Gasconade River.

1860—Abraham Lincoln elected President of the United States.

1861—The Confederate schooner "Berruda" ran the blockade at Savannah.

1861—Gen. McClellan succeeded Gen. Scott as commander of the United States army.

1862—Gen. Burnside succeeded Gen. McClellan in command of the army of the Potomac.

1863—The Federals took possession of Brazos Santiago, at the mouth of the Rio Grande.

1864—Horace Hefford, a witness in the treason trials at Indianapolis, exposed the workings of the Order of American Knights.

1867—First women's suffrage society formed in England.

1868—A bequest for a public library was left to Chicago, by Walter L. Newberry.

1868—Gen. U. S. Grant elected President of the United States.

1874—Massachusetts elected a Democratic Governor for the first time in twenty years.

1877—Dennis Kearney, the San Francisco agitator, arrested and confined in jail.

1880—Sarah Bernhardt made her American debut at Booth's Theater, New York.

1885—Canadian Pacific Railroad opened between Montreal and Winnipeg.

1886—Cyrus G. Luce elected Governor of Michigan.

1888—Gen. Benjamin Harrison of Indiana elected President of the United States.

1889—North and South Dakota admitted to the Union.

1890—Montana declared a State of the Union by the President's proclamation.

1895—Forty lives lost in the wreck of the Detroit Journal building, caused by the explosion of a boiler.

1895—Theodore Durant convicted in San Francisco of the murder of Blanche Lamont.

1898—Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem dedicated by the German Emperor.

1898—Theodore Roosevelt elected Governor of New York.

1899—Memorial to Miss Winnie Davis unveiled at Richmond, Va.

1901—The South Carolina and West Indian Exposition opened at Charleston.

1903—New Irish land act went into effect.

1904—Liberals victorious in the Canadian elections.

1905—British fleet in command of Prince Louis of Battenberg arrived at Annapolis, Md.

1908—Gen. Antoine Simons assumed the provisional presidency of Hayti.

Charles W. Morse of New York found guilty of fraudulent banking practices.

President Eliot, of Harvard University, resigned.

William H. Taft of Ohio elected President of the United States.

Features of Pure Food Congress.

Dr. Edward P. Shafter, of the United States Agricultural Department, the American representative to the Pure Food Congress, which has closed at Paris, said, upon his return, that the Congress had done great work in arousing world interest in the subject, in spite of most active lobbying on the part of private interests.

The work done was of a technical nature, much time having been spent upon defining what pure food is. Dr. Shafter says that this country leads in the fight for pure food, and that foreign experts were loath to believe that we spend \$3,000,000 yearly on government inspection of foods.

Pole Not a Fixed Point.

M. Flammarion the French scientist, now comes to the front with the announcement that the "poles" of the earth are not fixed points, but constantly vary, oscillating from year to year, from month to month, around an average position at which in reality the pole is never exactly to be found. He publishes an elaborate chart or diagram to illustrate the manner in which the earth is said to wobble and showing that not only the poles are shifting, but that latitudes are constantly varying over the whole earth.