The Redemption of David Corson

By CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

His interest and excitement culminated in an incident for which the listener was totally unprepared. The speaker who had been exhorting his audience upon the testimony of prophet and apostle now appealed to his own personal experience.

"Look at me!" he said, laying his great hand on his broad chest. "I was once as hardened and desperate a man as any of you; but God saved me! See this book!" he added, holding up the old volume. "I will tell you a story about it. I found it in a log cabin away out in the frontier State of Ohio. Listen, and I will tell you how. I had left a lumber camp with a company of frontiersmen one Sunday morning, to go to a new clearing which we were making in the wilderness, when I suddenly discovered that I had forgotten my axe. Swearing at my misfortune I returned to get it. As I approached the cabin which I had left a few minutes before, I heard a human voice. I paused in surprise, crept quietly to the door and listened. Some one was talking in almost the very language in which I have spoken to you. I was frightened and fled! Escaping into the depths of the forest, I lay down at the root of a great tree, and for the first time in my life I made a silence in my soul and listened to the voice of God. I know not how long I lay there; but at last when I recovered my consciousness I returned to the cabin. It was silent and empty; but on the floor I found this book."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed a voice.

So rapt had been the attention of the hearers that at this unexpected interruption the women screamed and the men made a wide path for the figure that burst through them and rushed toward the platform. The speaker paused and fixed his eye upon the man who pressed eagerly toward him.

"Tell me whether a red line is drawn down the edge of a certain chapter!" he cried.

"It is," replied the lumberman.

"Then let me take it!" exclaimed David, reaching out his trembling hands.

"What for?"

"Because it is mine! I am the man who proclaimed the holy faith, and, God forgive me, abandoned it even as you received it!"

The astonished dumberman handed him the Bible, and he covered it with kisses and tears. In the meantime, the crowd, excited by the spectacular elements of the drama, surged round the actors, and the preacher, reaching down, took David by the arm and raised him to the platform.

"Be quiet, my friends," he said, with a gesture of command, "and when this prodigal has regained his composure we will ask him to tell us his story."

Of what was transpiring around him David seemed to be entirely unconscious and at last the fickle crowd became impatient.

"What's de matter wid you?" said a sarcastic voice.

"Speak out! Don't snuffle," exclaimed another.

"Tip us your tale," cried a fourth.

"Go on. Go on. We're waiting," called many more.

These impatient cries at last aroused David from his waking dream, he drew his hand over his eyes, and began his story. For a time the strange narrative produced a profound impression. Heads drooped as if in meditation upon the mystery and meaning of life; significant glances were exchanged; tears trembled in many eyes; these torpid natures received a shock which for a moment awakened them to a new life.

But it was only for a moment. They were incapable of the sustained effort of thought, of ambition, or of will. Impressions made upon their souls were like those made on the soft folds of a garment by the passing touch of a hand.

To their besotted perceptions this scene was like a play in a Bowery theater, and now that the dramatic denouement had come, they lost their interest and sauntered away singly or in little groups. In a few moments there were only three figures left in the light of the flaming torch. They were those of the lumberman, David, and Mantel, who now drew near, took his friend by the hand and pressed it with a gentle sympathy.

"Where did you come from?" asked David, in surprise, as he for the first time recognized his companion.

"I have followed you all the evening," Mantel replied.

"Then you have heard the story of this book?"

"I have, and I could not have believed it without hearing."

"Can you spare us a little of your time?" said David, turning to the lumberman.

"I owe you all the time you wish and all the service I can render," he replied.

"You have more than paid your debt by what you have done for me tonight, but who are you?"

"I am only another voice crying in the wilderness."

"How do you support yourself?" asked Mantel, to whom such a man was a phenomenon.

"We do not any of us support ourselves so much as we are supported," he replied.

"And this life of toil and self-denial had its origin in those words I spoke in the empty lumber camp?" asked David, incredulously.

"It is not a life of self-denial, but that was its beginning."

"It is a mystery. I lost my faith and you found it, and now perhaps you are going to give it back again!"

The lumberman turned his searching eyes kindly on Mantel's face and said, "And how is it with thee, my friend; hast thou the peace of God?"

The directness of the question startled the gambler. "I have no peace of any kind; my heart is full of storms and my life is a ruin," he answered, sadly.

"Did thee never notice," said the lumberman, gently, "how nature loves to reclaim a ruin"

"I shall never be reclaimed. I have gone too far. I have often tried to find the true way of life, and prayed for a single glimpse of light! Have you ever heard how Zeyd used to spend hours leaning against the wall of the Kaaba and praying, 'Lord, if I knew in what manner thou wouldst have me adore thee, I would obey thee; but I do not! Oh! give me light!' I have prayed that prayer with all that agony, but, to me, the universe is dark as hell!"

"There is light enough! It is eyes we need!" said the evangelist.

"Light! Who has it? Many think they have, but it is mere fancy. They mistake the shining of rotten wood for fire!"

"And sometimes men have walked in the light without seeing it, as fish swim in the sea and birds flying in the air, might say, 'Where is the sea?' 'Where is the air?'"

"But what comfort is it, if there is light, and I cannot see it? There might as well be no light at all!"

"The bird never knows it has wings until it tries them! We see, not by looking for our eyes, but by looking out of them. We say of a little child that it has to 'find its legs.' Some men have to find their eyes."

"It is an art, then, to see? Can you impart that capacity and teach that art?"

"No, it must be acquired by each man for himself. We can only tell others 'we see.' We see by faith."

"And what is faith?"

"It is a power of the soul as much higher than reason as reason is higher than sense."

"Some men may possess such power, but I do not."

"You at least have an imagination."

"Yes."

"Well, faith is but the imagination spiritualized."

Mantel regarded the man who spoke in these terse and pregnant sentences with astonishment. "This," said he, "is not the same language in which you addressed the people in the Battery. This is the language of a philosopher! Do all lumbermen in the west speak thus?"

The evangelist began to reply, but was interrupted by David, who now burst out in a sudden exclamation of joy and gratitude. He had been too busy with reflections and memories to participate actively in the conversation, for this startling incident had disclosed to him the whole slow and hidden movement of the providence of his life towards this climax and opportunity. He was profoundly moved by a clear conviction that a divine hand must have planned and superintended this whole web of events, and had intentionally led him from contemplating the tragic issue of his sinful deeds and desires, to this vision of the good he had done in the better moments of his life.

With that instantaneous movement in which his disordered conceptions of life invariably re-formed themselves, the chaotic events of the past shifted themselves into a purposeful and comprehensible series, and revealed beyond peradventure the hand of God.

And as this conclusion burst upon him, he broke into the conversation of Mantel and the lumberman with the warmest exclamations of gratitude and happiness.

They talked a long time in the quiet night, asking and answering questions. The two friends besought the evangelist to accompany them to their rooms, but he said:

"I have given you my message and must pass on. My work is to bear testimony. I sow the seed and leave its cultivation and the harvest to others."

CHAPTER XIX.

Too busy with their own thoughts to talk on the way home, on entering their rooms Mantel threw himself into a chair, while David nervously began to gather his clothes together and crowd them hastily into a satchel.

"What's up?" asked Mantel.

"I'm off in the morning. I am going to find Pepeeta."

"Do you really expect to succeed?"

"Expect to! I am determined!. I am going to find Pepeeta, take her back to that quiet valley where I lived, and get myself readjusted to life. I need time for reflection, and so do you. What do you say? Will you join me? I cannot bear to leave you? You have been a friend, and I love you!"

"Thanks, Corson, thanks. You have come nearer to stirring this dead heart of mine than any one since—well, no matter. I reciprocate your feeling. I shall have a hard time of it after you have gone."

"Then join me."

"It is impossible."

"But why? This life will destroy you sooner or later."

"Oh—that's been done already."

"Think of your mother."

"Mantel, you are carrying this too far. A man is something more than the mere chemical product of his ancestor's blood and brains! Every one has a new and original endowment of his own. He must live and act for himself."

"I cannot bear to leave you, Mantel. Join me. Such feelings as these which stir us so deeply to-night do not come too often. It must be dangerous to resist them. I suppose there are slight protests and aspirations in the soul all the time, but these to-night are like the flood of the tide."

"Yes," said Mantel; "the Nile flows through Egypt every day, but flows over it only once a year."

"And this is the time to sow the seed, isn't it?"

"So they say. But you must remember that you feel this more deeply that I do, Davy. I am moved. I have a desire to do better, but it isn't large enough. It is like a six-inch stream trying to turn a seven-foot wheel."

"Don't make light of it, Mantel!"

"I don't mean to, but you must not overestimate the impressions made on me. I am not so good as you think."

"I wish you had the courage to be as good as you are."

"But there is no use trying to be what I am not. If I should start off with you, I should never be able to follow you. My old self would get the victory. In the long run, a man will be himself. 'Nature is often hidden, sometimes overcome—seldom extinguished.'"

"What a mood you are in, Mantel! It makes me shiver to hear you talk so. Here I am, full of hope and purpose; my heart on fire; believing in life; confident of the outcome; and you, a better man by nature than I am, sitting here, cold as a block of ice, and the victim of despair! I ought to be able to do something! Sweet as life is to me to-night, I feel that I could lay it down to save you."

"Dear fellow!" said Mantel, grasping his hands and choking with emotion; "you don't know how that moves me! It can't seem half so strange to you as it does to me; but I must be true to myself. If I told you I would take this step I should not be honest. No! Not to-night! Sometimes, perhaps. I haven't much faith in life, but I swear I don't believe, bad man as I am, that anybody can ever go clear to the bottom, without being rescued by a love like that! I'll never forget it, Davy; never! It will save me sometime; but you must not talk any more, you are tired out. Go to bed, friend, brother, the only one I ever really had and loved. You will need your sleep. Leave me alone, and I will sit the night out and chew the bitter cud."

It was not until Daybreak that David ceased his supplications and lay down to snatch a moment's rest. When he awoke, he sprang up suddenly and saw Mantel still sitting before the open window where he left him, pondering the great problem. They parted, one to break through the meshes and escape, and the other—!

In Australia, when drought drives the rabbits southward, the ranchmen, terrified at their approach, have only to erect a woven wire fence on the north side of their farms to be perfectly safe, for the poor things lie down against it and die in droves—too stupid to go round, climb over, or dig under! It is a comfort to see one of them now and then who has determined to find the green fields on the southward side—no matter what it costs!

Weak and bad as he had been, David at least took the first path which he saw leading up to the light.

(To be continued.)

In Chicago's Packeries.

Kate Barnard describes in the Survey her experience in a Chicago packing house and draws a humanitarian lesson from what she saw.

"I watched a hog sticker in a packing house stick 300 hogs an hour, ten hours a day. All day long the glittering dagger rose and fell, and each time a hog died and the rich red blood flowed and splashed over the man's arms and hands. He looked up at me and smiled—this human brother of mine—and even as he smiled the glittering dagger unerringly hit the jugular vein. Two years later he went mad—but his hand never ceased its automatic action, even when the light of his brain went out, and he felled five men before they could wrench from him the terrible dagger—a dagger no more cold or unfeeling than those who crushed his life. What an indictment against those who would fasten on their brothers the long work day. Sunshine and human fellowship daily would have saved this man. But we returned him to his maker, a maniac—we coined his brain into gold. It was such arguments as these which secured our laws to prevent disease."

No Escape Via Temperament.

"Mabel is getting past the marriageable age, isn't she?"

"Yes, and it's too bad she hasn't any talents."

"Why?"

"She won't be able to tell her friends that temperament prompts her to give up matrimony and devote herself to art."—St. Louis Star.

Modern Romance.

"Doll heart, tell me something," murmured the swain.

"What is it?" inquired the lady.

"Do you really love me?"

"Do I really love you? Ain't I giving up alimony for you?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Then He Went.

"I think I must be going," remarked the young man for the tenth time.

"You do not appear to be going," declared the young lady, after inspecting him carefully. "You seem to be perfectly stationary."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

His Better Half.

"I'm introducing a brand new invention—a combined talking machine, carpet sweeper and letter opener," said the agent, stepping briskly into an office.

"Got one already," answered the proprietor. "I'm married."—Bohemian.

If a boy is brought up to suit his father, he is too old to cry after he is six, but if he is Mother's Darling, he blubbers when he is sixteen.

Shear Nonsense

"Is she good at pyrography?" "You bet, especially her apple pies."—Baltimore American.

"Have you read Dobbley's last poem?" "I hope so, but I am afraid not."—Harper's Weekly.

Binks (in 1910)—What kind of a funeral did Howard have? Jinks—A mile of aeroplanes.—Life.

Hired Man—Shooting at air ships? Farmer—Yep; trying to bring down sumpin' to trim Mirandy's hat.—Puck.

"Drop in on us, any time," says one aviator to another. "You'll always find the skylight open."—Cleveland Leader.

Crawford—Why does your wife want to move? Crabshaw—She happened to see a house with two more closets in it.—Puck.

Thompson—Suppose a man should call you a liar, what would you do? Jones (hesitatingly) — What sized man?—Jewish Ledger.

She—Did you tell that photographer you didn't want your picture taken? He—Yes. She—What did he say? He—He said he didn't blame me.

Cynicus—That girl never says much, does she? Sillicus—Why, she talks all the time. Cynicus—That doesn't alter my contention.—Philadelphia Record.

She—Some day I want to show you our family tree. He (looking at her admiringly)—I should like to see it. It must be a peach.—Somerville Journal.

"Agnes sat playing bridge all the afternoon with her back to a glorious mountain view." "Yes. She is president of our Back to Nature Club."—Life.

He—We'd have won the foot ball game if our captain hadn't lost his head. She—Mercy! Was it so bad as that? I heard it was only an ear.—Boston Transcript.

"The time to save is when you're young." "That's all right, but a fellow doesn't earn anything till he gets well along and then it costs more to live."—Boston Herald.

Olga (all excited over Nora's account of her elopement)—How romantic! But wasn't you afraid of the ladder slipping? Nora—Oh, no! Mother was holding it.—Judge.

"He is suffering terribly. His teeth are locked up tightly." "Heavens, is it lockjaw?" "No, they're in a safe and he can't eat anything until he gets them out."—St. Louis Star.

Caller—My uncle died yesterday, sir, and I want you to officiate at the funeral. Deacon Jones—But I didn't know him, Caller—Good! You're just the man I want.—Kansas City Journal.

Jack—I was in a box at the opera last night. Tom—Were you? Jack—I should say I was. I took two ladies there and then discovered that I had left the tickets at home.—Boston Transcript.

Katie—What a lovely ring! Matie—Isn't it. This ring was given me on my twenty-first birthday. Katie—Really? Why, how well preserved it is—it's hardly a bit worn!—Cleveland Leader.

"So Miss Oldgirl is married at last." "Yes, and you should have seen her as she came up the aisle, made up to look like a young bride." "Who gave her away?" "Her wrinkles."—Baltimore American.

"I'm glad you've dropped in, Mrs. Irons," said Mrs. Lapsling, cordially greeting the visitor. "This has been a dreary day for me, and a call from a friend is like an Osiris in the desert."—Chicago Tribune.

Count Hickoff—Ze weather is so queer over here. I must get my overcoat out. The Heiress—How lucky. Count Hickoff—In what way? The Heiress—That you haven't lost the ticket.—Chicago Daily News.

Lady Shopper—I am looking for a suitable present for a gentleman. Clerk—What is your friend's occupation? Lady Shopper—He is an undertaker. Clerk—An undertaker. Let me show you a nice berry set.—Boston Transcript.

"But money doesn't always lead to happiness," said the poor young man who had just been handed the frigid mitt. "True," rejoined the fair owner of the cold-storage heart; "but it often facilitates the search."—Chicago Daily News.

The two men talked for a time in the train. "Are you going to hear Barkins' lecture to-night?" said one. "Yes," returned the other. "Take my advice and don't. I hear he is an awful bore." "I must go," said the other. "I'm Barkins."—Life.

He had managed to accumulate a lot of money by more or less questionable methods. "I should like to do something for the benefit of the town," he said. "Well," suggested the poor but otherwise honest citizen, "you might move out of it."—Chicago News.

Canny Lass.

Wee Miss—Mamma, mayn't I take the part of a milkmaid at the fancy ball?

Mamma—You are too little.

Wee Miss—Well, I can be a condensed milk-maid.—Comic Cuts.

GROWING POSTOFFICE DEFICIT.

Some Habits of Users of the Mails Which Helped to Make It.

Apropos of the $20,000,000 deficit in the Postoffice Department last year—which was $4,000,000 worse than the one of two years ago—the Silent Partner remarks that, after all, it is the people's own department, and it seems to be their delight to abuse its privileges.

"They may persist," says the article referred to, "in using stationery of gray, yellow, green, red, blue and every other color that makes addresses almost impossible to read at night, when most mail is handled.

"It is the people's department, so they have a right to deposit every year 11,000,000 pieces of mail to go to the dead letter office after carriers, clerks and experts have spent hours trying to decipher each address or hunting an address that did not exist.

"Since the postoffice belongs to the people they have a right as business men to save up all their hundreds of leters to mail at the close of the day, so that an extra night force is needed in every big postoffice, and so that nine-tenths of the mail may be sorted and handled at the very time when it is twice as hard to work it.

"As business men the people have a right to tie packages so they will come unwrapped, to send all sorts of mail with insufficient postage, to send huge cards that will not fit the carrier's bag or the pigeonholes in the mail cars, or squeeze into the sacks.

"The people have a right to demand that mail be carried on fast trains from which the sacks must be kicked at high speed, but it is not incumbent upon the people to use heavy covers for catalogues or booklets so that they will stand the jar.

"But if the people have all these rights and take advantage of them the people must not kick if the department is costly or if some who believe in individualism think that the people's government makes about the poorest showing as the administrator of a big business that can be made."—New York Sun.

Legal Information

The distribution of intoxicating liquors in less quantities than five gallons by a social club to its members, for a consideration, though without profit, is held, in State ex rel. Young vs. Minnesota Club, 106 Minn. 515, 119 N. W. 494, L. R. A. (N. S.) 1101, to constitute a "sale" within the meaning of laws requiring a license for the sale of liquor.

An ordinance merely imposing a license tax upon the business of selling intoxicating liquors is held, in Cuzner vs. California Club (Cal.) 100 Pac. 868, 20 L. R. A. (N. S.) 1095, not to include a bona fide social club which merely distributes such liquor to its members at a slight advance over the cost, the profit being devoted to the expenses of the institution.

The one in charge of an electric car is held, in Trigg vs. Water, Light and Transit Company, 215 Mo. 521, 114 S. W. 972, 20 L. R. A. (N. S.) 987, not to be bound to stop the car or slacken its speed upon discovering an object beside the track which he takes to be a clump of dirt, although it proves in fact to be a man, whom he strikes before he can stop the car, after he discovers that it is a man.

A bona fide purchaser of the capital stock of a corporation is held, in Everitt vs. Farmers' and M. Bank (Neb.) 117 N. W. 401, 20 L. R. A. (N. S.) 996, to have the right to sue in equity to compel the corporation to enter the assignment upon its books, and to issue a new certificate therefor, and to restrain the sheriff from selling said stock upon an execution against the vendor, the corporation and sheriff being parties to the action.

Persons who have bought lots bordering on a tract of land dedicated for park purposes are held in Northport Wesleyan Grove Campmeeting Association vs. Andrews (Me.) 71 Atl. 1027, 20 L. R. A. (N. S.) 976, to have the right, as against the owner of the fee, to cut the grass thereon if the authorities have not assumed jurisdiction over the park and the removal of the grass will render the park more suitable for the use for which it was intended.

The Man and the Lion.

"When I was once in danger from a lion," said an old African explorer, "I tried sitting down and staring at him, as I had no weapons."

"How did it work?" asked his companion.

"Perfectly. The lion didn't even offer to touch me."

"Strange! How do you account for it?"

"Well, sometimes I've thought it was because I sat down on a branch of a very tall tree."

A Timely Episode.

"The sheriff levied on our scenery in the third act. Fortunately, he had been an actor himself at one time."

"What happened?"

"We got away with our hand baggage while he was taking a curtain call."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Not Quite All.

"There is a big sale on at a mammoth department store."

"I suppose all the women in town are there?"

"No; a few are out in the cemetery."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN

1708—Arrival in New York of John Lovelace, the new governor of the province.

1719—First issue of the Boston Gazette.

1773—Cargo of taxed tea destroyed in Boston harbor by party of citizens disguised as Indians.

1787—New Jersey ratified the Constitution of the United States.

1792—First Provincial Parliament of Lower Canada met at Quebec.

1799—Remains of George Washington deposited in the family vault at Mt. Vernon.

1832—Gov. Hayne of South Carolina issued a proclamation in answer to that of the President of the United States.

1840—Remains of Napoleon I. laid in the tomb of the Invalides in Paris.

1847—First telegraph lines reached St. Louis.

1848—Asiatic cholera appeared among the United States troops in Texas. ....Park Theater, New York City, destroyed by fire.

1859—First train crossed the St. Lawrence on the Victoria bridge at Montreal.

1860—South Carolina seceded from the Union.

1861—The Federals sank seventeen old hulks to blockade the channel of Charleston harbor.

1862—Gen. Burnside's army removed to north side of the Rappahannock River....Federal troops occupied Baton Rouge, La....Holly Springs, Miss., was captured by the Confederates.

1863—Thirteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States proclaimed.

1864—Gen. Hardee destroyed his ironclads and navy yard and escaped from Savannah with 15,000 troops.

1873—Northern Pacific Railroad completed from the South to Tacoma.

1875—Violent bread riots in Montreal.

1878—Gold sold at par in New York, for the first time since January, 1862.

1883—The cantalever railroad bridge across the Niagara River was opened.

1884—Cotton Centennial Exposition opened in New Orleans.

1890—The Sioux chief, Sitting Bull, killed in a skirmish with soldiers in South Dakota.

1891—The Mercier government in Quebec dismissed for alleged corruption....Stephen B. Elkins of West Virginia became Secretary of War.

1893—A provincial plebiscite in Prince Edward Island supported prohibition of the liquor traffic by an overwhelming majority.

1895—President Cleveland sent to Congress his memorable message on Venezuela.

1898—New buildings of McGill University opened by Lord Minto.

1899—Imperial government accepted Canada's offer of cavalry and artillery for the war in South Africa.

1901—Isthmian canal treaty ratified by the United States Senate.

1902—First complete wireless telegraph message sent from Cornwall, England, to Nova Scotia.

1904—A Canadian deputation headed by Sir William Mulock waited upon President Diaz of Mexico and urged extended trade relations with Canada.

1905—Three Chicago banks failed, with liabilities of $26,000,000.

1907—The Dominion government voted $50,000 for the relief of the Jamaica earthquake sufferers....Keel of the battleship North Dakota laid at Quincy, Mass.

1908—New Turkish Constitution became effective in the assembling of Parliament.

Schools and Colleges

Frank White has been appointed director of education for the Philippine islands, to succeed Dr. Barrows, resigned. Mr. White has been assistant director of education at Manila for several years. He was reared in Nebraska and is a graduate of the University of Chicago.

The first published report to the effect that the famous elective system at Harvard had been abolished proves to have been incorrect. It appears to have been true, however, that under the Lowell administration plans for improving that system are receiving attention. One change contemplated is to require students to complete the prescribed course in any study that they elect.

John M. Humphreys, who graduated this year from the College of Agriculture of the University of Wisconsin, is in charge of agricultural instruction in the high school at Hinckley, Minn.

Louisiana will follow the methods of Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas and teach to every one of the pupils who enter the agricultural high schools the same curriculum that is taught in the four Northwestern States. This is the first year that agriculture has been taught with system and practical work in the high schools of Louisiana.