

The Redemption of David Corson

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CHAPTER XX.

The steamer on which Corson embarked after his overland journey from New York City to Pittsburg, had descended the Ohio almost as far as Cincinnati, before other thoughts than those which were concerned with Pepeeta and his spiritual regeneration could awaken any interest in his mind. But as the boat approached Cincinnati, the places, the persons and the incidents of his childhood world began to present themselves to his consciousness. An irrepressible longing to look once more upon the place of his birth and the friends of his youth took possession of his mind.

He found, on inquiry, that the boat was to remain in Cincinnati for several hours, and that there would be time enough for him to make the journey to his old home and back before she proceeded down the river. He decided to do so, and observed with satisfaction that these painful gropings for the next stepping stone across the streams of action which had been so persistent and painful a feature of his recent life had given place to the swift intuitions of his youth. He saw his way as he used to when a boy, and made his decisions rapidly and executed them fearlessly. The discovery of this fact gave a new zest and hope to life.

In a few moments after he had landed at the familiar wharf he was mounted upon a fleet horse, rushing away over those beautiful rolling hills which fill the mind of the traveler with unclouding delight in their variety, their fertility and their beauty. It was the first time since he had left the farm that his mind had been free enough from passion or pain to bestow its full attention upon the charms of Nature; they dawned on him now like a new discovery. The motion of the horse—so long unfamiliar, so easy, so graceful, so rhythmic—seemed of itself to key his spirits to his environment, for it is an elemental pleasure to be seated in the saddle and feel the thrill of power and rapid motion. The rider's eyes brightened, his cheeks glowed, his pulses bounded. He gathered up the beauties of the world around him in great sheaves of delicious and thrilling sensations. Long-forgotten odors came sweeping across the fields, rich with the verdure of the vernal season, and brought with them precious accompaniments of the almost-forgotten past. The rich and varied colors of field and sky and forest fed his starved soul with one kind of beauty; and the sweet sounds of the outdoor world intoxicated him with another. The low of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the crowing of chantrelers, the cackling of hens, the gobble of turkeys, the multitudinous songs of the birds enveloped him in a sort of musical atmosphere. For the first time since his restoration to hope, the past seemed like a dream, and these few blissful moments became a prophecy of a new and grander life. "For, if the burden can fall off for a single moment, why not for many moments?" So he said to himself, as the consciousness of his past misery and his unknown future thrust their disturbing faces into the midst of these blissful emotions.

The route which he had chosen did not lead to the farm house, but to the cemetery where the body of his mother lay wrapped in her dreamless sleep; that neglected grave was drawing him to itself with a magnetic force. He who, for a year, had thought of her scarcely at all, now thought of nothing else. The last incident in her life, the face white with its intolerable pain of confession, the gasp for breath, the sudden fall, the quiet funeral, his own responsibility for this tragic death—he lived it all over and over again in an instant of time as grief, regret, remorse, successively swept his heart. Tying his horse outside the lonely burying ground, he threaded his way among the myrtle-covered graves to the low mound which marked her resting place, approached it, removed his hat and stood silently, reverently, by its side.

There came to us all hours or moments of sudden and unexpected disclosures of the hidden meaning of life. Such an one came to David, there by that lowly grave. He saw, as in the light of eternity, the grandeur and beauty of that character which the story of her sin and suffering had made him, in his immaturity, misinterpret and despise! He did not comprehend that tragic story when she told it; it was impossible that he should, for he had no knowledge or experience adequate to furnish him the clue.

As he stood there by her grave, measuring this deep and tragic experience with his new divining rod of sympathy, there rushed upon him an overwhelming desire to reveal his appreciation to that suffering heart beyond the skies. A feeling of bitterness at his inability to do this frenzied him; a new consciousness of the irony of life in permitting him to make these discoveries when they could do her no good plunged him suddenly into a struggle with the darker problems of being which for a little while had ceased to vex him.

"ton, my love! But it is too late—too late." With this despairing cry on his lips, he flung himself upon the grave, buried his face in the green turf and burst into a convulsive passion of tears, such tears as come once or twice, perhaps, in the lives of most men, when they are passing through the awful years of adjustment to the incomprehensible and apparently chaotic experiences of existence.

Like a thunderstorm, these convulsions clear the atmosphere and give relief to the strained tension of the soul. At length, when his emotion had spent itself in long-drawn sighs, David rose in a calm and tender frame of mind, plucked a bunch of violets from the grave and reluctantly turned away. On foot, and leading his horse, he entered a quiet and secluded path which led past the rear of the farm. He had not consciously determined what he should do next; but his heart impelled him irresistibly toward that little bridge where he had encountered Pepeeta on his return from the lumber camp. It was at that place and that hour, perhaps, that he had passed through the deepest experience of his whole life, for it was there that the full power of the beauty of the woman in whom he had met his destiny had burst upon him, and it was there that for the first time he had consciously surrendered himself to those rich emotions which love kindles in the soul.

He threw the horse's bridle over the limb of a tree, leaned over the hand-rail of the bridge and looked down into the water. The stillness of the world, the slumber-song of the stream, the haunting power of the past superinduced a mood of abstraction so common in other, happier days. Oblivious to all the objects and events of that outside world, he stood there dreaming of the past. While he did so, Pepeeta, following her daily custom, left the farm-house to take an evening walk. She also sought the little bridge. Perhaps she was summoned to this spot by some telepathic message from her lover; perhaps it was habit that impelled her, perhaps it was some fascination in the place itself. She moved forward with the quiet step peculiar to nature which are sensitive to the charm of the great solitudes of the world, and came noiselessly out from the low bushes behind the lonely watcher. As she stepped out into the road, she caught sight of the solitary figure and her heart, anticipating her eye in its swift recognition, throbbled so violently that she placed her hand on her bosom as if to still it.

"David!" she said, in a low whisper. She paused to observe him for a moment and, as he did not stir, began to move quietly towards him as he stood there motionless—a silhouette against the background of the darkening sky. She drew near enough to touch him; but so profound was his reverie that he was oblivious of her presence. It could not have been long that Pepeeta waited, although it seemed ages before he moved, sighed and breathed her name.

She touched him on the arm. He turned, and so met her there, face to face. It was an experience too deep for language, and their emotions found expression in a single simple act. They clasped each other's hands and stood silently looking into each other's eyes. After many moments of silence David asked: "Why do you not speak to me, Pepeeta?"

"My eyes have told you all," she said. "But what they say is too good to be believed! You must confirm their mute utterance with a living word," he cried.

"I love you, love you, love you," she replied.

"You love me! I bless you for it, Pepeeta, but there is something else that I must know."

"What can it be? Is not everything comprehended in that single word? It is all-embracing as the air! It enfolds life as the sky enfolds the world!"

"Ah! Pepeeta, you loved me when we parted, but you did not forgive me!" She dropped her eyes.

"Have you forgiven me now?" "It is not true that I did not forgive you," she replied, looking up at his face again. "There has never been in my heart for a single moment any sense of a wrong which I could not pardon. It has been one of the awful mysteries of this experience that I could not feel that wrong! When I tried to feel it most, my heart would say to me, you are not sorry that he loved you, Pepeeta! You would rather that all this agony should have befallen you than that he should not have loved you at all! It is this feeling that has bewildered me, David. Explain it to me. Let me know how I could have such feelings in my heart and yet be good. It seems as if I ought to hate you; but I cannot. I love you, love you, love you."

"But, Pepeeta, if you loved me, why did you leave me? I do not comprehend. How could you let me stand in the darkness under your window and then turn away from it into the awful blackness and solitude to which I fled?" "Do not reproach me, I thought it was my duty, David."

"I do not reproach you, I only want to know your inmost heart."

"I do not know! There has been all the time something stronger than myself impelling me. I grew too weak to reason. I felt that the heart had reasons of its own, too deep for the mind to fathom, and I yielded to them. I was only a woman after all, David.

Love is stronger than woman! Oh! I was I who wronged you. I ought not to have forsaken you. Ought I? I do not know, even now. Who can tell me what is right? Who can lead me out of this frightful labyrinth? If I did wrong in seeking you, I humbly ask the pardon of God, and if I did wrong in abandoning you, I ask forgiveness in all lowliness and meekness from the man I wronged."

"No, Pepeeta, you have never wronged me; I alone have been to blame. The result could not have been really different, no matter what course you took. The change would have fallen anyway! All that has happened has been inevitable. Justice had to be vindicated. If it had not come in one way, it would in another, for there are no short cuts and evasions in tragedies like this! Every result that is attached to these causes must be drawn up by them like the links in a chain, and one never knows when the end has come."

His solemn manner and earnest words alarmed Pepeeta.

"Oh, David," she cried, "it cannot, cannot be so awful. Such consequences cannot hang upon the deeds we commit in the limitations and ignorance of this earthly life."

"Forgive me, Pepeeta, I should not talk so. These are the fears of my darker moments. I have brighter hopes and thoughts. There is a quiet feeling in my heart about the future that grows with the passing days. God is good, and he will give us strength to meet whatever comes. We must live, and while we live we will hope for the best. Life is a gift, and it is our duty to enjoy it."

"Oh! It is good to hear you say that! It comforts me. I think it cannot be possible that we should not be able to escape from this darkness if we are willing to follow the divine light."

"I think so, too," he said. His words were spoken with such assurance as to awaken a vague surprise that he had reasons which he had not told. She pressed his hands and besought him to explain.

"Oh! tell me," she said, eagerly; "is there anything new? Has anything happened?"

"Pepeeta," he answered, slowly, "we have been strangely and kindly dealt with. It is not quite so bad as it seemed, for I did not kill him."

"You did not kill him! What do you mean?" "No, it is a strange story! I thought I had killed him. I knew murder was in my heart. It was no fault of mine that the blow was not fatal. I left him in the road for dead. But, thank God, he did not die; he did not die then!"

"He did not die then? Have you seen him? Is he dead now? Tell me! Tell me!"

(To be continued.)

His Honey.

Luther M. Burbank, the plant wizard of California, said of honey, apropos of a flower that bees love:

"This flower grows abundantly near Santa Barbara, and there was once a young Californian who often visited a leading Santa Barbara hotel because they have such excellent honey there—a honey the bees make from this flower. Well, the young man got married in due course, and the wedding trip itinerary must include Santa Barbara, so that the bride might taste this superb honey. But, the first morning at the Santa Barbara hotel, there was no honey on the breakfast table. The bridegroom frowned. He called the old familiar waiter over to him:

"Where's my honey?" he demanded. "The waiter hesitated, looked awkwardly at the bride, then bent towards the young man's ear and in a stage whisper stammered:

"Er—Mamie don't work here no more, sir."

An Elusive Menu.

The opossum is good to eat, but not being dealt in by any organized provision company, is sometimes hard to get. A tourist in Georgia, says a writer in the Washington Times, stayed overnight at the Palace Hotel, in a little village, and expressed a desire to taste Georgia opossum. The whole opossum, cooked in genuine Georgia style, with potatoes on the side, was placed before him.

"Two dollars extra for the possum," said the landlord, when the guest came to settle.

"It's an outrage!" said the guest.

"It's according to the way you look at it, stranger," said the landlord; "but it took me six nights' swamp-wading to catch that possum, an' when I caught him I caught the rheumatism with him."

Unwholesome.

Medicine Man—What is the matter with your majesty? Cannibal King—Oh, I've an awful indigestion! Medicine Man—What have you been eating? Cannibal King—I have just polished off an American millionaire.

Medicine Man—Good heavens! No wonder you are ill! I've told you repeatedly to beware of anything rich.—London Th-Bits.

Saved His Life.

"I saved a beggar's life yesterday."

"How?"

"I asked him what he'd do if I gave him a sovereign. 'Good Lor!' he said. 'I should drop down dead.' So I put the sovereign back into my pocket."—London Mail.

They Were Shady.

Bung—So you have succeeded in tracing back my ancestors? What is your fee? Genealogist—Twenty guineas for keeping quiet about them.—Cassell's Saturday Journal.

It is by patience and self-control that the truly heroic character is perfected.—B. Smily

NERBY AND GARDEN

Stick to the Farm! "Stick to the farm," says the President to the wide-eyed farmer boy, Then he hies him back to the White House home, With its air of rustic joy.

"Stick to the farm," says the railroad king To the lad who looks afar, Then hies him back on the double quick To his rustic private car.

"Stick to the farm," says the clergyman To the youth on the worm fence perch, Then he lays his ear to the ground to hear A call to a city church.

"Stick to the farm," says the doctor wise To those who would break the rut, Then hies him where the appendix grows In bountiful crops to cut. —McLanburgh Wilson in New York Sun.

Why Boys Leave the Farm. An official connected with an eastern agricultural college has made a summary of the reasons given by 155 sons of farmers for abandoning the pursuit of their fathers. Sixty-two of this number said that farming does not pay. A strong argument can be made on the idea that it pays better than other forms of business. The secretary of agriculture has stated that the products of the soil in this country in 1905 reached a value of \$6,000,000,000, which is a good deal of wealth to divide up as a reward in one industry. Seventeen of the young men said the hours of labor on the farm are too long. No doubt they meant at certain seasons, but this is a detail open to adjustment. Twenty-six thought social advantages on the farms are not equal to those in cities, which is also a matter of opinion. Sixteen said they had a natural bent for something else, which is a point that deserves consideration always. Others objected to farm monotony, and fifteen said they would return to farming as soon as they made a pile of money at something else.

Many of these young men are the victims of illusion, and, unfortunately, of a kind curable only by experience. Probably they are not aware that 90 per cent of those who branch out into general business fail to accumulate any considerable wealth, while the positive wreckage in means, health and comfort is large. A farm is never monotonous to a good farmer. It is rather a book of fresh interest each succeeding day. A surplus at the end of a year is the rule on the farm; in the city a surplus is the exception, and the style of family living, on the whole, is in favor of the country. But statistics show that plenty of boys remain on the farms. The farming population of the United States in 1900 was four times as large as in 1850, and the value of their property increased five fold, or from \$1,000,000,000 to \$20,000,000,000.

Do Farmers Read Bulletins? I have noticed one thing in particular while traveling in some of our best agricultural states, and that is, when I see a number of well dressed farmers discussing beef and milk rations, feeding young animals for a healthy development, nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus and their functions in plant growth and protein and carbohydrates and their functions in animal growth, I am invariably in a prosperous and up-to-date community. Now, the question is, do the best and most intelligent farmers read their bulletins and keep in touch with their station workers and read the agricultural press, or does the reading of these bulletins and agricultural papers make more intelligent farmers? It is one or the other considered from either standpoint, for these bulletins and agricultural papers are not read by the poor and uneducated class of farmers, neither do they circulate as freely among the poorer farmers as they do among the farmers in the better agricultural communities.—Agricultural Epitomist.

No Use for the Horns. When cattle were raised on the range a good set of horns was necessary for protection. An all-wise creator put them there for that purpose. On the farm a cow or a steer is not in need of horns. Breeders are breeding them off very rapidly. Even the long-horned Hereford has a polled strain now, and it is predicted by many that within twenty-five years a horned animal of the bovine race will be a curiosity. On the other hand, advocates of horns say the hornless strain of every horned breed is undersized, and until it can come up to those that have horns in size and weight people will want the horned cattle of both shorthorn and Hereford breeds. However, there is no reason for leaving the horns on after they are there. The time to take them off is when the animal is young, and the way to do it is with any of the prepared horn killers. But take them off with the saw rather than let them go. It is more humane to do it than not to do it.—Farmers' Mail and Breeze.

Brush for Soil Wash. There is nothing quite so good as fine brush to catch and hold soil wash. Where small trees are used to fill a gully the top of the tree should be placed toward the head of the gully, so that all soil and trash coming down will be caught in the forks of the branches. If the tree is placed in the opposite direction the descending trash will slip more easily by and over it. For the same reason, in filling a gully with brush and branches, the tops of the brush should be placed upstream.

Where gullies have been formed during the summer by soil washing it is well to fill them as early as possible in the fall while the leaves are still on the brush with which they are filled. When they are filled early and before the leaves of the trees have fallen, many leaves, as well as grass and weeds by fall and winter winds will be caught in the brush to decay, will help fill and will form good soil. The brush itself will decay in a year or two, so that when the gully is filled it cannot only be plowed over, but will become the best soil. Never fill a gully with soil, unless some brush or similar material is put in the bottom to hold the soil.

In mending a steep place in the roadside, briars, brush and all fence row mowings make good material to lay down to place the dirt upon. If rocks are available it is best to first lay brush in the place to be filled, then place the rocks upon the brush, and last the dirt upon the rocks and brush. These will hold and bind the dirt until it becomes settled and firm, and it will be less subject to washing and being cut up by travel in wet weather. Never burn a bit of brush on the place, but put it to some good use.

Breeding Swine. In breeding swine or live stock of any kind the breeder should have a well defined object in view, a point toward which to work, a type, an ideal, which you will, well fixed in his mind. All hogs of the same breed are not alike, and it is this fact that makes improvement of any breed possible. There are different types of the same breed for the breeder to select from, and the intelligence and judgment used in the selection of the animals reserved for breeders will sooner or later demonstrate the success or failure of the breeder. Of course, methods of feeding and care cut an important figure. Many men who are good feeders of swine are very poor breeders, but few good breeders are poor feeders.

The tendency of all our improved animals is to revert backward toward the original type, and in the case of swine it should be borne in mind that while there is no stock that can be so rapidly improved by judicious selection, care and feed, there is none that will degenerate so quickly under neglect.—Kansas Farmer.

Vitality of Seeds. The period for which the seeds of different plants maintains their vitality varies a good deal. The seeds of some vegetables are worthless after they are two years old, while the seeds of other plants improve with age until a certain period. For instance: the seeds of artichokes are good until they are three years old; asparagus, four years; beans, two years; kidney beans, one year; beets, ten years; broccoli, four years; cabbage, four years; carrot, one year; cauliflower, four years; celery, ten years; corn, three years; cucumber, ten years; egg plant, three years; endive, four years; kale, four years; leek, two years; lettuce, three years; melon, ten years; pea, two years; okra, two years; onion, two years; pumpkin, ten years; radish, four years; salsify, two years; spinach, four years; squash, four years; tomato, two years, and turnips, four years.

Scab in Sheep. The disease commonly called sheep scab is one of the oldest known, most prevalent and most injurious maladies which affect sheep. It is a contagious skin disease caused by a parasitic mite. Investigation has shown that the disease is not hereditary, as the parasites which cause it live on the external surface of the body. It is possible, however, for a lamb to become infected from a scabby mother at the moment of birth or immediately thereafter. The treatment must consist of external cures to "purify the blood." Proper hygienic conditions alone, though of importance in connection with the subject of treatment, cannot be relied upon to cure scab. The only rational treatment consists in using some external application which will kill the parasites. By far the most rational and satisfactory and the cheapest method of curing scab is by dipping the sheep in some liquid which will kill the parasites.

Silo Feeding. Not only must the silo be erected, shelter must be provided for the cattle during winter. Then if corn is fed in the form of silage there will be successful results. A great many farms buy stock cattle in the fall of the year, turn them into stalk fields and resell them toward spring as feeders. If the market is normal there will usually be a profit, but it, nevertheless, is a wasteful practice. A much greater profit would be secured from silo feeding as mentioned.

The Cost of Keeping a Cow. According to careful experiments, the cost of keeping a cow a year with the best of feed and shelter, labor and interest on the investment included, all told, amounts to \$55. If, then, the cow can't be made to produce more than \$55, she is not worth keeping. A good cow ought to produce at least \$110, or double the cost of her keep.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



1706—The Colonial Assembly of North Carolina repealed acts of intolerance.

1772—The first vessel left Quebec for the West Indies.

1778—British force arrived off the Island of Tybee to begin their attack on Savannah.

1783—Washington, in the city of Annapolis, resigned his commission in the army.

1789—Bank of the United States began to discount.

1800—Attempt made to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte.

1811—Funeral in Richmond, Va., of the scores who perished in the burning of the Richmond theater.

1814—The British made an attack upon the position held by Gen. Jackson for the defense of New Orleans, and retired after a contest of about seven hours....Treaty of Ghent terminated the war of 1812, between Great Britain and the United States.

1832—Gov. Hayne of South Carolina issued a proclamation in answer to that of the President of the United States....John C. Calhoun resigned the vice presidency of the United States.

1835—A treaty was made with the Cherokees in Georgia, by which they agreed to remove west of the Mississippi.

1838—Execution of rebels in Montreal.

1839—Penny postage adopted in England.

1841—Gas first used for illuminating purposes in Toronto.

1847—First telegraph lines reached St. Louis.

1851—Louis Kossuth, the noted Hungarian patriot, spoke before the United States Congress at Washington.

1860—Louisiana adopted an ordinance of secession....United States revenue cutter William Allen surrendered to the South Carolina authorities.

1862—The Federals, under Gen. Sherman, were repulsed at Chickasaw Bayou, Miss.

1864—Gen. Hardee destroyed his iron-clads and navy rads and escaped from Savannah with 15,000 troops.

1865—Celebration of the 80th anniversary of the foundation of Westminster Abbey.

1867—First meeting of the Ontario Legislature.

1868—Lord Lisgar appointed Governor General of Canada.

1870—State of Georgia leased the Western and Atlantic Railroad to a company for twenty years at a rental of \$25,000 a month.

1871—Edward Blake formed a Liberal ministry in Canada.

1872—The Hon. Amos de Cosmos became premier of British Columbia....Barnum's Museum, New York City, destroyed by fire.

1874—King Kalakaua of Hawaii arrived in New York.

1875—Earthquake felt in Richmond, Va.

1876—Nearly a hundred lives lost in a train wreck at Ashtabula, Ohio.

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

1890—Henry B. Brown of Michigan commissioned an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court....Capt. Wallace and several soldiers killed in a fight with Sioux Indians in South Dakota.

1891—Flight at Raton Springs, Texas, between United States troops and Mexican revolutionists....Business suspended in London because of dense fog.

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

1903—Nearly 600 lives lost in the Iroquois theater fire in Chicago.

1904—Market price of cotton declined to 8 1/2 cents.

1905—Herbert H. D. Pierce appointed first United States minister to Norway.

1908—William I. Buchanan sent to Venezuela as American commissioner, to investigate conditions....President Roosevelt invited Canada and Mexico to participate in the movement for the conservation of resources.

French Medals for Flight. For distinguished success in the art of mechanical flight during the year, the French Academy of Science has decided to award gold medals to the following aviators: Bleriot, Farman, De Lambert, Latham, Dumont, De la Vaulx, Voisin, Wilbur and Orville Wright and Count Zeppelin.

TELEGRAPHIC BREVITIES Major W. H. Helstead, an inmate of the soldiers' home at Sawtelle, Cal., has fallen heir to the title and estate of Baron Karl Frederick Helstead, who died recently near Karlsruhe, Bavaria. All boarding and rooming houses occupied by students of the University of Wisconsin are henceforth to be under thorough inspection by the faculty committee on hygiene. At their last meeting the regents provided funds for this work.