

The Redemption of David Corson

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CHAPTER XXI.

Quietly, gently, briefly as he could, David narrated the events of the past few months, and as he did so she drew in short breaths or long inspirations as the story shifted from phase to phase, and when at last he had finished, she clasped her hands and gazed up into the depths of the sky with eyes that were swimming in tears.

"Poor doctor, poor old man," Pepeeta sighed at last. "Oh! How we have wronged him, how we have made him suffer. He was always kind! He was rough, but he was kind. Oh! why could I not have loved him? But I did not, I could not. My heart was asleep. It had never once waked from its slumber until it heard your voice, David. And afterwards—well I could not love him! But why should we have wronged him so? How base it was! How terrible! I pity him, I blame myself—and yet I cannot wish him back. What does all this mean for us, David? Perhaps you can see the light now, as you used to! I think from your face and your voice that you are your old self again. Oh! if you can see that inner light once more, consult it. Ask it if there is any reason why we cannot be happy now? Tell it that your Pepeeta is too weak to endure this separation any longer. I am only a woman, David! I cannot any longer bear life alone. I love you too deeply. I cannot live without you."

Waiting long before he answered, as if to reflect and be sure, David said quietly but confidently, "Pepeeta, I cannot see any reason why we should not begin our lives over again, starting at this very place from which we made that false beginning three long years ago. We cannot go back, but in a sense, we can begin again."

"But can we really begin again?" she asked. "How is it possible? I do not see. We are not what we were. There is so much of evil in our hearts. We were pure and innocent three years ago. Is it not necessary to be pure and innocent? And how can we be with all this fearful past behind us? We cannot become children again!"

"I have thought much and deeply about it," David responded. "I know not what subtle change has taken place within me, but I know that it has been great and real. My heart was hard, but not it is tender. It was full of despair, and now it is full of hope. I am not as innocent as I was that night when you heard me speak in the old Quaker meeting-house, or rather I am not innocent in the same way. My heart was then like a spring among the mountains! It had a sort of virgin innocence. I had sinned only in thought, and in the dreamy imaginations of unfolding youth. It is different now; a whole world of realized, actualized evil lies buried in the depths of my soul. It is there, but it is there only as a memory and not as a living force. There must in some way, I cannot tell how, be a purify of guilt as well as of innocence, and perhaps it is a purify of a still higher and finer kind. There was a peace of mind which I had as an innocent boy, which I do not possess now; but I have another and deeper peace. There was a childish courage; but it was the courage of one who had never been exposed to danger. There is another courage in my heart now, and it is the courage of the veteran who has bared his bosom to the foe! I know not by what strange alchemy these diverse elements of evil, can have become absorbed and incorporated into this newer and better life, but this I do know, and nothing can make me doubt it—that while I am not so good, yet I am better; while I am not so pure, yet I am purer. Yes, Pepeeta, I think we can go back on our track. We can be born again! We can once more be little children. I feel myself a little child to-night—I who, a few days ago, was like an old man, bowed and crushed under a load of wretchedness and misery! God seems near to me; life seems sweet to me. Let us begin again, Pepeeta. We have traveled round a circle, and have come back to the old starting point. Let us begin again."

"Oh! David," she said, kissing the hands she held; "how like your old self you are to-night. Your words of hope have filled my soul with joy. Is it your presence alone that has done it, or is it God's, or is it both? A change has come over the very world around us. All is the same, and yet all is different. The stars are brighter. The brook has a sweeter music. There is something of heaven in this intoxicating cup you have put to my lips! I seem to be enveloped by a spiritual presence! Hush! Do you hear voices?"

The excitement had been too intense for this sensitive woman to endure with tranquillity. Her heart, her conscience, her imagination had suffered an almost unbearable strain. She flung herself into the arms of her lover and trembled upon his breast, and he held her there until she had regained her composure.

"Do you really love me yet?" she asked, at length, raising her face and gazing up into his with an expression in which the simple affection of a little child was strangely blended with the passionate love of an ardent and adoring woman.

"Love you!" he cried; "your face has been the last vision upon which I gazed when I fell into a restless slumber, and the first which greeted returning consciousness, when I waked from my troubled dream. My life has been but a fragment since we parted; a part of my individuality seemed to have been torn away. I have always

felt that neither time nor space could separate us from—"

At that instant the horse which had stood patiently beside them on the bridge, shook his head, rattled his bridle and whinied.

"Poor fellow! I had forgotten all about him in my joy!" said David, starting at the sound, and patting his shoulder. "You have had a hard run, and are tired and hungry. I must get you to the barn and feed you. They will miss you at the stable to-night, but I will send you back to-morrow, or ride you myself, that is, if Pepeeta wishes to be rid of me."

He said this teasingly, but smiled at her—a tender and confident smile.

"Oh! you shall never leave me again—not for a moment," she cried, pressing his arm against her heart.

He paused a moment, and looked down as if a new thought had struck him.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Do you think they will welcome me home?" he said, with a penitence and humility that touched her deeply.

"Welcome you home?" she exclaimed; "you do not know them, David. They talk of nothing else. They have sent messages to you in every direction. The door is never locked, and there has never been a night since you disappeared that a candle has not burned to its socket on the sill of your window; what do you think of that? You do not know them, David. They are angels of mercy and goodness. I have been selfish in keeping you so long to myself. Come, let us hasten."

Just at that instant a loud halloo was heard—"Pepeeta, Pepeeta, Pepeeta!"

"It is Steven—the dear boy! He has missed me. You have a dangerous rival, David."

She said this with a merry laugh and cried out, "Steven, Steven, Steven!"

"Where are you?" he called.

"I am here by the bridge!" she cried, in her silver treble.

"She is here by the bridge!" The deep bass voice of her lover went rolling through the woods.

There was silence for a moment, and then they heard a joyous shout, "Uncle David! Uncle David! Oh! mother, father, it is Uncle David!"

There was a crashing in the bushes, and the great half-grown boy bounded through them and flung himself into the arms extended to him, with all the trust, all the love, all the devotion of the happy days of old.

CHAPTER XXII.

David's welcome home was quiet, cordial and heartfelt. The Quaker life is calm; storms seldom appear on its surface, even though they must sometimes agitate its depths; mind and heart are brought under remarkable control; sympathy and charity are extended to the erring; hospitality is a duty and an instinct; domestic love is deep and powerful.

When David had frankly told his story, he was permitted to resume his place in the life of the old homestead as if nothing had happened. He expressed to his brother and sister his love for Pepeeta, and his determination to make her his wife in lawful marriage.

They assented to his plans, and at the earliest possible moment the ministers and elders of the little congregation of Friends were asked to meet, in accordance with their custom, to "confer with him about a concern which was on his mind."

They came, and heard his story and his intention, told with straightforward simplicity. They, too, touched with sympathy and moved to confidence, agreed that there was no obstacle to the union. The date of the wedding was placed at the end of the month, which, by their ecclesiastical law, must elapse after this avowal, and an evening meeting was appointed for the ceremony.

In the meantime David remained quietly at home, and took up his old labors as nearly as possible where he had laid them down. Such a life as he had been leading induces a distaste for manual labor, and sometimes he chafed against it. Again and again he felt his spirit faint within him when he recalled the scenes of excitement through which he had passed, and looked forward to years of this unvaried drudgery; but he never permitted his soul to question his duty! He had decided in the most solemn reflections of his life that he would conquer himself in the place where he had been defeated, perform the tasks which he had so ignominiously abandoned, and then, when he had demonstrated his power to live a true life himself, devote his strength to helping others.

The charms of this pastoral existence gradually came to his support in his heroic resolution. The unbroken quiet of the happy life which had irritated him at first, grew to be more and more a balm to his wounded spirit. The society of the animal world lent its gracious consolation; the great horses, the ponderous oxen, the doves fluttering and cooling about the barnyard, the suckling calves, the playful colts, all came to him as to a friend, and in giving him their confidence and affection awakened his own.

Above all Pepeeta was ever near him. It was no wonder that her beauty threw its spell over David's spirit. It had been enhanced by sorrow, for the human countenance, like the landscape, requires shadow as well as sunshine to perfect its charms. But the burst of sunshine which had come with David's return had brought it a final consummation which transfused even the Quaker dress she had adopted. Her bonnet would never stay over her face but fell back on her shoulders, her ani-

mated countenance emerging from this envelope like the bud of a rose from its sheath. She was as a butterfly at that critical instant when it is ready to leave its chrysalis and take wings. She was a soul enmeshed in an ethereal body, rather than a body which enshathed a soul. Quietly and sedately the lovers met each other at the table, or at the spring, or at the milking.

And when the labors of the day had ended, they sat beneath the spreading hackberry trees, or wandered through the garden, or down the winding lane to the meadow, and reviewed the past with sadness or looked forward to the future with a chastened joy. Their spirits were subdued and softened, their love took on a holy rather than a passionate cast, they felt themselves beneath the shadow of an awful crime, and again and again when they grew joyous and almost gay they were checked by the irrepressible apprehension that out from under the silently revolving wheels of judgment some other punishment would roll.

Tenderly as they loved each other, and sweet as was that love, they could not always be happy with such a past behind them! In proportion to the soul's real grandeur it must suffer over its own imperfections. This suffering is remorse. In proud and gloomy hearts which tell their secrets only to their own pillows, its tears are poison and its rebukes the thrust of daggers. But in those which, like theirs, are gentle and tender by nature, remorseful tears are drops of penitential dew. David and Pepeeta suffered, but their suffering was curative, for pure love is like a fountain; by its incessant gushing from the heart it clarifies the most turbid streams of thought or emotion. Each week witnessed a perceptible advance in peace, in rest, in quiet happiness, and at last the night of their marriage arrived, and they went together to the meeting house.

(To be continued.)

WORKING WOMEN AND BALLOT.

Argument to Show That They Would Be Worse Off with It.

The lack of the ballot has nothing whatever to do with the fact that women workers are paid less than men in the same occupations; the grant of the ballot would not raise the rate of women's wages to an equality of that of men's, says the Boston Transcript. The comparatively low pay of women is due to economic and social causes which the voting power could not affect in the slightest degree. Briefly put the chief of these causes are: (1) The lower efficiency of the average woman worker, resulting mainly from physical limitations; (2) the temporary nature of the employment, which in most cases is terminated by marriage; (3) the rapid increase of the supply of woman labor, which in recent decades has been crowding into occupations already filled by men; (4) the lack of organization, which has left women at the mercy of sweat masters; (5) the parasitic relation of many women toward their industrial occupations, which are not their sole means of support. These causes would persist even if women had the ballot. Whatever the suffrage would or would not do for woman, it would assuredly not bring her equality of pay with man.

Nor would the ballot assist working women to obtain better legislative protection against injurious conditions of employment. On the contrary, much of the present legislation limiting the hours and regulating the terms of employment for women would be rendered unconstitutional by the proposed extension of the suffrage. This legislation, so far as it applies to adult women, now stands the test of constitutionality only because women are in the same class with minors as regards their constitutional status. If women were given the ballot and thus were placed in the same class with adult men, they would be deprived of the special protection now afforded them by the labor code. In this respect the working woman would be worse off with the ballot than she is without the boomerang "weapon."

Hope for the Victims of Narcotics.

In an article in Success Magazine Alexander Lambert, M. D., says: From time immemorial mankind has sought substances to help celebrate his joys, or soothe his sorrows, or blunt the drudgery of his existence. Opium and alcohol have most frequently been used for these purposes. Of late years cocaine has been added to this list. Whenever these narcotics have been employed for these purposes they have often been used to excess.

When the habit of the excessive use of narcotics has once been formed, so rare indeed have been the instances of individuals successfully freeing themselves from their enslaving habit that they have been regarded as medical curiosities. In the whole broad range of the practice of medicine there is no situation more trying to patient and physician than the struggle to obliterate the craving for narcotics and to re-establish the patient in a normal state in which he may again face successfully the problems of existence.

Until recently this seemed all but impossible, but lately a treatment was discovered which successfully obliterated the craving for narcotics, and persons who were formerly enslaved may now have the opportunity to begin life anew without their resistless desire for narcotic indulgence.

An Example.

"Some adjectives," said the teacher, "are made from nouns, such as dangerous, meaning full of danger; and hazardous, full of hazard. Can any boy give me another example?"

"Yes, sir," replied the fat boy at the end of the form, "plous, full of pia."—Sporting Times

COATS for COLD WEATHER



Fur-trimmed coats are in first favor. They equal the entire fur coat in popularity and are considered a trifle smarter for everyday street wear. The sketch shows three of these coats and one Buster Brown coat, over which is worn a fur mantle.

Women and Civilization.

Woman had little to do directly with the shaping of old civilization, but we can not help thinking that our modern sense of life and its more real and human investment are largely and directly due not only to spiritual qualities and distinctively feminine, but to feminine initiative. In the clarified light of the soul womanhood has been translated.

The woman is still the mother, but maternity has for our modern vision a significance which is not merely physical, but spiritual—in its fullest meaning it is the liberation of humanity for finer uses. She is nearer than man to the new Nature, as she was to the old. But our ultra-modern naturalism has a pellucid atmosphere, full of light, and there is a clearer vision of truth. The humanities and, we might also say, the divinities, have been transformed. A delusive network of sophistication has vanished. The terms "masculine" and "feminine" have no longer their old elemental or conventional meanings.

There is, or there is becoming, a new woman and a new man, and the distinction between them is not one of "spheres." No exaltation of life, here or hereafter, could be humanly interesting or at all human in which woman did not have her proper share and her peculiar distinction. This share and this distinction woman has had in the great modern renaissance. She first brought the creative imagination within homely bounds. But here we touch upon a field to which we must give separate consideration.

—Harper's.

placed to form an inset panel. Again, lace is used on the cuffs, entirely covering them, and a belt is designed of lace on the cloth and cut to point low at the front. All pieces are stitched to the jacket.

ABOUT THE BABY



Food for the Baby.

Make a thin paste with two tablespoonfuls of flour and boil it in a quart of water for fifteen minutes (pour paste in water while it is boiling). Then skim half pint of cream off a quart of milk. To this cream add one and one-half pints of the above gruel and two tablespoonfuls of granulated sugar. If milk sugar can be obtained substitute four tablespoonfuls of it in the place of the granulated. This amount is for twenty-four hours, one-quarter of a pint to be given every two and one-half hours as a feeding.

If the baby won't retain the milk, feed it the plain gruel mixed with the sugar.

This is an old nurse's recipe and has stood the test of time, bringing little ones back to strength and health when all other foods have failed.

Back to the Curves.

Couturiers are following closer the lines of the figure than at the beginning of the season. That is to say that now since Parisians have returned from the country and invested in new corsets, their figures are somewhat more reasonable. The corsetiers have decided that they have been murdering the feminine figure long enough, making only lines and angels where curves ought to be. However, things have not yet adjusted themselves, and the normal figure will not be with us until next spring.

Only Woman Surgeon.

Dr. Rose Ringgold is the only woman contract surgeon in the United States army. When on duty she wears a divided skirt and a uniform coat. She is especially interested in the hospital problem of an army in the field, and has made a study of the work of the Japanese hospital corps in the war with Russia.

Folding the Skirt.

To fold a dress skirt properly for packing and so avoid the crease down the middle of the front breadth, fasten the skirt band and pin the back to the middle of the band in front. Lay the skirt on a table or other flat surface, right side out, with the front

breath down. Smooth out all creases and lay folds flat. Then begin at the outer edges and roll each side toward the center back until the two rolls meet. In this way the hang of the skirt is not injured, there are no wrinkles and the front breadth is smooth and flat. If the skirt is too long for the trunk fold it near the top and place a roll of tissue paper under the fold.

For Invalids.

Beef Juice.—Take lean round steak. Heat it slightly in a pan over the fire, then squeeze in a warm lemon squeezer. Season with a little salt. Serve in a colored claret glass, as invalids often object to beef juice on account of the color.

Baked Milk.—Put the milk in a jar, covering the opening with white paper, and bake in a moderate oven until thick as cream. May be taken by the most delicate stomach.

Glycerin and Lemon Juice.—Half and half on a piece of absorbent cotton is the best thing to moisten the lips and tongue of a fever-parched patient.

Onion Gruel.—Boil a few sliced onions in a pint of fresh milk, stirring in a little oat meal and a pinch of salt; boil until the onions become tender, and take at once.

Hairdressing Styles.



The Explanation.

"Charlie, dear," queried the fair maid at the ball park, "why does that man behind the hitter wear such a big bib?"

"That," explained Charlie, "is to keep his shirt front from getting mussed when the ball knocks his teeth out."—Chicago News.

One Way.

A Canadian statesman proposes to solve the woman suffrage problem by giving the ballot to all women who have babies.

Next!

A Mississippi woman has just begun a seven years' term in the penitentiary for stealing half a pound of butter and five eggs.