

The Redemption of David Corson

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CHAPTER XXIII.

The period of our country's history in which these characters were formed was one of tremendous moral earnestness. In that struggle in which man pitted himself against primeval forest and aboriginal inhabitants, the strongest types of manhood and womanhood were evolved, and those who conceived the idea of living a righteous life set themselves to its realization with the same energy with which they addressed themselves to the conquest of nature itself. To multitudes of them, this present world took a place that in the fullest sense of the word was secondary to that other world in which they lived by anticipation.

David Corson was only one of many who, to a degree which in these less earnest or at least more materialistic times appears incredible, had determined to trample the world under their feet. He awoke next morning with an unabated purpose and at an early hour set resolutely about its execution. He had a brave farewell to Pepeeta, exhorted her to seek with him that preparation of heart which alone could fit them for the future, and then with a bag of provisions over his shoulder and an axe in his hand started forth to carry out a plan which he had formed in the night.

He began to prepare for himself a temporary booth which should shelter him until he had erected his cabin; and the rest of the day was consumed in this enterprise. At the close of this simple task was done, so easy is it to provide a shelter for him who seeks protection and not luxury! Having once more satisfied his hunger, he built a fire in front of his rude booth, and lay down in his genial rays, his head upon a pillow of moss. The stillness of the cool, quiet evening was broken only by the crackling of the flames, the quiet murmurs of the two little rills which whispered to each other startled interrogations as to the meaning of this rude invasion, the hoot of owls in the tall tree tops, and the stealthy tread of some of the little creatures of the forest who prowled around, while seeking their prey, to discover, if possible, the meaning of this great light, and the strange noises with which their forest world had resounded.

There came to the recumbent woodsman a deep and quiet peace. He felt a new sense of having been in some way taken back into the fraternity of the unfallen creatures of the universe, and into the all-embracing arms of the great Father. He fell asleep with pure thoughts hovering over the surface of his mind, like a flock of swallows above a crystal lake. And Nature did take him back into that all-enfolding heart where there is room and a welcome for all who do not alienate themselves. Her latches are always open, and forests, fields, mountains, oceans, deserts even, have a silent, genial welcome for all who enter their open doors with reverence, sympathy and yearning. A man asleep alone in a vast wilderness! How easy it would be for Nature to forget him and permit him to sleep on forever! What gives to his importance there amid those giant trees? Why should sun, moon, stars, gravity, heat, cold, care for him? How can the hand that guides the constellations—those vast navies of the infinite sea—pause to touch the eyelids of this atom when the time comes for him to rise? When the sleeper wakes, refreshed and rested, in the morning, it was to take up the routine of duties which were to be only slightly varied for many months to come.

One after another the great trees succumbed to the blows of his axe and from their prostrate forms he carefully selected those which were best adapted to the structure of his cabin, while over the others he piled the limbs and brush and left them to dry for the conflagration which at the end of the hot summer should remove them from the clearing.

When the rainy days came he spent his time in the shelter of his little arbor cutting the "shakes," or shingles, which were to furnish the roof of Pepeeta's home.

The days and weeks fled by and the opening in the forest grew apace. He measured it by night with a celestial arithmetic, using the stars for his triangulations, and as one after another of them became visible where before they had been obscured by the foliage of the trees, he smiled, and felt as if he were cutting his farm out of heaven instead of earth. It was really cut out of both!

His Sundays were spent at the old homestead with his loved ones, and once every week Pepeeta came with Steven to bring him luxuries which her own hands had prepared, and to pass the afternoon with him at his work in the "clearing."

Those were memorable hours, possessing that three-fold existence with which every hour can be endowed by the soul of man—anticipation—realization—recollection. In this way a single moment sometimes becomes almost synchronous with eternity.

It would have been impossible to tell which of the three was happiest, but Pepeeta was always the center of interest, attention and devotion. Her whole nature seemed to be aroused and called into play; all her countless charms were incessantly evoked; her inimitable laughter resounded through the woods and challenged the envious birds to unsuccessful competition. Seriousness alternated with gaiety, coquetry with gravity. Some of the time she spent in gathering flowers to adorn her lover's booth, and some in carrying to the rubbish pile such limbs and branches as her strength would permit her to handle.

Nothing could have been more charming than the immense efforts that she put forth with such grace, to lift with all her might some branch that her loved had tossed aside with a single hand! The attitudes into which these efforts threw her body were as graceful as those into which the water threw the cresses by its ceaseless flow, or the wind bent the tree tops by its fitful gusts.

Steven was frantic with delight at the free, open life of the woods. He chased the squirrels and rabbits, he climbed the trees to gaze into the nests of the birds, and caught the butterflies in his hat.

David entered into all their pleasures, but with a chastened and restrained delight, for he could never forget that he was an exile and a penitent.

There were two days in the season when the regular routine of the woodsman's work was interrupted by functions which possess a romantic charm. One was when the Friends and neighbors from a wide region assembled to help him "raise" the walls of his cabin.

From all sides they appeared, in their picturesque costumes of homespun or fur. Suddenly, through the open gates of the forest, teams of horses crashed, drawing after them clanking log chains, and driven by men who carried saws and "cant hooks" on their broad shoulders. Loud halloos of greeting, cheerful words of encouragement, an eager and agreeable bustle of business, filled the clearing.

Log by log the walls rose, as the horses rolled them into place with the aid of the great chains which the plowmen wrapped around them. It was only a rude log cabin they built—with a great, wide opening through the middle, a room on either side, and a picturesque chimney at either end; but it was not to be despised even for grace, and when warmth and comfort and adaptability to needs and opportunities are considered, there have been few buildings erected by the genius of man more justly entitled to admiration.

When this single day's work was ended there remained nothing for David to do but think and daub the walls with mud, cover the rude rafters of the roof with his shakes, build the chimneys out of short sticks, cob-house fashion, and cement them on the inside with clay to protect them from the flames.

The other day was the one on which, at the close of the long and genial summer, when the mass of timber and brushwood had been thoroughly seasoned by the hot sun, he set his torches to the carefully constructed piles.

Steven and Pepeeta were to share with him in the excitement of this conflagration, and David had postponed it until dusk, in order that they might enjoy its entire sublimity. He had taken the precaution to plow many furrows around the cabin and also around the edge of the clearing, so the flames could neither destroy his house nor devastate the forest.

Such precautions were necessary, for nothing can exceed the ferocity of fire in the debris which the woodsmen scatter about them. When the dusk had settled down on this woodland world and long shadows had crept across the clearing, wrapping themselves round the trees at its edge and scattering themselves among the thick branches till they were almost hid from view, David lighted a pine torch and gave it into the hands of the eager boy, who seized it and like a young Prometheus started forth. A single touch to the dry tinder was enough. With a dull explosion, the mass burst into flame. Shouting in his exultation, the little torch-bearer rushed on, igniting pile after pile, and leaving behind him almost at every step a mighty conflagration. At each new instant, as the night advanced, until ten, twenty, fifty great heaps were roaring and seething with flames! Great jets spouted up into the midnight heavens as if about to kiss the very stars, and suddenly expired in the illimitable space above them. Immense sparks, shot out from these bonfires as from the craters of volcanoes, went sailing into the void around them and fell hissing into the water of the brooks or silently into the new-plowed furrows.

The clouds above the heads of the subdued and almost terrified beholders, for no one is ever altogether prepared for the absolute awfulness of such a spectacle, were glowing with the fierce light which the fires threw upon them. Weird illuminations played fantastic tricks in the foliage from which the startled shadows had vanished. The roar of the ever-increasing fires became louder and louder, until in very terror Pepeeta crept into David's arms for protection, while the child who had fearlessly produced this scene of awful grandeur and destruction shouted with triumph at his play.

"There's a reckless little fire-ester!" said David, watching his figure as it appeared and disappeared. "How youth trifles with forces whose powers it can neither measure nor control! It was well that I drew a furrow around our cabin or it would have been burned."

His gaze was fixed on the little cabin in which seemed to dance and oscillate in the palpitating light; and touched by the analogies and symbols which his penetrating eye discovered in the simple scenes of daily life, he continued to soliloquize, saying, "I should have drawn furrows around my life, before I played with fire!"

"Nay, David," replied Pepeeta, "we should never have played with fire at all."

"How wise we are—too late!"

"Shall we walk any more cautiously when the next untried pathway opens?" he added, somewhat sadly, as he recalled the errors of the past.

"We ought to, if experience has any value," said Pepeeta.

"But has it? Or does it only interpret the past, and not point out the future?"

"Something of both, I think."

"Well, we must trust it."

"But not it alone. There is something better and safer."

"What is that, my love?"

"The path-finding instinct of the soul itself."

"Do you believe there is such an instinct?"

"As much as I believe the carrier pigeon has it. It is the inner light of which you told me. You see, I remember my lesson like an obedient child."

"Why, then, are we so often misled?" he asked, tempting her.

"Because we do not wholly trust it!" she said.

"But how can we distinguish the true light from the false, the instinct from imagination or desire? If the soul has a hundred compasses pointing in different ways, what compass shall lead the bewildered mariner to know the true compass?"

"He who will know, can know."

"Are you speaking from your heart, Pepeeta?"

"From its depths."

"And have you no doubts that what you say is true?"

"None, for I learned it from a teacher whom I trust, and have justified it by my own experience."

"And now the teacher must sit at the feet of the pupil! Oh! beautiful instructor, keep your faith firm for my sake! I have dark hours through which I have to pass and often lose my way. The restoration of my spiritual vision is but slow. How often am I bewildered and lost! My thoughts brood and brood within me!"

"But then away," she said, cheerily. "We live by faith and not by sight. We need not be concerned with the distant future. Let us live in this dear, divine moment. I am here. You are here. We are together; our hearts are one; our eyes meet; our hearts are one; we love! Let us only be true to our best selves, and to the light that shines within! Oh! I have learned so much in these few months, among these people of peace, David! They know the way of life! We need go no farther to seek it. It lies before us, let us follow it!"

"Angel of goodness," he exclaimed, clasping her hand, "it must be that supreme Love reigns over all the folly and madness of life, or to such a one as I, a gift so good and beautiful would never have been given!"

She pressed his hand for response, for her lips quivered and her heart was too full for words.

And now, through the ghastly light which magnified his size portentously and painted him with grotesque and terrible colors, the child reappeared, begrimed with smoke and wild with the transports of a power so vast and an accomplishment so wonderful.

The three figures stood in the bright illumination, fascinated by the spectacle. The flames as if satisfied with destruction, had died down, and fifty great beds of glowing embers lay spread out before them, like a sort of terrestrial constellation.

The wind, which had been awakened and excited to madness as it rushed in from the great halls of the forest to fan the fires, now that it was no longer needed, ceased to blow and sank into silence and repose. Little birds, returning to their roosts, complained mournfully that their dreams had been disturbed, and a great owl from the top of a lofty elm hooted his rage.

It was Saturday night. The labors of the week were over. The time had come for them to return to the farm house. They turned away reluctantly, leaving nature to finish the work they had begun.

(To be continued.)

Stopping the "Fire-Wagon."
When the first railroad was laid over the Western plains, and the cars began running to San Francisco, the Indians viewed the locomotive from the hilltops at a distance, not daring to come nearer the "fire-wagon." A train of cars was to them "heap wagon, no hoos." An Apache chief gathered a party of warriors in Arizona and went several hundred miles to see the terrible fire-wagon that whistled louder than the eagle's scream, and poured out dense black smoke. W. M. Thayer says, in his "Marvels of the New West," that the redskins grew bolder, and once attacked a fire-wagon, expecting to capture it. When they failed and many were injured, they said, "Fire-wagon had medicine!"

The Indians stretched a lariat across the track, breast-high, each end being held by thirty braves.

"When the engineer first saw it, he didn't know what on earth was the matter," said the narrator, "but in a minute more he burst out laughing. He caught hold of that throttle, and he opened her out."

"He struck that lariat going about forty miles an hour, and he just piled those braves up everlasting promiscuous."

Fair Enough.

"Why do you hand me this almanac?" inquired the prominent citizen. "So that you may pick out the anecdotes to be attached to your interview," explained the man who was getting up the magazine article. "It is only fair to give you a choice."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Questionable.

"Your tickets were complimentary, were they not?"

"Well," replied the man who had seen a painfully amateur entertainment, "I thought they were until I saw the show."—Tit Bits.

Experiments in abrasion conducted at a French mint have proved that aluminum coins will be less rapidly worn by use than coins made of gold, silver or even bronze.

DISPUTED DA VINCI BUST.



Dr. Bode, who was responsible for the purchase of the "Leonardo da Vinci bust" that has aroused so much controversy, is the director of the Kaiser Friedrich museum, Berlin, and it was for that institution that the work was bought for \$40,000.

Dr. Bode is as firmly convinced that the bust is, in very truth, the work of Leonardo as are certain others that it is the work of R. C. Lucas, the British sculptor, who flourished in the middle of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the more the doctor examines the bust the more certain he is that it is a genuine early sixteenth century work.

BASHFUL STANLEY.

His Response to a Speech of Eulogy at a Banquet.

William H. Riding tells in McClure's Magazine of a dinner of the Papyrus Club in Boston at which Henry M. Stanley, the explorer, was the guest of honor:

"Whether he (Stanley) sat or stood, he fidgeted and answered in monosyllables—not because he was unamiable or unappreciative, but because—this man of iron, God's instrument, whose word in the field brooked no contradiction or evasion, he who defied obstacles and danger and pierced the heart of darkness—was bashful even in the company of fellow craftsmen."

"His embarrassment grew when after dinner the chairman eulogized him to the audience. He squirmed and averted his face as cheer after cheer confirmed the speaker's rhetorical ebullience of praise. 'Gentlemen, I introduce to you Mr. Stanley, who,' etc. The hero stood up slowly, painfully, reluctantly, and with a gesture of deprecation, fumbled in first one and then another of his pockets without finding what he sought."

"It was supposed that he was looking for his notes, and more applause took the edge off the delay. His mouth twitched without speech for another awkward minute before, with a more erect bearing, he produced the object of his search and put it on his head. It was not paper, but a rag of a cap, and with that on he faced the company as one who by the act had done all that could be expected of him and made further acknowledgment of the honors he had received superfluous. It was a cap that Livingstone had worn and that Livingstone had given him."

A Curious Experience.

Lombroso, the famous Italian criminologist, once had a curious experience. He was in a printing office correcting the proofs in his "Delinquent Man" with the chief reader when on reaching a page which dealt with a young man who, impelled by jealousy, had stabbed his fiancée, he made a surprising discovery. The proofreader was this man.

"Suddenly," Lombroso said in telling the story, "he threw himself at my feet, declaring that he would commit suicide if I published this story with his name. His face, before very gentle, was completely altered and almost terrifying, and I was really afraid that he would kill himself or me on the spot. I tore up the proofs and for several editions omitted his story."

At the Darktown Culture Club.

Chairman (including an address of introduction)—An' now, ladies and gentlemen, I hab de honor of presentin' to dis audience de speaker of de evening—Prof. Johnning de Westville seminary—who will proceed to define de indefinable, deplend de indeplendable and unscrew the unscrewtable.—Life.

A Frequent Insincerity.

"The man's own words prove him a treacherer," said Mr. Quibbles. "In what way?"

"He writes me an insulting letter and signs it 'Yours Respectfully.'"—Washington Star.

Before Election Out West.

"Our ticket is bound to win in Frog Dog."

"All over but the shouting, eh?"

"All over but the shouting," explained the native politely.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Wrong Party.

Bill—Congratulations on your marriage, old man.

Will—Congratulations my wife, old boy; she got the best of men.—Harvard Lampoon.

A Braggart.

"Pa, what is a braggart?"

"He's a man, my son, who is not afraid to express his real opinion of himself."—Boston Transcript.

Riches have wings, but poverty bubbles around on crutches.



FARM NOTES

Profit in Crop Rotation.
Farmers in lower Delaware are greatly interested in an experiment just concluded by Capt. William E. Lank, who has thoroughly proven the advantage of the rotation of crops on a four-acre field. Last spring he manured the four acres, which had been in corn the previous year. The manure was plowed under, the ground well harrowed and peas drilled in. The crop grew well, and in June the peas were sold at a net profit of \$92.

As soon as the peas were removed, plows again turned the soil over and it was planted with corn. From this a fine crop of fodder was saved, yielding a net profit of \$65. The ground now has a fine set of scarlet clover on it, the seed having been sown at the last harrowing of the corn, with every indication of \$40 worth of clover hay in the spring and a constant improvement to the land.

Construction of Colony House.
During the dull season our local lumber dealer and his assistant built some portable colony poultry-houses as follows, writes an Indiana correspondent of Orange Judd Farmer: The frame is securely bolted to the sills, which are made sled-runner style. The walls are made from closely-fitted tongue and groove drop-siding. The floors are light, and the ventilators covered with screen wire to keep out rats, weasels, etc.; the cover is roofing felt. Each house is painted. The size is 6 by 8 feet; 6 feet high in front and 4 at the back. They cost me \$15 each for all material and work. Very likely they could be built for less in places where lumber is cheaper.

First Imported Horses.
It is said that the first horses imported into New England were brought over in 1629, or nine years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers. One stallion and seven mares survived the voyage. From this it will be seen that the first nine years of our history was a horseless "age" in New England. The colonists in Virginia differed from the sober-minded Puritans of New England in being fond of sport, loving fast horses and trying their speed on the race track. The horses imported were English hunters and racers. Fearnought, brought over in 1764, left his mark on a numerous progeny of uncommon beauty, size and speed.

Keeping Up Spraying Fight.
The fight against insect, scale and fungus diseases in our orchards must not be dropped with the harvesting of the fruit crops. It cannot be hoped that you have, by your spraying operations during the summer season, killed all the scale insects and fungi, and doubtless during the press of work on the farm during the midsummer season the matter will have been neglected, or very little done, since the fruit was formed, and it can be depended upon that there will now be on your orchard trees a fine collection of all sorts ready to hibernate and come forth in the spring stronger than ever.

How West Has Developed.
Five years ago it was freely predicted that land values in the West had reached their height, but they are 20 to 40 per cent higher now than then. The families of the first comers are grown to the fore and is taking part in the business of the communities. They have grown up with the country and know what it can produce and just how valuable it is for the purpose of production and for a home.—C. M. Harger in the Atlantic Magazine.

Good Roads of Sawdust.
Making good roads with sawdust is being practiced in a number of localities in the South. Two ridges of earth are thrown up (a road machine being required to do the work) at a certain width from each other, the space between being filled with a six-inch bed of sawdust. Dirt is then mixed with the sawdust, and it is claimed that heavily loaded vehicles in passing over this kind of a road make no impression upon it. It is estimated that the cost of building is about \$25 per mile.

Feeding Calves by Hand.
It is always best to feed the calves by hand, because one knows just what they are getting and how much. It is really not such a terrible task to feed a dozen calves, but is quite a nuisance to go through the motion just for one or two. Perhaps a great many dairy-men who object to raising calves or their own herds would change their minds if they should practice it in a wholesale way.

Light in Cow Stables.
The light in a cow stable should come from the rear of the cows, so the milkers can see to clean the cows properly for milking. This arrangement is accomplished in modern stables by building them thirty-four to thirty-six feet wide and having two rows of cows facing toward a feeding alley in the center.

Public Troughs Dangerous.
Be careful about letting your horses drink from public watering troughs when there are any contagious diseases in the country. The trough is a fine distributing center for infection.

World's Wheat Crop, 1909.
Broomhall's final estimate of the 1909 wheat crop of the world places the total wheat production of the wheat acreage of the world at 3,347,000,000 bushels, an increase of 285,000,000 bushels over the production in 1908, a 427,000,000 bushel increase over the crop of 1907. The production in Europe aggregated 1,872,000,000 bushels, being 160,000,000 bushels over the 1908 crop. The crops of North and South America reaches 1,040,000,000 bushels, or 80,000,000 bushels over last year. It is likely that this great production will not be more than enough to supply the demands of the world's population.

Conservative Corn Policy.
It is, after all, but evidence of a desire to speculate when the corn belt farmer, particularly the one located in the northern part, plants a type of corn which is too big to mature in the season lying between the limits of killing frosts in spring and fall.

Where an exceptionally favorable season makes possible the proper maturity of such corn one year, there will be a half dozen seasons when it will get hit with the frost before it is ripe and sour and mold in the crib. It is better to play safe and grow a smaller and earlier maturing type.

Feeding Substitute for Corn.
In these days of high priced corn there is a lesson in the experience of Boyden Pearce of Hancock County, Me., who says: "I have been forced to depend upon my farm for my pork and have learned that plenty of rutabaga turnips, clover and one bag of corn will put a hog through the winter; then to pasture till fall. It makes good pork and at a low price. There is money in it and no need to depend upon the West for pork."

Salt for Milking Cows.
Your cows will get enough salt by simply putting a lump of rock salt in the manger. A cow giving a good flow of milk, well fed, ought to have two ounces of salt a day, an ounce in the morning and an ounce at night. Some advise giving this to them on their ensilage, when you feed ensilage and grain. You can take a small piece of salt in your fingers and weigh it, and will soon be able to judge the amount in an ounce.

Cleanliness in Dairy Counts.
Cleanliness in all lines of dairying counts for quality of products. After milk vessels have been washed with soap and hot water they must be finally rinsed with scalding water. When scalding water is used no drying with rags will be necessary, as the heat from the water will dry the vessels without aid. Sunning after cleaning is to be commended.

Animal and Bird Farm Aids.
According to the Department of Agriculture of France a toad is worth \$9; a lizard, \$9; a swallow, \$20; a titmouse, \$8; the robin, \$4; a mat, \$30; an owl, \$12; a screech owl, \$16; a fern owl, \$30. That looks bad when some of us come to think it over and call to mind how many of our friends have been killed.

Providing Salt for Pigeons.
On one of the largest squab plants in this country salt is furnished the breeders by dipping the small sacks in water and then allowed to dry until they become hard and firm. These are then placed in the lofts and the pigeons pick-out the salt through the sacks. Never give common granulated salt loose.

Whitewashing the Houses.
Nothing is better for poultry buildings from a sanitary point of view than a good coat of whitewash. Especially is this true when getting the poultry houses ready for the winter. All may not be aware there is quite a science in whitewashing. There are different kinds, and each is adapted for a different use.

Working for Top of Ladder.
Do not hesitate to work on the top rounds of a ladder in the poultry business. The higher you get the less crowded it is, and therefore the better the business pays, says a writer in an exchange. You may feel a little lonesome at times, but it is the kind of loneliness that is right easy to bear.

The Power in Gasoline.
The power of gasoline is really marvelous. The man who has used gasoline power for years does not marvel at it as does the recent purchaser. A gallon of this liquid will easily carry five passengers ten or fifteen miles, or it will grind feed cheaper than the man with horses that need the exercise can do it. Great is gasoline.

Inoculation of Alfalfa.
The results from more than 100 co-operative experiments in growing alfalfa, located in over one-half of the counties of New York State, indicate that where neither the lime nor inoculation is applied the chance of a successful crop is not more than 20 per cent, or one chance in five.