

# The Redemption of David Corson

By CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS

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## CHAPTER VI.

Early the next morning the two adventurers took their departure. The jovial quack lavished his good-byes upon the landlord and the "riff-raff" who gathered to welcome the coming or speed the parting guest at the door of the country tavern. He drove a pair of beautiful, spirited horses, and had the satisfaction of knowing that he excited the envy of every beholder, as he took the ribbons in his hand, swung out his long whip and started. If her husband's heart was swelling with pride, Pepeeta's was bursting with anxiety. An instinct which she did not understand had prevented her from telling the doctor of her interview with the Quaker. Long before the farmhouse came in sight she began to scan the landscape for the figure which had been so vividly impressed upon her mind.

The swift horses, well fed and well groomed, whirled the light wagon along the road at a rapid pace and as they passed the humble home of the Quaker, Pepeeta saw a little child driving the cows down the long lane, and a woman moving quietly among the flowers in the garden; but David himself was not to be seen.

A tear fell from her eye, and her chin quivered. With the utmost effort of her will she could not repress these evidences of her disappointment, and with a spasmodic motion she clutched the arm of the driver as if it were that of Destiny and she could hold it back. So sudden and so powerful was the grasp of her young hand, that it turned the horses out of the road and all but upset the carriage. With a violent jerk of the reins, the astonished driver pulled them back, and exclaimed with an oath:

"You little wild cat, if you ever d-d-d do that again, I will throw you into the d-d-ditch!"

"Excuse me!" she answered humbly, covering under his angry glances.

"What is the matter?" he asked, more kindly, seeing the tears in her eyes.

"I do not know. I am nervous, I guess," she answered, sadly.

"Nervous? P-p-peeta Aesculapius nervous? I thought her nerves were made of steel? What is the m-m-matter?" he asked, looking at her anxiously.

His gentleness calmed her, and she answered: "I am sorry to leave a place where I have been so happy! Oh! why cannot we settle down somewhere and stay? I get so tired of being always on the wing. Even the birds have nests to rest in for a little while. Are we never going to have a home?"

"Nonsense, child! What do we want with a h-h-home? It is better to be always on the go. I want my liberty. It suits me best to fly through the heavens like a hawk or swim the deep sea like a shark. A home would be a p-prison. I should tramp back and forth in it like a polar bear in a c-cage. B-b-be gay! Be happy! How can you be sad on a morning like this? Look at the play of the muscles under the smooth skins of the horses? Remember the b-b-bright shining dollars that we coaxed out of the tightly b-b-buttoned breeches pockets of the gray-backed Q-Q-Quakers. What more do you ask of life? What else can it g-g-give?"

"It does not make me happy! I shall never be happy until I have a home," she said, still sobbing, and trying to conceal the cause of her grief from herself as well as from her husband.

She had divined the cause of her disappointment with an unerring instinct. It was exactly as she thought. At the last instant, David's heart had failed him.

On the preceding evening, he had hurried through his "chore," excused himself from giving an account of the adventures of the day on the ground of fatigue, and retired to his room to cherish in his heart the memories of that beautiful face and the prospects of the future. He could not sleep. For hours he tossed on his bed or sat in the window looking out into the night, and when at last he fell into an uneasy slumber his dreams were haunted by two faces which struggled ceaselessly to crowd each other from his mind. One was the young and passionate countenance of the egypt, and the other was that of his beautiful mother with her pale, carved features, her snow-white hair, her pensive and unearthly expression. They both looked at him, and then gazed at each other. Now one set below the horizon like a wan, white moon, and the other rose above it like the glowing star of love. Now the moon passed over the glowing star in a long eclipse and then disappearing behind a cloud left the brilliant star to shine alone.

When he awoke the gray dawn revealed in vague outline the realities of the world, and warned him that he had but a few moments to execute his plans. He sprang from his couch strong in his purpose to depart, for the fever of adventure was still burning in his veins, and the rapturous looks with which Pepeeta had received his promise to be her companion still made his pulses bound. He hurriedly put a few things into a bundle and stole out of the house.

As he moved quietly, but swiftly away from the familiar scenes, his heart which had been beating so high from hope and excitement began to sink in his bosom. He had never dreamed of the force of his attachment to this dear place, and he turned his face toward the old gray house again and again. Every step away from it seemed more difficult than the last, and his feet became heavy as lead. But he pressed on, ashamed to acknowledge his inability to execute his purpose. He came to the last fence which

lay between him and the bridge where he had agreed to await the adventurers, and then paused.

He was early. There was still time to reflect. Had the carriage arrived at that moment he would have gone; but it tarried, and the tide of love and regret bore back to the old familiar life. "I cannot go. I cannot give it up," he murmured to himself.

Torn by conflicting emotions, inclining at first one course and then another, he finally turned his face away from the bridge and fled, impelled by weakness rather than desire. He did not once look back, but ran at the top of his speed straight to the old barn and hid himself from sight. There, breathless and miserable, he watched. He had not long to wait. The dazzling "turn-out" dashed into view. On the high seat he beheld Pepeeta, saw the eager glance she cast at the farm house, followed her until they arrived at the bridge, beheld her disappointment, raved at his own weakness, rushed to the door, halted, returned, rushed back again, returned, threw himself upon the sweet smelling hay, cursed his weakness and indecision and finally surrendered himself to misery.

From the utter wretchedness of that bitter hour, he was roused by the ringing of the breakfast bell. Springing to his feet, he hastened to the spring, bathed his face, assumed a cheerful look and entered the house.

For the first time in his life he attempted the practice of deception, and experienced the bitterness of carrying a guilty secret in his bosom. How he worried through the morning meal and the prayer at the family altar, he never knew, and he escaped with inexpressible relief to the stable and the field to take up the duties of his daily life. He found it plodding work, for the old inspirations to endeavor had utterly vanished. He who had hitherto found toll a beatitude now moved behind the plow like a common drudge.

Tired of the pain which he endured, he tried again and again to forget the whole experience and to persuade himself that he was glad the adventure had ended; but he knew in his heart of hearts that he had failed to follow the gypsy, not because he did not really wish to, but because he did not wholly dare. The consciousness that he was not only a bad man but a coward, added a new element to the bitterness of the cup he was drinking.

Each succeeding day was a repetition of the first, and became a painful unrest. The very world in which he lived seemed to have undergone a transformation. The sunlight had lost its glory, the flowers had become pale and odorless, the songs of the birds dull and dispiriting.

Some men pass their lives in the midst of environments where insincerity would not have been so painful; but in a home and a community where sham and hypocrisy were almost unknown these perpetual deceptions became more and more intolerable with every passing hour. Nothing could be more certain than that in a short time, like some foreign substance in a healthy body, his nature would force him out of this ungenial environment. With some natures the experience would have been a slow and protracted one, but with him the termination could not be long delayed.

It came in a tragedy at the close of the next Sabbath. The day had been dreary, painful and exasperating beyond all endurance, and he felt that he could never stand the strain of another. And so, having detained his mother in the sitting room after the rest of the family had retired, he paced the floor for a few moments, and after several unsuccessful attempts to introduce the subject gently, said bluntly:

"Mother, I am chafing myself to death against the limitations of this narrow life."

"My son," she said, calmly, "this has not come to me as a surprise."

He moved uneasily and looked as if he would ask her "Why?"

"Because," she said, as if he had really spoken, "a mother possesses the power of divination, and can discern the sorrows of her children, by a suffering in her own bosom."

The consciousness that he had caused her pain rendered him incapable of speech, and for a moment they sat in silence.

"What is thy wish and purpose, my son?" she asked at last, with an effort which seemed to exhaust her strength.

"I wish to see the world," he answered, his eye kindling as he spoke. "I have seen it in my dreams. I have heard its distant voices calling to me. My spirit chafes to answer their summons. I strain at my anchor like a great ship caught by the tide."

"Shall I tell thee what this world of which thou has dreamed such dreams is really like, my son? I will," she said, regarding him with a look which seemed to devour him with yearning love. "This world whose voices thee hears calling is a fiction of thine own brain. That which thou thinkest thou beholds of glory and beauty thee hast conjured up from the depths of a youthful and disordered fancy, and projected into an unreal realm. That world which thou has thus beheld in thy dreams will burst like a pin-pricked bubble when thee tries to enter it. It is not the real world, my son. How shall I tell thee what that real world is? It is a snare, a pit-fall. It is a flame into which young men are ever plunging. It promises, only to deceive; it beckons, only to betray; its smiles are ambushes; it is sunlight on the surface, but ice at the heart; it offers life, but it confers death. I bid thee fear it, shun it, hate it!"

"Mother," he exclaimed, "what does thee know of this world, thee who has passed thy life in lonely places and amongst a quiet people?"

She rose and paced the floor as if to permit some of her excitement to escape in physical activity, and pausing before him, said: "My only and well-beloved son, thee does not know thy mother. A veil has been drawn over that portion of her life which preceded thy birth, and its secrets are hidden in her own heart. She has prayed God that she might never have to bring them into the light; but he has imposed upon her the necessity of opening the grave in which they are buried, in order that, seeing them, thee may abandon thy desire to taste those pleasures which once lured thy mother along the flower-strewn pathway to her sin and sorrow."

Her solemnity and her suffering produced in the bosom of her son a nameless fear. He could not speak. He could only look and listen.

"Thee sees before thee," she continued, "the faded form and features of a woman once young and beautiful. Can thee believe it?"

He did not answer, for she had seemed to him as mothers always do to children, to have been always what he had found her upon awakening to consciousness. He could not remember when her hair was not gray. Something in her manner revealed to the startled soul of the young Quaker that he was about to come upon a discovery that would shake the very foundation of his life; for a moment he could not speak.

"David," she said, in a voice that sounded like an echo of a long-dead past, "thee fear that the sins of thy parents should be visited upon thee, has tormented every hour of my life. I have watched thee and prayed for thee as no one but a mother who has drunk the bitter cup to its dregs could ever do. I have trembled at every childish sin. In every little fault I have beheld a miniature of the vices of thy mother and thy father—thy father! Oh! David, my son—my son!"

The white lips parted, but no sound issued from them. She raised her white hand and clutched at her throat as if choking. Then she trembled, gasped, reeled, and fell forward into his arms.

In a moment more, the agitated heart had ceased to beat, and the secret of her life was hidden in its mysterious silence. The sudden, inexplicable and calamitous nature of this event came near unsettling the mental balance of the sensitive and highly organized youth. Coming as it did upon the very heels of the experiences which had so thoroughly shaken his faith in the old life, he felt himself to be the target for every arrow in the quiver of misfortune.

(To be continued.)

### Not to Be Trapped.

"Concede nothing," was the advice of a well-known politician concerning a certain famous disputed election. His policy was followed to the letter by the man of whom the Chicago Tribune tells. On the relief train that had been rushed to the scene of the railway wreck was a newspaper reporter.

The first victim he saw was a man whose eyes were blackened and whose left arm was in a sling. With his hair full of dirt, one end of his shirt collar flying loose and his coat ripped up the back, the victim was sitting on the grass and serenely contemplating the landscape.

"How many people are hurt?" asked the reporter, hurrying up to him.

"I haven't heard of anybody being hurt, young man," said the other.

"How did this wreck happen?"

"I haven't heard of any wreck."

"You haven't? Who are you, anyhow?"

"I don't know that it's any of your business, but I'm the claim agent of the road."

### A Man of His Word.

Tom—Lend me \$10. I'll pay you next week.

Dick—That's what you said last week.

Tom—Well, you don't want me going around and telling you one thing one week and another thing the next, do you?

### A Talking Machine.

Brother—How did you like my friend, Mr. Smith.

Sister—Why, he yawned three times while I was talking to him.

Brother—Perhaps he wasn't yawning. He may have been trying to say something.

### Up to Him.

Stern Parent—So you would be willing to die for my daughter, would you?

Ardent Suitor—I would, indeed!

Stern Parent—All right, then. Get your life insured for \$20,000 and make good.

### A Parting Shot.

Doctor—Your case is a very serious one, sir, and I think a consultation had better be held.

Patient—Very well, doctor; have as many consultations as you like.

### In Fashion.

Crawford—So your wife doesn't make mince pies any more?

Crabshaw—No. She uses all the odds and ends around the house as trimmings for her hat.—Puck.

### Generous Johnny.

Minister—Johnny, do you know where little boys go that go fishing on Sunday?

Johnny—Sure. Follow me an' I'll show you.

### A Foregone Conclusion.

"Everybody thinks that Amelia is such a sweet girl, and I can't see it."

"You can't? Why, man, her father made a big fortune in the sugar business."

### Ready for Trial.

"The charge is desertion. What'll be your defense?"

"Temporary insanity, or I never would have married her."

# New England the Cradle of the Thanksgiving Holiday



TRADITION SAYS THAT MARY CHILTON WAS THE FIRST OF THE PILGRIMS FROM THE MAYFLOWER TO SET FOOT ON PLYMOUTH ROCK.

## THE THANKSGIVING PUMPKIN.

Ab, on Thanksgiving Day, when from east and from west From north and from south come the pilgrim and guest When the gray-haired New Englander sees round his board The old broken lines of reflection restored When the care-wearied man seeks his mother or once more And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before What moistens the lip, what brightens the eye That calls back the past like the rich pumpkin pie!

O fruit loved of boyhood; the old days recalling; When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were falling; When wild, ugly faces we carried in its skin, Glaring out through the dark with a candle within! When we laughed round the cornheap, with hearts all in tune, Our chair a broad pumpkin, our lantern the moon, Telling tales of the fairy who traveled like in a pumpkin-shell coach, with two rats for her team!

Then, thanks for thy presence!—none sweeter or better E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter! Falser hands never wrought at a pastry more fine. Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking than thine!

And the prayer which my mouth is too full to express, Swells my heart that thy shadow may never be less, That the days of thy lot may be lengthened below, And the frame of thy work like pumpkin vine grow, And thy life be as sweet, and its last sunset sky Golden-lit and fair as thy own pumpkin pie!

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

## THE RED MAN'S THANKSGIVING.

How Reservation Indians Enjoy the Day—A Pony Smoke Popular.

Interest in Thanksgiving day and its observance is just as intense these days among the reservation Indians as in college towns where great football games are scheduled to occur. Especially is this true in the Southwest, where the Indians have had an opportunity to become thoroughly civilized of late years. The white people find no more enjoyment in this day of universal cheer than do these sams-dusky redskins.

It is a day of feasting, playing and gaming, with a big dance at night. Such sport only comes once a year to them nowadays, when they have had to forsake the scalping knife for the plow. Their wild nature revolted at the idea of work, and it has been with much difficulty that the government agents have made farmers out of the young braves. A day of rest and amusement is considered good for their better nature, and the government authorities are willing that Thanksgiving day shall become a festive time for the reservation wards of the nation.

The Osages hold a big feast at Pawhuska, their capital city. All members of the tribe are invited to take part in the festivities. At the beginning and end of each meal, and there are many, the aged missionary who lives among them is invited to deliver a short prayer, thanking the Great Spirit for the good things which the agent has sent them. The food is cooked by the squaws, and while it could be prepared in a much cleaner and more tasteful manner, the cooking is an improvement over that of a few years ago.

The Apaches and Cherokees are in the habit of holding a pony smoke. Often the Osages indulge in this expensive festival. A pony smoke is a friendly meeting of two tribes and is especially appropriate for the occasion. The tribe giving the smoke is supposed to bear all the expenses. They provide the best game and vegetables in the market for their guests, and at the end of the first day's meeting they present a good pony to the head of each family visiting them. As a tribe consists of from 300 to 500 families, the expenses soon mount high. The Osages, being the richest reservation Indians, can better afford to hold pony smokes, and they generally invite several

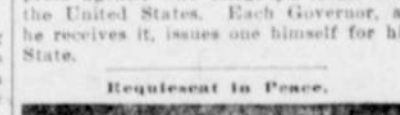
hundred guests from the Ponca, Tonka and surrounding tribes. Those accepting the ponies are supposed to return the gift with equally expensive ones later on, but few of them are in the position so to do.

The Ponca hold every Thanksgiving as a beef issue day. If the agent does not come forward and present them with a herd of cattle for this occasion they mortgage their property and buy cattle of some neighboring ranchman. A beef issue is the most typical and also the most picturesque of Indian Thanksgiving celebrations. For years the government has forbidden the issue of beef after the manner of an old time issue, but on special occasions they are allowed the amusement of killing their own meat. It is said by the government officers who succeeded in having the practice stopped the beef issues tend to make the Indian wilder and more difficult to civilize.

A hundred cattle are turned loose in a large pasture. The young men of the tribe are mounted on mustangs and have shining guns. With the good wishes of the squaws and medicine men ringing in their ears, they ride out to kill the cattle. The beasts have no chance for life whatever. The chase is accompanied by an undue amount of wild yelling, while excitement grows intense in the camp. The smell of fresh blood makes the squaws wild, as it were. After all the cattle have been shot down then the killers give a signal which means that all of the tribe are at liberty to rush forth and secure their portion. A half beef is awarded to each squaw. The beef is cleaned and cooked on a fire on the open plain, while the medicine men dance their approval and the warriors sing in their glee. The feast follows with more dancing, and the whole day is thus spent, ending late at night with a final gorge.—New York Tribune.

Thus duly signed and sealed many copies are made of it by clerks, and one is sent to the Governor of every State in the Union. It is also given out then to the press agents, who telegraph it all over the United States. Each Governor, as he receives it, issues one himself for his State.

Requiescat in Pace.



I'm the ghost of the gobbler Who used to be so great; They took my poor, neglected bones And piled them on a plate. Reader, shed a kindly tear For my unhappy fate.

This is the common fate of all Upon the world's great chart; They've got to leave a pile of bones— The stupid and the smart. Even when Napoleon died He left a Bonaparte.

We are merely poppets, Moving on a string; And when we think that we are it, The ax will fall—"Requiescat in Pace."

A THANKSGIVING IDYL.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High. To show forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. \* \* \* Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. \* \* \* O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. To him which led his people through the wilderness; for his mercy endureth forever."

This can usually be said of every man who can play the piano well. He can't do anything else.

## AN AFTER-DINNER SPEECH—"GEE, BUT I FEEL CROWDED."

I FEEL AS THOUGH I HAD EATEN AN ANTI-CHEMUR OR TWO

HAVE I BEEN TOO RASH WITH MY APPETITE? HAVE I EATEN TOO MUCH, BUT TOO WELL?

—Chicago Tribune.

—Chicago Tribune.