

The Redemption of David Corson

By CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS

Copyright, 1900, by The Bowen-Merrill Company.

All Rights Reserved

CHAPTER VIII.

A little before dusk the three companions started upon their evening's business. The horses and carriage were waiting at the door and they mounted to their seats. David was embarrassed by the novelty of the situation, and Peepeta by his presence; but the quack was in his highest spirits. He saluted the bystanders with easy familiarity, ostentatiously flung the hostler a coin, flourished his whip and excited universal admiration for his driving. During the turn which they took around the city for an advertisement, he indoctrinated his pupil with the principles of his art.

"People to-day are just what they were centuries ago. G-g-gull 'em just as easy. Make 'em think the moon is made of g-g-green cheese—way to catch larks is to p-p-pull the heavens down—extract sunbeams from c-c-cucumbers and all the rest! There's one master-weakness, Davy. They all think they are sick, or if they d-d-don't, you can make 'em!"

"What! Make a well man think he is sick?" the Quaker asked in astonishment.

"Sure! That's the secret of success. I can pick out the strongest man in the c-c-crowd and in five minutes have him shooting through him like g-g-greased lightning. They are all like jumping-packs to the man that knows them. You watch me pull the string and you'll see them wig-wig-wiggle."

"It seems a pity to take advantage of such weakness in our fellow men," said David, whose heart began to suffer qualms as he contemplated this raciality in his own connection with it.

"Fellow men! They are no fellows of mind. They are nuts for me to c-c-crack. They are oysters for me to open!" responded the quack, as he drove gaily into the public square and checked the horses, who stood with their proud necks arched, champing their bits and looking around at the crowd as if they shared their master's contempt.

Pepeeta descended from the carriage and made her way hastily into the tent which had already been pitched for her. The doctor lighted his torch and set his stock of goods while David, obeying his directions, began to move among the people to study their habits. Elbowing his way here and there, he contemplated the crowd in the light of the quack's philosophy, and as he did so received a series of painful mental shocks.

The first principle in the art of painting a picture is to know where to sit down; in other words, everything depends upon the point of view. Now that David began to look for evidences of the weaknesses and follies of his fellow men, he saw them everywhere. For the first time in his life he observed that startling prevalence of animal types which always communicates such a shock to the mind of him who has never discovered it before. Every countenance suddenly seemed to be the face of a beast, but thinly and imperfectly veiled. There were foxes and tigers and wolves, there were bulldogs and monkeys and swine. He had always seen, or thought he saw, upon the foreheads of his fellow men some evidences of that divinity which had been communicated to them when God breathed into the great first father the breath of life; but now he shuddered at the sight of those thick lips and drooping jaws, those dull or crafty eyes, those sullen, sodden, gargoyle features, as men do at beholding monstrosities.

A few weeks ago he would have felt a profound pity at this discovery, but so rapid and radical had been the alteration in his feelings that he was now seized by a sudden revulsion and contempt. "Are these creatures really men?" he asked himself. He stood there among them taller, straighter, keener, handsomer than them all, and the old feelings that have made men aristocrats and tyrants in every age of the world, surged in his heart and hardened it against them.

By this time the quack had finished his few simple preparations, and, standing erect before his audience, began the business of the evening. Having observed the habits of the game, David now chose a favorable position to study those of the hunter. He watched with an almost breathless interest every expression upon that sinister face and listened with a boundless interest to every word that fell from those treacherous lips.

He was not long in justifying the quack's honest criticism of his own oratory. His voice lacked the vibrant tones of a musical instrument and his rhetoric that fluency, without which the highest efforts of eloquence can never be attained. By speaking very slowly and deliberately he avoided stammering, but this always acted like a dragging anchor upon the movement of his thought. These were radical defects, but in every other respect he was a consummate artist. He arrested the attention of his hearers with an inimitable skill and held it with an irresistible power.

His piercing eye noted every expression on the faces of his hearers, and seemed to read the inmost secrets of their hearts. He perceived the slightest inclination to purchase, and was as keen to see a hand steal towards a pocket-book as a cat to see a mouse steal out of its hole.

He ceased, he whistled, he banted, he abused—he even threatened. He fulfilled his promise to the letter, "to make the well man think that they were sick," and many a stalwart frontiersman whose body was as sound as

an ox, began to be conscious of aching pains. Nor were those legitimate arts of oratory the only ones which this arch-knave practiced.

"I gave you two dollars, and you only gave me change for one," cried a thin-faced, stoop-shouldered, helpless-looking fellow, who had just purchased a bottle of the "Balm of the Blessed Islands."

With lightning-like legerdemain the quack had shuffled this bill to the bottom of his pile, and lifting up the one that lay on top, exposed it to the view of his audience.

"That's a lie!" he said, in his slow, impressive manner. "There is always some man as this in every crowd. Some one is always trying to take advantage of those who, like myself, are living for the public good. Gentlemen, you saw me lay the b-b-bill he gave me down upon the top! Here it is! Judge for yourselves. That is a bad man! Beware of him!"

The bold effrontery of the quack silenced the timid customer, who could only blush and look confused. His blushes and confusion condemned him and the crowd hustled him away from the wagon. They believed him guilty and he half believed it of himself.

David, who had seen the bill and knew the victim's innocence but not the doctor's fraud, pressed forward to defend him. The quack stopped and silenced him with an inimitable wink, and then instantly and with consummate art diverted his audience with a series of droll stories which he always reserved for emergencies like this. They were old and thread-bare, but this was the reason he chose them. He had one for every circumstance and occasion.

There was a man standing in an outer circle of the crowd around whose forehead was a bandage. "Come here, my friend," said the quack. "How did you get this wound? Don't want to tell? Oh! well, that is natural. A horse kicked him, no doubt; never get in a row! No! No! Couldn't any one hit him! Reminds me of the man who saw a big black-and-blue spot on his boy's forehead. 'My son,' said he, 'I thought I told you not to fight! How did you get this wound?' 'I hit it, father,' replied the boy. 'But it!' exclaimed the old man in astonishment, 'how could you bite yourself upon the forehead?'

"I climbed onto a chair," says he. "And you have been climbing on a chair to bite your forehead, too, my friend!" he asked with humorous gravity, while a loud guffaw went up from the crowd.

"Well," he continued, soothingly, "whether you did it or not, just let me rub a little of this b-b-balm upon it, and by to-morrow morning it will be well. There! That's right. One dollar is all it costs. You don't want it? What the d-d-deuce did you let me open the bottle for? I'll leave it to the crowd if that is fair? There, that is right. Pay for it like a man. It's worth double its price. Thank you. By to-morrow noon you will be sending me a testimonial to its value."

The novelty of the scene, the skill of the principal actor, the rapid growth of the piles of coin and bills, the frantic desire of the people to be guiled, all served to obscure those elements which were calculated to appeal to the Quaker's conscience. He felt like one awakened from a dream. While he was still in the half dazed condition of such an awakening, the quack gave him a sign that this part of his lesson was ended, and following the direction of the thumb which he threw over his shoulder towards Peepeta's tent, he eagerly took his way thither.

Before the door stood several groups of young men and maidens, talking under their breath. Now and then a couple disentangled itself from the crowd, and with visible trepidation entered. As they reappeared, their friends gathered about them and besought them to disclose the secrets they had discovered.

Some of them giggled and stammered, others laughed boisterously and skeptically, while others still, looked scared and anxious. It was evident that even those who tried to make light of what they had seen and heard were moved by something awe-inspiring.

David listened to their silly talk, observed their bold demeanor and their vulgar manners, while the impression of weakness, of stupidity, of the lowness and bestiality of humanity made upon his mind by the aged and the mature, was intensified by his observation of the young and callow.

From the outside of the gypsy's tent he could make but few discoveries of her method; and he waited impatiently until the last curious couple had departed. When they had disappeared, he entered.

At the opposite side of the tent and reclining upon a low divan was the gypsy. Above her head a tallow candle was burning dimly. Before her was a rough table covered with a shawl, upon which were scattered cups of tea with floating grounds, ivory, dice, cards, coins and other implements of the "Black Art."

Pepeeta sprang to her feet when she saw who her visitor was, and exhibited the clearest signs of agitation. David's own emotions were not less violent, for although the gypsy's surroundings were poor and mean, they served rather to enhance than to diminish her exquisite beauty. Her shoulders and arms were bare, and on her wrists were gold bracelets of writhing serpents in whose eyes gleamed diamonds. On her fingers and in her ears were other costly stones. Her dress was silk, and rustled when

she moved, with soft and sibilant sounds.

"The doctor has sent me here to study the methods by which you do your work," said David, approaching the table and gazing at her with undisguised admiration.

"You should have come before. How can you study my methods when I am not practicing them? And any way, you have no faith in them. Have you? I always had until I heard your sermon in the little meeting house."

"And have you lost it now?"

"It has been sadly shaken."

"You can at least show me how you practice the art, even if you have lost your faith in it. I too have lost a faith, but we must live. What are these cards for?"

"If you wish me to show you, you may shuffle and cut them, but I would rather tell your fortune by your hand, for I have more faith in palmistry than in cards."

He extended his hand; she took it, and with her right forefinger began to trace the lines. Her gaze had that intensity with which a little child peers into the mechanism of a watch or an astronomer into the depths of space. A thrill of emotion shot through the frame of the Quaker at the touch of those delicate and beautiful fingers.

Neither of them spoke. The delicate finger of the gypsy moved over the lines of the palm like that of a little school-girl over the pages of a primer. They did not realize how dangerous was that proximity, nor how fatal that touch. Through those two poles of Nature's most powerful battery, the magnetic and mysterious current of love was passing.

"Let me now examine the lines," she said. "Here is the line of the heart. It passes clear across the palm. It is well marked at every point and is most pronounced upon the upper side. But look! It is joined to the head below the finger of Saturn. It is the sign of a violent death!"

As she uttered this exclamation, she pressed the hand convulsively between her own, and looked up into his face. The involuntary and sudden action recalled him to his consciousness. "What did you say?" he asked.

"Have you not been listening?" she replied, repressing both her anxiety and her annoyance.

"No; was it a good story or a bad one which you were reading?"

"It was both."

"Well—it is no matter, those accidental marks can have no significance."

"Why should not the character and destiny of the man disclose itself in signs and marks upon his hands?"

As they stood confronting each other, they would have presented a study of equal interest to the artist or to the philosopher. There was both a poem and a picture in their attitudes. Grace and beauty revealed themselves on every feature and in every movement. They had arrived at one of those dramatic points in their life-journey, where all the tragic elements of existence seem to converge. Agitated by incomprehensible and delicious emotions, confronting insoluble problems, longing, hoping, fearing, they hovered over the ocean of life like two tiny sparrows swept out to sea by a tempest.

They were awakened from their reveries by the footsteps of the quack, and by his raucous voice summoning them back into the world of realities from which they had withdrawn so completely.

"Well, little wife," he said, "how is b-b-business?"

"Fair," she said, gathering up a double handful of change and passing it over to him indifferently.

The question fell upon the ears of the Quaker like a thunder bolt. It was to him the first intimation that Peepeta was not the daughter of the quack. "His wife!" The heart of the youth sank in his bosom. Here was a new and unexpected complication. What should he do? It was too late to turn back now. The die had been cast, and he must go forward.

(To be continued.)

Foxy Hiram.

"Well, now, if that ain't surprising: ejaculated Mrs. Rypost as she shaded her eyes with her hand. 'There goes old Hiram Skinfint, and rather than step on a poor black ant he picked it up, and I bet he is going to drop it somewhere out of the reach of danger.'"

Her husband laughed knowingly. "Not Hiram Skinfint, Mandy. He'll go down to Jed Weatherby's general store and order a pound of granulated sugar. Then while Jed is looking another way he'll drop the ant among the grains and tell Jed as long as his sugar has ants in it he ought to sell it at half price. Like as not he'll try to get Jed to throw in two or three raisins and a yeastcake. You don't know Hiram Skinfint."—Chicago News.

Expectation.

His Daughter—Father, I wish you'd stay home to-night. Mr. Slowboy will want to ask you for my hand.

Her Father—Has he really proposed at last?

His Daughter—No; but he will to-night.—Boston Globe.

A Farmer's Troubles.

"I dunno how to please these summer boarders."

"What's the matter, Sir?"

"They're clamoring for the moss-covered bucket after I had fitted up the wall with sterilized drinking cups instead."—Washington Herald.

Sure to Do It.

"He is such a lazy man that he took to manufacturing fans as the easiest way of making a living."

"The easiest way?"

"Sure. Isn't it certain to raise the wind?"—Baltimore American.

Help!

"I suppose the hired girl does all the heavy work in your house?"

"Not at all; my wife makes the pies and puddings."

FOR COUGHS KING OF CURES FOR COLDS

THE WONDER WORKER

FOR THROAT DR. KING'S AND LUNGS

NEW DISCOVERY

FOR COUGHS AND COLDS

PREVENTS PNEUMONIA

I had the most debilitating cough a mortal was ever afflicted with, and my friends expected that when I left my bed it would surely be for my grave. Our doctor pronounced my case incurable, but thanks be to God, four bottles of Dr. King's New Discovery cured me so completely that I am all sound and well.—MRS. EVA UNCAPHER, Grovertown, Ind.

Price 50c and \$1.00 ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEED! Trial Bottle Free

SOLD AND GUARANTEED BY

C. F. MOORE



"What does your husband like for his breakfast?" "Anything I haven't got in the house."—Cleveland Leader.

"Why do you allow your wife to pick your company?" "She's a good judge—she picked me."—Philadelphia Star.

Clerk—Mrs. Jones complains that her photographs don't look like her. Photographer—Complains! She ought to be grateful.

Alice—Ethel tells me she is engaged to Jack. Do you think she really means to marry him? Kate—Not if she can get anybody else.

"Hello, Brown, settled in your new house yet?" "I guess so. Everything is unpacked now except the things we really need."—Detroit Free Press.

"He's a fool and he only wants you for your money." "No—he says he'd marry me without my money." "Then he's a bigger fool than I thought."

The Psalmist—We'll pay for this fine weather later on. The Optimist—Well, cheer up! That's the regular time for paying for things, isn't it?

Her Husband—Well, it takes two to make a quarrel, so I'll shut up. His Wife—That's just like a contemptible man! You'll sit there and think mean things.

"If you'd assume a more genial manner, you'd get along better in business." "Rot! I tried it once, and everybody I met wanted to borrow money."

Young Wife—This dish, dearest, is an original composition of my own. Husband—Well, I should rather, my pet, that you would cook after the old masters.

He—So you think married life ought to be one grand sweet song? She—Yes. He—What air would you prefer for this matrimonial song? She—I think a millionaires.

Emeralde—How many times do you make a young man propose to you before you say yes? Gwendolen—If you have to make him propose you'd better say yes the first time.

Hotel Visitor—Are there any deer about here? Gillic—Well, there was yin, but the gentlemen were eye shooting and shootin' at it, and I'm thinkin' it left the deerstrie.—Punch.

African Guide—Come! Quick! Your excellency. I have spotted a leopard. Famous Hunter—Here! Here, no nature-taking goes on this outfit. Leopards have always been spotted.

Mrs. Smart—Be sure and come. You'll meet quite a number of pretty women. Mr. Carte (gallantly)—Yes; but it will not be for the pretty women that I shall come, but for you.

Gunner—And now comes a professor who declares that fruit is just as healthy with the skin on as it is peeled. Guyer—Hm! I'd like to see somebody start him on a diet of pineapples.

Anxious Mother—How do you know young Cashleigh is in love with you? He told you so? Pretty Daughter—No; but you should see the way he looks at me when I am not looking at him.

"Oh, Johnnie, Johnnie," said his aunt reproachfully, "why is it you never remember to say thank you?" "I expect it's 'cause I don't get things given to me often enough to practice," answered the young diplomat hopefully, eyeing a box of candy.

The kind lady had just handed the hungry hobo a sandwich and a piece of pie. "Poor man!" she said, sympathetically. "Are you married?" "No'm," answered the hobo. "I got dis hunted look from bein' chased from place t' place by der perlice."

English experts are examining the forests along the Amur river with a view to exporting Siberian lumber to Europe.

In its warfare against the Moors the Spanish army has revived the ancient sling to throw explosive grenades into the enemy's ranks.

It is proposed to convert Blackwell's Island, New York, now used for penal institutions, into the greatest tuberculous sanatorium in the world.

A feature of a new German system of telephotography is that the wire used to transmit a picture may be used for telephoning at the same time.

There is a belief prevalent among the natives of Asia Minor that the thicker the clothing worn at all seasons of the year, the better it is for the human body, protecting it alike from the winter cold and the summer heat. In Caucasus it is not uncommon to see people wearing huge bearskin coats in the midst of summer, with the thermometer standing at 100 degrees.

A tourist returning to the east on a transcontinental line, while passing through a forlorn-looking town in the desert heard two men conversing as the train stopped for water. "Good-by, Bill," said one. "I am leaving this burg with just one pair of pants, and not another thing on earth." "You are lucky, old pal," replied Bill; "that's more than anybody else ever took away from here."

Senator Dolliver in a recent campaign told this story to illustrate the logic of an opponent: Did you ever hear about the young woman in Fort Dodge? One spring morning she sat on the piazza of her pretty little home sewing a button on her husband's coat. The husband himself appeared and she said, fretfully: "It's a perfect shame the careless way the tailor sewed this button on. This is the fifth time I've had to sew it on again for you."

The high rates at which medicines and drugs are sold by the private pharmacies and drug stores of St. Petersburg have induced the municipal authorities to start a municipal pharmacy, for which purpose \$15,450 has been recently allowed. The city pharmacy will supply medicines and drugs to all the disinfection and sanitary departments, as well as municipal hospitals. To private persons drugs will be sold at 20 per cent discount against the normal charges.

The American consul-general at Liverpool shows that during the six months ending June 30 of the present year, 272,124 tons of salt were shipped from the Mersey, of which 190,505 tons were billed from Liverpool. Much of this was to fill orders from the United States. Increased quantities went to British North America, the West Indies, Central and South America, Africa, Asia and on the continent of Europe. There were lessened demands from Australasia and ports in the United Kingdom.

In spite of the reputation for latitudinarianism he gained from his early trial for heresy, the late Professor Jowett, of Oxford, was intolerant of pretentiousness and shallow conceit. One self-satisfied undergraduate met the master one day. "Master," he said, "I have searched everywhere in all philosophies, ancient and modern, and nowhere do I find the evidence of God."

"Mr. —," replied the master, after a shorter pause than usual, "if you don't find a God by 5 o'clock this afternoon you must leave this college."

The public service commission of the State of New York has declined to compel the adoption of electricity by the railroads passing through the Adirondack country as a means of preventing the destruction of forests by fire. The proposal was rejected because of the prohibitive cost of the operation of electric roads even though most of the power were obtained from waterfalls. It would mean an expenditure of much more than a million dollars a year above the present cost of steam operation for the railroads of the State of New York.

THE WOMEN OF SPAIN.

Settled by Both Custom and Law, They Lead Narrow Lives.

The vast majority of Spanish women still believe that it is degrading for a lady to take up any work for which she is paid. Therefore if they do not marry they either enter a convent or live with a member of the family, and they do not at all mind being dependent on the charity of friends or relatives.

Though marriages are often arranged without the consent of the bride-elect, law or custom gives the Spanish woman the power of appealing to a magistrate if she wishes to escape from a union which is distasteful to her.

The magistrate may take her from her father's home until she is of age, while if she determines to marry a man of whom her parents disapprove she may also place herself under the protection of the law, and she cannot be deprived of her share of the family estate.

On reaching her majority she enjoys the same privileges as her brother with regard to property, and may inherit, will, buy and sell; but when she marries she reverts to the position of a minor, and her husband has entire control of all her possessions, which he can squander without rendering any account to her, though she cannot spend a penny of her own money without his consent. He may desert her and her children without incurring any punishment or much public condemnation. A Spanish lady confers on her husband the titles of nobility and any privilege connected therewith she may possess at the time of her marriage.

Public opinion is still so strongly opposed to their education that it will be a long time before they are fitted to take their share in their country's work, and many women are so ignorant that they can hardly read their missals or write their names. This is especially the case in small country towns. At Madrid schools have been opened for their instruction, and the classes have been conducted by excellent professors, but comparatively few women have availed themselves of the privilege.

SHORT METER SERMONS.

Master Passion. Power-hunger and pleasure-lust are master passions.—Rev. W. L. Phillips, Congregationalist, New Haven.

Power. The church has sometimes been enamored of station and power.—Rev. W. H. Foulkes, Presbyterian, Portland, Ore.

Be Up and Doing. Search for your place before you get into God's waste heap.—Rev. H. F. Carpenter, Christian, Santa Clara, Cal.

Position. Position gives power. It lends advantage. Position puts one where he can be seen.—Rev. Statom, Presbyterian, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Calumny. Calumny may be so insidious and so cowardly that it lies in the shadows and does its deadly work in the dark.—Rev. F. Hope, Baptist, Santa Clara, Cal.

Receptiveness. Man's understanding of spiritual truth would increase more rapidly if he were more receptive to the light.—Rev. W. F. Lyon, True Life Church, San Jose, Cal.

Live in Christ. However large any man may be without Christ, he can be much larger and greater with Christ living in him.—Rev. M. S. Kaufman, Methodist, Norwich, Conn.

Starved Soul. Man may grow into a perfect animal, possess a cultivated brain, become carefully religious and yet carry in his bosom a starved soul.—Rev. Guy Arthur Jamieson, Presbyterian, New York City.