

The Redemption of David Corson

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CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

It occurred to him that if he left the body where it was and it should be eventually discovered, it would afford the gravest suspicions of foul play; but that if he dragged it back again to the road and laid it with its face in the dust, against the rock with which the deed was done, it might pass for an accident.

Once more that hideous smile of cunning lit up the face which in these few moments had undergone a mysterious deterioration. He hastily removed the heap of rubbish, shuddered as he saw the loathsome thing once more exposed to view, but seized it, dragged it back, and placed it with consummate art in the position which his criminal presence had suggested.

As it lay there in the road nothing could have seemed more natural than that it had fallen from the horse; he felt another momentary relief from the terror, in which he cunningly conceived a still more audacious plan, on nothing-Romeo. They were the best of friends; it was easy to catch him. He did so, removed the saddle, broke the girth and placed it near the prostrate figure of the quack. Nothing could have more perfectly resembled an accident! An adept in crime could not have performed this task with finer skill, and he was free now to turn to the rest of the work that he must do to conceal this ghastly deed.

Approaching the buggy, he found to his immense relief that Peepeta was still unconscious. With swift and silent movements he freed the mare, led her out into the road and drove hurriedly away.

As he emerged from the wood they came to another brook, similar to the one by the side of which the struggle had occurred, that he conceived the idea of stopping by its side and awakening Peepeta from her stupor there. "She will not notice the difference," he said to himself; "and if she did not witness the fatal blow I can persuade her that I overpowered the doctor and forced him to return while she was in her swoon."

Stopping the horse, he lifted her inanimate form from the carriage, bore it to the side of the brook, laid it gently upon the bank and dashed a handful of the cold water into her white face. She gasped, opened her eyes, and, sitting up, looked about her with an expression of terror.

"Where am I?" she asked. "Do you not remember? You are here in the wood where the doctor overtook us," he replied.

"And where is he?" "He has returned."

"But I saw you clench with each other, and it was awful! What happened then? I must have fainted. Do you mean that he has gone back without me? How did you persuade him to do that?"

"I persuaded him with my fists. You should have seen me, Peepeta!"

"Did he acknowledge that he had deceived me?"

"He did indeed. Yes, he has gone, never to return. He made his confession and relinquished his claim. And so we have nothing to do but forget him and be happy. Are you feeling better now?"

"Yes, I am better; but I am not well! I cannot shake it off. It seems too dreadful to have been real. And yet how much better it is than if one of you had been killed! Oh! I wish I could stop seeing it. Yet you go! Let us leave this gloomy wood. Let us get out into the sunshine. See! It is getting dark. We must not stay here any longer."

"Yes, let us go," he said, rising, lifting her gently from the ground and leading her back to the buggy, in which they took their seats and drove rapidly forward.

Peepeta's thought were full of gladness; and David's full of agony—they rushed tumultuously back and forth through his mind like contrary winds through a forest.

"Was it not enough that I should be an Adam, and fall? Must I also become a Cain and go forth with the brand of a murderer on my forehead?" he kept saying to himself.

CHAPTER XII.

The morning after the fight David and Peepeta hurried on to Louisville, and from there took a steamer to New Orleans. Peepeta was radiant with joy as they embarked. "How happy I am!" she cried. "It seems as if I had left my old life and the old world behind me!"

"And I am happy to see you glad," answered the wretched youth, whose heart lay in his bosom like lead and whose conscience was writhing with a torture of whose like he had never even dreamed. They embarked unknown and unobserved; but as soon as the first confusion had passed, their singular beauty and unusual appearance made them the cynosure of every eye.

"Who is that splendid fellow?" women asked each other, as David passed with Peepeta on his arm, while under their breaths men declared that his companion was the loveliest woman who had ever set foot on a Mississippi steamer.

David was in need of excitement. The thought of his crime was constantly agitating his heart, the prosaic form of the doctor with the bloody wound on his forehead was never absent from his mind, and through all the ceaseless rumble around him he could hear the dull thud of the stone upon the hard skull. The efforts which he made to throw off these horrible weights that crushed him were like those of a man awakened from a nightmare. He scarcely

dared to speak for fear of uttering words which would betray him, and which seemed to tremble on his lips. Had he been on shore he would have fled to the solitude of a forest; but here he was relentlessly impelled to that other solitude—a crowd. The necessity of being gay with his beautiful bride and of concealing every trace of his terror and remorse taxed his resources to their utmost limit, and in his nervousness he kept Peepeta moving with him all day long. At its close she was completely exhausted; and retired early to her stateroom. Freed from her company and craving relief from thought, David made his way straight to the gambling tables where the nightly games were in full swing.

In the months which they had spent together the quack had indoctrinated David into all the best-known secrets of this vice, and besides this, had familiarized him with the use of a certain "hold out" of his own invention, with which he had achieved incredible results, and which was new to the fraternity of the river. Having watched the players for a long time, David convinced himself that he could employ this trick successfully, and took his place at the table.

David felt his way along with a coolness that astonished himself, and his very first experiment with the delicate apparatus concealed in his sleeve was such a brilliant triumph that he saw it was undetected. With a strengthened confidence, he made the stakes larger and larger, and his winnings increased so rapidly as to make him the center of attention. The crowd swarmed round the table. The spectators became breathless. The gamblers were first astonished, then bewildered. As their nerve failed them, David's assurance increased, and when day broke ten thousand dollars lay upon his table before him as the result of his skillful and desperate efforts.

Their loss astonished and enraged the gamblers to such a degree that with a preconcerted signal they sprang at their opponent, determined to regain their money by violence. The move was not unexpected, nor was he unprepared. He fought as he had played, and so won the sympathies of the bystanders than in an instant there was a general melee in which he was helped to escape with his winnings.

He was the hero of the trip, and a career had opened before him. Satellites began to circle around him and to solicit his friendship and patronage. When he disembarked at New Orleans he had already entered into a partnership with one of the most notable members of the gambling fraternity, and purchased an interest in one of those "palaces" where games of chance attracted and destroyed their thousands.

The newspapers made the story of that gayest of all cities familiar with the incidents of David's advent. He and Peepeta became the talk of the town. They rented a fashionable house, and swung out into the current of the mad life of the metropolis of the South.

For a little while this excitement and glory softened the pain in the heart of the man who believed himself to be a murderer and encouraged him to hope that it might eventually pass away. He played recklessly but successfully, for he was a transient favorite of the fickle goddess. When gambling lost its power to drown the voice of conscience, there was the race, the play and the wine cup. To each of them appealing in turn, he went whirling madly around the circles of the great maelstrom in which so many brilliant youths were swallowed in those ante-bellum days.

For two years David and Peepeta lived together in New Orleans. They were years full of import, and of trouble. A baby came to them, lingered a few weeks, and then died. David pursued the occupation he had chosen, with the vicissitudes of fortune usually attending the votaries of games of chance, and the moral and spiritual deterioration which they invariably develop.

Peepeta altered strangely. Her bloom disappeared and an expression of sadness became habitual on her face. She was surrounded by luxuries of every kind, but they did not give her peace. With an ambition which never flagged she sought self-improvement, and attained it to a remarkable degree. Endowed with an inherited aptitude for culture, she read and studied books, observed and imitated elegant manners, and rapidly absorbed the best elements of such higher life as she had access to, until her natural beauty and charm were wonderfully enhanced. Yet she was not happy, for her life with David had brought her nothing but surprise and disappointment; something had come between them, she knew not what.

"Day des growed apahrt," said the old negro "mammy," who was with them during those two years. "Seemed to des tech each other like mahbles at a single point, staid of meltin' together lak two drops of watah runnin' down a window pane. Mars David, he done went he owa way, drinkin' and gamblin'; he lak a madman when he baby die. He seem skeered when he see Miss Peepeta. She look at him wid her big black eyes full of wonder and 'prise, stretch out her lip han', and when he run away or struck her, she des go out to the lip han' grave, creepin' along lak a shadder through the gyahden, soft lak and still. Dar she des set down all alone and sigh lak de breeze in he old pine tree. Some days she gone away all alone and de brack folks say she wanner all

around in de woods. When Sunday come, she des slip into de churches lak a lip mouse and nibble up de gospel crumbs and den run away before de priests catch her. Dark days dose, in de old Ballantree mansion! And den come de night when dey panted. You done heah about dat?"

The old colored mammy was right. They just grew apart, as it was inevitable that they should. Perfect self-manifestation is the true principle and law of love, and when a guilty secret comes between two lovers, suspicion and fear inevitably result. They became incomprehensible to each other. It was a frightful discipline; but she was sanctified by it. Day by day she became more patient, gentle and resigned, and in proportion as she grew in these graces, her lover's awe and fear increased, and so they drifted farther and farther apart. Such relationships cannot continue forever, and they generally terminate in tragedy.

After the first few months' excitement of his new life, David's conscience began to torment him anew. He became melancholy, then moody, and finally fell into the habit of sitting for hours among the crowds which swarmed the gambling rooms, brooding over his secret. From stage to stage in the evolution of his remorse he passed until he at last reached that of superstition, which attacks the soul of the gambler as rust does iron. And so the wretched victim of many vices sat one evening at the close of the second year with his hat drawn down over his eyes, reflecting upon his past.

"What's the matter, Davy?" asked a player who had lost his stake, and was whistling good-humoredly as he left the room.

"Leave me alone," David growled, and reached for a glass mug containing a strong decoction to which he was resorting more and more as his troubles grew intolerable. A strange thing happened: As he put it to his lips its bottom dropped upon the table and the contents streamed into his lap and down to the floor. It was the straw that broke the camel's back, for it had aroused a superstitious terror. With a smothered cry he sprang to his feet and gazed around upon his companions. They too, had observed the untoward accident, and to them as well as to him it was a symbol of disaster. Not one of them doubted that the bottom would fall out of his fortunes as out of his glass, for by such signs as these the gambler reads his destiny.

He pulled himself together and made a jest of the accident, but it was impossible for him to dissipate the impression it had made on the minds of his companions or to banish the gloom from his own soul. And so after a few brave but futile efforts to break the spell of apprehension, he slipped quietly away, opened the door and passed out into the night.

(To be continued.)

PREY OF THE TIGER.

Has Preference for Human Flesh After Once Tasting It.

In the intervals of rest and recreation which Mr. Rees doubtless allows himself he may do worse than give his most attentive consideration to certain facts mentioned by a writer in the Indian Forester bearing upon the evolution of the forest tiger's taste, first for cattle and then for human meat, the India Daily News says. When tired of the monotony of the menu provided by deer or wild pig the forest tiger develops a taste for domestic cattle, and then its modus operandi is a very interesting study. The menu is changed from deep forest to cattle-breeding area, where the tiger leisurely carries on its depredations until shot—an operation which, however it might shock Mr. Rees, is one of the most beneficent acts of the sportsman.

As the writer in the aforesaid periodical says, the transition from cattle slaying to man slaying is not a great step. Where cattle abound human beings are, and once the tiger has tasted the human meat it develops an extraordinary passion for it. And so it must have its daily feed. It goes anywhere in search of food.

Many years ago a tiger swam the Rangoon river, nearly a mile in width, and landed in the heart of the locality, crept under the raised floor of a Burman hut and was promptly slaughtered.

About six years ago a large tiger was observed on the platform of the Shwe-Dogan pagoda at Rangoon, and was shot by a party of soldiers told off for the purpose. The superstitious Burmese attributed the outbreak of plague in Rangoon to the shooting of this tiger, which they declared was some particular manifestation of the Buddha. It is a curious fact, however, that the plague outbreak occurred shortly afterward, and the city has not since been free of the scourge.

A Compromise.

"You'll have to send for another doctor," said the one who had been called after a glance at the patient.

"Am I so ill as that?" gasped the sufferer.

"I don't know just how ill you are," replied the man of medicine, "but I know you're the lawyer who cross-examined me when I appeared as an expert witness. My conscience won't let me kill you, and I'll be hanged if I want to cure you. Good day."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Before and After.

She was a frivolous, fashionable young woman with beaux galore, but one man with only a small income seemed to be the favorite.

"You'll have to work hard before you win that girl," said his mother. "And a good deal harder after you win her," answered his father, who knew what he was talking about.—Tit-Bits.

Kindness in ourselves is the honey that blunts the sting of unkindness in another.—Peabody.

A CHRISTMAS ACROSTIC.

Carollers singing in morning gray,
Holly and ivy in brave array;
Kinging of bells in the tower aloft,
Incense below and a chanting soft—
So should it be on Christmas!
Telling the tale of the Wonderful Child,
Mary, his worshiping Mother mild,
Angels adoring in Heaven above
Singing their praises of Infinite love.

So it should be on Christmas!
Ever should be on Christmas!
—Nora Archibald Smith.

MISTLETOE.

"She did," said the girl with the turquoise bossed dog collar, with an emphatic little nod. "She actually did. I declare I felt so ashamed of her that I didn't know what to do."

"I should think you would have been," said her friend with the sable muff. "I'd have been mortified to death if it had been a friend of mine."

"I don't see how she could have helped it myself," admitted the girl with the turquoise bossed dog collar. "She was there when Harry brought the mistletoe and hung it up. And it isn't a thing one would forget. Yes, she walked deliberately halfway across the room and stopped there. Willie called to her, but she needn't have stopped."

"When Willie rushed up she looked just as innocent and surprised as could be. And when he put his arm around her she acted as if she thought he had suddenly gone crazy—as if she hadn't the faintest idea of what he was going to do."

"Well, all I can say is that I am glad she isn't visiting with me. I wouldn't care if she was my cousin."

"She's awfully nice, though, in lots of ways," said the girl with the dog collar. "Of course, in a small town like Wessington you can't expect so very much, but it isn't as bad as you might think, really. She's got some perfectly lovely clothes. When she comes down I'll get her to show them to you."

"Grace had some," said the girl with the sable muff. "The man she's engaged to brought her no end of pretty things. But I think Willie ought to have known better."

"I think so, too," said the girl with the dog collar. "I suppose he thought that he had to kiss her. Did I tell you that she slapped him?"

"What did Willie do?" "He laughed. Everybody laughed. They seemed to think it was a good joke."

The girl with the sable muff looked thoughtful. "What puzzles me," she said, "is what she did it for. What do you think? She isn't exactly a beauty."

"That's what I say," said the girl with the dog collar. "I know a lot of girls there might have been some excuse for. She stood there half a minute at least. It was so open. I don't honestly believe, though, that I could have looked so unconcerned as she did. Perhaps Willie thought she didn't know what she was doing."

"That wasn't the only place you had mistletoe hung, was it?" asked the girl with the sable muff.

"Well, I should say not," replied the girl with the turquoise bossed dog collar. "There was a big bunch in the cozy corner and another in the bay window behind the curtains. No,

there wasn't the least excuse for her." "I don't see what anybody needs the old mistletoe for anyway," said the girl with the sable muff.

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST.

The Butterfly That Lived in a Christmas Tree.

Papa, Archie and May went to the woods to get a Christmas tree and found just what they wanted—a little pine, bushy and straight.

"There is something I must cut off," said Archie. He pointed to a little gray bunch on one of the twigs and pulled out his knife.

"No, no!" cried May, holding his hand. "Let it stay. It's a poor little caterpillar's house."

May was right. One Indian summer day a caterpillar, dressed in brown velvet, was taking a walk in the woods. At last he came to the little pine tree and thought to himself, "What a nice place to spend the winter!"

So he made himself a little house. He made it very tight and close, of fine, soft thread, and fastened up the door. He did not leave himself even a window to look out. If there had been one, how it would have surprised him to see that he and his house and the pine tree were riding in a sleigh with papa and May and Archie.

He would have been still more surprised if he had seen the tree standing in the parlor, covered with toys and trinkets and little candles.

"It must be spring at last," he thought, for it was very warm in the parlor.

So he poked a hole in the wall of his house, and out he came. But what do you think? He was not a caterpillar.

"Oh, see the lovely butterfly!" cried May.

He flew to the tiptop bough, and the children said there was nothing else on the tree so pretty as the butterfly.

"He must have come down the chimney with Santa Claus," said May. And she never guessed that he came out of the caterpillar's house.—Youth's Companion.

How to Play "Snapdragon."

"Snapdragon" is a Christmas game handed down from times immemorial. A broad, shallow bowl has a quantity of raisins in the bottom, and over these alcohol or brandy is poured and ignited. The dish is then passed, everybody in turn trying to take a raisin from the flames. It requires rapidity of movement and a certain amount of courage to perform this feat the entire company meanwhile singing the ancient song:

Here he comes with flowing bowl;
Don't he mean to take his toll?
Snap! Snap! Dragon!
Take care you do not take too much
Be you greedy in your clutch.
Snap! Snap! Dragon!

Christmas Eve.

God bless the babies' stockings
All over the land to-night!
God bless the little children
Asleep in the hearthfire's light.

May the baby hands be helpful,
Let the baby feet tread sure,
Keep the sweet eyes meet for heaven,
And the soft lips true and pure.

God bless the babies' stockings
All over the land to-night;
God keep the little children
Asleep in the hearthfire's light.

Discovered.

"Papa," said little Petie, "don't Kris Kringle bring little boys toys ahead of Christmas?" "No, my son," replied the father. "Why do you ask?" "I was a wonderin' what them new toys was I found away back in the lot behind the trunks."—Philadelphia North American.

The Simple Fact.

Sturveysant—Going to turn over a new leaf, New Year's day, old man?
Schmerhorn—No, going to turn over the same old leaf.—Brooklyn Eagle.

REFINERS PAY FINES

United States Treasury Receives \$2,830,573.

COMPANIES STILL HELD LIABLE

Evidence in Trial That Employes Was "Caught With the Goods" and Would "Squal."

New York, Dec. 16.—Arbuckle Bros., generally credited with being the largest independent rivals of the American Sugar Refining company, have acknowledged that from 1898 to 1907 they have failed to pay to the government all the money due as customs charges on imported sugar.

In settlement of all civil claims against them the Arbuckles have offered, and the treasury department, with the concurrence of the attorney-general, has accepted payment of \$695,573. But criminal prosecution of those responsible will in no wise be hampered or conditioned by this acceptance.

The government has now received the following voluntary restitutions and fines from importers of raw sugars: The American Sugar Refining company (voluntary), \$2,000,000; the American Sugar Refining company (fine imposed by the court), \$135,000; Arbuckle Bros. (voluntary), \$695,573. Total recovered, \$2,830,573.

Today's announcement of new irregularities in the sugar industry, ramifying into quarters never suspected by the public, was made in a review of the criminal trial of six employees of the American Sugar Refining company. Messrs. Stimson and Dennison, special counsel for the government, then gave out a statement in part as follows:

"In June last an investigation was begun as to duties paid on sugar landed on the docks of the Arbuckle Bros. New York refinery. The firm voluntarily gave us access to its books and a thorough comparison was made between the books and the custom-house records. As a result a shortage was reported to the members of the firm. As soon as they had verified the government's figures they voluntarily offered to pay this sum into the treasury of the United States."

The statement admits reference to methods by which the frauds were effected. "The matter is now pending before the grand jury," is the only reply Mr. Stimson would vouchsafe.

FOURTEEN DEAD IN WRECK.

Broken Rail Sends Passenger Train Over Trestle.

Greensboro, N. C., Dec. 16.—Local passenger train No. 11, on the Southern railway, known as the Richmond and Atlanta train, due in Greensboro at 6:40 o'clock, was wrecked this morning at 6:33 o'clock at Reedy Fork trestle, 10 miles north of here, and at 6 o'clock tonight 12 dead bodies had been removed from the wreckage. It is reported that 14 are dead and 24 injured are being cared for at St. Leo's hospital.

George J. Gould, who, with his son, Jay, was in one of the Pullmans when the train jumped the track, and who was reported dead, escaped uninjured. He, his son, Jay, and a friend, H. B. Russell, of New York, ex-editor of the Metropolitan magazine, had just got out of their berths when the wreck occurred. Mr. Russell was badly hurt by coming in contact with a car stove, and is at the hospital.

Mr. Gould and his son came in on the special bearing the dead and injured. He left this afternoon for his hunting trip, 15 miles from here, stating that the wreck had not disarranged his plans for a week's outing.

The derailment was caused by a broken rail about 200 feet from the trestle that spans a small stream. The train was composed of two baggage, express and mail cars, three day coaches and two Pullmans. The engine, baggage, mail and express cars passed over in safety, while the day coaches and Pullmans were thrown from the trestle into the creek and along the banks 50 to 30 feet below.

At the point where the first coach left the track, the right rail was broken into fragments for several feet and torn entirely from the ties.

Japs Kill Hawaiian Birds.

Seattle, Dec. 16.—The United States revenue cutter Thetis, Captain W. V. E. Jacobs, sailed today for Honolulu, where she will be stationed during the next 18 months. The Thetis, according to information received here, is being sent to the Hawaiian Islands at the request of the Audubon society. Complaints have been made to the government at Washington that Japanese on the islands are capturing and killing the Hawaiian birds and sending the feathers to Japan, where the plumage is prepared for the market and sent to London and Paris milliners.

Butte Switchmen Return to Places.

Butte, Mont., Dec. 16.—As a result of a conference between representatives of the striking switchmen employed in the Butte yards, W. M. Clark of Indianapolis, vice-president of the Order of Railway Conductors, and Robert McIntyre, of Los Angeles, vice-president of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, 40 strikers returned to work today. The Amalgamated Copper company's local mines also resumed operations this morning with a full force of 3,000 men.

Oklahoma Bank Law Wins.

Keifer, Okla., Dec. 16.—Every depositor of the First State bank of Keifer, which closed yesterday as a result of the failure of the Farmers National bank of Tulsa who demanded his money today was paid in full. The bank is protected by the state guaranty fund.

