

The Redemption of David Corson

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CHAPTER III.

True to his determination, the doctor devoted the night following his advent into the little frontier village to the investigation of the Quaker preacher's fitness for his use. He took Pepeeta with him, the older habitues of the tavern standing on the porch and smiling ironically as they started. The meeting house was one of those conventional weather-boarded buildings with which all travelers in the Western States are familiar. The rays of the tallow candles by which it was lighted were streaming feebly out into the night. The doors were open, and through them were passing meek-faced, soft-voiced and plain-robed worshippers.

Keeping close together, Pepeeta light and graceful, the doctor heavy and awkward, both of them thoroughly embarrassed, they ascended the steps as a bear and gazelle might have walked the gang-plank into the ark. They entered unobserved save by a few of the younger people who were staring vacantly about the room, and took their seats on the last bench. The Quaker maidens who caught sight of Pepeeta were visibly excited and began to preen themselves as turtle doves might have done if a bird of paradise had suddenly flashed among them. One of them happened to be seated next her. She was dressed in quiet drabs and grays. Her face and person were pervaded and adorned by simplicity, meekness, devotion; and the contrast between the two was so striking as to render them both self-conscious and uneasy in each other's presence.

The visitors did not know at all what to expect in this unfamiliar place, but could not have been astonished or awed by anything else half so much as by the inexplicable silence which prevailed. If the whole assemblage had been dancing or turning comers, she would not have been surprised, but the few moments in which they thus sat looking stupidly at the people and then at each other seemed to them like a small eternity. Pepeeta's sensitive nature could ill endure such a strain, and she became nervous.

"Take me away," she imploringly whispered to the doctor, who sat by her side, ignorant of the custom which separated the sexes.

He tried to encourage her in a few half-suppressed words, took her trembling hand in his great paw, pressed it reassuringly, winked humorously, and then looked about him with a sardonic grin.

To Pepeeta's relief, the silence was at last broken by an old man who rose from his seat, reverently folded his hands, lifted his face to heaven, closed his eyes and began to speak. She had never until this moment listened to a prayer, and this address to an invisible Being wrought in her already agitated mind a confused and exciting effect; but the prayer was long, and gave her time to recover her self-control. The silence which followed its close was less painful because less strange than the other, and she permitted herself to glance about the room and to wonder what would happen next. Her curiosity was soon satisfied. David Corson, the young mystic, rose to his feet. He was dressed with exquisite neatness in that simple garb which lends to a noble person a peculiar and serious dignity. Standing for a moment before he began his address, he looked over the audience with the self-possession of an accomplished orator. The attention of every person in the room was at once arrested. They all recalled their wandering or preoccupied thoughts, lifted their bowed heads and fixed their eyes upon the commanding figure before them.

This general movement caused Pepeeta to turn, and she observed a sudden transformation on the countenance of the dove-like Quaker maiden. A flush mantled her pale cheek and a radiance beamed in her mild blue eyes. It was a tell-tale look, and Pepeeta, who divined its meaning, smiled sympathetically.

But the first word which fell from the lips of the speaker withdrew her attention from every other object, for his voice possessed a quality with which she was entirely unfamiliar. It would have charmed and fascinated the hearer, even if it had uttered incoherent words. For Pepeeta, it had another and a more mysterious value. It was the voice of her destiny, and rang in her soul like a bell. The speech of the young Quaker was a simple and unadorned message of the love of God to men, and of their power to respond to the Divine call.

Each sentence had fallen into the sensitive soul of the fortune teller like a pebble into a deep well. She was gazing at him in astonishment. Her lips were parted, her eyes were suffused and she was leaning forward breathlessly.

When at length David stopped speaking, it seemed to Pepeeta as if a sudden end had come to everything; as if rivers had ceased to run and stars to rise and set. She drew a long, deep breath, sighed and sank back in her seat, exhausted by the nervous tension

to which she had been subjected.

The effect upon the quack was hardly less remarkable. He, too, had listened with breathless attention. He tried to analyze and then to resist this mesmeric power, but gradually succumbed. He felt as if chained to his seat, and it was only by a great effort that he pulled himself together, took Pepeeta by the arm and drew her out into the open air.

For a few moments they walked in silence, and then the doctor exclaimed: "P-p-peeta, I have found him at last!"

"Found whom?" she asked sharply, irritated by the voice which offered such a rasping contrast to the one still echoing in her ears.

"Found whom? As if you didn't know! I mean the man of d-d-destiny! He is a snake charmer, Pepeeta! He just fairly b-b-bamboozled you! I was laughing in my sleeve and saying to myself, 'He's bamboozled Pepeeta; but he can't b-b-bamboozle me!' When he up and did it! Tee-totally did it! And if he can bamboozle me, he can bamboozle anybody."

"Did you understand what he said?" Pepeeta asked.

"Understand? Well, I should say not! But between you and me and the town p-p-pump it's all the better, for if he can fool the people with that kind of g-g-gibberish, he can certainly f-f-fool them with the Balm of the B-B-Blessed Islands! First time I was ever b-b-bamboozled in my life. Feels queer. Our fortune's made, P-p-peeta!"

His triumph and excitement were so great that he did not notice the silence and abstraction of his wife. His ardent mind invariably excavated a channel into which it poured its thoughts, digging its bed so deep as to flow on unconscious of everything else. Exulting in the prospect of attaching to himself a companion so gifted, never doubting for a moment that he could do so, reveling in the dreams of wealth to be gathered from the increased sales of his patent medicine, he entered the hotel and made straight for the bar-room, where he told his story with the most unbounded delight.

Pepeeta retired at once to her room, but her mind was too much excited and her heart too much agitated for slumber. She moved restlessly about for a long time and then sat down at the open window and looked into the night. For the first time in her life, the mystery of existence really dawned upon her. She gazed with a new awe at the starry sky. She thought of that Being of whom David had spoken. Questions which had never before occurred to her knocked at the door of her mind and imperatively demanded an answer. "Who am I? Whence did I come? For what was I created? Whither did I come? For what was I created? Whither am I going?" she asked herself again and again with profound astonishment at the newness of these questions and her inability to answer them.

For a long time she sat in the light of the moon, and reflected on these mysteries with all the power of her untutored mind. But that power was soon exhausted, and vague, chaotic, abstract conceptions gave place to a definite image which had been eternally impressed upon her inward eyes. It was the figure of the young Quaker, idealized by the imagination of an ardent and emotional woman whose heart had been thrilled for the first time.

She began timidly to ask herself what was the meaning of those feelings which this stranger had awakened in her bosom. She knew that they were different from those which her husband inspired; but how different, she did not know. They filled her with a sort of ecstasy, and she gave herself up to them. Exhausted at last by these vivid thoughts and emotions, she rested her head upon her arms across the window sill and fell asleep. It must have been that the young Quaker followed her into the land of dreams, for when her husband aroused her at midnight a faint flush could be seen by the light of the moon on those rounded cheeks.

CHAPTER IV.

On the following morning the preacher-plowman was afield at break of day. The horses, refreshed and rested by food and sleep, dragged the gleaming plowshare through the heavy sod as if it were light snow, and the farmer exulted behind them.

David tied the reins to the plow handles and strode across the fresh furrows. Vaulting the fence and leaping the brook which formed the boundary line of the farm, he ascended the bank and approached a carriage from which a man had hailed him. As he did so the occupants got out and came to meet him. To his astonishment he saw the strangers whom he had noticed the night before. The man advanced with a bold, free demeanor, the woman timidly and with downcast eyes.

"Good morning," said the doctor. David returned his greeting with the customary duality of the Quakers.

"My name is Dr. Aesculapius.

"Thee is welcome."

"I was over to the m-m-meeting house last night, and heard your a-s-speech. Didn't understand a w-w-word, but saw that you c-c-can talk like a United States Senator."

David bowed and blushed.

"I came over to make you a proposition. Want you to yoke up with me, and help me sell the 'B-B-Balm of the Blessed Islands.' You can do 'the t-t-talking and I'll run the b-b-bus-ness; see? What do you s-s-say?"

Gravely, placidly, the young Quaker answered: "I thank thee, friend, for what thee evidently means as a kindness, but I must decline thy offer."

"Decline my offer? Are you c-c-crazy? Why do you d-d-decline my offer?"

"Because I have no wish to leave my home and work."

Although his answer was addressed to the man, his eyes were directed to the woman. His reply, simple and natural enough, astounded the quack.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean that you p-p-prefer to stay in this p-p-pigstye of a town to becoming a citizen of the g-g-great world?"

"I do."

"But listen; I will pay you more money in a single month than you can earn by d-d-driving your plow through that b-b-black mud for a whole year."

"I have no need and no desire for more money than I can earn by daily toil."

"No need and no desire for money! B-b-bah! You are not talking to aniveling old women and crack-b-b-brained old men; but to a f-f-feller who can see through a two-inch plank, and you can't p-p-pass off any of your religious d-d-drive on him, either."

This coarse insult went straight to the soul of the youth. His blood tingled in his veins. There was a tightening around his heart of something which was out of place in the bosom of a Quaker. A hot reply sprang to his lips, but died away as he glanced at the woman, and saw her face mantled with an angry flush.

Calmed by her silent sympathy, he quietly replied: "Friend, I have no desire to annoy thee, but I have been taught that 'the love of money is the root of all evil,' and believing as I do I could not answer thee otherwise than I did."

"Well, well, reckon you are more to be pitied than b-b-blamed. Fault of early education! Talk like a p-p-parrot! What can a young fellow like you know about life, shut up here in this seven-by-nine valley, like a man in a b-b-barrel looking out of the b-b-bung-hole?"

Offended and disgusted, the Quaker was about to turn upon his heel; but he saw in the face of the man's beautiful companion a look which said plainly as spoken words, "I, too, desire that you should go with us."

This look changed his purpose, and he paused.

"Listen to me now," continued the doctor, observing his irresolution. "You think you know what life is; but you d-d-don't! Do you know what K-g-great cities are? Do you know what it is to p-p-possess and to spend the money which you d-d-despise? Do you know what it is to wear fine clothes, to see great sights, to go where you want to and to do what you p-p-please?"

"I do not, nor do I wish to. And thee must abandon these follies and sins, if thee would enter the Kingdom of God," David replied, fixing his eyes sternly upon the face of the blasphemer.

"Good-bye, d-d-dead man! I have always hated c-c-corpuses! I am going where men have red b-b-blood in their veins."

With these words he turned on his heel and started toward the carriage, leaving David and Pepeeta alone. Neither of them moved. The gypsy nervously plucked the petals from a daisy and the Quaker gazed at her face. During these few moments nature had not been idle. In air and earth and troop, following blind instincts, her myriad children were seeking their mates. And here, in the odorous sunshine of the May morning, these two young, impressionable and ardent beings, yielding themselves unconsciously to the same mysterious attraction which was uniting other happy couples, were drawn together in a union which time could not dissolve and sterner, perhaps, cannot annul.

(To be continued.)

Poor Mother Eve.

"Dr. Emil Reich is now saying that the American woman can't understand genius. That doesn't preclude her from understanding him."

The speaker, a Colonial Club woman, frowned.

"Dr. Reich," she said, "is anything but a genius, though abroad the women do fawn on him. Here we treated him as a light-weight with a slight gift of humor. He didn't like it. Hence his strictures on us. I admit that Dr. Reich is now and then rather funny. Once, for example, I heard him say at a dinner, apropos of woman's vanity:

"Mother Eve must have been terribly put out not to be able to hold a small pail of water in front of her when she stood with her back to a pool and tried to see if her hair was properly done up behind."

A Worthy Quaker.

"To be in the swim, I paid \$4 admission to hear that new pianist last night."

"Well, do you begrudge it?"

"Yes, I do. He turned out to be the fellow I complained to the police about thumping the piano all day and all night in the next flat."—Judge.



A Fireless Brooder.

If a hen can hatch a duckling, why can't a bunch of any sort of feathers hatch a chick? As a matter of fact, they can, as has been demonstrated by the fireless brooder invented by a California man. In general appearance the brooder resembles other machines of the kind, but there is no space in it for the lamp, or other heating apparatus used in the older types. Instead, a number of bunches of feathers are fastened to the under side of the



CHICKS EASY TO REACH.

lid. These feathers are just long enough to reach the floor of the box, with a little left over. The eggs are laid on the bottom, just beneath the feather tufts, and when the lid is closed each egg is inclosed in a cluster of down that makes a very good imitation hen. As each egg is hatched out the lid can be lifted for a second and the chick removed without the difficulty that would attend his removal from the old-style brooder, the interior of which is reached from one end.

Benefits of Humus.

The substance left in the ground after the fertilizer has decayed is known as "humus." In order to secure the greatest results from the fertilizer and to get the largest possible quantity of humus, it is necessary that the soil be moist when the fertilizer is plowed under. Only a small amount of humus is obtained from the turned-under fertilizer should the ground be dry.

When the fertilizer is allowed to lie upon the surface for a period, exposed to the sun, much good is lost from the fact that it forms but a small amount of humus when plowed under. Therefore it is important that the soil should always be moist when fertilizer of any kind is plowed under.

In many ways humus benefits the soil. In the first place, it makes the soil lighter as well as looser. This condition allows good ventilation and gives a chance for poisonous gases to escape. The soil does not become overheated, and, in clay territory, the ground is lightened, making it more easy to work. It is equally beneficial in a sandy soil, inasmuch as it assists in binding it together, allowing more substance.

Killing Quack Grass.

A Michigan farmer gives these instructions for killing quack grass: Plow five or six inches deep in the growing season, say April, May and June. Give it a good digging, then cultivate with a cultivator that has teeth close enough so they will cut the roots two or two and one-half inches under the ground. The secret is to keep it from getting to the surface. It wants holding down six weeks. It does not take expensive tools. I use an old-fashioned cultivator that was bought fifty years ago. It has seven teeth, three in front, four in rear; each tooth cuts six inches wide. It is good to drag it over after three or four days. I cultivate once a week for six weeks; it has never failed me yet. The roots will be dead as hay. It is good for Canada thistles. If one is doubtful, take a rod or more square and keep it down for six weeks and see how it works. This was done with a hoe on two acres, and 100 bushels of smutnose corn were raised to the acre, planted in drills one foot apart and hoed to kill.

Fat in Milk.

It can not be that the butter fat in milk is obtained from the fat stored in the tissues of the cow, otherwise the animal would soon become emaciated. Cows obtain the butter fat in milk from the food they eat and digest, and not from the reserve or accumulation of fat in their bodies. Reason as well as observation teaches that cows extract butter fat from the food they consume and digest, and to produce a large percentage of cream the rations of the cow should be rich in the elements of nitrogen and carbohydrates, which are found in linseed meal, mid-

dlings, bran, corn meal and ground oats. At the Cornell University cows that yielded 200 pounds of butter fat annually under ordinary feeding yielded 310 pounds when given liberal rations of feed rich in nitrogen and carbohydrates. Cream will not make butter unless it contains fat, and profitable fats will not be produced unless cows are fed on rations rich in the elements that produce cream.

Digging Potatoes.

The time is near when farmers will be digging their potatoes, and then is the time to select the seed for another year; when a hill of nice, smooth potatoes is found, free from scab or rot, and a goodly number are just the shape and size wanted for table use, put them one side. At night gather them up and put them away for seed next spring. You will be surprised to see how you can change the type and improve them in a few years, says a Vermont contributor to the American Cultivator. We do this every year, and, while our townspeople are complaining of their potatoes running out and buying of us to renew their seed, we are planting potatoes (Green Mountains) that started from the seed that was bought for \$5 a bushel when they first came around. If farmers would take as much pains in selecting their seed potatoes as they do their seed corn, we would not hear so much complaint about potatoes running out.

Changing Bees.

The common busy bees may be gradually replaced by the Italian or Cyprian varieties, by removing the old queen and substituting a new fertilized queen of either kind preferred. If she is carefully guarded in a small cage for a few days the bees soon recognize her, and in the course of a few months the old bees will all be dead and the new ones will be of the desired kind. The queen is compelled to lay numbers of eggs daily in order to supply the great loss constantly recurring by the destruction from birds, storms and other difficulties. There should be left plenty of honey for a winter supply, and the hives should be well protected from storms. What the beekeeper should aim to do is to sow such crops as will enable the bees to lay in a large supply of honey, and he can well afford to do so if he has a number of hives.

Hogs and Straw Ricks.

Some farmers think that a straw rick is a good place for the sow and her brood to sleep. This is a mistake. It is best to keep them away from the straw pile winter and summer. In the winter the pigs will burrow beneath the straw, get too warm and take cold when they come out into the freezing atmosphere. Coughing and wheezing is the result, and the pigs do no good or die. Besides, if burrowed beneath the straw they are liable to be stepped on and seriously injured or killed by the stock running to the rick.

During the summer months especially should the sow and her young be fenced from the straw pile. If they burrow down into the half rotted straw they will be very apt to contract some disease.

Rye as Horse Feed.

Rye is a good grain to feed horses. It is equal to oats and wheat, but it must be ground middling fine and mixed with cut straw or cut hay. The straw or hay should be cut into half-inch lengths, moistened with water and the rye meal well mixed with it. It is very sticky and horses cannot get the meal without eating the straw or hay with it. In feeding corn to horses we always grind half rye with the corn to make the corn meal stick to the cut straw. Corn and rye ground together in equal proportions and mixed with bright cut straw moistened with water make a well-balanced ration, equally as good, as eagerly sought after by horses and a cheaper horse feed than oats and hay.

Poultry Notes.

Others have built up an egg laying strain. Why not do so yourself? Lazy hens cause much of the high prices for eggs. Make 'em get busy and hustle.

The warmer the weather the more water required, as more is thrown off by the body.

Many a hen that is otherwise well fed may fail to lay on account of lack of water.

Successful poultrymen, in order to keep their poultry on a paying basis, are continually culling their flocks.

One of the great values of green food, it is said, lies in its ability to aid in the digestion of other things—Farm and Ranch.

Memorable Schools.

The United States Department of Agriculture recommends the establishment of movable schools of agriculture by the state experiment stations. Where fifteen farmers can be secured as students the school may be conducted for a year or longer. The kind of instruction will depend upon the needs of the section.