

The Redemption of David Corson

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CHAPTER VI.

Early the next morning the two adventurers took their departure. The jovial quick 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, Peepeta'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, Peepeta 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 autohatched driver pulled them back, and exclaimed with an oath:

"You little wild cat, if you ever d-d-so 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-p-prison. I should tramp back and forth in it like a polar bear in a c-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 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 faltered.

On the preceding evening, he had hurried through his "shores," 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 gypsy, and the other was that of his beautiful mother with her pale, carved features, her snow-white hair, her pensile 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 Peepeta 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 to 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 Peepeta, 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 toil 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 uncongenial 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 thee 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 thee thinks thee 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 thee 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 mouths 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, "the 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.)

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 accomplices as you like.

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.

Ready for Trial.
The charge is desertion. What'll be your defense?
Temporary insanity, or I never would have married her.



The Apple Barrel.

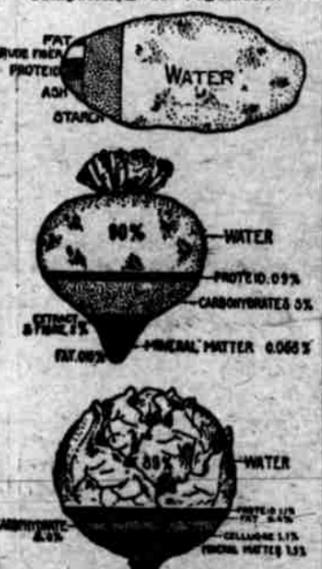
It stood in the cellar low and dim,
Where the cobwebs swept and swayed,
Holding the store from bough and limb
At the feet of autumn laid.
And oft, when the days were short and drear
And the north wind shrieked and roared,
We children sought in the corner here
And drew on the toothsome board.

For thus through the long, long winter-time
It answered our every call
With wine of the summer's golden prime,
Sealed by the hand of fall.
The best there was of the earth and air,
Of rain and sun and breeze,
Changed to a pipin' sweet and rare
By the art of the faithful trees.

A wonderful barrel was this, had we
Its message but rightly heard,
Filled with the tales of wind and bee,
Of cricket and moth and bird;
Rife with the bliss of the fragrant June
When skies were soft and blue;
Thronged with the dreams of a harvest moon
O'er fields drenched deep with dew.

Oh, homely barrel, I'd fain essay
Your marvelous skill again;
Take me back to the past, I pray,
As willingly now as then—
Back to the tender morns and eves,
The noontides warm and still,
The fleecy clouds and the spangled leaves
Of the orchard over the hill.
—Edwin L. Sabin, in Lippincott's.

Composition of Vegetables.



While vegetables are given a low value as food for man or beast on account of their large percentage of water, the dry portion is highly nutritive. In the potato the 22 per cent of solid matter is nearly all available for food. The proteids as flesh formers and the carbohydrates as fat producers are essential parts of food.

Keep the Road Drag Going.
Bad roads are an extravagance that no farming community can afford. Just what they cost in unnecessary expenses it takes but a moment to determine.

A team and driver are reasonably worth \$3 a day, and by the use of these it is possible to deliver to market from your home 100 bushels of corn. Hauling over good roads, the cost of delivery is 2 cents per bushel. But if, in consequence of bad roads, but fifty bushels can be delivered, the cost is doubled and the difference is what the impassible roads cost you. Continue this calculation, applying it to the hauling of all your crops, and it quickly becomes apparent that it amounts to a very burdensome tax. Good roads help in every way; they promote sociability by making friends and relatives accessible, and by means of them it is easier to reach the schools and churches and to generally do and enjoy the things which make life really worth living.

Sunflowers for Poultry.
Sunflowers are grown by many poultrymen and farmers. The seed make an excellent feed for poultry and can be easily and profitably produced. The seeds can be sown in rows and the crop cultivated the same

as corn. When ripe the seed is thrashed out and fed to the poultry either whole or ground. If the sunflower heads are thrown into the chicken yard, the birds will thresh the seeds out themselves with no expense to the grower. It is an excellent fattening food, and when fed with cracked corn gives good results.

It is too late this season to sow the sunflower seeds, but it is a good thing to keep in mind for another year.—Farmers' Guide.

A Troublesome Weed.



Reports come from Ontario that the perennial sow thistle has gained a firm foothold, making it the greatest weed enemy with which the farmer has to contend. It has been spread from one farm to another by the threshing machines, the numerous seeds being easily carried. One method being advocated for its eradication is to sow winter rye in September and pasture it the following spring. This can be followed in June by rye, turnips or buckwheat. In this way crops are secured and the sow thistle fought at the same time.

Fowls and Eggs.

Farmers' Bulletin No. 128, United States Department of Agriculture, says: "The eggs of different kinds of domestic poultry vary in size as well as appearance, and there is also a considerable range in the size of eggs of different breeds. Thus, hens' eggs range from the small ones laid by bantams to the large ones laid by such breeds as light Brahmas. On an average a hen's egg is 2.27 inches in length, and 1.73 inches in diameter or width at the broadest point, and weighs about 2 ounces, or eight eggs to the pound (1½ pounds per dozen). Generally speaking, the eggs of pullets are smaller than those of old hens; those of ducks somewhat larger than hens' eggs, while those of turkeys and geese are considerably larger. Guinea eggs, on an average, measure 1½x1½ inches, are rather pointed at one end, and weigh about 1.4 ounces each, or 17 ounces to the dozen. Goose eggs weigh about 5.5 to 6.7 ounces each, or about 5 pounds to the dozen—that is, more than three times as much as hens' eggs. The eggs of wild birds are said to be smaller than those of the same species when domesticated. Wild ducks' eggs are said to be, on an average, 1.97 to 2.17 inches in diameter; domestic ducks' eggs, 2.36 to 2.56 inches.

Hints on Hog Raising.

The white breed of hogs is gradually disappearing. Salt buried a few inches in the ground in certain spots will attract the hogs and confine them pretty closely to such places.

It is natural for a hog to root, but if you want to prevent him from doing so a simple ring in the snout will answer the purpose.

It is a great mistake to mark a hog by mutilating his ears. Better use a metal tag.

Successful hog raisers will always have clover or alfalfa pastures for their animals.

Every hog pasture ought to have an open shed on a high point of ground for shelter from the hot sun. Leave all sides open so the air can pass over them.

Keep the pigs growing from the day they are born until they go to the slaughtering pen.

The man who imagines that he can produce fat and lean bacon in streaks by feeding one week and starving the next will be disappointed.

It looks like a waste when thinning the fruit on the trees, but the harvest time of larger and better fruit proves the wisdom of the course.

Radishes need lots of potash, and for this reason wood ashes sprinkled on the soil where they are grown will give them large and rapid growth.