

The Redemption of David Corson

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CHAPTER XV.

During several months of loneliness and sorrow a great change had been taking place in the mind of Pepeeta, of which she was only vaguely conscious. The strain which she had been undergoing began at last to exhaust her physically.

Her vital force became depleted, her step grew feeble, the light died out of her eyes, she drooped and crept feebly about her room. The determination which she had so resolutely maintained to live apart slowly ebbed away. She was, after all, a woman, not a disembodied spirit, and her woman's heart yearned unceasingly for the touch of her lover's hand, for the kisses of his lips, for the comfort of his presence.

This longing increased with every passing hour. Fatigue, weariness, loneliness, steadily undermined her still struggling resistance to those hungerings which never left her, till at last, when the failing resources of her nature were at their lowest point, all her remaining strength was concentrated into a single passionate desire to look once more upon the face which glowed forever before her inner eye, or at least to discover what had befallen in his sin and wretchedness.

It was a long and tedious journey from New Orleans to Cincinnati in those days, and it told terribly upon the weakened constitution of the wayfarer. Her heart beat too violently in her bosom; a fierce fever began to burn in her veins; she trembled with terror lest her strength fail her before she reached her journey's end. It was not of death himself that she was afraid; but that he should overtake her before she had seen her lover!

Husbanding her strength as shipwrecked sailors save their bread and water, she counted the days and the miles to the journey's end, and having arrived at the wharf of the Queen City, the pale young traveler who had excited the compassion of the passengers, but who would neither communicate the secret of her sorrow nor accept of any aid, took her little bundle in her thin hand and started off on the last stage of her weary pilgrimage. It was the hardest of all, for her money was exhausted and there was nothing for her to do but walk.

It was a cold December day. Gray clouds lowered, wintry winds began to moan, and she had proceeded but a little way when light flakes of snow began to fall. The chill penetrated her thin clothing and shook her fragile form. She moved more like a wraith than a living woman. Her tired feet left such slight impressions in the snow that the feathery flakes obliterated one almost before she had made another, and she was haunted by the thought that every trace of her passage through life was thus to disappear!

Ignorant of the distance or the exact direction, and stopping occasionally to inquire the way, she plodded on, the exhaustion of hunger and weariness becoming more and more unendurable. All that she did now was done by the sheer force of will; but yield she would not. She would die cheerfully when she had attained her object, but not before. The winds became more wild and boisterous; they loosened and tossed her black hair about her wan face; they beat against her person and drove her back. Every step seemed the last one possible; but suddenly, just as she descended the slope of a steep hill, she saw the twinkling lights of the village and the feeble rays shot new courage into her heart. Under this accession of power she pushed forward and made her way toward the old Quaker homestead.

The night had now deepened around her; but every foot of the landscape had been indelibly impressed upon her memory, and even in the gathering gloom she chose the road unerringly. There were only a few steps more, and reeling toward the door-yard fence she felt her way to the gate, opened it, staggered forward up the path in the rays of light that struggled out into the darkness, and with one final effort fell fainting upon the threshold.

The scene within the house presented a striking contrast to that without. In a great open fireplace the flames of the beech logs were wavering up the chimney. Seated in the radiance of their light, on a low stool, was a young boy with his elbows upon his knees and his cheeks in the palms of his hands. His mother sat by his side stroking his hair and gazing at him in fond, brooding love. The father was bending over a Bible lying open on the table, and had just articulated in slow and reverent tones the words of Jesus, "I was a stranger and ye took me in," when they heard a sound at the door.

Father, mother and son sprang to their feet and, hurrying towards the door, flung it open and beheld a woman's limp form lying on the threshold. It was but a child's weight to the stalwart Quaker who picked it up in his great arms and carried it into the radiance of the great fireplace, and in an instant he and Dorothea his wife were pushing forward the work of restoration. The little boy stood gazing wonderingly at her from a distance. The calm features of the Quaker were agitated with emotion. His wife knelt by the side of the pale sleeper, and her tears dropped silently on the hand which she pressed to her lips.

For many days Pepeeta's life hung in the balance, her spirit hovering uncertainly along the border land of being, and it was only love that wooed it back to life.

When at length, through careful nursing, she really regained her con-

sciousness and came up from those unfathomable abysses where she had been wandering, she opened her eyes upon the walls of a little chamber that looked out through an alcove into the living room of the Quaker house.

The silence was suddenly broken by a voice feeble and tremulous, but very musical and sweet. It was Pepeeta, who gazed around her in bewilderment and asked in vague alarm, "Where am I?"

"Dorothea was by her side in an instant, and taking the thin fingers in her strong hands, replied: "There is among friends."

Pepeeta looked long into the calm face above her, and gathered reassurance; but her memory did not at once return.

"Have I ever been in this place before? Have I ever seen your face? Has something dreadful happened? Tell me," she entreated, gazing with agitation into the calm eyes that looked down into hers.

"I cannot tell thee whether thee has ever seen us before, but we have seen thee so much for a few days that we feel like old friends," said Dorothea, pressing the hand she held, and smiling.

Pepeeta's eyes wandered about the room restlessly for a moment, and then some dim remembrance of the past came back.

"Did I come here in a great storm?" she asked.

"Thee did, indeed. The night was wild and cold."

"Did I fall on the threshold?"

"Upon the very threshold, and let us thank God for that, because if thee had fallen at the gate or in the path we should never have heard thee."

Pepeeta struggled to a sitting posture as her memory clarified, fixed her wide open eyes upon Dorothea, and asked, pathetically, "Where is he?"

"I do not know who thee means," said Dorothea, laying her hand on the invalid's shoulders and trying gently to push her back upon her pillow.

"David!" she exclaimed, "David. Tell me if you know, for it seems to me I shall die if I do not hear."

"I do not know, my love. It is a long time since we have heard from David. But thee must lie down. Thee is not strong enough to talk."

"Are we alone?"

"Yes, all alone."

"Well, then I will begin," Pepeeta said, and in a voice choked with emotion, the poor sufferer breathed out the tale of her sin and her sorrow. She told all. She did not shield herself, and everywhere she could she softened the wrong done by David. It was a long story, and was interrupted only by the ticking of the great clock in the hall-way, telling off the moments with as little concern as when three years before it had listened to the story told to David by his mother. When the confession was ended the tender-hearted woman kissed the quivering lips.

"Have you forgiven me?" Pepeeta asked, seizing the face in her thin hands and looking almost despairingly into the great blue eyes.

"As I hope to be forgiven," Dorothea answered, kissing her again and again. A look of almost perfect happiness diffused itself over the pale countenance.

"It is too much—too much. How can it be? It was such a great wrong!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, it was a great wrong. Thee has sinned much, but much shall be forgiven if thee is penitent, and I think thee is. No love nor pardon should be withheld from those who mourn their sins. Our God is love! And so we are ignorant and frail. It is a sad story, as thee says, but it is better to be led astray by our good passions than by our bad. I have noticed that it is sometimes by our holiest instincts that we are betrayed into our darkest sins! It was heaven's brightest light—the light of love—that led thee astray, my child, and even love may not be followed with closed eyes! But thee does not need to be preached to."

Astonished at such an almost divine insight and compassion, Pepeeta exclaimed, "How came you to know so much of the tragedy of human life, so much of the soul's weakness and guilt; you who have lived so quietly in this happy home?"

"By consulting my own heart, dear. We do not differ in ourselves so much as in our experiences and temptations. But thee has talked enough about thy troubles. Tell me thy name? What shall we call thee?"

"My name is Pepeeta."

"And mine is Dorothea."

"Oh! Dorothea," Pepeeta exclaimed, "do you think we shall ever see him again?"

"I cannot tell. We had made many inquiries and given up in despair. And now when we least expected news, thee has come! We will cherish thee again. We were discouraged too easily."

"Oh! how strong you are—how comforting. Yes, we will cherish thee, and when I am well I will start out, and search for him everywhere. I shall find him. My heart tells me so."

"But thee is not well enough, yet," Dorothea said, with a kind smile, "and until thee is, thee must be at rest in thy soul and, abiding here with us, await the revelation of the divine will."

"Oh, may I stay a little while? It is so quiet and restful here. I feel like a tired bird that has found a refuge from a storm. But what will your husband say, when he hears this story?"

"Thee need not be troubled about that. His door and heart are ever

open to those who labor and are heavy laden. Thee Christ has found a faithful follower in thee, Pepeeta. It was he who first divined thy story."

"Then you knew me?"

"We had conjectured."

"Then I will stay, oh, I will stay a little while, and perhaps, perhaps—who knows?" she clasped her hands, her soul looked out of her eyes, and a smile of genuine happiness lit up her sad face.

"Yes, who knows?" said Dorothea, gently, rearranging the pillows and bidding the invalid fall asleep again.

CHAPTER XVI.

In due time the vessel upon which David had embarked arrived at her destination, the city of New York, and the lonely traveler stepped forth unnoticed and unknown into the metropolis of the New World.

With an instinct common to all adventurers, he made his way to the Bowery. Amid its perpetual excitements and boundless opportunities for adventure, David resumed the habits formed during that period of life upon which the doors had now closed. His reputation had followed him, and the new scenes, the physical restoration during the long voyage, the necessity of maintaining his fame, all conspired to help him take a place in the front rank of the devotees of the gambling rooms.

He did his best to enter into this new life with enthusiasm, but it had no power to banish or even to allay his grief. He therefore spent most of his time in wandering about among the wonders of the swiftly-growing city, observing her busy streets, her crowded wharves, her libraries, museums and parks. This moving panorama temporarily diverted his thoughts from that channel into which they were constantly wearing deeper and deeper, and so helped him to accomplish the one aim of his wretched life, which was to become even for a single moment unconscious of himself and of his misery.

Among the many acquaintances he had made in that realm of life to which his vices and his crimes had awakened him, a single person had cognized in his bosom emotions of interest and regard. There was in that circle of silent, terrible, remorseless parasites of society, a young man whose classical face, exquisite manners and varied accomplishments set him apart from all the others. He moved among them like a ghost—mysterious, uncommunicative and unapproachable.

From the time of their first meeting he had treated David in an exceptional manner. In unobserved ways he had done him little kindnesses, and proffered many delicate advances of friendship, and not many months passed before the two lone, suspicious and ostracized men united their fortunes in a sort of informal partnership and were living in common apartments.

There was in Foster Mantel a sort of sardonic humor into which he was always withdrawing himself. In one of their infrequent conversations the two companions had grown unusually confidential and found themselves drifting a little too near that most dangerous of all shoals in the lives of such men—the past.

(To be continued.)

LET THE WEAKLINGS DIE!

Theory of an English Socialist Seemingly Indorsed by Figures.

G. C. Hill, an English "sociologist," announces that it is mathematically a mistake to suppose that human life is lengthening. He thinks that in the British islands at least it can be proved mathematically that everything done to prevent sickly children from dying soon, cuts down the length of the "average lifetime" after 40. Writing in the Sociological Review he shows that in thirty years from 1870, the death rate among male infants under 5 years, was cut down from 75 to 58 in the thousand. The rate was cut down in one degree or another so that there were fewer deaths at all ages under 35. At 35 there was almost no change in thirty years. At from 45 to 55 he shows the British death rate going up from 19.6 to 20.3 in the thousand. Between 55 and 65 years it rose from 33.9 to 38.9.

His argument agrees with that of a considerable school of "sociologists," who agree with the sociology of the American Indians. By putting their babies in the cold water of the nearest stream, the Indians learned easily which were too weak to make a success in life as fighters and hunters. On the other hand, the biographies of men who have done most to civilize the world by great discoveries and inventions show that as children they were often so weak that they were kept alive only by the greatest and most loving pains.

Others who have minds as mathematical as that of Mr. Hill are now working out calculations showing that as the people of Europe get more to eat from the United States and South America they are growing taller and living longer for the same reason that natives of Missouri, Kansas and Texas measure half a foot taller than natives of Japan and China. Until a generation ago, sociologists of the highest Chinese education took the view taken now by Mr. Hill in England. They applied it chiefly against girl babies. It was a Chinese sociological custom to leave the undersized, superfluous girl exposed in the open air to starve to death.

Unprejudiced.

Mike McGinnis was being examined for jury duty in a murder trial. "Mr. McGinnis," asked the judge, "have you formed or expressed an opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the prisoner at the bar?" "No, sir," replied Mike. "Have you any conscientious scruples against capital punishment?" "Not in this case, your honor," Mike replied.—Success.

THE PRICE OF COAL.



—Chicago Record Herald.

EDITOR OF CENTURY IS DEAD.

R. W. Gilder, Surrounded by Members of Family, Conscious at End.

Richard Watson Gilder, poet, lecturer and editor-in-chief of the Century Magazine, died shortly before 6 o'clock Thursday night. The famous editor, who for more than a quarter of a century has been regarded as an authority on literature, passed away at the home of a friend, Mrs. Schuyler Van

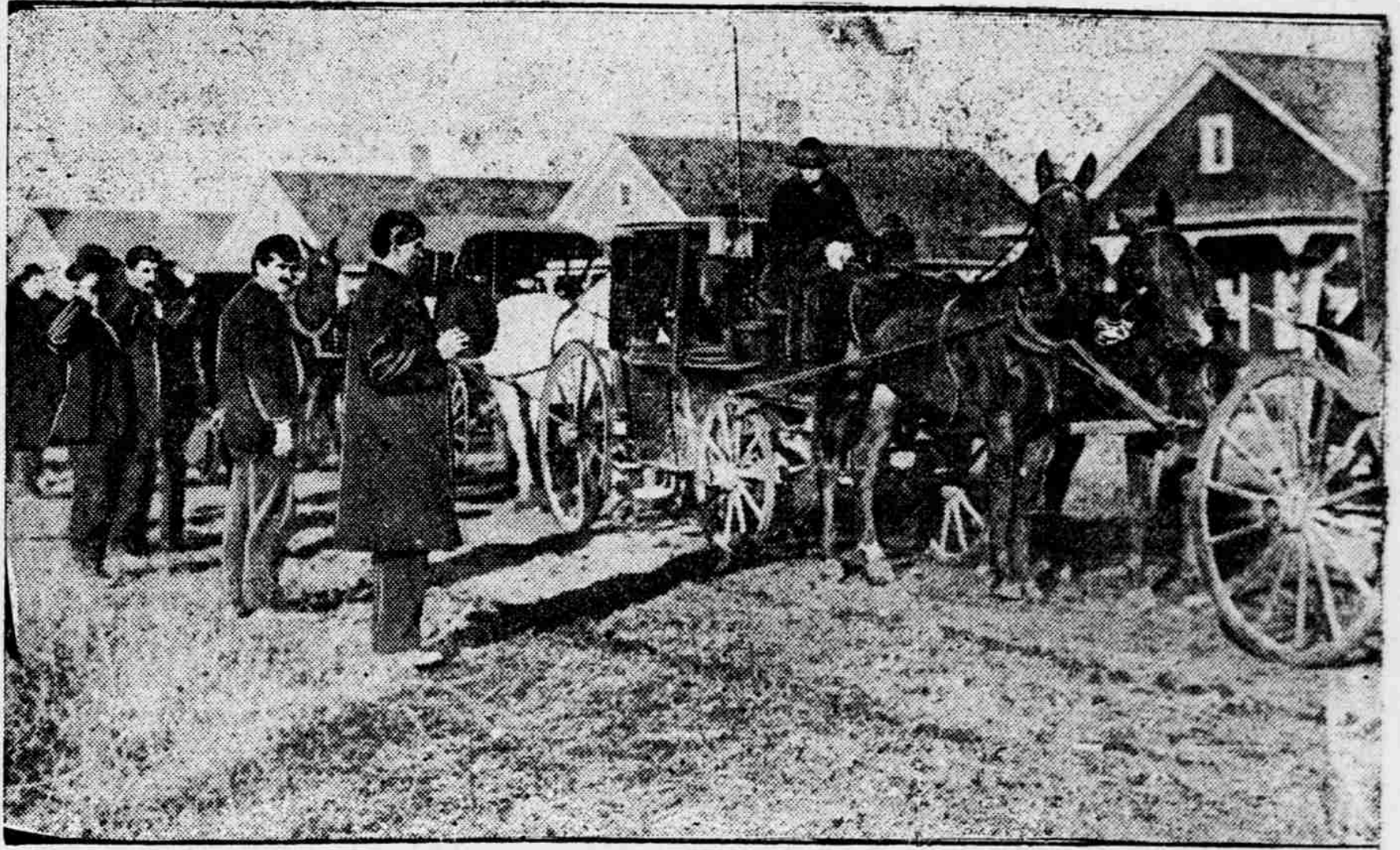
NOTES OF THE MINE DISASTER.

A woman attacked the guard at the main shaft and demanded that the seals be broken.

State Factory Inspector Davies found that a number of boys under 16 years of age were employed in the mine.

The children of the town flocked to the Congregational Church Wednesday, where they were fed by represen-

BURIAL OF THOSE WHO ATTEMPTED RESCUE.



MINERS WITH BARE HEADS WATCHING FUNERAL OF MINE VICTIMS.

Rensselaer, 9 West 10th street, New York. He succumbed to an attack of angina pectoris. He was surrounded by his wife and children.

Mr. Gilder had been slightly indisposed for two weeks, but death came with unexpected quickness. He was seemingly in better health Thursday morning when Mrs. Gilder left the house for a short time, but an hour after noon he was stricken with heart trouble. He retained control of his faculties until the end, and bade farewell to the members of his family.

THIS BOY BAD WHEN HE SLEEPS

Order Reversed in Case of Kansas City Lad—Would Kill Parents.

What strange impulse leads Walter Schoonover, 11 years old, who is devoted to his parents in his waking hours, to try to murder them when darkness falls? For months his parents, who live at Kansas City, Kan., have attempted to answer this question. Failing, they have appealed to Judge Van B. Prather to help them solve the mystery. Several times the boy's father and step-mother have awakened to find the youth stooping over them with a hammer, ready to kill them. When awakened he returns to bed in a peaceful frame of mind. The boy asserts that he does not know why he has such homicidal impulses. The court ordered him sent to a sanitarium.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

H. Rockwell, an Iowa strawberry enthusiast, after twelve years' effort and experimenting, claims to have produced an ever-bearing strawberry.

St. Paul officials declare that no advance in freight rates is contemplated in the Northwest, whatever may be the plans of railroads in other parts of the country.

Michael Ryan, president of the American Packers' Association, at a convention in Chicago, said that unless a great many more cattle were raised in America, this country would soon need to be importing meat. No hope of permanently lower prices for meat is held out by the association.

James J. Hill will distribute \$2,500 in gold as prizes at the Omaha corn exhibit for the best grain grown in Montana within twenty-five miles of the Great Northern. Montana will have on display products which will demonstrate that the State of former mining and cattle-raising fame is now in the agricultural chase.

CHARLES N. CRITTENTON DEAD.

Founder of Many Rescue Homes Pneumonia Victim.

Charles N. Crittenton of New York, 76 years old, known as the millionaire founder of seventy-three rescue homes for girls in America and several in Japan and China, which he named in memory of his daughter, Florence, died in San Francisco Tuesday night of pneumonia, after a short illness. Mr. Crittenton was visiting the homes throughout the country and arrived in San Francisco ten days before. He became ill within a few days after his arrival. He was senior member of the firm of Charles N. Crittenton & Co., wholesale druggists, New York. Mr. Crittenton became converted in 1883, the day after the burial of his daughter, who died at the age of 6. He had become wealthy by hard work, having started with a capital of \$60, and decided to spend a part of his money and time in philanthropy. In April, 1883, the first Florence Crittenton home was established. The object of the new movement was the reclamation of unfortunate women.

DRIVEN FROM HOMES BY FLOOD

Suffering Is Caused in Eastern Kansas by High Water and Cold.

Many rivers and smaller streams in eastern Kansas are higher than ever before at this season of the year because of torrents of rain during three days. The small towns of Frankfort, Centralia, Vliets and Vermillion are flooded and many residents sought shelter on the high lands Monday night. The weather was cold and raw, causing much suffering among the people driven from their homes. At Lawrence the Kansas river is higher than it has ever been at this time of the year, and in the low-

tatives of the Congregational Home Missionary Society.

Agitators harangued the miners and urged them to seize the works by force, tear the seals off the shafts and rescue the entombed miners.

Scores of families are suffering from the cold, many of the sorrowing widows and orphans being found huddled together in unheated houses.

Two companies of militia arrived in Cherry Wednesday, but remained in cars on outskirts of town until night in order not to arouse the miners.

Malcolm McDonald, State President,

lands near there many persons have been forced to leave their homes. At Salina, Manhattan and Junction City the unusual rains are causing anxiety. At Salina the Western Star mill dam across the Smoky Hill river is threatened. The Smoky Hill and Republican rivers are unusually high and still rising.

Dies of Hydrophobia on Train.

Paul Wesley Collins, 4 years old, died of hydrophobia on a Big Four train due in Indianapolis. The child had been bitten by a dog at Delaware, Ohio, and was being taken home from

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS AT CHERRY.



of the United Mine workers, declared that the presence of the troops increased rather than lessened the gravity of the situation.

Relief work is well organized and a regular system of relieving cases of distress has been put in operation. Many pitiable cases of suffering are brought to the attention of the Red Cross

Chicago, where he had received treatment.

Elmira City Hall Burned.

The City Hall in Elmira, N. Y., was burned to the ground when a fire which started in the engineer's room spread so quickly that the firemen could not check the flames. The structure was built ten years ago at a cost of \$100,000.