A TALE OF THE OLD WEST

By HARRY LEON WILSON, AUTHOR OF THE SPENDERS

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CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

It broke the spell of awe that had lain upon him, so that he felt for the moment only a pious horror of her speech. He called Christina to take charge of her, and Martha, the second wife, to put away her little bundle of clothing. He himself went to be alone where he could think what must be done for her. From an entry in the little Bible, written in letters that seemed to shout to him the accusation of his crime, he had found that she must now be five years old. It was plainly time that he should begin to supply her very apparent need of religious instruction.

When she had become a little used to her surroundings later in the day, he sought to beguile her to this end, beginning diplomatically with other matters.

"Come, tell me your name, dear."

She allowed her attention to be diverted from her largest doll.

"My name is Prudence—" She hesitated.

"Prudence—what?"

"I—I lost my mind of it." She looked at him hopefully to be prompted.

"Prudence Rae."

She repeated the name, doubtingly, "Prudence Rae?"

"Yes—remember new—Prudence Rae. You are my little girl—Prudence Rae."

"But you're not my really papa—he's went far off—oh, ten ninety miles far!"

"No, Prudence—God is your Father in heaven, and I am your father on earth—"

"But not my papa!"

"Listen, Prudence—do you know what you are?"

The puzzled look she had worn fled instantly from her face.

"I'm a generation of vipers."

She made the announcement with a palpable ring of elation in her tones, looking at him proudly, and as if waiting to hear expressions of astonishment and delight.

"Child, child, who has told you such things? You are not that!"

She retorted, indignantly now, the lines drawing about her eyes in signal of near-by tears:

"I am a generation of vipers—the Bishop said I was—he told that other mamma, and I am it!"

"Well, well, don't cry—all right—you shall be it—but I can tell you something much nicer." He assumed a knowing air, as one who withheld knowledge of overwhelmin fascinations.

"Tell me—what?"

And so, little by little, hardly knowing where to begin, but feeling that any light whatsoever must profit a soul so benighted, he began to teach her.

In the days that followed he wooed her patiently, seeking constantly to find some favor with her, and grateful beyond words when he succeeded ever so little. At first he could win but slight notice of any sort from her, and that only at rare and uncertain intervals. But gradually his unobtrusive efforts told, and, little by little, she began to take him into her confidence. The first day she invited him to play with her in one of her games was a day of rejoicing for him.

And that night, before her bedtime, when he sat in front of the fire, she came with a most matter-of-fact unconsciousness to climb into his lap. He held her a long time, trying to breathe gently and not daring to move lest he make her uncomfortable. Her head pillowed on his arm, she was soon asleep, and he refused to give her up when Martha came to put her to bed.

Though their intimacy grew during the winter, so that she called him her father and came confidingly to him at all times, in tears or in laughter, yet he never ceased to feel in aloofness from her, an awkwardness in her presence, a fear that the mother who looked from her eyes might at any moment call to him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

How the Fiend Came Back to the Blood to Be a Snare.

The red was coming back to the blood of Martha, the fair flesh to her meager frame, the spring of youth to her step and living fire to her voice and the glance of her eyes. Her husband was pleased. He had made a new creature of the poor, worn wreck found by the wayside, weak, emaciated, reeling under her burden. He rejoiced to know he had done a true service. He was glad, moreover, to know that she made an admirable mother to the little woman-child, Prudence. Indeed, had brought them closer to each other, slowly, subtly, in little ways to disarm the most timid caution.

And this mothering and fathering of little Prudence was a work by no means colorless or uneventful. The child had displayed a grievous capacity for remaining unimpressed by even the best-weighed opinions of her protector. She was also appallingly fluent in and partial to the idioms and metaphors of revealed religion,—a circumstance that would not infrequently cause the sensitive to shudder.

Yet her days were by no means all of reproof nor was her reproof ever harsher than the more or less pointed selections from the moral verses could inflict. Under the watchful care of Martha she flourished and was happy, her mother in little, a laughing whirlwind of tender flesh, tireless feet, dancing eyes, hair of sunlight that was darkening as she grew older, and a mind that seemed to him she called father a miracle of unfoldment. It was a mind not so quickly receptive as he could have wished to the learning he tried patiently to impart; he wondered, indeed, if she were not unduly frivolous even for a child of six; or she would refuse to study unless he could have the doll she called Bishop Wright with her and pretend that she taught the lesson to him, finding him always stupid and loth to learn. He hoped for better things from her mind as she aged, watching anxiously for the buddings of reason and religion, praying daily that she should be increased in wisdom as in stature. He had become so used to the look of her mother in her face that it now and then gave him an instant of unspeakable joy. But the sound of his own voice calling her "Prudence" would shock him from this as with an icy blast of truth.

As he observed her day by day in her joyous growth, it was inevitable that he came more and more to observe the woman who was caring for her, and it was thus on one night in late summer that he awoke to an awful truth,—a truth that brought back the words of the woman's former husband with a new meaning.

He had heard Prudence pray to her, on to the bare bench of the mountain—his old refuge in temptation—where he could be safe from submitting to what his soul had forbidden. He had meant to take up a cross, but before his very eyes it had changed to be a snare set for him by the Devil.

He stayed late on the ground in the darkness, winning the battle for himself over and over, decisively, he thought, at the last. But when he went home she was there in the door, way to meet him, still silent, but with eyes that told more than he dared to hear. He thought she had in some way divined his struggle, and was waiting to strengthen the odds against him, with her face in the light of a candle she held above her head.

He went by her without speaking, afraid of his weakness, and rushed to his little cell-like room to fight the battle over. As a last source of strength he took from its hiding place the little Bible. And as it fell open naturally at the blood-washed page a new thing came, a new torture. No sooner had his eyes fallen on the stain that it seemed to him to cry out of itself, so that he started back from it. He shut the book and the cries were stilled; he opened it and again he heard them—far, loud cries and low groans close to his ear; then long piercing scream stifled suddenly to low, horrible gurglings. And before him came the inscrutable face with the deep gray eyes and the shining lips, lifting, with love in the eyes, above a gashed throat.

He closed the book and fell weakly to his knees to pray brokenly, and almost despairingly: "Help me to keep down this self within me; let it ask for nothing; fan the fires until they consume it! Bow me, bend me, break me, burn me out—burn me out!"

In the morning, when he said, "Martha, the harvest is over now, and I want you to go north with me," she prepared to obey without question.

He talked freely to her on the way, knew he ought to have some one to help her. The fever of sacrifice was also upon him. And so he found another derelict, to whom he was sealed forever.

At a time of more calmness he might have balked at this one. She was a cross, to be sure, and it was now his part in life to bear crosses. But there were plenty of these, and even one vowed to a life of sacrifice, he suspected, need not grossly abuse the powers of discrimination with which Heaven had seen fit to endow him. But he had lately been on the verge of a seething maelstrom, balancing there with unholy desire and wickedly looking far down, and the need to atone for this sin excited him to indiscretions.

It was not that this star in his crown was in her late thirties and less than lovely. He had learned, indeed, that in the game which, for the chastening of his soul, he now played with the Devil, it were best to choose stars whose charms could excite to little but conduct of a saintlike seemliness. The fat, dumpy figure of this woman, therefore, and her round, flat, moonlike face, her mouse-colored wisps of hair cut squarely off at the back of her neck, were points of a merit that was in its whole effect nothing less than distinguished.

But she talked. Her tones played with the monotony of an ever-living fountain. Artlessly she let herself in the sound of their music, until she also lost her sense of proportion, of light and shade, of simple, Christian charity. Her name was Lorena Sears, and she had come in with one of the late trains of converts, without friends, relatives, or means, with nothing but her natural gifts and an abiding faith in the saving powers of the new dispensation. And though she was so alive in her faith, rarely informed in the Scriptures, bubbling with enthusiasm for the new covenant, the new Zion, and the second coming of the Messiah, there had seemed to be no place for her. She had not been asked in marriage, nor had she found it easy to secure work to support herself.

"She's strong," said Brigham, to his inquiring Elder, "and a good worker, but even Brother Heber Kimball wouldn't marry her; and between you and me, Brother Joel, I never knew Heber to aby before at anything that would work. You can see that, yourself, by looking over his household."

But, after the needful preliminaries, and a very little coy hesitation on the part of the lady, Lorena Sears, spinster, native of Kyria, Ohio, was duly sealed to, for time and eternity, and became a star forever in the crown of Joel Rae, Elder after the Order of Melchisedek in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and President of the Amalon Stake of Zion.

In the bustle of the start south there were, of necessity, moments in which the crown's new star could not talk; but these blessed respites were at an end when at last they came to the open road.

At first, as her speech flowed on, he looked sidelong at her, in a trouble of fear and wonder; then, at length, absently, trying to put his mind elsewhere and to leave her voice as the muted murmur of a distant torrent. He succeeded fairly well in this, for Lorena combined admirably in herself the parts of speaker and listener, and was not, he thankfully noted, watchful of his attention.

He was called back by the stopping of her voice, but she had to repeat her question before he understood it. The Devil tempted him in that moment. He was on the point of answering, "Because she talked too much," but instead he climbed out of the wagon to walk. He walked most of the 300 miles in the next ten days.

But he had taken up a new cross and he had his reward. The first night after they reached home he took the little Bible from its hiding place and opened it with trembling hands. The stain was there, red in the candle-light. But the cries no longer rang in his ears as on that other night when he had been sinful before the page. And he was glad, knowing that the self within him had again been put down.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Wild Ram of the Mountains Offers to Become a Savior on Mount Zion.

In the valley of which Amalon was the center, they made ready for the end of the world. It is true that in the north, as the appointed year drew nigh, an opinion had begun to prevail that the Son of Man might defer his coming; and presently it became known that Brigham himself was doubtful about the year 1870, and was inquiring others to doubt. But in Amalon they were untainted by this heresy, choosing to rely upon what Brigham had said in moments more inspired.

He had taught that Joseph was to be the first person resurrected; that after his frame had been knit together and clothed with immortal flesh he would resurrect those who had died in the faith, according to their rank in the priesthood; then all his wives and children. Resurrected Elders, having has the keys of the resurrection conferred upon them by Joseph, their own households; and when the last of these had been called forth, whether or not there would be perfections, the Gentiles would then be resurrected to act as servants and slaves to the Saints. In his lighter moments Brigham had been wont to name a couple of Presidents of the United States who would then act as his valets.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

She Was Waiting, Silent, But with Eyes That Told More Than He Dared to Hear.

"You are a pretty mamma," and suddenly there came rushing upon him the sum of all the impressions his eyes had taken of her since that day when the Bishop had spoken. He trembled and became weak under the assault, feeling that in some insidious way his strength had been undermined. He went out into the early evening to be alone, but she, presently, having put the child to bed, came and stood near, silently in the doorway.

He looked and saw she was indeed made new, restored to the luster and fullness of her young womanhood. He remembered then that she had long been silent, when he came near her, plainly conscious of his presence but with an apparent constraint, with something almost tentative in her manner. With her return to health and comeliness there had come back to her a thousand little graces of dress and manner and speech. She drew him, with his starved love of beauty and his need of companionship; drew him with a mighty power, and he knew it at last. He remembered how he had felt and faintly thrilled under a certain soft suppression in her tone when she had spoken to him of late, this had drawn him, and the new light in her eyes and her whole freshened womanhood, even before he knew it. Now that he did know it he felt himself shaken and all but lost; clutching weakly at some support that threatened every moment to give way.

And she was his wife, his who had starved year after year for the light touch of a woman's hand and the tones of her voice that should be for him alone. He knew now that he had ached and sickened in his yearning for this, and she stood there for him in the soft night. He knew she was waiting, and he knew he desired above all things else to go to her; that the comfort of her, his to take, would give him new life, new desires, new powers; that with her he would revive as she had done. He waited long, indulging freely in hesitation, bathing his wearied soul in her nearness—yielding in fancy.

Then he walked off into the night, down through the village, past the light of open doors, and through the voices that sounded from them, out

Pointing the Way to Sinners

The medley fell into an unusual swinging rhythm; the humming rose loud and louder, gathering and adding to itself accidental suggestions; one impromptu phrase of music, which fitted the passing words, was caught up instantly; the congregation was swept away by a hysterical, rhythmical, emotional tide; utterly strange and new, never before heard, an air sprang into being—refrain first, then both refrain and line, one swift, bold, strong voice leading on. Their wild emotions strangely stirred the primitive congregation swept full tide into such an air as one carries home with him, rolling for days afterward, in his ears.

"My dyin' brederin, way yo' gwine stan'?" shouted the preacher. "Way yo' gwine stan' w'en dey tek de cubbah off'n hell, an' no wawteh nowy? Yo'all gwine come er-runnin' and er-crin' 'Way is mah crown of glory? Wuh is mah long white robe? Wuh is mah place? But fuh dem wut ain't bin convuted dey ain't gwine ter be'no place! Oh, brederin, way will yo' stan' gen day?"—John Bennett in the Atlantic.

SOME WIVES ARE DIFFERENT.

Quiet Cynicism, or Good Honest Row—Which is the Better?

"Most men," said the man of experience, "think it must be awfully nice to have a wife who takes things as coolly as Dave Potter's wife takes them; but others, more discriminating, prefer a good honest row to her style of quiet cynicism. The way she behaved the other day when she found a letter in Dave's pocket from a girl is an example of her method.

"'I don't see,' wrote this girl, 'how on earth I can ever live without you.'

"Dave's wife read that gush, and a lot more just like it, without ever turning a hair.

"'Well,' she said, quietly, 'that girl is a fool. If she knew you as well as I do she would be wondering how on earth she could ever live with you.'

"And that, in the opinion of the discriminating few, cuts a whole lot deeper than a common, everyday rumpus."

CHILDREN TORTURED.

Girl Had Running Sores from Eczema—Boy Tormented by Poison Oak—Both Cured by Cuticura.

"Last year, after having my little girl treated by a very prominent physician for an obstinate case of eczema, I resorted to the Cuticura Remedies, and was so well pleased with the almost instantaneous relief afforded that we discarded the physician's prescription and relied entirely on the Cuticura Soap, Cuticura Ointment, and Cuticura Pills. When we commenced with the Cuticura Remedies her feet and limbs were covered with running sores. In about six weeks we had her completely well, and there has been no recurrence of the trouble.

"In July of this year a little boy in our family poisoned his hands and arms with poison oak, and in twenty-four hours his hands and arms were a mass of torturing sores. We used only the Cuticura Remedies, washing his hands and arms with the Cuticura Soap, and anointing them with the Cuticura Ointment, and then gave him the Cuticura Resolvent. In about three weeks his hands and arms healed up. So we have lots of cause for feeling grateful for the Cuticura Remedies. We find that the Cuticura Remedies are a valuable household standby, living as we do twelve miles from a doctor. Mrs. Lizzie Vincent Thomas, Fairmount, Walden's Ridge, Tenn., Oct. 13, 1905."

How to Sleep in a Blanket.

There are a great many very competent treatises telling you how to build your fire, pitch your tent and all the rest of it. I have never seen described the woodman's method of using a blanket, however. Lie flat on your back. Spread the blanket over you. Now raise your legs rigid from the hips, the blanket, of course, draping over them. In two swift motions tuck first one edge under your legs from right to left, then the second edge under from left to right, and over the first edge. Lower your legs, wrap up your shoulders and go to sleep. If you roll over one edge will unwind but the other will tighten.—Stewart Edward White in Outing.

Long Sermons.

Mark Twain tells this story, the moral of which you may supply yourself: "I went to church one time and was so impressed by what the preacher told me about the poor heathen that I was ready to give up a hundred dollars of my own money and even go out and borrow more to send to the heathen. But the minister preached too long, and my enthusiasm began to drop about $25 a drop till there was nothing left for the poor heathen, and by the time he was through and the collection was taken up I stole ten cents off the plate."—Southwestern's book.

The Mugger's Attendants.

While clambering up I noticed what looked like the hulk of a ship, about 400 yards away, says a writer in the London Field. It turned out to be a monster crocodile; it must, without exaggeration, have been 27 or 28 feet long, and in its close vicinity were five or six small muggers, looking like a bodyguard. I was afterward told by an old Cawnpore resident that they actually act as such, and give warning of any approaching danger to their overlord.

Notwithstanding the existence of switches, pads, drug store complexions, belladonna and pneumatic contrivances such as are described in the advertising pages of magazines, you never have heard of a self-made woman.

COFFEE THRESHED HER.

15 Long Years.

"For over fifteen years," writes a patient, hopeful little Ills. woman, "while a coffee drinker, I suffered from Spinal Irritation and Nervous trouble. I was treated by good physicians, but did not get much relief.

"I never suspected that coffee might be aggravating my condition. I was downhearted and discouraged, but prayed daily that I might find something to help me.

"Several years ago while at a friend's house, I drank a cup of Postum and thought I had never tasted anything more delicious.

"From that time on I used Postum instead of coffee, and soon began to improve in health, so that now I can walk half a dozen blocks or more with ease, and do many other things that I never thought I would be able to do again in this world.

"My appetite is good, I sleep well, and find life worth living, indeed. A lady of my acquaintance said she did not like Postum, it was so weak and tasteless.

"I explained to her the difference when it is made right—boiled according to directions. She was glad to know this because coffee did not agree with her. Now her folks say they expect to use Postum the rest of their lives." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

"There's a reason."

HEREDITY IS NOT ALL.

Physicians Now Believe Less in Transmission of Disease.

Medical men are coming round to the view that it is the personal history that is of primary importance, or, in other words, that a man's own manner of life, his record of health, and his circumstances should be more carefully considered than the illnesses that his ancestors died of. Dr. Rabagliati, a medical examiner for insurance companies, who is well known in the profession which he adorns, and of high repute in the north of England, has devoted much thought to this question of heredity from a life insurance point of view. In his opinion it is not so much disease that is transmitted from one generation to another, but organization, or "humanity," as he expresses it. Any member of the human family may suffer from any disease to which humanity is subject, and when any individual so suffers it is the cause of the ailment that must be inquired into. Exposure to this or that set of conditions brings varying results. If the body is exposed to one set of conditions it will take on gout; if to another, consumption; if to a third, cancer; and so on.

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Mrs. Jocie Robbins, of 1121 Clay St., Decatur, Ill., says: "I was weak, thin and troubled with headaches. My appetite failed so that I did not relish my food. I was unable to do my work because my kidneys pained me so and my feet were swollen. I got numb and dizzy, my tongue seemed at times to be paralyzed so that I couldn't speak distinctly. My extremities, when in this numb state, felt as if some one was sticking needles into me all over their surface. Through my shoulders at times I had such pain that I couldn't sleep. Many times I awoke with a smothering sensation.

"When the physician's remedies failed to benefit me I began to look for something that would. My sister, Mrs. McDaniel, of Decatur, recommended Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to me and I at once purchased some. I was greatly encouraged when I saw how they acted on my nervous condition and continued using them until cured. I am now able to attend to my duties and have not consulted a physician since.

"I also gave them to my daughter who had always been weak and who at this time seemed to lack vitality. Her cheeks were colorless and she was thin and spiritless. She had anaemia and we feared consumption, because every time she went out doors if it was at all cold or damp she would take cold and cough. But Dr. Williams' Pink Pills brought color back to her cheeks and strength to her body."

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