

The Power of Persuasion

Or Lady Caraven's Labor of Love.

CHAPTER XX.

Arley Ransome had not worked quite so hard of late; there was but little need. He had achieved the height of his ambition; he had a large fortune; he was able to speak of his daughter, the Countess of Caraven; he could claim kinship through his daughter with some of the noblest families in England. There was no need now to work quite so hard; he could linger over his daintily-spread breakfast table and read his papers at his leisure, content if he reached the city before noon.

On this morning he had seated himself so as to enjoy three things at once—the beautiful view of the river from his window, the bright fire in the grate, and the dainty little breakfast that had been served up to him. It was a sudden shock to him when, on hearing a sound, he raised his eyes to the door, and there saw a pale, beautiful woman, who stood wringing her hands.

"Father," she said, "I am come home."

In utter amazement he started from his seat. His daughter, his beautiful Hildred, the Countess of Caraven, pale as death, wrapped in a dark traveling cloak! What could it mean?

"This is the end of my marriage, father," she said, calmly—"the marriage that you told me could be happy without love. This is the end of it, and I am come home."

"Sit down, my dear, sit down; there is nothing so horrible as a scene," and this looks like one. Take off your cloak and your bonnet. What a strange head-dress!"

She unfastened the thick traveling cloak, and there in picturesque array was the rich evening dress of amber and black, with a faded crimson flower clinging to it. The lawyer looked on in utter dismay. This disregard for dress and appearance spoke more forcibly than anything else could have done—told more plainly than words that something dreadful had happened.

"Evening toilet, Hildred! Pray, my dear, put on your cloak again. I do not know—I was not prepared—put it on quickly, before any of the servants come in. What is it, Hildred—what is the matter?"

"Not much, father," she replied, drearily; "my marriage has not turned out well, and I am come home, you see."

"But this is nonsense—you cannot come home. What is the matter? Tell me," and the lawyer, with a very resigned expression of face, folded his hands to listen to his daughter's story.

"You have not quarreled with the earl, I hope—that is, you have not left him?"

"He has sent me away," she replied, and Arley Ransome's face grew very dark.

"There is not much to tell," she continued, wearily. "You misled me—you told me that marriage could be happy without love. I find that love is the soul of it, that without love marriage is a dead body. I, being the weaker and inferior, was the first to learn to love. I learned to love my husband—he has never cared for me."

"You are too sentimental, Hildred," said Arley Ransome, severely.

"I have been doing my best for my husband," she continued, "and we were growing happier. In time I think that he would have loved me; but some one else, a fair woman—one of the kind of women that he admires—Lady Hamilton, came, and—"

"I see," said the lawyer—"the old story, jealousy and quarrelling. Surely, Hildred, you have not thrown away the labor of a lifetime by growing jealous and vexing the earl?"

"I have done worse than that," she said—"far worse. I was jealous of Lady Hamilton. I thought that both she and my husband were

deriding me. I followed them when they went out to see the sun set over the lake. I hid myself behind the alder-trees to listen if they said anything about me; and then—I cannot tell how it happened—my husband saw me. He was very angry; he said that I was never to enter his doors again, but to return home at once to you."

"The lawyer's face cleared. "You are quite sure that you have told me the whole truth?" he said.

"What can I have to hide, papa? In telling you of my love and my jealousy, I have told you the worst." "Then all will come right again. In the meantime keep up appearances, go to your own room unobserved, and wait until your luggage arrives. I shall say that you are come for a few days' change. Keep up your spirits; all will come right again, I feel sure."

"I am very tired, papa," she said. "I think I will stay in my room today."

"Very well, my dear; do just as you like; you know best, of course. I will say that you do not feel very well. Go to your room, by all means. I hope you will soon be better. Now try to cheer up; it will be all right; I will see to this difficulty with your husband for you."

It had not been an agreeable interruption to his breakfast, but he tried to think little of it. It was only a quarrel after all, and his daughter had done nothing wrong. He should make it all right in a few seconds when he saw the earl. He wrote to him before he went to the city, telling him that his wife had reached home safely, but was looking very ill.

The rest of that day Hildred remained in her room, and on the morning following she had not come down stairs. It was afternoon when Arley Ransome, with a face as pale as death, asked for admittance to her apartment.

She bade him enter, and he did so, with an open letter in his hand. It was her husband's writing, she perceived.

"You have deceived me," said her father, sternly; "you told me that you had hidden nothing from me. Your husband tells me that he has hidden you here because you shot Lady Hamilton on the evening of the thirty-first—shot her with intent to murder—and that you confessed your guilt!"

Without a word or a murmur, she looked at him, and then fell like one dead at his feet.

The young Countess, as she stood behind the alder-trees at Ravensmere, had heard the sound of a shot; she was too dazed with her own grief and misery to note the direction from which it had proceeded. She had fancied that something went whirring through the trees. That something was the ball that had been fired at Lady Hamilton, which pierced her shoulder, and would have pierced her heart had it gone in the direction in which it had been aimed.

For the moment Lord Caraven had been too bewildered to know what had happened; what he was saying in reality to his guest was that he liked his wife's maiden name better than any other he had ever heard. Lady Hamilton, who never liked to hear anyone praised but herself, asked at once what it was. He had answered "Hildred Ransome;" and those were the words Lady Caraven had heard. They had been no sooner uttered than Lady Hamilton fell on his shoulder with a faint, low cry—a cry that seemed almost simultaneous with the firing of the shot.

The earl knew she had been shot, but by whom or why he could not guess. He laid her down for one minute while he looked around; then it was that he saw the white face of his wife. He jumped to the conclusion that she had done it; she, and no other, was there on the spot. She had even herself avowed her

jealousy. She had followed them, and in the madness of her folly had shot Lady Hamilton. No other idea occurred to him. He said to himself at once that it was so, and he implicitly believed it. He had rushed to her and told her that she was a "guilty woman." She had owned it. But they were speaking of different kinds of guilt. He meant the guilt of murder; she meant the guilt of being a spy upon him. No doubt of her guilt relieved his mind. Even in that first bewildered moment he said to himself that she should never enter his house again, but that he would shield her because she bore his name. He had told her to remain where she was while he carried the senseless lady to the house.

There was a terrible consternation. He had the presence of mind to throw the agitated inquirers off the scent. He said that the poachers were out—must be out, for a chance shot fired in the woods had wounded Lady Hamilton. Some of the gentlemen staying at the house went with the keepers to scour the woods. Dire were the threats of vengeance as to the rogue who had done the mischief. Meanwhile a groom was despatched to Court Raven to summon a doctor—the wounded lady had been taken to her room and laid on the bed. At first the earl was frightened lest the wound should prove mortal; but one of the ladies staying at the castle, who knew something of surgery, declared that the wound was not dangerous, and that the ball could soon be extracted. After hearing that, the earl returned to his unhappy young wife. His first great fear that she had been guilty of murder had been removed; there remained the fear lest the wound should prove dangerous in the end. It was better, he thought, that she should go away at once.

He made two announcements to his household, which no one even thought of connecting. The first and most startling was, of course, that Lady Hamilton had been shot accidentally—a chance shot—though why a ball cartridge had been used was a puzzle—supposed to have been fired by poachers in the wood; the second was that Lady Caraven had been suddenly summoned to her father's house in London. No one dreamed of connecting the two announcements, and in the disordered state of the household it never occurred to any of the guests to question the servants as to when the Countess had gone. She had been sent for after dinner, and the apologies that the earl made were deemed quite sufficient. Some of the guests indeed said that it was as well Lady Caraven was out of the way, as she would probably have been greatly distressed. To this day the earl is uncertain what in his panic he said or did. The only idea quite clear to him was that he must shield the woman who bore his name.

It was not very long before the doctor arrived, and then all alarm was at an end. He found the ball at once; it had not gone very deep into the shoulder. It was extracted, and the wound bound up.

Then she was content to remain in her room, not suffering very much pain. To be petted, indulged, made a great heroine of, to be the center of all anxiety, was very pleasant to her. She knew that all her admirers would be in a state of anxiety about her, that a hundred perfumed notes would reach her every day, that flowers and fruits, newspapers, books, all the trifles invalids love, would be showered upon her; above all, she would be a great source of interest to the handsome earl. She did not think very much about who had shot her; there were poachers about, and it must have been a stray shot—no one had done it purposely, for, as the lovely lady told herself with a smile, she had not an enemy in the whole wide world.

The keepers had made strenuous

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efforts to find the poachers, but they had evidently made their escape, frightened, doubtless, at what they had done. No trace of them could be found.

It was with a sense of relief that Lord Caraven went to his room that night. He wanted to be alone to think over the events of the day. He found himself dwelling less on the terrible fact that his wife had shot Lady Hamilton than on the wonderful fact that she loved him. "I have gone mad—I love you—let me die!"

The words haunted him like the refrain of a song. He could not sleep. All night the pale, passionate, beautiful face was before him. The words rang in his ears as they had rung when he saw Hildred in the starlight, pleading, praying, accusing him, all in one vehement storm of words. So he would see her until he died. He felt as though she had been a stranger to him until then. The passionate love which had flamed into hot jealousy had been hidden under a cold, calm exterior. How she loved him! He had never seen any woman's face light up so splendidly. For the first time in his life he owned to himself that by the side of her magnificent beauty blonde loveliness faded into nothing.

He wondered that he had lived so long in the house with her, so long under one roof, yet had not noticed that which every one else remarked. He was struck most of all by the fact that she loved him. It did not matter about anything else. He had read her truth and her love in her face. She loved him as no one else ever would or could; and it flashed across him that the wife he had neglected and despised was, notwithstanding what she had done, one of the noblest women in the world. If it had but been different; if he had but thought more of her before this happened! How she must have loved him to let herself drift into such a crime! Was there any one who had ever loved him half so well?

"I wish it had never happened," he said to himself. "She is a noble woman in spite of all, and I—well, I could have loved her, but now she must never return."

Yet it showed how strongly his feelings were swayed when he thought far less of wounded Lady Hamilton than of the fact that his wife loved him.

He could not sleep or rest. Never had his pillow seemed so hard, his thoughts so troublesome. The excitement had been too much for him. Wherever he went, whatever he did, his thoughts were with Hildred. Had she reached Arley Ransome's house? Had he acted wisely in letting her go alone? Would any clew to her guilt ever be found? These questions followed him, haunted him, pursued him. If he went to talk to any of his visitors, the conversation was sure to turn upon the poachers and Lady Hamilton.

Wearied of it all he sought refuge with Sir Raoul in his room; and the soldier noted with concern how worn and haggard the handsome earl looked.

(To Be Continued).

SAM'S SPOONING STORY.

Samuel sought Susan steadily. Susan snubbed Samuel. She seemed sure Samuel saw Sarah sometimes. She showed such sensitiveness. Sarah saw Susan's suspicions.

"Samuel," said Sarah, "seek Susan secretly; sing sweet songs; say soft somethings."

"So?" said Samuel.

"Sheep!" sneered Sarah.

Susan's swain saw sense sharpening Sarah's suggestions.

"Susan," sighed Samuel, "see summer stars shining so sweetly—softly! Sweetheart, such stellar splendors spellbound souls!"

"Stuff!" scolded Susan. "Stop such silly stunts. Say something sensible."

"Susan," said Samuel, shortly, "spice?"

"Sure," snapped Susan. "Soon?"

Sequel.

Sarah satisfied. Samuel, Susan—spoons, spasms, spouses.

Sentiment.

Such stuff!

MINUTES THAT SEEM HOURS.

A foreman was once sent to see how some workmen, who were mending a road, were getting on with their work. Turning a corner he was astonished to see all the men standing on their pickaxes and shovels, quietly talking to each other and smoking their pipes, not attempting to do the least possible amount of work. Whereupon he exclaimed:

"Well! What is the meaning of this? Why are you not working?"

"Lazily a big six-foot navy took his pipe out of his mouth and replied:

"Can't you see, governor, it's ten minutes to leaving-off time, and we're waiting to stop work?"

He was a noble lord, and he was in an awful rage with one of his footmen. "It is intolerable!" he exclaimed. "Are you a fool or an idiot?" "Oh! my lord," replied James, with humility, anxious to appease the great man, "I am sure you wouldn't keep a servant who was a fool."

New Constable—"I searched the prisoner, yer worship." Magistrate—"Well, what did you find on him?" New Constable—"Only a black eye, sir."

Dentist—"Been suffering from toothache, I see?" She—"Yes, haven't slept a wink for three nights." Dentist—"Is it a black one or—?" She—"No; it's my husband's tooth."

Mr. Callateight—"Didn't you say your dog's bark was worse than his bite?" Miss Tete-a-Tete—"Yes." Mr. Callateight—"Then, for goodness' sake, keep him from barking. He has just bitten me."

MISERABLE NIGHTS.

What to Do When Baby Is Fretful and Sleepless.

It is wrong to take up a wakeful baby from the cradle and walk it up and down the floor all night. It demoralizes the infant and enslaves the parents. Baby does not cry for the fun of the thing; it cries because it is not well—generally because its stomach is sour, its little bowels congested, its skin hot and feverish. Relieve it and it will sleep all night, every night growing stronger in proportion. Just what mothers need is told in a letter from Mrs. E. J. Flanders, Marbleton, Que., who says:—"I cannot say too much in favor of Baby's Own Tablets. They have worked like a charm with my baby, who was very restless at night, but Baby's Own Tablets soon brought quiet sleep and rest. I shall never be without a box while I have a baby." Baby's Own Tablets cure all minor ailments of little ones, and are guaranteed to contain no opiate or harmful drug. They are sold at 25 cents a box by all dealers, or you can get them by mail, post paid, by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

WHY PAT DID NOT VOTE.

A solicitor's clerk was collecting evidence of clerical intimidation of voters in a certain constituency in Ireland.

He had questioned many voters without eliciting anything of much importance, until he came to an old man who had not voted.

"And why did you not vote?" asked the clerk.

"Well, then, sor," was the reply "it was all His Rivrence's doing."

"Ah, his reverence," said the clerk, brightening up. "What did he do to prevent you?"

"I was working in the yard," said the old man, "when he suddenly burst into it and chased me into the barn, and kept me there until it was too late to vote."

"And are you ready to swear that his reverence forcibly prevented you from voting?" asked the clerk.

"I am, sor," was the reply, "and there are others who can swear to it, too."

"That's sufficient," said the clerk "I have not time to go into particulars now; but there will be a gentleman here in a few days to whom you can tell everything."

So important was old Pat's evidence considered that the next day the solicitor in the case drove ten miles in a blinding snowstorm to interview him.

Pat repeated the same story, with the addition that he considered himself lucky in escaping as he did.

"You appear to be greatly afraid of your priest," said the solicitor, a little surprised.

"The praste!" exclaimed Pat "Arrah, sure, it is not the praste I'm talking about at all; it's Phil Hogan's bull. Faix, I thought everyone knew Phil's bull, which we call 'His Rivrence.'"

HIS ONLY CHANCE.

One day, a few years ago, Mr. O'Brien, a land-agent in the West of Ireland, met a countryman, and, having heard of his marriage, saluted him with:

"Well, Pat, so you have taken to yourself a wife?"

"Yis, yer honor," said Pat, touching his hat, "I have."

Mr. O'Brien, looking comically at him, said:

"Well, here I am, and I can get no one to take me, and I feel very lonely sometimes."

Pat, looking confidential, said:

"I think I can put yer honor in the way."

"How, Pat?"

"Do as I did; go where you are not known."

JUSTIFIABLE HAUTEUR.

Pauline—"Have you nothing to be proud of?"

Penelope—"Yes; I'm proud that I haven't any false pride."

IN THE CLOSEST ANALYSIS.

Arthur—"How would you define friendship?"

Edgar—"Well, nowadays, friendship is the patience people have with each other's fads."

WISER.

Jerry—"Is the world getting better?"

Jack—"It is getting wiser; I have an awful time trying to borrow money."

"Well, my man," said the visiting physician of a Dublin infirmary to a patient, "how do you feel this morning?" "Purty well, sorr," was the reply. "That's right. I hope you like the place?" "Indeed and I do, sorr!" said the man. "There's only wan thing wrong in this establishment, and that is I only get as much mate as wud feed a sparrow."

"Oh, you're getting your appetite, are you?" said the doctor. "Then I'll order an egg to be sent up to you." "Arrah, dother," rejoined the patient, "would you be so kind as to tell him at the same time to send me up the hin that laid it?"

Tickling in the Throat.

Throat Irritation, Hoarseness and Sore Throat as well as the Most Severe Chest Colds are Promptly Relieved and Cured by Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine.

"Tickling in the throat," may not of itself seem serious, but this is the critical point at which a cold in the head works its way into the bronchial tubes and develops into bronchitis, pneumonia or consumption.

This is the point where a few doses of Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine will prove sufficient to bring about a thorough and prompt cure. While this great medicine is undoubtedly the most effective treatment for severe chest colds, bronchitis and even asthma, wisdom suggests the use of it when the trouble

is just beginning.

Singers and speakers commend Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine, because they can rely on it absolutely to relieve and cure the hoarseness and throat irritation, which proves so embarrassing to persons appearing on the public platform.

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advance of disease, and in a few days he was as well as ever, and is now going to school regularly. I have now great faith in this valuable remedy, and shall recommend it to my friends."

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