The Power of Persuasion

Or Lady Caraven's Labor of Love.

CHAPTER III.

A beautiful evening in October; it was as though some of the warmth and sweetness of summer had returned for a while. The sky was blue, the colors of the sunset were gorgeous, the foliage of the trees was magnificent; autumn flowers were blooming, autumn tints were over the land. It was twilight, and Lord Caraven, having no one to play at billiards with him, sauntered restlessly through the rooms, thinking to himself how foolish he had been not to provide himself with a companion for that most interesting of all games.

"I must not let this happen again," he said. "To live here alone requires more strength of mind than I am possessed of."

It did not occur to him that he was alone—that he had a fair young wife near him. He never thought of her at all. He would not have remembered her existence but that, wandering aimlessly along the terrace, he saw her in the drawing-room.

He almost owned to himself that there could not have been a lovelier picture. Wishing to finish something she was reading, she had brought her book to the window and couched down where the light fell. He saw a fair, flower-like face, a shining wealth of dark hair in which lay gleaming pearls, a flowing mass of purple velvet upon which the white arms shone like snow on a purple crocus; the lovely figure, the graceful attitude, the picturesque dress, cut square in the front, leaving the white neck bare, the wide hanging sleeves, the slender white hands—all made a picture that he must have admired had the subject been any other than the money-lender's daughter.

Seeing her, he thought it was possible she understood something of billiards, although "women never knew anything useful." She saw him, and fancying from his manner that he wished to speak to her, she opened the window and went out to him.

"You will be cold," he said, with unusual thoughtfulness.

She went back to the drawing-room in search of a silvery scarf that she used. She threw it carelessly over her head and shoulders, where it looked so picturesque, and became her so well that he could not help noticing it.

"This is dull work, being here alone," he said.

"It is dull for both of us," she replied, briefly.

"We will ask some nice people down at once; this kind of thing will never do. I wanted to ask you, do you know anything of billiards?"

"Billiards?" she reapeated wonderingly.

"Yes—many ladies play remarkably well. It is such a great resource."

"Do you want me to play with you?" she asked, quickly.

"Yes; I am bored to death. I am tired of smoking. I never read much, and there is nothing to do!"

"Extraordinary," she cried—"nothing to do!"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean nothing. I am very sorry. I have seen a billiard table; but I have never played. I will try to learn, if you like."

"Beginners are generally very awkward," he said, frankly. "I cannot think how it is that I have forgotten to ask any one over. I must not be so remiss again."

They walked down the terrace until they reached a rustic garden seat, and, with an air of utter exhaustion, the earl sat down. Hildred took her seat, unasked, by his side.

"Lord Caraven," said Hildred, "a thought has just struck me. We have been married—how long? since the third of August, and it is now October; and do you know that you have never once addressed me by name? My schoolfellows used to call me 'Dreda,' my father calls me 'Hildred.' You have so contrived as never to give me any name at all. You do not say 'Lady Caraven,' 'Hildred,' 'wife,' or anything of the kind. How is it?"

"I cannot tell," he replied, blankly. The question had evidently puzzled him. "I will not do it again, Lady Caraven, if it annoys you," he said; and then there was silence between them, broken only by the sighing of the wind.

"Lord Caraven," she said at last, "will you be very angry with me if I ask you a question?"

"No; without knowing what the question may be, I predict that—certainly not."

"This question has troubled me very much; it has been the one thing which I have pondered night and day—a question I cannot answer, one that I feel is the key to a secret."

"You alarm me with that long prologue. Briefly, what is your question, Lady Caraven?"

"Briefly, it is this. Why did you marry me, Lord Caraven?"

"Why did I marry you?" he echoed, with astonishment.

"I ask you the question," she went on, "because I have watched you and studied you, and I am convinced at last that you did not marry me for love."

"Love!" he cried. "Why, what has that to do with it?"

"I thought," she continued, "that you had married me because you loved me. I knew that you were cold, undemonstrative, that you had no sympathy, little kindness; but I believed implicitly that you married me for love."

"I had never seen you—I saw you only once," he said, in astonishment.

"I know, I remember. Still, I repeat what I have said to you; I—I fancied—I am quite ashamed to tell you the truth, but I will do so—I fancied you had seen me somewhere and had liked me."

He laughed, but the laugh was not pleasant to her.

"Did you really think that?" he asked, musingly. "Poor child!" Then he turned to her with sudden briskness. "Do you really mean to tell me, on your word of honor, that you do not know why I married you?"

She raised her fair, proud face to his.

"I assure you most solemnly that I do not. It is the greatest puzzle I ever had."

"Did your father tell you that, I—I loved you?"

"No," she replied, thoughtfully, "he did not. Indeed he assured me that love was not needful for happiness. He never said you loved me—he said you wanted to marry me."

"And what else? Go on. What else?"

"That if I consented his highest ambition would be gratified."

Lord Caraven murmured some terrible words between his closed lips.

"Then he never told you why this marriage was forced upon me?"

"No; he never told me that."

"Then I will tell you now. He compelled me to marry you—and I begin to perceive that he has sacrificed you as well as myself."

"Sacrificed us?" she repeated. "You cannot mean the word!"

"I do mean it, both for myself and you," he replied. "I will tell you, Lady Caraven; it is right that you should know the truth. I have been a spendthrift and a prodigal. I have owed your father the sum of sixty thousand pounds—I had mortgaged Ravensmere to him. I was also deeply in debt to others. I had literally come to my last shilling; disgrace, ruin, poverty and shame were all before me. Your father had the management of my affairs, and when I asked him what I was to do, he told me he had two hundred thousand pounds and a daughter."

A low cry came from her lips, and she covered her face with her hands.

"I am sorry to pain you," he said—"sorry to distress you—but it is better that you should know the real truth. Your father is ambitious; his hopes were fixed on your marriage. He offered me the alternative—I could choose beggary, ruin, shame, disgrace, the total annihilation of my house and name, or I could choose the money and marry you. Your fortune has saved me from worse than death. I am sorry to tell you this story; but it is best that you should know the truth."

"Yes," she agreed, despairingly, "it is best."

She drew her hands from her face and looked at him. What nature of man could he have been that the anguish and despair on that girlish face did not touch him?

"Then you have never loved me, never cared for me?" she said, faintly.

"No. I am grateful to you; I can say no more."

He saw her draw the silvery shawl round her shoulders and shudder as though she were seized with violent cold.

"I feel now," he said, "that it was a cruel thing to do. You are young; and your whole life is blighted. At first I thought and believed that you understood everything—that you were as mercenary and ambitious as your father—that you were as ready as he to give yourself and your money in exchange for my title; I thought that you, through him, knew the full value of the estate and everything on it—that you knew all the house contained—that you were as keen and shrewd as he was. I misjudged you—I beg your pardon for it."

She raised her pale face to his.

"I swear to you," she said, "that I would rather have died than have married you had I known the truth."

"I believe it, and respect you for it. For some short time past I have fancied that in thinking as I did I was mistaken. Now I know it, and am glad to know it. I am sorry that you were sacrificed to me."

"Did you—do you—pray do not be angry with me," she said—"did you love anyone else?"

"You ask me if I had ever loved one sufficiently to ask her to be my wife. No, I had not. I have never asked any one to marry me, for the simple, all-sufficient reason that I have never seen any one whom I should have cared to marry."

"And are you very unhappy with me?" she asked, gently.

"What a strange question! Unhappy? Well, no; I cannot quite say that. I am, as I said before, grateful to you; and now that I find you have been victimized, I am sorry for you."

"Now that our marriage is an accomplished fact, do you not think that we might manage to make the best of it—might try to forget this wretched beginning) Could you never care even ever so little for me?"

He looked at her thoughtfully.

"No, not in the sense you mean—not to love you as a man should love his wife—never! You forgive me if these seem hard words—you have asked me for them."

"It is better to speak frankly; then we shall both know what we are doing."

She dropped the silvery veil that shrouded her head and face.

"Will you tell me," she asked, meekly, "why you cannot care for me? Am I not fair enough to please you?"

"Yes, you are fair enough; but love is not to be taught or bought—it comes unperceived. I cannot express myself well on the subject; but it seems to me absurd for a man to say to himself, 'It is my duty to fall in love with such and such a woman, so I must do it.'"

"But if that woman were his wife?" she suggested, gently.

"No man can love against his will, wife or no wife," was the hasty reply.

"Then, Lord Caraven, am I to live in your house always an unloved, uncared-for wife?" she asked.

"The fault is not mine," he replied. "I believed that your father had explained to you that the whole affair was—was distasteful to me. Believing that, I married you; now that I have found out my mistake, I pity myself and I pity you, Lady Caraven. I despise myself now for what I have done. If I had to choose again, I should choose disgrace or death."

The night wind sighed around them, the sunlight had died away, the moon was rising in the sky.

"I am grateful to you," he continued. "I will do all I can to show my gratitude; you are and shall be mistress of the whole place. It is yours in so far as your money has saved it; you shall have every desire of your heart, every wish gratified. Your position is one of the highest in the land; you shall have everything to grace it. You shall have entire liberty; you shall invite whom you like, visit whom you like; you shall go abroad when you will and remain at home when you will. You shall be your own mistress in every respect. I will always see that every honor is paid to you."

"In short," she said, "you will give me everything but love."

"Well, if you choose to put it in that light, yes."

"I accept the terms," she said, gently. "There are many women who have to find the happiness of their lives in the fulfillment of duty; I must do the same."

Some girls, proudly indignant, would have left the house; others would have retaliated fiercely; others would have grown sullen and revengeful. She was calm almost to heroism, although a more cruel position could not have been imagined. Even his own confession that he could never care for her had not quite destroyed her love. He was very frank—among his sins and imperfections deceit certainly could not be set down. Yet how different it all was from what she had thought it would be!

"I am quite sure of one thing," she said to herself. "It is almost cruel to write such stories as the histories of Lancelot and Elaine. What a difference between such men as the stainless knight and my husband! There are women living as fair, as tender, as lovely as Elaine; is there a man like Lancelot—like Lancelot before he loved 'the Queen?' Ah, me! if I could have had such love as his! But I must be content."

It seemed to her like an answer to an unspoken prayer, when she opened a book and saw these words of Carlyle—"Say unto all kinds of happiness, I can do without thee. With self-renunciation life begins."

That was to her new life—self-renunciation without happiness—life all duty, with no reward but the knowledge of itself.

"I can do it," said Hildred. "It is an uncommon fate—I can master it. It might break a weak heart, anger a proud one—it shall strengthen mine. Fate is what people make it—I will make mine."

(To Be Continued).

Severe Pains in the Back

Kidney Disease and Stomach Troubles — More Evidence of the Efficiency of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

Kidney disease and stomach and liver disorders are almost always found together, and for this reason Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, on account of their direct and continued action on these several organs, are wonderfully effective in curing such complications.

Mr. James Keeley, caretaker of the Primary School and Presbyterian church, Newmarket, Ont., states:—"I find that Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are the best medicine I ever used. I was troubled for some time with kidney disease, pains in the back and stomach disorders. At times I suffered very severely from backache, but since using Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills I am all right again.

"It is my belief that they are the most effective medicine a person can use for kidney disease and stomach troubles."

Mrs. Ross, 100 Manitoba street, St. Thomas, Ont., states:—"I had a very weak back, and at times suffered very much from severe pains across the small of my back. Believing these to be caused by derangements of the kidneys, I began the use of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. This treatment seemed to be exactly what I required, for it was not long before the pains entirely left me, and I was quite strong and well again. We have also used Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine for the children when they had coughs and colds, and I never knew it to fail to relieve the trouble at once."

There is no quicker or more certain way of curing back pains and kidney disease than by the use of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. Scores of thousands have proved this, and many have sent us statements similar to the above. One pill a dose, 25cts. a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

Piles To prove to you that Dr. Chase's Ointment is a certain and absolute cure for each and every form of itching, bleeding and protruding piles, the manufacturers have guaranteed it. See testimonials in the daily press and ask your neighbors what they think of it. You can use it and get your money back if not cured. 60c a box, at all dealers or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

Dr. Chase's Ointment

SAILING ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

A Young Woman's Experience in a Balloon.

A young woman who has made several trips in a balloon describes a journey through the clouds in which she nearly lost her life. The ascent was made for the purpose of reporting on the Leonid shower of meteors which was predicted by the astronomers, but which could not be observed from the ground on account of clouds. The aeronauts had risen without accident, and were so high in the sky that all sounds of earth were inaudible.

About nine o'clock in the morning there rose to us the shrill, wild, unmistakable note of a ship's steam-siren, mingled with the clash and clang of hammers in some shipyard.

We were evidently over some big seaport town. What was to be done? Clearly, nothing. To pull the valve rope meant a headlong fall of nearly two miles; to climb the rigging and pierce the silk above the equator was a gymnastic feat beyond even our captain's sailor training. We had to leave it to fate.

By noon my father declared that we had fallen two thousand feet, and were still falling. Soon after we could see the earth under the clouds.

Once below the clouds we saw that the end was near at hand. For a few uncertain moments we were lost in the dense blanket; then we reappeared on the lower edge, to find green fields and pastures below us. We were descending in South Wales, among the mountains of Glamorganshire, and as we swooped down to earth a wild gust caught our half-emptied balloon and dashed our car to the ground with a shock. Finally our anchor caught in an oak tree, and in a minute or two we scrambled out.

We had been ten hours in the balloon, yet had escaped the sea by the skin of our teeth. Those who came to our assistance told us in their first words that we were a mile and a half from the Atlantic, towards which we were heading directly as we fell. Yet five minutes more in the ten hours that we had been aloft and we had been lost, for at the time the sea was wildly rough. Therefore, I am not claiming too much in calling this balloon ascent one of the records of British ballooning.

STREET DUST.

Its Injurious Effects Are of Two Kinds.

Few persons realize what a sanitary agent is the sprinkling-cart in our cities and towns, because few appreciate the dangers to health and life that lurk in dust, especially street dust.

The injurious effects of street dust are of two kinds—those due to the mechanical injury of the gritty powder and those due to the action of the disease germs contained in it. When one realizes that the streets, even in well-cleaned cities, are a receptacle for all sorts of filth,—decaying vegetable matter, such as cigar stumps, banana skins and apple parings, manure and expectorated matter,—ground up into a fine powder with soot and particles of sand and cobblestones, one can readily understand that disease may be caused by the inhalation of clouds of such dust.

There is no doubt that many cases of consumption are directly due to the dust of city streets. The gritty particles irritate the mucous membrane of the nose and larynx, and set up a catarrh which prepares the soil for the tubercle bacilli, present often in great numbers in the same dust.

Other diseases may also be caused in the same way, and it is believed that cases of lockjaw, which sometimes occur without any previous wound, arise from the entrance of the germ of this disease into the bronchial tubes from the dust of the streets. The amount of dust in a city varies according to the care taken to clean the streets, but it varies especially with the kind of pavement, macadamized streets being in this respect the worst and the asphalted streets the best. But all city streets, no matter how paved or how well swept, need constant watering to keep the dust laid, and particularly is this the case since the automobile and the trolley-car have come with their rapid movement, which raises thick clouds of dust.

In some places in the United States the experiment has been made of sprinkling the country roads with petroleum, and the results, so far as laying the dust is concerned, are good. The oil, however, soils the dresses of ladies, and is therefore objectionable. Better results have been obtained recently in France by the application of coal-tar, which makes a surface like asphalt, but not so impervious, capable of arresting the dust particles as they form anew and incorporating them in itself. In cities, however, this is impracticable, and the watering-cart is there the only safety.

ELECTRIC TRACTION.

Although the predictions freely made a few years ago that the development of electric traction would quickly drive horses from the field of labor have not been fulfilled, yet the Electrical Review cites statistics to prove that the disappearance of the horse is actually taking place, although so slowly as not to attract much attention. In Paris the number of horses fell off about 6 per cent. between 1901 and 1902. In London the decrease in the same time was 10 per cent. In Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg a similar falling off is shown by the census of horses. In New York it is estimated that the number of horses has decreased 33 per cent. in the last twenty years.

BABY'S OWN TABLETS.

Cure All the Ills of Little Babies and Big Children.

This medicine is good for all children, from the feeblest infant, whose life seems to hang on a thread, to the sturdy boy whose digestive apparatus occasionally gets out of order. There is no stomach or bowel trouble that Baby's Own Tablets will not speedily relieve and promptly cure, and do it in a natural way, as the medicine is guaranteed to contain no opiate or harmful drug. Experienced mothers everywhere praise Baby's Own Tablets above all medicines. Mrs. James A. Wilson, Wyoming, Ont., says:—"I have used Baby's Own Tablets for both my children, and consider them indispensible in any home where there are young children. One of my children was very fretful, and I always found the Tablets comforting, and a splendid regulator of the stomach and bowels. I think the Tablets have been the means of promoting many a sound night's rest for both myself and children."

Children take these Tablets as readily as candy, and crushed to a powder, they can be given with absolute safety to the youngest, weakest infant. You can get the Tablets from any dealer in medicine or post paid at 25 cents a box, by writing the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

SAVED 1,800 LIVES.

There is a horse in Havana, Cuba, which probably has saved the lives of 1,800 human beings. This unique philanthropist is kept in Havana's bacteriological laboratory, which, like the Pasteur Institute of Baltimore, was founded by a newspaper. This horse was given to that institute in 1895. From that year up to date it is said to have furnished 74,000 cubic centimetres of anti-diphtheria serum, with a record of 1,800 cures.