The Power of Persuasion

Or Lady Caraven's Labor of Love.

CHAPTER IV.

"Lord Caraven," said Hildred, one day soon after this little scene, "who is the person—gentleman, I should say, perhaps—who comes here so often?"

"Do you mean John Blantyre, my faithful friend and steward?" he asked, laughingly. "He comes every day."

"Is that his name? I do not like his face."

"Why not, Hildred?" he asked.

"It is not the face of an honest man, unless Nature has for once made a mistake in her own handwriting."

"It is not a handsome face, certainly," said the earl—"far from it."

"I am not speaking of mere beauty of feature—and perhaps I judge him harshly," she replied. "But it does not seem to me an honest face. I would not trust the man for —— Do you trust him, Lord Caraven?"

"I trust him implicitly—indeed I do not believe I have ever overlooked his accounts."

She looked at him in wonder.

"Never overlooked his accounts? How very careless of you!" she said.

"I am not careful by nature," he told her, laughingly.

"But," she observed, earnestly, "such carelessness is wrong. You put a terrible temptation in his way by not keeping a check upon him."

"I suppose," said Lord Caraven, indolently, "that I find it easier to let myself be robbed a little than to look after matters for myself."

The dark, eloquent eyes that were raised to his expressed a great deal.

"What do you do with your life?" she asked. "It seems to me that you have no idea of duty."

"Nor have I. I know well what to do with my life—I enjoy it."

"There can be nothing more to add," said Hildred. "But if I were you, Lord Caraven, I should look after my accounts."

Hildred's heart sank lower and lower—every day brought her some fresh revelation of her husband's character which was utterly unendurable to her. The worst trait of all was that he seemed to her, as it were, to lounge through life. He literally did nothing—no useful occupation ever seemed to attract him. He never read—he never wrote. If any letter of importance required an answer, he passed it to her, or threw it aside. If the agent brought the accounts, he said, in his indolent manner: "Lay the books down—I will see to them soon;" but he never looked at them. He had but one idea, and that was amusement. No idea of work ever seemed to occur to him—self-indulgence and indolence was all that he cared for.

Hildred's heart sank in dismay. She looked at him sometimes as he lay listlessly stretched on a couch, and wondered why Nature had given so fair an exterior to one with so little soul. The handsome face seemed to have no purpose in it. If he spoke, it was always about some plan or other for his own special amusement—it was either of billiards or of one of the games in which he took such infinite delight. He never advanced any scheme for the benefit of others; in fact, the people, except so far as they ministered to his pleasures and his will, did not exist for him. His was a hopeless character—far more hopeless than that of a man of graver faults. His young wife looked at him sometimes wondering if anything would ever interest him, would ever arouse him, would ever stimulate him to action.

"It is a terrible thing," she said, "to live so entirely for one's self — a terrible thing."

She thought to herself once that she would sketch his day. He never rose until after ten; he sat for some time over his breakfast, reading his letters and newspapers. The former were thrown aside and seldom, if ever, answered; even those of importance were ignored like the rest. There was generally a muttered word over the bills if any came. Then he took a gallop on his horse wherever his wild fancy led. That was followed by luncheon, when his lordship did not spare his wine; after that came billiards or cards, if any one worth playing with was in the house. Dinner was followed by wine and billiards until the early hours of the morning. It was not a noble life, it was not even a dignified life—it had no end, no aim, no object except self-indulgence. and the young wife looked on in sorrowful dismay. On every side she saw the same evil—nothing was attended to, nothing done; the indolent ease of the earl seemed to extend to every one with whom he came in contact. The servants were continually being changed; nothing went right, as nothing does when the master of the house takes no interest in anything that passes in it.

Another thing distressed her. She saw that his old love of gambling was returned in full force. There were times when his face grew very dark over his betting-book; and he would leave home on all the great race days, remaining away for some time, and returning more indolent, more selfish than ever.

Time had familiarized him with her presence in the house; but it was seldom that he took any special notice of her, seldom that he spoke to her. As for any display of kindness or love, it was out of the question.

It was a dreary fate. She tried to bear it bravely, to store up knowledge and wisdom; but at eighteen, when the heart longs for love, and the fair opening life craves for its full enjoyment, it is difficult to live on knowledge and wisdom. She strove hard; she told herself that marriage was irrevocable—that hers could never be undone. The only thing that remained was to make the best of it. How to do that was the great study of her life.

When the month of May came round he decided upon going to London. Halby House was prepared for them, and the handsome earl's friends made ready to receive him with open arms. He had been welcome in his penniless state, and, having married a wealthy heiress, he was now doubly welcome. Those who had won money from him before looked forward to winning more; those who had gambled and betted with him before looked forward to a renewal of those delights. He would be welcome.

The elite of the fashionable world were not sorry to receive their favorite again. The rumor that Halby House was to be thrown open, that the young Countess of Caraven was very beautiful, that the earl's revived prosperity would enable him to vie with the best party-givers in London, was good news. The only one indifferent to it was the young countess herself—and she would fain have hidden her sorrows from all eyes and remained at Ravensmere.

The people of the great world did not quite understand Lady Caraven. She was among them, but not of them. In crowded ball rooms, in the opera house, at garden parties, and where the lovers of fashion congregated, her noble, beautiful face, with its look of proud reserve, appeared out of place. She was very popular —very much liked—but not quite understood. Fair ladies whose lives were one gay round of pleasure wondered why smiles did not come as readily to her lips as to theirs — why she was graver, more thoughtful, more abstracted.

It was so strange a life; the world around her was so brilliant, so gay, there seemed no room in it for anything but laughter and song. There were times when she looked wonderingly at the bright faces of others, crying from the depths of her soul: "My heart is empty!"

The tender, loving human heart was empty. She had loved her father very dearly, and he had sold her to the handsome earl for a title —for the gratification of a paltry ambition. She had tried to love her husband and he had amused himself by telling her of his conquests — he had frankly owned that he did not care for her and that he never should. Her heart was empty. It was too noble to be filled with frivolity. She might have turned to that refuge for the destitute, flirtation; she might have thrown herself into the giddy vortex of the world —into the whirlpool of gayety; she might have lived on excitement. But she was too noble for any of these things—she could not have consented to them.

"What shall I do with my life?"

The cry that arises from so many aching hearts now arose from hers. She had no one to love, no one to care for—the very duties that might have occupied her were taken from her—and something of all this was told in the beautiful young face. She had many sad thoughts.

One morning she was restless and could not sleep. She had been thinking about her strange lot in life until her head ached. The pillow was hot; she longed to be up and breathing the sweet, fresh morning air. She touched the repeater; it was just four. She thought a book might soothe her, and was much interested in a new novel. She was always considerate about her servants. Many ladies would have rung for their maid, and have sent her for what they required; but Lady Caraven rose and put on her dressing gown, intending to go to the drawing-room herself. Then the clear cold water in her dressing room looked so tempting that she stopped and bathed her face and hands in it. She drew her wealth of dark hair behind her pretty shell-like ears. She had no thought of the lovely picture she presented—her beautiful face glowing with roses from the cold water, her hair falling in most picturesque disorder, the graceful lines and curves of her figure showing to greatest advantage.

She went down stairs, and was surprised to see the large lamp still burning in the hall. She thought it had been forgotten, and went forward with the intention of putting it out. To her still greater surprise, she saw Adolphe, her husband's valet, asleep in the great arm-chair. She spoke to him.

"Adolphe," she said, "what are you doing here? Why is this lamp still alight? It is morning."

The tired man-servant looked around him with an air of stupefaction for half a minute, then arose, and, seeing the young countess, grew puzzled and half alarmed. What was he to say if she repeated the question?

"What are you doing here?" she asked again.

He dared not say that he was waiting for his master; but, before he had time to reply, there came, fortunately, a knock at the hall door, and the next moment the earl stood before her. In amazement he looked at the vision before him.

"Hildred," he cried, "what are you doing here?"

"I came down to find a book, because I could not sleep, and, seeing the lamp burning, I intended to extinguish it."

Lord Caraven took out his watch.

"Four o'clock," he said. "I am late—or rather early. I have been playing billiards since eleven."

She looked contemptuously at him.

"I believe," she said, "that your whole soul is engrossed in billiards."

"I have played the best game tonight that I have ever played in my life," he told her, laughing.

She made no reply. He continued:

"I will quote a popular line—'If you're waking, call me early'—that is, some time after noon. We shall have a grand match at the club tomorrow evening, and I have staked a small fortune on the champion billiard player of England."

Hildred looked at him—the handsome face was worn and haggard, the eyes were tired and dim. The picture was a striking one—the girl-wife in all the fresh beauty of her youth; the husband, still in his evening dress, haggard, yet handsome even in his fatigue; the lovely light of the morning struggling with the garish light of the lamp.

She went into the drawing-room and opened the shutters, letting in all the glory of the sunshine, all the fragrance of the morning air. She opened the windows and looked out at the tall green trees. How fair it was—this world on which she looked! The sky was glowing with crimson and gold, the dew lay shining on the grass, the western wind was fragrant with sweet odors.

Looking at the morning sky, she remembered her husband's handsome haggard face under the garish light of the lamp, and she turned away with a shudder. What a false unnatural life it was! How she loathed it! She laid her head against the cool green leaves of the plants that half filled the window, and, looking still at the morning skies, dreamed of the world, of life as it might have been—so different—ah, so different, if she had only married some one who loved her!"

(To Be Continued).

Remarkable Recovery From Nervous Collapse.

A Methodist Minister Tells How He Was Rescued From a Helpless Condition by Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

That Dr. Chase's Nerve Food possesses unusual control over the nerves and rekindles nervous energy when all other means fail is well illustrated in the case described below. Mr. Brown was forced to give up his ministerial work, and so far exhausted that for a time he was positively helpless. Doctors were consulted and many remedies were resorted to, in vain. Every effort to build up the system seemed in vain, and it is little wonder that the sufferer was losing hope of recovery, when he began to use Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

Rev. T. Brown, Methodist minister, of Omemee, and late of Bethany, Ont., writes: "A year ago last November I was overtaken with nervous exhaustion. For six months I did no work, and during that time I had to be waited on, not being able to help myself. Nervous collapse was complete, and though I was in the physician's hands for months, I did not seem to improve. At any little exertion my strength would leave me, and I would tremble with nervousness.

"From the first I used a great many nerve remedies, but they seemed to have no effect in my case. I had almost lost hope of recovery, when I heard of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and began to use it. As my system became stronger I began to do a little work, and have gradually increased in nerve force and vigor, until now I am about in my normal condition again. I consider Dr. Chase's Nerve Food the best medicine I ever used. Not only has it proven its wonderful restorative powers in my own case, but also in several others where I have recommended it."

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, 50 cents a box, 6 boxes for $2.50. At all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

BABY'S OWN TABLETS.

Are Nature's Cure for Children's Ailments.

Medicines containing opiates should never be given to children — little or big. When you use Baby's Own Tablets for your little ones you have a positive guarantee that they contain neither opiate nor harmful drug. They are good for all children from the smallest, weakest infant to the well grown child. These Tablets quickly relieve and positively cure all stomach and bowel troubles, simple fevers, troubles with teething, etc. They always do good, and can never do the slightest harm. For very small infants crush the Tablets to a powder. Mrs. P. J. Latham, Chatham, Ont., says: "My baby took very sick. His tongue was coated, his breath offensive and he could not retain food on his stomach. He also had diarrhoea for four or five days and grew very thin and pale. We gave him medicine but nothing helped him until we gave him Baby's Own Tablets. After giving him the first dose he began to improve and in three days he was quite well. He began to gain flesh, and is now a fat, healthy boy. I am more than pleased with the Tablets as I think they saved my baby's life."

Baby's Own Tablets are sold by all druggists or will be sent by mail post paid at 25 cents a box by writing direct to The Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Cchenectady, N. Y.

NATION GOBBLES NATION

ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT MIGHT IS RIGHT.

Little Peoples Eaten Up by Great Countries During the Last Fifty Years.

There are many nations missing on the map of the wold to-day, which were more or less powerful states well within the memory of people now living. The latest example in point is, of course, the two Dutch Republics in South Africa. Their acquisition has cost us two hundred millions of pounds sterling, and over 20,000 valuable lives. In return for this there have been added to the British Empire 167,526 square miles of territory, peopled by some 150,000 sturdy peasants, whom it is reasonable to hope and expect will, in the not far distant future, prove as loyal and valuable citizens as any of those in His Majesty's other dominions beyond the seas, says Pearson's Weekly.

Of course, John Bull is not alone in what unfriendly critics, both at home and abroad, are wont to stigmatize as a policy of land-grabbing. France, for instance, has blotted out half a dozen flourishing countries since she first inaugurated her policy of colonial expansion in 1833.

FRANCE'S BIG MEAL.

Algeria was the first to fall, after a long and bitter war, characterized on the part of the invaders by a savage ferocity, accompanied by such and so many acts of gross treachery, as have rarely been equalled, at least within the last century. General Savary, Duc de Rovigo, was the officer in supreme command, and one of the earliest of his exploits was the massacre of a whole Arab tribe, including old men, women, and children, during the night. He also treacherously murdered two powerful Sheiks whom he had enticed into his power by a written assurance of safety. The result of it all was to give to France 184,474 square miles of territory—mostly desert.

Tunis, with 51,000 square miles of territory was gobbled up in 1882; and Madagascar so late as 1895, the conquest of this latter island adding 228,500 square miles to the colonial possessions of the Republic. It also extinguished in fire and blood one of the most unique negroid civilizations of which we have any knowledge.

ATTACK OF INDIGESTION.

The conquest of Annam, again, in the spring of 1884, and Tonkin in the latter part of the same year, gave France 15,000,000 new — and unwilling — subjects, and 115,000 square miles of territory. In putting on all this flesh, however, the country gave itself dyspepsia pretty badly, and ministries went and came, came and went again, with something of the dazzling persistency of a quick-change artiste in a modern music hall sketch.

The eating up of Dahomey was perhaps France's least excusable bit of nation-killing; for if ever there was a despotism that richly deserved to be strangled, it was that established by the truculent gang of ruffians who claimed to rule over that unhappy land prior to the arrival of the white conquerors. The last native monarch, for instance, King Behanzin, whom the French defeated and dethroned, thought nothing of sacrificing a few dozen slaves before breakfast; while his usual method of ridding himself of surplus or undesirable wives was to place them, bound and smeared all over with honey, in the track of an advancing column of the seruyi, or warrior ants, by whom the unhappy creatures were, of course, devoured alive.

THE GREEDY RUSSIAN BEAR.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago it used to be the custom of the Tsars of Russia to gobble up a Central Asian Khanate every few months. Most of these were, it is true, petty states and ill-governed; but some few of them were deserving of a better fate. Khiva, for instance, with its 700,000 stalwart peasants, and Bokhara with a population of two and a half millions and an area of nearly one hundred thousand square miles, both made a brave and protracted, though fruitless stand, against overwhelming odds.

One cannot help feeling a thrill of admiration, too, for the brave Tekke Turcomans, who, in 1881, so gallantly defended themselves against the redoubtable General Skobeloff, and only gave in at last when their fortress capital, Geok Tepe, was stormed and taken by the conqueror of Plevna.

But it was with the fate of the ancient kingdom of Poland, declared a Russian province in 1847, but not finally conquered until many years afterwards, that the rest of Europe, and Britain especially, was chiefly concerned. Nearly all the great Powers, with the single exception of Austria, protested, coaxed, and threatened by turns; yet the Bear was, after all, permitted to finish his meal. But it was not a meal enjoyed in peace, at all events.

TENS OF THOUSANDS

of the Tsar's soldiers were killed, millions on millions of roubles were expended; yet even so late as the autumn of 1864 we find the "Secret Provisional Government of the Polish Nation," after stating that 50,000 patriots had been slain, and 100,000 exiled to Siberia, still calling on the Poles to continue the struggle.

Turkey, once a champion among land-grabbers, has of late years seen much of her own territory filched from her; but she has, at all events, made one recent acquisition worth having, that of Tripoli, with its 398,000 square miles of territory and its 1,300,000 population.

Islands, of course, are constantly being gobbled by the big powers; but they hardly count, unless they are, like Madagascar or New Guinea, of extra large size. Still the seizure of Hawaii, the Philippines, and Porto Rico by the United States, marks an era in the onward march of that lusty young republic; while Germany was very much delighted with her share of Samoa, and still more at her acquisition of the beautiful and fertile Caroline Islands. Indeed, there seems to be a peculiar satisfaction attached to the swallowing of little independent islands; else why did John Bull go into such ecstacies over Fiji, Zanzibar, and other similar earth morsels.

BRITAIN'S BIG MOUTHFULS.

Burmah is the biggest of Britain's modern acquisitions, so far as mere mileage is concerned, leaving out of consideration, of course, her South African colonies, and Egypt and the Soudan Provinces, both of which latter are under our protection only —nominally. The incorporation within the British Empire of Burmah dates from 1885, when the half-made and wholly wicked King Thebaw saw fit to wantonly massacre a number of peaceful British traders, insult our Commissioner, and arrogantly refuse to even receive our Envoy. The result was, of course, war, which ended, so far as the King was concerned, in the speedy capture of his capital, Mandalay, and his own deposition.

Ashanti, another independent state ruled by yet another bloodthirsty potentate, King Prempeh, was absorbed early in 1896, giving us 45,000 square miles more territory. Eighteen months previously Uganda had been gobbled—a country just about twice as big as Ashanti and fully twice as populous, and to it we have since added four other native "kingdoms," known as Usoga, Unyoro, Ankoli, and Koki. To attain our ends in these remote regions entailed almost perpetual fighting for some years, the brunt of which, however, was borne by black troops led by British officers.

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

A FROST ALARUM.

Electric contrivances which give alarm by ringing a bell at the approach of frost have been used to some extent by California fruit growers. The apparatus consists of a battery relay coil, thermometer and alarm bell, and it is so adjusted that when the mercury in the thermometer falls below a certain point the electric circuit is broken and the bell rings. As the instrument can be set for any temperature it can be used in hot-houses for various crops. It is set to a few degrees above the point of danger.