The Power of Persuasion

Or Lady Caraven's Labor of Love.

CHAPTER VIII.

The quiet of Ravensmere was indeed broken up—the house was filled with guests. Many of them were people whom Hildred did not like; but she was compelled to be agreeable to all. There were men of the same stamp as her husband, whose whole lives seemed to be passed at the billiard-table, who had no thought except for gambling and betting, whose lives were a round of self-indulgence, who had not a noble thought or idea.

She did not like some of the people whom the earl had invited. If not rude, they were neglectful of her—seemed to know her position by instinct—seemed to guess that she was an unloved wife, that she had been married for her money, and had a title instead of love. She must endure it, but there were things she could not tolerate. This was one.

One morning she was quite alone in the castle. The whole party had gone out riding and driving, some of them greatly disappointed at not having their beautiful young hostess with them; but she thought Sir Raoul looked worse that morning, so would not leave him. She was busily engaged in reading to him, when a servant came to say that a poor woman was waiting to see her.

"I tried to send her away, your ladyship," said the man, "but she begged so hard that I had not the heart."

"Tried to send her away! Why did you do that?" asked Lady Caraven.

"I think she is one of the tenants, your ladyship, and his lordship gave orders that they should never be attended to here—they were to be sent to Mr. Blantyre. If I have done wrong I am sorry for it."

"You have done right," she said; "no blessing ever comes to a house where the poor and the sorrowful are sent from the door."

The woman was waiting to see her in one of the ante-rooms. Lady Caraven's generous heart was touched as she looked at her, she was so thin, so worn, with a face so white and so sad, and great, despairing eyes; her clothes were a thin, shabby dress and a still thinner and shabbier shawl.

As the young countess stood before her in all the pride of her youth and beauty, amid all the luxury of her surroundings, she felt, in some vague way, ashamed of the contrast.

"Did you want me?" she said, in a low, gentle voice. "I am Lady Caraven. Do you wish to see me?"

"Oh! my lady, my lady!" was the cry that seemed to come from a breaking heart, "will you take pity on me?"

"I will, indeed, if I can. If I can help you, I promise that I will. What is the matter? You must not fear to tell me. I can understand the sorrows of others, and feel for them."

The woman looked up in the kindly, beautiful face.

"I hardly know how to tell you, my lady. It is not the earl's fault. None of us blame him; he does not know it. It is all Mr. Blantyre's doing."

"But what is it?" she asked, gently. "You forget that I do not know."

"My lady, it is this. My husband—a fine, strong, handsome young man—was killed here in the woods two years ago; he was a keeper, and there was a fight with the poachers—my husband, John Woodruff, was killed. He was a fine, handsome young man, my lady, and we had three little children. I was fetched to him after he was hurt. He had been struck with the butt-end of a gun, and the doctor said that the moment he was moved he would die. So his companions fetched me to him, my lady—me with my three children; and we saw him, in the early dawn of the morning, lying in the clover dying—dying, my lady—the dear lad who had never given me an angry word. We knelt down beside him, and he tried to raise his head to look at the children for the last time; but he could not see them—his eyes were dim, he groped with his hand, as though he was in darkness. He neither saw them nor me, but he knew that I was there.

"'Ellen,' he said—and even in dying the words sounded quite clear—'Ellen, you have been a good wife to me. I am losing my life for a few birds of my lord's; but he will see to you. The earl will see to you—he will never let you want.' And all the men standing round him said:

"'That is right enough; the earl will never let you want.'

"But, my lady, it was the keepers who buried my husband—I think the earl forgot him. We lived then in a little cottage—one belonging to the earl—and, my lady, since my husband's death I have lived there—I do not know why—rent free. Living there has been my livelihood. I have had no rent to pay, and every week I have earned a few shillings by taking in washing for the people at Court Raven. Some weeks I have made five shillings—sometimes more. So, my lady, the little cottage has, after a fashion, kept me and my children. But now a paper has come to say that henceforth we must pay rent—four-and-sixpence each week—for the place; and my lady, if I pay it I shall not be able to buy bread for my children to eat."

"But you shall not pay it," said the young countess.

"Oh, my lady, Heaven bless you! If you would but speak to the earl for me! He is young, and he does not think—he does not know. If you would but speak to him for me!"

Speak to her husband! Hildred had not thought of that—had not meant that. The woman went on:

"I have been to Mr. Blantyre, my lady, but he refused to hear me. He said I must pay the rent or go. Where can I go? My husband took me home to his cottage, and my little children were born there. Where can I go? What can I do? It seems hard, my lady. My poor husband died to keep a few birds alive—birds that my lord and his friends shot afterward—and now I must leave the home I love for my dear lad's sake. It is a hard world for the poor, my lady—hard and cold and cruel."

"There is another, better and brighter," said the countess.

"Yes, my lady—I know it; but it seems hard to wait for that, hard to wait while the children are crying for bread, and there is no coal for the fire."

"I promise to help you," said Lady Caraven. "I will speak to the earl, my husband; he will let you stay without paying rent."

"I know he will—if he understands but, my lady, Mr. Blantyre does as he likes with the poor, and the earl knows nothing about it. What could four shillings and sixpence a week matter to the earl? And my husband died to save his birds."

"I will do all I can," said the countess; "come and see me again in three days' time from now."

And Lady Caraven placed in the thin hand that which made the widow's heart beat fast for joy.

On the day after the poor widow's visit Lady Caraven had no opportunity of speaking to her husband. He cared little enough, as a rule, for county business, but he was compelled to attend a political meeting at Court Raven, the town which belonged almost entirely to the Ravensmere estates. He did not return until late in the evening, and she did not see him. On the day following she determined to make an opportunity. As it happened, the earl was at the breakfast table.

"It will be easy enough," she thought now. "When breakfast is over I will ask him to spare a few minutes for me."

"Lord Caraven," she said, "you can spare me ten minutes? I will not detain you longer."

An expression of impatience came over his face; she saw it, and her own blanched with anger.

"Have no fear," she said, sarcastically; "it is not of myself that I wish to speak."

"I was just going out," he told her, hastily.

Her first impulse was to sweep disdainfully from the room, and never to speak to him again. For one half minute she felt that she hated him; and then she remembered that she had promised to plead the widow's cause—the widow who loved her home for her "dear lad's" sake.

"Lord Caraven," she said, gently, "I promise that I will not detain you long."

He laid his handsome head back on the luxurious chair, and she, looking at him, felt for half a moment a longing in her heart that all were different—that he was at home there—that she could kneel by his side and draw the handsome face down to hers and whisper her requests. Then she felt angry with herself. What a day-dream—what a foolish day-dream about the husband who did not like her!

"Lord Caraven," she said, "I have a favor to ask from you—a great favor. Will you grant it?"

"I will hear first what it is," he replied.

Then she told him. Her heart sank as she saw his face grow dark and angry.

"Which of the servants told you that woman was here?"

"Will you tell me why you wish to know, Lord Caraven."

"Yes; the moment I know I shall dismiss him without a character for disobedience."

"If he disobeyed you," she said, "I am sorry for it. But pray do not allow that to influence you against my petition."

He turned round angrily.

"Plainly speaking, Hildred," he said, "I have quite enough annoyance with my tenants without interference from you, and I cannot allow ——"

"Lord Caraven," she interposed eagerly, "do believe me. I have not the least wish to interfere; but this poor woman—if you had seen her pale, hungry face and sad eyes."

"It is easy enough to look hungry," he said, impatiently.

"You do not mean that. I know you have pity and compassion for the unfortunate—I have seen you kind and generous to them; and this poor woman's husband—and she loved him—mind, her husband, Lord Caraven, died to save your birds. Think—a man killed that a few birds may live!"

"That is your way of looking at the matter. Do you know that you are attacking the very base of society?"

"What am I attacking in this case?" she asked.

"The Game Laws—the most glorious part of the British Constitution. John Woodruff died in defense of the Game Laws, not for my birds."

"As you will," she said, gently. "You understand things of that kind better than I do. I only know how sorry I felt for the poor woman, who loved her husband—loved him and lost him."

The unconscious pathos, the sweet sadness in her voice, as she uttered these words, both touched and angered him. He meant to speak gently.

"Hildred, you must not ask me to interfere. It does not do to give way to one's feelings always. I cannot interfere with my tenants. They must pay their rents."

"But," she said, pleadingly, "this is a matter of only four-and-sixpence a week—it cannot possibly hurt you."

"It is not a question of money, but of principle. As Blantyre says, if I let this woman live rent free, every widow on my estate will want to do the same. If I excuse her I must excuse all the rest. As Blantyre says, it is a bad precedent. I might go on until every tenant on the estate found some touching and pathetic reason why he should not pay any rent—then what would become of me?"

"But this is not probable; and I ask this as an especial favor. You will not refuse, I am sure."

"Blantyre especially warned me about this very matter. He said she would be coming again and again. Do you know that we could get more for the cottage if we tried?"

It was with great difficulty that she controlled herself. To grow impatient would be to lose her cause.

"Will you let me pay the rent for her, then?" she asked.

He laughed.

"If you do, we shall raise it to three hundred a year. Seriously speaking, Hildred, you must not interfere—it will not do. It would be a fatal precedent. I must absolutely forbid you to say any more."

She turned from him, her face growing pale, her lips quivering with anger. He saw it, and felt almost sorry.

"I regret to refuse you, Hildred," he said, rising to quit the room. "It is the first favor you have asked of me, and I should have liked to grant it. But I promised Blantyre faithfully that I would not interfere. We must make what we can of the estate, and we shall never do it if we interfere with Blantyre."

She raised her head with a charming air of pique and disdain.

"Pray, my lord," she said, "may I ask if you have left your conscience in Mr. Blantyre's hands?"

"He would not have much to hold," laughed the earl. "My conscience would go into a small space."

Her face flushed, her eyes shone brightly.

"Let me ask you, my lord," she said, "have you ever remembered that all this wealth was given to you, not for your own especial self-indulgence, but in trust for the poor and the needy?"

"I should like you to tell Blantyre that," sneered the earl. "I have never remembered anything of the kind."

"Then let me tell you it is true. I would sooner be the poorest beggar turned from your door than I would be you, with your titles, your estates, your wealth, your dead conscience, and your dead heart. Good-morning, my lord."

And with an air of dignity the young countess swept from the room leaving him dumb with rage.

(To Be Continued.)

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

Many Coughs and Bad Colds

The Recent Cold Snap Responsible for Much Sickness—Relief and Cure is Obtainable by the Use of Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine.

"The first cold I have had this fall," you hear people say, as they cough violently. And to hear the coughing you would think that comparatively few people have escaped it.

The sudden changes of temperature at this season, when people are not clothed to protect themselves, are almost sure to bring trouble, and one can never tell where a cold is going to end.

It may wear away, but it is more likely to hold on and be added to by cold after cold, until some serious element is developed—perhaps consumption or pneumonia, perhaps kidney disease or liver complaint.

The wise plan is to nip the trouble in the bud by promptly curing the cough and cold before it fastens itself on the vital organs, and in this connection we suggest Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine.

Not that there is any scarcity of cough mixtures, but because this preparation is more than a mere cough cure, has stood the test of time, and never had such an enormous sale as it has to-day. This we consider the strongest evidence of its worth as a treatment for coughs and colds.

Composed as it is of linseed, turpentine and half a dozen other ingredients of known virtue in the cure of colds, this remedy is far-reaching in action, and positively cures the cold as well as giving prompt relief to coughing, hoarseness, sore throat, etc.

There are many imitations of Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine, so be careful when buying and look for the portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase on the wrapper. This is the strongest guarantee any medicine can have.

Children delight to take Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine, and it is a positive cure for croup, bronchitis, whooping cough, coughs and colds; 25 cents a bottle, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

HELP FOR MOTHERS.

Baby's Own Tablets Are What You Need When Little Ones Are Cross, Fretful and Sleepless.

If a child is cross, fretful and sleeps badly, the mother may feel absolutely certain that some derangement of the stomach or bowels is the cause. And she can be just as certain that Baby's Own Tablets will put her little one right. These Tablets cure all the minor ailments of little ones, such as indigestion, constipation, simple fevers, diarrhoea, worms and teething troubles. They are guaranteed to contain no opiate and can be given with absolute safety to the youngest and most feeble child. Every mother who has used them speaks of these Tablets in the warmest terms. Mrs. E. Bancroft, Deerwood, Man., says: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets for stomach and bowel troubles, for simple fevers and teething, and I think them the best medicine in the world. They always strengthen children instead of weakening them as most other medicines do."

You can get Baby's Own Tablets at any drug store, or by mail post paid at 25 cents a box by writing direct to The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

RAISING THE WIND.

When a certain late Shah of Persia became temporarily embarrassed for money he had quite a unique method of filling his purse. He would go to the market, where, after examining the shops, he would select one, and turning to the proprietor would say: "Will you take me in as a partner in your business for the day?" The offer was, of course, eagerly accepted. The Shah would take his seat near the shop entrance, and say to his courtiers, whom he always took with him on these occasions: "Now, I'm the salesman. Who'll buy?" The latter, not daring to refuse the offers of the royal merchant, set about clearing the shop of its contents, paying sometimes two hundred dollars for goods that were not worth ten. No one was allowed to beat down prices or to leave the place without making purchases. When everything was sold the Shah had a list of the cost price of each article made out, and loyally shared with the shopkeeper the amount of the profit realized.

WIRELESS "WIRES" AFLOAT

On the Cunard mail steamships, which are all fitted with wireless telegraphy, the Marconi Telegraph Company charge a uniform rate of twelve cents a word for telegraphing from the ship to a Marconi station or to a passing ship. As an example of the extent to which the system is used by private passengers, it is stated that 2,000 words are sent from a ship in a single passage, while it may be reckoned that nearly an equal number are received.

TATTOOED CELEBRITIES

Many Members of the Royal Family Are Adorned.

The craze for being tattooed, fast involving those who occupy the higher walks of life, is in some measures attributable to the fact that quite a number of royalties are among the latest converts to the fashion, says London Answers. Many members of our own royal family bear the indelible marks of the tattooer's needle upon their persons, including King Edward, who has a fanciful design executed upon his right shoulder, while another elaborate design is the dragon with a row of spikes down its back, which was tattooed four or five years ago on the Prince of Wales, thus representing "George and the Dragon."

Sailors are, as is well known, invariably adorned in this manner, and Lord Charles Beresford is no exception to the rule. A gigantic snake with open mouth and forked tongue exposed is coiled round his whole body, a piece of work which took considerable time to execute, for every scale on the reptile is faithfully depicted. Prince George of Greece has a flying dragon on his chest, the creature measuring 18in. from head to tail.

The Grand Duke Alexis is the most tattooed royalty, there being no fewer than seven distinct designs upon him which he has caused to be added at different times, while King Oscar of Sweden and the Duke of Newcastle are almost as elaborately adorned. But one of the greatest triumphs of the tattooer's art was that executed upon the body of a Scotch baron four years ago. It was an exact representation of Constable's famous etching of Sir Joshua Reynold's picture, "Mrs. Pelham," the original engraving, it will be remembered, having been sold at Christie's about the same time for $2,125.

But this form of adornment is by no means confined to the sterner sex indeed, some of the most beautiful designs are worn by ladies of rank, because the softness of the skin better adapts itself to the tattooer's needle. The only lady in the English peerage thus marked, however, is Mrs. Cornwallis-West (Lady Randolph Churchill), who, when on a visit to India some years ago, was tattooed by a native artist when the symbol of Eternity, a snake holding its tail in its mouth. Many Princesses are sailors and wear the blue anchor, among them the Queen of Greece, who is an admiral of the fleet, a large anchor figuring on her shoulder. The Princess Waldemar of Denmark, whose husband is so well known in the nautical world, likewise has an anchor on her arm surmounted by a crown.

ANNALS OF A QUIET LIFE.

1. Bawled until 3,

2. Bald after 30.

A FRIENDLY WASP.

A gentleman who, while reading the newspaper, felt bothered by the buzzing of a wasp about his head, knocked it down. It fell through the open window, and lay on the sill as if dead. A few seconds afterwards, to his great surprise, a large wasp flew on to the window sill, and after buzzing around the wounded brother for a few minutes, began to lick him all over. The sick wasp seemed to revive under this treatment, and his friend then dragged him gently to the edge, grasped him round the body, and flew away with him. It was plain that the stranger, finding a wounded comrade, gave him "first aid" as well as he could and then bore him away home.

England spends 5½ millions yearly in foreign eggs.