The Power of Persuasion

Or Lady Caraven's Labor of Love.

CHAPTER XIX.

Near the lake, across which the last red glimmer of the sunset had faded, husband and wife stood for one moment beneath the darkening sky, looking at each other. Lord Caraven's face was ghastly white, an unknown, untold horror lay in his eyes, his lips trembled with uncontrollable emotion, Hildred — pale, terrified, wondering — gazed at him like one fascinated.

"What is it?" she gasped.

"You guilty woman," cried the earl — "you cruel, guilty, jealous woman!"

She shrank back as though he had struck her — her lips parted as though she would speak, but all sound died away on them.

"You guilty woman," repeated the earl, "own the truth! You followed Lady Hamilton and me here to watch, to listen. Speak!"

"May Heaven pardon me, I did!" she moaned.

"Here you must remain. I shall know where to find you, crouching at the end of the alder-trees, where you hid yourself to listen to your husband and his guest. Great Heaven! that a spy should bear my name! Stay here until I return. If you attempt to escape I will send the whole country after you. And I was beginning to care for you — to think you a noble woman!"

She shrank cowering from him. His angry face, the anger that shone in his eyes, the stern voice, frightened her. She shrank lower and lower, until she fell on her knees, sobbing as though her heart would break.

"Stir at your peril!" he said, and then he left her.

For some minutes afterward she heard sounds on the borders of the lake — murmured sounds, as of intense pity and compassion, followed by the tramp of many feotsteps, and then all was still.

The ground was covered with dead and dying leaves. Lady Caraven flung herself down upon them, and as she lay there the old words came to her: "Let me die!" Death would have been mercy.

What did it all mean? She had forgotten all about the shot, she believed the poachers to have fired in the woods — it had not dwelt for one moment in her mind. She was in a maze of doubt, difficulty, and despair.

What did it mean? If she attempted to escape he would send the whole country after her. Surely she had not merited such threats. Surely she had not deserved language that he might have used toward a murderer, but which came strangely enough to his wife. He had discovered that she loved him, that she was jealous, that she had followed him for the sake of watching and listening to him; but surely that was not enough to call out the whole country to pursue her.

He had called her guilty. She had owned that she was. Ah! dear Heaven, if she had but died when a child in her mother's arms! He had called her cruel; that she was not, for she would never have voluntarily hurt even a worm. Why was she to remain there — to move at her peril? What did it mean?

The golden stars came out in the sky. Was it really herself, or was she dreaming? Was she Hildred, the beautiful, popular Countess of Caraven, lying there in all the abandonment of her misery, her husband's angry voice in her ears, the marks of his angry grasp on her arm? Outcast, wretched, despairing, there was only one friend for her in the world, and that was Sir Raoul; if she could but see him, if she could but tell him! The pitiless night hid her from all eyes. Surely there had never been a night so full of pain.

How long she had been lying there she never knew. Time was all ended for her. She was conscious only of infinite misery. She did not even feel the chill breath of the wind as it passed over her.

Then, after what seemed to her an age of suspense and agony, she heard footsteps amid the brushwood, and Lord Caraven calling her by name.

"I am here," she said.

In the thick growing darkness it was with difficulty that he discovered her. He saw her at length with her face hidden among the dead leaves.

"You may rise and thank Heaven," he said, in a stern voice, "that you have not succeeded; the evil is not so great as it might have been."

She rose and stood before him, the same dazed look on her face.

"I do not understand — you say such hard, such cruel things," she moaned.

"Hard and cruel," repeated her husband, with bitter contempt; "did ever a woman live so cruel as you?"

"I am not cruel," she replied. "I have been driven mad."

There was such infinite sadness in the young voice, such dreary despair in the young face, that he was touched in spite of his anger and contempt.

"Tell me," he said, "what made you do this thing — this cruel, ungenerous, unwomanly deed?"

She thought he referred to her conduct in following him, and they seemed to her hard words.

"What made me do it? You will only despise and hate me the more if I tell you," she replied.

"Frankly speaking, Hildred, nothing that you can say to me will make the matter worse, but it may certainly be made better. Tell me the plain truth."

"Yes, I will tell you," she replied. "I see that all good understanding is at an end between us."

"That is quite certain," he said, with emphasis; "with my consent you shall never enter my doors again."

"Have I acted so very wrong?" she asked, sadly.

"Wrong!" he exclaimed, contemptuously. "We will waive that, Hildred. You have done that which I will never pardon. Now tell me why you did it. You may speak the truth to me; you bear my name, I will shield you from all harm. No one knows but myself."

"Then she did not see me?" said Hildred, drearily.

"No — and you may be thankful for it," answered the earl, severely. "She did not see you. You may speak quite frankly — no one knows anything about it except myself. Now tell me."

"What have I to tell you?" she said. "I — I did it; I followed you here because — oh! how hard it is to tell! — because I was jealous of her. I thought that you both were ridiculing me, that you would tell her that you had been obliged to marry me to save yourself from ruin, but that you did not love me, you did not care for me, you disliked me, you hated me, you longed to be free from me — my accursed money was all you wanted — that you would never like me. And I fancied she would pity you, in that soft, caressing voice of hers — pity you for being burdened with a wife you did not love. I believed that you would tell her that I was jealous of her, that then both of you would laugh at me."

The passion of her words had deadened all sense of shame. She had forgotten that which her jealousy had prompted her to do, and remembered her great, bitter wrongs. She was no longer a heroine — only a passionate, injured, deeply-loving woman. She rose to the occasion.

The earl was impressed more than he would have cared to own.

"I could not bear it," she continued, passionately. "I should have done worse than this, I am sure, if it could have been done. I was mad. I will tell you all. I was mad, because I had learned to love you with all the strength of my heart and soul. I could not bear that you should jest about me with careless words; it was as though you had stabbed me for pleasure."

He looked terribly distressed.

"Why did you not tell me this before, Hildred?" he asked.

"I tell you? How little you know me! Was it my place to go to the husband who neglected me and plead for his caresses — for his love? I would have died a thousand deaths first. How little you know me! I should not tell you all this now, but that I know in this world we shall never perhaps meet again. I am speaking to you across a grave. I stretch out my hands to you over a grave — the grave where my love lies — slain!"

And as she said the words she fell upon her knees, weeping, sobbing with bitter cries, as though a grave lay there, and she had fallen upon it.

He was touched. He could not tolerate what he believed to be her crime, but she was young, beautiful, and loving. Her crime had been committed through love for him. He raised her from the ground.

"I am very sorry, Hildred," he said; "it is very sad for both of us. Now we must talk of something else. You must go at once."

She raised her weeping eyes to him.

"Must you send me away?" she asked, gently. "It was wrong. I was mad with jealous anger, but I did not think I was. Could you not overlook it?"

"You speak lightly," he replied sternly. "No, you can never re-enter my house. I have arranged it all. I did so when I took poor Lady Hamilton back to the castle. I told our guests that you had been suddenly sent for by your father, that I had driven you to the station — and it is to your father's house that you must go."

"Very well," she said, drearily.

"You do not seem to understand," he remarked, sharply; "do you not know the danger, the peril that hangs over you?"

She did not; but of what use was it to say so?

"Try to collect yourself and understand," he continued; "time presses. I cannot keep them away much longer. You must depart at once without being seen. No one must know at what hour you went. You must go to your father's house and wait there. If it should be needful to send you abroad, I will arrange it."

"Have I done so very wrong?" she murmured.

The earl cried out passionately:

"Heaven give me patience! You must be mad to ask me such a question. One would think you did not know what wrong meant."

Hildred stood quite still, looking almost helplessly at him.

"You do not seem to realize or to know what you have done," he said, hastily.

"I do, I do," she moaned; "and there will be no pardon. I wish that I might fling myself into that lake. I would, but that there is a life to come."

"Hildred," said the earl, sternly, "listen to me. I have told you that you must never re-enter my doors; but you bear my name, and for my name's sake I will shield you. The Countess of Caraven may have done wrong, but the world must not know it. I must save you from the consequences of your mad folly. See —I went quickly to your rooms and have brought you these." He gave her a cloak and a bonnet with a thick veil. "I found them in your wardrobe. Have you any money?"

"No," she replied, vacantly, "none."

He took out his purse and gave it to her.

"I would accompany you," he said, "but that it would draw down suspicion on you. I must be here to ward it off. Wrap yourself in this cloak. Hide all that amber satin."

With cold, trembling hands, she obeyed him. Suddenly she remembered the rubies. She unclasped the necklace and bracelets.

"Take these," she said; and the earl took them — it was better, he thought, to humor her.

"Now you quite understand, Hildred? You must not go near Court Raven — you are known there. You must walk to Worseley; that is a larger station; no one will know you. Take a ticket for London. When you reach there, hail a cab and go straight to your father's house. Are you quite sure that you understand?"

"Yes; what must I say to my father?" she asked.

"You had better tell him the truth. He is a quick, keen man of the world; he will know far better than I do what should be done. Tell him all."

"Yes," she replied, mechanically.

"Now hasten away from here, Hildred," he said. "I am in mortal fear. You understand all. You know the road to Worseley—it is direct — you take the high-road without turning. Good-bye."

She raised her dark, sad eyes to his face; all the love, the passion, the regret, that she could not put into words, was revealed in them.

"Good-bye," she repeated.

He did not hold out his hand to her. Had he been speaking to the merest stranger, his voice could not have been colder or more stern. Then he turned quickly away, and Lady Caraven walked across the coppice and through a lane into the high-road. Her face was deadly pale; her limbs trembled with cold. The golden stars shone down upon her; the night winds whispered round her. She walked on, unconscious of it all.

It was the early dawn of morning when she reached the station — a large railroad junction, where she was both unknown and unnoticed. The train started for London in half an hour. No one spoke to her, or appeared to see her, as she took her place, and in a few minutes more she was on her way.

It was a hard punishment — terribly hard for such a trifle, she thought, wondering that the earl could be so stern. She was tired, fatigued, exhausted with passion and emotion. She had neither eaten, drank, nor slept since the evening before. When she reached London she asked a porter to call a cab for her, and gave the address: "Mr. Ransome, the Hollies, Kew," — and the drive thither seemed to her more than ever like a dream."

(To Be Continued).

BABY'S FIRST TOOTH.

A Family Event That Does Not Always Bring Unmixed Joy.

Baby's first tooth does not come unannounced. Inflamed gums and impaired digestion produce a feverish and fretful condition about which the mother often feels concern. The baby boy of Mrs. George McGregor, of Hamilton, Ont., was troubled with diarrhoea while teething and was cross and restless. He did not sleep well and matters became serious. The mother writes as follows: "My sister had used Baby's Own Tablets for her baby and advised me to try them. I got a box and after giving the Tablets to the baby a few times he began to improve and was soon well. He is now a big, healthy baby and whenever he gets fretful or does not feel well I give him a Tablet and he is soon all right again."

Baby's Own Tablets replace with great advantage castor oil and other nauseous, griping drugs. They sweeten the stomach, quiet the nerves and promote healthful sleep. They are guaranteed to contain no opiate and to be absolutely harmless. If your druggist does not keep them you can obtain a full-size box by mail, post paid, by sending 25 cents to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N. Y.

NOT WHAT SHE EXPECTED.

Opening the door in response to an insistent knock the lady beheld the figure of one she remembered.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" she said, icily.

"It is me," was the answer. "Your long-lost husband, who has come to tell you that he is sorry he ran away two years ago."

"Maybe you are sorry you went," retorted the lady, "but I ain't. What did you come back for?"

"My dearest, I have been to Klondike, and last summer I accumulated fifty thousand——"

"Fif-ty thou-sand dollars!" shrieked the loving wife, as she fell on his neck.

"No; mosquito bites."

It was only a moment later that he fell on his neck himself.

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

PARDONED.

A lady traveling by rail sat facing a gentleman, who, with one eye at least, seemed to be staring fixedly at her. She became indignant, and said:

"Why do you look at me so, sir?"

He said he was not aware of having offended, but she insisted.

"I beg your pardon, madam, but it's this eye, is it not?" — lifting his finger to his left optic.

"Yes, sir, that's the eye."

"Well, madam, that eye won't do you any harm. It's a glass eye. I hope you'll excuse it. But I'm not surprised that even a glass eye should feel interested in so charming a woman."

The explanation and the compliment combined put the lady in good humor.

"Are you educating your son for any particular calling?" "Yes." "What?" "Well, he made his own selection, and as near as I can find out he is educating himself to be the husband of an heiress."

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

It is a rule, to which good lawyers usually adhere, never to tell more than one knows. A newspaper tells a funny story of a lawyer who carried the rule to the extreme.

One of the agents in a Midland Revision Court in England objected to a person whose name was on the register, on the ground that he was dead. The revising barrister declined to accept the assurance, however, and demanded conclusive testimony on the point.

The agent of the other side rose and gave corroborative evidence as to the decease of the gentleman in question.

"But, sir, how do you know the man's dead?" demanded the barrister.

"Well," was the reply, "I don't know. It's very difficult to prove."

"As I suspected," returned the barrister. "You don't know whether he's dead or not."

The barrister glanced triumphantly round the court, but his expression gradually underwent a change as the witness coolly continued:

"I was saying, sir, that I don't know whether he is dead or not, but I do know this: they buried him about a month ago on suspicion."

VERY METHODICAL INDEED.

Once an old man, James Scott by name, traveled about on business until he was nearly 80 years of age. He became celebrated for his punctuality and his methodical habits. Upon one occasion a gentleman stopped at an inn much frequented by Mr. Scott, and saw a fine fowl cooking.

"That is very good," said the hungry guest. "You may serve that for my dinner."

"You cannot have that, sir," replied the landlord. "That is being cooked for Mr. Scott, the traveler."

"I know Mr. Scott very well," said the gentleman. "Is he stopping here?"

"Oh, no, sir," answered the landlord. "But two months ago he ordered a fowl to be ready for him at precisely two o'clock to-day, and we are expecting him every minute."

Mr. Scott arrived on the stroke of two.

A DANDY-LION STORY.

He had been in the Dark Continent for two or three years, and when home on a visit he delighted to spin his "tall" yarns about his experiences in Africa. The hunting of wild lions was his speciality — how he could shoot them, how he could go out and be sure of finding one, etc., and he generally wound up by saying he never yet saw a lion he feared.

One night, after he had finished yarning, he was a little taken back by one of his audience, who said:

"That's nothing. I have lain down and actually slept among lions in their wild, natural state."

"I don't believe that. I'm no fool!" said the great hunter.

"It's the truth, though."

"You slept among lions in their wild, natural state?"

"Yes, I certainly did."

"Can you prove it? Were they African?"

"Well, not exactly African lions. They were dandelions."

BENEFIT OF ADVERTISING.

A merchant in one of our cities lately put an advertisement in a paper headed:

"Boy wanted!"

The next morning he found a bandbox on his doorstep, with this inscription on the top:

"How will this one answer?"

On opening it he found a nice, fat, chubby-looking specimen of the article he wanted, warmly done up in flannel.

MIKE LOST.

Pat — Did you ever back a horse in your life, Mike?

Mike—Yes, once, and only once.

"Did you win anything?"

"No, begorra; that I didn't."

"Why, how was that?"

"Well, you see, I backed the blessed hoss through a shop window, and I had to pay $25."

Landlady — "What portion of the chicken would you like, Mr. Newcomer?" Mr. Newcomer — "Oh, half or it will be ample, thank you."

First Traveler — "Does the train stop here long enough to let you get something to eat?" Second Traveler — "No; just long enough to let you pay for what you order."

"We know a girl," says someone, "so industrious that when she has nothing else to do she sits and knits her brow."

Gladys — "I thought you said he was rich?" Mildred — "Oh, no. I merely said he had more money than brains."

"Do you have trouble with your cooks boiling coffee too long?" "Goodness, no! They don't stay long enough for that."

"When are you going to call on the Van Dulls?" asked the daughter. "Just as soon," answered the mother, "as I can find out when they are not going to be at home."

Mother — "What makes you cry that way?" Johnnie — "Our poor teacher has been ill so long, and — and——" "What! Did he die?" "No — no — he is getting well — boo — boo."

In Four Hospitals in Montreal

But the Doctors Could Not Cure Mr. Cloutier—Said He Would Never be Well Again—After Six Years of Helplessness He Was Cured by

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

The case of Mr. Simon Cloutier, shoemaker, 110 Lagouchetiere street, Montreal, deserves more than passing notice, because his case was unusually severe.

For six long years Mr. Cloutier was an invalid, unable to attend to his work, and much of his time was spent in the hospitals of Montreal. The doctors gave him no hope of recovery, but, on the contrary, told him that he would never be well again.

A treatment that will restore to good health a person whose case was considered hopeless must be of more than ordinary value, and this is only one of a series of remarkable cures that have been brought about by the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

Mr. Simon Cloutier, shoemaker, 110 Lagauchetiere street, Montreal, Que., states :—"For six years I was not able to work, my nerves were all unstrung and my digestion bad. I had severe attacks of headache, could not sleep, and suffered with shooting pains in the small of my back. I was in four hospitals, but the doctors could not cure me. They said I would never be well again. In spite of their decision I began the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food some months ago, and I am convinced that I owe my life to this medicine. I have now been at work for over two weeks, and believe that my health has been fully restored. It is a pleasure for me to add my testimony to the hosts of others from persons who have been cured by this wonderful medicine."

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