The Power of Persuasion

Or Lady Caraven's Labor of Love.

CHAPTER XXII.

Lady Caraven had refused to see any one; she had refused to quit her apartment. The horror of the charge made against her overpowered her. Her husband believed her guilty of intent to murder. At first that was the only idea her mind could grasp — a horrible, distorted idea. She could not think clearly. Her husband, whom she had saved from ruin, whom she had roused from indolence and self-indulgence, whose better nature she had called into life, whom she loved with a passionate love, had judged her guilty of murder. She could not realize it; she could not put her thoughts into words; they assumed no tangible form. Then slowly enough she returned to a clear memory of what had happened.

Some one had shot Lady Hamilton; who it was, or how it had happened, she could not tell. Then she remembered having heard the shot fired, of which at the time she had thought so little. She remembered how something had whizzed through the trees. By degrees all the events of that dreadful night returned to her clearly and forcibly — the startled cry, the sound that came from the borders of the lake, the tramp of many feet—and she wondered that all these things had had no significance for her when her husband had cried, "You guilty, cruel woman!" and she had owned herself guilty. Then she saw how the mistake had arisen. They had been playing at cross purposes. He meant that she was guilty of murder; she had meant that she was guilty of jealousy and of following him.

She was in despair. Of what avail would it be now to defend herself, to tell him that she was not guilty, to try to clear herself? Her husband would never believe her; he would always suspect her because of her own words.

"Was there ever a fate like mine?" cried the unhappy girl. "What have I done that such a lot in life should be mine?"

Her courage, her bravery, her hope and faith seemed all to give way. She was in despair. Her husband believed her guilty of a great crime, and she had no means of proving her innocence. The only hope that remained to her was that the real criminal would confess, and so free her from the accusation; but that was most unlikely. In her own mind she believed that some lover of Lady Hamilton's, wild with jealousy, had fired at her; if so, it was most unlikely that he would accuse himself.

No, there was no hope. She had striven so bravely to bear a cruel fate; she had done her best; she had made a brave fight where many people would have run away — and now it was all ended. So far was her husband from loving her that he believed her guilty of a crime—thought her capable of a crime. The girl's heart failed her utterly; she would fain have turned her face to the wall and died.

"Sir Raoul would not have believed it," she said to herself; "he would have defended me."

All hope was at an end. She felt that she could never interest herself in life again. Then a vague but none the less terrible fear came over her. She could not tell what might happen. Suppose that Lady Hamilton should die! Some one must be punished. Her husband had said that he would keep her secret, but suppose that he found it impossible to do so—that, from circumstantial evidence, others suspected and accused her—what would she do? There could be no defence. She had been found behind the trees, and she had said she was guilty. Could it be within the bounds of possibility that she, Hildred, Countess of Caraven, would ever be brought before a public tribunal and tried for a crime of which she was perfectly innocent? Her vivid imagination ran riot about it. She pictured herself in a dark cell. She wept until from sheer exhaustion she slept.

A knocking at the door aroused her.

"Hildred," called Arley Ransome, "I wish to see you."

"Hildred, I have something very particular to say to you—open the door."

There was not a sound, and Lord Caraven began to feel slightly alarmed.

"Hildred," said her father, "I have a message from your husband."

Still there was no sound, and, unable to control himself, the earl cried out:

"Hildred, for Heaven's sake speak to me! Let me in — I want to see you!"

The sound of his voice seemed to have an electric effect upon her. The next moment she turned the key in the lock and opened wide the door.

With a cry of fear and surprise, he started back when he saw her. He had seen her lately so beautiful, so radiant—now her long black hair hung in disorder over her shoulders; her face was pale and stained with tears, her eyes were dim, her lips white. He hardly knew her.

"Hildred!" he cried.

She looked at him with dim, sad eyes.

"You!" she said. "Is it you, who thought me guilty of murder?"

Lord Caraven turned to Arley Ransome.

"Leave me alone with her," he said. "I have much to say."

Mr. Ransome went away. The earl entered the room and closed the door. He went to his wife, holding out both his hands.

"Will you forgive me?" he said.

"There can be no pardon, my lord, for the wrong you have done me," she replied.

And then the earl knew, if ever he won his wife's pardon, it would be a work of patience and of time.

"I cannot believe," he said, "that you will be unkind or unjust to me, Hildred — I have suffered more than you have."

"That is not possible," she rejoined; "no one has accused you of a terrible crime."

"But I have suspected an innocent person," he said, "and it is harder to inflict than to bear pain."

He gazed anxiously at her. She looked pale and wan, with the stains of bitter weeping on her face. He saw, too, that she shivered like one seized with mortal cold.

"Hildred," he cried, "do forgive me — you do not know how grieved I am to see you like this. I want to tell you kow the misunderstanding happened. Will you listen?"

"Yes," she replied, mechanically, and she sat silent and motionless while he told her the story. She looked at him when it was ended with dull, dim eyes.

"I am very sorry," she said, "that Blantyre made the mistake. I almost wish that he had shot me through the heart. What have I to live for?"

"I could not spare you, Hildred — you have been the good angel of my life!" he cried.

"You sent me from your house, Lord Caraven, and pronounced me guilty on what seems to me very light evidence. I may claim to be at least as credulous as yourself, yet

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I declare, that had any one accused you of murder I should not have believed it. You judged me guilty at once—guilty of trying to murder—I, who never in my life trampled even upon a worm. Why should you have thought that I wished Lady Hamilton dead?"

He looked slightly confused.

"You remember that you told me you were jealous of her," he replied.

"Jealous," she repeated, drearily. "Did I ever love you then? I have forgotten — my brain is dazed, dull. I seem to remember nothing clearly, except that you judged me guilty of murder. Did I love you?"

The wan face and dim eyes touched him inexpressibly.

"When you thought I had tried to commit murder, you turned me from your doors; in the darkness of night, alone and unfriended, you bade me begone. Which kind of murder is worse — that which destroys a body, or that which slays heart, mind, brain, and hope? I say that in this sense you have slain me."

"Hildred, be merciful to me!" he cried.

"I will show you the same mercy that you have shown me. Go from my presence and do not let me see you again."

With shining eyes, and pale, passionate face, she swept from the room, leaving the earl overcome with astonishment.

"She is the most high-minded woman I have ever met in my life," he thought. "I have been blind, indeed. How superb she looked in her indignation! I will win her yet. I have never cared about winning her before, but I swear to give my life to the task now."

It seemed probable that it would be a very long one, for Lady Caraven positively refused to see her husband again. In vain Arley Ransome pleaded for him; she was inexorable.

The earl was compelled to return to Ravensmere, and he did so almost despairingly. Lady Hamilton was fast improving; she would be able to go to her own home soon, the doctor said, and all anxiety about her was quite at an end. The truth of the story had come to light; all the papers had it; every one knew that Lady Hamilton had been shot by mistake, and that it was the young Countess of Caraven whom John Blantyre had intended to kill.

The earl confided the result of his mission to Sir Raoul, who was not much surprised.

"You have tried her beyond her strength," he said; "I should advise you, without loss of time, to return to London again."

Lord Caraven did so, but his journey was fruitless. Hildred refused to see him; to all entreaties from her father she answered simply:

"I have not one word to add to what I have said;" and with that answer the earl was obliged to be content.

In sheer despair he sent for Sir Raoul, who, though almost unfit to travel, hastened to him; he besought him to use his influence with the beautiful young wife who had no pity for him. Then he grew wildly jealous at the idea that she would listen to Sir Raoul when she refused absolutely to listen to him.

"Why should you have more influence over her than I have?" he asked, half angrily.

"Because," said Sir Raoul, "I understand the higher, better, nobler part o f her nature, as you, I fear, will never understand it. I will try what I can do."

"Tell her then, Raoul," went on the earl, his tone and manner changing suddenly, "that I was blind to her beauty, her goodness, her truth, but that I see all now. Tell her that I did not love her when I first knew her, but that I love her now; tell her, if she will but forgive me, I will make the devotion of my whole life atone for my past neglect."

Sir Raoul promised. Lady Caraven did not refuse to see him. He was shocked and startled at the terrible change a few days had wrought in her. He looked at the pale face.

"How you have suffered, Hildred?" he said.

"Yes; I came to the end of my patience at last. I can bear it no longer, Raoul; it was a life of torture after all, and I will never return to it. I could not be brave any longer."

"Poor child!" said the grave, pitying voice. "Some words are running in my mind, Hildred, about those, who, having put their hand to the plow, turn back again. May I ask, are you one of those, Hildred? Are you tired of heroism?"

"There was no heroism in my life," she said.

"Nay, pardon me; there was the grandest heroism possible. Do you know what my idea of heroism really is?"

She looked at him with greater interest than she had yet displayed.

"Tell me, Raoul."

"This is the grandest heroism," he said — "the heroism that makes saints and martyrs — bearing the burden of our lives patiently and cheerfully, never failing in strength and endurance. I thought that you would heroically and cheerfully bear the crosses and trials of your life. So you did for a time; now you have laid down your cross, saying that it is too heavy for you to bear. Ah! Hildred! believe me, good was never yet won by cowardice. Take it up again, this burden you have laid down. In the day of adversity fail not—be a heroine until the end."

His words cheered and encouraged her, as they always did.

"What would you have me do?" she asked.

"I would have you lay aside your coldness, your pride, your reserve," he told her. "Do not become a revengeful woman. Your husband has, it is true, outraged and insulted you, but it was a mistake, and he deplores it bitterly. Be generous; leave revenge to small souls and narrow minds; rise above it, and forgive him."

"You do not know, Raoul," she said, "that my heart is sore with trouble."

"I know," he replied, "it is hard to bear, but you must forgive him. You must again take up the duties of your life, resume your occupations, devote yourself to the welfare of your husband, forgive generously and entirely all that has happened, live for the good work you have begun. Once before I asked you if you were strong enough to take up the burden of your life and carry it bravely. I ask you the same question now."

She was quite silent for a few minutes, and then, as the mist rolls from the hill-tops before the light of the sun, all shadow passed from her face, and she answered him.

"I will. I will do all you advise, Raoul. I will forgive my husband. You say that he loves me now. I shall put his love to the test. If it fails, well and good—I will do my duty without the sunshine of love to cheer me; if it stands the test, I will try to crown his life with my love."

He looked long and lovingly at her.

"You are a brave girl, Hildred — you are a good woman," he said, admiringly. "I wish there were more like you. I will tell Ulric that you are willing to see him now."

"If you please," she responded; "but, Raoul, do not repeat what I have said. I want to test his love myself."

(To Be Continued).

Paralysis and Locomotor Ataxia

The Dreadful Result of Neglected Nervous Diseases—Dr. Chase's Nerve Food Prevents and Cures Paralysis by Restoring the Wasted and Depleted Nerve Cells.

To understand paralysis and its causes it is well to remember that every movement of the body of its members is due to the contraction of muscle, which can only take place under the influence of nerve force.

As this all-important nerve force is created in the nerve centres of the brain and spinal cord, and conducted along wirelike nerve fibres to the various parts of the body, any derangement of the brain, spinal cord, or nerve fibres may result in paralysis or loss of the power of movement.

Paralysis, then, is the natural result of all neglected nervous diseases.

If you find yourself nervous and irritable, over-sensitive to light, sound, and motion, addicted to continual movement or tapping of the fingers, twitching of the muscles, sudden startings and jerkings of the limbs during sleep; if you have nervous headaches or dyspepsia, are unable to sleep or rest, feel downhearted and discouraged, and unfit to fight the battles of life; if your nerves are weak and exhausted, and your blood thin and watery, you have every reason to fear paralysis of at least some part of the body, and consequent suffering and helplessness.

Paralysis can always be prevented and partial paralysis actually cured by the timely use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food. The time to begin treatment is when any of the above-mentioned symptoms become apparent. These are indications of a degeneration of the nerve cells, and when nerve force becomes exhausted paralysis is bound to follow.

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food acts on the system in an entirely different way to ordinary medicines. It is neither a stimulant to whip tired nerves to renewed activity, nor a narcotic, nor opiate, to deaden the nerves. On the contrary it is a food cure, which forms new, red corpuscles in the blood, and creates new nerve cells. Every day it is bringing back health, strength, and vitality to scores and hundreds who have become discouraged through the failure of doctors and other treatments to cure them. 50 cents a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

WAKE UP, BABY !

A New Game for Mothers.

Baby's awakening ought to be looked forward to as a pleasure, not dreaded as a scourge. He should awaken bright, merry, and full of fun, refreshed by sleep, ready for a good time.

How many mothers dread his awakening howls, knowing that he will keep everyone miserable until he goes to sleep again or gets his food. These crying fits are the terror of every inexperienced mother. Mrs. Gabriel Barnes, Six Mile Lake, Ont., is a mother who has learned how this trouble can be best met, and writes us as follows: "My baby suffered much from indigestion, and was cross and restless. I gave him several medicines, but they did not help him. I then got a box of Baby's Own Tablets and they helped him almost at once, and have done him so much good that I would not now be without them. I can recommend Baby's Own Tablets to all mothers as the best medicine I have ever used for children." These Tablets are guaranteed to contain no opiate or harmful drug and can be given with absolute safety to the youngest, weakest infant. Sold by all druggists or sent by mail, post paid, at 25 cents a box, by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

HIGHEST RAILROAD.

The American built Oroya railroad in the Peruvian Andes attains the greatest elevation reached by any railroad in the world. At one point it passes through a tunnel 15,665 feet above sea level. This is but little over 100 feet less than the elevation of Mont Blanc. The Oroya railroad also enjoys the distinction of beingmn nvbgh gdfett arfertyhiti of having cost more per mile than the great majority of railroads. It is 138 miles long, and cost $43,000,000. The many tunnels, bridges and zigzags presented difficult engineering problems.

GERM-PROOF HOUSES.

A germ-proof house is the latest addition to the hygienic terrors of life. When it arrives and we are all thoroughly scientific and uncomfortable, our homes will be single storied, without stairs, built on gravel soil, destitute of cellars, with concrete and blocks of earthenware "pierced for ventilation," placed under the floor, and the ordinary bricks "will be superseded by glazed and tightly-fitting hygienic bricks." The roof will be tiled, not slated, and the windows will reach from top to bottom of the walls. Curtains and draperies of all kinds will be abolished; pictures will be permitted only when let into the cement wall.

HOW THE SULTAN LOOKS.

Pen Picture of the Sick Man of Europe.

Mr. Ray Stannard Baker thus describes a glimpse he lately had of the Sultan in Constantinople:

"I stood on the palace terrace rising above the little roadway down which on Friday the Sultan ventures forth to say his prayers. I saw the extraordinary precautions taken to protect him — the gathering of all his five thousand troops, the stoppage of traffic by walls of armed men in every roadway leading up to the palace, then the surrounding of the few hundred yards of roadway which the Sultan must traverse from the palace gate to the mosque by rows of soldiers knee-deep. It was a strange, gorgeous, incongruous spectacle.

"Preceded by women in closed carriages, several of his sons, and some eighty great generals and officers of the army marching on foot, came the Sultan himself. He was driven slowly in an open carriage, facing forward, with his Minister at War sitting opposite. And this is Abdul Hamid II., the absolute ruler of 25,000,000 people, the defender of the faith monarch of the Hukymeti-senize, the glorious government, variously known elsewhere as the Sick Man of Europe and the great assassin. Every splendor of general and trooper is forgotten; every eye is fixed on the little, old, round-shouldered man in the carriage.

"A shout — a well-trained and evidently long-practiced shout, curiously lacking in fire or spontaneity—goes up from the troops. The old man raises his hand in salute. He wears a red fez; his face is sickly white, like parchment; the nose is that of an old eagle, long, hooked, high-bridged — the Armenian nose, his subjects all whisper in contempt. His eyes, what one sees of them, for he turns his head neither to right left, are deep-set and black.

"Those who know him best say that he has a peculiar way of moving his eyes without moving his head, as if he were always seeking to look behind him, to pry out secrets, to surprise hidden motives. His beard is deep blue-black, as are his eyebrows; naturally they would be gray, but he dyes them, for the Sultan must never look old. To his generals he leaves all the pomp and display of gold lace and tinsel; for himself he is clad wholly in black, like a eunuch, without ornamentation of any kind. 'The Raven' he has been called, and the raven he looks.

"The Sultan is not really a very old man — only sixty years old — and yet if there is one impression above another that he gives, it is that of age and great weariness.

"Poor old Sultan!"

NEW DISEASE.

First Symptom Is Disinclination for Exertion.

A patient at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md., is said by the physicians there to be suffering from a disease which has, as far as records go, only once before appeared in Maryland. The disease is known as ankylostoma, or "lazy disease," and acquires its name from the fact that the most striking visible symptom is an increasing disinclination for physical exertion of any kind and the most extreme lassitude. The authorities at the hospital refuse to divulge the name of the patient under treatment, but stated that a brother of the patient recently died from a similar disease. Guided by the facts furnished by a post mortem examination in the former case, Superintendent Hurd of the hospital states that the patient will recover.

The only other case is reported in the Johns Hopkins Hospital bulletin, December, 1901, and was that of an English sailor, who was sent to Bayview Asylum from a vessel which had recently arrived in port from a southern voyage. He was supposed to be suffering from anaemia, and continued to sink until he died on the eighteenth day after his admission. A post-mortem examination by the physicians at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, made at the request of the Bayview authorities, revealed the fact that many thousands of infinitesimal parasites were actively at work boring into the mucous membrane of the intestines and causing a loss of blood, with resultant lassitude and inertia and finally producing death. These parasites, according to the statement of Dr Hurd, are especially abundant in certain sections of the Carolinas and Georgia, and the disease is prevalent among what are known as the "clay eaters" of that region.

STREETS PAVED WITH GOLD.

The town of Altman, in the Cripple Creek district of Colorado, has had its streets paved with the dump of the Pharmacist mine. Recently some of the pavement was assayed and yielded gold to the amount of twenty dollars a ton. Immediately following the announcement of the assay people began carting off the surface of the streets until the police were obliged to intervene and stop them.

COURTSHIP IN TURKEY.

In Turkestan every wedding engagement begins with the payment of a substantial consideration to the girl's parents. If the girl jilts her lover the engagement gift has to be returned, unless the parents have another daughter to give an a substitute.