

"Oh no," said Gladys grandly. "I'm never ashamed to confess if I have been hasty. That makes it all right."

"For you, perhaps?"

"No, for you. How silly you are mistaking everything I say!"

"But how should I know anything about it?"

"You don't mean to say you wouldn't be penitent?"

"Why should I be penitent if I had made you respect me? The more penitent I was, the further I should keep away from you, lest you should despise me again."

"Not really?" Gladys was half incredulous, half impressed.

"Really." There was something in his tone that carried conviction, but she struggled against it.

"That's nothing but pride. Well, perhaps I would write to you, if I was feeling very miserable."

"But what difference would that make?"

"Do you mean to tell me that you wouldn't make it up if I took the first step? If I spoke to you—if I—well, if I simply entreated, that you wouldn't do it then?"

"No." He uttered the word bravely, carried away by the ardour of the moment, but he was conscious of a chill doubt. It would be very hard indeed to resist a penitent and entreating Gladys.

"Then you would be a brute!" cried Gladys passionately, and the poignant reproach in her voice made him agree with her promptly. But to yield now would be to lose all that had been gained. He laughed as carelessly as he could.

"Don't let us be so tragic," he said. "There's no harm done."

"No harm? when we have all but—" An indignant sob followed, which was turned into a cough.

"Well, nothing irrevocable has been said, after all."

"Said! as if words signified! It's you."

"But I haven't done anything—except try to keep off dangerous ground."

"But there had no business to be any dangerous ground. Why should you suddenly begin to talk about breaking off? It isn't fair. You ought to have let me know you were going to be so horrid."

"But really, I have been most awfully careful. Haven't I warded off the danger three times at least in this very walk? Did you expect me not to mind if you broke off our engagement? How was I to know that with you it only meant making it up again next day?"

"It's not that. Nothing is a bit like what I expected. You're quite different—I never thought—"

"I'm sorry," he said again, "but I don't quite know where I have gone wrong. What did you think I was like?"

"But you are one, you know—a frightful tyrant. And you're proud of it, that's the worst."

"Now I know you're joking," with relief in his tone, "for you'd never stand that."

"I don't know," she said seriously. "It depends how it's done, and who does it. I think I rather like. But I feel as if I had had a tremendous escape from something. I believe I was afraid of you for a moment. I'm quite shaky."

"Nonsense! take my arm." She obeyed with more than meekness, with positive alacrity. "Afraid of me, what stuff! Why should you be afraid of me? You know you could knock me down easily, if you tried."

"No, really; I don't know anything of the kind. I shall always think of you as about ten feet high in future. What have you done to yourself—or is it to me? How did you manage it? Are you really like that always, or have you just been pretending?"

"Like what? There's been no pretending that I know of."

"But it's so funny. Somehow I feel as if I would rather do what you liked than what I liked."

"I passed Gladys and Geoff in the lane," said Gladys's brother to his mother, "and they never saw me."

"Why, were they talking so hard?"

"Going at it hammer and tongs, I should say."

Gladys's mother sighed with unutterable meaning. "It isn't our business to slight poor Geoffrey's battles for him," she said, "but I think Gladys is treating him shamefully. Still, of course, he knew what she was like when he asked her to marry him."

"Perhaps he'll stand up to her yet. He has some spirit, though he looks as if Gladys could put him comfortably in her pocket. If she comes back alone, we shall know—Mullo, there's the gate!" there was a moment of eager silence, as mother and son listened intently.

"They are both coming in," said the mother, with deep gloom.

"Little beggar's knuckled under, then. Well, I thought better of him. He's done for himself now. Gladys will simply walk over him!"

"Mother, you didn't send my letter to Cara to the post, did you?" asked Gladys, coming in bright-eyed and rosy.

"No, dear; I trusted—" with a sigh—that you might change your mind."

"I'm so glad. Geoff has got tickets for a concert that night, and he's going to take me."

### Don't Marry a Man to Reform Him.

There are few things more generally over-estimated than the personal influence of women over men. It is by no means to be denied that occasionally, in individual instances, it is great, even astonishing, and that in the aggregate it amounts to much. But usually it is the other way round. The influence of men over women is far more powerful than that of women over men.

It follows, therefore, that the woman who marries a man, hoping and expecting to mould him according to her ideal, fondly dreaming that love for herself will transform his character, and that henceforth his one effort in life will be to please her, and her only, makes, in 99,999 cases in 100,000, a great and grievous mistake.

"As the husband is the wife is." Never poet sang nor philosopher uttered a truer word. In the close intimacy of married life the husband and wife must necessarily act and react upon each other.

No woman is wholly without influence upon the man who loves her, but even so the influence of the man preponderates, and most women are ready to be all things to the men of their choice if so they may gain and retain their affection.

Moreover, it is a mournful fact that the influence of the sweetheart is often—indeed, usually—more persuading than that of the wife. In the natural course of things it is the husband who, so to speak, sets the pace for the married couple.

It is an easy matter to influence a man whither his inclination leads him, but to influence him contrary to his desire, to lead him against his will, even for his own good is as hard, or harder, than it is to make water flow uphill. Moreover, no man, however loving and lovable he may be, is willing to pose as under petticoat government; he resents any suspicion, still less imputation, that he walks in his wife's way rather than his own. There is no precept which men are more willing to practise than that which declares that a man should rule his own household.

King Solomon tells us that a good wife will do her husband good and not evil all the days of her life. But none the less the fact remains that the reformation of an evil man by even the best of wives is to be classed among the most difficult human undertakings, a task which John Howard declared "impossible, saving by the amazing grace of God."

Sunday School Teacher: "Who was it that the whale swallowed?"

Tommy: "Why—crer—"

Sunday School Teacher: "Come, now, that's an easy question."

Tommy: "Oh, it ain't the question that bothers me, but the answer."

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