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LIKE AND UNLIKE.

By M. E. BRADDON,

Author of "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," "WYLLARD'S WEIRD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

TOTAL SURRENDER.

All Helen's seriousness seemed to have taken flight, as if blown away by the balmy west wind. Once more she was gay and volatile, for ever on the wing with a ceaseless vivacity. The change puzzled Lady Belfield, who liked her daughter better in her serious mood.

"My dear child, you seem as if you were bewitched," she said.

Helen blushed, and was silent for a few moments, then replied with a laugh.

"I am so glad summer is coming, so glad to be out of doors again. You must not forget that I am a wild Irish girl, and love my liberty."

"I am pleased to see you happy, Helen, answered the mother, kindly, and then Helen went back to the tennis court, and the balls were flying across the net again, and the girl's graceful form was skimming over the grass, swift as the flight of a bird.

She came back to the drawing room flushed and excited at tea time, and then Adrian had her all to himself for an hour or so, while she lolled in a low easy chair, resting from the fatigues of the afternoon, and allowing her lover to wait upon her. She had a prettily deprecating air, as if apologising for taking pleasure in a sport which had no interest for him.

"It is a foolish, childish game, I dare say," she said; "but it is something to live for."

She did not know how such a speech as that wounded her lover; or how much it revealed to him.

He went up to his room to dress for dinner one evening, after having lingered longer than usual in the drawing-room with Helen. She had been out of spirits, fretful, like a child overtired with play, and he had been soothing her as tenderly as a mother might soothe a wilful child.

He was so deeply in love that all her failings, her childishness, her triviality, seemed to endear her to him only the more. There was a fascination in her very faults which seemed to be inseparable from her beauty. A fragile delicate loveliness like that must needs go with fitful spirits and a variable temper. Robust virtue would not have been half so charming.

Pinned on to the pincushion upon his dressing table he saw a slip of paper, with four words written upon it in a large round hand "Somebody is false. Watch."

He felt as a man feels who finds a cobra on his pillow. Who could have dared to put that diabolical scrawl there. Someone in his mother's household—some servants eating his mother's bread, had been black-hearted enough to stab an innocent girl's reputation.

His first impulse was to tear the paper to atoms; his next was to put it away carefully in his letter case, with a view to identifying the writer.

"I will have every one of the servants in the library to-morrow morning," he thought, "and each shall write those four words before my eyes until I discover the wretch who penned that lie."

Yet to do this would create a scandal. Better that than to exist under the same roof with the venomous traitor who wrote that insult to truth and purity. False? with whom should she be false? What tempter had ever tried to seduce her from the straight line of faith and honor since she had been his plighted wife. Spurn that paper as he might, the argument it suggested forced itself upon his mind; haunted him and goaded him almost to madness as he hurried in his dressing, anxious to be early in the drawing room, to see Helen again before dinner, to be reassured and comforted by her presence, by the steady light of truth in those lovely eyes.

Not a word would he say to her of that foul slander, that stab in the dark; not for worlds would he have her know of that base attempt to blemish her name. But he wanted to be with her again. Never since the first hour of their betrothal had he been so eager to see her.

It was a little more than half-past-seven when he went downstairs, his heart beating heavily, passionately, impatiently, for the sound of the only voice that could give him comfort. There was the sound of the piano in the drawing-room, but not his mother's touch. A modern waltz lightly played; fitfully, as if the player were preoccupied.

He noticed this detail as he opened the door and went in. Helen was seated at the piano at the further end of the room, her head bent over the keys, in an attitude of self-abasement; Valentine was leaning upon the piano, talking to her, his head close to to hers, his lips almost touching her hair.

The girl started guiltily at the opening of the door; the man went on talking, moving not a muscle.

"Say yes," he urged; "say yes."

"Well, yes, if you like," she answered, carelessly, and resumed the waltz, which she had stopped for a moment.

She played more brilliantly than usual, it seemed to Adrian, with the spasmodic brilliancy of an indifferent, unscientific player, who has spurts of execution and dash now and then, occasional moments in which the fingers have an unaccustomed precision and power. She played for the next ten minutes—a waltz, a mazurka, a nocturne of Chopin's: all with the same air of being engrossed by the music.

Then she rose from the piano hurriedly, and went across the room to Adrian.

"How early you are down!" she said.

"There is nothing strange in that," he answered coldly, "but *you* are not generally so early. What compact were you making with Valentine just now."

His brother was sitting at a book table near the piano, reading a newspaper, and apparently unconscious of anything going on in the room.

"It is about our tennis tournament. We are to have a tournament you know."

"Indeed I know nothing about it. The tournament will be something to live for I suppose."

"Oh, Adrian, you never spoke to me before with a sneer."

"Did I not? There must be a beginning for all things."

She stood looking at him, stricken, guilty. That light nature might be false, but was not yet skilled in hypocrisy. His mother entered the room at this moment, and he went over to her, taking no further notice of Helen.

His heart was as heavy as lead. Good heavens, what an idiot he had been to need this rough awakening to an obvious bitter fact; what a blind, besotted idiot he must have been not to see that which was visible to every servant in his mother's house.

"It trusted her so completely," he said to himself, "I thought her so pure and true."

Pure? True? He could never think her either of these again, after that little scene by the piano. It was so little, yet it had told him so much. The drooping head and and arms, the half-despairing attitude, as of one who submits to the power of an indomitable will: and Valentine's attitude, his lips so close to her hair and brow, his easy air of mastery.

Not for a moment after that revelation could Adrian doubt that his brother had stolen the heart of his betrothed.

"Nature made him to rule and me to serve," he told himself. "How could I ever hope to be victorious where he would be a competitor. He has beaten me in all things in which men care to conquer. He has left me my books, and my music; a woman's occupation, not a man's. He might have left me my bride. There are women enough in the world for him to subjugate. He might have left her free."

"Watch," wrote the anonymous denouncer. He had not watched, but the discovery had been made; the bitter, humiliating truth had been forced upon him; accident had given him the key to that secret accusation. That a servant's hand should have pointed out that treachery, seemed to add to the sting of degradation, to the agony of betrayal.

He had considerable power of self-control, and exercised it this evening. He talked easily and even gaily all through dinner, but the conversation was a trio. Valentine talked much and seemed in excellent spirits, Helen sat silent, and Adrian did not attempt to draw her into the conversation.

"How tired you look, Helen," said Lady Belfield, after an animated discussion upon the news in the papers of the day.

Adrian and his mother were strictly conservative, but Valentine had taken upon himself the opinions and the arrogance of an advanced radical. Hence politics always offered a theme for lively discussion and a little temper. Nothing so dull as a one-opinioned family!

"Yes, I am rather tired," answered Helen, listlessly. "The day has been so dreadfully warm."

Adrian went back to the drawing-room with the two ladies. Valentine stopped behind, ostensibly for his after-dinner smoke.

The old mullioned windows were closed and curtained, but a large bay window, which had been added twenty years ago, both to give more light and as an outlet to the garden, stood wide open to the moonlight and the soft evening air. This modern window was an eyesore to architects and all persons of artistic temperament, but it was very convenient to the dwellers in the room, and it brought Lady Belfield's drawing-room and Lady Belfield's garden into one perfect whole. In summer, people sat indifferently in room and garden, and teacups circulated freely between the Persian carpet within and the velvet lawn without.

The day had been one of those precocious summer days that perk themselves up in the midst of the spring, and Helen's complaint of its sultriness was not unfounded. There was a small wood fire in the grate, for show and not for heat, and Lady Belfield took her accustomed chair, not remote from the hearth; but Helen went at once to the open window, and seated herself on a low ottoman close to the threshold.

The moon was near the full, and all the garden was steeped in light. The girl sat idle, watching the night sky, above the tall cypresses and deodaras that bounded lawn and shrubbery.

Adrian seated himself at his mother's book table, and took up a volume of biography which had arrived that afternoon. Helen stole a look at him presently, and saw him engrossed in his book. She was not surprised that he should be so, as it was a book he had been particularly impatient to see, and the librarian had been slow in sending it. Lady Belfield, finding the other two silent, had resumed a new German novel which she had been reading in the afternoon. They had been all three seated thus for about a quarter of an hour, when Helon rose quietly and went out into the garden.

Softly as she moved, Adrian heard the flutter of her muslin gown as she rose and passed out. He lifted his eyes from the page which he had been staring at fixedly, without the faintest knowledge of its contents.

"Watch."

He put his book down softly, and went across to the window.

Helen was walking slowly along a path that skirted the lawn. His eyes followed the white robed figure till it disappeared at a turn of the path which led into the heart of the shrubbery, where a labyrinthine walk wound in and out among the thickets of choice comfers, laurels and arbutus. Those shrubberies had been laid out and planted a century before, and had been improved and added to by every new owner of Belfield Abbey.

The ground sloped on the other side of the shrubberies, there were steep grassy banks sloping down to the stream, and by the side of the stream there was a long Italian terrace, with a row of cypresses on each side of the walk.

This terrace had ever been a favorite promenade with the ladies of the Belfield family.

Scarcely had the white gown vanished into darkness, when a man's figure skirted the lawn upon the opposite side, and then disappeared in the shrubbery. There was just light enough for Adrian to identify that hurrying figure as his brother Valentine.

He went out, bareheaded and crossed the lawn to the shrubbery. His quick ear caught the sound of a man's footsteps on the winding path, and with that for his guide it was easy for him to follow in the right direction, though neither figure was visible in the thickly shaded paths by which he went.

Presently, that quick firm step stopped, and then, after a pause, went on with slackened pace. He could guess that these two were now together, walking slowly side by side, the girl's light foot inaudible, amidst the sound of the man's firmer tread.

He knew he was gaining upon them presently, for he could hear their voices at intervals, faint gusts of sound blown towards him on the evening air. He followed to the sloping bank, and standing there in the shadow of a cypress saw them on the moonlit walk below him. He was near enough to them to hear every word, every breath, and he had to control his own hurried breathing lest they should hear him. They were standing by the waterside, she was clasped in his arms, her head upon his breast, and Adrian could hear her sobs in the stillness, the passionate sobs of a despairing love. Never had his arms so enfolded her, never had her passionate tears been shed for him. They had been like children playing at love. Here was love's stern reality—tears and despair. Her new lover's head was bent to the half hidden face. He was trying to kiss those sobs into silence. And then came the sound of his voice, deep and strong, and resolute.

"Break with him, dearest, yes, of course you must break with him. You were meant to be mine, not his. He has most of the good things in this life. He is the elder born, the honored and wealthy. But I have you, and I mean to keep you, and hold you against a kingdom of brothers."

"Lady Belfield has been so good to me," faltered the girl's tearful voice, "She has been so loving—and for me to disappoint her——"

"Who knows that you will disappoint her. She shall love you still, my sweetest, love you all the better perhaps for that which you call treason. Don't you know the secret of that kind mother's heart, Helen? She does her duty to Adrian, but she gives the lion's share of love to me. She will love any wife who loves me."

"You are cruel to say so," cried Helen, escaping from his arms. "What, are you to have everything and he nothing, he who is so good?

"He has the estate, and he is Sir Adrian. Do you call that nothing?"

"Yes, nothing, nothing, nothing, if he is not happy. No, I won't betray him, I won't be called a jilt and a hypocrite. I loved him before I knew you. I will try to forget you, and to be true to him."

"Helen, don't be a fool."

He drew her to his breast again, snared her as easily with an unmannerly speech as with the honeyed phrases of a modern Romeo. His influence over her was a thing apart from words. It was the despotic power of a strong man's will, which to a weak woman seems destiny. Adrian came a step or two forward, emerged out of the shadow and stood suddenly beside them. The girl recoiled from her lover with a startled air, horrified at being seen by a gamekeeper, or some such insignificant person; but at sight of Adrian she clasped her hands before her face and stood motionless, as if she had been turned to stone.

"I did not think myself passing rich, Valentine," he said quietly, as his brother, faced him boldly and resolutely, with the defiant look with which he had faced angry college dons and aggrieved authorities of all kinds. "I thought myself like Nathan with my one ewe lamb," laying his hand lightly upon Helen's shoulder, "and you have robbed me of that one inestimable blessing."

"Don't talk about robbery," said Valentine, "that's arrant nonsense. Men are the slaves of circumstances in such matters. You bring a lovely fascinating girl into the house where I live, and say 'She is mine, she is taboo, you are not to fall in love with her.' But I am mortal. I am of a clay that is quicker to take fire than most other clay. I have not been under the same roof for four and twenty hours with your privileged young lady, before I am over head and ears in love with her. I don't give myself up without a struggle. I say no surrender, and try to be as uncivil as I possibly can to the young lady. Helen will bear me out that I was a most consummate savage during the earlier part of our acquaintance. And then we hunted together—nothing so dangerous as those long hours of easy intercourse in the hunting field—and I got fonder and fonder of her, and she—yes, I know she began to get rather fond of me. But she too cried no surrender, and then she took to being uncivil; and then I knew it was all over with us both. Tennis finished us; and you will please to remember, Adrian, that tennis was my mother's proposition, not mine. Poor simple soul, she wanted to see Helen and me more like brother and sister, and she thought tennis might help to bring us together."

"You are laudably candid now," said Adrian, holding passion in check with the strong curb of pride. "Would it not at least have been better to be candid before resorting to a secret meeting like this, and degrading your future wife by a clandestine courtship while she was betrothed to your brother, would it not at least have been wise to spare her the humiliation of being spied upon by servants."

"What do you mean?"

"Only that it was some servant or hanger-on in the Abbey who gave me the hint that brought me here to night."

"One of the servants spoke to you about me, about Helen?"

"No one spoke to me. I found a paper in my room, with a suggestion that there was falsehood, and that I should watch."

"The she-devil," muttered Valentine between his set teeth.

"What, you know who wrote it?" asked Adrian, surprised.

"No, but I can guess; some old busybody. The housekeeper, perhaps."

"What, Mrs. Marrable? That good old soul never did anything underhand or tried to make mischief in her life. But whoever my informant was, I am grateful to the hand that lifted the veil. You and Miss Deverill might have left me in my fool's paradise ever so much longer."

"There you wrong us both. Things had come to a crisis to-night, and it would have been our duty to confess the truth to you to-morrow. All I wanted to be sure of was that Helen would give up an ample fortune and the privilege of being Lady Belfield, in order to share a younger brother's pittance, and the obscurity of a younger brother's position."

"And Miss Deverill has made her choice?"

"Well, I believe she was on the point of making it definitely when you interrupted us."

"I can at least simplify the question," said Adrian, icily, "by assuring Miss Deverill that after what has happened to-night, I withdraw all claim upon her fidelity or her consideration. She may hold herself as free as the summer wind that is blowing in our faces."

Helen's hands had fallen from before her face, which showed death-like in the moonlight. She tried to take Adrian's hand, but he recoiled from her touch, and drew back two or three paces.

"Forgive me," she cried, with passionate entreaty; "oh, forgive me, Adrian. I hate myself for my inconstancy, my weakness, my folly. Be more merciful to me than I am to myself. Forgive me!"

"When I can," he answered, and left them without another word.

He had left the Abbey before Helen came down to breakfast next morning, and he left the following letter for his brother:—

"You have shown yourself my superior as a lover, as you have in all other accomplishments in which men wish to excel. I submit to fate, which gave me failure and disappointment as a part of my birthright. I think you have used me ill, and that Helen has used me worse; but it is a quality of my nature to love you, and even while smarting under the sense of a deep wrong, you are still to me something more than a brother. You are a part of myself. Be as happy as you can, and I will take comfort in my desolation from the thought of your happiness. But above all things make her happy. She is all that is lovely and sweet in womanhood, but she lacks strength of character or stability of purpose, as you have already proved. Bear with her, and be patient with her, as I would have been. Her nature will expand like a flower in the warmth of your love, but it will be warped and withered by unkindness or neglect. I resign her to you as a sacred trust. Let me never have to call you to account for her peace of mind. When once my mind and heart are reconciled to my loss, I shall accept my position as your wife's brother, and shall assume all a brother's responsibilities. Tell Helen I am leaving England in the hope that absence may teach me the lesson of forgiveness. Good-bye."

This was all: but in a letter to Lady Belfield, Adrian explained that he was going to London, whence he would start for Norway, after a day or two spent in preparation for his journey. He meant to spend the summer and early autumn in Norway and Sweden, and thence to go to Vienna and to follow the Danube southward, and winter in Greece.

"If you should feel tempted to join me during any part of my travels, I would go to Frankfort to meet you, and would adapt my wanderings to your comfort and pleasure. My engagement is broken—suddenly, like a dream from which one awakeneth. All the good fairies were at my brother's christening feast, and one of them gave him power over the heart of woman. He has stolen Helen's love, almost involuntarily, I believe, so you must not upbraid him with treachery. Make the best of the position, dear mother, do all you can for your younger son and his betrothed, and be assured of my co-operation in all you do."

The letter was a shock to Lady Belfield. Her loyal nature revolted against Helen's treachery. She, who was truth itself, could not understand how any other woman could be false. However her heart might secretly incline to the wayward, self-indulgent younger son, her sense of honor and justice were outraged by his triumph.

Helen came into the breakfast-room while Lady Belfield sat with Adrian's letter in her hand. The girl's white face and hollow eyes, with traces of prolonged weeping, made a silent appeal to the mother's pity, but even that remorseful countenance could not lessen Constance Belfield's contempt for the offender.

"I find, Helen, that I have been looking on at a comedy, and that you had your own secrets, while I thought you were to me as a daughter, and that I knew your heart as a mother knows the heart of her child."

"Do mothers always know?" faltered Helen. "There are things in this life that no one can reckon against. Oh, Lady Belgeld, forgive me if you can. I can't help your despising me: I don't wonder at it. He has told you how base I have been," with a glance at the open letter, "but indeed if you only knew, if I could ever make you understand how I struggled, how I tried to be good and true, and how my heart went to Valentine in spite of myself. Indeed, I tried not to love him—tried to hate him, to avoid him, to shrink from all contact with him, but it was all in vain. From the hour we first met, a fatal, foolish, mistaken meeting on my part, a cruel sport on his—from that hour I was lost, my fidelity to Adrian was shaken, and I began to ask myself if I had ever really loved him."

She flung herself on her knees before Lady Belfield and buried her tearful face in the mother's lap, sobbing heart brokenly. It was hardly possible to be angry with a creature so bowed down by remorse and the consciousness of her own sin.

"My child, it is the most miserable turn that fate could have taken," said Constance Belfield with sad seriousness.

"You were all the world to Adrian, and the loss of your love may darken all the best years of his life. He is not the kind of man to recover quickly or easily from such a blow. You will never be all the world to my other son. I have studied them both from their cradles, and know what stuff each is made of. Fondly as I love Valentine, I am not blind to his faults. He has a passionate, self-willed nature, and to be loved by him will not be all sunshine. This young head will not escape the storms of life, Helen, if you are mated with my son Valentine. It is your heart that will have to bear the heavier burden in your life journey, it is you who will have to suffer and submit. Adrian would have subjugated his own inclinations to make you happy. Valentine will expect you to yield to him in all things."

"I know that he is my master," answered Helen, in a low voice. "If his will were not stronger than mine I should have been true to Adrian. I know that in our life to come I shall be his slave—his fond adoring slave. But I shall be utterly happy if he always loves me as he loves me now. Nothing in this life could be misery for me so long as I am sure of his affection."

"It would be hard if that should ever waver, when you have sacrificed so much—principle, self-interest—for his sake. You know that your position as Valentine's wife will be very different from what it would have been as Lady Belfield."

"I have never thought of position—not even when I accepted Adrian. I thought it would be nice to have a home of my own, and to hear no more of debts and difficulties and unpaid rents. That is all I ever thought of from a mercenary point of view.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Drinking Water at Meals.

Opinions differ as to the effect of free ingestion of water at meal times, the view most generally received is probably that it dilutes the gastric juice, so retards digestion. Apart from the that a moderate delay in the process is no means a disadvantage, as Sir Will Roberts has shown in his explanation the popularity of tea and coffee, it is than doubtful whether any such effect in reality produced. When ingested ing meals water may do good by washout the digested food and by exposing indigested part more thoroughly to the tion of the digestive ferments.

Pepsin is a catalyptic body, and a quantity will work almost indefinitely vided the pep stones are removed as are formed. The good effects of drunk freely before meals, has, however another beneficial result—it washes the mucus which is secreted by the membrane during the intervals of an i favors peristalsis of the whole ary tract. The membrane thus cleansed in a much better condition to receive and convert it into soluble compound The accumulation of mucus is especial well marked in the morning, when gastric walls are covered with a thick, acious layer. Food entering the stomach this time will become covered with this acious coating, which for a time protects from the action of the gastric ferments, so retards digestion. The tubular contract ed stomach, with its puckered mucus lin and viscid contents, a normal condition the morning before breakfast, is not suitable to receive food. Exercise before partaking a meal stimulates the circulation of the through the vessels. A glass of washes out the mucus, partially distend the stomach, wakes up peristalsis and pares the alimentary canal for the meal. Observation has shown that non-irritating liquids pass directly through "tubular" stomach, and even if food present, they only mix with it to a extent. According to Dr. Leuf, who made this subject a special study, water should be given to persons who have sufficient vitality to react, and hot water the others. In chronic gastric catarrh it is extremely beneficial to drink warm or water before meals, and salt is said in cases to add to the good effect produced.—[British Medical Examiner.

Women as Rulers of Men.

History does not encourage us to consign the State to female rule. England owes one civil war to the temper of Margaret of Anjon, and another to that of Henrietta Maria. Mary was an impersonation of liability to clerical influence. Anne overturned not only a Ministry, but the policy of the country, and robbed the nation of the fruits of its victories to gratify the spleen of a favourite waiting woman. Under the results of recent researches the reputation of Elizabeth for statesmanship has collapsed. It was her good luck to give her name to an era of national greatness, but her own political character, as it now stands revealed to us, is that of a false and heartless coquette. Her ill-treatment of her servants, such as Walsingham, was not less conspicuous than her partiality for handsome scoundrels like Leicester, or dancers like Hatton. Her neglect of the national defences on the eve of the Spanish invasion was little short of treasonable, and the nation saved itself in its sovereign's despite. Caroline, the Queen of George II., did good service by upholding Walpole, but she did it in a womanly way. If we look to the history of other countries we shall find its testimony the same. In France the Regent Anne did pretty well, because she put herself into the hands of Mazarin; but Catherine de Medicis and the Pompadour did far from well. That female rule is not essentially favorable to peace, the exploits of three nearly contemporary Queens, Elizabeth of Spain, Maria Theresa of Austria, and Catherine of Russia, are proofs enough. Female ambition or passion, if it takes a warlike turn, is likely to be rendered more dangerous by the irresponsibility of sex. Isabella of Castile is the paragon of female government; but she had Ferdinand at her side and she established the Iniquisition. Mr. Mill thinks that Charles V. showed his high appreciation of female statesmanship by setting women of his family to govern the Netherlands; but Charles had no men of his family available for the appointment, and the result of these female regencies, though little of the blame may be due to the regents, can scarcely be said to have set the seal of success upon the experiment. It is childish to talk of the good government of kings or queens who reign but do not govern.

The Package Sells the Goods.

The business of canning butter for sale in foreign countries is chiefly carried on in Denmark, where, to judge from the report of the American consul at Copenhagen, the business has grown to large proportions, not so much from the excellent quality of the butter as from its convenient form of package. It is a fact well known to experts in this business that this convenient form in which the butter is offered for sale is more effective in its disposal than high quality is when the form is inconvenient. A 100 or 50 pound tub of the very best butter ever made will not sell for more than a slight advance upon the ordinary market price, because it cannot reach the buyers who are willing to pay more money for a somewhat inferior quality put up in small parcels. Small packages of fresh sweet butter of no more than 5 pound weight have sold for 75 cents or a dollar per pound, at the same time that butter of the same churning packed in tubs has brought only 30 cents per lb. In the report referred to, and to be found in the most interesting volume published by the Department of State, there is no evidence shown that the tin-packed Danish butter is of any better quality than that of the best American dairies, and yet 2,000,000 pounds of it are taken by the English markets annually. It is clearly a case in which "the package sells the goods."

Some fifty years ago a certain Frenchman's upper lip was graced by a flowing mustache of such extraordinary length that it was his custom before a meal to tie it, with the most gravity, behind his head, that there might be no impediment to the full enjoyment of his food

MR. AND MRS. BOWSER.

"My dear child," said an old aunt of the day I was married, "have you got your husband's love letters?"

"Of course."

"And now that you are married you will probably burn 'em?"

"That's just what I was going to do."

"Well, don't. Keep 'em to the longest you live."

"But why?"

"Because they will be stronger weapons all your tears, pleading or arguments. Nothing will bring a husband to time like a sight of some of the love letters he wrote before marriage."

I took her advice and have always been glad I did. On several occasions I have used them to bring Mr. Bowser down off his high horse, and the fact that they further his peace of mind is proved by the further fact that he has several times hunted me house over in my absence in hopes to lay hands on them.

Something went wrong at the office the other day and he came home cantankercus. He held in until we got to the supper table, and then broke out with:

"Got any name for these things here?"

"Yes, dear. Those are called biscuit."

"Well, the man who calls 'em fit to eat ought to be shot! Mrs. Bowser, why is it I can never get anything decent to eat in my own house?"

"Why, Mr. Bowser! No one could take more pains than we do. In order that the biscuit might be extra good I went out and made them myself."

"Humph!"

"There was a time, Mr. Bowser, when you loved over my cooking."

"Never! I knew from the day I set eyes on you wading across a mud puddle that you could never cook. You can sing very well—as well as some bad actresses—but you can't cook."

"And if I will prove that you once hungered for my cooking you will—"

"I will give you $50 cash in hand."

After supper I went upstairs and brought down several letters. Mr. Bowser had got his nose into a magazine and wanted the matter dropped, but I read to him the following extract:

"And I thought, darling, while eating supper that night, how proud I should be over our delicious cookery when we had a home of our own. The thought of those biscuits alone made me hungry. Good-bye, my pet."

"Who wrote that?" sternly demanded Mr. Bowser.

"You did."

"When?"

"Three months before our marriage."

"Never!"

"But here's the letter, dated and signed."

"It's a base forgery, and the forger must beware! How could I have praised your cooking?"

"You also used to praise my singing, Mr. Bowser."

"Never!"

"Oh, but you did. Let me read:

"And, precious pet of mine, let me again thank you for that beautiful song, 'The Lover's Farewell,' and the exquisite manner in which you rendered it. It drew tears from my eyes, and I was not ashamed of them. You have one of the purest, clearest voices ever heard."

"Who wrote that?" he gasped.

"You did."

"Mrs. Bowser, don't carry this thing too far! There is a limit beyond which you must not go!"

"Well, here it is, in your own writing and over your own signature. Once in awhile you fling out a hint that I am very dull. There was a time when you thought differently."

"Look out, Mrs. Bowser!"

"Yes, you did! You even thought me the smarter of the two."

"W-waht! Am I awake or dreaming"

"Wide awake, Mr. Bowser. Let me read you an extract from this exhibit marked 'A.'"

"I don't see why you should go back to grammar. Few young ladies are more accomplished or better educated. All your friends, myself included, give in to you on the matter of grammar in particular. How do you see you as usual next Sunday, my dear little honeysuckle."

Mr. Bowser sat and looked at me like one petrified.

"And, sir, you often fling out about the size of my feet. I admit they are as large again as I should have ordered from a dealer, although I wear No. 3's with a great deal of comfort. Let me say, however, that your mother wears 6's, your three sisters 7's, and the two girls you kept company with before we met wear full-sized 6's with very broad toes."

"Mrs. Bowser, do you suppose I would stand such insults in my own house!" shouted as he sprang up.

"Are facts and truths insults? I have been reading from your letters."

"Never! Never! If I ever wrote such stuff I was crazy!"

"But here is your signature. You remember you used to want me to sign letters "Rosebud," and you signed yourself "Oak Leaf."

"I never did! No power on earth can convince me that I was any such fool!"

"Well, perhaps you will remember this sentence. You wrote it a few months after our marriage. Listen.

"Oh, my Rosebud, but the heart of me was made a thousand times lighter at the receipt of your loving note yesterday. If those delicious little missives should cease, I should pine and die."

"And you claim I wrote that!" he asked in a strange voice.

"Of course. You can't go back on your own writing, can you!"

"I assert that those are my letters, positively."

"Why did you call that I called you fond names like that for you?"

"I don't know about the size of it, Mr. Bowser, but you wrote me several times that you were suffering as if I had bought your shoes and have jumped into a well any time."

Mr. Bowser put on his overcoat and gloves, and then kissed the baby.

"Darling! If you never remember that he loved you without so much as a kiss at midnight came home and went into bed, and next day hunt after that pill