

# UNMAKING LOVE.

My dear fellow, suddenly I saw that she loved me. I saw it in her eyes, as the saying is. Imagine my consideration, I am by no means insensible of the great good luck of a man who is loved by a good sort of woman, though quite capable of not pretending to enjoy him. But this wouldn't do at all. She was the prettiest girl there, and I had gravitated toward her beauty as a matter of course. I always pick out the prettiest face and go straight for it mechanically. Of course, I often don't arrive, there may be obstacles and I am quite content to make a bow to the next Venus. It would be a real shock to discover that there was a degree, a possibility between what I had achieved and what I had abandoned, that I was paying my homage to a star of less brilliancy than necessary. The fact is, I have quite enough of reason and ideas and intellect generally when I am at work, and we are all of us eternally applying some principle, and that's philosophy. When I join the ladies all I care about is to have my eye and ear agreeably stimulated, not because they are capable of making me think, though I don't say they are, but because at those times I want amusement, not instruction. That's why I'm so severely judgmental, that I'm so full of charms of person and feel of personal loss when I worship at a shrine of beauty power, instead of 100. However, I am not often in this dilemma, as nature doesn't cut things so fine.

Well, what was I to do? As I said, it wouldn't do; she had no ideas, there was nothing for me to cling to. We might have gone on like that for the rest of our lives. I am admiring her beauty and she existing beautifully. I don't think I was to blame; I faced the question fully and honorably acquitted myself. I never sought her society; but when I met I certainly did enjoy her musical small talk; she had a charming voice. I don't know what we talked about. I can't remember her saying anything worth remembering, and I certainly didn't attempt to converse. There was a string of questions and answers just like a royal commission, and such as romantic. But the whole thing, her face, her voice, her easy chat, the frou frou, was a perfect holiday for me and I felt some of the acquiescence of sleep without any of its shuffles of circumstance. And, secondly, it smacked of the heroic, of which, of course, I have a horror. I was afraid, too, that she would take a feminine pleasure in feeding a sentiment for the absent, and my obvious policy was to discourage, not inflame, her imagination. Externally I had to maintain the old attitude, but it would have been a false pretense to do so with the old nonchalance. I took the first opportunity of denying myself.

"Have you been to see the pictures?" she said.

"Not I," I replied.

"What do you mean? Don't you like beautiful things?"

"Only when I am looking at them, and even then I am haunted by the fear that I am wasting time, and might be more profitably employed."

"More profitably?"

"Yes; storing up sources that will last—facts, thoughts, goods, money, anything but fancies."

"You are coming out in a new light," she said.

"A new darkness, you mean," I replied.

"I suppose you are what is called a dark horse," she rejoined.

We both laughed, and she went away puzzled.

Next time I managed to startle her. We were talking of the newest novel. "Romance," I said, "is all very well, but it must be contemporary. Put it into bygone days, in as large quantities as you like, but the tale of today, which deals with us and our friends, ought only to encourage sober business principles."

She ought to have retorted: "Such as answering a fool according to his folly," or by referring to the fact that most fiction was designed to stave off bankruptcy, quite in accordance with my theory. But she only said:

"Don't you think we want a change from our every day life?"

"I don't," I said, "because my chief amusement consists in watching other people."

"I didn't know you were such a critic. I hope you haven't ranked me up."

"The critic," I said, "shuts one eye in order to get a better view; the cynic purposely puts on glasses which don't fit him; the philosopher sees one thing with one eye and the opposite with the other."

"Have you got a better view?" she asked.

"I have no view or views," I said. "I am the plain man who is supposed not to exist. Now, the plain woman—"

"I know lots," she said, "and very nice they are."

"What a pity it is," I said, "that only women can understand women. That's why it is that men never really make good companions. I think too highly of them; for instance, we think that they are all beautiful."

"But you know better all the time?"

"Of course we do in practice, but the theory is a good one all the same. It is an attempt to take their own view, to put ourselves in their place for a moment. The fact is that very few men take any interest in individual women. It is the sex that they think about—the whole lot at once; it's no like a school book; I hate anything dry."

"Tea?" I said.

"With pleasure," said she, smiling for the first time; and we went off together.

Well, we were getting on, but still I didn't see the end. Chance came to

my rescue, as it does to everyone's if they only wait long enough. There was a new play, the great situation in it was the heroine, who was unambiguously supposed to be a light and unattractive woman, demonstrating quite without design her love for her husband; everybody was talking about it. On this occasion conversation was general and some genius remarked that the only objection to the woman was that she was so hopelessly old, she was always relapsing into weakness of this sort; there was no strength in such a character, a strong woman would have acted quite differently in the second scene, where she could have deserted with honor.

"Well-groomed youth, sitting next to her, remarked pointedly that, if she did love her husband, you know, that made all the difference. She said, if wives didn't love their husbands it was their (the husbands') own fault."

"Quite so," I said, "if they will persist in being satellites instead of having an orbit of their own, in playing Damon and Pythias instead of Darby and Joan, they can't expect that their wear and tear of their society can be made good, unless they allow the proper intervals for the worn and torn to discover that other people can't continuously please, either."

"That's a nice view to take of married life," she said. "I know you don't mean it."

"Unfortunately," I said, "the experiment can't be made, or you'd see."

"What should I see?"

"Well, something, I fancy, would astonish you. The fact is, I don't think any one has understood matrimony before me, and I've had no experience of it. It has long been recognized as fatal to love, if it exists and more or less apt to produce it, if it does not, just as there are places which give you neuralgia if you don't take it there and are sure if you do. But I don't think there has been anything to do with the matter; that's detail important enough in the early days of meeting, but not comparable to the bargain which is the essence of the business."

"The bargain," she almost gasped.

"Yes," I said, "the bargain. The bargain, I must have feminine society, I must have the female point of view; always there whenever I want it; my own womanhood won't do. In the first place, I can't rely on their punctuality; and then at any moment they may lapse into seriousness, think hard of me—the very thing I want to avoid, and the mischief is done. Beside, they know you; they never give you a chance. Now, matrimony at its best must be between people who don't know one another, and who never will. That's the great secret. It's the only chance of a revelation. It is the only hope of getting anything read into you, and then learning the lesson yourself, especially anything high, noble or not commonplace. There is no room for love here. That discolors such a union—such a contract, if you like—with all the pagantry of the rainbow; it is very natural, a pleasant sight, but it effects nothing. On the other hand, she says: 'I am tired of this kind of life—I want something new. What- ever I like in my present existence I can practically keep, he will make a new woman of me. Really, what she wants, too, is a trusty companion; if she has any qualities they must come out, because she is in a new world. So what each demands is to be developed and take, of the most of really, I'm not at all sure, when I come to think of it, that an enlightened system of polygamy may not, after all, be the greatest encouragement to man to advance to his highest ends. At any rate, it would secure the requisite amount of alibi."

I could hardly refrain from smiling at my own paradox, but she was quite serious, gradually maturing to grave.

"Don't you agree with my theory of a bargain now?"

"Well," she said, "there must be give and take, of course, but I—I think I prefer the old fashion."

"It is the old fashion I am pleading for," I said. "At least, it is what I believe and hope; of course, we never know, because those in the secret never tell us. But common sense tells us it must be so. Marriage is an agreement for occasional companionship on terms, and very strict terms."

"Oh, dear," she said, with a genuine sigh. "I dare say you are right, but how horrid!"

"Anyway," I went on, "that's the type, and so it ought to be, idealize it as much as you like, but remember that there is nothing in this life which may not be idealized—crime, dress, furniture, a fashionable 'at home,' school-boys, impetuosity, even bourgeois comfort, so why not marriage?"

"I was just going on, 'if ever I have a wife—' when I reflected that such a parting shot would be too crude. Besides, she had clearly lost her interest."

"So I trailed off amicably. 'Talking of 'at homes,' are you going to the Idylls?" she asked.

"She said she was."

"Don't you think that kind of hospitality is a mistake?"

"Well, of course, it isn't a dance, but what sort do you prefer?"

"Where each sticks to his or her kind; he forgets that with his backlogs, and she, like Jephthah's daughter, with the maids of her youth till they desert; the two tributaries ought never to mix at the matrimonial confluence like Dr. Donkey's party."

"Then, how about seeing your friends?"

"You oughtn't to want to see them all at once; the frequent, though not unlimited meeting of husband and wife ought to be enough for the purposes of companionship; all other friends are superfluous. Indeed, society is to be recommended as a means of voiding them. Good cutting acquaintances are enough."

"What a queer idea! What a prospect for the woman! What do you think is to be her fate in this scheme?"

"Singleness," I said, "tempered by a husband."

"Who may turn out—," she went on.

"Who may turn her out," I said.

She laughed artfully and went off.

In three weeks I heard she was engaged to the well-groomed youth—Pall Mall Gazette.

**Omdurman.**  
From the National Review.  
Certainly the first glance gives an impression of squalor, because no one dared show openly any evidence of wealth or comfort; and those who built fine, large

## FAR-OFF TAHITI IS A REGULAR UTOPIA

LIFE THERE IS LIKE A CONTINUOUS DREAM.

South Sea Hospitality Is Boundless, and Tahiti Would Be a Perfect Paradise for the American Tramp If He Could Ever Get There—Flowers, Fruits, Lovely Girls and Accomplished Cooks Among the Delights of Tahiti.

From the New York Times.  
The earth is God's footstool—so wise men wrote. If it is, then the little island of Tahiti is the golden tassel on the footstool. On this favored paradise in the far Pacific landscape and life merge into a delicious dream, and both are impressionist. Neither will submit to photography or the pen. Years of study cannot itemize the picture. To those who have visited this coral-reef spot there lingers forever in the memory the soft, sweet haze of shifting light and shade, the wilderness of happy silence and everlasting ease.

Think of a generous reef-bound expanse of clear, transparent water, in whose limp depths swim myriads of tiny, dainty, dazzling the changing colors of the coral. In the foreground, a garden of coral—the roses of the sea—blossoming in a thousand tints. A long, low stretch of beach, bordered by tall coconut trees, palms and ever-blooming bushes. Long rows of cheerful cottages, almost hidden by the spreading branches of the breadfruit trees. Tall mountain peaks, rising inland they are lost in a lacework of clouds. Brawny men darning here and there in fruit-laden canoes, and voices of dark-eyed girls strolling idly along the shore. The scene is seen from the side of the incoming ship—the most exquisite, fascinating and gorgeous spot on the face of the earth.

No one ever went to Tahiti without leaving with a pang of regret, and I find in the scores of writers from Charles Warren Roddard to Rodard Louis Stevenson, who have visited its shores, and say that a few months spent in its sunshine and in the hospitality of its people can never, never be forgotten.

**LOCATION.**  
Tahiti lies somewhere in that mysterious part of the South Pacific where two days are rolled into one in order to set aright the conventional calendar; where tomorrow becomes today with a subtle charm that is almost overwhelming. You go there by a little white brig from San Francisco, which skims over the waters of the west, taking up the best part of a month before landing you in this world of idleness and peace.

Life in Tahiti is the nearest approach to the ideal of all the world. Outside of its principal city, Papeete, which is the commercial center of all the islands in the Society group, of which Tahiti is one, the days pass their days in a listless dreaming of peace with themselves and all the world. Fancy being in a land where money is spurned. I once had the audacity to offer a Tahitian a dozen dollars for the privilege of sitting in his food and talking to him nearly all day, revealing to his untutored mind the wonders of the United States, and to my surprise he threw it to the ground, having been greatly insulted. If those who have been over here would only get inside of Tahiti, they would find only payment that a Tahitian would give for his hospitality is for the person to whom it is offered to accept it.

**THE TAHITI GIRL.**  
Much more than has been written has been heard about the lovely Tahiti girl. Tall, languorous, with the modesty of a Castilian; walking like a queen, her Mother Hubbard gown and her flower-wreathed hair (with these two articles the attire of the Tahiti girl, glistening with coconut oil, hanging to her waist, she is one of the most attractive of her sex. Besides many personal charms that might turn the head of an anchorite, she possesses the most attractive gifts. Her eyes are black, her countenance is expressive, and though the Tahiti girl has tinged her cheeks with a hue of brown, her complexion is as clear as the sky above her. Best of all, she owns her own little home, where roses always bloom and the bread-fruit tree and taro plant grow in profusion. A certain acreage of land surrounding it is hers also, and she is absolutely independent and can do exactly as she likes—and she does. Every night in Papeete scores of girls and men come down the byways leading to the market place, where they congregated to see their strings of flowers and shells, and to join in the daily festivities. Finished with their evening meal, they come to gossip, dance and make merry. Around the great fountain, throwing its silver bubbles to the high stars, they chant their soulful music to the wailing strains of an accordion. Bursts of bibulous hilarity come from the Spanish-like edifices that surround the market place. Shy damsels promenade with the visiting Europeans, the officers of the French navy-of-war, a array of municipal officials and their own brawny lovers, exchanging the same old secrets that have been handed down through the mystery of ages.

**PASSES IN MELODY.**  
So the evening passes in melody, drink and love. Then the curfew on the little white Catholic church tells that the hour of ten has come, and the great mass of merry-makers suddenly stop their bustling lanes and silently file into the long lanes along the beach and through the coconut groves to the rows of thatched cottages. Red and radiant, the mellow moon fills the air with a magic light. The dead silence filled with the heavy perfume of the flowers and the soft, low sound of coral, sending a hollow, rolling boom over the pallid sea. One by one the lamps go out, the mosquito nets are spread around the beds, and Tahiti is asleep.

The American who visits Tahiti for the first time will find himself in a land entirely unlike any other place in the world. The conventionalities of introduction there is barred. In Papeete, of course, where the sea government is situated, and where the foreign consuls reside, a certain form of society and dress is kept up which somewhat resembles our New York forms. But out in the districts, out in the deep valleys by the rivers, where the coco-nuts grow and the vanilla and coffee plantations thrive in the sun, there is where the visitor banishes his foreign customs and becomes a native. It is not customary to wait for an invitation before visiting a Tahitian. Just

**BAMBOOZLING GRANDMA.**  
"There never was a grandma half so good!"  
He whispered while beside her chair he stood.  
And laid his rosy cheek,  
With merriment very meek,  
Against her dear old face in loving mood.  
"There never was a newer grandma born; I know some little boys would be forlorn, because they've none like you."  
I wonder what I'd do  
Without a grandma's kisses night and noon and morn?  
"There never was a dearer grandma, there!"  
He kissed her and he smoothed her snow-white hair;  
Then fixed her ruffled cap,  
While grinning, smiling, rocked her old arm chair.  
"When I'm a man what things to you I'll bring;  
A horse and carriage and a watch and ring."  
All grandmas are so nice  
That grandpas give a good boy everything.  
Before his dear old grandma could reply  
This boy looked up, and with rough eye  
Then whispered in her ear  
"That nobody will ever see me here."  
"Say grandma, have you any more mince pie?"  
—Nebraska State Journal.

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**The Query Brought Forth a Query.**  
From the Milwaukee Journal.  
Sometimes ambitious men within the party tried to measure their strength with that of the "boss," as he was called for a long series of years. One of these cases I remember right well. Captain Elihu Knos, of Waukesha, wanted to be State marshal for the eastern district of the state. As I recollect this story, "Boss" Keyes promptly told him that he could not have the appointment. The doughty captain swore that he would have it "in spite of the boss and his little one-horse Madison regency," thus disclosing his hand. The boss told him to go ahead and see how he wouldn't get it, and the captain went so far as he could. Of course he failed, and the boss then used the failure as an illustration of the folly of trying to get along without the aid of the machine.

Along about that time a fellow named Alex Botkin came up from Story's "Chicago Times" and took a position on the Milwaukee Sentinel, then the leading Republican paper of the state. Keyes was alleged by Botkin to have taken occasion to prod Captain Knos with a phrase that was greatly in vogue at that time, sending him a message which read: "To Captain Elihu Knos, Waukesha, Wis.: Are you a user of a cash on call? I have sent this response to Keyes: 'To Colonel Elihu W. Keyes, Madison, Wis.: Yes, sir; what the h— are you?'"

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