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Henriette Marc  
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1922

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## From Brownings to free love

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Brownings are fashionable. It has now replaced, in “honour” killings, the outdated sword, even the more innocuous fists, and as an ending to love stories, poison and vitriol.

“If I love you, beware!” Don Jose sings, louder than ever, his hand on his revolver-pocket. More often than ever, the custom is to hurt the person who has, first, been bored of a two-person romance. Times of the sorrows of love are gone, we won’t see the abandoned cry for the “fragile idyll” and make careful rimes from their tale of woe for posterity. Three warnings, a shot, and love is avenged.

Poor love which takes delight in the blood of the loved one, and suffers less from their death than from the sight of their new happiness!

In reality, love is a rare thing; most of the time, common search for pleasure, selfish possession of a being enviable by their beauty, wealth or mind, hides under its name. But the gift of oneself, the search for happiness of the loved one, how many can boast to have known that kind of love?...

On top of this, killing is a bad way to rekindle love, imposing it as well. When a new love comes, it is that the heart is free, and, therefore, why would the former occupant who couldn’t

keep their place and does not have the courage to win it back be outraged? Poor happiness which is built on an abuse of sentimental power, poor satisfaction which destroys what does not reflect you any more.

No doubt there are times when any gesture of excess seems to alleviate the torturing anguish, the definitive void which the indifference of the person we love and who loves us creates, but then, even though it is not a solution and all of life protests against such an act, it would be more normal and human to disappear ourselves, leaving space for the new couple.

But crimes of passion have more general and deeper causes than love suffering. Prejudice which make love a sin and marriage a sacrament have their share in it.

What is jealousy, of not the feeling of ownership which extends from things to individuals themselves? As soon as a person gives themselves freely to another, will they be subjected for the rest of their life and will they not be allowed to take back their whole or part of their freedom without the jealous other, considering them their property, preventing them and punishing their attempt by death?

Some people are true by nature, others are changing and only feel truly alive when they follow their desires of the moment. Why, when the union is based not on fleeting interests or tastes any more, but on real and sustainable affinities, couldn't each individual, confident in their partner's trust, and conscious of their promises, live as they wish part of their sexual lives, since that is where most profound disagreements stem from? When weariness would start, earlier for some than for others, the loving hearts would reunite, without any arguments, any drama having torn them apart forever.

Maybe this would bring some fleeting pains, but o so few compared to those which result from the current prejudices, which push the individual, imprisoned in ideas of sin, to free themselves suddenly from an old love, even if they bitterly regret it when the joy of the new desire wears off.

In other words, could there not be, at the start of union, an implied acknowledgement of each other's freedom?

People will cry that this is licentious, an orgy. Are the early evening meetings of our bourgeois women, the hospitable houses for the men, any more moral? But they are covered by the hypocrisy dear to the time of the Bérangers and Lamarzelles. Also, while virtue is now compulsory, the use of our freedom would not be, and everyone would act according to their tastes and possibilities.

People will object that this would endanger unions. Maybe, but less often than current liaisons; what is allowed is a lot less tempting and how many only leave their households to run after pleasures which are all the more desirable since they are forbidden.

For women especially, people will asked the sacred question of children. Let's not dwell on it; any conscious person knows that, in the current society, pleasure cannot be lumped with procreation and that children are only desirable when we are sure we don't have any other desire in us than their education, and especially the material means to provide for it.

In short, although there is for each individual personal ethics, we could wish for some greater freedom to intervene in love relationships, without duplicity, without lies. Also, that people get united only after having known each other, studied each other, to avoid painful discoveries which weaken love. That if some people don't love any more, that the people sacrificed accept this fact and give them their freedom, easily and without a fight, to those who wish for it. Above all, that selfishness, the basis for relations between individuals, learn how to remain silent in those circumstances, and that the happiness of those we loved, if they truly found it, alleviate and not aggravate the suffering of the abandoned.