



Roberto de las Carreras
The husband and the lover
1902

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For four long years I subjugated a nervously passionate woman, a magic potion of corrosive lust, a human cantharides, a Berber woman of my harem dreams: a living exoticism in this country where women are peaceful and stand out for their domestic air, for a desperate expression of monotonous foolishness. She seems more like a scorched daughter of the scorching sands, with the blood of a panther, her senses heightened by the flames of the Simoom!

To keep a woman aflame for four years is a prodigy that cannot be understood among us!

Certainly, innocent husbands should not be proud of it, for whom the honeymoon lasts barely as long as a moon: four weeks; who confuse, with haloed naiveté, the loyalty their wives maintain to Public Opinion or to Duty, with a loyalty of love for their vulgar, boorish, and caricature-like selves.

The bourgeoisie are lost. Love is not Virtue. Love dies young. It is a fatality of Nature. The ideal of Love must be integrated with countless women. Seeking to obtain it from a single woman is like trying to create an opera with a single note on the staff or write a book with a single letter of the alphabet. The Greeks, those renowned masters of Beauty, Philosophy, Art, and Love, say that

to seek to be loved exclusively is the madness of mortals. It would be curious if Love, whose fragile wings have slipped through the fingers of the demigods—of Catullus, of Musset, of Horace, of Lord Byron—were to find itself imprisoned in Montevideo homes next to the kitchen and the toilet!

All the cowardice, all the crimes of Marriage are due to the fact that man considers himself the master of woman. When he recognizes her independence, the inviolable prerogatives of her heart and her sex, he will no longer be spitefully snatched away by the thousand livid specters of Vengeance. Her fatal fickleness will no longer seem to him a depraved theft, a wicked disregard for the sensual rights with which he considers himself invested. He will not see in her the irritating disrespect, the bold stroke of the slave that provoked his dominant male thrusts, but rather the farewell of an equal being who is departing...

A woman is denied ownership of her body. She can only use it for her Husband. If, by an elemental right, she disposes of her gift of life for the benefit of her lover, irresistibly drawn by Elective Affinity, sovereign dispenser of the good of Love, a cynical criminal to whom no mitigating circumstances are heeded, her master cuts her throat. Treachery, premeditation, cruelty, all the gloomy clouds of crime are permitted to the pater familias, the Roman despot, to avenge his impotence, his spite, his atavistic prejudice.

The Law hands him its blade!

Code of tyranny that rages against the weak! Depraved laws dictated by the Anthropoid! Dumas, in the midst of the theater, dogmatically pronounces that the adulteress, the autonomous woman, must be killed!

Bourgeois, you would have murdered the people in the Commune!

Aberration spreads far and wide. An energetic man told me, recounting the case of a husband who, upon catching his wife in flagrante delicto, had thrown her off the balcony: "It's the only way to restrain a woman!"

They believed me a sellout, trampled by my heroine who avenged them, a harmless illusion!

I told the volcanic Favorite, in the dawn of our caresses, that I accepted only the most spontaneous sexual communion in her embrace; that her slightest sacrifice for the sake of fidelity would offend the proud, the anarchic in me. I imperiously suggested that she surrender to her nature, to Nature. In my arms, in the arms of another, she has not ceased for a moment to be my banner!

The man who spoke thus was my father. From then on, I felt protesting in me, the soul of my mother who inspires me, of the woman of passion and adventure, of the vanished dreamer that bourgeois education taught me to hate. In defending sex, I feel I am defending her. My libertarian effort is a haughty and vengeful tribute to her Amorosa's pains!

The injustice toward women appears sinisterly engraved, like an irrevocable Dantesque condemnation, on the frontispiece of the centuries, on the Tablets of the Law.

Since the beginning of the world, an untamed, feudal, inquisitorial, overbearing sex has sacrificed itself in the name of its strength, its love of blood, its dark vanity: a stupid tyrant who demands from woman what her ideal clay cannot grant her. Another, defenseless, pariah, cunningly takes refuge in lies, the power of the slave. Suffocated, brutally diverted, it stealthily opens, with the weapons of hypocrisy, the inevitable channel of its Olympian sensations...

Let us not be surprised that free women still deceive. It is the inheritance of their oppressed grandmothers!

It was the beginning of the centuries... Stretched out on the cold bed of the Bride, her right to love trampled, subject to the ignominious imposture of Duty, to the treacherous oppression of Virtue, the Slave of Man waited...

Then, before the Husband, a stern conservative, his forehead adorned by the diadem of invincible prestige, the Lover rose, symbol of caresses, promised land of Sensuality. Olympian Lucifer, son of Beauty, extended his redeeming arms to the tortured flesh of Woman. It was Paris, it was the florid troubadour, a sentimental bohemian who fluttered around the frowning towers, the prison of the Castellana. It was Macías, hanging from a battlement. It was Abelard, mutilated, tearing from the fibers of Heloise, the burning sublime, an anarchic cry of amorous rebellion that uprooted the Middle Ages.

She, the Beloved, rose, called by the siren of Desire. She surrendered her mouth... Heroine of her tenderness, she defied her lord.

She offered herself to death. She sealed Free Love with the blood of her sensual Calvary, and she called herself Francesca: a fiery pagan who abandoned, smiling, the Christian delights of the Resurrection in the blue halos, to coil, convulsing, around the body of her Paolo. Flashing star of the dark circles, victorious rival of Beatrice in the apocalyptic epic of the mystical genius to whom she gave Glory! Light of Hell that makes Paradise pale!

The struggle between Husband and Lover has never ceased. Tireless enemies, they leave a trail of blood and hatred in the history of women that extends through the centuries...

If the Husband was aided by Religion, the Lover had on his side the hidden genius of paganism, which could not die and which transformed the gross concupiscence of Scripture into the divine sin of poets! The future belongs to the Lover, who will triumph with Anarchy!

—The husband is an atavism...

Nowhere is man revealed as irreconcilably primitive as in jealousy... Woman's enemy is the Anthropoid. We feminists must stab the inner monster, the Male Originel!

—Anarchy without free love is not Anarchy! We must think about Love more strongly than about the economic question! We have time to concern ourselves with the puny earth. Let us turn to what is most urgent...

Nature is changeable, capricious, woman! Love lives on desires and dies of satiety, says the great saying. Woman is fatally fickle like man. She is the daughter of man. Love does not spare its chosen ones!

Let us opt: the inert woman, the Montevideo woman without a soul, without a body, without virtue, even within the same conventional point of view; Without self-denial, who stirs nothing, who impassively witnesses, installed in a box, the greatest sobs that traverse the emotional history of humanity and that burst forth in the music; who looks on without understanding all the torments, all the dramatic anguish of the crushed heart; who doesn't feel Manon,

who doesn't understand Faust, who calls passion: things in books; who sells herself stupidly content, a long-term prostitute, as Tolstoy would say, to the greed of a bourgeois, with whom she maintains an imperturbable bed friendship; who mates through an inertia of instinct, a wild female, an unconscious reproducer, whose cohabitation, as Nordau would say, will never be an episode in the vital process of humanity; or, the lover and all her tortures.

We, who have been crucified, martyred, and shattered a hundred times, do not waver. We do not give up our burning anguish for the bourgeoisie's plethora of satisfaction; we do not give up the poison of the betrayals that gnaw at us for the legal fidelity of their marital marmots.

The day will come when, once sentimental atavism has been tamed, women will be free without making us unhappy. Anarchy will make us Greek... Sappho, Aspasia, Bylitis will be reborn for us in the Future City.

Torn from Christian education, we will become accustomed to seeing love as a fleeting thing, like everything that lives.

New molds, new harmonies, new interweavings, new forms are sought with turbulent eagerness by the feverish genius of Nature in the yearnings of Man and Woman for the intense sensation exhausted by the repetition of the same kiss, the rubbing of the same sensuality.

May Life, a poem of palpitation and force, not be born poorly from the inertia of marital contact, affected, trivial, bourgeois, almost artificial, denigrated, marked on the forehead by the sacrilegious yawn that engendered it in boredom. May it emerge, shaken, electric—a tearing of the flesh—from the extreme vibration of tempestuous embraces, from the inspired, violent fertilization, from the lightning of the spermatozoon precipitated with vertigo!

Free Love is a hymn to the Species!

When the libertarian displayed her capricious fickleness before the public with unprecedented arrogance, the sordid bourgeois let out a cry of triumph. Smiles of happy irony blossomed on every lip.