

## DELUSION!

**A**S I walked down Main Street, I said, in bitterness of spirit, "All women are false! All women are false!"

I bitterly cursed the fatal susceptibility to female charms, that had so often made me a victim of shallow coquetry and heartless indifference. I thought of the fair Luella, the peerless Imogene Marie, and a host of others, whom I had loved and lost, and grinding my teeth, I solemnly swore that hereafter my heart should be proof against the alluring smiles of the fair daughters of Eve. I had been duped once, twice, yes a dozen times, but, at last, I had learnt my lesson. I should never be deceived again, no, not I. Woman, after all, was no great part of a man's life. I would drive her from my thoughts, I would resign the torturing happiness of love and live and die a woman hater.

As I reached this point in my reflections, happening to glance up, I saw sitting on a verandah, directly in front of me the loveliest figure it is possible to conceive of. I say figure, for, though the face was turned towards me, it was concealed by a fashionable hat, tipped forward in the absurd style, that was in vogue until recently.

Little thought did I give to my resolution of the moment before, as with beating heart and surging blood I gazed, spell-bound with admiration. Attired in faultless style, the elegance of her apparel served but to render more prominent the graces of her person and, as I admired the perfect beauty and symmetry of her figure, the little feet that peeped from beneath the gown, the lovely hands that displayed their delicacy of form, in spite of their casing of kid, I grew more and more curious to catch a glimpse of her face. Hers must be the alabaster brow, the blue eyes, the golden hair, and the long curling lashes so dear to the heart of the artist. Her cheek must be that delicate commingling of the lily and the rose that marks the highest type of beauty, or perhaps, she is a daughter of the sunny South and glorious black eyes and raven tresses unite with an olive complexion to make a face as irresistibly attractive as her form.

Recovering from a momentary stupor, that had enthralled my senses at the thought of so much loveliness, I approached the verandah, when, raising her head, my Venus confronted me with the blackest face that Africa ever produced.

Alas for my beating heart and surging blood! Alas for my quickly conjured dreams of love and happiness! Silently, I turned on my heel and strode away, savagely grinding my teeth, as I muttered: "All women are false! All women are false!"

*Sauer Kraut.*