

"Oh, yes, you will. I won't leave you."
"You bully."
"All this only proves you're doing things you ought not to do."
"I'll never, never speak to you again."
They paused for breath. The motor, which had been jammed in a crowd of vehicles, whilst this had been going on, now stopped at the kerb. The footman jumped down and opened the door. Mamie got out and Lord Portsea followed.

Each was flushed and excited. Each was equally determined.

But before the combat could be renewed a young man rushed round the back of the motor, and, with a gay laugh, seized Mamie suddenly by the arm.

"Mamie," he said.

"Billy!"
Before the eyes of Lord Portsea, in the face of the whole world, he stooped and kissed her. She reddened, slipped

her hand within Billy's arm, said haughtily to Lord Portsea, "I shall be back in one hour," and walked away.

He moved after her unconsciously, taking a dozen steps without knowing it. "What on earth made you come over here?" he heard Mamie say. "You told me to meet you in the Park. That was Lord Portsea and he saw you."

"I'm sorry, I saw you and I ran over. I thought he was a flunkey. They all

look alike to me, Mamie."

"It's a lover's quarrel," said Lady Portsea.

"It simply shows how devoted they are," said Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart.

"I look on it as an excellent omen."

"Nothing could be better."

At the same time each felt it was a little trying to see dear Mamie sitting opposite to dear John without a smile or a glance. She said she had a headache. But dear John, who had no such excuse, was equally glum and speechless all through dinner.

After dinner Lord Portsea disappeared into the library. Mamie went to the music room.

But just as the solitary occupant of the library was tossing aside the third book he had picked up, some one came softly in, and there before him was the American girl.

"I want to speak to you," she said.

He sprang to his feet, but she sank into a big chair by the fire as though she meant to say a good deal. Lord Portsea went to his seat.

"We've got to have this talk," she went on. "Of course, it's unpleasant for me to speak to you after—after your behavior this morning, but I am nothing if I am not honest. I hate pretending and deception, as you know very well."

Lord Portsea, who all the day had been finding synonyms for her deceit and double dealing was taken aback.

"By an accident," she said, "you found out my secret."

"I found out nothing," said Lord Portsea hotly.

"Why you saw me meet him. You saw him kiss me. How can you say things that are untrue. And it was all your fault. If you had let me get out at once without any argument he would never have seen me, and you would never have seen him."

Just then someone went drifting by the door of the library, and, casting a casual but well directed glance at the two figures, passed on quickly to tell the good news to Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart.

The American girl jumped up and shut the door with a bang.

"This is not for you to hear," she said in an angry voice as she sank back into the chair.

"What are you going to do about it? Are you going to tell?"

"Tell?"

"Tell the Stoddart-Stoddarts, I mean."

He looked at her without speaking but with his lips set.

"I know I'm in your power."

He was still speechless. Suddenly her eyes filled with tears.

"I should think you might promise me," she said.

"Men don't tell," said Lord Portsea quickly.

She was looking into the fire while her hand sought for her handkerchief.

"You don't know my dad," she burst forth piteously. "He's like iron. If he heard of this he'd come over like a shot, and—and—lead Billy an awful life."

Lord Portsea found something extremely comforting in the idea.

"Promise you won't tell."

"It is not necessary. However, to please you Miss Kinnersly, I promise."

"Honest Injun?"

"I promised."

The handkerchief disappeared, the piteous look vanished.

"Well, now, our making belief to—to like each other can come to an end," she said.

"There's no longer any need for it since Billy's been and gone. I don't mind now if I am sent home."

England's much duller than New York. Dad can haul me back there if he chooses."

I guess I don't mind, I need not pretend any longer that I'm going to marry a lord."

The ingratitudes of it held Lord Portsea tongue tied. She had no more use for him.

He could go. As he sat staring into the fire, long after she had disappeared, he was thinking dark thoughts of what he would like to do to her if he had his way. He would not treat her as he treated beetles.

"Love's dreams," breathed Lady Portsea to Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart as the ladies passed on their way to bed.

The visit was a thing of the past. Two weeks went by and the "news" was vouchsafed to Lady Portsea by her son who announced that he was going to let the Abbey.

"But Miss Kinnersly?" gasped Lady Portsea.

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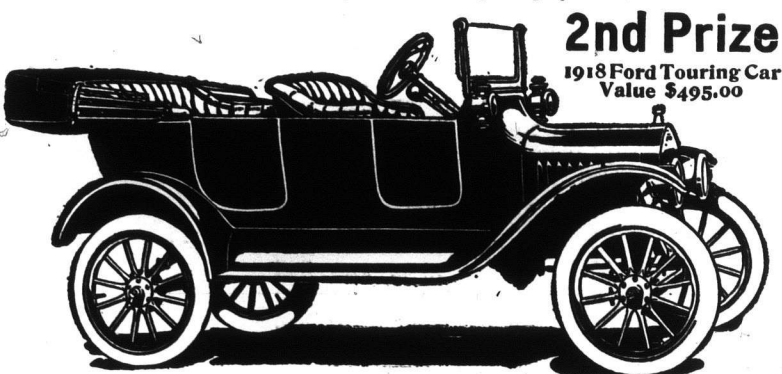


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