

affairs, but I simply must know one thing. Are you in love?"

"Of course not."

"I mean is any one in love with you?"

"With me? Of course not."

"No girls at all that you like, and have made think that you like them?"

"None at all."

"But haven't you ever been in love?"

"Never."

"But why haven't you?"

"Never had the time."

"But what have you been doing?"

"I don't know. I collect beetles. That takes an awful lot of time."

"Lady Portsea says you've a scientific mind. Is that so? Do you collect beetles as a scientist or simply as a horrid boy, because you like to stick a pin into them?"

Lord Portsea, who had forgotten about the tennis, thought that unnecessarily spiteful.

"You ought not to say such things to me, some one might hear."

"You mean Lady Portsea or Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart?"

"Yes."

"You think they listen, then? So do I."

"No, no, I don't think so."

"Well, they do. They are always hanging round and disappearing. Don't you notice how wonderfully they leave us to ourselves?"

"Do they? This is the first time we've been alone all day."

"You said that real well," said Mamie.

"It's a pity there's no one to hear it."

and honesty of this American girl was marvellous.

"You see women are very sensitive," went on Mamie staring dreamily into the fire. "Now there's an American man I know very well. He's very good looking and—"

"But you just said you didn't know any," Lord Portsea interrupted sharply.

"Oh, yes, so I did. I mean—I—"

She put her hands up to the cheek nearest Lord Portsea who was leaning over staring into her face. Then she jumped up said it was time to dress and flitted towards the staircase.

Above, on the balcony, at the top of the stairs, there was a soft rustle. Lady Portsea glided away down the corridor with a happy smile on her lips.

On the sixth day of the visit the American girl came to breakfast, opened her letters and became a little pale. Neither Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart nor Lady Portsea appeared. Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart was away in London.

"I'm glad we're alone," said Mamie.

"I want to speak to you. Will you do me a great favor?"

"Yes," said Lord Portsea.

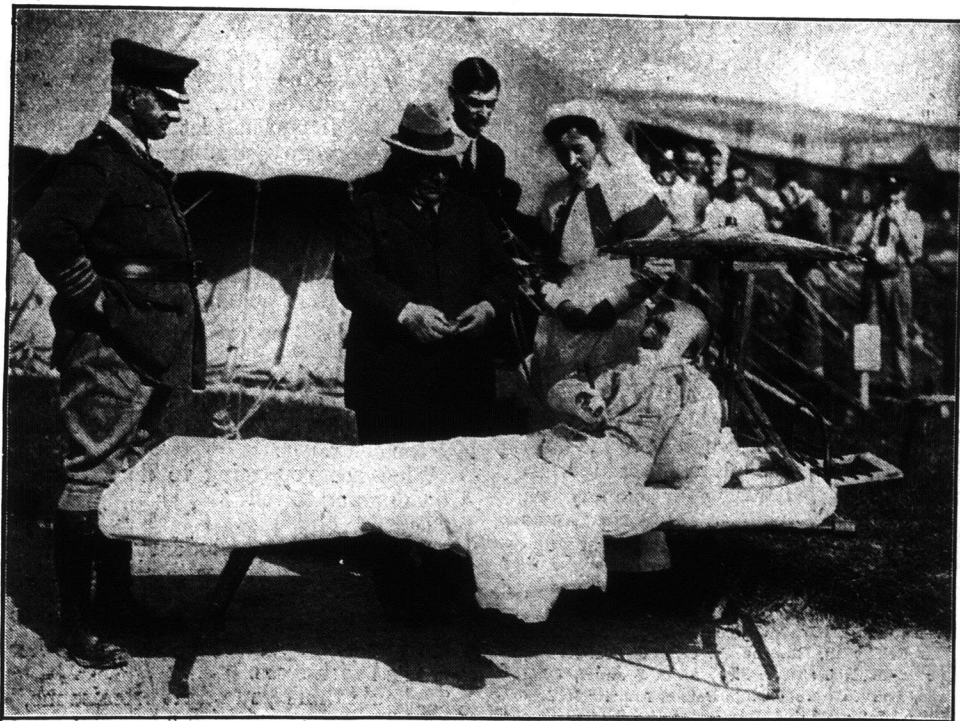
"Will you take me up to London for the day?"

She looked at him pleadingly.

"Oh, do take me," she said, throwing into her soft eyes an irresistible sweetness such as Lord Portsea had never seen in any other eyes.

"But will they let you go?"

"With you? Yes. It's my only chance."



Mr. Horatio Bottomley talking to a wounded Canadian during his visit to France. The soldier has lost one arm and is badly wounded in the other, but is still able to smoke, thanks to a great device, a wooden clip which clips the cigarette holder to his bandaged arm.

She looked into the fire and sighed.

"I want to ask you a question now," said Lord Portsea. "Have you ever been in love?"

"Good gracious, I should think so—often."

"I mean seriously."

"I should think so, deadly serious."

This was extraordinary he thought. If she had loved anyone, it was impossible that he had not loved her in return, and where was he now?

"One was an Italian, one was an Englishman, and another was a Spaniard."

"But the American?" said Lord Portsea.

"What American? There was no American."

"Oh, I thought—I thought—there might be."

"Well, of course, they're the best of all, but I've been at school abroad ever since I was a child, and now I'm eighteen, I scarcely know any of my countrymen."

Lord Portsea nodded but said nothing.

"The Italian was my music master. The Englishman was an actor. The Spaniard was a great musician. I only knew one of them, the music master. He married my French teacher. It was all long, long ago."

"And now? What about now?"

"Oh, now I'm in love with no one. If I were you see I wouldn't be playing the game. It wouldn't be fair, that's why I asked you about your love affairs. I wanted to be sure I wasn't making another woman suffer in accepting your attentions like this."

Lord Portsea thought that the honor

They'll willingly let me go with you. And it's so important."

At eleven o'clock they were in London. Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart's new motor had been put at their disposal with many smiles, and away behind them at the country house two very happy ladies were talking house decorations and trousseau without end.

Much less happy were the two in the motor. Lord Portsea was a little aggrieved. Mamie had not given him the slightest idea for what she was coming to London. And considering that she had made him do the asking, made him represent the excursion as his idea, not hers, he felt she might at least tell him, what she wanted to do. But no, scarcely a word did she speak from the house to Marble Arch. There she asked him to stop.

"But where are you going?" he asked.

"I have an appointment with someone in the Park. I shall be about an hour. Then I'll come back and meet you here and you can take me to lunch at Princess where Mrs. Stoddart-Stoddart will meet us at one o'clock."

"You can't go over there alone."

"Absurd! Of course I can."

"At least I must escort you."

"But I don't want you!"

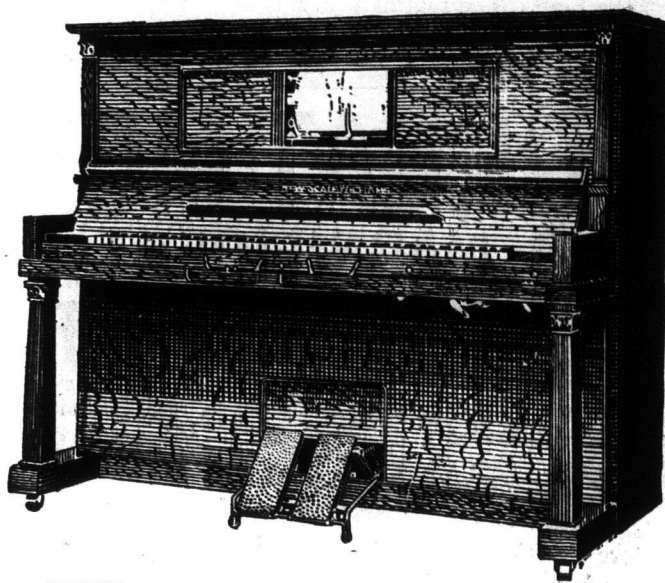
"I insist. Young girls can't go alone to meet—people."

"I hate you," said the American girl under her breath.

"I dare say. I'll escort you all the same."

"I won't have you."

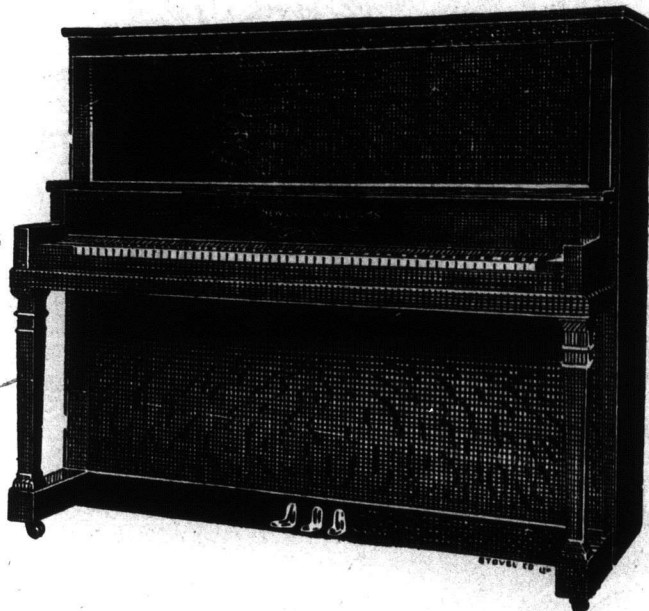
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