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BLACKMAIL.

"I never give my photographs away," said Miss Moreton, primly, the dimple displaying itself almost ostentatiously in her cheek.

"But I am an old friend," said I. "Surely an old friend doesn't count."

"It's not the same thing," said Miss Moreton, vaguely. "Of course, it would be different if—" She ceased, apparently not knowing how to go on.

"Oh, very well," said I, with a sigh. "At any rate I've got something to go on with." She glanced at me swiftly, and then looked down the room, where the people were chattering.

"If one gave to one, one would have to give to all," she said, oracularly.

"I'm thankful I have that snapshot at any rate," I said.

"Snapshot?" she said, looking at me suspiciously.

"Why, yes," said I. "You remember in the boat at Goring last July. I took one of you then."

"I have no recollection of it," she said boldly.

"It was rather a good one, but, of course not well developed and, naturally, not one of you at your best. But, at any rate, it's something."

"What sort of one was it?" she inquired, with interest. "You've no right to take photographs without telling one."

"On the contrary," I replied, "it has been held in law that you may take what photographs you will; only you mustn't sell them. I'm not going to sell yours."

"What is it like?" she inquired, ignoring this.

"For answer I dived into my frock coat pocket. 'I have a print here,' I said. 'I've not fixed it properly, but you can get an idea. It was when you were laughing at a story of Travers.'"

Miss Moreton almost plucked the photograph out of my fingers and examined it. "How abominable of you!" she said. "It's perfectly ridiculous. Good gracious, I didn't open my mouth like that!"

"It's a pretty mouth," said I.

"It's a detestable grimace and all out of drawing," she declared, with visible annoyance. "Amateur photography is all like that. People have no right to be let loose with cameras they don't understand."

"It's all I have," I pleaded. "If you would let me have a real one of you, I would willingly sacrifice it."

Miss Moreton appeared to hesitate. "Certainly not," she said at last with decision. "And you must please destroy these."

"That's the only print I have," I said meekly.

She eyed me for a moment, and then suddenly stooped and thrust it into the fire.

"I'm glad to hear it," she said shortly.

"I made no attempt at rescue, but watched the poor thing burn."

"Then you are going to let me have one of yours," I said.

"Indeed, no such thing," she replied, and walked off toward a group who were discussing Mr. Beerbohm Tree. I sat down beside a young lady in furs, and entered into a disquisition on motor cars, of which I knew nothing. Presently Miss Moreton passed us.

"Do you prefer a Panhard or a Mercedes?" I asked her. She paused. "I don't know the difference," she said.

"Oh, do you motor?" asked the young lady in the fur coat, with enthusiasm.

"Miss Moreton rows," said I. "She punts very well, but she's not a first rate hand with the sculls."

"Indeed!" said Miss Moreton to me, distantly.

"At least she's unconventional in her style," I went on. "Sometimes she catches 'crabs.'"

The young lady in the fur coat tittered, but Miss Moreton looked at me with displeasure.

"I don't pretend to all the accomplishments," she said.

"Nor do I," I replied. "But I can take a sort of photograph. I have one of a 'crab.'"

She was going on, but hesitated. It was I who rose and bade my motoring acquaintance good-by. I walked toward my hostess and the door, but ere I reached the former I found Miss Moreton at my heels.

"What do you mean, Mr. Mallison?" she asked quickly. "Why do you talk about crabs and photographs?"

"Oh, I only remember that I took another snapshot last year," I replied.

She was silent for a moment, and then "Please explain," she said.

"Don't you remember when you went over and Travers picked you up?" I asked. "I was just going to take a beautiful picture of your head, and it turned out—"

"Yes," she said, now quite rosy red, "and what did it turn out?"

"Oh, it was a picture of your heels and your—"

"How abominable of you," she interrupted hastily.

"But you can see your head also," I assured her. "You're falling—I mean, leaning—backward, with a terrified but fascinating smile on your face, and your skirt is—"

"Of course, you will destroy it at once," she interrupted with her former haste.

I demurred.

"It really is a very good one of you; at least, of part of you. If you see it—"

"I don't want to see it," she broke in, "you must destroy it at once."

"But it's the only thing I have of you, now that you've burnt that," and I indicated the fire.

"You've no right to any of me. I don't see why you want one at all," said Miss Moreton, hotly.

"I don't say I have any right," I replied meekly; "but I'm going to stick to what I have. After all, it's mine. I took it."

"It's perfectly disgraceful of you, and—and—the law," declared she, her face handsomely flushed now, and her eyes bright with anger. "It's monstrous that I—that one hasn't command over one's own—own person."

"You hadn't any command at that moment I said."

She cast me a fiery glance and bit her lips as if on something she had decided to suppress. I think she determined at that moment to try diplomacy.

"Tell me," she said, in a milder voice, "tell me exactly what it's like, and how I'm—how I came out, I mean."

"Well, you know what happens when you catch a 'crab,'" I said, evasively.

"Yes," she said, doubtfully. "You mean—I—do I?"—She hesitated, almost wistfully.

"Well, you do, rather," I answered reluctantly.

"Mr. Mallison," she said, earnestly and very persuasively, putting a hand on my arm, "you will destroy it, won't you?"

It was pretty; it was pathetic; it almost succeeded.

But I hardened my heart. "On one condition," I said, slowly. "And it's a very easy condition. I might make much better terms."

Miss Moreton flounced away indignantly, I proceeded on my way to her mother to make my adieux. The room was fairly empty now, and I was following a little knot of departing guests into the hall when I heard my name reiterated earnestly and softly. I turned.

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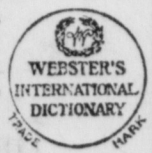
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Mr. Mallison, I wish you would stay just one moment," said Miss Moreton. "I—" She hesitated, glanced about the emptying room and then moved toward the back of it, where a little ante-chamber gave upon it through wide folded doors. I followed.

"You really mean what you say?" she asked suddenly confronting me. "I said that I did. 'Very well,' she said, bitterly. It's the most atrocious conduct of you, and I'll never forget or forgive it. But—"

She angrily tossed open an album on the table and at last stopped. I bent down and a beautiful face on fair shoulders crowning a pretty evening gown looked at me with a charming smile. I looked at my companion. I wished she would smile like that at me, but even in her anger she was wonderful. Her gaze expressed coldness, distance . . . contempt.

"It's a magnificent likeness," I breathed, fervently. "It's—it's divine."

"It's said to be good," said Miss Moreton, indifferently.

"It's the most beautifully picture I've ever seen," I said.

"Do you think so, really?" asked Miss Moreton.

"It's your living, breathing image that looks out on me," I continued.

"They do take very well, as a rule, those people," said Miss Moreton, affably.

"You can't wonder that I want it!" I exclaimed. "I'd give anything for—"

"Well, you can take it, if you'll give me your word to destroy the—that other thing," she said, in a not unfriendly voice.

I promised, and she graciously helped me to extract the photograph from the album. I buttoned it safely over my heart in my pocket, but Miss Moreton, having completed the bargain, of course took no interest in the matter. She was gazing down the room at someone else. But a thought occurred to her.

"You haven't shown that—that absurd snapshot anyone," she asked anxiously.

"Oh, no," I said. "I've never printed it."

"Oh!" she said. "but you said—"

"Well, you see, I could make out some patches and a foot, but I broke it, unfortunately, as I was developing it."

Miss Moreton's mouth was firm. "Mr. Mallison give me back that photograph," she demanded.

"But I'm going to finish the breakage," I protested.

"Give it back to me at once," she insisted, advancing on me. I was driven to bay. Besides, the rest of the room might hear us.

"I'll give it back if you'll give me the original," I said boldly, but quite low.

Miss Moreton paused; she was taken back. Her face flushed warmly.

"—you —oh!" she stammered. "Mr. Mallison!"

"Is it a bargain?" I said anxiously, holding out the photograph toward her.

She hesitated, the pretty glow still on her face, and she was not looking at me.

"You are—oh, you are dreadful!" she said with a tiny, troubled laugh. "But, in that case, perhaps, you'd better keep the photograph."

"On second thoughts, I'll take both," I said.

Boys In The Great Civil War.

Springfield Republican: It is not easy for the present generation to realize how largely the Civil War was fought by boys. The most striking fact about the dedication of the statue in the State house to Gen. William Francis Bartlett was the knowledge that it brought to many that he began as a volunteer in that war and became a general at the age of 24. Another striking instance of this sort is brought out by the fact that Capt. Hoitt, the pension agent at Boston has just celebrated his 60th birthday. Capt. Hoitt as senior officer of his regiment, present for duty commanded the 5th New Hampshire in the grand review at Washington at the close of the war, he being at that time only 19 years old. It has been well said that it would be a surprising thing in these days to see a boy, two years short of his majority, in command of a militia regiment, but here was a boy commanding a fighting regiment that lost more men than any other infantry organization during the war.

Fashion Invading Tombstone.

Every symptom points to a tendency to spread on style in Tombstone. Among other instances in this direction, the boys bought a pair of beautiful barber pole suspenders and presented them to the amiable dispenser who shoves the amber extract of cheerfulness over the mahogany of the parlor saloon. He promptly donned the innovation, but claimed that he felt like he had a fence rail on each shoulder. Then, when they became overburdensome he would unbutton them and permit them to dangle in front, but he finally got them down fine enough to go to church in. Several old-timers, conspicuously court attendants from other end of the country, have fallen into the habit of wearing boiled shirts, and it looks as if sky blue overalls might be discarded as a full dress costume. Getting "powerful tony" in town nowadays. [Tombstone Epitaph.]

Poet—Do you think I will get muce from the editor for this poem? Friend—not much: you will be able to be around again in a few days, I imagine.