

## DIAMONDS FOR THE BRIDE

Or, a Proposal by Proxy

### CHAPTER VIII.—(Cont'd)

She expected that the terraced walk above the river would be the place of meeting, because remotest from interruption. The way which led directly thither was a narrow one, but she could slip aside among the shrubs if she heard ascending steps. But no such steps came up to meet her, and the broad walk was empty from end to end, in shade as well as in light.

Disappointment mingled with her anger. To be drawn out on a false scent—that was worse than all; and at a time when she should have been enjoying her well-earned rest, the superiority of her better gown, the savoury supper served to her apart. And that supper was doubtless growing cold, for it would be like Betty to forget to cover it. Where could the mistress have gone? Could she be possibly quitting her home, as Madeline Fielding did before her? But no, the housekeeper felt sure that would not be. It was not in the new mistress's nature to put from her advantage and dignity, though she might hanker after the tasting of stolen sweets. If not on the river terrace, where? And then the garden-house came into Hartopp's mind, though it was less private, being near the often-used gate which led out into the park.

She must try the garden-house; and now came the effort of the upward climb, difficult, for Hartopp's wind had grown shorter and shorter with added years. Shame that the need for this should be, shame on the hussy and her lover for leading an honest woman such a dance, as well as the greater shame of the domestic treason. She was forced to wait a while till the labored breathing became tranquil, as those pants would have betrayed her. But here at last was the shelter, and voices, yes, voices, within.

If Mrs. Hartopp had been taxed with deafness she would indignantly have denied the charge, but now she acknowledged to herself that she was hard of hearing. She laid her ear against the boarded side of the garden-house, crouching close to the chinks. Yes, there were voices, and one of them was Mrs. Swayne's; but, try as she might, all that reached her was an occasional word, a fragment here and there. They were speaking low, of course, which was like their slyness; but, despite her prepossession so to believe, the conversation did not sound like that of a lovers' meeting. These two people were plainly angry, there was some matter of contention between them, of urgency on one side and denial on the other. Mrs. Swayne was one of the speakers; but the other, who did most of the talking, somehow did not sound like the secretary, Mr. May.

As she could not overhear, safe hidden at the back, she must run the greater risk and try to see. She drew the grey shawl closer over her cap; it was shadow tint and not likely to attract notice, though a white face looked out from it with hard, eager eyes. She would creep round to the glass side and look in. The panes were newly washed and would be clear enough, for the gardener's boy was busy there only on Saturday.

The moon still shone into the shelter. Another cloud was rising, but the moment of its veiling had not come. Those cross-bars of light and shadow were still upon the floor, and there were the two figures confronted, Mrs. Swayne and May; certainly it must be May, though in a different dress from any she had seen him wear. Could he have adopted it as a disguise, and was he urging the mistress to clope with him? If so, erect and defiant, she was plainly disinclined to go; and these two were on vastly different terms from the terms of the morning, when she had witnessed that embrace, that kiss!

It was intensely annoying that her ears were not keen enough to assist her eyes. But now Mrs. Swayne was moving nearer to the opening. At last it would be possible to hear.

"I will think of it," she was saying, "but I do not trust you. How can I tell, when I have given all, that you will not come again with the same demand, next month, next year? I had better face the worst now, and then you will be disarmed."

"Ay, think of it," exclaimed the man behind, but this remoter voice was indistinct to Mrs. Hartopp. "Are these advantages that you enjoy not worth the purchase, even if only for a time? I shall be gone—a hundred things may happen—sickness—death. My absence may be long before; it may be long again. But you must not linger over deciding. I will give you another day."

He advanced as she left the cover

of the roof; his last words were audible. The housekeeper shrank away behind a laurel, fearful of discovery; and there came a further alarm. The wicket from the park swung open, a quick, firm step approached; Gower, for it was he, the bridegroom of the morrow, passed on his way to Dulcie, whistling a snatch tune.

Probably the interview had reached its natural close. Mrs. Swayne glided into the shadow and was lost; Vince drew back, and, when the way was clear, betook himself through that same wicket back to his waiting motor. Hartopp returned to her own quarters, breathless and perplexed, to find her delayed supper well-nigh cold, though duly covered by Betty. Her appetite for it was not great, despite the exertion of the last half hour; she was lost in consideration, even while scooping up clotted gravy and cold potatoes, and pouring out (with a head) from her modest jug of ale.

She had made a discovery, that was certain. Something was on foot that hadn't ought to be—she will here borrow her own expression. But she was driven to doubt whether it was of the simple sort which had been her first suspicion, and she hardly knew what complexion to put on the affair when she went to tell Colonel Swayne.

### CHAPTER IX

The man who whistles is supposed to be of good cheer, and who should be cheery if not a bridegroom hastening to so-fair a bride! But despite that stave of indifferent music, it may be doubted whether Gower forgot the black void which yawned behind him in the past; its suggested dread was present even when Dulcie came down to the library and he received her with a kiss. The lamp was lit, hanging from the ceiling, and there was a vacant settee; but the room did not suggest comfort. It was crowded from end to end with the display of bridal gifts; objects of art, of household use or useless fancy, silver, china, and bijouterie, each with its accompanying ticket; and altogether transformed from the comfortable shabby apartment, known and loved of every day, which had witnessed other meetings between these two.

"Well," said Gower interrogatively, the first greeting being over, "I suppose Margaret is here, and you are happy?"

"I have just left her upstairs. We had supper in my sitting-room, we two by ourselves. Yes, it is nice to have her; she is just the same old dear. I wanted to bring her to see you, but she said that would do to-morrow. She seemed to think you wanted only me."

"Margaret has the gift of divination among her other perfections. I shall be glad to see her to-morrow, but to-night I did want only you. For I must not stay longer than five minutes."

"Five minutes!"—with a pout. "Five minutes, or thereabouts. They keep early hours, I fancy, at the Vicarage, and I promised Hungerford I would not be long away. So you and Margaret have been supping tete-a-tete? And, I'll wager, talking all the time, one against the other. Which of you two, after three years, had the most to say?"

"I believe I talked most," said Dulcie meditatively, arching her delicate eyebrows. "You see, I had so much to tell her, about—"

"About me?"

"Well, yes, about you. And Grendon—and things in general."

"And those innumerable dresses Stephens is packing in the boxes which are to go away?"

"It is all very well to laugh, but dresses are important. You would not like me to be dowdy. But I don't think I have said much to Margaret about the dresses. And she had something to tell me—something astonishing, and unexpected, and said."

"Sad! Then my guess won't do. I thought she might be going to marry some French fellow."

"I'll tell you if you like, but you must keep the secret. Papa doesn't know it yet; nobody knows about it. So you must not tell."

"I will be absolutely discreet. I suppose it is the Frenchman. And he has no money, or is bound to ask his mamma, according to the Code Napoleon."

"Margaret said he was English."

"Well, English or French, I am right that it is an engagement. And I suppose there is an obstacle, as you say it is not only astonishing but sad. Perhaps we might help to smooth it away; you and I, Dulcie! I am sure you will turn out an inveterate little match-maker. I feel it coming on."

But Dulcie did not smile when he rallied her; she shook her head.

"I cannot do anything to make this match, and you cannot either, for it is made already. Margaret is married. And the sad part of it is, her husband has gone away."

"Away! Where?"

"She does not know; she is not certain if he is alive. She thinks he may not want to come back. But that is impossible. Not want to come back to Margaret! If you saw her, you would say so too. I could cry about it, only you know it would be unlucky if I cried to-night."

"You must not cry, lucky or unlucky. Get her to come to us at Grendon, and then we will see what can be done."

"Can anything be done when a person goes away?" Dulcie appeared doubtful of her lover's power to help, not of his will.

"Yes, a great deal can be done. The detective police are better in France than in England."

"George, how can you! Fancy sending a policeman after one's husband!"

"Or we could put an advertisement in the papers." He said it without thinking, and then winced as he recollected how a certain advertisement had inquired for George Cullen, and the circumstances under which he had been found. He could not get away from the void; every incident turned him back to it; the most trivial remark converted itself into a finger-pointing. But it did not occur to him to connect it with Margaret's loss.

"We will think of some way, and find the real, original Sherlock Holmes, if you are shocked at a policeman. But now, Dulcie, really, time is short, and I have something for you in my pocket."

"George! Not the necklace! I thought it would never have been ready."

"Exactly so, the necklace. I am told it is ready only by an extraordinary effort; but that is a legend always trotted out if a thing is wanted by a fixed date. I hope you will like it. I don't understand these things, but it seems to me they have done it rather well."

A considerable amount of value may be compressed into small compass. The cases Gower took from his pocket were neither of them large ones; not large enough to make a too conspicuous bulge under a coat. The necklace was a mere string of single stones, but the central gems were large ones, and the whole line held under the light seemed to be on fire with brilliance. When the second case was opened, Dulcie cried out in surprise.

"George! Why, it is a tiara. For me? And what pearls?"

"I thought you would like pearls better than coloured stones. There had to be centres, you see, for the devices; and the riviere. You really like it? Why, don't you see, these are the sprays. They fit together and make this thing; see the screw attachments at the back. Undo these, and the shape falls apart into the separate brooches, which you can fasten where you please."

It was hardly necessary to ask if Dulcie liked it, her face was sufficient answer. He had filled up the measure of her delight, and the diamonds were a last glittering pinnacle added to the summit of her triumph. And Dulcie was sweet when she was placed, when the ways of life were smooth for her. Her little feet were made to walk on velvet, not to stumble among thorns. She could be good when she had all she wanted; it was a nursery saving of her, and had grown up still to be a truth. She meant to be good now, keeping faith of wifehood, and loving Gower back again for his affection and his gifts. And if she set love and gifts on the same level, as a child might, do we hold the child to blame? It is only that its understanding is not grown. "Oh!" she said, and "oh!" again, and the exclamations were expressive enough, even in their detachment.

"I must go now, little woman. As it is, I have overstayed my time. You will keep a safe thought of me, together with the trinkets. And now, my darling, good-night."

(To be continued.)

### USES OF SALT.

A pinch of salt on the tongue, followed by a drink of cold water, will cure sick headache.

It hardens the gums and makes the teeth white.

By adding a little salt to the water, cut flowers may be kept fresh much longer.

By using very fine, dry salt as one would snuff for colds, hay fever may be relieved.

A shallow teaspoonful of salt dissolved in a cupful of hot water will relieve dyspepsia and indigestion.

Strong salt water will revive an unconscious person quicker than brandy or whisky.

Salt and pineapple juice will cure mild cases of gastritis.

Salt added to water in which colored dresses are washed will prevent fading.

## LETTERS OF A SON IN THE MAKING TO HIS DAD.

—BY REX McEVY

[Mr. McEvoy will write for this paper a series of letters from the west. They will appear from time to time under the above heading, and will give a picture of the great Canadian west from the standpoint of a young Ontario man going out there to make his way. These letters should be full of interest for every Ontario father.]

Heron Bay, Ont., Aug. 9th.  
My Dear Father,—

Perhaps it would be well to explain the shakiness of my handwriting before going any further in this letter. Although everybody in our car is in excellent spirits, we are all sober. The fact is, however, that in spite of the little movable table which the porter has fitted up for me, the motion of the car occasionally makes my writing rather shaky. They are great little tables that fit into the side of the car near the windows and they are supported at the other end on one leg. They come in useful for all sorts of things. We use them as dining tables, and just now an old man and his three sons just across the aisle are 'playing a game of cards on their little table. They are going out to take up some of the irrigated lands of Alberta which are watered by the C. P. R. irrigation canal. I got acquainted with them through mother not putting a cup in my valise when she packed the grub for me to eat on the trip. I borrowed a cup from them and traded two bananas for a cup of coffee and some dried beef. They are a fine jolly crowd in this car, and there is all sorts of fun all the time, especially at meal times.

I am mighty glad already that we decided I should come out west this summer, even if I don't stop here. Why, I never realized before what a big place Ontario is. Of course, that big map of the Dominion hanging on the school-house wall, showed that the Province was some size, but here I have been travelling along for pretty near twenty-four hours, and we have to go over fourteen hours more before we get to Manitoba. We cross the boundary at Rennie, just 1161 miles from the Union Station, Toronto, where you saw me off when I climbed up into this car in the Canadian Pacific train for Vancouver.

Do you know, Dad, for all they talk of the West, we have a good line of country in Ontario. We didn't see much of Muskoka, as we passed through there at night, but I woke at Muskoka station and saw the trunks of the nearest trees looking ghostly in the electric lights of the station. Behind them was black mystery. Of course, I couldn't see much, but it looked as though the folks that go there for their holidays ought to get a pretty good change from the cities. At breakfast time, on the first morning of our trip, we were in the Sudbury district, and it's something to make us throw out our chests, and feel proud to think that the richest nickel and copper deposits in the whole world are right here in Ontario. Moose Mountain Range is close here, too—the greatest known iron range in Canada. This ought to be a great manufacturing district some day.

There is not much timber round the line just near Sudbury. The trees die when they get to be six or nine inches through. Poplar trees grow about twenty feet high and then they die, and everywhere you can see these young trees covered with dead, shrivelled leaves. Low bushes give the only touch of green to be seen, and everywhere there are rocks of all kinds, sizes and shapes. There are rocks that you could play duck on the rock with, and others that are bigger than our barn at home, with all sizes in between. It must have been a tremendous job putting the railroad through here. It seems like railroad building was what mother says woman's work is—it's never finished. Every little while we pass a gang of men who are busy doing something to the track. They build culverts of concrete sections and turn streams through them, then they fill in solid all round them, so that a number of little bridges have been done away with. Long trestles have been filled in the same way with solid banks in some places thirty or forty feet high. The line crosses deep valleys on these high banks, and if there is a stream in the bottom of it, the railway may cut a new channel for it through the solid rock. I would like to see how they managed to get over this country in the days when they

## HEADACHE ACHE

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### WAR AND BRITISH CREDIT.

How War Increased Debt Eight Hundred Million Dollars.

In 1896 the debt of Great Britain stood at the lowest point since the Napoleonic wars, and for four years Government bonds bearing two and three-quarter per cent interest had sold at a premium averaging about ten per cent. Then came the Boer War, increasing the debt by eight hundred million dollars and making the total nearly four billions. "This," the editor of the Economist recently observed, "was the highest point since 1867; so that the national savings of thirty-six years of peace were swept away by national borrowings during three years of war." And in April, 1903, interest on consols was reduced to two and a half per cent.

For a good while consols have been selling at a discount of about twenty per cent., and in the middle of July they dropped to seventy-eight and a quarter—the lowest price in eighty years. The drop was attributed to apprehension over the Morocco situation—which naturally raises a question as to what would become of consols if there were a real war scare.

Money cannot be had at two and a half per cent, because there are too many competitors for the world's savings. The relative prices of British two and a half per cents and French three per cents suggests that investors do not like a very low-rate bond, even at a discount.

The more important point is that about a year of actual fighting with a handful of Boers caused Britain's debt to increase three-fourths as much as twelve years of fighting with Napoleon at the height of his power. That suggests the colossal destructiveness of modern warfare.

### GET POWER.

The Supply Comes From Food.

If we get power from food why not strive to get all the power we can. That is only possible by use of skillfully selected food that exactly fits the requirements of the body.

Poor fuel makes a poor fire and a poor fire is not a good steam producer.

"From not knowing how to select the right food to fit my needs, I suffered grievously for a long time from stomach troubles," writes a lady from a little town in Missouri. "It seemed as if I would never be able to find out the sort of food that was best for me. Hardly anything that I could eat would stay on my stomach. Every attempt gave me heartburn and filled my stomach with gas. I got thinner and thinner until I literally became a living skeleton and in time was compelled to keep to my bed."

"A few months ago I was persuaded to try Graps-Nuts food, and it had such good effect from the very beginning that I have kept up its use ever since. I was surprised at the ease with which I digested it. It proved to be just what I needed."

"All my unpleasant symptoms, the heartburn, the inflated feeling which gave me so much pain disappeared. My weight gradually increased from 98 to 116 pounds, my figure rounded out, my strength came back, and I am now able to do my housework and enjoy it. Graps-Nuts food did it." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

A ten days' trial will show anyone some facts about food.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

It is easier to accept a position than it is to hold a job.

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