

# DIAMONDS FOR THE BRIDE

Or, a Proposal by Proxy.

## CHAPTER XV.—(Cont'd)

Thus it came about that Vincy, who had just thrown away the stump of his cigar among the laurels behind the garden shelter, saw a lovely boy in a fantastic dress of white satin stealing near him through the shrubs. The child was in search of a hiding-place, and finally he crouched beneath a tangle of arbutus. This must be the young heir, who was to be dressed up page-fashion to carry his sister's train; and at sight of the child a new thought occurred to Vincy. What if he strengthened his position by decoying the heir from his home, and holding him away for ransom. Here might be an argument which would appeal more strongly to the wife and mother than the hushing up of an old story. That payment over which she hesitated in the latter case might be promptly rendered if it brought back the child; he might even increase his terms by three or four added hundreds, which were surely worth the risk. And so the plan figured itself in his mind—Annabel would be afraid to inform against him, and risk of detection would be small.

Vincy came lightly forward. "Hello, Ernest," he said. "That is a good place, but I know of a better way of hiding. Your mother sent me to tell you, and she says you may go if you like."

"Hush, hush!" said the child, who supposed this stranger to be a guest of the day. "Speak low, or they will hear you, Phyllis and Lilla, if they are coming round the walk. Where is the better place?" And he looked up fearlessly in Vincy's face, with those dark eyes like Lucie's, which were an inheritance from his father.

"I have my motor just outside by the wood. Your mother thought you might like a ride in it, and gave me leave to take you. You will have a joke over your little companions when they cannot find you. And think of their surprise when you come back, for nobody is to tell."

The boy flushed up with pleasure. To ride on a motor; that had been always his ambition. And it did seem a grand idea, to steal away like this from Lilla and Phyllis, and have them searching for him in vain. But still there was a lurking doubt.

"Did mamma say I might go? Are you sure, for Cousin Joan told us not to be long."

"Yes," said the mendacious stranger. "She sent me to tell you; for she is busy, as you know, with the wedding. Come this way at once, for the car is waiting."

Vincy lifted the child over the fence—strengthened with rabbit-wire, which divided the spinney from the garden. It was lucky he had run the car into this lonely place, for the satin dress was conspicuous. Ernest seemed himself to be aware it was unsuitable. "Can I go like this?" he questioned. "And I left my cap behind, because the feather would catch in the bushes."

"I have got a spare coat on the car, and I'll wrap you round in it," returned Vincy, while he reflected that for the success of his scheme it was well that this might be. One small boy is much like another, whizzing by at speed; but the marked dress would be a different matter, along ninety miles of road. "And if I'm not mistaken, there is a cap in the coat-pocket, one that will come down well about your ears. It is better to wrap up when motoring, for those who are not used to it. For it makes a fellow cold, you know, going so fast through the air."

To go fast through the air! That was just what Ernest longed to do from the bottom of his heart. This stranger had brought his mother's message of permission, so he was justified in giving himself up to the anticipated enjoyment. It would be as good as the pony George Gower had promised him out of the herd at Grendon—George Gower, who was going to be his big brother; perhaps better than the pony, for here there was no danger of kicking and falling off. His eyes sparkled with delight when he saw the car, and he poured out a flood of questions while Vincy was finding the coat and enveloping his small figure in it, covering the objectionable satin out of sight. The child's appearance was further altered by the cap with ear-pieces, and then he was perched up on the seat of the car, and bidden to hold on tight, while Vincy started the machinery and climbed to his place to take the wheel.

Ernest cried out with delight, once they were on the high-road and at speed. There was clear space before them and a downward sweep, and the car, though a poor one, whizzed smoothly as the wind whistled in his ears. It was like a dream. It was like a

bird's flight, he thought, as the air rushed past his cheek—summer air and soft, but with a certain chill; the movement of a bird when it shoots down without effort or beating of the wing. "You like it?" Vincy said, amused.

"Oh yes, yes; it is splendid. I have always wanted to ride in one, but mamma said 'No' before."

"It was luck she said 'Yes' this time; but she knows I am a steady driver," Vincy's amusement continued; he laughed, and patted the boy's shoulder with the one hand which was at liberty.

"It is very kind of you to take me—sir. I don't remember your name," went on Ernest Swayne.

"Oh—Brown. You may call me Uncle Brown," returned the driver.

"Thank you, Uncle Brown. And I hope we need not go home just yet."

"Well, no. I'll take you the longer way round, as you like it so much. Mamma will not mind."

It was convenient that the child went with him willingly, and was happy and well amused. Any struggle or outcry would have made things difficult; as it was, the plan bid fair to work smoothly to the end. For another hour Uncle Brown ran on at speed, slowing only at the cross-roads where there were finger-posts to read. Then they came upon the outskirts of a village of the larger sort, the main street of which boasted a couple of public-houses, and a baker's shop which was also the post-office. At this street Uncle Brown slowed down, looking about him; and some little way past the baker's shop he came to a standstill.

"Wait here for me, Ernest. Don't get out, and don't speak to anybody; I leave you in charge. I shall not be many minutes away."

Vincy jumped down and stretched himself, and then walked back the half-dozen yards to the baker's shop. A fresh-looking young woman was behind the counter.

"I want a couple of buns, and a cup of milk, if you can let me have it, for my small nephew who is out there on the car; children get hungry on a long ride. And could you accommodate me with a sheet of paper and an envelope? I want to write a letter."

Vincy's correspondence has before figured in these pages, and this epistle may be transcribed as well. It was brief, and bore no signature:

"I have the boy. Be prompt and liberal, and he shall be restored."

Vincy addressed the envelope to Mrs. Swayne, bought and affixed a stamp, and put it away in his pocket. He would drop it in some other post-box along the route; not here, where the address might be scrutinized, and he could be described. And then he asked the way to London, as the mistress of the shop unlocked her till and counted out his change.

"First turning you come to with the telegraph wires, you strike into the London Road, sir. Thirty-eight miles it is from here, and the milestone is just beyond; you will see the figures. But I suppose thirty-eight miles ain't nothing to you gentlemen going about on motors; is it now?"

Vincy smiled, and agreed the distance was not much; privately he was wondering how his petrol would hold out, and if he had started with a full tank. Then he went out, carrying the buns, and the woman accompanied him with the cup of milk.

"Here, my boy," he said, with the same affection of a hearty manner. "I want you to drink up this, as you'll be thirsty and hungry too before we can get in. You can eat the buns after, as this good lady is waiting."

"Thank you, uncle," said the child, the very words that were intended; and then the cup was given back, and they were soon again at speed.

There was a stoppage twenty miles farther on at a wayside post-box, and there the letter was dropped in which would reach Annabel in the morning. "I have been writing to mamma," Uncle Brown said, when he climbed up again to take the wheel.

"To mamma?" Ernest repeated in his surprise.

"Ay, to mamma. As we have gone so far as this, it will be better for you to come on and stay the night with me. The housekeeper I have will take care of you. And then I'll drive you back to-morrow to Fortune's Court."

Ernest looked serious over this new proposal. He did not object in words, but his pleasure in the ride began to fail, and the buns lost their flavor. Uncle Brown knew best, he concluded; and Uncle Brown had sent word to mamma;

but he had been looking forward to a triumphant return, and the bewilderment of Phyllis and Lilla. Phyllis and Lilla would have gone home by the morning; he would not be able now to astonish them by riding up to the front door, when they thought he was hiding in the garden. It would never do to disgrace himself by crying on a motor, but he knew when the night came he would sorely want his home, and his white bed in the nursery, and mamma. The mouthful of bun stuck in his throat with something like a sob, and the stream of chatter, the frequent questions, with which he had greatly taxed Vincy's patience, suddenly failed at its source. The two drove on in silence through the deepening afternoon.

That sob rose more than once, and the little fellow had hard work to choke it back as the feeling of strangeness increased. The country faded away from them, and presently they touched the fringes and outskirts of the great city. Then the streets narrowed and filled with traffic; streets with endless turnings, through which, with an inquiry here and there, Uncle Brown contrived to thread his way. The final stoppage was before a shabby lodging-house, and a slatternly woman came to the door.

## CHAPTER XVI.

The guests at the interrupted wedding were so far considerate that few of them made any length of stay for entertainment at the Court. Colonel Swayne did not appear, but Joan Winthrop bravely did her best to help Annabel, and proved an admirable lieutenant. The absence of the master provoked comment; the situation was evidently graver than it was convenient to declare.

The gossips whispered together and put up eyeglasses to inspect the show of presents in the library, curious, as such guests often are, to see what others have felt it incumbent on them to offer, and whether their own individual gift compares well among the crowd. What would be done with them was a point variously mooted. Of course, there would be no wedding after the scandal of this interruption, it was nothing but a pretence to say it might take place on the morrow. Mrs. Swayne must know better than to expect it, though she told her falsehood without flinching. Mrs. Winthrop, who was a cousin, said much the same, but Mrs. Winthrop had the candor to admit she did not know. The gossips concluded the presents would be sent back, heart-breaking as it would be to any bride to relinquish such an array; and then it became a question what would be the right attitude of the givers.

All this added zest to the inspection in the library and then there was a service of refreshment—wine and coffee and some light substantial, for many of the guests had come from far. But there was no cutting of the great bride-cake—that, under the circumstances, could not be. The carriages, hastily summoned, came round irregularly and after delay, for there were servants also to be refreshed. Mrs. Swayne, standing in the hall to speed the departures, felt her face grown stiff with the desperate effort to smile—to smile not only through this new disaster, but under that private agony and apprehension of her own which lay heavy on her heart.

(To be continued.)

## THE DECLINE OF EXERCISE.

Physician Thinks Motors Are Making People Lazy.

Any one who takes an outing, particularly at the seaside, can hardly fail to notice the revolution that has taken place during the last decade in the methods of enjoying a vacation. The automobile whizzes by on the roads and the motorboat splutters noisily within sight of the shore, each bearing its crowd of pleasure seekers, while even the swimmers are supported, a large proportion of them at least, by an artificial contrivance designed to keep them afloat without exertion. Rowing, walking and swimming are the three ideal exercises, all demanding the open air and all having definite objects apart from their excellent effect on bodily health. But the modern amusements, such as motoring and motor boat racing, have nothing to recommend them save that they too require outdoor space.

Golf seems to be increasing the number of its devotees, even if the latter go to the links in high-powered cars. It is not only the rich who become lazy; the omnipresent trolley car embodies the favorite recreation of the poor.

## LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON.

"I won't pay another penny of your debts for you, you disgrace. You must either go bankrupt or get married. I had to do the same."

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

—By REX McEVoy

[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.]

No. 6.

Vancouver, Sept. 21st.

My Dear Dad:

Here I am at the end of my journey, though not as far west as I intend to go before returning east. It is only four and a half hours by boat from here to Victoria, the capital of the Province, so I shall try and get there for a day or two before starting for home. Uncle John met me at the station when I got in and took me right up to their home in Fairview for breakfast. Aunt and the cousins were there, of course, and gave me a great welcome. They certainly have been good to me, and they have given me the best bedroom in the house, with an outlook over the city to the mountains beyond.

I didn't see anything of the Fraser Valley coming here, as we passed through it at night. I am told that it is one of the best parts of the trip, so I shall arrange to go home by the Toronto Express, which leaves the C. P. R. station here at nine o'clock in the morning and goes through the valley by daylight. By taking this train I shall have seen all the mountains, as what I shall miss on this train I shall have seen coming out on the Imperial Limited.

I like Vancouver fine, what I have seen of it. The business portion of the town is well paved and has some fine, solid buildings. It has more prosperous stores for its size than any place I have been in, and they have the art of making their windows attractive down to the last word. There are one or two hills and steep streets in the downtown section, but for the most part it is level. Quite a large portion of the up-town part is cut off from downtown by False Creek, an arm of the sea which reaches inland for over two miles. At high tide there is twelve feet of water in the creek, which is crossed by three long bridges. At low tide there is practically no water in the creek at all, and the mud flats are exposed, with only puddles of water here and there. The first time I saw it, it looked quite like a harbor, for there were small boats with rafts of logs lying close to the sawmills, which line the banks of False Creek. The mills all have their piles of lumber characteristic of this lumber country, and all have great furnaces, as big as houses, where the waste from the mills is burned. Flames are constantly leaping out of the open tops of these furnaces, which are fed from a sort of spout which projects over them. There is a constant stream of splinters and lath-like pieces of wood falling from the spout to feed the flames. To the south of Vancouver on quite a

## SOUND SLEEP Can Easily be Secured.

"Up to 2 years ago," a woman writes, "I was in the habit of using both tea and coffee regularly. I found that my health was beginning to fail, strange nervous attacks would come suddenly upon me, making me tremble so excessively that I could not do my work while they lasted; my sleep left me and I passed long nights in restless discomfort. I was filled with a nervous dread as to the future. A friend suggested that possibly tea and coffee were to blame, and I decided to give them up, and in casting about for a hot table beverage, which I felt was an absolute necessity, I was led by good fortune to try Postum. For more than a year I have used it three times a day and expect, so much good has it done me, to continue its use during the rest of my life. Soon after beginning the use of Postum, I found, to my surprise, that, instead of tossing on a sleepless bed through the long, dreary night, I dropped into a sound, dreamless sleep the moment my head touched the pillow. Then I suddenly realized that all my nervousness had left me, and my appetite, which had fallen off before, had all at once been restored so that I ate my food with a keen relish. All the nervous dread has gone. I walk a mile and a half each way to my work every day and enjoy it. I find an interest in everything that goes on about me that makes life a pleasure. All this I owe to leaving off tea and coffee and the use of Postum, for I have taken no medicine. Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. There's a reason," and it is explained in the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

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hill are the residential districts known as Grandview, Fairview, and Shaughnessy Heights. From the latter place you get a magnificent view all over Vancouver, and beyond Burrard Inlet, the harbor, North Vancouver and the mountains. We have heard of the Yellow Peril in the East, and you realize what is meant by it when you get to Vancouver, where there are 11,000 Asiatics out of a total population of 110,000. Chinamen are here in great numbers. They are employed quite a lot as house servants. Often when going through a good residential district, I have seen a Chinaman come out of the kitchen door on to the side verandah, busy on some domestic duty. They go about, some of them, as charwomen do in the East, and they get \$2 a day for such work. They are liked better than the Japanese, as they seem to be better workers. The Jap boy knows the minimum work he can do and the maximum wage he can get, so they say. The Chinese are great market gardeners, too, and all the vegetable peddlers I have seen out here have been Chinese. Some of them are very well off, and own fine horses and wagons, while there are many who carry their goods in baskets swung one at each end of a bamboo pole, just as you see in pictures of Chinese coolies. Of course there are merchant Chinese here who are very well off. Uncle John took me to dinner with one of them who goes home to China every year. He came to Vancouver twenty-eight years ago, and was here when the place was called Gastown. He has taken advantage of his opportunities, and must be worth a great amount.

Another section of the yellow peril is formed by our fellow subjects the Hindus. These you see everywhere, and they are easily distinguishable by their turbans, which are of all colors, some pink, some red, some white, some yellow—I don't know what color I have not seen. There were ten of these chaps in the trolley coming home from New Westminster yesterday. They seemed quite at home and were laughing and jabbering away among themselves the whole way back to Vancouver. I am told that the different colored turbans indicate different castes, and that the men work for the most part in the saw mills. They are very swarthy, and for the most part are black-bearded men.

Coming home from New Westminster I saw something that would surprise anyone from the East. Passing Hastings townsite, I saw the way they clear the land here when they are in a hurry. They have a powerful donkey engine, and by a system of pulleys they hitch cables to the trees as they stand and drag them holus-bolus to a pile in the centre of the spot they are clearing. If the tree is too large it is cut into logs, and the logs are hauled on to the pile. I saw some logs two to three feet through. Some of the piles are forty to fifty feet high. When the pile is as high as they are going to make it they start another, and so get all the timber into piles. These piles are then set on fire. There was one of these

piles on Shaughnessy heights, only a few blocks from Uncle John's house, and this was set on fire one night. The spectacle was immense. The flames in a solid sheet leaped about forty feet into the air, and the glare illumined the whole district. Good-bye for the present.

JIM.  
P. S.—I have opened this to explain that I have carried this letter around in my pocket for a week. You see, I wrote it on election day, and in the excitement down town that night I completely forgot to post it, and it has been in my pocket ever since.—J.

## TRUE TO HIS PROMISE.

"Dearest, will you let me share your every sorrow after we are married?" she whispered as she cuddled her cheek against his.

"Yes, darling," he replied, again plucking a delicious kiss from her sweet lips.

It was the same lady who two years later wearily cried out:

"Oh, Tom, why can't you ever come into the house without bringing a tale of trouble with you? I'm so sick of hearing about how hard you have to work to keep the bills paid."

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