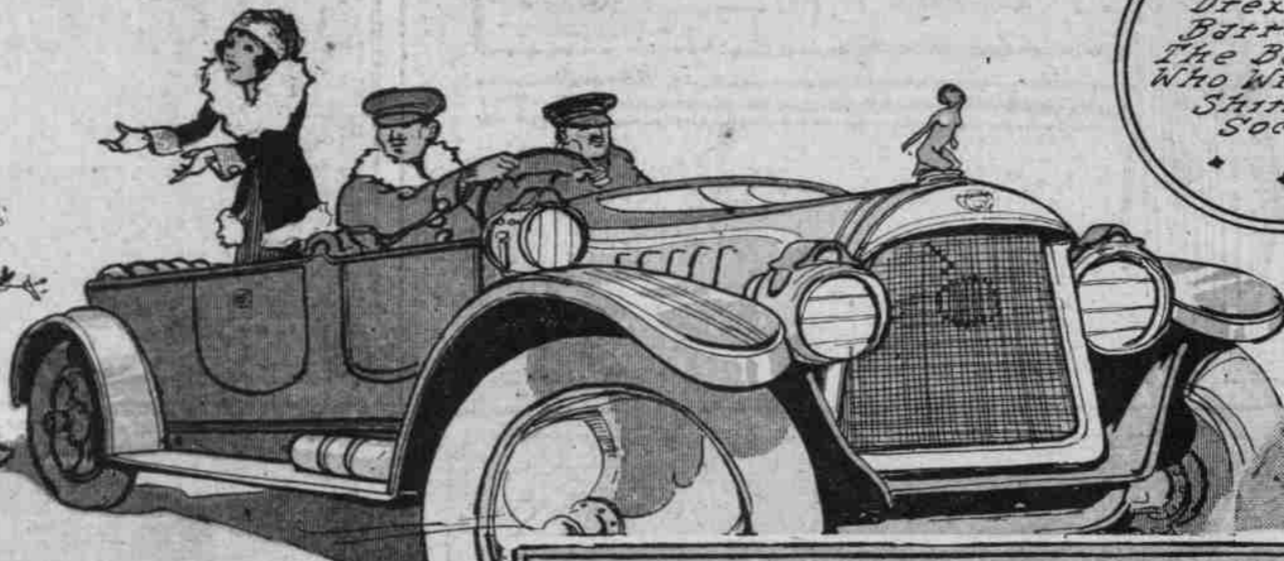




The Very Modern Situation of the Drexel Prodigal Daughter

Deserted With Her Baby Abroad After Her Elopement. This Darling of Millions Is Again to Shine on Fifth Avenue on Condition That She Drop Her Husband's Name.



Mrs. Alice Drexel Barrett, The Beauty Who Will Again Shine in Society.



The Palatial Drexel Home at Newport

BY BETTY VAN BENTHUYSEN.

ALICE DREXEL BARRETT, heiress to the John R. Drexel millions, has come home after a two-year experience in the leading role of the prodigal daughter—in real—not reel—life, and so far as Papa and Mama Drexel are concerned, she may have the whole veal output of the Chicago stockyards, if it will help any to blot out the memory of a debutante's broken heart.

With the return is to come a divorce from "Diamond Bill" Barrett, formerly of Portland and Hillsboro, Or., who played the other side of the sketch in society's most astonishing heart tragedy. Following the divorce, as "Mrs. Alice C. Drexel," the young woman is to resume her place in the society of New York, Newport and Europe.

Such is the latest chapter in the peculiarly sad, and at the same time, remarkable story of the young heiress who has crowded the joys and the sorrows of life into two years that left little along the route of experience to be shaded into the picture.

Alice Drexel was one of those girls who, from childhood, might not. She might not do any of the things she pictured in advance, and under the watchful eye of a mother who was accustomed to rule in her own way, she came to the estate of the young womanhood under the tight rein of authority. Marriage especially seemed to be the one thing that the mother sought to delay, and it was through the appetizing of the mother's plans by fate that all the tragedy of the girl's life came.

Carefully planning against fate, Mrs. Drexel consigned her daughter to the schoolroom for a couple of years more than the other girls of her set, and then delayed her debut by sending her abroad, and she was well over 20 when a ball of great fame introduced her to New York society, and formed the prelude to numerous entertainments in neighboring cities at which the formal presentation was continued in lesser form.

But nobody on earth can keep a young girl, pretty, heiress to millions, and holding the privileges of the most exclusive circles, from attracting beaux.

Attract them she did. Four swains appeared on the horizon of whom society thought well, but none of them seemed to find favor with the mother. In fact, when Mrs. Drexel found that the young men were making progress toward the family dinner table, she formed the notion that another trip to Europe might serve as a deterrent, and gave orders for the journey.

It happened that among the young men she had met was a young army captain, little known to society, but coming at a time that the war softened the social situation for shoulder straps, and presented by the Princess Royal. He was a sturdy youth, with an open, frank countenance, a pleasing smile and what politicians call "mixing ability."

William Barrett, the young captain, came directly from Washington, D. C. More remotely he hailed from San Francisco, Tacoma, Wash., and Hillsboro, Or. Also he knew the ropes at London and was no stranger in Paris. Before anybody dreamed that he had aspirations in the Drexel direction,



Mrs. John R. Drexel, whose sternness toward the Eloping Daughter was softened by the stork.



Capt. Wm. Barrett, The Vanished Husband.

the couple might have been found at times wandering together in the shady spots of Bronx park, where they met and cooed as the days went by.

But, although the girl was far from suspecting it, this was not the gallant captain's first experience with love's young dream. "Diamond Bill" Barrett, the son of the late W. N. Barrett of Hillsboro, Or., former state senator of Oregon, had graduated from the naval academy at Annapolis in 1910, received his discharge from the service shortly afterward and went to San Francisco, where he was welcomed into society. Here he narrowly escaped prosecution in connection with passing two diamond rings which he had purchased on credit. Thus came the name "Diamond Bill." From San Francisco Barrett went to Hillsboro, Or., where for a brief time he attempted to study law in his father's office. But the little town proved too tame and Barrett went to Tacoma, where in the summer of 1914 he eloped with a prominent Tacoma society girl. This first romance followed much the course the later one

was to follow, and in 1915 the girl secured a divorce.

From then until the world war "Diamond Bill" dropped from sight, only to bob up again in New York's social world with the epaulets of a captain of aviation upon his shoulders.

Planning the Elopement.

When Alice told the captain that the plans of the family called for a trip to Europe, he urged marriage.

"But," said the girl, "I have no means of my own. All that I have is a little personal allowance."

"It is not your money, it is you, I want," pleaded the captain.

The idea appealed to the girl. She

where she had taken quarters, and that while the voice was that of Alice, the registry at the hotel was that of "Captain and Mrs. William Barrett."

A very much surprised, and a very much shocked, mother heard the story of the elopement over the wire.

The couple were ordered to the family home for a talk. Just what the talk brought nobody ever knew.

But the next chapter in their story shows them on board an ocean liner, bound for Paris, with no financial resources other than an army captain's pay and what little change she had from her allowance. The Drexel checkbook was not financing the trip. That much was certain.

Over on the south side of the Seine are several quarters in which persons who have small means may find accommodations in keeping with the purse. Small hotels of ancient type, and pensions that have no acquaintance with the smart world shelter many a traveler who would see the world on a shoestring. Into these surroundings went the girl of millions and the lover who had told his love in the shady nooks of Bronx park.

Once in a while they ventured out. Once, during the time when the Paris police still had the war lid on gaiety, they gave a dancing party at the Ritz to which all of the Who's Who of the American and English set were bidden. Little Alice and her soldier husband received the congratulations as hosts and, as an especial concession, the hotel got the police to relax the closing order so that dancing might continue to the then impossible hour of 1 o'clock in the morning.

That, of itself, meant some influence at court—the influence of what one is supposed to possess.

But time went along and the bill for the affair was unpaid. The Barretts were not receiving guests at whatever home they affected. Money went, love went, and then one day Alice found that Barrett had deserted her. He left her with never a sou, and with the prospect of a new member of the family to add to the terrors of the situation.

"It seemed that the young mother must go to a public hospital and have

her child first see day in a charity ward. But right there the saving chapter that always comes in good plays and books, opened itself with Father Drexel, in far America, hearing of the distress of his daughter.

True, the family had been on very bad terms with the Barretts after the elopement; true, the breach had undergone no healing, but Father Drexel is human and good-natured, and he gave certain orders, and then took the first boat.

In pursuance to his orders, a nursing home in Normandy took the place of the dreaded public hospital, and when Father Drexel arrived he was just a lap behind the stork bearing a grandson. There was precious little time lost in bringing father and daughter together.

No such easy route was before those who wished to appease Mrs. Drexel. Her pride had been sorely wounded, and it took many weeks to bring her to a position where she was willing to forgive the prodigal daughter. But in course of time the news came that Mrs. Drexel was sailing to join her husband in France, and then the time arrived when it became known that a truce had been patched up between the mother and daughter.

Two ironclad conditions were placed on her forgiveness:

William Barrett's name must never be mentioned to her.

Alice would immediately divorce him and take the name of "Alice C. Drexel."

The Prodigal Returns.

So, fulfilling the pact, Mr. and Mrs. Drexel are bringing the prodigal daughter back to New York and the winter entertainments will find her again in the favored set, with no fear that a cheap hotel in a strange quarter of a strange land will be her lot. Instead, she will have her old place in the New York mansion, and in the great Newport estate.

And what, you ask, became of Barrett?

Nobody seems to know.

He came back from Paris and was lost to the set that had known him in the east. All of a sudden one night the wires from Los Angeles told that he had been arrested. The police

only knew that the arrest was made at the request of Scotland Yard and that the charge was the taking of a string of pearls, worth \$100,000, from Mrs. John D. Spreckels Jr.

Mrs. Spreckels was once a stage dancer in San Francisco. She married young Spreckels against the wishes of his family, and went to London. It seems that Barrett was also in London in the days before his marriage to Miss Drexel and that he was much in the society of Mrs. Spreckels while her husband was away on a business trip to Norway.

During that time Mrs. Spreckels charged that she entrusted the pearls to Barrett and that he disappeared with them. The Los Angeles police heard all of the facts and then reported that they did not justify holding Barrett. He was released and dropped out of sight.

In the meantime, Tiffany came along with a suit against Mrs. Spreckels for \$50,000 alleged to be due on the missing pearls. The suit is now pending. Spreckels, who bought the gems in London from the Tiffany branch, died last August as the result of a motor accident.

But that much of the story no longer interests the Drexels. They have washed the family hands of him, and it remains to be seen what the prodigal daughter, who crowded a whole life story into two chapters of one year each, will do once she is fairly launched upon the social ocean which she once left for love.

Policeman's Evidence Exact.

A case of cruelty to a pony was being tried at the police court. The witness for the prosecution, Policeman Flanagan, was cross-examined by the counsel for the defense.

"Now, officer, be careful and remember that you are on oath. Was the pony in the cart or was it not?"

"No, it was not," emphatically replied Flanagan.

"You hear that, your honor?" triumphantly proclaimed the counsel for the defense. "Then, pray, officer, where was the pony?"

"In the shafts," answered the exact policeman.