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The Comedy-Tragedy of Mrs. Vanderbilt's \$100,000 Pearl Necklace

How It Lay Lost Under the Feet of Fashion Until One of Mr. Vanderbilt's Own Clerks Found It



How He Received His Reward BUT—How It Also Broke Up the Home of the Girl He Admired



"He Clasped It Around Mrs. Gough's Neck. 'It's Clumsy,' She Said.

"There It Lay Unnoticed, While the Skirts of Fashion Frou-froued Over It.

WHY should the luck of the Vanderbilts, which is popularly supposed to turn everything they touch into gold, have reversed its magic to blight the happiness of a Brooklyn bride?

By what token do talismans operate that this one, popularly the most potent, should turn to dross the gladness of Mrs. Lillian Gough, of Flatbush, Brooklyn, New York?

When alchemy once starts working backward, once the Philosopher's Stone is rubbed the wrong way, it can turn things into trouble faster than it ever turned them into gold.

Witness Mrs. Lillian Gough and the Vanderbilt necklace.

The necklace, which holds some of Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt's favorite pearls, lay on the doorstep of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Daintily shod toes trod its encasing envelope. Over it, through the rotary doors, streamed the frou-frou of fashion. While it lay there young John Jere Collins locked his desk in Mr. Vanderbilt's New York Central freight offices, a few blocks away, and then started down town. By the time he had reached the Ritz-Carlton the envelope containing the pearls had been kicked to the base of the steps. The envelope had been torn also and the diamond pendant flashed a signal to his eye. Collins picked up the envelope and put it in his pocket.

Here was a situation in itself. An honest young clerk from Mr. Vanderbilt's own New York Central Railroad office picked up Mrs. Vanderbilt's lost necklace before Mrs. Vanderbilt knew it was lost, at the very door of the Ritz, where Mrs. Vanderbilt's maid had dropped it.

But in the tangled skein of human fates interwoven around the fortunate finding of one of Mrs. Vanderbilt's most treasured possessions there was another situation—over in Flatbush, Brooklyn, where Mrs. Gough lived, and where, it happened, Collins frequently called. For, from afar, ever since his boyhood, he had brought his friendship to the feet of the pretty young woman.

Even now as he threaded his way through the imporing throng of wealth of fashion at the door of the Ritz, he was bent on an errand which had her happiness for its object and its aim.

"Oh, I so would like to see that play," he heard her say the evening before when they were out together with friends. He had set out after the day's work at the office was over to go to the theatre and buy tickets.

How should he know that he was

going to stumble upon Mrs. Vanderbilt's pearl necklace? How should he know that Fate, which has so strange a penchant for choosing jewels as emissaries of undoing, lurked in the sparkle of the diamond pendant that his eyes caught at the door of the Ritz?

Least of all, how should poor little Mrs. Gough, in her Flatbush home, seek evil portents in her young admirer's discovery.

Fortunate Mr. Collins saw her that evening.

"Oh, I found this thing," he said. He drew the necklace from his pocket.

"Beads," said young Mrs. Gough. "Be careful how you handle them, John. It's so hard to string them."

"Try them on," he suggested. She clasped them about her neck and looked down disapprovingly upon them. "I don't like it," she said. "I wouldn't wear the big, clumsy thing."

When she removed it they discovered the "clumsy thing" had a pendant encircled by shining stones.

"The rest of it is trash," she said, "but that may be worth something." The pendant was a large oval, beneath which, on one side, was a miniature of a very young man, scarcely more than a lad. On the other was a lock of hair, probably from the thick, waving mass on the head of the original of the miniature. As a matter of fact, the portrait was that of Mrs. Vanderbilt's son, Rutherford, who was killed in France some years ago.

"Better watch the Lost advertisements," advised a friend who was present. "The thing may be worth something."

"It is worth something to somebody because of this," said the finder, looking at the pictured face. "Whoever he is, he is a manly chap."

The next day there appeared in the Lost and Found columns an advertisement by a leading firm of jewelers, describing the necklace, naming the hour and place at which it was lost, and offering \$500 reward. The jeweller looked up in surprise as Collins presented the necklace.

"I am commissioned to pay the \$500 reward in cash," he said.

And he handed across the counter five \$100 bills.

"By the way, how much is that necklace worth?" asked the young man, departing.

"About \$100,000 was the reply. Collins gasped his astonishment. But he was yet to learn at how much more than that Mrs. Vanderbilt rated the value.

He was at work at his clerk's desk in the big freight offices of the New York Central next day when he was

told by an office boy that Mr. Vanderbilt wished to see him.

"The Big Boss?" breathed Collins in surprise that was half dismay. He walked briskly into Mr. Vanderbilt's private office.

"Mr. Collins," said the millionaire, "I hear that you found a necklace belonging to Mrs. Vanderbilt and returned it. I ask you if you would rather have \$500 cash or five one thousand dollar bonds of the railroad."

"I'd prefer to leave that to your judgment, sir," said Collins.

"Well, here, then," said Mr. Vanderbilt, handing the young clerk five one-thousand-dollar bonds of the New York Central.

"Here is the \$500," said Collins. "Oh, you may as well keep that."

By which token it would appear that so far, at least, the talisman of the Vanderbilt touch of gold held good.

It did for Collins. But what of poor little Mrs. Lillian Gough? Hearken now to what it brought to her.

For ten years Collins had known her, and all that time had loved her. His patient, awkward, boyish love apparently made little impression upon the belle of his neighborhood in which they lived in Brooklyn.

He had many rivals. From among them she chose Joseph Gough, a master machinist of Newark. Five years ago she wedded him. Two years ago a little daughter was added to their home.

In business Joseph Gough prospered. But in business, cards often bear the inverse ratio to success in love. There were rumors that the Goughs were not wholly happy. He was faithful. She was true. He attended to his business in the shop, she to hers in the home. Yet there was not perfect accord. Neighbors whispered the long word, covering much unhappiness, "incompatibility."

Meanwhile the clerk plodded steadily on in his office. He saved his money. He hoped for happier times. And now and then when Mrs. Gough paid a visit to her family or friends in Flatbush he called upon her and occasionally had the happiness of escorting her to the theatre.

Then enter the pearl necklace. Followed the catastrophe to the Mrs. Joseph Gough.

"She told me a fellow in Brooklyn was going to get tickets for 'Twin Beds,' and on the way he found the necklace. It belonged to Mrs. Vanderbilt, and he got a reward for it," testified her friend, Mrs. Nellie V. Wordley, in the suit that followed. For her husband a master machinist, having found a letter written by the clerk, waxed indignant and ordered



Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt; the \$100,000 Necklace, Actual Size, and Below It Mrs. John Gough, Whose Home it Broke Up.

his wife to leave his home and never more return to it.

The Vanderbilt necklace had been lost and found the first week in December. Her forced departure from

her husband's home followed January 5.

"Joe thinks I wore the necklace to the theatre. I didn't. You know perfectly well that after I tried it on it stayed in that cabinet drawer until John left, and then he had to be reminded of it or he would have forgotten it," sobbed Lillian Gough. "I never thought of wearing the old thing."

"You did say you wouldn't wear the clumsy thing," affirmed a friend.

But Joseph Gough was immovable as one of the rivets in the machine he operates. He produced a letter written by the clerk, a missive which he designated as "slushy, but convincing."

This letter, which was signed "Jere," ran as follows:

"Dear Sweetheart Girl—I am just aching to hold you in my arms again. It seems like an age since I saw you last. Am trying to picture you over there pining and worrying away, and I can't bear to think about it, so I am coming over to Newark every evening, if it is possible, even if I can only see you for five minutes. For you sweet girl, five minutes with you is like a year in heaven, if we believe what is preached.

"But, for me, heaven is just you and I, and for me to see you happy

and have that sweet little smile on your face a'ways.

"As I write this your ring on my finger gleams staring me in the face, and it seems as if the lion were saying, 'Your girlie wants you.' And that is just the way it is. Whatever I am doing, wherever I am, my first thoughts are 'Whatever is my poor little girlie doing now?'

"But be of brave heart and cheer up. Things are bound to change, and the sooner they do the better. I will be over in Newark to see you to-morrow night. Will call you up some time after 6 p. m. If you are not in, will leave the telephone number where you can reach me. I had a telephone conversation with Mr. C. and it will be all right for you to see him in his office to-morrow, Tuesday, afternoon at 3 o'clock.

"So, girlie, go down and see him; explain everything to him and ask his advice to the limit. Was talking with your mother this afternoon. The baby is fine and dandy. Heard her running around and playing while I was talking. Everything and everybody else is all O. K., so don't worry on that.

"Well, my sweetheart girl, and I know you are mine and mine only, and I am not afraid I am in a dream and will be waked up. When those sweet lips of yours told me that you loved me, then I knew that it was no dream, but a reality, and I was filled to overflowing.

"Sweetheart, words cannot express

the feeling. Neither can I describe it. Will do everything I can to show you in time to come. Much as I hate to say it, will have to say goodbye until to-morrow night, sweetheart girlie of mine."

On the strength of the affidavit of Mrs. Wordley and on this letter he responded to her suit for separate maintenance with a counter suit.

Of course, it is hardly fair to blame young Collins' alleged infatuation for Mrs. Gough on the Vanderbilt necklace, but if it had not been for the necklace incident, and the repetition of it by Mrs. Wordley to Mr. Gough, the breaking up of the Gough home might perhaps have been averted.

This time the proverbial Vanderbilt luck has been reversed. Undoubtedly the proverb of the Vanderbilt good luck held for Mrs. Vanderbilt. Problematically for the clerk. But it failed for the young woman of the divided homes in Newark and Flatbush.

For her the necklace was *lost* and not found. That a young man found a necklace and, placing it about her neck, took her to the theatre, was enough evidence for the breaking up of her home. Though the wife has explained and the clerk has said he will talk matters over with him at any time, the master machinist is obdurate.

For Mrs. Joseph Gough the Vanderbilt necklace was her undoing.

What Becomes of the Holes in Our Postage Stamps

WHAT becomes of the holes in a sheet of postage stamps? Sounds like a silly question, doesn't it? But wait a minute.

On a concrete platform outside the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington a few days ago some barrels were being "headed up." They were filled with queer-looking stuff which anybody might well have been at a loss to identify. It certainly wasn't a mineral; it didn't look like a vegetable. Many colors—red, blue, green and yellow—seemed to be mixed in the small particles of which it was composed.

"What on earth is it?" asked a curious passerby, pausing to take a look.

"Just holes in postage stamps," replied the man with the hammer. Then, in explanation, he grabbed out a handful of the stuff and showed that it was composed of tiny disks of

paper, some red, some yellow, some blue, some green. Others were of yet other colors.

It appears that the material in question is a by-product of the machines through which the sheets of postage stamps go to be perforated. As the little holes are punched out of them the tiny paper disks fall into baskets beneath, while later on are emptied into barrels. Every week-day in the year the Bureau of Engraving turns out in this way a barrel and a half of "holes." This means nine barrels a week, or 468 barrels in a twelvemonth.

How many holes go to make a barrel full? Nobody ever took the trouble to count, but it may be reckoned approximately without much difficulty. The bureau prints in a year 12,000,000,000 postage stamps. Allowing for the fact that a row of perforations serves for the stamps on both sides of it, there are twenty-one of them for each stamp. This would mean a total of 252,000,000,000 holes

made by the machines. With a total output of 468 barrels of holes for the twelvemonth, it is obvious that the contents of each barrel would amount to about 538,461,538 holes.

Astronomers say that there are in the universe not fewer than 500 billion stars and not more than 1,000 billion, the exact number being somewhere between the two. It appears then that the Bureau of Engraving in a period between two and four years turns out enough holes in postage stamps to equal the number of the stars.

Now, what becomes of all these holes? Have they any value? The answer to the latter question is, not the slightest. They are carried off, in the barrels, to the city dump.

Many sheets of postage stamps are spoiled in the making. Thousands of other sheets, gummed together by hot weather in the Summer time, nibbled by mice, or in other ways rendered unusable, are returned to the bureau to be replaced with new ones. Such sheets, of course, have a cash

value; they must be destroyed, like redeemed paper money. For this purpose they are packed in boxes and sent in a wagon to the Washington Navy Yard, where they are burned, under the official eye of a Government committee, in a big furnace.

Formerly the spoiled stamps were boiled to a pulp, like the old paper money, in a tank with water and acids. But, whereas the paper money pulp was sold, as is still the custom, for paper stock, being derived originally from fine linen rags, the stamps, of woodpulp paper, went into the sewer, being not worth saving.

As for the hole in a postage stamp, it seems to be a very trifling thing; yet, as a matter of fact, it represents an extremely important invention. When stamps were first used they had to be cut apart with scissors, which was highly inconvenient. It is said that \$10,000 was paid to the man who originated the idea of perforating the sheets, for the privilege of using it.