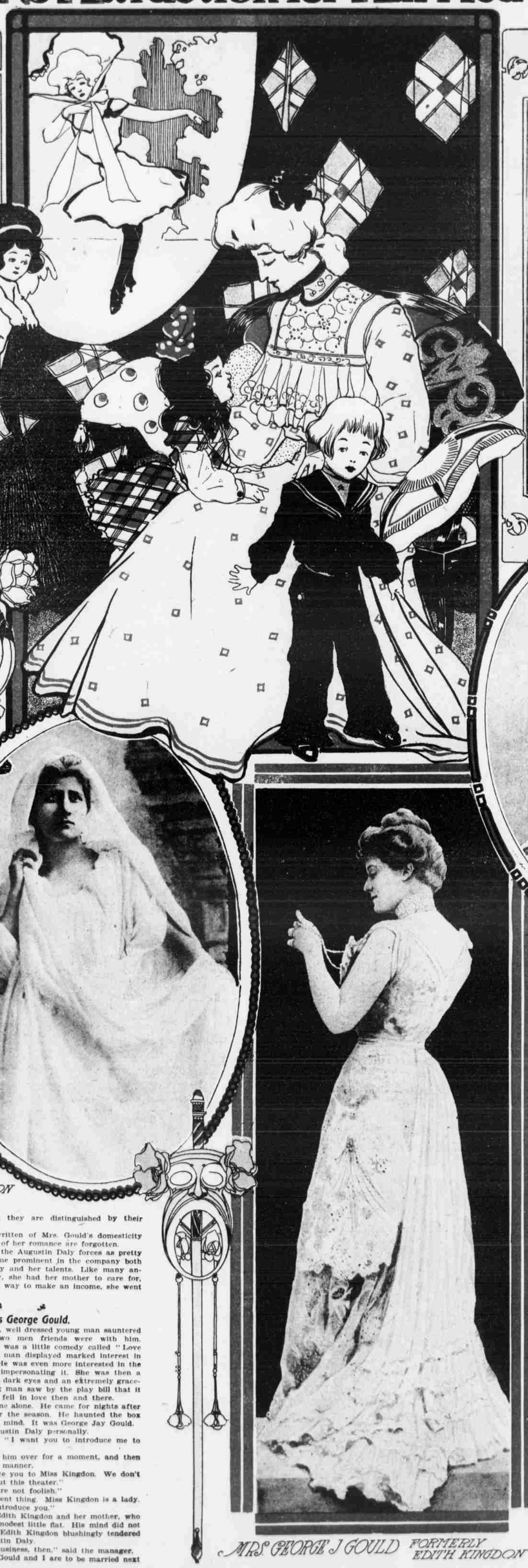
Footlights Have No Attraction for Married Stage Beauties

MRS. HOWARD GOULD FORMERLY KATHRIN CLEMMONS



MRS B.P CHENEY FORMERLY JULIA ARTHUR

The Countess of CLANCARTY FORMERLY BELLE BILTON

MRS NAVARRO FORMERLY MARY ANDERSON

MRS. GEORGE J GOULD FORMERLY EDITH KINGDON

"I WANT to get as far away from the public as possible."

The sentiment expressed in this oft quoted utterance of Mme. Antonio Navarro is one which seems to be shared by the majority of stage beauties who have married out of the profession. There are half a dozen women of the stage married during the time of early and brilliant promise who have proved the fallacy of the belief that there springs up within the heart of every one time actress a perennial and irresistible desire to return to the scene of her triumphs. So far from this being the case, the greater number of those actresses who have retired are devoted to domesticity and disclaim the slightest desire to go back.

"I would not act professionally again if I was paid a million dollars," says Mary Anderson Navarro.

The devotion of Mrs. George Gould, who was Edith Kingdon, to her home and children, and her positive refusal to act again in anything but private theatricals is well known.

Mrs. Howard Gould, who was Kathrin Clemmons, never shows the slightest desire to shine beyond the circle of her own and her husband's intimate friends. The only "part" which she cares for is that of the good fairy to the thousands of little waifs which she befriends every winter in New York.

Miss Julia Arthur, who directly after her marriage to the millionaire Benjamin Pierce Cheney starred in "The Lady of Quality" and Shakspearean productions, now avows that she will never return to the stage.

Domestic Qualities Win Queen's Favor.

Even more quiet has been the life of the young English girl, Belle Bilton, who is now Lady Clancarty, and who upon her country estate in Ireland has lived a life of the most exclusive retirement and devotion to her children. The contrast between her unusual qualities as a wife and mother and her early stage career has been such as to attract the attention of the queen and England's best families, with the result that after years spent without social recognition she has been presented at court.

Taken together the early life and married life of this beautiful woman combine to make an extraordinary career through which no woman could have passed unsullied and emerged triumphant unless endowed with absolute goodness and an ever present guardian angel. Lady Clancarty was the daughter of a respectable soldier named Bilton. She had a young sister named Flo, and when she herself was only 15 they earned their own living and that of their mother and younger sisters by a kind of gypsy life that included tramping through England and giving lively performances at suburban music halls. They were extraordinarily pretty, and they had "success." For success of a kind it certainly was, which brought the two girls, untrained and unadvertised, to the boards of a London theater, and which in a week made one of them the most conspicuous favorite on the music hall stage. Belle Bilton in particular acquired such a reputation for beauty that she soon had many admirers, openly devoted, who would do anything to gain a smile from her. She would listen to none of them, however, and soon married Richard Viscount Dunlo, who, in spite of his expectations of his father's earldom, had at that time not a cent of income.

Fight Father's Opposition.

The marriage raised a storm, the father of the groom dragging his son into a divorce suit, which, however, ended in a complete triumph for the wife and reflected unfavorably upon the old earl for trying to besmirch the name of his son's wife. The next week young Lord Dunlo followed his wife to Dublin, where a reconciliation was effected. Lady Dunlo continued on the stage for a year or two until the old earl died. Then she found herself in possession of a magnificent country place, Garbbally park, and 25,000 acres in Ireland.

The model life which the young peeress has led here has been the wonder of all England. She completely transformed the dissolute young earl, so that he now is a pattern of what a good husband and a nobleman should be. She is likewise an efficient and adoring mother to her little daughter and her twin sons. It was through these domestic virtues that Lady Clancarty won the favor of Queen Alexandra, who in 1901 changed the course of her ladyship's life by receiving her at court.

Edith Kingdon Model Mother.

Although the career of Mrs. George Gould cannot in its earlier period be compared to that of Lady Clancarty, it is a well known fact that a large amount of the admiration which Mrs. Gould has received has been because she has made such a beautiful mother, and that this has played its part in her recognition by New York's 400. Even society loves a good mother, and Mrs. Gould's well known devotion to her children has won approval from some of its most exclusive leaders. When her children were babies she cared for them personally almost as much and continuously as any woman in a more humble sphere of life cares for her own children.

To disprove certain assertions which were made of society women when topics kindred to race suicide were being discussed Mrs. Gould wrote:

"Devotion to the domestic circle comes first in every woman's list of duties. It ought to be, and in the majority of cases is, the greatest pleasure that a woman can have. There may be some women who place the pleasures of social life above those which are found in the heart of one's family, where the children are kings and queens, but they are so few in number that they are distinguished by their scarcity."

So much has been written of Mrs. Gould's domesticity that the earlier incidents of her romance are forgotten.

Soon after she joined the Augustin Daly forces as pretty Edith Kingdon she became prominent in the company both on account of her beauty and her talents. Like many another girl of good family, she had her mother to care for, and, seeking the quickest way to make an income, she went on the stage.

Attracts George Gould.

One night a dark eyed, well dressed young man sauntered into Daly's theater. Two men friends were with him. Through the play, which was a little comedy called "Love on Crutches," the young man displayed marked interest in one of the characters. He was even more interested in the young woman who was impersonating it. She was then a slender slip of a girl with dark eyes and an extremely graceful figure, and the young man saw by the play bill that it was Edith Kingdon. He fell in love then and there.

The next night he came alone. He came for nights after that. He hired a box for the season. He haunted the box until he had made up his mind. It was George Jay Gould.

Next he went to Augustin Daly personally.

"Mr. Daly," he said, "I want you to introduce me to Edith Kingdon."

Augustin Daly looked him over for a moment, and then spoke in his usual gruff manner.

"No, I won't introduce you to Miss Kingdon. We don't want any foolishness about this theater."

"But my intentions are not foolish."

"Well, that is a different thing. Miss Kingdon is a lady. At the proper time I'll introduce you."

The young man met Edith Kingdon and her mother, who entertained him in their modest little flat. His mind did not change. And soon after Edith Kingdon blushingly tendered her resignation to Augustin Daly.

"Well, he did mean business, then," said the manager.

"Yes, Mr. Daly, Mr. Gould and I are to be married next month."

When Julia Arthur married the Boston millionaire, Mr. Cheney, it was generally understood that she did so with the proviso that she was to continue on the stage. Her husband did not oppose her; in fact, he helped her to put on some of the most lavish productions. In this course he showed himself wise. After a few seasons she was so in love with married life and her beautiful home that she was ready to settle down in it, and now emphatically declares that she is done with the stage forever. Mr. Cheney is even more emphatic. Some time ago she announced her intention to appear in a benefit given to her friend Clara Morris, to show her in some degree her devotion. But at the last moment Mr. Cheney persuaded her to give it up.

She is in love with her new home, the Moorings, on Calf island, in the midst of the Brewsters. When taking visitors over it she is not content until they have peered into the refrigerator and the cozy laundry. She shows her silver closets and her capacious linen closets. In the trailing gowns of white which she affects, and which accentuate her height, she looks as much a queen in her home as she did in her stage parts, and the rôle is the one which she seems more than content to play.

Kathrin Clemmons Distressed Actresses' Friend.

One of the stage women who, because of the fact that married life has brought her no children, might have been expected to aspire at some time or other to at least a temporary return to the stage is Mrs. Howard Gould. So far from this being the case, her life is entirely devoted to her husband, their friends, and their charities. An actress who is poor and in trouble never comes to her in vain. A little actress from California got without work or money in New York, and was unable to regain her feet. She came to Mrs. Gould, and when, three months later, she died, it was in one of the most expensive and luxurious of New York hospitals, and after having had the best medical attention that it was possible for money to procure. She also made the last days of Jennie O'Neill Potter ones of comfort and comparative happiness.

Another story is told of a seamstress who used to know Mrs. Gould's mother. The seamstress looked up Mrs. Gould, told a tale of woe, and was received into the house. She recuperated for two weeks and was then given a place in the sewing room, where she now has steady work at a price far beyond her wildest dreams.

Recently a stationer moved into Fifth avenue, where he will sell stationery to the four hundred at a greatly increased profit over that he has been making. He received his start from Mrs. Howard Gould. In old days he had known her father. One day when he did not have a dollar in his pocket he wrote a line to her recalling the early acquaintance. By return mail he received a check from Mrs. Gould's secretary suggesting that he start up in a store of some kind and wishing him all success. The success followed, as it has in many such cases, when this millionaire's wife has come to the rescue just in time.

Though she has not had millions at her command, Mary Anderson Navarro is also noted for her charities and kindnesses to her old friends. When she became Mrs. Navarro she laid aside all customs and habits of the actress. In her English home she is the ideal wife, mother, hostess, and housekeeper.