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KITTY GORDON'S TRIAL RECONCILIATION

Lady Decies, Who Was Vivien Gould, and Whose Title May, Some Day, Be Kitty Gordon's.

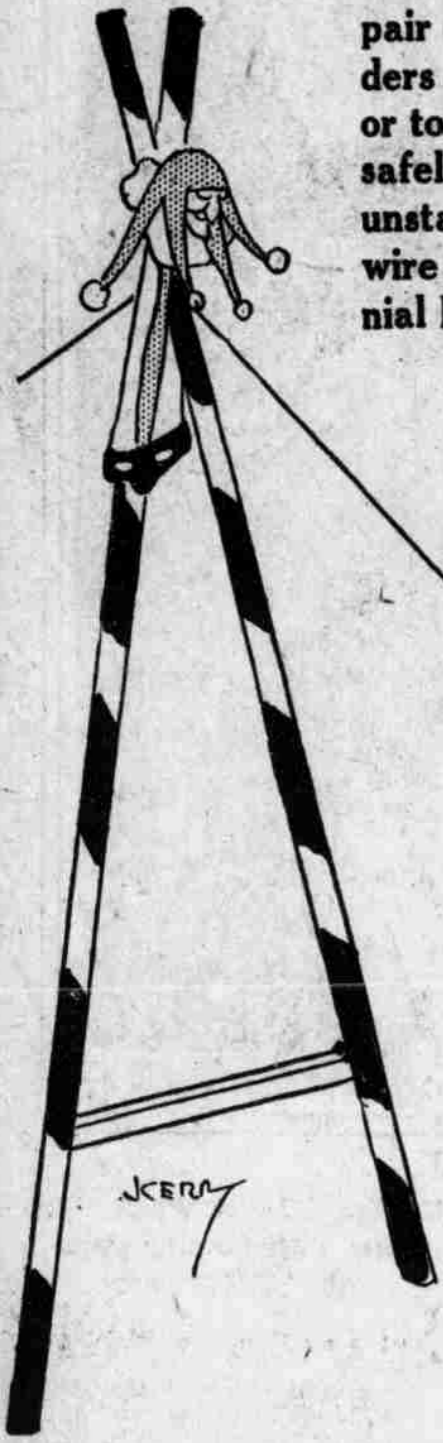


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How the Most Beautiful Back on the Stage, Which Was Turned Away for Years from Her Husband, Lady Decies' (Vivien Gould's) Brother-in-Law, Will Turn Back to Him and Aristocracy Again--If His Test Works Out

KITTY GORDON'S beautiful back—maybe it's the most beautiful back in the world—will soon be but an enchanting memory to the theatre-going public. She is about to withdraw it from the public stage and—if her most interesting experiment succeeds—exhibit it henceforth only in polite, even aristocratic, social circles.

It is, in fact, an aristocratic back, alas! Before it had ever been discovered by American playgoers a marriage ceremony had made it the conjugal property of the Honorable Henry Beresford, younger brother to Vivien Gould's Lord Decies—as is duly set forth in the book of British Peers.

That it ever gladdened the hearts of playgoers was wholly due to the accident of a conjugal misunderstanding—which it seems that the Honorable Beresford now regrets.

"The stage is a bore, anyway," says the Honorable Mrs. Beresford, except Kitty Gordon, having discovered some regrets on her own account.

So Cupid is once more to take the pair on his shoulders and endeavor to carry them safely along the unstable slack-wire of matrimonial life.

Will the experiment succeed? Or will Cupid's foot slip again, and restore to the stage that most beautiful of backs? Will the British aristocracy receive that beautiful back back? Will Lord Decies and Lady Vivien welcome it home to the ancestral estates? Will it warm other noble English hearts, as it warmed that organ in pious bosoms at the theatre and in the music halls? Who can say? Let the sequel determine.

Behind that beautiful back is a story, not of bones and flesh and muscle, but of hearts. Can strained or broken bonds be mended? Can sundered hearts be rejoined? One rude, practical philosopher said they could not. He even drew a parallel. He said, "Broken china always shows the crack."

Kitty Gordon flouts saws and laughs at philosophers. She believes that severed hearts can reunite and beat as fondly as before. And that brings us to the story. Kitty Gordon is trying matrimony again, and with the same spouse. There are trial marriages, trial courtships, trial almost everything, but this is the first couple on record to attempt a trial reconciliation.

"My husband, the Hon. Henry Beresford and myself were never divorced," she said to friends in New York before starting on tour with "The Enchantress," in which it goes

without saying, she plays and sings the title role. "That is a mistake. We talked of it and even started it, but never secured one. In our hearts I don't believe that either of us ever wanted one. He has come over here and we will stay for two or three months. If we get along, as we are pretty sure to do—we are older now—we will remain husband and wife. There will be no divorce."

The Honorable Henry Beresford is therefore on probation, as it were. So, too, is his radiantly beautiful wife. Will he keep his temper? Will she control hers? That is the question in the minds of each. For it was temper that strained the bonds, and finally caused the separation, of the interesting pair.

"It was about nothing in particular," said the Honorable Mrs. Henry Beresford, a bit tearfully, to her friends.

"I started with nothing, but quarrels usually do," said the Honorable Henry, who is but one remove from Lord Decies. "But she couldn't give in."

Nor did she. Instead she sailed for America, and her husband heard by cable of her success, and her newly revealed back in the States.

At the latter news he swore. How should he know that all this was a part of the exactions of the commercial theatre in the sordid States, and had in it no element of the personal, that indeed Miss Gordon protested against the revelation of those lovely back lines to the waist, but that she yielded to the demands of art and the coaxings of salary? He was a very angry young man, was the Honorable Henry Beresford, and began action for divorce.

But all men are not of views so narrow as the Honorable Henry. Of these was Count Maurice De Vries, an Austrian, who admired the chic and candor of Viennese women, and who was not dismayed by the glories of Miss Gordon's back, only dazzled and delighted. The Count met Miss Gordon in London. He followed her to romantic Paris. The ill-tempered and unreasonable Honorable Henry followed him. He even played the dog in the manger to such an extent that he challenged the Count to a duel in the early morning in the damp Bois.

"It was decidedly uncomfortable at that hour," Count Maurice said. "Damp and draughty."

Count De Vries only lost his coffee and got a few scratches that soon healed, for he is young and healthy. Undeterred by the duel and the watchful jealousy of Honorable Henry Beresford, he accompanied his "Enchantress" to this country. Their marriage was only deferred by the dilatoriness of

Miss Gordon's spouse in securing his divorce. Count De Vries returned to his diplomatic post in London. The men were careful not to meet at their clubs.

Meanwhile the anger of Kitty Gordon's husband slowly cooled. He even brought himself to look at the pictures of his wife taken in gowns of extreme rear décolletage in the American newspapers. Having glanced, he lingered to admire. It was always thus with Miss Gordon's pictures, and Miss Gordon's self.

Meanwhile, too, Miss Gordon, in New York, and especially on tour, reflected upon the past. Thoughts are vagrants. They would not centre upon her husband's temper and the bitter things he said while the tempest of that temper was raging. The thoughts travelled back to the early years of their married life, to the perfect days of courtship. And presently, greatly to her own surprise, Miss Gordon found herself weeping.

While Miss Gordon was in England for her vacation last year her absentee lord and master wrote asking if he might call. She received him conventionally and chilly, as she might any casual caller. There were several present, and she handed him a cup of tea with impartial attention. The others left first, and when they had gone the husband and wife "talked things over." There was no quarrel nor hint of a quarrel.

"We might try again and see if we can make it a go," he suggested, as he prolonged his farewell.

"We are older now," assented his wife. "We may have more patience. Come along with me to America. You have always wanted to go."

"I can't go now, Constance." Her name isn't really Kitty except on the stage. "But I will follow you in a fortnight."

"At least, if we cannot get along we will be no worse off than we are now," said his wife.

"Right-o," responded his near-lordship.

He came. Every night at the stage door wherever "The Enchantress" is playing, appears a tall, quiet mannered man with a soldierly air, who puts the star into a cab, steps in after her and closes the door.

"One of them fool Johnnies!" ask the doorkeeper.

"This Johnnie is a wise one," replies the "prop," who travels with the company. "Guess he's permanent."

So Kitty Gordon will leave the stage after another season or two. She will go to the Beresford home forty miles from Ascot. She and the Honorable Henry and their little daughter, Vera, who is at school in England, will live quietly after the manner of gentry, except when



The Honorable Mrs. Beresford, Sister-in-Law of Lady Decies—Known on the

Stage as Kitty Gordon. they run up to London to see the new plays and to enter Mayfair, if the ex-actress is bidden. The famous back will be for her family and for society if it wishes it. Their cousin, Lady Decies, once Vivien Gould, may cast the deciding vote, for the Beresford family has never

been quite sure what to do with an actress.

But Miss Gordon will no longer be an actress. She will be the Hon. Mrs. Beresford, and some time, perhaps, Lady Constance Decies. That is, if, as her husband says, they "make it a go" this time.



HON. HENRY BERESFORD, KITTY'S HUSBAND



VERA BERESFORD, KITTY'S DAUGHTER