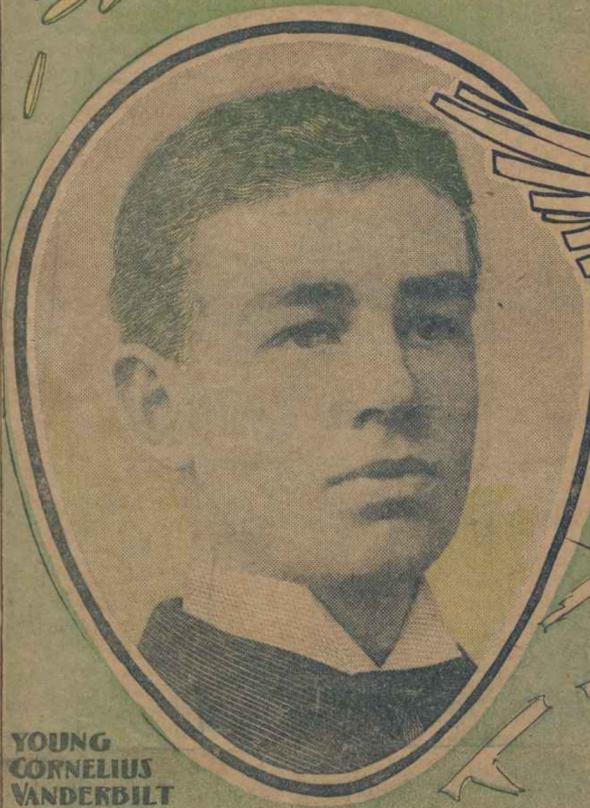


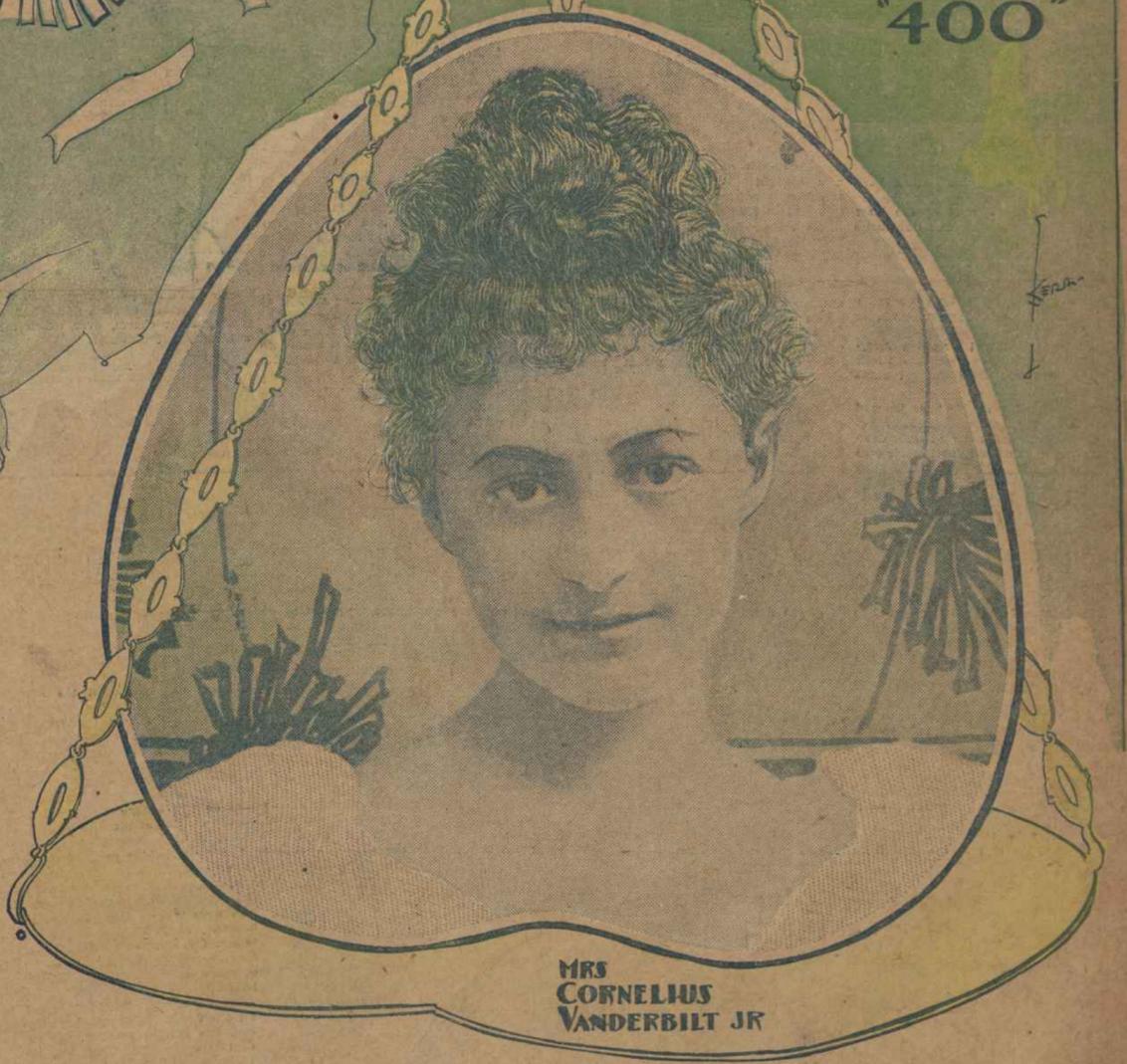
THE GIRL WHOSE LOVE COST YOUNG VANDERBILT ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS

CUPID
AND THE
"400"



YOUNG
CORNELIUS
VANDERBILT

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MRS
CORNELIUS
VANDERBILT JR

A Romance and Tragedy in Real Life

THE death on Tuesday last of Cornelius Vanderbilt was not merely the passing of the chief of the richest family in America. It furnished the climax of a drama of extraordinary human interest.

The theme of this drama is the most ancient and classical known to the novelist and the dramatist.

It is the drama of the rich, stern father, who loves his children but seeks to enforce his wishes in their love affairs; of the son and heir, who submits to disinheritorship and estrangement in order to marry the woman of his choice, and of the final reconciliation when the father is on his deathbed.

The circumstances in this drama of real life were in many respects more impressive and thrilling than they have ever been on the stage or in fiction. The father was rich beyond the dreams of avarice, rich to a degree that an author would hardly dare to represent. He was also more unaccountably obdurate than any literary prototype, for no stern father of fiction ever objects to a daughter-in-law who is rich, beautiful and a leader of society.

The son, young Cornelius Vanderbilt, made a greater sacrifice of wealth than any man has ever been known to make in order to marry the woman he loved—Miss Grace Wilson. He was more obdurate and uncompromising when he discussed the subject of his marriage with his father than we have ever known a son threatened with disinheritorship to be.

The reconciliation was not of the conventional, old-fashioned, dramatic kind. It was only partial, and it was very sorrowful, not taking place in the midst of an admiring group of relatives and friends. It came about after the father knew that he was in the grasp of a cruel malady which might strike him dead at any instant. Such are the elements of this drama of real life, which has been played before the people of New York. Its personages occupy the most conspicuous place in the life of this great metropolis. Its scenes are laid in the most splendid houses of this country. All the great millionaire families of New York are more or less directly concerned in it, and the British aristocracy is not without personal interest in it.

The hero of it, without question, is Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. His attitude is one that appeals deeply to every human heart capable of emotion. Many lovers have proclaimed what they would do for love, but young Vanderbilt actually forfeited the principal share in his father's untold millions in order to marry the woman he loved. He said:

"Father, I am going to marry this girl, and the fact that I shall lose \$100,000,000, or all the money in the world for that matter, will not make the slightest difference to me."

High finance plays a part only secondary to love in this drama. In order to keep a great fortune like that of the Vanderbilts together it is necessary that the bulk of the property should be under the control of one or at most two men.

When William H. Vanderbilt died, in 1838, he left \$10,000,000 apiece to each of his eight children, and the residue to the two oldest sons, Cornelius and William K. They received in all about \$20,000,000 apiece. Cornelius was already the richer, for he had inherited \$5,000,000 from his grandfather, the old Commodore.

It was upon the late Cornelius Vanderbilt that the task of carrying

More Strange
Than Dramatists
and Novelists
Are Forever
Portraying
in Fiction
and on
the Stage.

ing the whole vast family fortune fell. He discharged it with a devotion to duty and a conscientiousness which have never been surpassed, and which undoubtedly hastened his death. By his conservative but wise measures the fortune increased steadily until at his death his own share was estimated at from \$125,000,000 to \$200,000,000.

In accordance with the family policy, Mr. Vanderbilt had to select a son of his own who should inherit the bulk of his fortune and look after the interests of the others. Mr. Vanderbilt married Miss Alice Gwynne, of Cincinnati, and they had six children—William H., Cornelius, Gertrude, Alfred Gwynne, Gladys and Reginald. The oldest, William H., was at first regarded as the principal heir, but he died while still an undergraduate at Yale.

Upon Cornelius, Jr., then devolved the great prospective responsibility. He was educated with endless care, and the fact that he would have control of one of the greatest fortunes in the world was constantly impressed upon him. His father looked with satisfaction on his progress, for, while the young man was not brilliant, he showed steadiness and strength of character. What appeared particularly promising was his love for mechanics, which he has never lost. He has been through a complete apprenticeship in the yards of the New York Central Railroad, and is to-day capable of fitting a complete locomotive together. This inclination to mechanics gave an assurance that he would take a personal interest in the affairs of the great railroad he was to direct.

Physically, young Cornelius Vanderbilt is slightly above medium height and rather slender. His features indicate considerable strength of character. One peculiarity of them is that the eyelids have a slant which is almost Chinese.

He graduated from Yale in 1855, and his own family and the world expected that he would at once enter upon the career which was to culminate in his control of the New York Central Railroad. His wife is a Napoleon of society, and a score of others that are connected with it.

But Cupid rudely disturbed that carefully laid family and business scheme. While at college young Vanderbilt had experienced a growing attachment to Miss Grace Wilson, the pretty daughter of a pretty, fair-haired girl, of slight figure and great vivacity. She had developed rapidly into ardent love, and he spent every moment he could in the society of his adored.

His father then warned him that he would never consent to his marriage with Miss Wilson. The son replied that he loved her, and that she had all the best qualities that a girl could have. There were various reasons suggested for Cornelius Vanderbilt's uncompromising opposition to Miss Wilson. At this time young Vanderbilt was only just twenty-one years old, while Miss Wilson was at least eight years older, having been in society many seasons. At any rate, the older Vanderbilt insisted that she was absolutely unfitted to be his wife for his son.

Judging from past events, young Vanderbilt's fate was sealed from the moment the Wilsons desired to admit him to their family house, to Paris to urge him to return, but in vain. When the youth came back, Mrs. Richard T. Wilson is credited with a fortune of \$20,000,000. His wife is a Napoleon of society, and a score of others that are connected with it. The engagement was announced on June 10, and the wedding took place on June 13. Vanderbilt partisans remarked that the Wilsons were going to devour their prey before he could be rescued. To complete the real estate connection, Orme Wilson married Miss Caroline Astor, daughter of Mrs. William Astor. Then Miss Belle Wilson brought blue blood into the family by marrying the Hon. Michael Henry Herbert, brother of the Earl of Pembroke.

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To crown her matchmaking achievements, then, Mrs. Wilson proposed to marry her daughter Grace to the heir of the greatest fortune in America. Miss Grace Wilson was an extremely pretty, fair-haired girl, of slight figure and great vivacity. She had been in society many seasons. At any rate, the older Vanderbilt insisted that she was absolutely unfitted to be his wife for his son.

Some years ago her engagement was reported to the Hon. Cecil Baring, the New York representative of the great English banking firm, but that was broken off, it is said, because Mr. Wilson could not meet the financial views of the fiancé. The first public indication the Vanderbilts gave of their disapproval of their son's attentions to Miss Wilson was at the Patriarchs' Ball, in February, 1856, when they failed to recognize the Wilsons. In August of the same year Mrs. Ogden Goelet and her sister Grace went to Europe, and young Vanderbilt accompanied them. That sealed his fate. His father sent a friend, Worthington White-

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(Continued on Page Twenty-three)