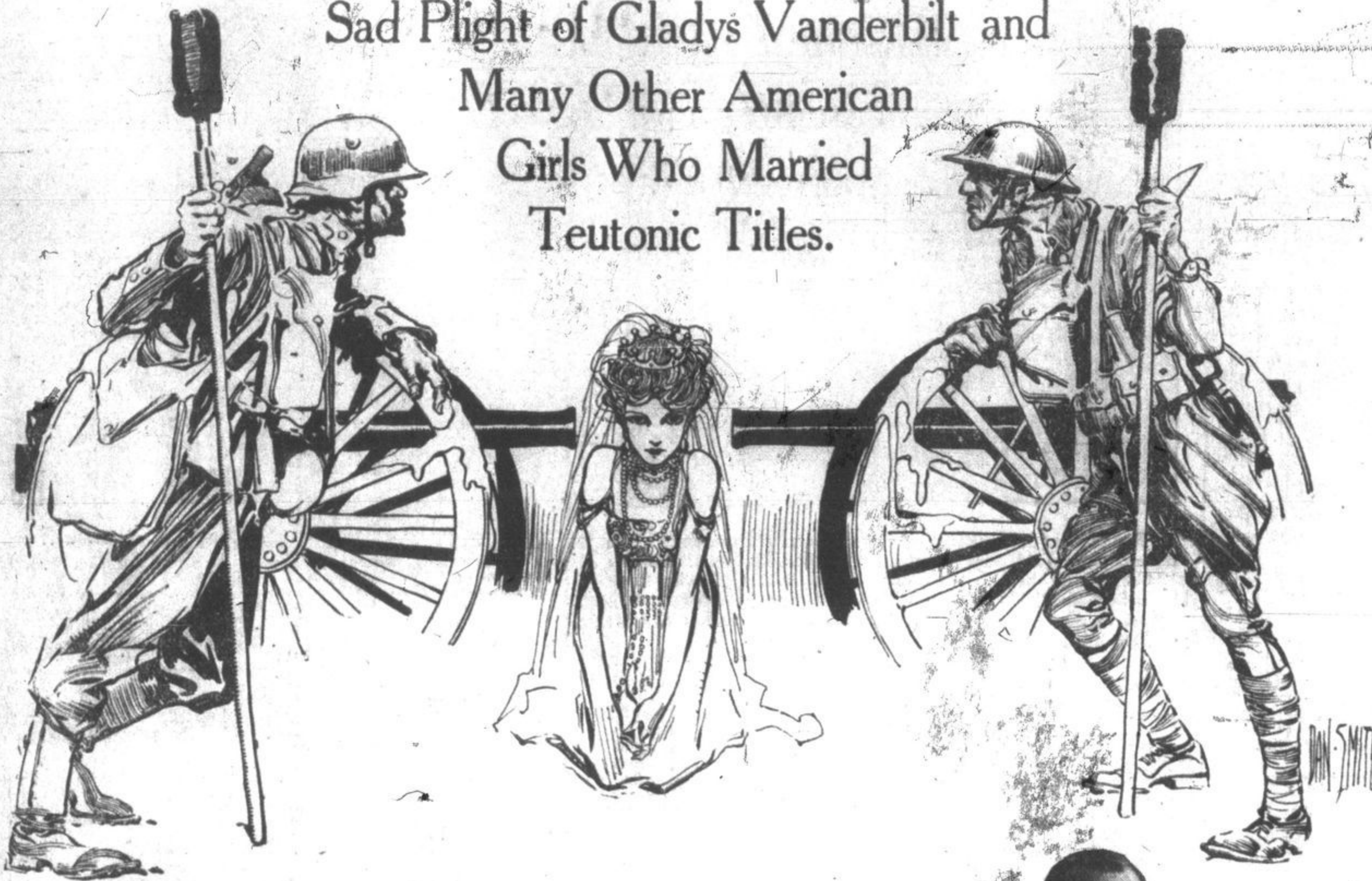


My Enemy Husband

Sad Plight of Gladys Vanderbilt and Many Other American Girls Who Married Teutonic Titles.



The Countess Szchenyi (Gladys Vanderbilt), Who Represents a Large Group of American Victims of the War.

By Elizabeth Van Benthuyzen

WHAT a pity it is that the international peace conference cannot have a committee on broken hearts and shattered romances! They will talk about shoes and ships and sealing wax, of cabbages and kings, but there will be no solemn body picking up the pieces of the hearts that were struck by shell or the fortunes that were officially gassed.

And yet, along the whole history-making line of events there will be many women who stand like so many wives of fishermen on a storm-wrecked coast looking seaward toward the horizon behind which dropped their social glory and their financial strength. For them there is no indemnity. For them there can come no chance to retrieve. They staked all of their hopes on the altar either of love or of ambition, and they lost.

The Penalty of Titles

For they are the women who married German and Austrian titled husbands, either for love or for title, and in many cases there remains for them nothing more than might be reclaimed from the shack of a Belgian peasant which got in the way of a Flanders bombardment on a busy day. Titles are below par in all lands; kings and kaisers have largely gone out of business, and it will be many days before America, from which these unfortunate girls came, will be willing to take anything "Made in Germany"—even a title that is as musty and old as the collar of an ancestral castle.

A Mitchell Palmer, who has had charge of the work of taking the estates and property of aliens in this country, has commandeered the American holdings of 29 women who married Germans or Austrians, and the total of their seized wealth reached \$21,667,890. It was always notorious that the American end of the foreign fortune was its spring—the fountain-head from which the other side drew its revenue to be spent, used in social conquest and dissipated. Rarely indeed has there been a case where any titled husband has used any part of his dot to the making of more money; and

cut by the hand of the government of their fathers. In the very centre of this group of Sad Little Sisters is the Countess Gladys Vanderbilt Szchenyi. She had in her own right in this country, safe from the hand of the Austrian government, \$4,000,000 in securities and the income from a trust fund of \$5,000,000 created by the will of her father. Whatever funds she had on the other side of the line of war had either been largely spent in social conquest, the upkeep of an expensive husband and an equally expensive establishment, or had been taken by the Austro-Hungarian government in the heavy war levies made on its subjects.

The count was not of the profiteer type. He had no time to pay heed to the industries out of which many men coin dollars from the blood of their fellows, even under conditions of defeat. As an earning proposition he was on the debit side of the ledger of life.

When he came to America but a few years ago he came frankly as a seeker for a matrimonial alliance that promised the funds required for high social links. He had to the fullest extent what was then regarded as a social asset, before the days when the red flag appeared in Budapest and the more or less common people took the reins of government. But he was not looking for companionship, for love, for a pretty face, a form divine, or anything in the world, which, separated from mere money, might still have a place in the asset column of life.

Ways of the Fortune Hunter

It was purely and simply a fortune—MONEY. He was taken about New York by his aides with much the same spirit that one might have a groom lead a fancy roadster about the tan bark at the horse show with the view of placing the eye and attracting a customer.

He was what one might call a bit of human period furniture waiting for a lover of the old, and it was the period of his ancestry, not of his own, that held the lure.

Gladys Vanderbilt was one of those who had passed before this count from a strange land who had the uniforms, the gilt and the court dress to

Count Szchenyi in Uniform.



of the dash and attraction that might, without the camouflage of fortune, have won an errand stranger. Her figure was slight and stopped. She got all ties with her home, her family, her friends—and her fortune—were cut. There remained nothing excepting the estate that was already in Austria-Hungary. At first her own land was not at war and her castles were turned over to the hospital workers who cared for the soldiers as they were brought back from the Danube, from Galicia and the Russian wilds. She went along with the workers and nursed the sick.

A Brilliant Wedding

But she was socially ambitious and she took the count. All society went to see the wedding, because all society will go anywhere to see \$1,000,000 united in holy wedlock to a title. It is the order of things. It was thus in the beginning, and, with the exceptions of the few times in world affairs when the gutter gets on top of the roof for a brief period of reforming the roof and making badly needed repairs, it will always be the case.

Then came the period of foreign rule. It is recorded that the merry villagers at the old Szchenyi place flocked out in quaint garb to meet the new mistress and welcome her to the ancient castle that was rich in memories though any of the bathing facilities. But the Vanderbilt dollars worked wonders on the old pile. It became habitable for people who had been accustomed to the luxuries of the ordinary American home, and a town mansion came along to keep it company.

But it must be remembered all the while that the American dollars were working this transformation. The source of supply was the stream that was dammed by the alien property custodian when he took over the estate of the countess. And, in the interim, the new countess did not find all as well as she had anticipated at court. The foolish persons now hurled from place and power by the upheaval of the world then thought that she might not be presented at court with the full privileges of her lord and master. She did not get equal social rank by any means.

And in the same period her own land, following the law of nations, had shut her out from citizenship and the protection of the flag as though

she had been born in Hungary. The wife ever follows the citizenship of the husband.

Such was her status when the war came. Then all ties with her home, her family, her friends—and her fortune—were cut. There remained nothing excepting the estate that was already in Austria-Hungary. At first her own land was not at war and her castles were turned over to the hospital workers who cared for the soldiers as they were brought back from the Danube, from Galicia and the Russian wilds. She went along with the workers and nursed the sick.

Maybe it was there that she found some solace in her hours of trouble.

And Then to Lose the Millions

In the mean time the suave Mr. Palmer takes in the revenue from her estate and deposits it with the funds of the common country. They become a part of the just assets from which the nation may collect its part of the war debt from the enemy. By a curious coincidence, the money of this girl may be lawfully used to pay damages for the loss of her own brother's life when the Teutons sank the Lusitania, for Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt was one of those who went down on that ship.

In the long list of women of America who are in the same boat, one finds Countess Harriet Sigray, daughter of the late Marcus Daly, who forfeited over \$1,000,000 in securities and a bank account of some \$15,000.

Add Baroness Olivia Louise von Rothkirch, formerly Olive Louise Brown, daughter of William John Brown of New York, a life interest in trust approximating a million dollars.

Also add Baroness Mathilda L. Bornemisza, Budapest, Austria; Baroness Margaret von Wuch-

erer, Steiermark, Austria, and Anna von Dory Johanna, Steiermark, Austria, daughters of the late James Price of Philadelphia, and granddaughters of the late Samuel Harlan of Philadelphia, heiresses to both their father and grandfather's estates.

Other Clouded American Titles

Other American girls in the list include the following well-known American names:

Countess Marguerite Isabelle Eugenie Victorine de Steurs Obendorf, wife of former German ambassador to Austria and daughter of Alphonse de Steurs, minister to Holland in France. She is a grandniece of the late Henry Astor, grandson of the original John Jacob Astor, and inherits a share in his estate. Her mother was Countess Margaret Laura Zborowski, daughter of Alida Astor, a sister of Henry Astor and daughter of William Astor.

Baroness Cornelia C. Zeidlitz, Berlin, Germany, formerly Cornelia Carnochan Roosevelt, daughter of the late Charles Y. Roosevelt of New York. Her husband, Baron Clemens Zeidlitz, died in 1901. Under a trust agreement made in 1889 in contemplation of marriage her property, valued at about \$1,000,000, was put in trust, reserving to her a life interest. Personal property valued at \$250,000 was also taken over.

Countess von Francken Sierstorff, Zyrowa Leschnitz, Prussia, formerly Mary Knowlton, daughter of Edwin F. Knowlton of New York. Life interest trust fund \$1,200,000, left under the will of her father; bonds, \$3600; notes, \$21,457.55; insurance policy, \$10,000; bank account, \$216,005. Remainder interests of Count Edwin Victor Guido Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Casper Johannes Marie Sierstorff and Count Hans Clemens Herman Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Casper Alexander Maria Sierstorff, sons of the above enemy, also taken over.

Countess Alice Grote, Schloss Varchentin, Mecklenburg, Germany, formerly Alice von Bagen, daughter of Anthony von Bergen of New York.



The Palace of Count Szchenyi, for the Restoration of Which Much Vanderbilt Money Was Expended.

equally rare is the husband of the type who saved any of it.

This one must remember in order to understand the utter woe that has been wrought by this taking of the American estates of the rich women who went abroad for happiness—or position—and now find the line of supply back to the money that made them possible abroad suddenly and severely

show his rank. They were, it is true, no more dazzling than that worn by the carriage man at a leading hotel, but whereas the carriage man's garb only entitled him to remain outside the portals without police molestation for taking public money, the count might go inside and mingle with the great.

Miss Vanderbilt was not pretty. She had none