

# What 1931 Sequel to the Pretty Grass Widows' \$10,000 Valentine?

Maybe None, Since All the Jewels Stolen from the Society Matron Were Returned



BEAUTY AND THE JEWELS

A Charming Photo-Portrait of Miss Howard Vrooman, Who Is Engaged to Wilbur F. Coen, Jr., the Famous Tennis Star. Fortunately, on the Night She and Her Mother Were Held Up, She Was Not Wearing the Gems Seen Around Her Neck.

Two years ago she received an anonymous valentine consisting of a floral piece in which was embedded her lost wedding ring.

The following year her valentine was a package containing \$10,000 in jewelry stolen from her during a holdup. And now Mrs. Howard J. Vrooman, beautiful and socially prominent divorcee of Kansas City, Mo., is wondering just what sort of a unique valentine she is going to get this year—if any. So far as she knows, none of her personal possessions is now missing, so that her prankish and mysterious "friend" had better think up something original.

Of course, valentines are mysterious



CHAGRINED Former Judge Howard J. Vrooman, of Kansas City, Mo. He Was Divorced by His Wife After a Long Legal Tangle. Here He Is Shown Before the Tide of Fortune Turned Against Him.

things, anyhow, often sent anonymously. But the case of Mrs. Vrooman not only baffled the police but had the smart society set of Kansas City wondering and watching and waiting for a new sequel.

It all happened, it seems, just when the Vroomans were in the midst of a long series of marital difficulties that reached a climax in the divorce courts. For a time even their best friends didn't suspect that there was anything but contentment in the Vrooman home. The family was wealthy and prominent. Vrooman was judge of a county court, had a farm and conducted an extensive real estate business. There were two pretty debutante daughters, Miss Frances Ault Vrooman and Miss Howard Jess Vrooman, who is engaged to Wilbur F. Coen, Jr., famous tennis star and protégé of Bill Tilden.

Suddenly Kansas City society was startled, in 1927, when Mrs. Vrooman filed suit for divorce, stating that the judge had said he married her only because he was short of money. At the time she obtained a temporary restrain-

ing order prohibiting her husband from returning home because she was afraid of another "scene."

Judge Vrooman countered with a divorce suit charging desertion. It was dismissed and Mrs. Vrooman, in 1928, sued for separate maintenance. She claimed, among other things, that she sometimes had to sleep under the bed to escape her husband's rage. She was granted \$300 a month.

Again Judge Vrooman countered, this time with an alienation suit against his wife's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur F. Ault, asking for \$500,000 damages. This, too, was dismissed. Then one day Judge Vrooman was arrested on a charge of assaulting Floyd E. Jacobs, well-known attorney and a political opponent of the judge.

While Kansas City society was being entertained and amazed by this strange series of events, a misfortune befell Mrs. Vrooman. On the night of February 11, 1929, Mrs. Vrooman and her daughter, Miss Howard Jess, were returning home from a social function. They had stopped their motor car in front of their home in a fashionable



WAS SHE SURPRISED? On St. Valentine's Day, Mrs. Vrooman returned home to find a plain package awaiting her. She casually opened it and was overjoyed—but puzzled—to find inside all the jewelry that had been stolen from her during the hold-up. Nothing was missing.

district of the city. Just as they started to get out a bandit flashed a gun and commanded them to turn over their jewels.

These, including a diamond ring, a wedding ring, an onyx ring, were valued at \$10,000, but were not insured. The police sought in vain to track down the thief.

But a few days later, on St. Valentine's Day, Mrs. Vrooman was surprised and baffled to receive from an anonymous source a floral valentine piece, in which she discovered the lost wedding ring.

A year passed, and the Vroomans' domestic wrangles continued in the courts. On St. Valentine's Day a year ago, Mrs. Vrooman returned home to find a plain package, bearing a Kansas City postmark, awaiting her. She cas-

ually opened it and was overjoyed—but puzzled—to find inside all the jewelry that had been stolen from her during the hold-up. Nothing was missing. The police gave up the case as an unsolved mystery.

Meanwhile Mrs. Vrooman obtained a divorce from her husband. She took a new and finer home in the exclusive country club district of the city. But his fortunes declined. He lost much of his property. He sought to be reelected judge, but his party faction failed to support him sufficiently.

Thus the troubles of the Vroomans passed from the newspapers and the

A LADY VICTORIOUS Mrs. Howard J. Vrooman, Kansas City Society Matron. She Triumphed in a Series of Court Battles with Her Husband. Here She Is Shown Leaving the Courtroom After One of Them.

public mind. But privately, many people are wondering if THIS year there will be a sequel to that curious \$10,000 valentine.

## Highlights of Broadway From the Circle to the Square By Jack Lait

### Tears and Smiles These Nights Along

**B**ATTLING back. A long way back to come from and much to live ahead for. Dorothy Mackaye and Paul Kelly. He's on a rain-check out of San Quentin for battering her husband, Ray Raymond, to death. She has washed up her stretch in the same stir for suppression of the facts. Now they're going to marry as soon as they can, which is as soon as Paul's parole is out. Meanwhile, he's playing "Hobo" at \$30 a week, all a paroled man may earn. He's playing a convict part.

I know a few facts about the Mackaye-Raymond-Kelly tri-raged y that have never been printed before. I knew all three when they were gizzling pals. Dot and Ray, when he was in my musical show, "Gus the Bus," in Philadelphia, and she was in "Rose-Marie" in New York, were so in love that every night after her performance she'd make an 11:25 train to Philly, spend the night with Ray, and return next day. Kelly was then in Los Angeles, in films.

I was in Hollywood, editing my "Ten Modern Commandments," when I later first saw the three together. Ray and Paul were thick—in friendship and in speech. I saw at a glance that all wasn't kosher between Paul and Dot. But Ray didn't. Then, one night, Ray long-distanced me from another California town where he was playing, and asked if I had seen her, as he couldn't raise her on the phone. I had a fair idea, but I tipped off nothing. He couldn't sleep. He left his show flat, grabbed his car and drove in. He found their child, Mimi, but Dot was out. Mimi said Mr. Kelly had come and got mother.

Ray, drunk, got Kelly on the wire, Paul, cockeyed, started stalling. Dot, plastered, grabbed the receiver and let Ray have a cheerful little carful—yes, she was with Paul, she loved Paul—what about it? Ray demanded that she come right home. Paul came, instead, alone. There was a wicked scrap. Paul was younger and huskier, Ray was a booze-burned shell. Kelly soon knocked him cold. Raymond died.

We were all shocked, but didn't dream what had happened. A physician signed a certificate of natural causes. And it would never have been upset, had not Mimi prattled to a neighbor's child about the fight she had seen. The other kid told her father, who happened to be related to the Dis-

### the Hardened Artery



A DRY CELL Paul Kelly, in His Cage at San Quentin, Where He Did His Bit and Swallowed His Lesson Against Gin.

trict Attorney. Paul and Dot couldn't chip the rap and got the Big House. It was an awful cure for what had been a woeful curse. But it cured. Now they are hand in hand, living Christian, earnest, penitent lives. The stage is their only trade, and they will follow it. But they will never again taste alcohol. They've had their quota. And paid plenty. I certainly wish them good luck.



RED GREW HER HAIR Dorothy Mackaye, in "Rose-Marie," When Her Features, Tresses, Pep and Voice Won Her Broadway Love. Below, Mimi, Daughter of Dot and Ray Raymond, the Victim of the Ginny Triangle.

### It's a Canary!

**E**STELLE TAYLOR, when we last played a parlay to a Mexican stand-off at Agua Caliente, told me on the club-house veranda that she was opera-bound. I like Estelle (and Jack Dempsey was sitting with us) so I didn't laugh out loud. Now I am buzzed by Jack himself that it wasn't hokey. As a result of a tonsil job, Estelle has regained a voice which promised much, back in 1920, when he was studying vocal in New York.

She had her tonsils chiseled and it seems a piece of one wasn't taken out. The silent screen was right up her path of roses, anyway, so she didn't bother. But now that they have to talk it, too. Mrs. Dempsey had the thing surveyed. Another carving, and —lo! She trills like a prima. Now



HE WAS A GENT The Reporter Used to be Pictured as a Hero.

she's training again. And when that gal starts something, she winds it up.

### Grow Fat and Eat.

**G**ABBING on the zephyrus over WOR every Friday afternoon, I request my audiences to request me to request guest stars of their selection. To my amazement, the demand for strictly mike-made talent far exceeds the call for stage-built celebrities. Names that I had never heard of flooded in on me.

And yet it is surprising how few notable idols of its own radio has made. In certain zones there are local faves. Beyond these there are only a half-dozen who have come out of the air, alone. And what a haven radio should be for men and women with personalities, who are short on appearance.



HE IS A BUM Now the Reporter is Portrayed as a Bad Babe.

I know one serio-comic tragedy. A girl who was in an operatic quartette (and, somehow, for operatics one can be fat) lost her partners, couldn't get a radio job, and decided to go into vaudeville. Everyone told her at once —reduce! She starved, rolled, rowed, gouged off thirty-six pounds in three months—and then she was sent for and got a long-time contract—on the radio.

### Ex-Lily.

**N**EWSPAPERMEN write newspaper plays about newspapermen. If they don't, who should? Maybe nobody. It strikes me that the recent ones are pretty savage, hard-boiled and malicious. When Joe Patterson, one of my Chicago cronies of reporter days, wrote "The Fourth Es-



NEW PIPELINE Estelle Taylor Dempsey, Who Is Going Great Guns and Grand Opera.

tate," newspapermen were not expected to be crooks, fiends, reprobates; nor were they in Jesse Lynch Williams' "The Stolen Story." They were a rather romantic lot—broke, on the level, hard workers, hard drinkers, but good souls.

Look at the poor things now, in "Five Star Final," by a man who was a metropolitan managing editor; and "Front Page," by two ex-reporters; and "Gentlemen of the Press," by half a dozen working editorial men. In "The Racket" our outfit got no little white lies. In "Chicago" we were the goofs and boobs, and in "Midnight" we have the preposterous situation of a reporter who plants a mike in the home of an enemy to the whole world can cavendrop on his private sentiments.

Have we completely slipped from heroes to heavies—like judges?