

Love and "The Woman in Yellow"

Fashionable Newport's Most Thrilling Heart Tournament—with a Famous Artist's Beautiful Widow as the Prize and Two Tennis Croesuses as the Battling Knights

NEWPORT, Sept. 7.
"THIRTY LOVE," another swift serve from Mrs. Howard Cushing across the grass court of the Newport Casino, a flash of orange and white as the player followed up her game—their "forty love" and the love game was won by Mrs. Cushing and her partner, J. Gordon Douglas.

With this love game, the championship for doubles of the Newport courts went to the two partners who have been the most observed of all observers all Summer at the Casino.

Loud cheers and knowing smiles followed the winning of the sets in which Mrs. Cushing, the beautiful widow of Howard Cushing, the artist, and Gordon Douglas, divorced husband of Mrs. Annie Kountze Douglas, played against Mrs. Arthur Scott Burden and Drexel Biddle, the young son of Craig Biddle, of Philadelphia.

Back of these exciting games lay another and very different contest, for all Newport was keenly "on" to the fact that Mrs. Cushing, the vibrantly beautiful "woman in yellow" whose rare and amazing coloring inspired her artist husband in his best work, was being courted by way of tennis by two prominent men of the colony, Williams P. Burden and J. Gordon Douglas.

It is many moons since Newport has been afforded so delightful a spectacle as the perfectly open contest between these two men for the love of a woman whose beauty has been many times immortalized on canvas by an adoring husband. Following Howard Cushing's work from the time of his marriage it is easily seen how his wife colored all his art. Even in doing the mural decorations for Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney's studio Mrs. Cushing was her husband's theme. In the striking nude on the dolphin, a panel that raised a storm of gossip, the artist was still faithful to his favorite model for her coloring and facial characteristics as unmistakable. One of the last paintings he did of her was the glorious "Woman in Yellow," and the portrait is considerably talked of this Summer by Newport.

The contest now engaging Newport's attention actually began last Summer, only no one realized it, because Mr. Douglas was then married and had no intention of competing for the lady.

Mr. Burden, however, was free to win a bride, and began his drive soon after Mrs. Cushing arrived at her Newport cottage. "Winnie" Burden, as he is called by his intimates, is a widower of wealth and much social prominence, for he is a son of the late James Abercrombie Burden and a cousin of Evelyn Byrd Burden, Arthur Scott Burden and Mrs. David Dow, who was the lovely Gwendolyn Burden.

His wife was Natica Rives, perhaps the most beautiful girl that Newport has ever married off. She was a daughter of the late Oliver H. P. Belmont by his first wife. Not long after her marriage she was found dead in her bed, and her husband has never been seriously interested in another woman until Mrs. Cushing appeared on the scene as a widow.

When Ethel Cochrane Cushing and Burden joined up as tennis partners early last Summer no one in the colony dreamed that the beginning of a genuine romance was being staged. They played awfully good tennis, and won over all comers, even against such veterans as Craig Biddle and Mrs. Barger Wallach. But it was tennis, and not love, that apparently occupied the two principals. This season, however, love and tennis are all mixed up with Burden and Douglas attacking each other from every vantage point. In a way Mrs. Cushing, while always the prize for which they are fighting, might also be likened to the ball which is constantly being tossed across the nets.

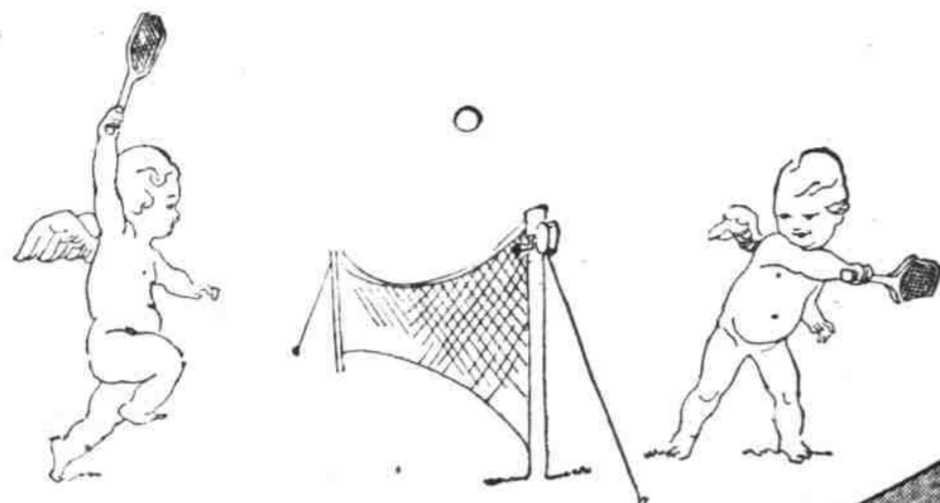
When the season closed last Autumn, with Burden and the lady winners, all the women of the colony decided that Mrs. Cushing had made up her mind to become Mrs. Burden. Otherwise, why did she give up all other social pleasures in order to join Winnie on the courts? And, undoubtedly, her partner would have had a clear field if Mrs. Douglas had not secured a divorce and so left her former husband free to fall in love once more.

When the tennis teams were made up for this year's tournament, Newport got a shock, for instead of Winnie, they found Douglas paired off with the "Woman in Yellow."

"How can this be? Is Ethel done with Winnie?" asked more than one woman in the colony.

"No, indeed!" still others would reply. "We hear she just wants a change, she is afraid of a one-man partner."

It developed speedily that Mrs. Cushing and Douglas had been playing together quite a lot over at Forest Hills and on one of the private courts in New York. Newport was puzzled and when puzzled the colony is never satisfied until it learns the reason why. Everything is fairly plain,



The Former Mrs. J. Gordon Douglas, Who Recently Secured a Divorce.

to-day. The whole thing in a nutshell is that the lady, when approached by both of the men in the guise of suitors, decided to play one off against the other on the tennis courts.

It was not a case of "if you love me, be my husband," but "if you make me champion, then you may be my suitor." All during the Spring the lady played on New York courts with first one man and then the other. She wanted to play fair and so gave Douglas her Mondays and Burden her Tuesdays and so on.

After several weeks, Mrs. Cushing evidently decided that Douglas proved the better partner and so she settled on him as her Summer playmate. In making her decision, she put it squarely up to Douglas, however, that he must carry her to victory this season on the Newport courts or all would be over between them. And never has man worked harder than Douglas to fulfill his lady's demands.

Early birds, twittering on the big elms that shade the Casino courts have heard strange sounds from two early players. Father Robin may not have understood what "love all" or "thirty love" meant, but Mother Robin understood and was also interested in the bits of flashing color that constantly streaked across the grass under her tree top nest. Could it be a scarlet tanager, or a brilliant Baltimore oriole? No, second glances proved the streaks to be Mrs. Cushing clad in a trim white linen suit, topped by her magnificent red-gold hair, left unshaded in the brilliant sunlight. Swift and sure of her game as she played with Douglas, winning "love" in nearly every court.

What the robins knew, all of Newport

soon learned, and many commiserating glances were cast Mrs. Burden's way. But in a way the lady gave her former partner his chance, for she took to motoring with him on late afternoons. It seemed as though she wanted him to realize that while she must play tennis with Douglas, she wanted to keep his devotion as well.

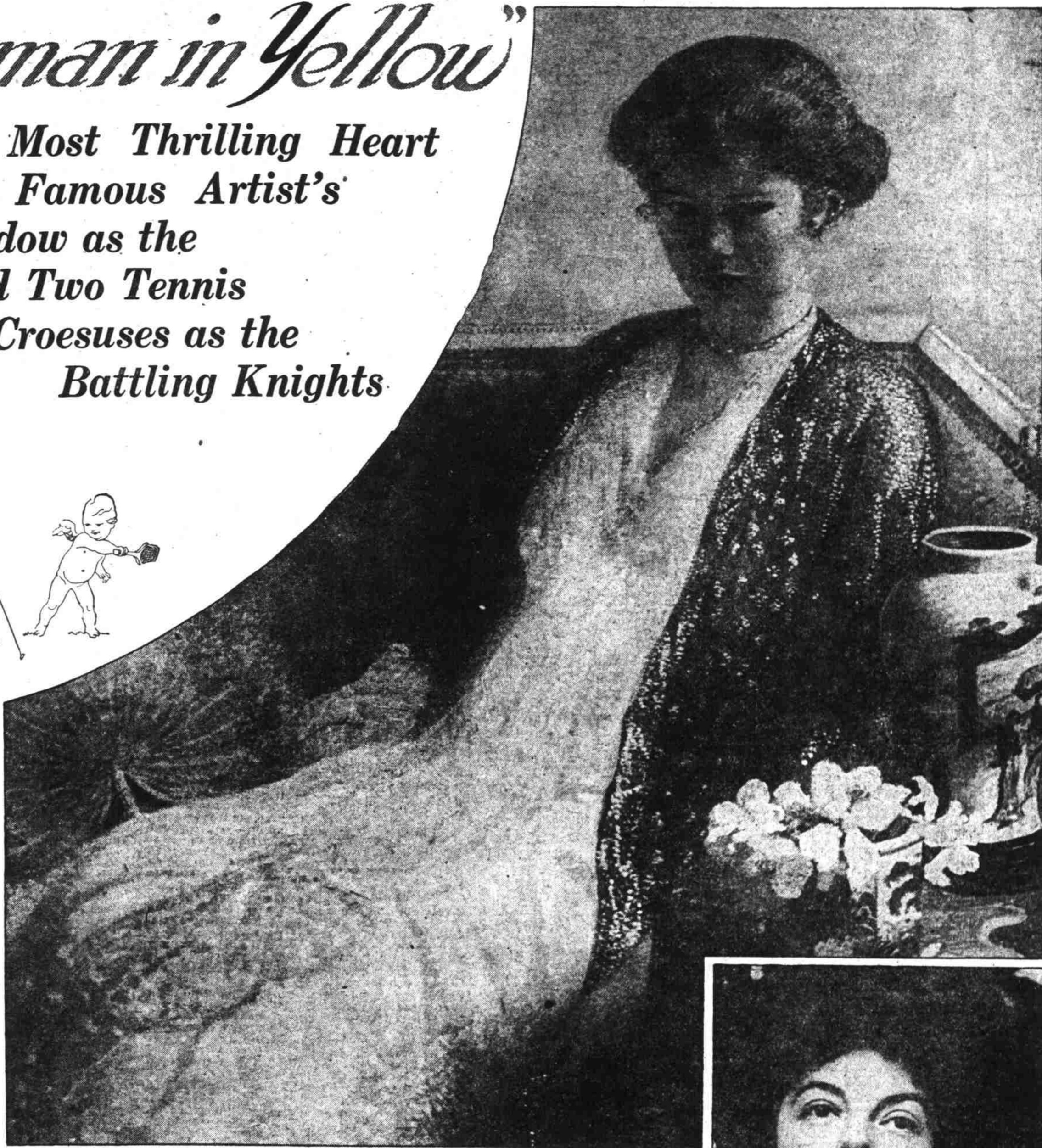
Dear me, but the colony was in a ferment when it discovered these motoring "two somes!"

"Which is the most serious," fair ladies asked over their tea cups, "tennis doubles or motor two somes?" But no answer came from those most concerned.

In between-times, Mrs. Cushing, who has a large fortune and a charming house out on the rocks near Bailey's Beach, kept up her social end by giving small dinners and luncheons and always her two playmates were among those present.

While that part of New York society which goes to Lenox, Bar Harbor and other places than Newport in the Summer was intensely surprised to hear of Mrs. Cushing's change of partners, it was not surprised to hear that the artist's widow had cut loose entirely from the semi-artistic crowd that had gathered round her during Howard Cushing's life time.

Having been born a Boston Cochrane, daughter of that doughty New Englander Cochrane, she was born to stern Puritan traditions. Her sensational, even bizarre coloring (her eyes are the same warm golden red as her hair and her pallor is that of old ivory) placed her apart from the girls of her class. Wherever she went, Ethel Cochrane was the star beauty and no one wondered when Howard Cushing, also a Bostonian, but already a painter of



"The Woman in Yellow," the Famous Portrait of the Beautiful Mrs. Howard Cushing by Her Noted Husband That Gave Her the Title.

distinction, fell in love with the flaming young debutante.

After their marriage the Cushings made New York their winter residence and went to Newport for the Summers. The wife's coloring and personality became the painter's inspiration and he used her almost exclusively as his model. Sometimes he painted her in brilliant crimson, again in emerald green, still again he made her famous as the "Woman in Yellow."

In one of his portraits Cushing emphasized the Oriental strain that was oftentimes apparent in his wife's beauty, and then old Bostonians delved back in their memories in an effort to discern how Ethel Cochrane came by this strain. They did not appreciate the imaginative power of the artist!

In their New York home the Cushings gave informal semi-Bohemian parties and gradually gathered a following of the painters and allied arts about them. But always Mrs. Cushing was strong for her social life, and in Newport clung only to the conservative element.

And now she is all for this one social element and has dropped all others. Mr. Cushing died very suddenly two years ago, and his widow has worn mourning until this Summer. It is doubtful, however, if she ever goes back to the exotic colors that Cushing loved to have her wear and in which he always painted her.

There is no telling, of course, what effect a second marriage will have on the lady, for other men than the painter-husband have raved over Mrs. Cushing's choice of colors, not realizing that if left to herself she would wear pastel shades entirely! And it happens that both Mr. Burden and Mr. Douglas are keen on bright colors.

Newport is giving mighty little heed to the color question, all its attention is focused on the one thrilling problem of the lady and her partners. Aside from their tennis prowess the two men stand about an even chance. Burden has somewhat the best of it financially, and, of course, he is a bona fide widower, as against Gordon's divorce. But what is a divorce nowadays between friends? Mrs. Cushing is too liberal minded to let that be a detriment.

No, it is the tennis that must decide. Burden carried her to victory last Summer, and Lere Douglas has done the same this year. It looks like a stand-off, but it is not after all. Last year's tennis, with the best men off to the war, was not nearly so stiff

a proposition, with the men all home and the women relieved from war work. Mrs. Cushing and Douglas faced the strongest doubles in New York and Philadelphia society this year and won "love" nearly every time. So many "loves" did they win, in fact, that they are called the "love couple."

Every day during the tournament Mr. Burden betook himself to a court in a far corner of the Casino and practised steadily some very hard smashing serves. Every time "love" was called on the championship court he winced and drove the balls harder against his professional opponent—none of his friends would stand up against him. It was too plain that Winnie was out for a killing!

"What makes Winnie slobber by himself?" ask all the pretty debs and sighing young matrons.

"That's easy," explain the men. "Burden is training himself to challenge Douglas for a two some in which the victor shall gain the spoils."

Said spoils being Mrs. Cushing, of course. Now this would prove a most thrilling wind-up of the whole contest. The two men, standing about equal in the sight of law and man, might fight for the lady over the tennis court! Newport believes firmly that late in the month, after the crowd has left the colony that the two men will meet in just such a duel, the winner being left to woo the lady, unchallenged by the loser, for a specified period. Then, if no definite decision has been made by the "woman in yellow," the other man may go to it once more.

Newport is watching the whole affair with gleeful eyes, for there is a good deal of amusement in the whole thing, and then there is the element of chance to be considered, and on this Newport has one last word to say:

"It is always possible, of course, that Ethel may choose neither the winner nor the loser, but an entirely different man of whom we know nothing! We do know, however, that she will marry again, because she is the type of woman over which men go mad!"



Natica Rives, the Late Mrs. Williams P. Burden.



The Oriental Eyes of Mrs. Cushing.