

Photo by Evans

Grace Darmond, who is appearing in the serial May Yohe wrote, "The Hope Diamond Mystery."

SHE was the toast of London. Everybody'd heard pretty May Yohe sing her famous song, "Honey, My Honey"; she sang it on the musical-comedy stage for the general public, and at private parties for royalty. Her madcap escapades were the talk of the town; every one knew all about the American girl who had gone to France to study, and then come to England and won all hearts. And the town speculated as to which of her titled suitors she'd accept.

She ended the talk by marrying Lord Francis Hope, and started more by wearing the famous Hope Diamond, which, according to tradi-



May Yohe and her first husband, Lord Francis Hope.

The Toast of London Town

Grace Darmond tells of her visit to May Yohe—once wearer of the famous Hope Diamond about which the story of Miss Darmond's new serial was written.

By Barbara Little

tion, ruins the lives of all who possess it. And now some say that it ruined May Yohe's, just because, not so very long ago, she had to work as janitress in a California shipyard to support herself and her husband. But May Yohe doesn't think so. She told Grace Darmond, who is appearing in a serial, "The Hope Diamond Mystery," based on the history of the famous jewel. And Grace Darmond told me all about it.

"She's the happiest person you ever saw," Grace told me, the day after she'd called on May Yohe Smuts in her little cottage in San Pedro, near Los Angeles. "She lives in a wee little place all covered with honeysuckle—there are just three rooms in that house, and it's filled with souvenirs of the time when May Yohe was famous. She met me at the door—and she's still so pretty; when you look into her brown eyes you don't wonder that she dazzled all London."

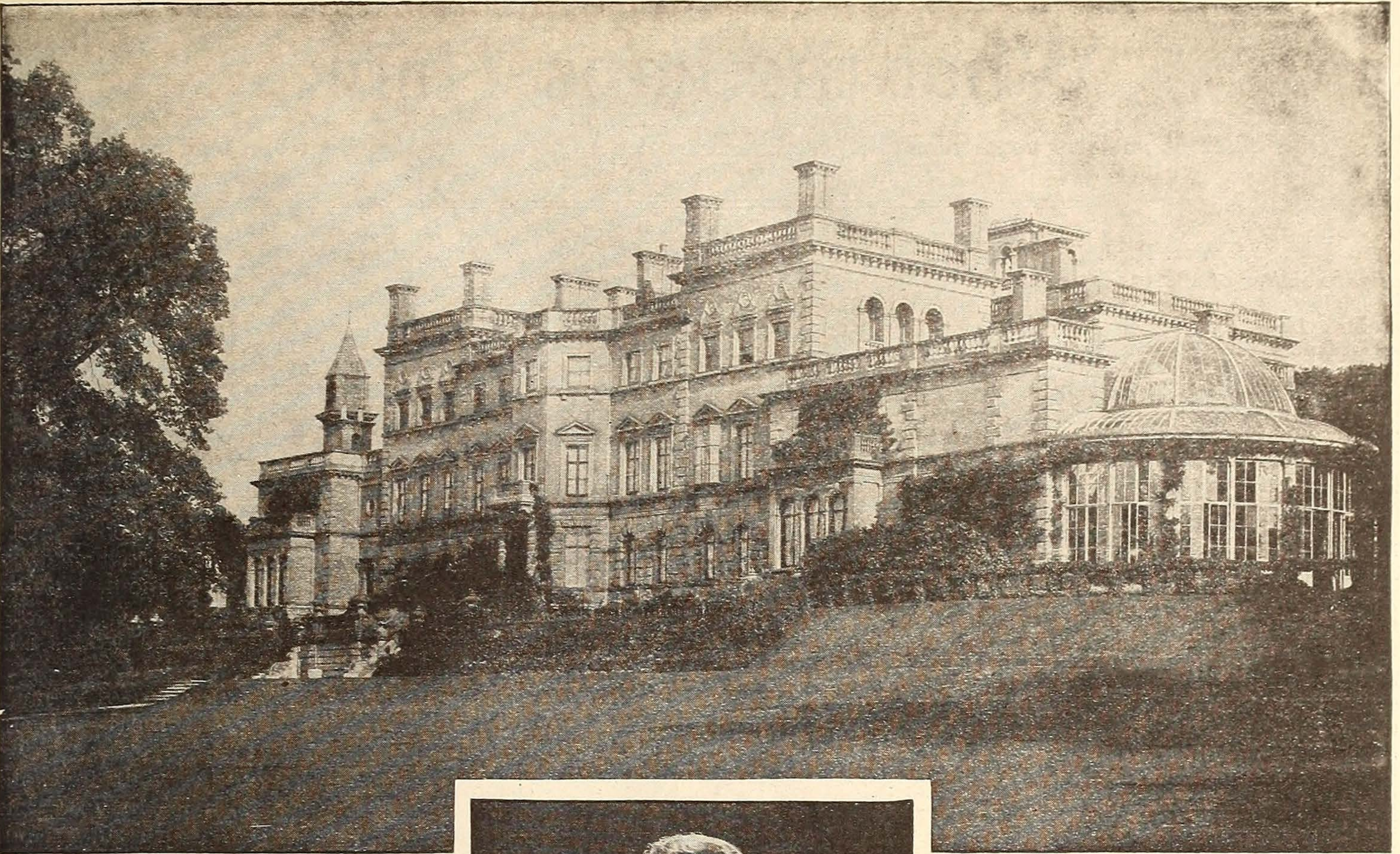
"Tell me all about your visit," I urged.

Miss Darmond did so; and here, in as nearly her own words as I can recall, I shall try to repeat the story to you, just as she told it to me.

I'll catch up on May Yohe's history for you first. Lord Hope's relatives didn't take to her any too kindly, you know, and she was just as much of a madcap as she'd ever been after she was married, and finally she ran away with an American officer.

He later deserted her—doesn't that show the influence of the Hope Diamond on her life? But she refused to be downed by Fate, and toured the Orient, singing and dancing. Then she married Captain John Smuts of the British army; he's a relative of General Smuts. And they're happy as kings.

I never had a nicer time in my life than I did the day I spent with them. He works in the shipyards now, you know, and wasn't home when I arrived, but came soon after. And when we heard his step on the back porch she called to him, "John, dear, wash up and come into the sitting room." Imagine a woman who's lived in a castle in that environment! So he did, and she played, "Honey, My Honey," on the piano for me, and he turned the



Deep Dene, Dorking, England, of which May Yohe Hope was mistress.

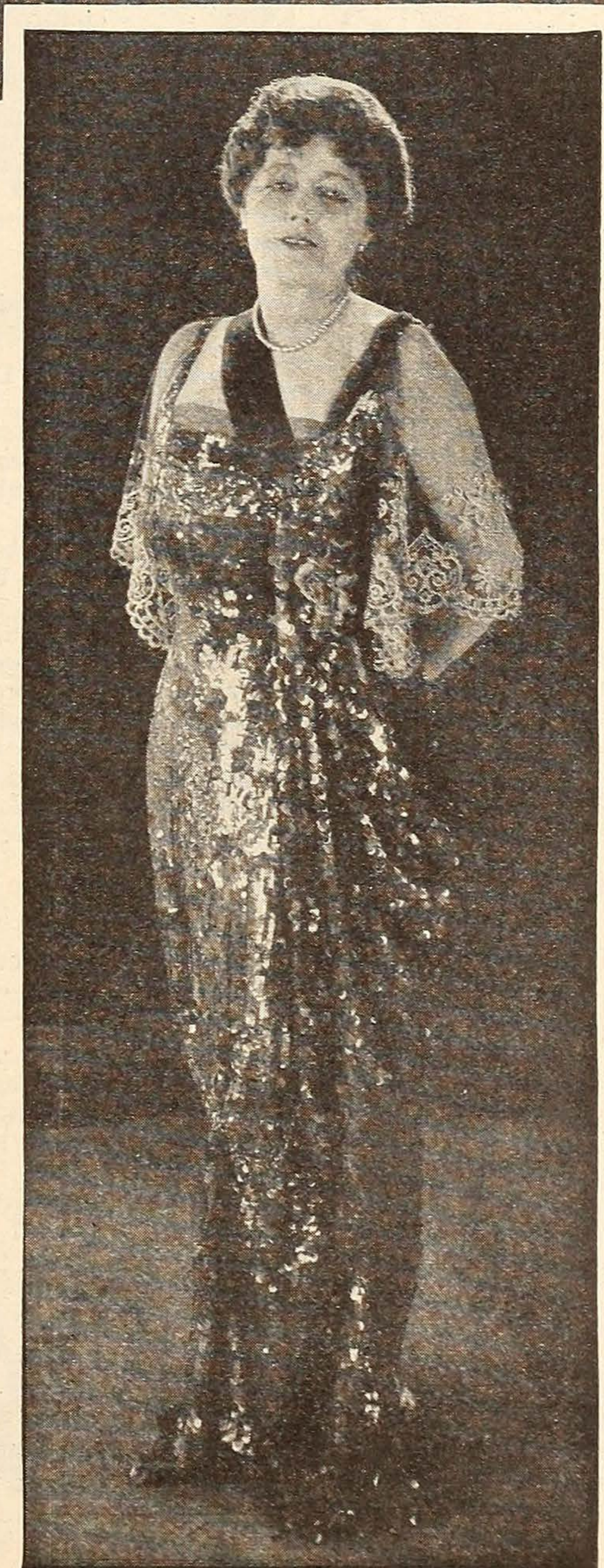
music. She had a photograph of King Edward on the piano—and on the silver frame is engraved, “To May from Edward.”

“He was my friend—he was kind to me,” she said. “I would not part with this picture for all the diamonds in the world.”

It seemed a funny combination of events, for me to be sitting there thinking about how I’d portray May Yohe on the screen, and using a napkin that had once been in the linen closet of the castle of the famous Hope family of England, and eating a salad of lettuce, radishes, and onions that May Yohe had raised in the little garden behind her three-room house.

Yet, somehow, you can’t think of the change in her life as a misfortune; she has a philosophy that absolutely discounts it.

“I’ve been at the top, titled, wealthy, a friend of nobility, and I’ve been at the bottom, a social outcast, penniless, a janitress in the shipyards—when we first came here John was ill, and I had to do whatever I could to earn money, you see. And I’ve always been happy. I never walked the floor at night nursing my troubles. Happiness is here,” she touched her heart, “and never did I dream that I could be so happy as I am here in my little house with John and the flowers and the rabbits.”



You can’t feel sorry for the fallen fortunes of a woman who sees life that way; there’s nothing to feel sorry about.

However, she doesn’t intend to remain in her little house forever.

“I’m going to tell you a secret,” she told me. “I wrote the story of the Hope Diamond for a purpose. I mean some day to return to England; I love that old country, where I have many, many friends. And with the money I get from this serial about the diamond I am going back there and show them that May Yohe is alive, happy, and prosperous. And I am eager to get John away from the shipyards; people are always being hurt there—and I’d rather have him away from it.”

And how much money do you suppose it’s her ambition to have? Fifty-five thousand dollars. Certainly her former life did not leave with her an inheritance of extravagance.

And if I’ve shown you May Yohe as she really is—kindly, unassuming, lovable—you’ll understand why I’m trying harder than I’ve ever tried before to do the best work I can in this picturization of the story she’s written; I’m so anxious to do my part in helping her to get back to England.

“You can’t feel sorry for the fallen fortunes of a woman who looks at life as she does.”