

## THE EVENING STORY

### HER WONDERFUL VOICE

She was ready and waiting. And she was not a bit nervous. She had too much confidence in herself for that. She smiled serenely as she glanced again at the programme in her hand. How well her name looked printed, "Miss Maude Vance, soprano." Yes, taken all in all, she was quite perfect in training and figure and stage presence. And her dress—why, it was Parisian to the last degree and, therefore, perfect, too. She had chosen it because she had always had a fondness for pink of just that shade and she remembered that he had, too. Certainly she had thought of him. She had meant from the first to show him that she could succeed, that her voice was worth something. She had never quite forgiven him what he had said that night two years ago, when she had told him she was going abroad to study.

"Don't do it, Maude," he had said. "You haven't voice enough." He had said it just like that. And he was the only one who had ever said it. Everybody else had praised her to the skies—her mother and her dearest friends and her teachers, of course. They must know better than he did. Yet she could never get those words of his out of her mind. And his way of saying them! He was always so deadly in earnest about everything. Especially about that. How angry she had been.

"I'll show you!" she had flung back at him and bit her lips cruelly to keep the tears from her eyes. During those two years of study that determination of hers had been ever present: "I'll show him!" It had driven her to do painstakingly all the drudgery demanded of her. It had kept her on her feet under the exacting eyes of the famous maestro, who had been coaxed to accept her as his pupil, when she was ready to fall down with fatigue. And now she had learned all there was to learn apparently and had come back to show him that she had a voice and could sing, after all. She would flaunt her success in his face, and, since he was fair, he would be obliged to admit it. Then she would smile at him and forgive him.

She knew that he was out there in the audience waiting with the rest—her mother and her cousins and her

aunts and the old uncle who had advanced the money for the training. They were impatiently listening, she knew, to the performers that preceded her and longing for her to appear. Not one of them of course, except her mother, who had been her constant companion, had heard her sing since she returned. She had been very careful that they should not. She wanted to surprise them all—him especially. It was, indeed, curious that she should still care so much for his opinion—that she had always cared, even when she would not own it. What was there, aside from his love for her, that should have any weight with her whatever? He was not rich or handsome or of great influence as were a half dozen other men she knew almost as well. But somehow it was always his face and not theirs that she saw in her dreams.

"Miss Vance!" said the manager. Her turn had come. From beyond the stage came the diminishing applause of an encore. She thought, "Mr. Herford must have pleased them." Then she rose, arranged her train and followed her accompanist out upon the stage. They were all there, and she faced them calmly, smiling and bowing in acknowledgment of the whirlwind of applause that greeted her. There was her mother, very flushed and conscious in her lavender satin; there was Aunt Belle, her bosom twinkling with jetted lace; there was her cousin Violet Vance, who, too, longed to sing, and there was Uncle James, whose bounty had supplied her with French gowns and Italian teachers. And there was he, with his clear gray eyes fixed upon her. Did he notice that her gown was pink? Or dream of its meaning? She wondered a great many things foolishly as she stood waiting for the applause to end so that she could sing. She felt quite eager to sing. She felt capable of doing her best. Her voice had never been better and the aria she had chosen was sure to please. Ah, there was the keynote! As she sang she was still conscious of what was going on before her upon the faces of the audience, which was composed largely of people she had known all her life. The general look of eager expectation, had changed, not to one of gratification, but to one of amazement, of perplexity, almost of pain. Only his face told nothing. He sat very still, with his chin slightly

lifted, listening closely. She could not understand what those other faces meant, and she did not care. But his face she could understand! Oh, if only it would convey some message to her! After all, it was really to him she was singing. It was only his approval that she sought. She had worked hard to show him that she could sing. And now she was showing him.

The applause that followed the singing of the aria seemed somehow perfunctory. She felt jarred and puzzled. Yet she came back smiling in response to the encore, though a little subdued, perhaps; a little less radiant. There was surely something a little wrong. She was not making the impression she had planned to make.

"It's hard work singing before one's own people," she thought. "A prophet is not without honor," etc. "Perhaps they didn't like that French aria. There is certainly nothing wrong with my voice or me."

Between that appearance and her next upon the programme she could not sit still, but walked about restlessly. She knew very well what her mother thought—that she had never done so well in her life. And Uncle James—that she had given him good value for his money. "By George, that niece of mine, she's a winner," he would be saying at his club tomorrow. And Violet would go home to dream of French gowns and bunches of orchids as large as her own fussy little blonde head. And Aunt Belle would be planning a dinner to take place before "Maude starts on her tour." But he—what did he think? His eyes were so unfathomable. That was because they held so much. Had she convinced him that she could sing? Had she?

Ah, there was her second call at last! She went out again upon the stage; she bowed and smiled and sang again her best—to him. And still he sat with his arms folded and his chin lifted and his inscrutable eyes watching—watching. It was over at last. She was whisked away in Uncle James' big motor to their apartments, where a little supper had been arranged for her. They were all there but him. Would he come? And they were all trying to talk at once about her. They wearied and worried her with their praise. Somehow it suddenly sounded meaningless to her. What she wanted was the truth. And she felt deep down in her heart that only he could give it.

The apartments were suffocatingly sweet with flowers—all offerings at her shrine. He had sent his bouquet with the rest. She took it up now and held it close to her face. It was pink—pink roses. And down among them was his name upon a

little white card. Why didn't he come? Why didn't he come? Suddenly the door opened and he entered. Her color rushed to meet the roses' color in a warm sweet flood. He had seen her at once without seeming to see her, just as she had seen her. And now he was coming toward her. Above the roses their eyes met. She held out her hand.

"Well?" she demanded. "What have you to say?"

"What do you wish me to say?" She looked down at the roses. And it was well, because she did not see his face.

"You know," she said—"the truth."

He caught his breath as if in pain. "The truth!" he repeated. "Ah!" And then she looked up at him sharply, for it was as if he had said "Let me tell you something pleasanter than the truth."

"Oh," she said, piteously, understanding. "I have failed! I haven't shown you—"

"You have shown me," he voice was exquisite, "that you are all things a woman should be—the rarest, the sweetest, the best. Dear," he faltered, "I know I am breaking your heart, but better for me to break it who love you so than for strangers whose indifference will make them unnecessarily cruel. As I listened to you tonight I felt that I must tell you the truth even as you have asked me, before you went out into the world in all your happy young confidence to learn it by bitter defeat. For that is what awaits you. I speak as a man and a critic, not as your lover, for I know that after this you will not consider me such. I am sacrificing a good deal, am I not, just to tell you the plain truth? You are a glorious woman. Maude, but you can't sing. It is not your fault; you have been deceived by praise and flattery. But I can't deceive you."

Above the pink roses her face was perfectly white. She had done her best and they had all told her that she had succeeded. They had all lied to her because they loved her—all except this one man. He had never lied. He was telling her the truth. Better to hear it from his lips than, as he said, from the lips of strangers. She thought of her prospective tour and shuddered. She was a brave woman, and though she had her moment of bitter struggle her spirit rose presently from the black depths into which he had plunged it and she looked him steadily in the face.

"After all," she said, "I did it all for you. It was your opinion I wanted, because I knew it would be the right one. When I asked you to tell me the truth I did it because I knew that you would tell me the

### YOUNG MORGAN TO HAVE

#### SWELL HOUSE

J. P. Morgan Jr., son of the famous financier and himself a Wall street power, is busily engaged in a project which has water for one of its principal features, for he is building a country home on his estate, East Island, which stands out in Hempstead Harbor, on the north shore of Long Island, not far from Glen Cove.

Ground was broken by the builders Charles T. Wills, Inc., of No. 156 Fifth avenue, New York a few days ago. The plans were drawn by La Farge and Grant, architects, of No. 25 East Twenty-eighth street, New York.

East Island was purchased by Mr. Morgan last January. It covers about ten acres and is connected with the mainland by a bridge. The house will have a frontage of 75 feet and stretch back for 175 feet.

The structure will be four stories high, designed on Colonial lines, and built of brick with limestone trimmings. It will cost not over \$150,000 including furnishings and fittings.

On the ground floor, besides the reception, drawing, dining and smoking rooms and the library will be situated a playroom, servants' dining room and day quarters for the footmen and chauffeurs. Ten rooms will be given over to the servants.

The servants' sitting and recreation rooms will be in the basement where also, will be situated the storage and equipment plants.

The Island was selected by Mr. Morgan because of its proximity to Manhattan, permitting him to live in the country, but also to continue his business activity.

The builders plan to have the structure ready in the fall, but it will not be occupied until the spring of 1911.

#### MODERN SURGERY.

"Robinson was badly hurt in that railway accident, wasn't he, doctor?" "Very. We had to amputate both legs."

"How terrible. Will he pull through?"

"Oh, yes; we'll put him on his feet again in about six months."

truth. And you have. Thank you, Alan."

She held out her hand again. And as, he lifted it reverently to his lips he felt with a sudden thrill of joy and hope and thanksgiving that the great good he craved was nearer to him than ever before—that he had, indeed, not lost, but gained all.

### GIRLS HAVE NO USE

#### FOR WIDOWERS CLUB

Greenwich, Conn., March 24.—Greenwich, which boasts that it has a larger number of clubs per capita than any other town in the state, having up to last week fifty-six, has just added one more to make "fifty-seven varieties."

The new one is the Widowers' Social Club. The founder is Arthur H. Dorland, Democratic candidate for Representative in the State Legislature last year. It is composed entirely of widowers. One of the by-laws provides that any member who remarries shall give a first class dinner for the other members, so it would seem that in these days of high prices it would work to retard re-marriage.

The club already has several members but the feminine population does not look upon it with approval. The spinsters especially, who are noted for their energy, activity and perseverance, seem to take it as an affront.

Mr. Dorland is regarded as the handsomest man in town. He is still young, tall, wellbuilt, has a fine sympathetic baritone voice, writes poetry and despite that fact is well to do. He denies that he started the club for his personal protection and says that if he wishes to marry again he will not hesitate at the price of the dinner.

#### JOYS OF WOMANHOOD.

"You women," exclaimed the disgusted brother, "simply have a glorious time doing nothing! My word, I envy you your idleness!"

"Idleness?" shrieked his pretty sister.

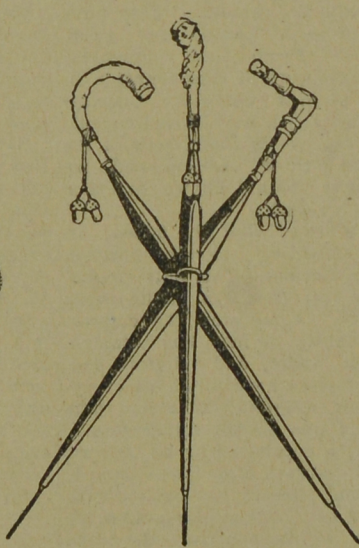
"Yes, idleness! Oh, why—why—why wasn't I born a woman?"

"Oh, yes; you'd like to be a woman retorted the pretty sister. "Just try it for a day! Fasten a blanket and a counterpane round your legs, buckle a strap around your waist so tight you can't draw a full breath or eat a hearty meal, have your hair all loose and fluffy so that it keeps tickling your ears and getting into your eyes wear high-heeled shoes and gloves a size too small for you, cover your face with a veil full of spots that make you squint, fix a huge hat on with pins, so that every time the wind blows it pulls your hair out by the roots, and then, without any pockets and with short sleeves and open work stockings go for a walk on a winter's day and enjoy yourself. Oh, yes, my word, you would like it!"

The height of folly and the depth of despair are not so far apart as they sound.

# Edgecombe's Easter Sale

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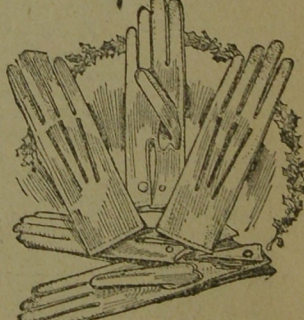
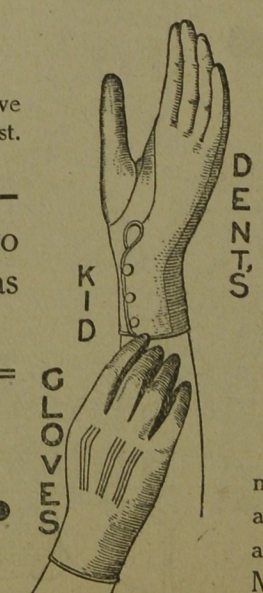
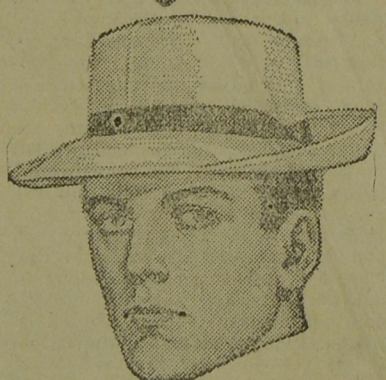
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