

Bedtime Tales

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BEDTIME TALES



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PAID IN FULL

By GRACE BARLEE

It was Saturday night in happy Paris. Marcelle Abadie yawned lazily, and moving across the room to the radio, snapped on the switch and twirled the dial to her favorite station. Her every motion was languid, mechanical.

"Alphonse," she murmured, her voice a bare shade higher than the soft tone of the music, "have you ever been told that as a conversationalist you are an exceptional bore?"

The man seated across from her leapt to his feet, and regarded her angrily. "Nom d'un nom! Then you consider it bothersome to listen to a man's declaration of love?"





Marcelle shrugged her lovely shoulders. "I am very easily tired," she confessed lightly; then, in a piercing, explanatory manner: "Oh, ce n'est pas ça, du tout!— It is the mere repetition of the thing, over and over, monotonously, until I do not think that I could bear another amorous protest! Have I not impressed you with the fact that I intend to marry money, much money, and that I refuse absolutely to countenance a placid Parisian existence?"

"Do not be a fool, ma chérie." An expression of pain darted across Alphonse's features, and he reached for her hand. "Consider matters in the light of reason. Although I will admit that you are the most beautiful nurse in all Paris, and a thousand and other little things like that, I hardly think that you will discover it a simple matter to find a millionaire patient who will be proud to marry you—"

"Et ne pour-quoi pas?" she interrupted in a crude pretence of surprise. "You have no idea to what extent I would go to convince a rich man that I am his intended mate."

He fell back before her calm assurance. "You—you cannot mean that?"

"Mais oui; I can!" she insisted in a calm, business-like tone, appropriate to her words. "Suppose that I married you, Alphonse; what would life hold for me, other than a futile struggle against overwhelming odds? In the capacity of wife of a very ordinary writer whose income does not even approach a substantial figure, I would feel that I had lived entirely in vain. I cannot, and I will not, be provincial, regardless of the price. The ambitions which I have cherished for seven long years refuse to be smothered, and even the whole-hearted love of a man would scarcely be adequate to fill the gap in my heart which their abandonment I have promised myself that it shall be would occasion. The world is large, and my playground. I want to travel, to see things, to do things, and to enjoy the luxuries which life denies the average woman. If you were in a position to offer me these things, I would fly to your arms in the traditional melodramatic fashion; but —" she hesitated, and her eyes sought the floor.

"You—you common fille de joie!" Alphonse ground the words between his teeth, and reached for his hat on the table. You are a fool Marcelle, and if you persist in that ridiculous attitude, you will receive a series of lovely bumps which should hammer a bit of sense into that pretty little head of yours. I am going." He moved to the door. "When you have decided to forget the Cinderella fancies, send for me, and we shall plan

our honeymoon; until then, I shall employ my hours of leisure to better advantage than heretofore. Good night."

Good night! Marcelle clenched her hands and glared at him in lofty disdain. A sudden flush of temper drew the warm blood to her cheeks. "You need not entertain the slightest hope that I will ever plead with you to return," she started but the sudden jangling of the telephone in the corner of the room cut through her words, and with an impatient gesture, she strode across to it and lifted the receiver to her ear.

"Eh bien? Marcelle Abadie."

"You are needed at once, mademoiselle. A call has just been received from the country home of Monsieur Pierre Cantrelle, at Aix-les-Arbees. Would you care to accept?"

Pierre Cantrelle! The wealthy sportsman who earned more newspaper headlines than the Chamber of Deputies! The most sought-after eligible within a thousand kilometers!

"Certainement." She endeavored desperately to conceal her anxiety. "I will report for duty within an hour."

She turned from the instrument, her eyes seeking out the figure of her guest, so that she might gloat over him and torture him with the possibility of eventual success, but he had already gone. She wondered if he had heard. Coute que coute, the sooner she banished thoughts of Alphonse from her mind, the happier she would be. Better, indeed, to dwell upon the prospect of exercising her wiles on the reputedly handsome sportsman.

Alighting from her conservative little Italian roadster before the imposing mansion of Pierre Cantrelle, she walked swiftly up the narrow tiled walk to the steps, mounted to the high Jacobean porch and pressed on the bell.

A minute passed. No reassuring footsteps came from within. Another minute; still no reply. She pushed again on the buzzer.

"Qui est La?" The scarcely audible whisper drifted to her ears from the ancient speaking-tube directly in front of her.

She placed her lips to the apparatus. "A nurse from l'Hopital de Cicely."

A moment of silence; then: "Entrez, s'il-vous-plait. I am alone on the second etage—" the voice seemed to break—"and I doubt if I can creep back—to my room—"

She understood the symptoms; weakness claimed the sufferer who had been obliged to lift himself from his bed and stagger to the speaking tube. The door yielded to her touch, and throwing it open, she leapt with surprising agility up the winding staircase to the upper landing of the house.

"Where are you?"

"Here. I succeeded." A light suddenly flashed on from a room a little to her left, and illuminated the darkened hallway. "I must have overestimated my strength. Things went rather black for a second or so, but I managed to crawl back."

She stopped across the threshold and considered the pyjamaed figure on the bed. "You're feeling better?" she asked, with a professional smile.

"Very much so," he assured her: "I must confess, however, that I scarcely expected the most beautiful girl in all Paris to—to nurse me."

"You must not exert yourself, Monsieur Cantrelle." Her accent was polite to the verge of ineptitude, and with a sigh of resignation, he lowered his head to the pillow. "Now," she continued, "kindly furnish me with a few details. To begin with, I would like to know if you anticipate a visit from le docteur tonight."

He thought for a moment. "I hardly believe that Docteur Robellin will return until morning," he said. "You see," he hesitated again for a full minute, "I suffered a mild attack of ptomaine poisoning, and discovering myself alone in the house, I put through a hurry call to the physician. His arrival proved timely, and I weathered the storm with no serious effects, other than a session of weakness and nausea which have just about abated. Robellin insisted that I allow him to engage the services of a nurse, as a precautionary measure—and here you are."

"C'est tout." Marcelle lifted her eyes from the makeshift chart which she had prepared. "Any medicines to administer?"

"None." He flushed guiltily, and she wondered whether he had childishly hidden the bottles. "But, by the way, nurse, what is your name?"

"Mademoiselle Abadie," she said swiftly; then, obviously relenting: "Marcelle Abadie."

His eyes roved to the ceiling. "Qu'elle nom pour qu'elle femme!" he said softly. She placed a cool restraining finger on

his lips. "You will do well to cease speaking now," she admonished bluntly. "I am going to take your temperature, and if you have even so much as a single degree of fever, you will be obliged to remain silent throughout the night."

"Dieu que non!" He opened his mouth and allowed her to place the thermometer beneath his tongue, the merest semblance of a smile hovering about his lips.

Her eyes met his for a brief instant, held them, and fell, her lips tightening as the realization came over her that her cheeks flushed crimson. It had been im-

"What is the verdict?" He lifted himself from the pillow, and placed his hands on his hips.

She turned her back on him, and moved to the table near the bedside. "You will be yourself by morning," she announced, with forced placidity.

He glanced suspiciously at her. "I know that it is a holiday, but—you are not going?" he asked suddenly, as though the very suggestion frightened him.

Her composure had returned, and she faced him squarely. "Not if you wish me to remain. You are not entirely hors du danger, monsieur, and holidays mean but little to a nurse."



possible to stare into those level brown eyes without wavering, and the sensations evoked by his handsomely irregular profile were those which unwittingly betrayed themselves.

Her fingers trembled as she withdrew the thermometer, and denoted the figure attained by the mercury: Ninety-eight degrees. No doubt his pulse was also normal; but she dared not trust herself to the extent of touching his wrist.

He nodded seriously. "If you ventured so much as a single step from this room, I am certain that I would have a dangerous relapse! Draw up a chair, and let us talk. Frankly, a chat with you will do more good than harm. If you refuse, I will no doubt endure a sleepless night."

"Very well," she snapped back uncompromisingly, although her heart sang with elation. At least, she had awakened his interest.

In the shadowy brilliance of a single

chandelier, he regarded her, strange emotions coursing through his body. He had never seen anything so beautiful, so desirable. "I never knew that a woman could be so lovely," he said solemnly, and touched his bedewed forehead with a handkerchief.

Her lips parted in a glowing smile.

"Love makes all women beautiful," she whispered, dimpling and blushing very prettily.

"Love?" He remained before her, his breath coming fast. "Do you mean—?"

"That I love you, mon amour!" Her soft voice thrilled him, and he quivered in anticipating of her caresses, "From the first minute I saw you, I loved you!"

Exultantly sure of herself, Marcelle drew his head down to her, and kissed him full upon the lips. Her warm fingers caressed his cheeks, and moving upward, stroked his curly black hair with a motion so tender as to lull him to a sense of absolute security. "You are going to learn the true hidden meaning of the word 'love,'" she promised, looking at him for a moment, and then dropping her eyes.

His lips narrowed into a slim, straight line. "I believe that I am beginning to learn—already!" he announced, tightening her masterfully in an arm which had ceased to tremble.

"Then kiss me!" She stared pleadingly into his eyes. "Kiss me, and teach me—the meaning of your kind of love!" She nestled in his arms, her head resting upon his shoulder, her eyes closed.

"The meaning of all love!" he said softly, forcing her head backward with a hand which cupped her lovely chin. "This is love!" His own mounting passion answered hers in a kiss of terrible ardor, which touched her to the very depths of her soul. . . .

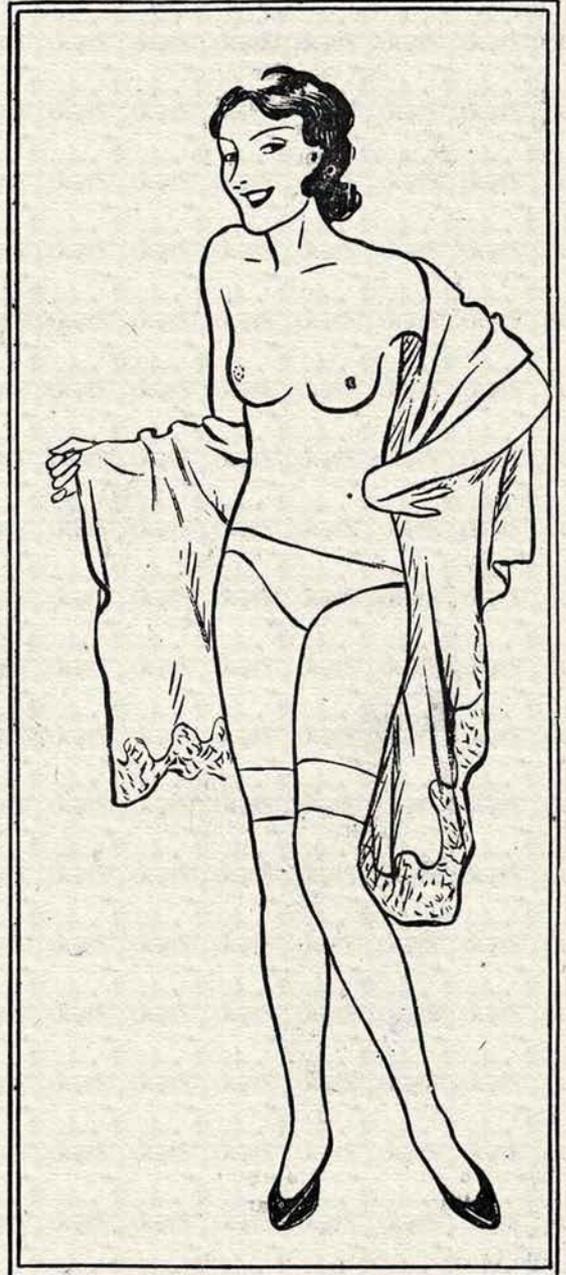
Dawn.—The dawn of a new day and of a new life!—Marcelle lifted her head from the pillow and allowed her glance to roam about the chamber which would in the future be her own. Her life mate! Although the unexpected success of her scheming had left her somewhat dazed, her selfish, material impressions darted again to the fore, piercing the spell of unreality which enveloped her, and she smiled with smug complacency. She doubted very seriously that Pierre could awaken in her the tender affection which she still felt for the struggling writer, Alphonse Fortier, but at any rate, she might learn to care for him to some extent. The luxuries with which he would be in a position to provide her would adequately recompense her for the slight discrepancy.

Her heart still sang as she arose from the bed and donned the prim white uniform which she had so carelessly tossed

aside the night before. She would allow Pierre to sleep as late as he wished. No doubt, he felt completely fagged.

"Good morning, ma chérie!" His voice, loud and clear, cutting sharply through the stillness, however, assured her that her concern had been needless.

"Good morning!" She moved to the



side of the bed, and lowered her lips to his. "You had better rest a little longer, chere, or you will be unable to carry out our little program today—"

"Our wedding day!" His expression became suddenly deadly serious. "Do you really love me, Marcelle?"

She laughed away his doubts. "Je t'adore!" she insisted passionately. "Nothing will ever take me away from you, new that—that—"

"I know." He chewed nervously at his lower lip. "But there is something I must entire face of the matter." His eyes wavered, and his hands shook as with palsy.

"What is it?" Contagiously, the germ tell you; something which may alter the her mouth was a splash of scarlet in the of his apprehension transferred itself to her.

"I—I'm—" The sound of footsteps in the lower hallway checked his confession, and his face blanched pathetically.

Although Marcelle's heart thumped anxiously against her ribs, she remained silent, listening intently to the regular pace of the newcomer as he ascended the stairs, approached the room—

"Bon jour." The door opened slowly, and a tall, distinguished man stepped across the threshold. Marcelle gazed at him in frank admiration; handsome to the point of actual beauty, with a figure which radiated elegance and position, he regarded them with sparkling eyes. "I am happy to that you have definitely improved."

"Almost unbelievably, Monsieur; bien merci," acknowledged the man in the bed.

The newcomer smiled. "I rather expected a different finale yesterday even-

ing, Henri," he reminded.

Henri! Marcelle stared at her newly betrothed in sheer consternation. Henri! Qu'elle diable! What did he mean—?

"Mademoiselle," the other turned to her, and held out his hand, "I am Pierre Cantrelle. May I offer you my sincerest thanks for your share in our patient's miraculous recovery?"

Marcelle's mouth gaped open. "You—you are Pierre Cantrelle—?"

"Assurement; no doubt Henri must have told you that I would return this morning? Had I not been called away on urgent business, I assure you that I would have remained with you at his bedside throughout the night. Henri means more to me than I can readily express, mademoiselle. He has served me faithfully in a confidential position for nine years—"

Marcelle nodded her head dumbly. His secretary! She had thrown away her most priceless possession upon a mere, penniless pen-pusher!

"Will you allow me to reward you for your assistance?" The cultured voice of Pierre Cantrelle drifted to her ears, restoring her to the present.

"I—I suppose that I have—I have already been—paid in full—" she stammered, and her fingers trembled as she endured the strange sensations of thousands of francs dribbling through them, like water through a sieve. . . .



IT HAPPENED IN A BEAUTY PARLOR

By EVA GASTON

"Is this the Crescent Beauty Parlor?"
Sitting at her office desk, temporarily forgetting the rows of typewriter keys which faced her, Doris Steele spoke into the telephone.

The reply must have been in the affirmative, because her next words were:

"Will you ask Nelly if she can take me for a shampoo and a wave at four o'clock? . . . This is Miss Steele speaking . . . yes, that's right, Steele. . . . S-t-e-e-l-e!"



Doris hummed snatches of a catchy song as she waited for the answer. . . . "Guess I ought to change my name to Jones or something," she thought. "I always have to spell it for everybody!"

"Hello!" She swerved back to the telephone mouthpiece. "She can? . . . All right . . . thank you!"

Glancing at her notebook at exactly the point where she had left off a few minutes before, her fingertips resumed the staccato hammering of the keys. It was Saturday morning, and she was in a hurry to finish her work before the office closed at noon.

Doris had a "date" on ice for that evening . . . an extra heavy date with her best boy friend, Kilbur Gray, who was taking her to a dance out on Long Island.

It was only recently that Doris had begun to patronize the beauty shops. Her dark brown hair, liberally streaked with bronze tints, was naturally long and wavy when she arrived in New York from her

small-town home, and she had always been accustomed to giving it an occasional shampoo with her own hands.

One day, in the office rest room, a girl had remarked:

"You ought to get your hair bobbed!"

"Why?" asked Doris. . . . The idea had never occurred to her!

"Because you're the type for it."

"Looks good now, doesn't it?"

"Sure! But it would be real swell if it was bobbed!"

Doris thought it over. . . . Maybe the girl was right. . . . On her way to the subway the next morning, she noticed the Crescent Beauty Parlor around the corner.

After office hours, she dropped in to the Crescent and made several inquiries. The result could be seen a little later when she emerged, hat in hand, and headed gleefully toward the apartment house where she occupied a one-room-bath-kitchenette suite.

Your skin is glorious, Sweetheart. Wilbur's gaze were avidly traveling, on and on, over a rapidly expanding territory.



Thereafter, it was a difficult matter to persuade Doris to wear a hat. . . . "I just love it when the breeze blows through my hair!" she would explain.

Soon she realized that bobbed locks need frequent attention, and she became a regular customer at the Crescent. Nelly was the staff hair-dresser who kept Doris head in good trim!

Cut and arranged in a fluffy style, the bronze elements in her hair seemed to be more pronounced than the brown, thus giving a piquant air to her personality that was more than ordinarily attractive.

Nelly was quite proud of her pretty patron.

"Who's your girl friend?" asked another operative after Doris had left the shop on the evening of her first visit.

"Isn't she cute?" murmured Nelly. "Her hair has never been bobbed before."

"She'll be a steady customer of yours now! You get all the breaks!" the other retorted, complaining: "Why didn't they turn her over to me? . . . You catch all the good-looking ones, but I get the hens and crows!"

Nelly laughed complacently, and disappeared into her booth.

Doris insisted upon trying many different ways of fixing her new bob, critically seeking to find out if there was a more becoming type. . . . It was Nelly who advised her to adopt the bushy fluffiness in back, exposing all of her creamy white forehead and tiny ears.

Her boy friends raved about it. . . . The girls in the office were jealous, even the one who suggested it would be "real swell" . . . All of which was a sure sign that it was alluringly fetching!

Doris was on time for her four o'clock appointment. When she minced down the aisle of the beauty shop, several pairs of eyes trailed her until she vanished behind the curtains of Nelly's booth.

Whisking off her dress, she sat down clad only in a sheer silk chemise that was simply the whipped cream on the cake of her glowing young charms.

"You've got to do better than your best this afternoon!" she warned Nelly, smiling. "I'm stepping out tonight!"

"He's a lucky boy, whoever he is!" looking young man in New York. . . . Mmmmm!" Doris sighed.

"That takes in a lot of territory!" said Nelly. "New York is a big city."

"And you're going to say there are a lot of young men in this town," retorted Doris. "I know! But this one is different, if you know what I mean."

"What makes him so different?"

Nelly liked intimate conversations with her customers on topics that dealt with the emotional side of human nature.

"Oh, you want details!" laughed Doris. "You'll have to use your imagination. . . . It's a hard thing to describe, but he just makes me feel different when I'm with him, that's all."

"Goose flesh all over?"

"More than that! . . . Say, did you ever have a pins-and-needles cramp?"

"Lots of times!"

Nelly smiled and went on with her work. During the shampoo, Doris said little. It was after her hair had dried, and the waving operation was about to start, that she remarked:

"I'm going to wear an evening gown tonight . . . How do you think I'll look?"

"You can wear one!" said Nelly. "You've got the skin and the figure! You'll look lovely."

"Wilbur likes me in it!"

"That's the 'best looking young man,' I suppose?"

"Of course!" Doris murmured. Innocently, she pulled down the front of her chemise and put her finger on an infinitesimal spot, almost invisible, on her chest. "What is this, Nelly? . . . I noticed it this morning when I was dressing."

In the course of Nelly's investigation, she pulled the chemise considerably lower than was necessary. . . . A generous portion of Doris's firm young breasts came into view.

"Oh, it's only a little blackhead!" said Nelly, testing it with a fingertip. "I can fix that in no time."

Suiting the action to the word, the blackhead vanished under Nelly's skilled manipulation of a loop-holed instrument. Then she suggested:

"Let me see if you've got any more."

Arms and shoulders and neck were examined minutely, but there was nothing to mar the satin sheen of flesh.

"Any on your back?" Nelly continued the examination. "Better be careful, because evening gowns have hardly any back to them these days."

The chemise interfered with the thoroughness of the inspection, so Nelly pushed the shoulder straps. Down went the garment around Doris's waist.

"You've got the loveliest skin!" Nelly must have thought that the gown was going to be a very daring model, because her hunt for the blackheads, which she failed to find, went far afield! Finally, she faced Doris:

"There! You can wear anything, or nothing, now! Your skin is perfect." Her eyes swept the gracefully rounded contours. . . . Youth was expressed in every line and curve. . . . Breasts that were as perfect as the skin that formed a natural brassiere, topped with cherry-red nipples, stood out boldly.

"You're a sweet little thing!" whispered Nelly. "You ought to take good care of yourself. . . . Not many girls are blessed with a shape like yours!"

Doris laughed. "It is cute, isn't it?" The chemise still lay bunched about her waist. "I hope I never get fat!" Doris continued. "I'd hate it, except that I'd like to fill out a bit here." Her hands went up to her breasts, fondling the delicate

"How big?"

"Plenty!" declared Nelly. "I have to buy over-sized brassieres. I was always full-breasted, even when I was a kid."

"Ob, let me see!" exclaimed Doris, impulsively.

Nelly obligingly opened her coat. . . . Securely imprisoned within the confines of a mesh bandeau, with ridges of flesh escaping from the sides and top, her bosom strained impatiently,



roundness.

"What an idea!" said Nelly. "It's funny about people! Here you are, wanting to develop a big bust, and here I am trying to reduce mine."

Doris glanced at her. The long white coat successfully hid Nelly's figure.

"Are you big there?"

"I'll say I am!"

"Mmmmm!" murmured Doris. "You are big, aren't you?"

In the deep valley between those bulging mountains, there were several dimples, and through the lace mesh darkly red shadows could be seen, surrounding each pointed tip.

"You haven't seen anything yet!" commented Nelly. A flip of her finger un-

hooked the brassiere. Instantaneously. Doris saw the most voluptuous development that she had yet observed.

"They're marvelous, Nelly!"

Stretching out a hand, she touched each breast, gingerly at first, then more interestedly.

"Why in the world do you want to reduce?"

"Oh, I don't know! Too much of a good thing is sometimes not so good."

"The boys love them that way, don't they?"

"Do they?" asked Nelly, laughing. "What do you know about the boys?"

"I know that much, anyway!" Doris whispered.

Nelly let the front of her coat flap loosely as she resumed the hair waving job. She didn't bother to readjust her brassiere, nor did she stop to re-button.

"What lotion do you use on your skin?" she asked.

"Oh, you should use something to keep it soft and pliable!"

"What, for instance?"

"We have a lotion that's wonderful. I'll show it to you after I'm through with your hair. It keeps your skin just like satin."

"I'd like to try it."

"And you should have a body massage once in a while. Tones up the sinews and the muscles and makes the flesh springy and lively. Did you ever have one?"

"I've had a facial massage!" said Doris.

"I mean a body massage."

"All over?" Doris stressed the question incredulously.

"Sure!" replied Nelly.

"It must be funny. Do you give them, too?"

"Certainly."

"Does it make a person feel good?"

"It does!" echoed Nelly. "I'll tell you what I'll do. You are going out for a grand evening with the 'best looking' young man in New York. You want to look and feel your best. I'll give you a massage and fix you up with the lotion 'neverything!'"

"No, you won't!" declared Doris. "Do you expect me to spend my week's pay in here this afternoon?"

"Who said anything about the cost?"

"Well, how much?"

"We'll come to that later, beautiful! I'd be willing to give you a massage for nothing if I owned this shop."

"But you don't own it!" laughed Doris.

Nelly leaned over her, whispering confidentially: "That's very true, but who knows what goes on inside my booth? Nobody!"



It was nearly seven o'clock before Doris turned the key in her apartment door. In the interim she had been subjected to the most bewildering variety of beauty treatments! She hadn't dreamed that such things were possible!

Undressing quickly, she paraded before her mirror, excessively proud of her appearance. Her skin glistened pinkly, and the fragrance of her impregnated the atmosphere.

It was while she was admiring herself that Margie Snow, her girl friend, with whom she now shared the apartment, burst in.

"I thought you had a date?"

"You bet I have, and an important one, too!"

"It's getting late."

"This is a society dance, darling, and Wilbur isn't calling for me until 9 o'clock."

"Oh, pardon me!" said Margie, haugh-

tily, peeling off her coat and hat. "Is he taking you to dinner?"

"No! I had a bite to eat before I came in."

"And where were you all afternoon?"

"Dolling up at the beauty parlor!" you're getting so that you spend most of your time, and I suppose most of your money, in that place."

Doris laughed.

"I may spend some time there, but it doesn't cost me much.

Margie sniffed sarcastically as she took off her dress and reached in the closet for a negligee. A pink silk combination did not even pretend to conceal the duskiness of her brunette charms, full-fledged and luxuriant.

"Have you got a date tonight?" asked Doris.

"It's Saturday night, isn't it?"

"Who've you dated and where are you



going to have your wild time?"

"Frank Samson is blowing me to a show, and he says he knows of a new speakeasy with the duckiest dance floor and the best liquor in the city." Margie had tossed the negligee on the bed, and was now stepping out of her combination.

Doris, drawing on a stocking, glanced at her.

"You should have had what I had this afternoon, girlie."

"What?"

"A massage . . . all over!"

Margie sniffed again. "And somebody poured a bottle of perfume over you, too, my nose tells me!"

"Not a whole bottle!" Doris said, teasingly.

"Who massaged you?"

"Nelly . . . she's a wonder!"

"You telling me?" smiled Margie enigmatically, disappearing into the bathroom.

"To hear you talk, you'd think a massage was one of your daily habits!" Doris called after her. "You've never had one!"

"No-o-o-o?" sung out Margie, turning on the shower. "Tell me, dearie . . . did she find any blackheads?"

Doris paused in the act of putting on a pair of silk panties.

"How do you know about that?"

Margie's laughter was heard above the sound of rushing water.

"That's her favorite pastime! . . . Hunting for blackheads!"

Wilbur Gray rang the bell promptly at nine o'clock.

Doris was ready, and his heart was not to be blamed for pumping his blood heatedly through his veins when she pranced into the living room and greeted him.

"You're more gorgeous every time I see you!"

"Thanks. Do you really like this evening gown?" Doris turned and pirouetted before him. The bodice was simply strips of velvet diminishing in width until they became very narrow straps over each shoulder. The schism between her pretty breasts, clearly defined, caused them to stand out even more prominently.

In back, there was a sweeping vista of bare skin down to the flowing hip line. The gown was such that a brassiere could not be worn with it, and the consequences were obvious when the eye took in the ensemble!

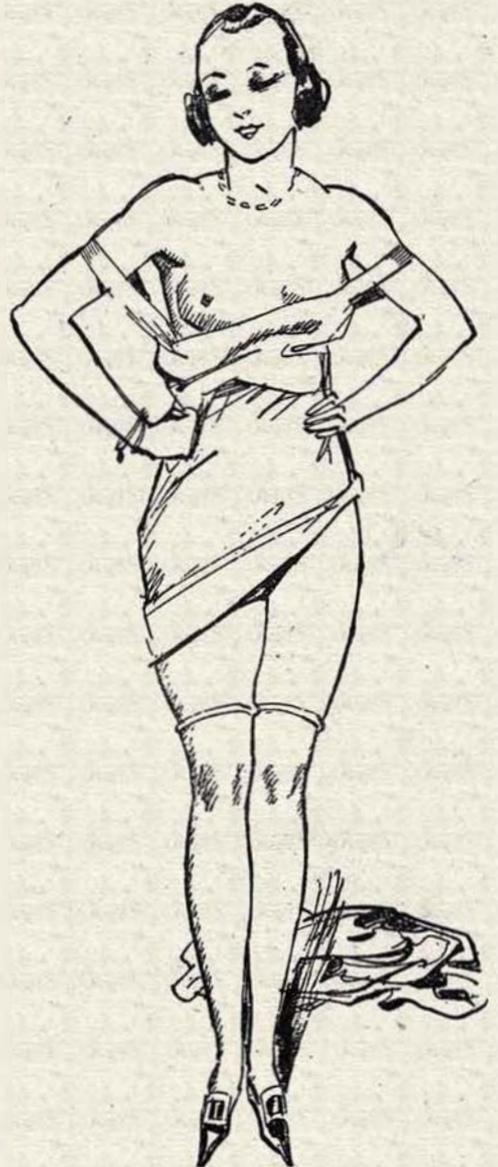
"It's swell!" said Wilbur.

Swathed in a fur coat, Doris seated herself beside him in his roadster, and soon they shot across the bridge, threading their way through traffic, until they settled down for an easy loping ride along

the winding Long Island roads.

Wilbur had a flask, and there were several convenient pauses in quiet country lanes. After the third attack on the flask, he put an arm about her shoulder. His fingers barely touched her neck.

"Oooooooo!" Doris exclaimed. "Your hand is cold. Here, get yourself warm!"



She made a slight opening in the front of her fur coat, through which he slid his hand.

It was surprising how warm it became in the twinkling of an eye! But it was surprising that his fingers began to move in a surreptitious arc.

Doris felt the creeping sensation, and when his hand discovered the swelling

breast for which he was searching amid the vast area of fur, she murmured:

"Now, Wilbur! Be a good boy! I only suggested that you get your hand warm!"

"Thanks for the suggestion!" he whispered, gently toying with the softness that lay beneath his palm.

"This other hand is cold, too!" The remark brought a smile to Doris's red lips. She looked at him thrillingly.

"May I warm it?"

"Well, I don't want you to suffer from frozen fingers!" she said. "Then you couldn't drive."

The implied consent was sufficient for Wilbur. In a second or two his arms vanished from sight amongst the fur. Doris snuggled closer.

"Give me a little kiss!" he breathed.

"We're going to a dance, aren't we? Or is this going to be a petting party?"

His hand was coursing up and down her back in a way that sent repeated thrills chasing each other in rapid succession. Another hand was wandering in another direction that was capable of distributing a greater variety of thrills!

"We'd better be going, Wilbur. We'll be late."

"Oh, let's stay a little while. How about that kiss?"

"Only one . . . that's all."

But the moist parting of her lips pro-

longed it to an extent that made it many kisses rolled into one. Doris's heart beat in a furious flutter, and her response was soulful!

When their lips melted apart, she sighed in bliss.

"I'm mad about you!" declared Wilbur. "And I've got an idea! Let's pass up the dance and elope!"

As their mouths met and clung tenuously once more, she whispered: "Where's the nearest minister, darling?"

Toward dawn, in a tiny hotel in another state where marriages can be consummated without interminable license delays, the newly-weds basked in the moonbeams that were peeping through the window of their room.

"Your skin is glorious, sweetheart!" Wilbur's lips were avidly travelling, on and on, over a rapidly expanding territory.

Doris closed her eyes and sighed, twisting her bare arms about him in heavenly rapture.

"And I think the perfume in your atomizer must be expensive! I like it."

Laughing happily, Doris thought of Nelly and her ministrations that afternoon.

"Kiss me, darling boy!" she gloated. "Kiss me and make it last f-o-r-e-v-e-r!"

WHOOPEE IN SUITE 16

Bellhop: "Mrs. Newlywed, PLEASE put your phone on the hook. A switchboard dame who was listening-in just bit three men in the lobby.

THE FATAL FOUNTAIN PEN

Say it with flowers,
Say it with sweets,
Say it with kisses,
Say it with eats,
Say it with tender words,
Say it with smiles,
Say it with gallantries,
Say it with wiles,
Say it with perfumes,
Say it with jack,
Say it with dinner gowns,
Low in the back.

Say it with diamonds,
That sparkle and shine,
Say it with lingerie,
Dainty and fine,
Say it with jewelry,
Trinkets of gold,
Say it with vintages,
Mellow and old,
Say it with ermine,
Or say it with mink;
But don't be a d—— fool
And say it with ink!

BETIME TALES

SUCCESS STORY

What's become of the maid forlorn
Who milked the cow with the crump-
led horn?

She's living in style in Hollywood now
A movie producer has signed up the
cow!

YOU NEED A LAXATIVE IF

you think Lansing, Michigan, is a sur-
gical instrument.

that the Chamber of Commerce has a
handle on it.

that aspirin tablets are something to
write on.

that Rex Beach is a summer resort.

that a blood vessel is a bot of some
kind.

that Bedtime Tales isn't the Gol-
Dangest magazine on the newsstand
this month and every month hereafter.

A GYP-SY, EH!

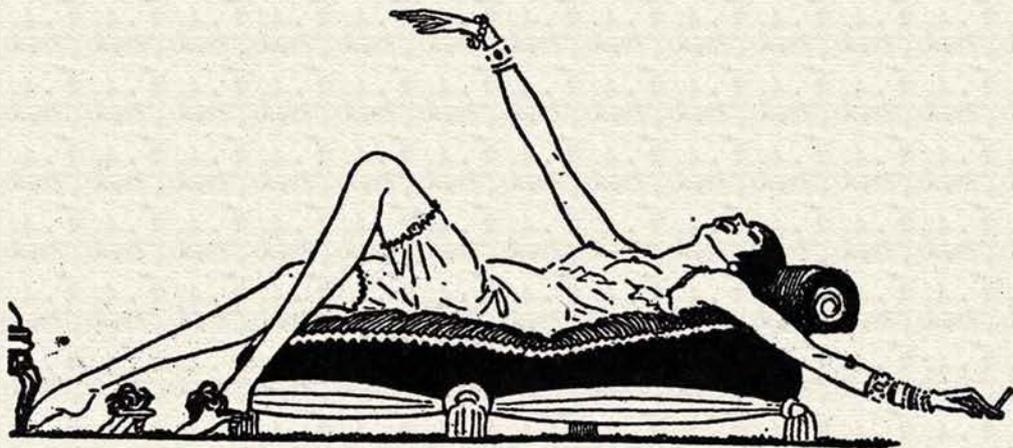
"It has been revealed that the name
of Gypsy Rose Lee is a pseudonym."

"So the country's leading strip-teas-
er was hiding something from her pub-
lic after all!"

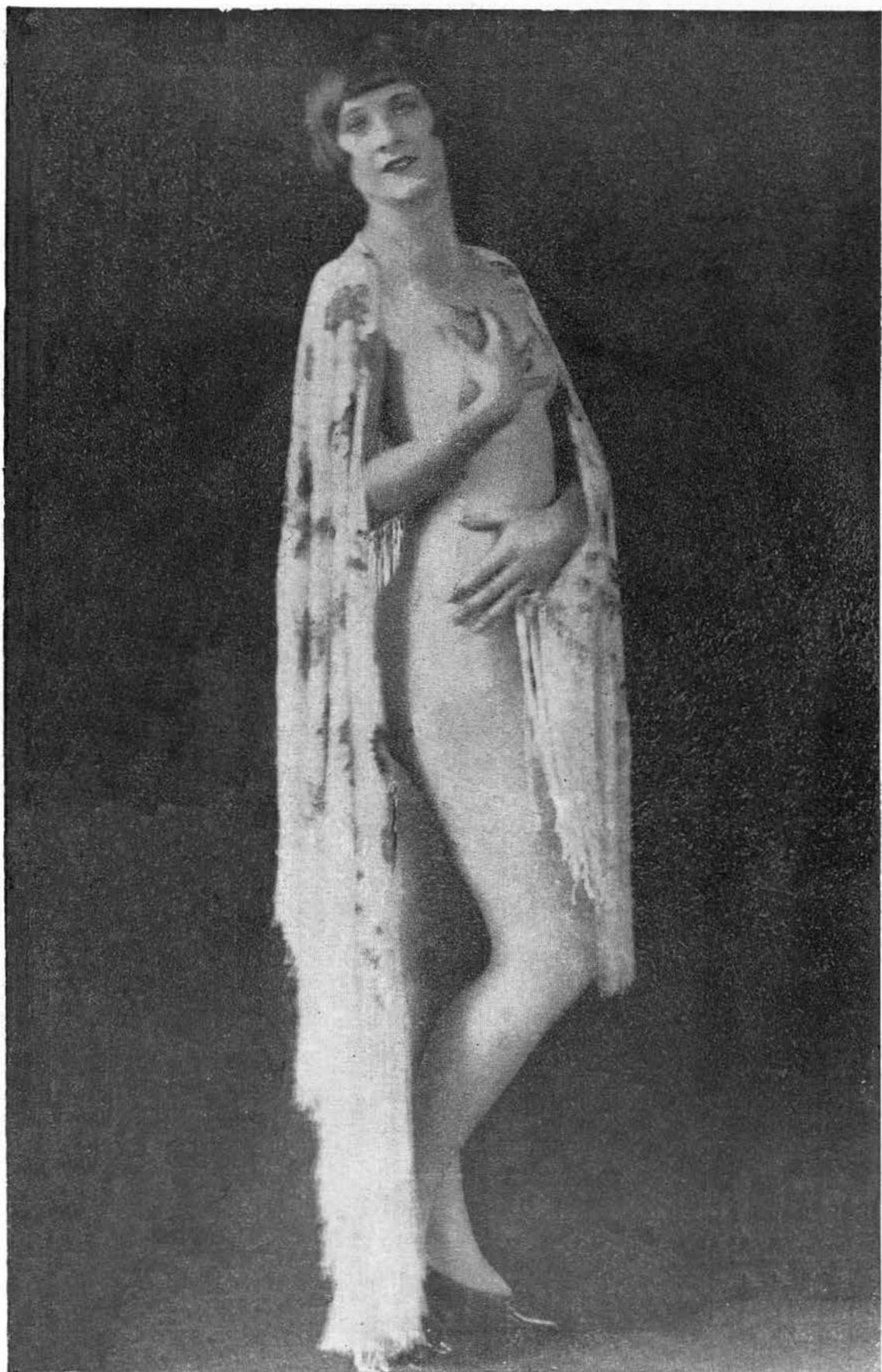
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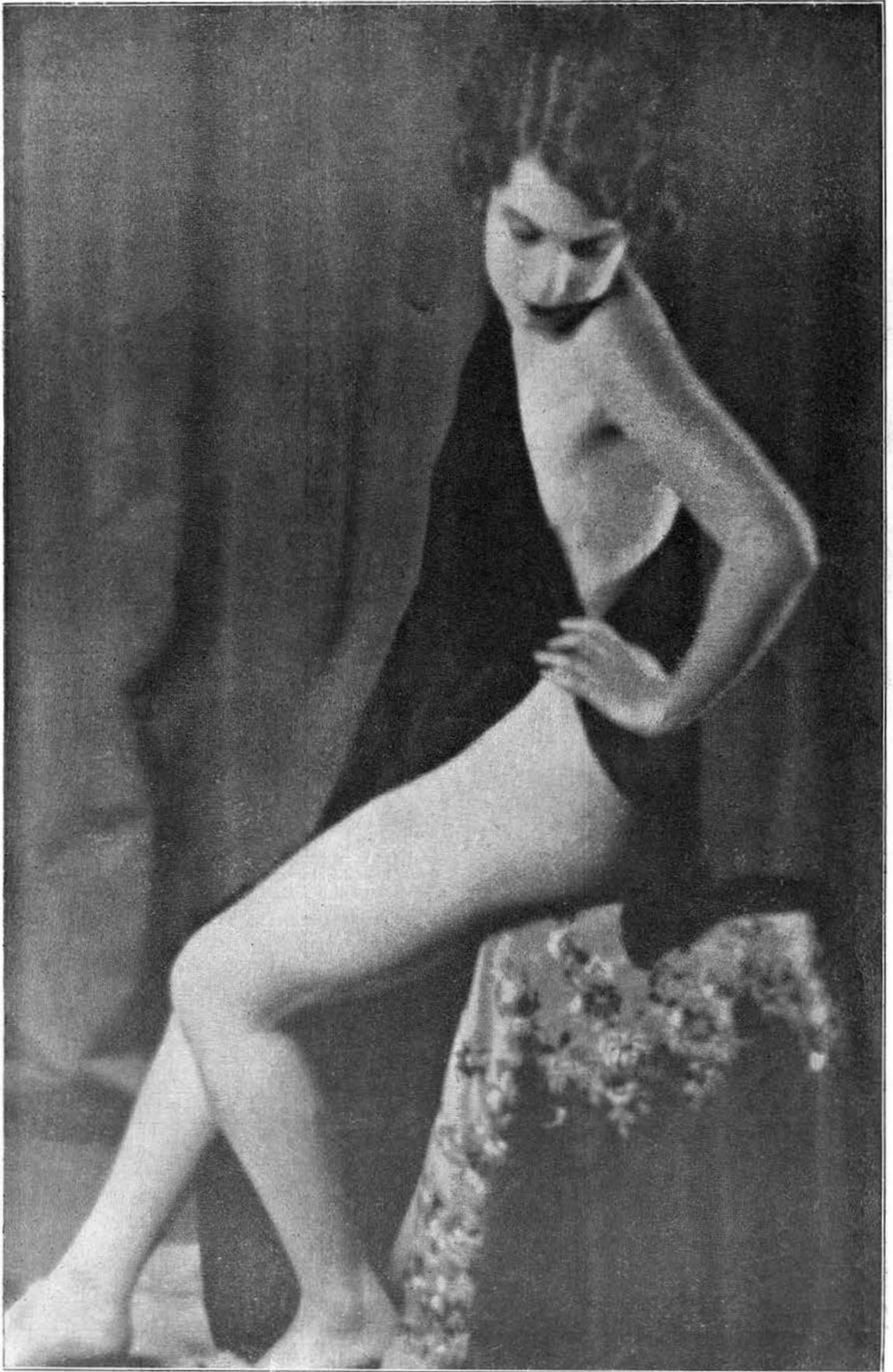
"That girl shows a lot of style in her
beach apparel."

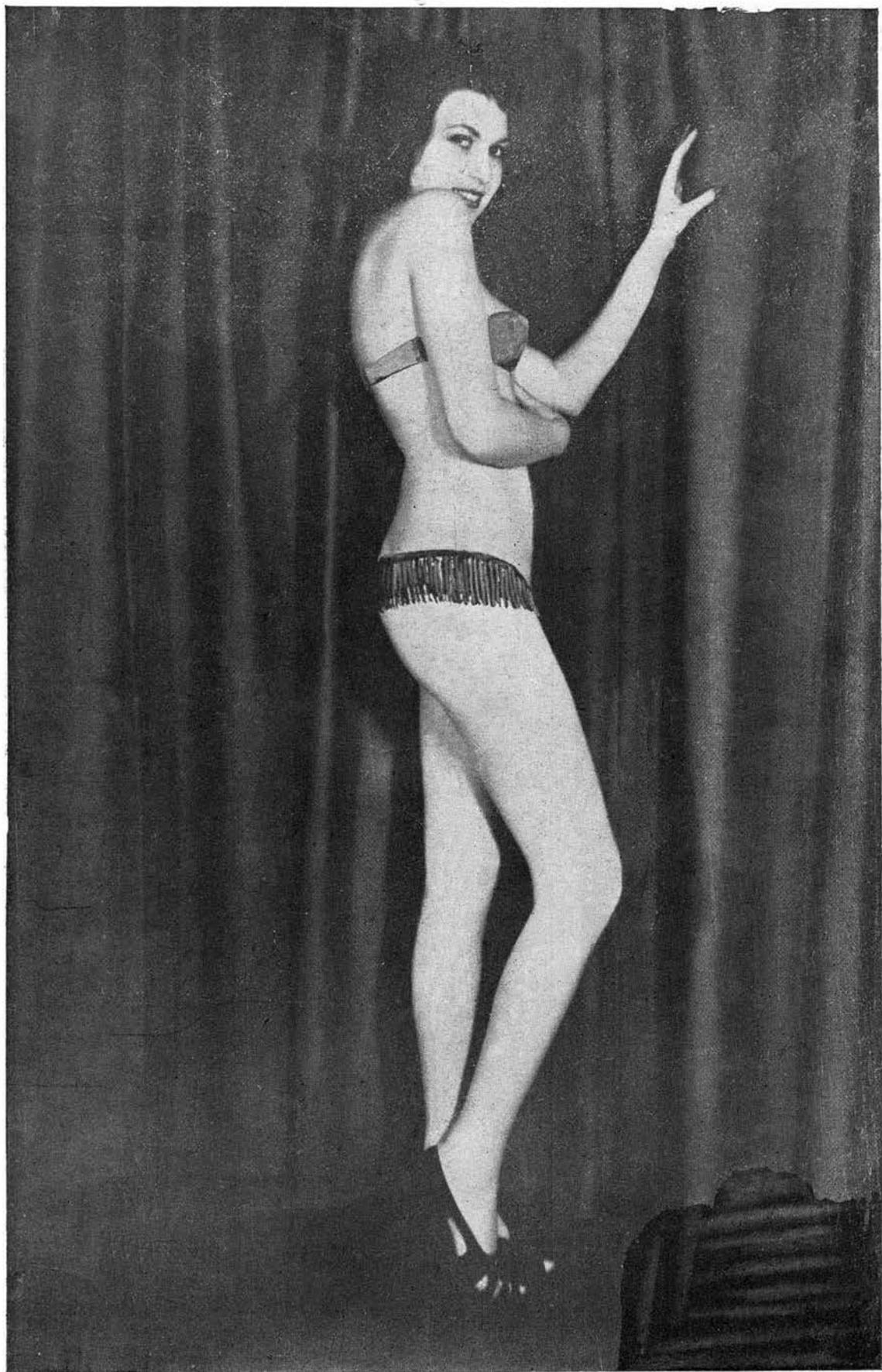
"You mean her beach apparel shows
a lot of girl."

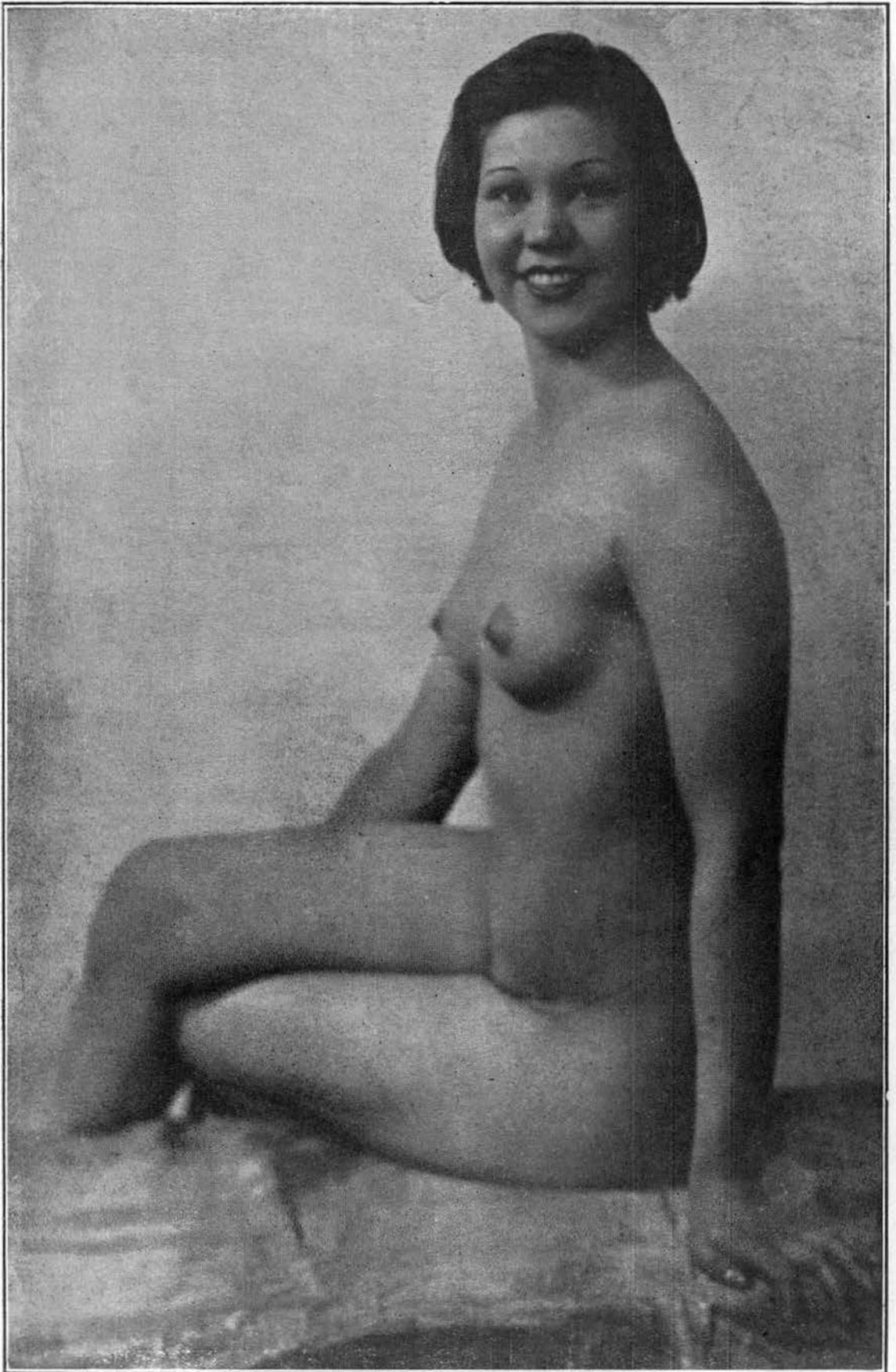




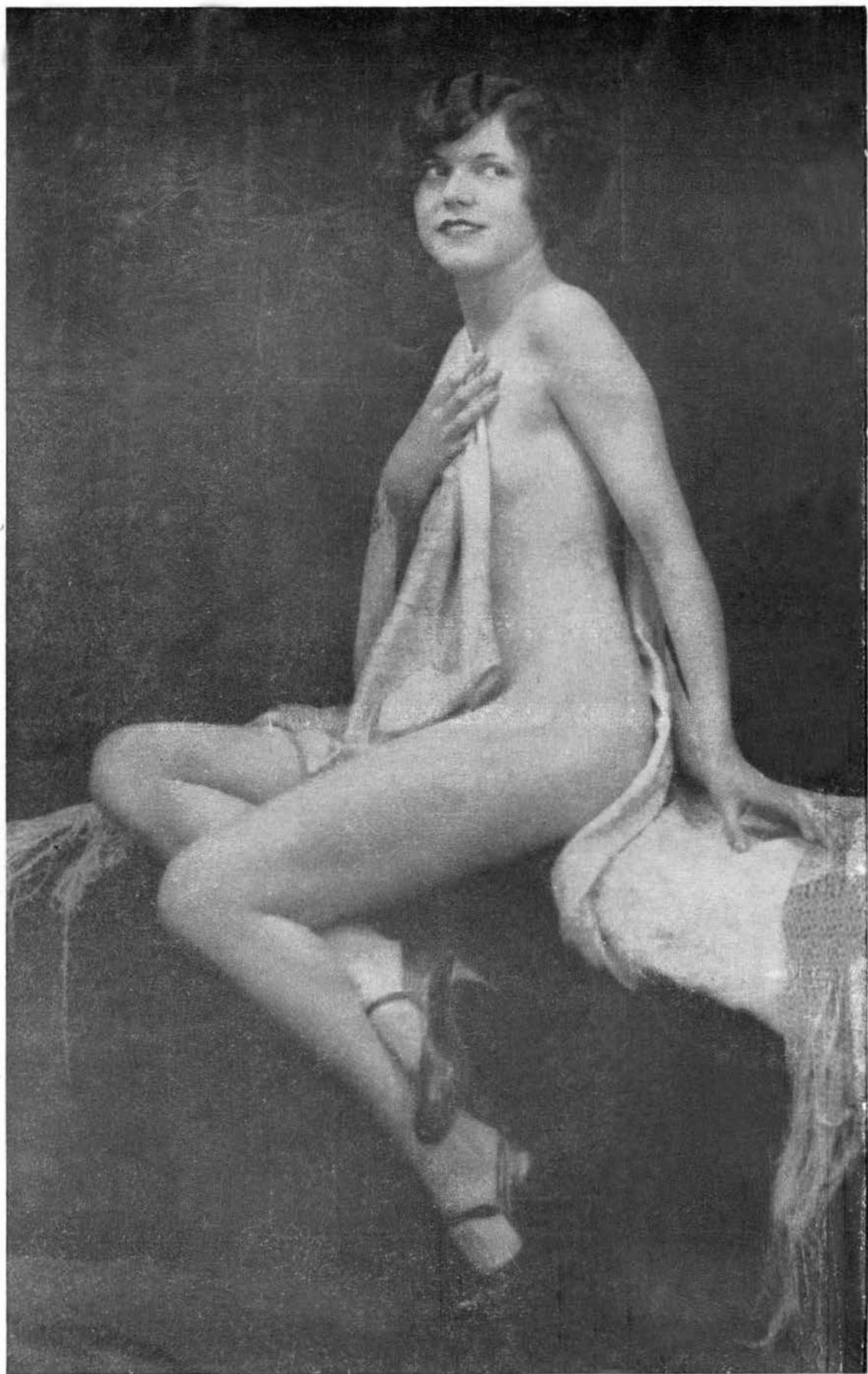




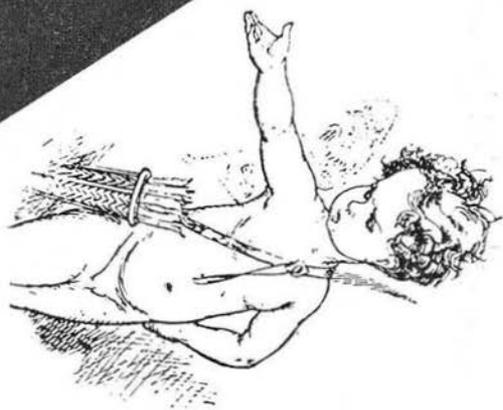










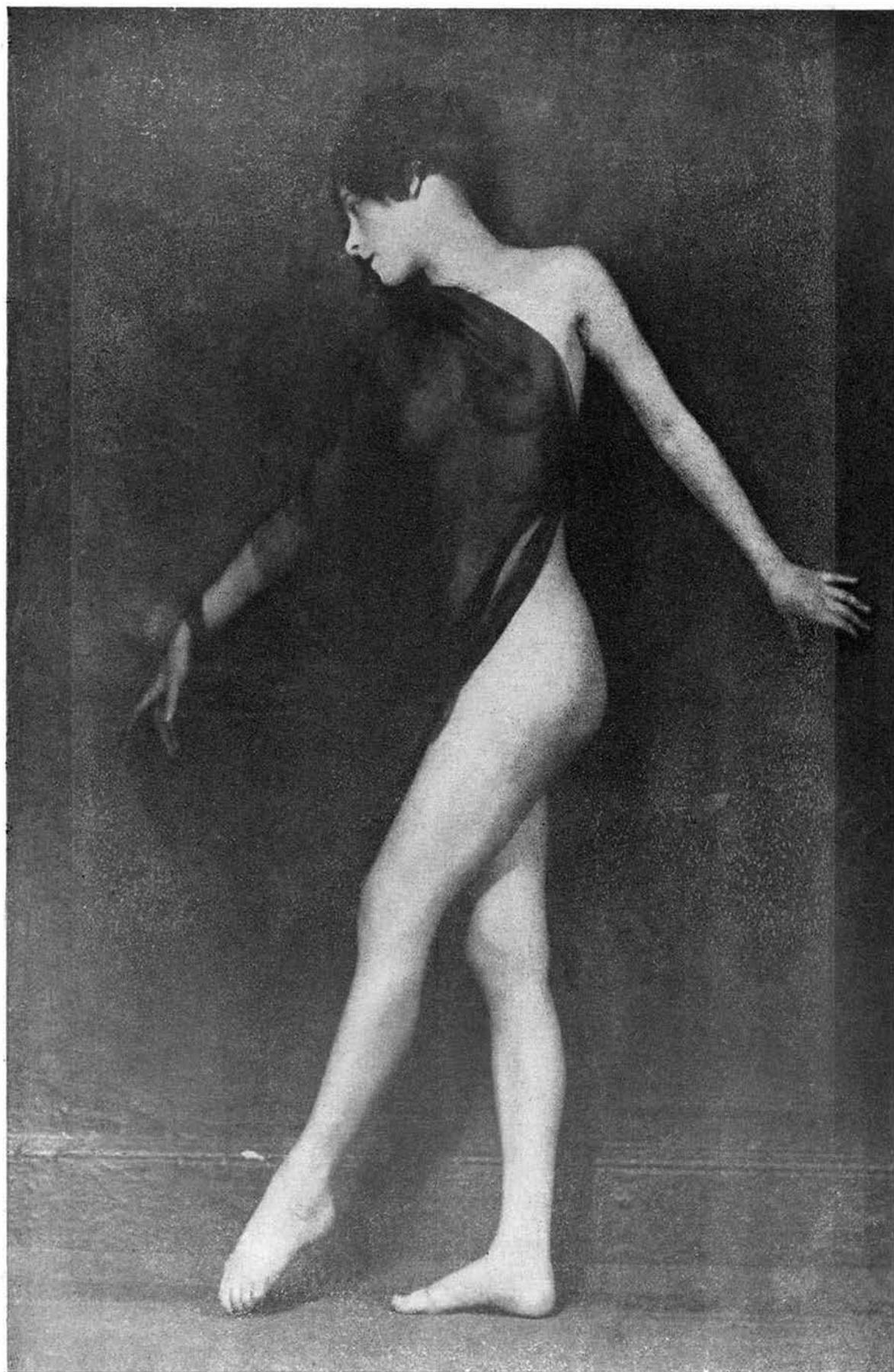




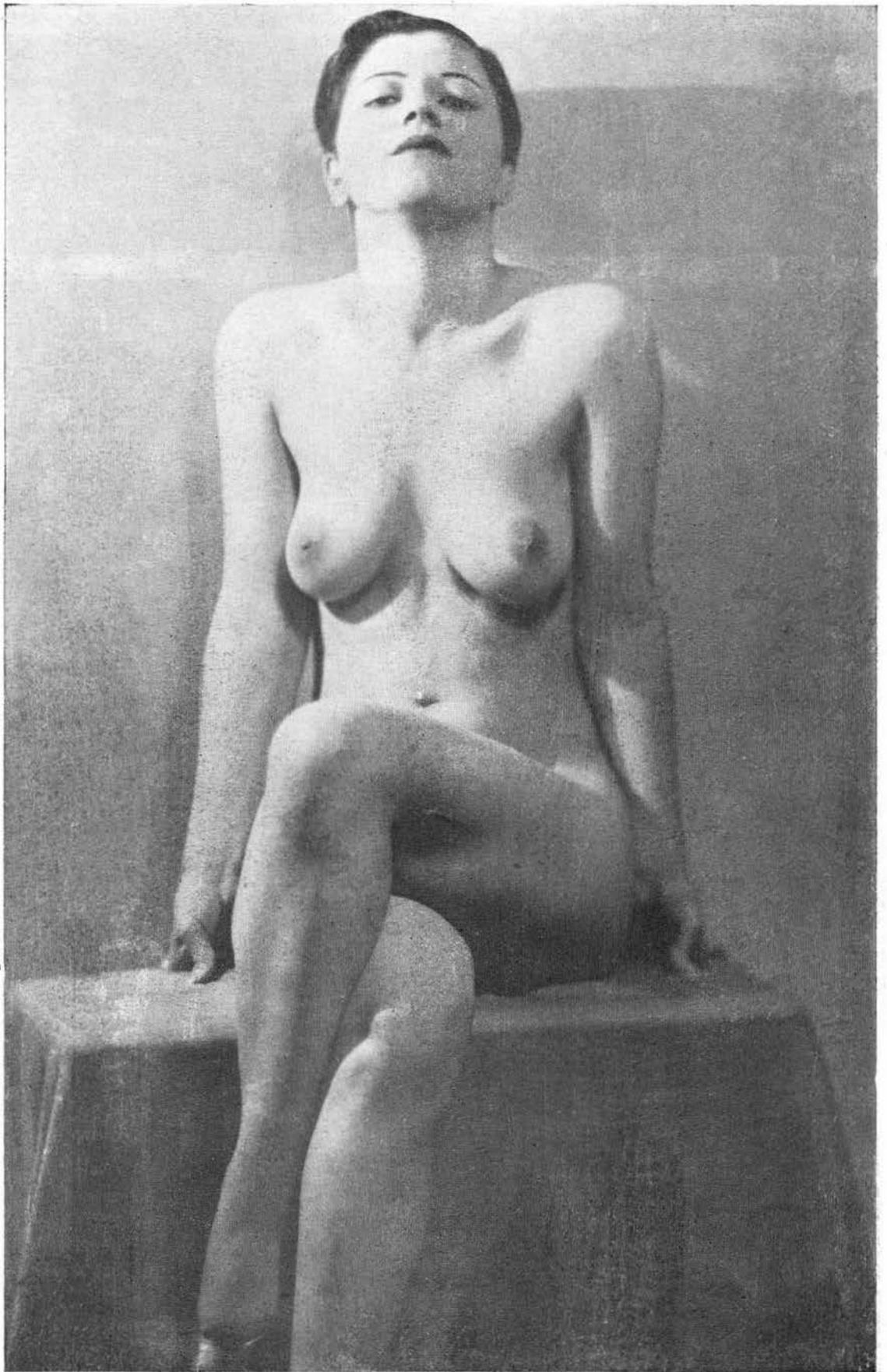






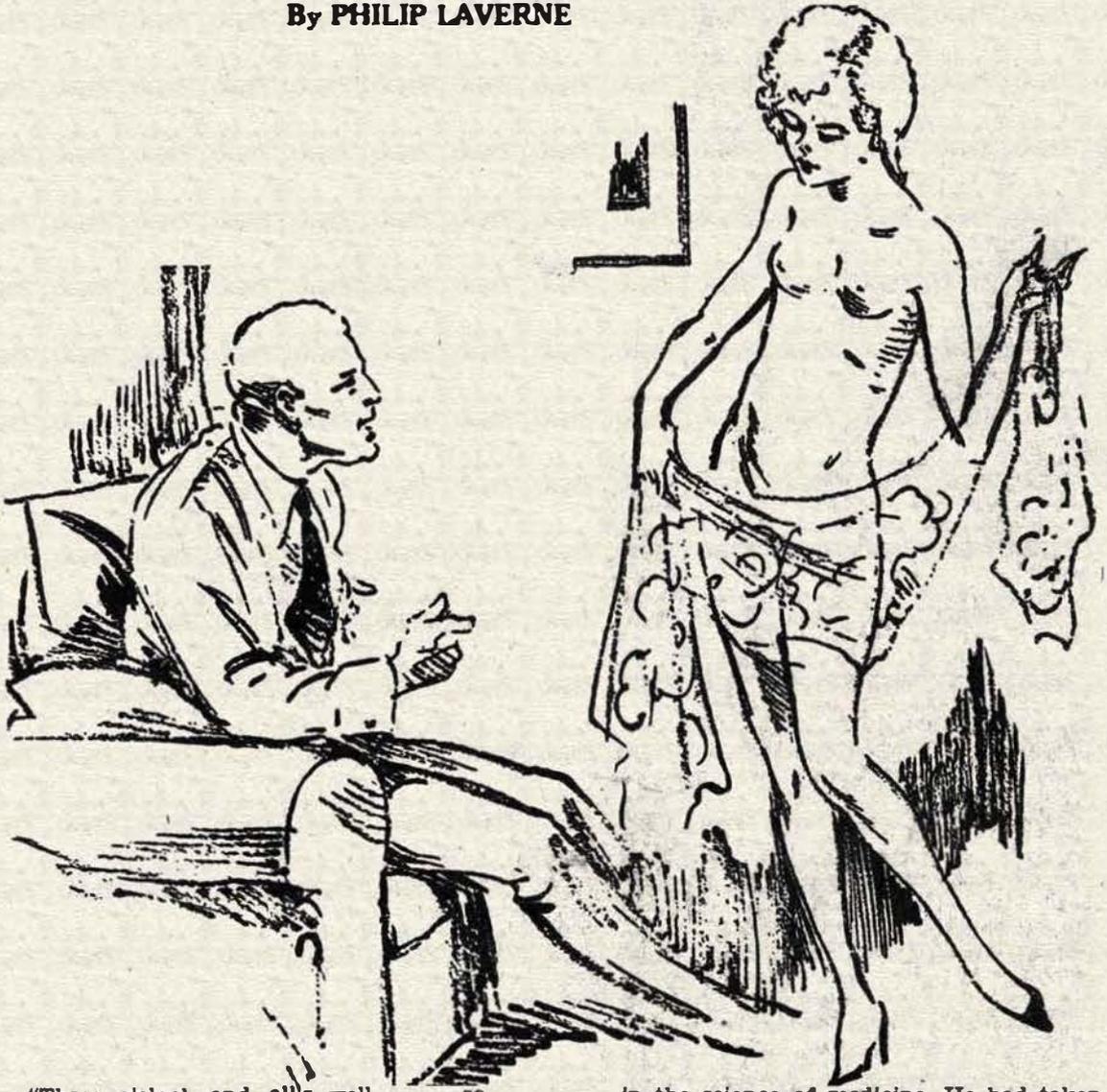






GAY PAREE

By PHILIP LAVERNE



"Three o'clock and all's well . . . so far!"

George Taylor put his watch back in his pocket and filled his lungs with the keen night air. He was standing on a small ledge, railed in like a miniature porch, that jutted out from the side of the house. A tortuous, winding street, typical of the older part of Paris, lay below him.

Inside the dwelling, behind the curtained windows and drawn shades, sounds of revelry cut into the stillness and came floating to his ears.

"Speaking of wild parties!" George mused, lighting a cigarette. "This one certainly reminds me of a tornado back home!"

He had arrived in Paris only a few days before, after winning a scholarship which entitled him to a year's post-graduate work

in the science of medicine. He had taken rooms in a pension in the Latin quartier of the city, and had scarcely unpacked his belongings when he received the invitation to the soiree that he had forsaken for a moment's breathing spell in the fresh air.

"Phew!" he whistled, blinking his eyes.

Leaning against the rail, his brain began to rid itself of the surcharge of wine and cocktail fumes that were making him feel woozy and befuddled, so he decided to stay out there in the air a little longer. But he had no sooner reached this decision than he heard a feminine voice directly behind him:

"Ah, monsieur, I have been looking all over the place for you! Isn't the party enjoyable?"

He turned to look into the dancing eyes of a titian-haired charmer who was his hostess.

"I'm having a wonderful time!" he declared.

"Then why are you out here all alone?"

"For no particular reason!" he prevaricated. "The window was open and I came out for the view!"

"It is worth while!" she murmured, shutting the casement that extended from floor to ceiling. As she did so, George saw the white surface of a bare back that the décolletage of her gown uncovered to the bend of her hips, and when she swung around to face him he was confronted by a similar expanse of pale skin except for peaked strips of velvet that cupped the softness of her breasts.

"Has monsieur a cigarette for me?" asked Lucette Cailleaux, her crimson poppy mouth opening in a flushed smile. A short upper lip, shaped like the lower so easily!

George had been admiring Lucette all evening. He had danced with her once or twice, but she was such a popular partner that he was crowded out too frequently!

A pungent perfume mingled with the crispness of the air as she swayed forward to accept the flame of a match for the cigarette that she placed between her lips and George was agreeably disturbed by the pressure of a warm thigh just above his knee.

Isn't it a bit chilly for you without a cloak?" he asked.

Mischievously, she blew a puff of smoke directly into his face, and laughed. "Monsieur will keep me from freezing, no c'est pas?"

A soft arm was creeping about his neck! George glanced at the casement window. He hadn't been in Paris long enough to stop worrying about jealous husbands! Suppose that window should be pushed suddenly, and an irate torrent of Gallic malediction commence to pour down on his head!

"Where is Francois?" he queried.

Lucette laughed again. "Fear not, monsieur, that we will suffer any interruption! Francois, at this minute, is thoroughly occupied and interested, tres beaucoup, with a blonde, and a brunette who are sitting in his fat lap trying to curl three hairs on the top of his bald head!"

Her mouth was almost touching George's lips. Her breath was very sweet and hot, impregnated with the odours of wine, perfume and smoke! He found it not at all displeasing.

Reassured that Francois was not likely to burst upon them with uxorial wrath, George let his hands play up and down the smoothness of her back. She pressed closer.

"Kiss me, mon George!" Her fingers seized his face and drew him as she tip-

toed the better to take complete possession of his lips, and he glimpsed more than the curling tip of a lively tongue, avidly expectant!

It seemed to be minutes later when she slowly released his face and gasped: "Delicious, monsieur!"

George's mind was in a whirl. He took a deep breath:

"Tell me, madame, is that what is called a French kiss?"

Lucette smiled and tilted her head coquettishly. "Isn't a kiss the same honeyed meeting of the lips the world over?"

George looked daringly into her eyes. "Yes and no!"

"Don't people kiss that way in America?" She seemed very much surprised.

"Sometimes!" said George. "It depends upon who is kissing and who is being kissed . . . you understand!"

"Oui, oui! But it should be a meeting of souls as well as lips, monsieur, otherwise there is no meaning to a kiss!" One shadowy eyebrow slanted upward, and she shrugged her shoulders.

"Yes, yes, of course!" he agreed.

Her arms were still coiled around his neck. He was sitting sideways on the railing, one leg dangling free. The exotic heat of her enveloped him like a misty fragrant cloud, and, as she talked, he felt her move sinuously nearer.

"A kiss should be tasted, ne c'est pas, like one toastes wine upon the tongue!" she continued, in a low murmur.

"Certainly!" assented George. His hands were wandering over her now. He had completely forgotten the possibility that Francois might appear on the scene, and Francois might appear with the softness of the contours, yielding so delightfully beneath his fingers. Her breasts were small in comparison with the fullness of her hefty hips, curving in and out most intriguingly!

Lucette's lip: were moistly demonstrating what was her clinging conception of a tasty kiss, as she slowly insinuated herself against him until every line and curve fitted perfectly!

George's enthusiasm was growing apace. His blood, already heated with the wine that he had consumed, now was racing like molten lava in his veins under the exhilarating spell of her kiss.

"Mmmmm! Monsieur!" she moaned

Her lips tore away from his, only to plunge into his mouth once more with greater avidity than ever! George felt his knees giving way, wobbly under the ecstatic strain!

Suddenly she wilted limply in his arms and would have fallen, had he not held her so tightly, so possessively!

And at that very instant, the excited voice of Francois could be heard:

"Lucette! Lucette!" he called.

She squirmed away. "I must go, monsieur!" Her eyes were aswim with emotion. "Lover!" she whispered, planting a swift, impulsive kiss on his lips before she vanished through the casement window!

George was panting. He wished that there was a comfortable chair out there on the ledge, so that he could sit down to recover his equilibrium!

"What a girl!" he muttered, holding a light to his cigarette. It was his first amorous experience in Paris, and he marveled at the passionate impetuosity that had overwhelmed him.

"I need a cocktail!" he said, but he hadn't taken a step toward the window when it opened, and willowy brunette charms embodied in the person of a lovely femme staggered out and almost collided with him. A glass was in her hand, and some of its contents spilled.

"Oh, monsieur . . . pardonnez-moi!"

She laughed gaily, adding: "I did not know that anybody was out here!"

George was glad that she hadn't thought of taking their hectic rendezvous a few minutes ago! And he grinned as he wondered what the brunette would have done if she had stumbled upon the fiery tableau.

"I was just going in for a cocktail!" he said.

"Here, monsieur, please take mine!" she offered. "It seems as though I have had far too many already!"

"Oh, no, no!" he demurred. "Go ahead and drink it! I'll run in and get another."

She blocked his passage, smiling, "Please, monsieur! Take this one! See! I shall sweeten it for you." She touched the rim of the glass with her bloodred lips and the sharp point of a snaky tongue dipped itself into the liquid.

Then, swiftly circling his neck with her arm, she held it to his mouth at exactly the spot where the sweetening process had taken place!

George drank thirstily. "Thanks!" he murmured.

"It was a drop of honey, monsieur," She whispered. And there is an ocean of it where that came from! Her parted lips moved about the edges of his, nibbling, biting, moisture-laden, hot.

George's arm about her waist encompassed a slimness that seemed as if it might be brittle if it were not so resilient, but his hand, upward bound, met a breast that was amazingly full-fleshed! Then, slipping downward, his fingers found hips that were boyishly small!

The party sounded very, very far away to George as he gave himself up whole-



heartedly to the thrill of her kiss and the exploring of her beauties, which were a study in contrasts!

At last, she let her lips dissolve. Ahh! she sighed. It was the most luscious kiss I've had tonight! A fingertip stroked his cheek.

"Monsieur would like another cocktail, perhaps?"

"I'd like another kiss!"

"Oh, but you are greedy!"

"No! Thirsty!"

She pinched his nose playfully. Monsieur shall have both kiss and cocktail, and as many of each as you desire! A million, billion, trillion!"

George was fascinated by her colorful personality!

"You will wait here?" she murmured, approaching the window. "I will bring the glasses! Cocktails before kisses!" Non?

Left alone once again, George chuckled. "I guess that's why they call this town gay Paree." He hadn't taken three puffs of his cigarette before the brunette reappeared, a glass in each hand. She sipped one, darting a tongue tip in it, her eyes sparkling!

"That's mine!" he declared, reaching for it.

"Monsieur likes honeydew, I see!" She sidled up to him, offering her mouth. Whether the kisses tasted better with the cocktail or the cocktail tasted better with kisses, George couldn't make up his mind, but there was a tempestuous merger of lips before and after each sip, and when the glasses were empty she began to teach him variations in the tricky art of osculation!

In the midst of a particularly long and especially succulent kiss, she trembled like a reed in his arms!"

"What's your name?" he asked, a moment later, soothingly.

"Sophie, monsieur!" she answered sighing. "I am Sophie La Rue! They call me the idol of Montmartre! Everybody knows me!"

"No wonder," said George, resuming the kiss.

It was progressing steadily toward another crescendo of fiery flares when they heard someone fumbling with the latch on the window, and a shrill voice said:

"Diable!"

Sophie smiled, because she had slipped the catch that locked the casement when she came back with the cocktails!

"It is Sara, mon ami! She has such a temper that she will break down the window if it does not open. I had better see what she wants."

Disengaging herself from the interlacing network of George's muscular arms,



Sophie unlatched the casement and let it swing wide. A girl with a blazing bush of the reddest hair that he had ever seen peering out into the dimness of the little balcony.

At the sight of Sophie, she said excitedly: "Ah—ha, so there you are, ma bebe."

"Mais oui!" I am here!" replied Sophie calmly. "What of it?"

"Our host, Francois, is beside himself, searching for you from cellar to garret!" continued Sara. "He swears that you promised to dance with him, and the prospect seems to have gone to his head with all the wine he has swilled!" She laughed and waved a hand. "Go to him, dearie, and comfort him before he is completely insane!"

Sleeky tigerish eyes were focused upon George as Sara rambled on. They were heavy-lidded eyes, glinting feverishly, and egg-white of her complexion.

"If monsieur will excuse me—" Sophie was saying. "I did make a promise to Francois that I should keep. Au revoir!" She stepped inside as Sara stepped out on the ledge.

"Bon soir, monsieur!" said Sara, smiling at George. "Or perhaps I should really say bon matin! Look! The dawn is breaking."

That's right!" said he.

"Oh, it is cold, ne c'est pas?" A shiver rippled through her. "Let us go in, mon homme! Would you care to dance with me?"

"I was just about to propose the same thing!" he countered with an interested grin.

The balcony gave directly on to a narrow piazza, and beyond it was the drawingroom, where several couples were drifting about in a pretense of dancing, but paying more heed to each other than to the music. Sophie was there, hugged by Francois.



On chairs and settees, more couples draped themselves in lesser or greater degree of wanton abandonment in accordance with the stage of satiety of their amorous inclinations.

George paused in the doorway with Sara. Amusement showed on his face as he glanced about the room. Everywhere he looked there was a piquant exhibition! Two white arms around a manly collar, all else invisible except a silken kneecap. A gleaming thigh clasped by a flowered garter! Two faces welded in a soulful kiss! Masculine fingers frantically trying to solve the mysteries of a brassiere! Lace-fringed panties and other lingerie of all the colors of the rainbow! And a bewildering variety of sizes and shapes in breasts that were pointed pinkly, redly or darkly!

He heard Sara laugh and looked into her slinky eyes.

"Monsieur might prefer a cozy corner instead of a dance!" she purred, lopping her arm with his. "There is a settee just big enough for two non?"

She pointed to the end of the piazza. Almost hidden in the shadows he saw the little couch, invitingly vacant.

"I'm glad you suggested it!" he said, sitting beside her.

"Oh, you should not be bashful or backward, mon ami!" Sara's lily-white hand seemed to be counting the buttons on his vest. "We are friends, ne c'est pas?"

"I hope so!" murmured George inanely, dropping his eyes to the swelling mounds so frankly disclosed by the brevity of her corsage. An individualistic perfume, heavily spiced by musk, emanated from her with the allure of the orient in its odeur.

She leaned back against a large cushion on one side of the settee. One hand still flitted nervously about him, the other was resting like a lily-white bird on his shoulder.

"Monsieur didn't feel the chill on the balcony?"

"No!"

Sara's lips were perpetually open, whether or not she was talking, laughing or silent, and George was thrilled by her habit of constantly poking a salmon-tinted tongue-tip between the edges of her pearly teeth. It was as characteristic a gesture as her musk-laden perfume!

"It is never cold when Sophie is near!" she commented, smiling. "Her kiss is a living furnace, monsieur, oui?"

George felt a bit embarrassed. He had always felt that it wasn't gentlemanly to kiss and tell," so he simply said:

"Is it?"

Sara laughed lightly. "You are a diplomat, mon ami! But you wouldn't be di-

vulging any secrets to admit that you enjoyed the kiss of Sophie! She herself would boast of another conquest!"

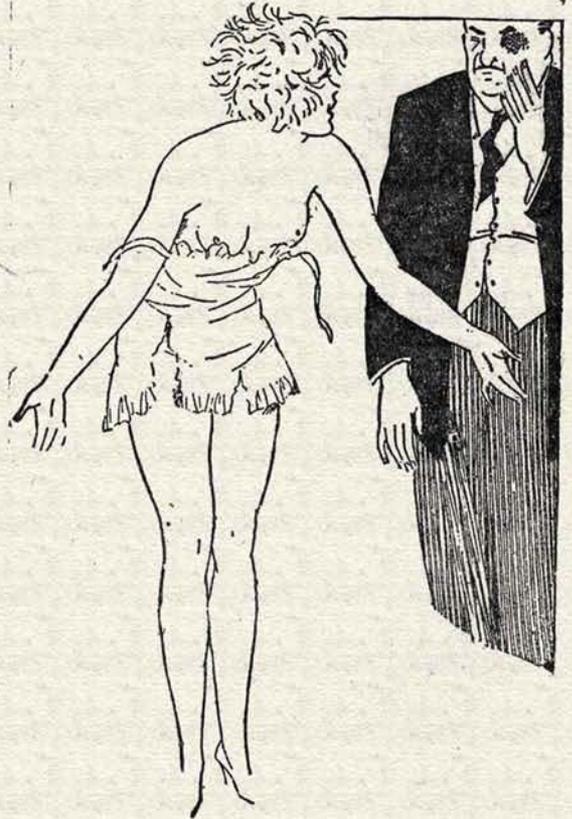
"It is her privilege!" said George. "But let us talk about you, mam'selle! Your hair is very pretty."

Her fingers had slid along his shoulder and were now toying with the lobe of his ear.

"You like red hair, monsieur?"

"It is strikingly attractive!"

Sara looked pleased. "It has always been as you see it now! I was red-haired baby!"



George thought that she still was!

"Is that a dimple?" he asked, placing a hesitant hand near the bend of her elbow.

"Mais out! And here is another!" She lifted the other elbow. "There are many more, aussi!"

"Where?" he pursued, courageously.

"For instance . . ." she whispered, pulling down the front of her gown ever so slightly. In the valley between her breasts, George saw a perfect dimpled recess, but his eyes did not overlook the red carnation buds on the adjacent hill tops!

He bent his head to kiss the dimple, distended and crystal hard! It was as and then his lips travelled to first one and then the twin bud, both becoming

though he had dipped his face in a bowl of perfume!

Sara drew in a hissing breath through clenched teeth, ending in a gasp that expressed her joyous reaction to his caress.

"Oh! Monsieur! I should faint if you did that again!"

George put it to the test. Sara didn't faint but her hissing sigh and the grinding of little teeth together were even more eloquent than if she had lost consciousness. And finally, a muffled scream of sheer delight caused him to look up quickly.

Sara had thrown her curly red head back on the pillow, eyes shut tightly, lips thrillingly a-quiver. The hollow at the base of her throbbing throat might have been an exaggerated dimple, and George's kiss found it sweetly warm! It was an easy matter, then, for him to claim her mouth! And in the rhapsody of her de-

lirious response, there was nothing wanting!

In the momentary lull that sometimes occurs between stormy guests, George heard her whisper.

"There are as many dimples, cheri, still to be discovered!"

"I'll kiss each one," he replied, "if you will show them to me."

Sara laughed enticingly. "Wouldn't it be ever so much more fun if you searched for them yourself? Seek, monsieur, and you will be sure to find!"

George played the game of hide-and-seek with a thoroughness that was its own rich reward!

It was broad daylight when George climbed the stairs of his pension, rattled the key in the apartment lock, and, undressing quickly, crawled wearily into bed, murmuring:

"Seven o'clock and all's well, so far."

"Move over closer to me, sweetie."

"Didn't I tell you I was a lady?"

"I don't care what you were."

"CHOCK FULL O' NUTS"

Does not necessarily refer to a candy—it might mean an asylum.

Ever hear the one about the man who married a Scotch wife because he knew she'd never give him a piece of her mind?

He: "Let's play posteo....ce."

She: "Oh, that's such a childish game."

He: "Not the way I play it."

They MET

She SPOKE

He REFUSED

She WONDERED

"Not my 'TYPE," said he,

"Too BOLD FACE;"—

"Not MY type," said she,

"You're a small PICA."

"Well, well, where in the world did you get so many brothers and sisters?"

"Oh, Papa told me a stork left them all on the doorstep."

"You tell Papa he'd better watch his step."

IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU"

If two keep company, whether there'll be a crowd.

Little Willie from his mirror

Licked the mercury all off,

Thinking in his childish error

It would cure his whooping cough;

At his funeral Willie's mother

Smartly said to Mrs. Brown:

" 'Twas a chitly day for William

When the mercury went down!"

"Style was what made Oscar Wilde."

"Yes, and Thornton Wilder."

Fluffy Ruffles wants you to know that she has been leading a fast life, but is on her last lap now.

Dumb: "Were you ever crossed in love?"

Dumber: "Humph! I've been double-crossed and how"

Judy: "You had no business to kiss me"

Rudy: "It wasn't business, my dear. It was a great pleasure"



Young Girl: "Were you ever in a predicament?"

Old Maid: "No—but I tried—many a time!"

"Mary, aren't you getting too big to play with boys?"

"No mother, the bigger I get the better I like 'em."

There was once a girl who was born abroad and—
be's been a broad ever since

Helen: "How do you like my new fur coat?"
coat?"

Belle: "It's the CATS!"

There's quite a difference between Teddy's and Teddys."



HE LOVED HER
After The Ball
BUT
After the BAWL—?

MABEL: LOVE IS JUST A GAME OF CHANCE.

JOAN: YEH, AND EVERY SOFA IS A GAMBLING JOINT.



MABEL: HENRY ARE YOU FISHING?

HENRY: NOPE MABEL, I'LL GIVE YOU TWO MORE GUESSES.



ALL SET FOR THE KILLING

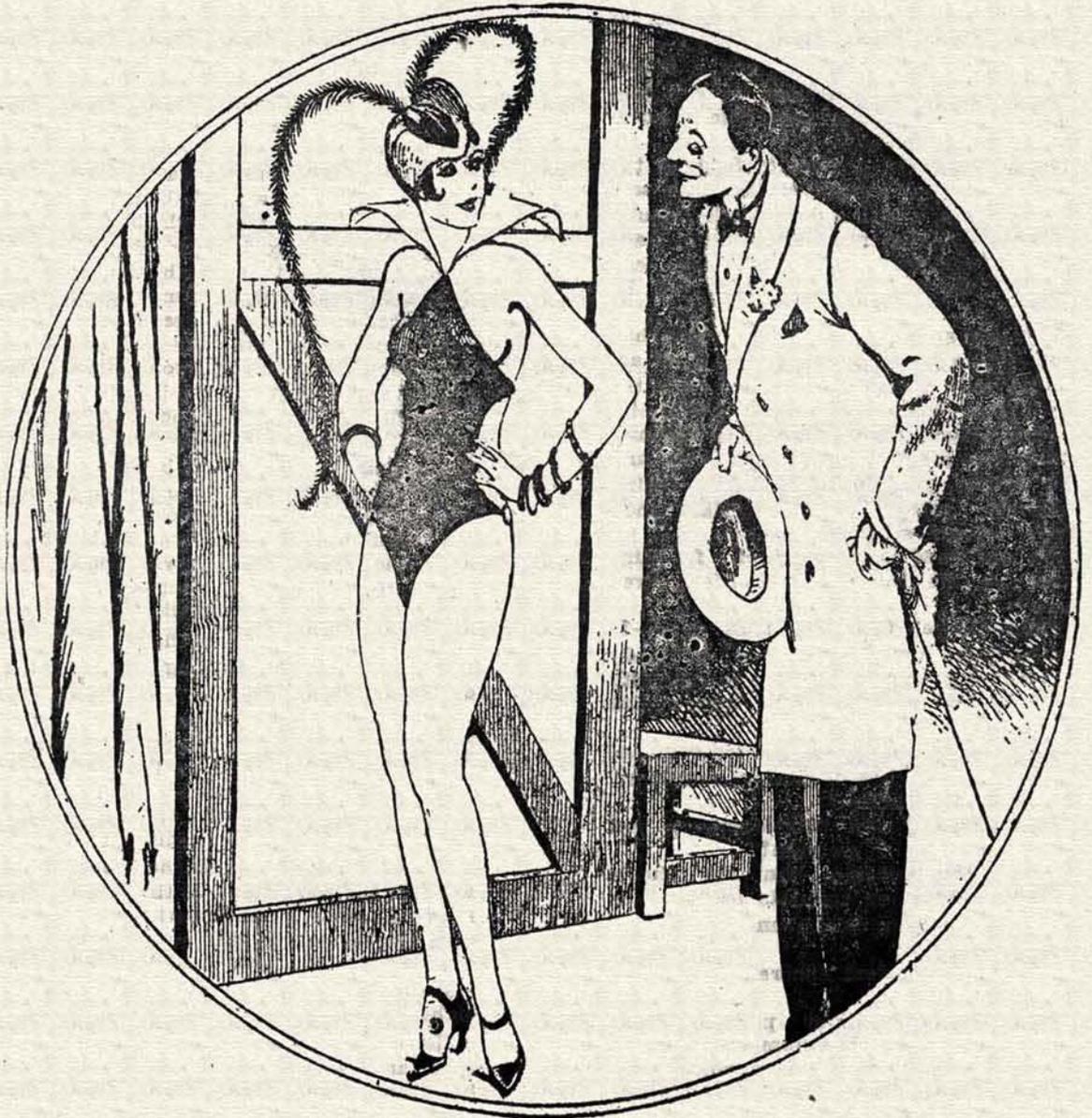
Florette smiled grimly—the scene had been to her liking.

By OSCER RUE

It was the night before the Carnival, Moulin du Diable were whooping it up, celebrating the occasion in their own exclusive fashion. They danced, cavorted and played like school children on a picnic, and the walls of the Moulin echoed back their shrieks of laughter.

But even more than the hilarious guests,

Florette Carvel, lovely proprietress of the establishment, celebrated. Satisfied patrons meant increased business, and increased business meant a substantial bank account. Oh, it was good, she reflected, to feel independent, to know that one's existence did not depend upon the generosity of others!



Her glance rested upon a party of six that occupied a ringside table. Headed by the Parisian artist of note, Monsieur Rene Volland, the sextette were literally raising the roof. Their voices sounded clearly over the hubbub of countless other voices and their dances were wilder, and more impassioned. They had ordered lavishly everything on the menu, from capons and anchovies to roast duck and caviar; and demanded that they be served the rarest liqueurs from the cellars of the Moulin. What a magnificent time they were having—and what a magnificent bill they were running up!

She smiled in satisfaction as four of the party arose from their chairs and staggered to the check-room for their cloaks, leaving only Rene Volland, who was apparently too drunk to notice their departure and a short, fiery brunette, at the table.

Florette's eyes narrowed, and a flicker of hatred shone from them as she considered the remaining pair. The minutes ticked away slowly.

Finally, without a word of farewell the brunette slipped away from the now sodden Parisian, and the door of the Moulin closed behind her retreating figure. Rene Volland was very much alone. His head slumped forward on his chest, and he slept.

Florette smiled grimly. The scene had been set to her liking, and the final act of the play would provide her with the thrill that comes once in a lifetime!

Four o'clock. The Master of Ceremonies had made his little bedtime speech, and the waiters were in the act of assisting inebriated patrons to their limousines. Rene Volland slumbered on.

He awakened to the touch of a feminine hand on his shoulder and lifted tired eyes.

"Misericorde! Cannot a man sleep—?" He hesitated sharply and strove to steady himself long enough to solve the identity of the woman who had roused him: "What do you want?"

Florette maintained a severe countenance. "It is the time of closing, monsieur," she said. "I am sorry."

He nodded dizzily. "Certainement; you want me to go, I presume?"

"Yes." She tendered him the check. "Your indebtedness amounts to two hundred and forty-six dollars and eighty-nine cents, monsieur."

The announcement sobered him. "Two hundred —?"

"Yes, monsieur. Your party ordered quite lavishly, as the numerous empty champagne bottles should convince you."

"But it was not my party!" he protested. "I came as an invited guest!"

Florette's lips narrowed to a thin line. "Regardless of whose party it was, I am legally entitled to hold you responsible for the bill," she said. "I will therefore be pleased to accept a personal check."

"Useless." He shrugged his shoulders. "I have no money. The collapse of Ferrando Mills stock has reduced me to absolute penury."

Florette thought for a moment before she replied. "Ordinarily, in such cases, I have recourse to the police," she advised, gloating over his evident perturbation, "but in this instance, I will be more generous. You are Monsieur Rene Volland, and I admire your work; I am Mademoiselle Carvel, proprietress of the Moulin. We shall bargain; Paint my portrait tomorrow, and I shall be pleased to issue you a receipt — in full."

"Mademoiselle is very kind." Rene lifted himself to his feet. "You may come to my studio tomorrow —"

Florette signalled to two of the waiters who had remained in the background during the enactment of the scene. "You will stay here, Monsieur Valland," she said quietly. "These two gentlemen will escort you to the room which you shall occupy for the remainder of the night. Kindly provide them with the keys of your studio, so that they may go at once and procure your palette, easel, and whatever accessories you may require, as I shall report to you tomorrow morning at nine. I will expect my full-length portrait to be finished by six in the evening."

"But, mademoiselle!" He stared at her in amazement. "That will be impossible!"

"Nothing is impossible to a determined woman," she gave back, viciously. "I shall not exact of you a masterpiece, but only a simple sketch which will bear your signature. Good night, monsieur."

"Good night, mademoiselle."

And with a little cry of helplessness, he fell back into the waiting arms of his escort.

Rene was awakened at eight on the following morning, put through a series of invigorating treatments by a masseur par excellence, and served with an excellent breakfast. For the first time in his life, he felt almost physically fit after a night of dissipation, and he looked forward to the adventures of the day with a newborn sense of anticipation. Mademoiselle Carvel was a strange creature, but a devilishly thorough one! Imagine her insisting on a picture done in less than eight hours!

He set up his easel in the most desirable spot, and prepared his paints. It would be interesting, this attempt to portray on canvas the lovely features of his hostess!

There was something about her that appealed to him; something that called out for recognition, for —

The sudden opening of the door startled him, and he turned to consider the intruder. Mademoiselle Carvel stood upon the threshold, a pleasant smile transfiguring her lovely features. Her long black hair rolled down her shoulders in waves of jet that scintillated in the reflected sunlight from the window, lending a bizarre

fell to the floor in a heap at her feet, revealing in every detail the unbelievable loveliness of her creamy body. Only a filmy wisp of silken veil remained to conceal her magnificent proportions.

Rene gasped in amazement. "You wish me to—to paint you like that, mademoiselle?" he cried, scarcely conscious that he spoke.

She smiled at his discomfiture. "Why otherwise should I remove the greater part



contrast to the mandarin robe of brightest orange which draped her body.

"Good morning," she greeted him. "You are ready?"

"Good morning." He bowed slightly. "All is in preparation. Will you kindly be seated here?"

She moved to the chair which he had designated as an improvised dais, then, without hesitating a moment, she slipped

the gown from about her shoulders. It of my clothing, monsieur? Am I so proud of my shapeless body that I should exhibit it with impunity?"

"No, no!" he said, pencil in hand. "You are superb, mademoiselle! Never before have I seen such perfection, in the feminine form; never —"

"That will be quite sufficient," she interrupted. "You will kindly work in silence."

Her cruel retort cut him to the quick, and squaring his jaw, he commenced to sketch. Her sang-froid had completely unnerved him.

For two hours he labored without a minute's respite; he sketched the outlines of her form, filled in those details which he considered of paramount importance, and shaded other details with that almost uncanny ability that had made him famous.

Quite often, he had been obliged to caution her as to the importance of remaining immobile, but while he inwardly sympathized with her for the strain under which she labored to comply with his request, he did not comment on it. He feared the reply which he felt certain she would deliver.

She groaned slightly, and an uplifted arm dropped slowly to her side. Her eyes closed.

Rene considered her sharply. "Mademoiselle —" he started, but the pallor of her features cut him short. Florette had fainted.

Hurrying forward, he lifted her into his arms and deposited her on the long couch beneath the window. Then, with a cadmness that surprised him, he moistened a handkerchief in the bowl of flowers on the table and spread it over her features.

She stirred just a little, and her eyelids fluttered.

"Mademoiselle!" He leaned over and placed an arm beneath her head. "You are feeling better?"

She nodded, and her eyes opened. "Infinitely better; but, oh, so tired!"

"That is to be expected," he explained. "You have undergone a frightful strain."

"It does not matter." Her gaze centered on him. "Alcide, my dearest, I—I cannot go through with it! I loved you so!"

He fell back before the awful portent of her words. "Then you know my name?" he whispered, anxiously.

"Know your name?" Her lips parted in a glowing smile. "Alcide, have I ever known the name of another since you—?"

"Florette!" Sudden recognition had made all things clear in a blinding flash. "Florette Carmouche! Then you—you have forgiven?"

"I have forgiven, Alcide, because I love you too much to refuse you even that!" She moved closer to him. "Love me, Alcide! Kiss me until I can no longer think the awful thoughts that have haunted me for ten years; bury your head upon my breast and tell me that you—that you still care!"

"Care!" he repeated. "Florette! I have never ceased to worship your memory, even —!"

His voice died as his hungry lips fastened themselves upon her hand in a kiss so tender, so full of love, as to drive all thoughts of the past from her mind. The caress of an adolescent youth, she thought; so pleasantly different from those of the men who had sought her favors!



"My little sweetheart!" His face could be no closer to hers, yet she had the feeling that he was drawing nearer, ever nearer. Her emotions were further stirred by his proximity; it had been ten long years since she had enjoyed the strange sensations of actually wanting the arms of a man about her, or desired kisses that were more than kisses.

Cupping her face between fingers that trembled, he kissed her again, ardently, delightfully. She did not resist him; her head was in a whirl, and the blood pounded furiously in her ears. Her eyes closed tightly, in order that she might better feel his strength, his nearness.

"Florette, ma chérie," he said softly, "won't you try to understand how utterly, unbelievably precious you have always been to me?" His breathing became labored, and he crushed her fiercely to him.

"I do understand," she sighed, her bosom heaving spasmodically.

Her confession filled him with happiness. "You—you still love me?"

She nodded her head, and in a wild gesture of abandon, her arms encircled his neck and drew down his lips to hers.

"We must be dreaming!"

Their lips met again, clug, and melted together

It was long past the noon hour when the enraptured lovers permitted themselves to return to earth. It had been so delightful, so wonderfully unreal, to linger in the Seventh Heaven of Reciprocated Affection.

"I—I don't deserve this happiness," Florette whispered, shattering the sweet

silence that hung between them. "I have been unworthy of your respect, Alcide. It was I who planned that party last night, and I who engineered the scheme which resulted in your desertion and consequent embarrassment." She paused for a moment, then went on: "I wanted revenge, and I wanted to see you suffer! You have no idea what hell life has been during those long ten years since you left me in Alsace; left me to wait, and to hope, and to trust, until —"

"Until your patience could no longer bear it!" he finished for her. "But do not blame yourself, chérie. It was my ridiculous pride that prevented me from communicating with you. Two days after that occasion when I kissed your lips in farewell, I was placed under arrest on a false charge and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. After being released four years later, unvindicated, I returned to Alsace, only to discover that your father had died, and you had gone away. I had almost forgotten your features, but my love has lived, and will continue to live—always!"

Florette's head slumped to her breast. "I have been a beast," she sobbed, "a bitter, faithless beast!"

"No, mon coeur," he said, taking her again into his arms. "You have been only a poor little girl too much in love to endure a test which proved too exacting! But come; we are again together, and together, we will remain —"

"Always, Alcide!" she promised. "Always!"



Couple: "Five dollars for a marriage? We haven't that much judge."

Justice: "Well, I can give you a trial marriage for two dollars."

Hub: "Don't buy any of those cheap eggs."

Wife: "Why not, Ignatz?"

Hub: "I don't like to wear anything but the best on my vest."

SOON

The bathing girls will be making their first

STRIPS

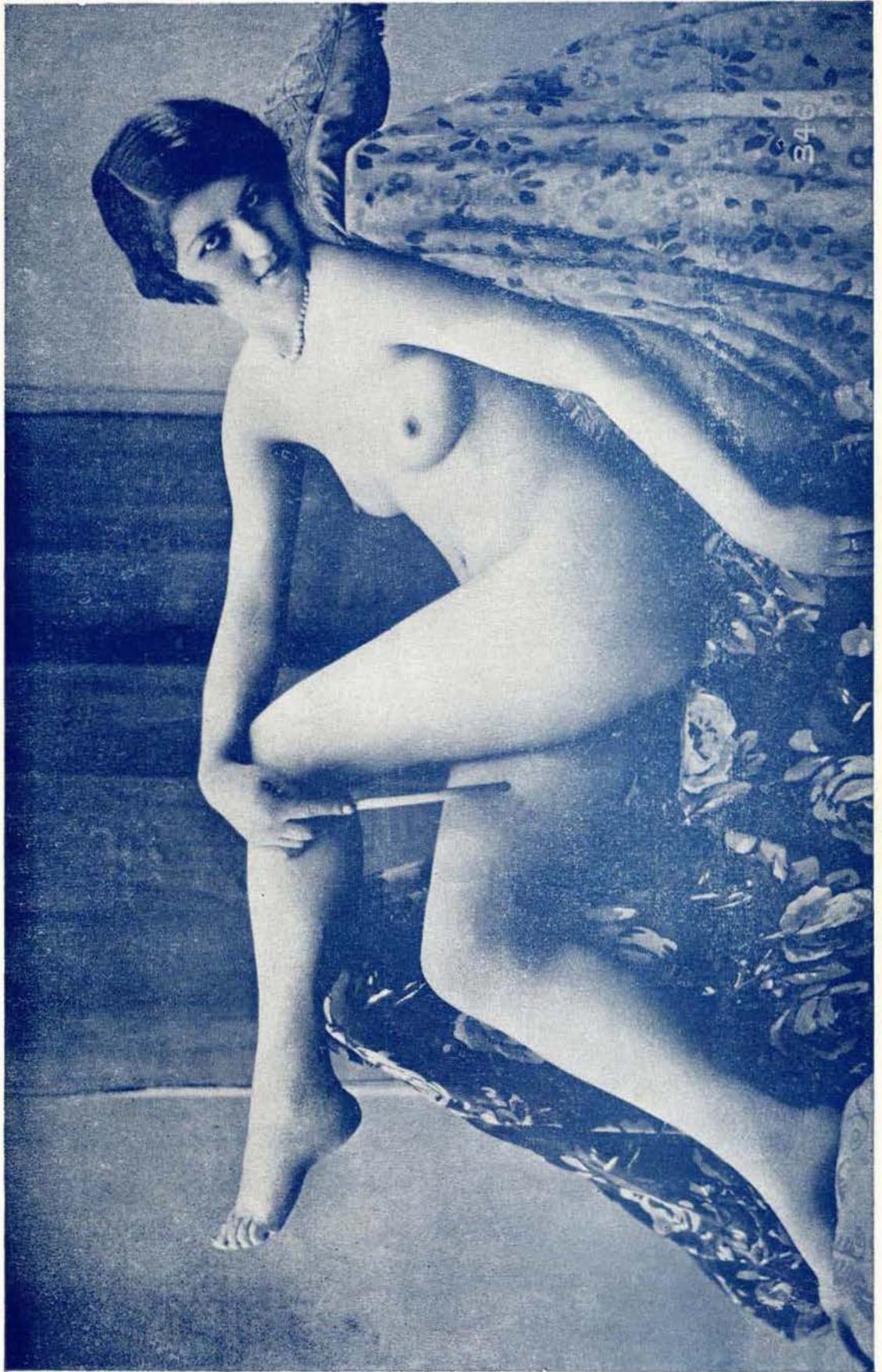
of the season!

HELPLESS HARRY HAS A BEAUTIFUL GIRL BUT SHE HAS NO CLOTHES AND HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. KEEP HER IN BED SO SHE WON'T CATCH A COLD, HARRY!

JOAN: What did you say after he kissed you at the doorway?

JANE: I asked him to put down his hat and stick."





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