

Why Boston Made the "Suffs" Put Their Stockings On.

Interesting Discussion of the Effects Upon Morals of Barefoot Society Dancing Aroused by the Action of Boston's Mayor in Forbidding It

Why Barefoot Dancing Is Bad
By Mayor Curley of Boston
(in an interview.)

IT is unfortunate that those elements of society, who through their stations in life and financial positions have not developed sufficiently high moral standards to realize that they are expected to furnish examples of culture and refinement that merit public approval, should stand as violators of the laws that have been enacted to safeguard the morality of the city.

Under existing laws there cannot, in justice, be a dual code—one ruling for the wealthy and still another ruling for the poor. All must be subject to the same restraint.

To permit girls to dance with their limbs bare from the knees down, under the thinly veiled guise of Grecian or Greek art, is but to make it extremely difficult in the vaudeville theatres of the city to determine where art ends and immorality or indecency begins.

EVERY worldly-minded person will agree that those Boston suffragettes would have made more money out of their Suffrage Carnival if they had danced in their bare feet, according to their intention as originally announced. However Puritan Boston remains in its official capacity, the multitude of its private citizens are as eager for stage sensations as those of any other city.

Boston's private citizens didn't put tin corsets on Boston's publicly exhibited Venuses, nor do they bury nude marble mythological ladies in the cellar of their Public Library. Undoubtedly they would have spent their dollars joyfully to see those pretty "Suffs" dance at the Cort Theatre in their bare feet.

For the good of the cause those pretty suffragettes were quite willing thus to expose their stockingless

ings, denied that any such shocking stocking request had been made. "It was," declared the "Antis." "It wasn't," said the Political Equality Union. "Twas." "Twasn't."

Well, you know the general trend of feminine arguments. Altogether there was about a column of it, with variations. Mrs. Samuel H. Wallace, the Political Union's president, was particularly indignant in making her denial for publication. She said: "Barefoot dancing? Well, I should say not! The ideal! As suffragists there is nothing we would more oppose. Somebody has been trying to injure us—that's all. That's the secret of this thing. It's the Antis—that's who it is. You can quote me as saying so, too."

"This is a critical time for our party. The Antis know it as well as we do ourselves. Consequently why should we invite criticism by allowing these girls—these children, I might say—to appear in public barefooted? You don't suppose I would allow a daughter of mine to appear



Miss Mary King, as Bacchus, and Miss Winford Lawrence, in One of the Fashionable Society Barefoot Dances Boston Opposes.

Miss Rhind's Feet in the Same Pose as Stockinged for Purposes of Comparison as to Decency.



Mrs. John Baker as She Might Have Danced in Boston—with the Mayor's Consent.

Miss Elvira Rhind, One of the Fashionable Society Amateurs, in the Barefoot Dance the Boston Mayor Forbade.

Flavola, the most world-celebrated of the Russian dancers.

The Mayor forbade both of these famous dancers appearing in Boston publicly in their bare feet.

Elsewhere, as the Bostonians well know, the art of barefoot dancing in flowing classical draperies is cultivated publicly in the most fashionable circles. There are fashionable schools where such dancing is taught to girls belonging to the best families in the land.

Among the numerous pupils of Mrs. Florence Fleming Noyes maintains such a school, and is herself a society favorite with her graceful dances in bare feet. At Newport Mrs. Noyes was enthusiastically received in her "Water Nymph Dance," in bare feet and otherwise costumed as in the illustration on this page. She even danced in water, emerging from a huge seashell and disporting herself as a light-hearted sea nymph naturally would.

The thing that is disturbing the minds of the ordinary, unofficial people of Boston is exactly where to draw the line of prohibition respecting bare feet. In their town bare feet in public are evidently taboo under any conditions—professional or amateur, high art or for vaudeville performances. The two most celebrated barefoot dancers who ever performed anywhere in this country are Isadora Duncan, with a famous revival of a whole ancient Grecian dancing and pantomime system for her ethical background, and Anna

Baker and Miss Elvira Rhind—both pictured on this page in barefoot dancing costume—are favorites among the society amateurs.

Perhaps these illustrations will help the reader to make up his or her mind about when barefoot dancing is all right and proper, and when it isn't. In all these illustrations it will be noticed that the dancing is "in character." It is not a case of Mrs. Noyes or Mrs. Baker pulling off her shoes and stockings and hopping about in her bare feet. There is an illusion about it. A story is told in pantomime and dance. Mrs. Baker or Mrs. Noyes has ceased to exist for the moment; it is the central character in the story that is doing the barefoot dancing—Bacchus, Bacchante, a Faun, a Water Nymph, and so on.

Would you expect Bacchus, Bacchante, a Faun or a Water Nymph to dance in shoes and stockings?

That is the theory which is held to justify public dancing in bare feet and flowing draperies. The women and girls who do it—even as society amateurs—have attempted to obliterate themselves as real women and girls of these times, and to resuscitate women and girls of ancient Greece, or certain minor deities in Greek mythology.

Do persons holding the convictions of the Mayor of Boston consider that it is impossible for a barefooted dancing woman to obliterate her own personality and become a mythological "character"? If an actual Bacchante or Water Nymph should apply to Mayor Curley for permission to dance before the Bostonians would she get it? Or would she have to put on shoes and stockings and become a Mrs. Jones or a Mrs. Robinson?

Probably Mayor Curley would rule out these considerations as subtleties beyond comprehension of the general Boston public, and not comprehended in the law enacted for the protection of Boston morals. He is enforcing the law as it stands.

Irrespective of the law, are bare feet indecent? Are all bare feet equally indecent? Are men's bare feet less indecent for public display than women's bare feet, or

vice versa? Which are more injurious to public morals, pretty bare feet or ugly ones; of young girls or matrons? Are public morals more menaced by the bare feet of pretty women, or of ugly ones?

Questions of the subject are inexhaustible. For example, why are bare feet indecent? Because, in public, they are usually covered? Would bare hands have a tendency to corrupt public morals if they, too, were customarily covered?

In what way is a deterioration of public morals, due to the display of bare feet on the stage, manifested? Do the spectators feel constrained

then and there to immorally kick off their own shoes and stockings? Do they go home and beat their wives, or take to drink, or become gunner and porch-climbers?

Mayor Curley's statement remarks that there cannot be one rule for the rich and another for the poor regarding the bare feet prohibition, and refers to the difficulty of restraining the vaudeville profession in matters affecting public morals. Right here may be justification for the whole business. Who could he hold the average vaudeville actor in bare feet without feeling a desire to commit murder on the spot?

Why the Bravest Airmen Get "Cold Feet"

PROFESSIONAL aeroplane pilots have long since ceased to be ashamed to confess that they get scared, and that a panic of fear while in the air may seize them at any time. Why this is so is the subject of an article in a recent issue of the London Aeroplane.

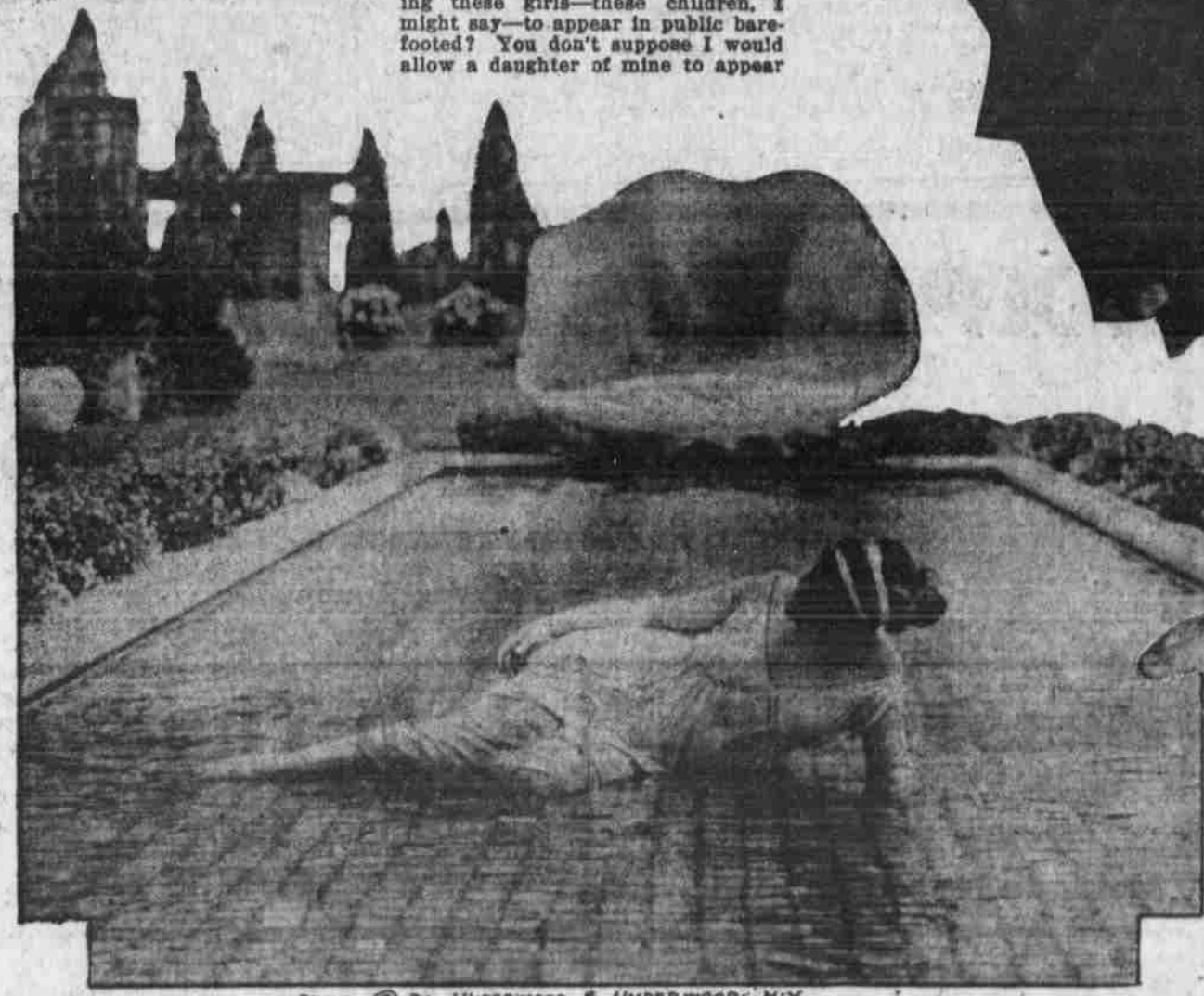
It appears that a flier with an imagination is never quite happy, especially on a long flight in calm weather when he has nothing to occupy his attention. One pilot, who is one of the finest fliers in England, has a habit which is most disconcerting to his passengers, however consoling it may be to him personally. He will fly without a waver for perhaps half an hour, then suddenly the passenger will imagine that a storm has struck them, for the machine will stand first on one wing-tip and then on the other, then it will dive terrifically, and then it will almost loop the loop. After that it will calm down and fly for another half hour, when the performance will be repeated. After they have landed, and the passenger has remarked on the extraordinary squalls which struck them when over certain places, the pilot will casually explain that he was merely looking round at those intervals to see whether his tail was still there, and was testing the controls to see

whether anything was trying to jam "Cold feet" may lead merely to proper caution, or it may lead to complete loss of nerve. A pilot may have cold feet of a certain machine and so fly it with due respect for its peculiarities, or he may have cold feet of flying altogether, in which case he had better give it up, for, if he does not, he must take to "doping," which is fatal.

"A particularly malignant disease is 'constructor's cold feet,' in which the victim, always on the ground himself, watches every machine in the air in a constant state of terror expecting it to fall in pieces when ever it is moved by a gust, and when a machine of his own or any other makes it on the ground, he is always pawing round it, finding some spot at which it may break.

"But perhaps the most unpleasant form of the disease is 'passenger's cold feet.' It is a trouble from which military and naval observers are particularly likely to suffer, especially since so many officers who are not aviators have been attached as observers.

"But there is one anxiety which, under war conditions, can never be absent from the passenger's mind—namely, that he has a very poor chance of coming out alive if his pilot is hit."



Mrs. Florence Fleming Noyes, in a Pose of Her "Water Nymph Dance" Given at Newport.

tooties. It is on record that they went to Mayor Curley for a permit to do so. The Mayor didn't deny that the cause was a worthy one, but—

NO! YOU WILL KEEP YOUR STOCKINGS ON!

That was Mayor Curley's ultimatum. He flatly turned down that pretty suffragette barefooted dancing idea. And in order that his reasons should not be misunderstood by the cruelly disappointed Boston public, he set them forth in the statement printed elsewhere on this page.

All this was an opportunity too rich and juicy for the "Antis" to let go by in silence. Their merry choruses were heard all over Boston. Women in the Political Equality Union, which had charge of the Suffrage Carnival, and who had not been present when the Mayor was asked to let those pretty dancing suffragettes forget about their stock-

ing, do you? Well, I guess not. And you don't suppose I'd allow anybody else's daughter to, either, do you? No, sir, I wouldn't—not for a minute! The very idea!

"I know what these girls were going to war right from the start, and you can bet they intended to wear stockings, too! Mayor Curley was misinformed, that's all. These young women appear in bare legs? These girls—society buds? Well, I should say not. You couldn't hire them for \$1,000 a week!"

Miss Mary Ware Laughton was in charge of the Greek dancing numbers on the programme. Except with regard to this affair, she has an open mind on the subject of barefoot performances. Here is her contribution to the controversy: "These young women dance bare-legged? Why, absurd! he idea of such a thing! In the first place they

wouldn't think of doing it themselves, and in the second place I would never allow such a thing.

"I don't mean to say I am unalterably opposed to barefoot dancing. I believe it is permissible of professionals. It is art. But here—these young women—never! To circulate such a story is a shame. It is unfair. It is mean."

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