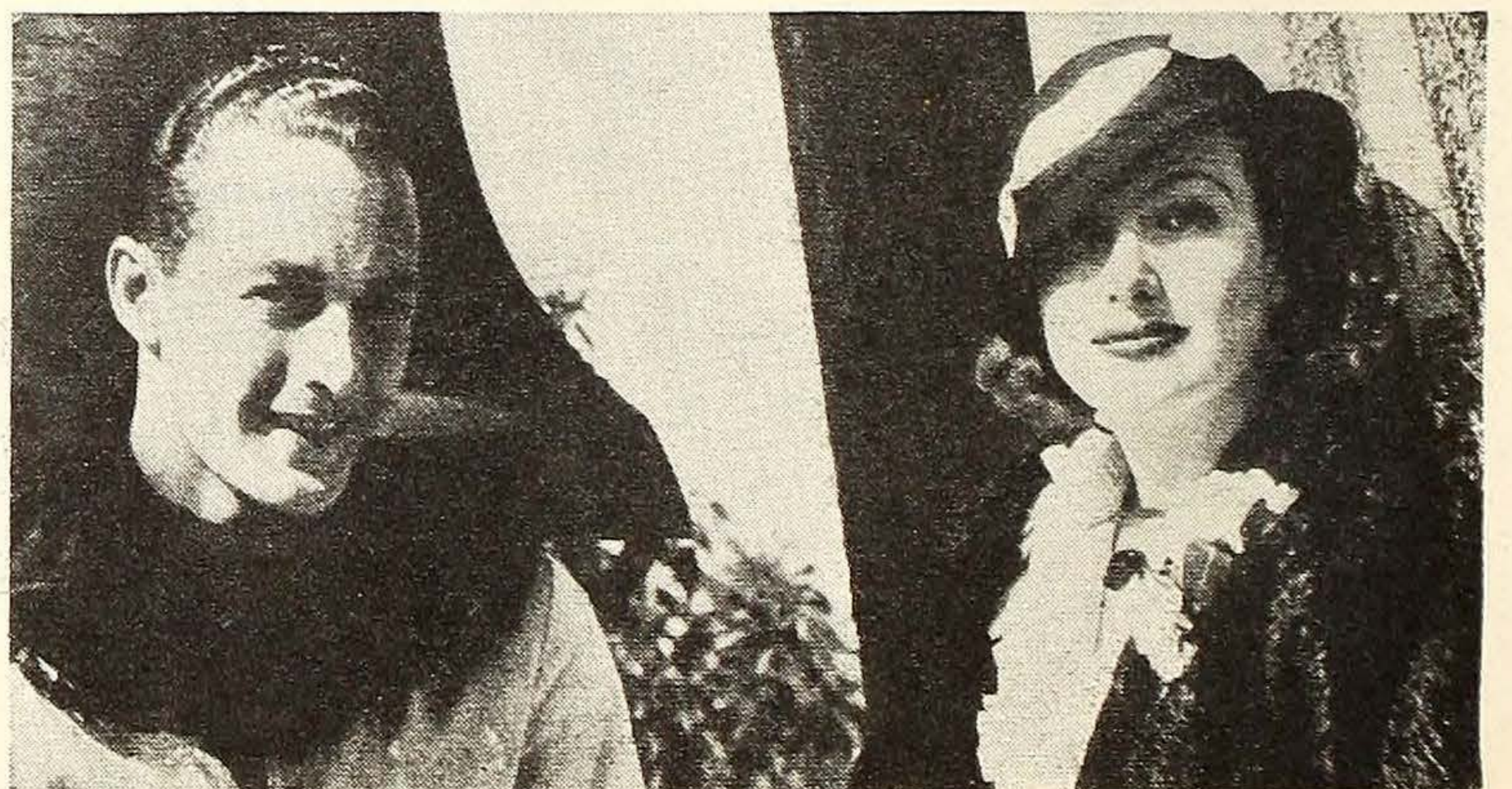




Joan Crawford Confesses!

Keystone

You have read about Joan the dazzling star, Joan the inspiring woman, and Joan the ever-ambitious emotional actress—but here, at the right, is a new Joan: the devoted sister. Her brother, Hal LeSueur, is an extra, and Joan is helping him on his way. Will Hal achieve the Hollywood heights that his brilliant sister has scaled? What do you think is the answer?





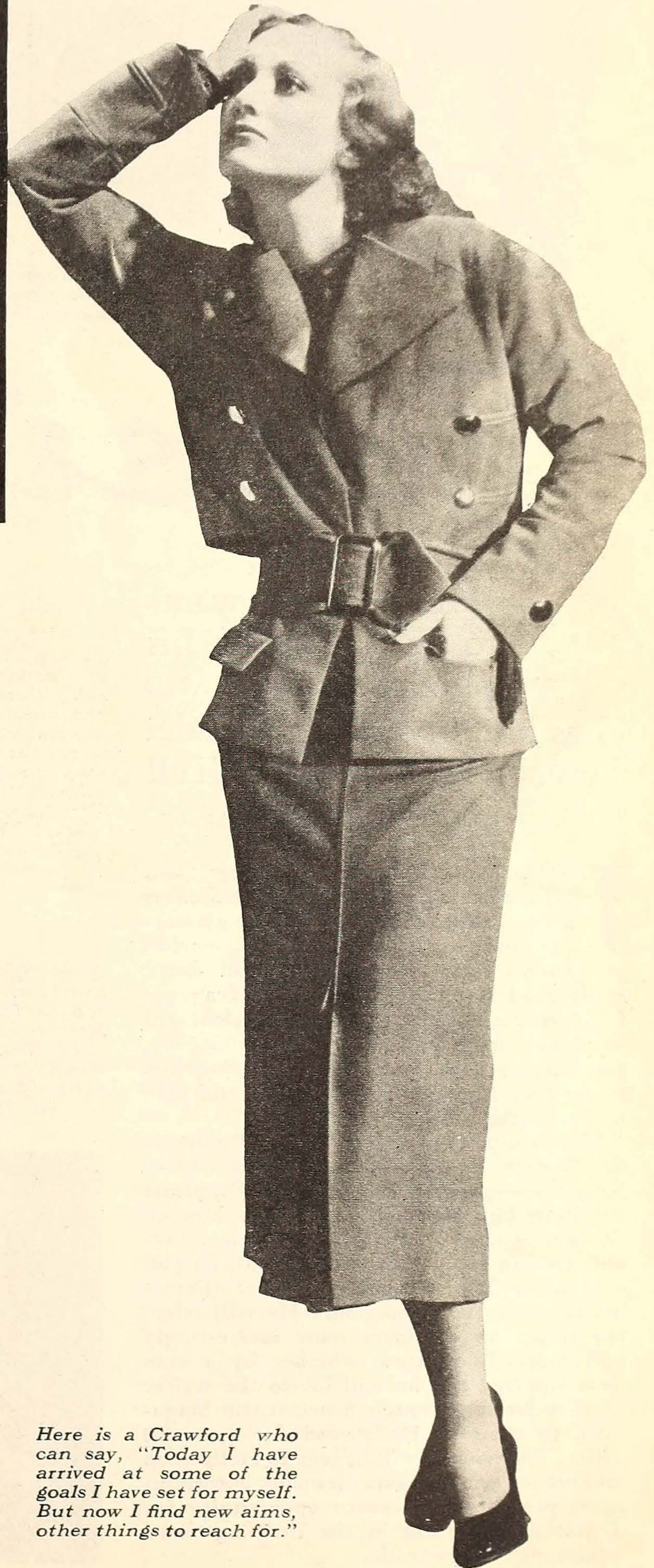
Joan
Tells
some of her
Secrets:

"I owe my success and wealth to shame!

"When I was a child I was ashamed because other little girls had dolls my own parents could not afford to give me. So I ran errands and minded neighbors' babies until I earned enough money to buy my own doll!

"When I was a bit player and passed stars on the street, I was ashamed that I was not a success.

"That's why I'm a star—I was ashamed not to be!"



Here is a Crawford who can say, "Today I have arrived at some of the goals I have set for myself. But now I find new aims, other things to reach for."

JOAN CRAWFORD said to me, "I owe my success and wealth to *shame!*"

"I mean that I am ashamed of my deficiencies," she confessed. "Since early childhood, I've been ashamed of my faults or lack of accomplishments. When other children did things I could not duplicate, I worked and studied until I could do as much. Some hidden internal element of my soul will not permit me to be satisfied with my lot. I constantly discover new things which I do not understand, and I am never happy until they are clear to me. That is why I am a star; *I was ashamed not to be!*"

"But I have always regarded ambition as the guiding motive to success, Joan," I said.

"Ambition is a word that is broadly mis-used," she answered. "We have a way of saying, 'He will succeed, for he is ambitious,' but if we really stop to diagnose, we would learn that the term is ambiguous; it is a word with many meanings—a word that mothers a number of words, as a hen mothers her chicks.

"I, for example, wish to be learned and respected. People say I am ambitious, when I am really ashamed of my shortcomings. Therefore, shame is the basis for my success. The next man may achieve wealth because he fears poverty, and struggles to rise from it. Still another may succeed because he is avaricious. Another may have innate yearnings to travel, and he may realize that money is necessary to the complete satisfaction of his desire. Each of these humans would struggle hard for success, but each would be motivated by an individual motive.

"Shame has guided my efforts as long as I can remember. When I was a child, other little girls had dolls and toys my own parents could not afford to give me. So I worked at odd jobs, such as running errands, minding neighbors' babies and so on—until I accumulated the money to purchase a doll as beautiful as any I have ever seen. Then I was not ashamed.

"A few years later I went to school. Because my parents could not afford the tuition, I had to work to pay a part of my expenses. I (Continued on page 90)



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fine photography that story value is overlooked," observes Mr. Edeson, "the result will be an almost inanimate painting, instead of a moving picture.

"However, the camera can create a mood, add glamor, deepen mystery and heighten tragedy.

"Candle-light or moonlight helps romance, especially if you place your lights so that lovely things surround the lovers—a fountain in a garden, a detail of casement window, flowers in a slim vase, etc.—are discreetly visible.

"Shadows enhance tragedy. You can throw them up high on a wall behind your characters so that they seem to dominate the helpless figures below. You can reach out from dim corners with them so that they seem like clutching hands of fear pursuing their victim. You can sharpen the face of your terror-stricken actor with them, or soften the eyes of a girl in love."

Critics' reviews of pictures almost invariably amuse cameramen when they touch on photography.

"Critics always rave over stuff done in gorgeous scenic spots," remarked Mr.

Walker. "But any tenth-rate cameraman can go out to the Painted Desert or up into Utah or the Feather River canyon and come back with fine shots that will get glowing notices. Of course the man knows his business, but nobody could help getting good stuff because there isn't anything else to get.

"The test comes when a chap has to take a compo board room and make his audience think it is a real home with atmosphere. That's where a cameraman simply has to be good!

"In 'One Way Passage,' the cameraman did wonders with Kay Francis walking down corridors, going up stairs, on decks, etc., and not one critic mentioned his work. They probably thought Kay Francis is a pretty girl and she was on a boat,—well, a boat's a boat and it can't be hard to shoot a girl like Kay on one. They didn't take into account that he got atmosphere, beauty and variety into shots that might have been monotonous, dull and perhaps downright ugly. His space was limited, so were his backgrounds,—his effects would have been limited, if he hadn't been great!"

Joan Crawford Confesses

Continued from page 25

was unhappy, but because I wanted an education, I overcame my shame of the menial labor and I studied hard—very hard. Meanwhile, I determined that I should some day be wealthy, so that I need not feel that burning sense of inferiority that poverty caused me.

"When the time came for me to choose my life's work, I chose the stage, because that seemed to hold greater promises of success. A man is able to achieve wealth in hundreds of business careers but the way for women is limited. I went to New York. Then, for the same reason that I had chosen the stage, I switched to motion pictures—they offered an even swifter passage to fame and fortune.

"When I became a stock actress at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, I was temporarily happy, for I realized that I was in a position to advance. I knew that stardom was certain if I worked hard and studied, and I have never been afraid of either.

"But I soon became discontented as a stock actress. When I passed stars on the studio streets, I was ashamed that they were stars and I was only a bit player. I was so ashamed that I worked the harder to achieve their importance. I was not envious; I am never envious. I do not begrudge others their success. I was only ashamed that I was not a star, and I was more determined than ever that I should progress.

"Today I have arrived at some of the goals I set for myself. But now I find new aims; other things to reach for. For example, I am studying French. When I visited Europe with Douglas last year, we went to France. There he talked like a native, for he was educated abroad. And as we stood among crowds of people and he conversed with them and interpreted for me, I became terribly ashamed that I was not prepared for just such a moment. I realized that I had wasted hours that might have been devoted to study, and I determined that upon my return to Hollywood, I would take up the study of French. I have already engaged a tutor, and when I return to Europe next year I shall be able to carry on my own conversations."

I sat without thought of interruption throughout Joan's confession. She concentrates amazingly when she talks. Her body is like a tightly wound clock spring—at great tension. A frown forms between

her eyes, her teeth seem to snap off her words and her lips tighten into hard, straight lines. Once or twice her fingers clenched and she struck firm fists against the arms of her chair for emphasis.

As she talked, I recalled the Joan Crawford whom I knew many years ago—when she was a stock girl—and I was startled to find that she has changed very little. Even then she talked as she does today. Even then she told me of her great desire to be successful, and she confessed that shame motivated her every action.

Writers and critics of today delight in describing Joan's transitions since those early days of her career. But there are no such changes. She is inherently the same woman in "Letty Lynton" and "Today We Live" that she was in "Pretty Ladies," the picture in which she forecast, with an unimportant part, the magnificent success she ultimately was to achieve.

Joan has expanded, as a woman must in eight years. She has grown, as a tiny sprig develops into a beautiful, spreading tree that reaches upward and outward, groping among the heavens for greatness. She has progressed surely and steadily, as a rivulet gathers power and depth on its march to the sea.

But nothing she has achieved is any miracle of transition. Recent pictures may display more cinema footage of Miss Crawford, but her characterizations are no more poignant than were her younger and less important portrayals in "Our Dancing Daughters" and "Sally, Irene and Mary."

Whatever changes may have taken place are purely physical and mental—the natural variations that time brings about. She is more slender today than she was a few years ago, but that is because she has learned that her body photographs better when underweight. She knows better how to wear clothes. She has acquired a thorough technical knowledge of screen acting. She knows the poses most agreeable to cameras; the positions that photograph most gracefully. But these are all physical alterations and have nothing to do with the woman inside.

There are no spiritual changes that I can discern, and Joan agrees that there are none. Years ago I knew her as a groping, hopeful, striving youngster in her middle 'teens; a girl who ever looked upward and ahead, and never backward except to re-

view her mistakes and guard against their re-occurrence.

Today she is the same. Time may have written the story of her struggles across her face and imprinted the tragedies of her heartaches indelibly in her eyes, but time has not altered her soul. Her serious sense of living and her insatiable yearning for improvement of mind are plainly stamped on her features, but no changes have been tattooed on her soul.

I believe that Joan is the most intelligent woman I have ever known. I say intelligent; not intellectual. There is a vast difference. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., recognizes it, for one day he said to her, "Billie, (his nickname for Joan), people say I am intellectual. They are mistaken; I am intellectual. You are intelligent, and I would gladly exchange with you. You instinctively know the proper answers to human problems. Your knowledge is natural. My intellect is trained, and therefore superficial."

Joan is the most honest person I know, nor do I intend to convey that she is too frank. I mean that she is honest with and about herself, as only a rare few of us humans are. She detests insincerity. She hates liars and I have known her to strike from her list of dearest friends one whom she discovered to treat truth too lightly. Something inside of her—a sixth sense, perhaps—draws her instantly to persons blessed with similarly graceful honesty.

There is an inspirational quality about her that flames like a torch. It warms you if you really understand her. After fourteen years of Hollywood, I have long since lost all degree of awe in the presence of the movie greats, yet I find myself awkward and humble when I am with Joan. I can't explain; I only know that I have such a tremendous respect for her.

The longer and the better I know her, the more impressive I find Joan to be. One recent day when we were motoring from the studio to her home, I uttered an uncommon word in conversation. She interrupted me instantly, and from a compartment in the tonneau of the car she removed a dictionary in which she traced the word's origin and meaning. I shall never forget the glow of satisfaction on her face as she replaced the book. A few days afterward she reminded me of the word and recited its precise etymology! Joan always keeps that dictionary convenient, and she

never fails to investigate words whose meanings she does not fully comprehend.

If you do not believe that I so deeply respect Miss Crawford, and if you think that all I have written is just so much writer's poppycock, permit me to inform you of what happened to me on the day I interviewed her for this story:

It was one of those "unusual" California days—the rain was pouring down in torrents. After I left Joan, I walked from the sound stage towards the front offices. Rain fell in bucketfuls, and twice I waded through sudden streams that swirled about my shoe-tops and sought to sweep me away. A cold wind whipped razor-edged drops of water into my face, blinding and choking me.

And abruptly I said to myself, "You fool, you're whistling!" Whistling, in the most damnable weather California has ever seen. Whistling, in the teeth of a gale that threatened to fling me bodily into one of the myriad of temporary lakes formed by the cloud-burst. Whistling, while my shoes oozed water with every step, and while my ears, cold and red and raw, dripped icy drops inside my collar!

When a man whistles in the face of such savage outbursts of the elements, he is drunk, in love, or inspired. I had not touched liquor and I'd have run away from love. Ergo, I must have been inspired.

I told Joan I intended thus to describe her greatness.

"But I'm not," she protested. "Greatness comes from within. It is not stardom or wealth or physical achievement. It is a spiritual motive that may elevate the lowliest slave above his master."

"Exactly my own belief," I agreed.

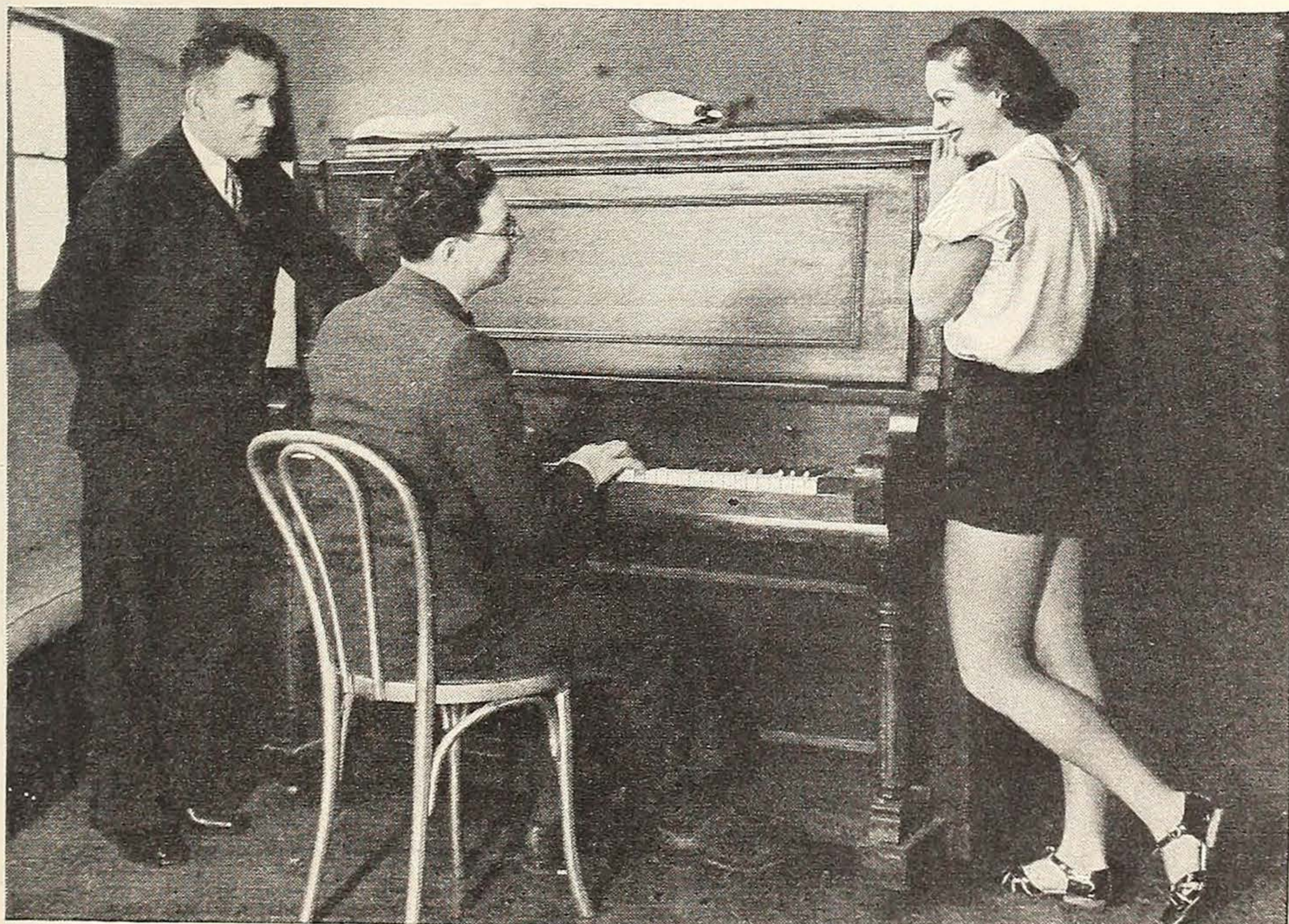
And when I call Joan inspiring, I do not refer to her achievements. I pay allegiance to her womanly instincts. I offer respect to a woman who is not afraid to admit that she is ashamed of her deficiencies and who is constantly striving to overcome them.

As I left the studio, I paused to show a member of the publicity department a photograph I had posed with Miss Crawford.

"Lucky dog," said he, "to have a picture with such a famous star."

I laughed. "Lucky dog," said I, "to have shared a photograph with such a remarkable woman."

As I departed, he stared after me as though I were crazy.



Keeping in trim! Joan Crawford takes frequent dancing lessons by way of maintaining that girlish figure. Here she is about to step into a routine under the watchful eye of her dancing instructor.



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