

The Emancipation of VIRGINIA

By Dorothy Spensley

VIRGINIA VALLI was wearing one of those insinuating negligees. Crimson and gold and green brocade, it clung to her legs like a mermaid's scales.

Her black hair was parted in the center and looped back behind each ear.

She walked with a sliding step, geisha-girl like.



See what a little make-up and a bushel of diamonds will do to a sedate gal!



Virginia Valli shook herself free from all contracts—matrimonial as well as professional—now watch her!

If her eyes had been slanted, she might have been a beautiful Oriental lady, incarnated for the moment from the rich embroideries of a fan. But, then again, she couldn't. Her eyes are blue and Irish.

"Virginia," I said, "why don't you do things like 'Wild Oranges'? Why don't you get away from these cut-and-dried parts—these stereotyped rôles you have been doing for years?"

"I can't," then a simple, resigned, gesture, "because no one will let me."

"You did 'Wild Oranges' . . ."

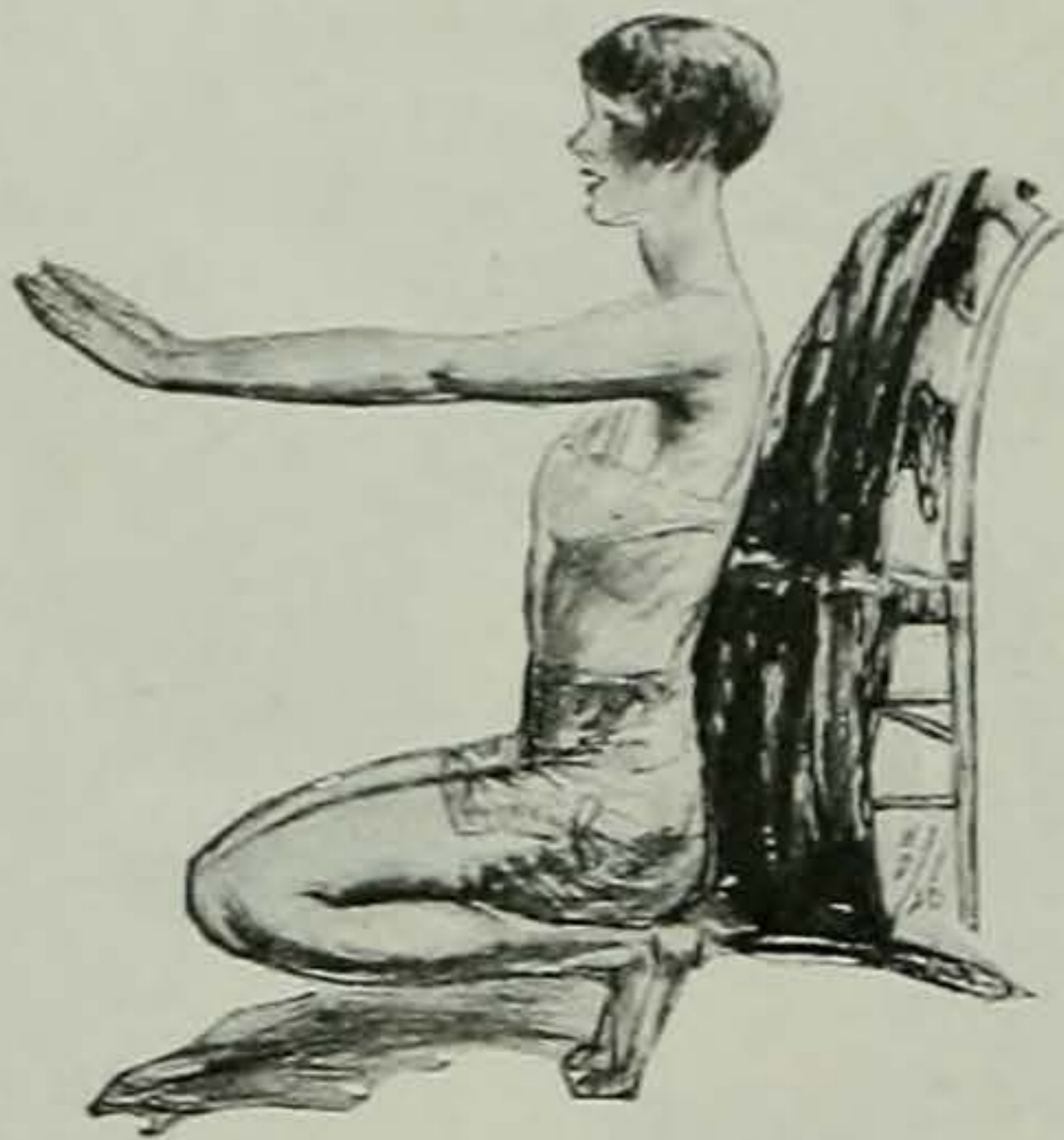
"Quite by accident. They wanted a long-haired girl. I was the only one available. There is a story to that—" The soft curve of her cheek grew more round in a smile. "I was just recovering from pneumonia in Chicago and my hair had been trimmed to almost nothing, to save me from becoming completely bald. King Vidor was the director. He wired me to meet the company in Florida, saying not a word about the requirement of long hair, taking it for granted that mine was still long.

"I got there and King gave one look and groaned. Thousands of miles from Hollywood, ready to start work on a story that demanded a tangle-topped heroine and here was I looking like a Mexican hairless. There was nothing to do. I was fitted to a wig, and we started shooting."

"But," I said, "after 'Wild Oranges.' More mediocre rôles. More dignified, carefully poised, perfect heroines. Nothing that even

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 86]

Your gums need calisthenics, too!



MANY of us find time for regular exercise to keep our bodies in trim. And even when the "daily dozen" is omitted, our muscular tissues in the course of a busy day get some work and stimulation to keep them healthy. But our gum tissues get none.

They are robbed of exercise by our modern diet. For these soft, delicious eatables we prize so highly have lost their invigorating properties. They are stripped of their roughage. They fail to keep the blood within the gum walls in lively circulation.

That is why gums soften and become prey to disease. "Pink tooth brush" is only a fore-runner of more stubborn troubles.

How Ipana and massage offset the harm that soft food brings

Very logically, the dentists turn to massage of the gums as the remedy. And, further, thousands of them direct that the massage be performed with Ipana Tooth Paste after the regular cleaning with Ipana.

For Ipana contains ziratol, an antiseptic and hemostatic well-known to the profession. Its special properties enable Ipana to aid in the toning and strengthening of the weak, undernourished tissues.

Switch to Ipana for one month

You'll find Ipana's flavor a delicious surprise. And Ipana will keep your teeth white and brilliant. The ten-day trial tube will readily prove these things. But the better plan is to get a full-size tube at the drug store. Use it faithfully for a whole month, and see how your gums respond to good care!

IPANA TOOTH PASTE

BRISTOL-MYERS CO., Dept. I 57
73 West Street, New York, N.Y.

Kindly send me a trial tube of IPANA TOOTH PASTE. Enclosed is a two-cent stamp to cover partly the cost of packing and mailing.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

© B.-M. Co., 1927

The Emancipation of Virginia

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 73]

suggested that half wild creature of the Everglades. How come?"

"Contracts . . . and things."

There you have it. Contracts, yes, but mostly things. All her life there have been things to bar her from the complete fulfilment of her talents. Indifference on the part of her family when she commenced her career. Economic pressure.

Marital unhappiness. Oppression hung like wet sea-weed on her soul. But all the time there was that brave Irish philosophy that kept her from sinking into a slough of her own despond.

Virginia comes from Chicago, where there are many McSweeneys and Murphys and O'Hoolihans, also Pilsudskis, Olsens and Garibaldi. She had the good fortune to be born a McSweeney, as well as did her brother and sister. She was a McSweeney only until she decided to become a motion picture actress. Then she changed her name to Valli. That was when she was eighteen and through the course at school that taught pothooks and type-writing.

THE family was different. Her mother was sympathetic, but housework and a family drains time. Virginia was playing small bits and parts at the old Essanay Studio on Argyle Street.

There was no scurrying home to tell what she had done at the studio that day. Sometimes there was a question from one of the family, "What are you doing now?"

"Working in pictures." It might have been scrubbing for all they knew.

The little Irish girl had to keep her dreams to herself. She built a sturdy wall of reserve, not to be broken down by indifference. People say Virginia is too cool, too poised, too dignified.

That she lacks warmth. It shows on the screen, they say.

She will never be a great actress until she tears the wall down.

Essanay closed. Virginia got a job as a typist in an insurance broker's office on Michigan Avenue. Typing leases. But not for long. She quit to model hats. One noon she met a man whom she had known at the studio. There was a vacancy in a stock company in Milwaukee, he told her. They wanted an ingenue. Virginia never returned to the hat modelling job.

Dollar by dollar, she saved enough money to go to New York, where she returned to her beloved picture work. It was there she married. She and her husband came to Hollywood. Virginia was not happy, but she kept on with her career.

Picture after picture she moved through, beautiful, talented, reserved.

Still that wall surrounding her, wherein her dreams were cherished.

Her work and her beauty, however, merited her a Universal contract. Under it she was the cool, calmly poised heroine of "The Lady of Quality," "The Signal Tower," "Siege." She made "Wild Oranges," the best thing she ever did, to my way of thinking. In this wild eerie rôle, Virginia forgot herself. Forgot she had a wall built around her dreams and permitted them to peep forth. Back in Hollywood from the Everglades where the picture was made, Virginia became the beautiful lady of poise and cool distinction.

It was then Virginia decided something had to be done to save her work and herself. That there must be some escape from it.

She asked Universal to release her from her contract. They did. Some of the fetters were gone.

Then happened an unheard of thing. Women of Virginia's nationality and creed do not seek divorces.

But Virginia did.

No scandal. No violent charges. Just a quiet divorce and Virginia was free.

At that moment there came an offer from a German film company to make a picture abroad. It was just what should have happened at that time and the rock of Virginia's sturdy little wall began to crumble. Two months in Europe. Weeks in Munich, where the picture was made. Evenings at the opera, at concerts.

Week-ends in Italy, shopping in Paris, a hurried trip to London. An overwhelming sense of freedom, of independence, that she had never felt before.

VIRGINIA returned to Hollywood ready to fight for the rôles she was entitled to. But battle, for once, was not necessary. Howard Hawks, a pioneering young director who delights in juggling the marionette strings by casting villains as heroes and vice versa, gave Virginia the rôle of *Gaby*, a Parisian dancer in love with a king, by way of proving his theory. It's about the only colorful rôle she has had since "Wild Oranges," and it helped to knock down all that remained of that uncompromising wall.

Then "Evening Clothes" with Adolphe Menjou. Light, sparkling, gay. So was Virginia.

They say it is Luther Reed's best effort as a director.

There are going to be some surprised producers when they see the new Virginia Valli. And I, for one, predict there will be no simple, resigned gestures as she says, "no one will let me do things like 'Wild Oranges.'" She'll be too busy with vivid rôles.

There's something heady about this freedom.

Acquiring a Taste for Olive

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51]

she is not distracted by temperament nor by outside interests. In a year and four months, she has made nine pictures. The only vacation she has taken was to go to the hospital for an appendicitis operation.

Five weeks after the operation, Olive was back at the studio, walking the tight-rope for "The Monkey Talks."

Olive, as you can see, is still unaware that she is a Big Star. She still believes that stunt scenes should be performed without the aid of

a double. She hasn't yet asked for gauze photography. She doesn't want to select her own stories or produce her own pictures. She still thinks that she is awfully lucky to be a star at all and doesn't believe that the public is in her debt because she condescends to make pictures for them.

And all these qualities are the signs of a star who is on the ascendant and not sinking off into a decline. In two years from now, we are going to shout, "I told you so!"