

Lights Out in Gay Paris At 10 ^{PM}

**The
Fast
Night
Life and
Famous Resorts of the
French Capital Promptly
Snuffed Out at "Dix
Heures" and the
Pleasure Seekers
Turned Into the
Darkened Streets**

PARIS, May 13.
"ALL lights out at ten o'clock!" is the new order of the day in Paris.

At that hour, by Government order, all restaurants, cafes, public rooms in hotels, dancing cabarets and similar places of entertainment, are darkened and closed, while street lights are also turned off.

An eclipse of the gaiety of Paris has been caused by this order that almost passes comprehension and cannot be fully appreciated by the foreigner without personal inspection. What was once called "the City of Light" is now "the City of Darkness."

A curfew law for Paris! That is the bold, hard, scarcely credible fact. All nocturnal gaiety must now end at an hour when, in other times, it was scarcely beginning.

The order to turn off all lights is issued by the Prefect of Police, who is an important official of the national Government and not a subordinate of the Paris municipality.

The curfew order is explained by the Government as necessary to conserve fuel, but it is known to be fully as much due to the desire not to enrage the half-starved people by the sight of exotic luxury and dissipation.

The strain which the French middle and working classes have had to bear has, of course, been cruel. Now, when the war is long over, they are asked to pay famine prices for food and fuel, which are scarcely obtainable even at those prices. The poor Parisians are fond of gaiety and luxury themselves, but under present conditions such things are only for the rich.

It would be maddening to present to the eyes of the hungry Parisians the sight of North Americans, South Americans, Russians, Turks, Japanese and other opulent exiles feeding on chicken at \$12 a plate and rare wines at \$50 a bottle beneath the radiance of fabulously expensive electric lights. Still more enraging would it be to those Parisians to see their foreign visitors enjoying the society of the fairest and most frivolous Parisiennes while they themselves were driven to the practice of the austere virtues. Therefore it has been decreed that the gay foreign visitors must find such diversions as they can—not beneath the extravagant electric lights, but in gloomy darkness.

It would be too much to expect the Parisians to endure all those sights without revolting. In other days they broke into revolution for much more trivial causes—just because an official made an unhappy choice of phrases or wore his hat in an unbecoming way. It is surprising that they have shown such patience under their trials, but there is a limit to their patience. Therefore, the only safe course was to darken the city and forbid all evidences of nocturnal gaiety.

The change is one that will give a shock to the ideas of people in the most distant parts of the world. For more than a century Paris has been regarded as the place where a man could enjoy himself day and night—and especially at night—without restraint from Puritanical laws.

The South American who made a fortune always hurried to Paris to spend it, and did it so recklessly and ostentatiously that he gained a reputation as the typical foreign spendthrift—the "rasta." Russian Grand Dukes and others, who had fished fortunes out of their unfortunate

country, spent practically all their time and money in Paris, which offered them delights that could not be obtained in their own barbarous land. And here it should be noted that in spite of the chaos into which the former Russian empire has fallen there are still plenty of Russian Grand Dukes and aristocrats with money to spend and desires to gratify. The wealth they took from Russia seems inexhaustible.

Certain of the Grand Dukes have been refused admission to France recently, but that is not because they have no money—it is because France has become too solemn and sober to permit their old dissipated. Another sign of the times!

It is hardly necessary to recall the lure which Paris has always had for many Americans. The lumberman long isolated in the backwoods, the miner from the Klondike, the millionaire from some uninteresting industrial city has often dreamed of the time when he would break away from his grimy or solitary surroundings and enjoy the nocturnal life of Paris.

No country was too far away or too uncivilized to send its odd-looking denizens in search of the refined delights of Paris unobtainable at home. Moroccan chiefs and bandits, who had acquired a heap of yellow gold in some mysterious way, have been a common sight at the cafes and public resorts of Paris, usually accompanied by admiring but avaricious specimens of the harpy family.

Indeed, the prominence of colored faces among the nocturnal revellers of Paris has led to not a little heated comment by visitors from America, and some very lively conflicts have resulted in the cosmopolitan dance halls and cafe concerts.

All the yellow nations have sent their pleasure-seekers to Paris—solemn in appearance, but, nevertheless, eager for the joys they could not find at home. Japanese, Chinese, Siamese, Tonkinese, Annamites, Hindus, Polynesians—all helped to make up the strange cosmopolitan crowds that thronged the Parisian resorts, listened to the gypsy orchestras and drank in the details of bizarre and sensual entertainments.

To the most extravagant of these pleasure-seekers the life of Paris only began about ten o'clock in the evening—the hour at which the law now says all lights must be out and all amusements must come to an end. "How preposterous!" they say.

There is a Russian Prince in Paris who has made it a rule never to get up by daylight. His luxurious apartment is darkened during the day while he is resting in his lace-trimmed bed, so that no distressing ray of sunshine can reach him.

When his valet assured him that the shades of night had fallen he would put on evening clothes and go out to dinner at some favorite cafe on the boulevards, where he usually entertained a large party of friends.

The rest of the night he would divide between the concert halls, the gambling houses and the other queer amusement places of Paris. When dawn threatened

Homeward
Bound
in
the
Darkness.

to disturb him he would jump into a closed carriage, pull down the shades and hasten home, usually accompanied by friends.

This unhappy man is now condemned to spend all his time at home, as life to him is only tolerable by artificial light.

There was a great region stretching from the "grands boulevards" northward and including the famous Montmartre, where humanity only came to life after nightfall. By day it was the street cleaners, the shopkeepers, the prosaic toilers alone who were to be seen. All those who gave the quarter its character—the artists, the sirens, the waiters—came into existence only at dusk.

Once there was a noted resort called the "Cabaret de la Mort"—the "Cabaret of Death"—where revellers could enjoy reckless pleasures amid sights and sounds that reminded them at every turn of death. A

certain amount of stimulation and nocturnal atmosphere were absolutely necessary for the enjoyment of this place.

It is impossible to drink champagne from a coffin and wish good health to a skeleton by broad daylight. You are not permitted now to see anything at night, and so such truly Parisian places of entertainment become impossible.

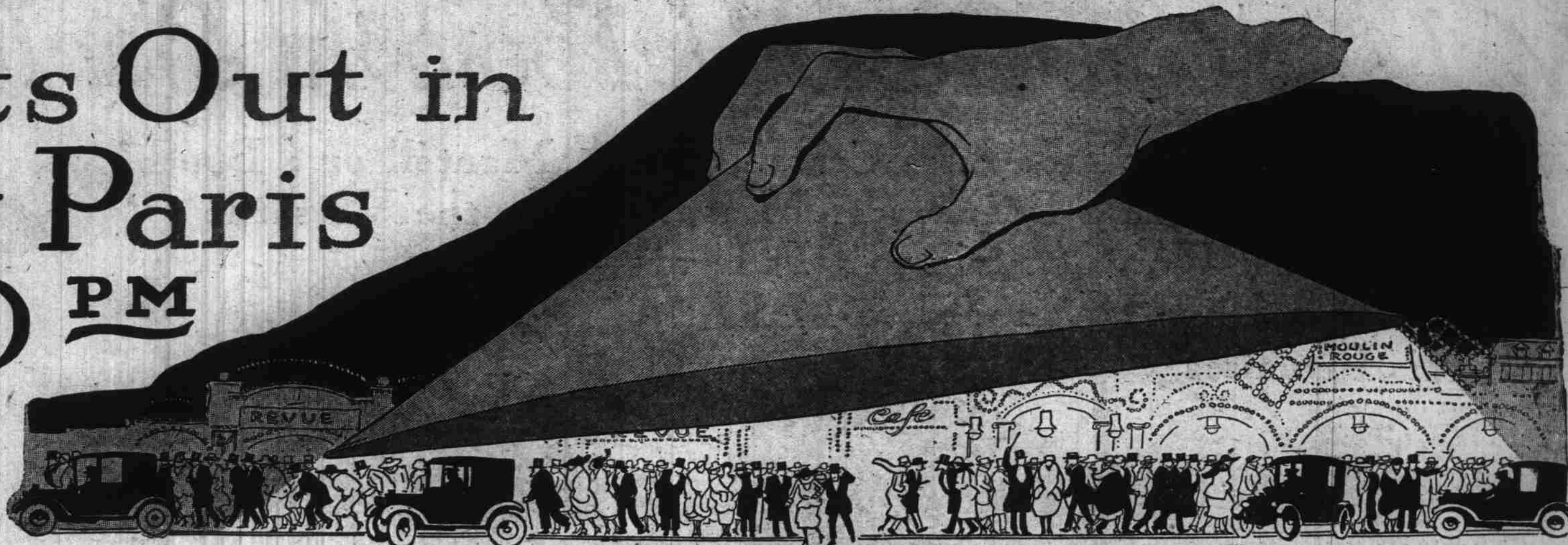
Who can think of enjoying the high kicking and hectic pleasures of a Parisian dancing hall at three o'clock on a bright sunny afternoon? It is indeed not to be thought of, and hence all these dancing resorts have either been closed or are on their last legs.

Ten o'clock is, in fact, just about the hour when the Parisian "bon vivant" or "noceur" would have finished a good dinner, with its accompaniment of wines and "liqueurs" and begin to think of the real business of the night.

At such an hour a stroll along the boulevards was a pleasure not despised even by those who possessed carriages and motor cars of their own. It gave one a good opportunity to observe the fashions in hats and hosiery and other things. Now, of course, it is impossible to see anything.

A stroll along the darkened boulevards at ten o'clock at night, it is said, may result in being relieved of watch and pocket-book, or even worse, handled by an "apache" or some other wild Indian of modern civilization.

Under normal conditions the nocturnal pleasure-seekers of Paris, having grown a bit weary of the professional night birds, would seek a change by visiting "Halles Centrales," the great markets. After revelling with those who made it a business to stay up all night it was refreshing to meet some citizens who made it a business to go to work infernally early. Hence



Humorous Pictorial Comment on the Situation from a French Paper.

(And to the left):
All-night Revels in a French Cafe as Painted by Vadasa Miklos—and Which the New Curfew Law Has Put an End To.

there was always a troop of hollow-eyed and highly-painted revellers coming to greet the husky handlers of meat and vegetables. To-day very few people care to linger about in the dark from ten o'clock in the evening until four o'clock in the morning, which is about the time when the market workers get busy. So another Parisian diversion is suppressed.

The nocturnal darkening of Paris has been the subject of endless comment by Parisians and their newspapers. Much of this comment is quite amusing, for Parisians always manage to see the funny side of their worst troubles and have gone through revolutions with a jest.

"La Vie Parisienne," an illustrated periodical which typifies the lighter side of Paris life, publishes a most humorous series of silhouettes representing "Paris sans lumiere"—"Paris without light."

According to this publication there are a great many amusements to be had in the dark. One always runs the danger of colliding with somebody on the unlighted boulevard, but the collision is not necessarily disagreeable. Shadowy figures perceived in the darkness are not necessarily "apaches." Indeed, we are assured that those dreaded characters and all kinds of disturbers of the peace have become very scarce since the war. Paris has become a good city in many ways, but this witty publication seems anxious to prove that it has not become too good.

Darkness undoubtedly may have its delights, especially for those of a romantic and thoughtful temperament. What pleasure can be greater than watching the moon and stars, especially if it be done in congenial company?

But what is the value of these unlighted joys to the Parisian restaurateur, concert manager and amusement provider? None at all, it seems, judging from the complaints.

Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the Parisian director of amusements will soon find a way of coining money out of darkness.

Paris, of course, still has many attractions in the daytime. The churches, museums, public buildings and parks are all accessible at that time, and every well-informed person knows that they are among the finest in the world.

To suggest that the Parisian pleasure-seeker should find his pleasure in churches and museums is rather startling. Such things have usually been left to American school teachers, ministers and other poor but worthy persons who do Europe in six weeks for \$300.

The gay Pittsburgh millionaire and the giddy South American planter have perhaps never thought of an early morning visit to Notre Dame, a morning in the park and an afternoon in the Louvre Gallery, followed by an early retirement to bed, as a profitable way of spending the day. Perhaps the French Government's order will turn their thoughts in that direction. Who can say that a great moral reform has not been started by the "lights out" order?

In One of the Popular American Bars—Now in Darkness at 10 o'Clock.

