

DANCE HALLS FLOODED BY DRINK, DOPE

Girls Are Told Of Kick In "Muggles"

This is the second of a series of articles on the "free" dance halls of New Orleans, written by a girl reporter for The Item who worked in them.

BY DOROTHY DAY

Drink, dope and men of all ages and occupations—these are to be found night after night at the Arcadia dance hall, corner of Burgundy and Canal streets, one of the three "free" dance halls in which the writer worked for a week. There was drink in abundance that second night when we came to take the job of dancing given us by the manager the night before—although nothing but soft drinks are sold on the premises. And drunken men, as long as they can toddle around, the dance floor, are welcomed both by the management and the girls because the drunker they are, the more they suffer under the delusion that they are reincarnations of Vernon Castle.

Dope came afterward, in the form of "Mary Warner" cigarets, which two young men who pressed their services on us as escorts home, offered us, assuring us that "they sure would give us a lift—much better than whiskey because you woke up in the morning without a head."

The girls who dance are glad to accept liquor from their acquaintances of the dance floor, needing a stimulant after two or three hours of continual dancing, most often with clumsy partners or drunken ones, who have to be held up to keep them from falling to the floor. Dancing for pleasure and dancing for a living are two different things.

As to whether the girls accept offers of "Mary Warner" cigarets, we don't know. We only know from our inquiries that all the girls had heard of them, all had been offered them, and all knew some girls who smoked them.

"But Cheesus, I'm scared to death of them—they make you crazy," seemed to be the sentiment of most of them. "And you get a habit from them. Give me some good old whisky any day. That has a real kick in it."

Drunken Nights Recalled

"Say kid, do you remember the night we were all so drunk that we couldn't dance, and gosh, wasn't Mrs. S. mad?"

"And do you remember the night that Sadie got so stewed she fell on the floor, and cut her face all up. Gee, I never laughed so much in my life."

Not that the girls openly accept bottles from the men and tilt them on the dance floor. After all, these are times of prohibition, and there is a policeman on the floor whose uni-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE)