

THE QUEEN OF THE BALLET.

The Biography of a Tender Goryphee.

Mlle. Alle Samee was the Queen of the Ballet.

She was fair and young (once), and intensely human.

Yes, Mlle Samee was human. One could tell that almost at a glance.

She was born of poor but dishonest parents at Rouen, and it was owing to this early influence that she became the grand old ruin she was.

She danced first to the tune of a slipper in the hands of her *mere*. Here *mere* was a teaser.

Her *pere* breathed for living. It was a grind, of course, breathing every day, every hour, every minute—breathing, year in and year out—but he stuck to it right on up to the day of his death.

When yet a giddy young thing of forty-seven summers, Mlle. Samee ran away with a very wealthy artist from the Quartier Latin, Paris. That is, the artist ran, and she ran after him. She wanted alimony, or something of that sort.

She got nothing but a bad cold in her upper register.

The artist compromised by painting her picture and hanging it up in a saloon.

He hung it up for three absinthes *frappees*, one for her and two for himself.

It was on this occasion that she got her name. When he asked her what she would take she replied "Samee."

Mademoiselle led a gay life in Paris. It was quite a butterfly existence, so far as eating was concerned.

She was a precocious child, and in time learned to speak French. She could say *Garson, Swei bier!* in the most offhand manner. In the Latin Quarter she learned Latin.

At the tender age of sixty-two she entered a dancing academy and began to study to be a *premier danseuse*.

She had made a vow to astonish both the old world and the new, though the chances were that both would be old before she should do so.

Her master said, however, that she was born with terpsichorean feet. They were a birthmark.

After that, whenever she saw a little boy prattling at his play she would think, "Some day, little boy, when you are nice and bald-headed, you will worship from the front row the world-renowned star of the ballet, Mlle. Alle Samee!"

Movéd by this laudable ambition, and a notice from her landlord to quit, she worked ten hours a day—mostly on the question of where her next meal was coming from. After a time, however, she experienced the rare good fortune of being able to borrow sums at regular intervals from one of her grandchildren, and thereafter she dined at least twice a week.

A century sped by.

She could now dance like a bird.

Her debut was announced. She was to make her first appearance

on any stage by special permission of the board of health and under police protection.

She was exactly one hundred and ninety-nine years old on the day of her debut.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children tried to prevent her appearance, but the effort was unsuccessful.

So the only thing the society could do was to warn parents to keep their children at home.

There was a large, reckless audience that night, and Mlle Samee danced for her life. She bobbed around all over the stage, spun about on her toes, dislocated her spine four times, smiled, waved the gauze that did duty as a skirt, sprained her diaphragm, kissed her hands, fractured her vermiform appendix, broke her contract, kicked, skipped, cavorted, pranced, and finished with a Mobile buck down the centre.

The audience gave one yell and then went out to get a drink.

It was a great triumph.

Mlle. Alle Samee was a *ballerina* for the gods, as well as for the baldheaded sinners in the parquette.

Paris rang with her name. The next day she was engaged to dance ten nights and eight matinees a week for a term of one hundred years. Her salary was five hundred francs a minute.

She could now have champagne for her breakfast.

At the age of three hundred and seventeen she came to America on the ship *Champagne*, in the displacement of which she took so much interest.

By a *coup d'etat* she escaped custom house detention and fumigation, and a few nights later she appeared at the Academy of Music in a revival of the "Cracked Bloke". The next morning a leading newspaper said:

Mlle Alle Samee, the celebrated young *premiere danseuse* from Paris tripped her way into popular favor last night. But it was her last appearance on any stage.

Why her last appearance on any stage?

Here was a mystery. The newspaper did not explain. All New York was excited. Why? why? was the question on every tongue.

The breathless populace gathered in the street before her boarding place as though waiting election returns.

At last—at last the truth became known.

The mystery was a mystery no longer.

Mlle. Alle Samee, the Queen of the Ballet, had ossified!

Town Topics.

THE RETORT CLERICAL.

"Since you take me to task so roundly for my failings," said the physician, somewhat nettled, "let me ask you why you don't restrain your own son. He gambles, drinks and plays the races."

"Ah, yes," said the clergyman, with a sigh. "We don't seem to exert much influence over our own families, do we? By the way, doctor, please convey my warmest sympathies to your wife and say to her that I am sorry she is still unable to find any relief from her rheumatism."

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