

MOST GRACEFUL OF MEN



M. Mordkin As He Appears With Mme Pavlova



M. Nyrinsky
Whose Made a Big
Success in England.

M. Tichomiroff
In a Pose With
the Catrinas Getzer

The Russian Dancers, Who Are Now the Prize Matinee Idols and Even Eclipse the Opera Tenors in Feminine Esteem

IT HAS been many a long day since a man could acquire the reputation of being either beautiful or graceful and avoid the popular belief that his was an effeminacy beneath contempt.

But it has happened in London. A whole group of men, dancers at that, all at once became the idols of the female population, and they have been far worse besieged by their adorer than the most famous of women dancers have been. Even the madness of admiration—which, in times past, seems to have risen to the stage of blind adoration—vouchsafed to the tenors of grand opera and to the musicians who can wring ecstasy from violin or piano has been surpassed by the frenzy of longing on the part of the women to be near to the wonderful exponents of the dances from the icy north.

Society has turned to them as the rescuers from spinsterhood of daughters whose charms and dowries have failed to catch the necessary male. Not that England's high-born maids were being flung at the heads of the dancers. By no means. The girls were flung at the dancers' feet, so that instruction in dancing might give them an accomplishment certain to bring other men to theirs.

In the dance itself, as hitherto indulged in by its votaries of the ballroom, the most exciting changes are impending, and if the suddenly aroused partisans of the old lackadaisical methods should be defeated—it's peculiarly hard to prophesy just now—the whole world of fashionable folk may find itself whirling and leaping, as though the dancing madness of the Middle Ages had seized on humanity again.

AND all because some few good-looking young Russians have been pirouetting on their toes outside of their own special territory, by gracious permission of the czar. Americans know some, if not all of them, very well, both by sight and reputation. Already their importance, in popular esteem, has grown to the level where their actions, their opinions, their little, jealous bickerings have an international importance equal to that of princes.

Michael Mordkin and Anna Pavlova had been spitting. It was easy to comprehend what the spat was about; the unprecedented rise to superior importance of a man dancer, when all dancing history of modern times has doomed the male to the role of a mere muscular supernumerary, was enough to make any distinguished artist wild with rage and able to find about two million reasons why she couldn't get along with him. Which of the two millions was taking them further apart while their professional triumphs were keeping them in apparently fond embraces doesn't matter. But the consequence does. Peace had been patched up by a management as passionately fond of money as the London public had become of the dancers. They resumed their joint performance. Part of it was a whirl of Pavlova's, held fast by the Apollo-like Mordkin, that resembled a boy's spinning top, centrifugal forces included. She looked like some fair, ethereal creature that dreams are made of; the flitting butterflies were gross beside her. It was her instant of supreme glory, and for that instant the ascending star of Mordkin

was all but veiled, a motionless foil for Pavlova's brilliant feat.

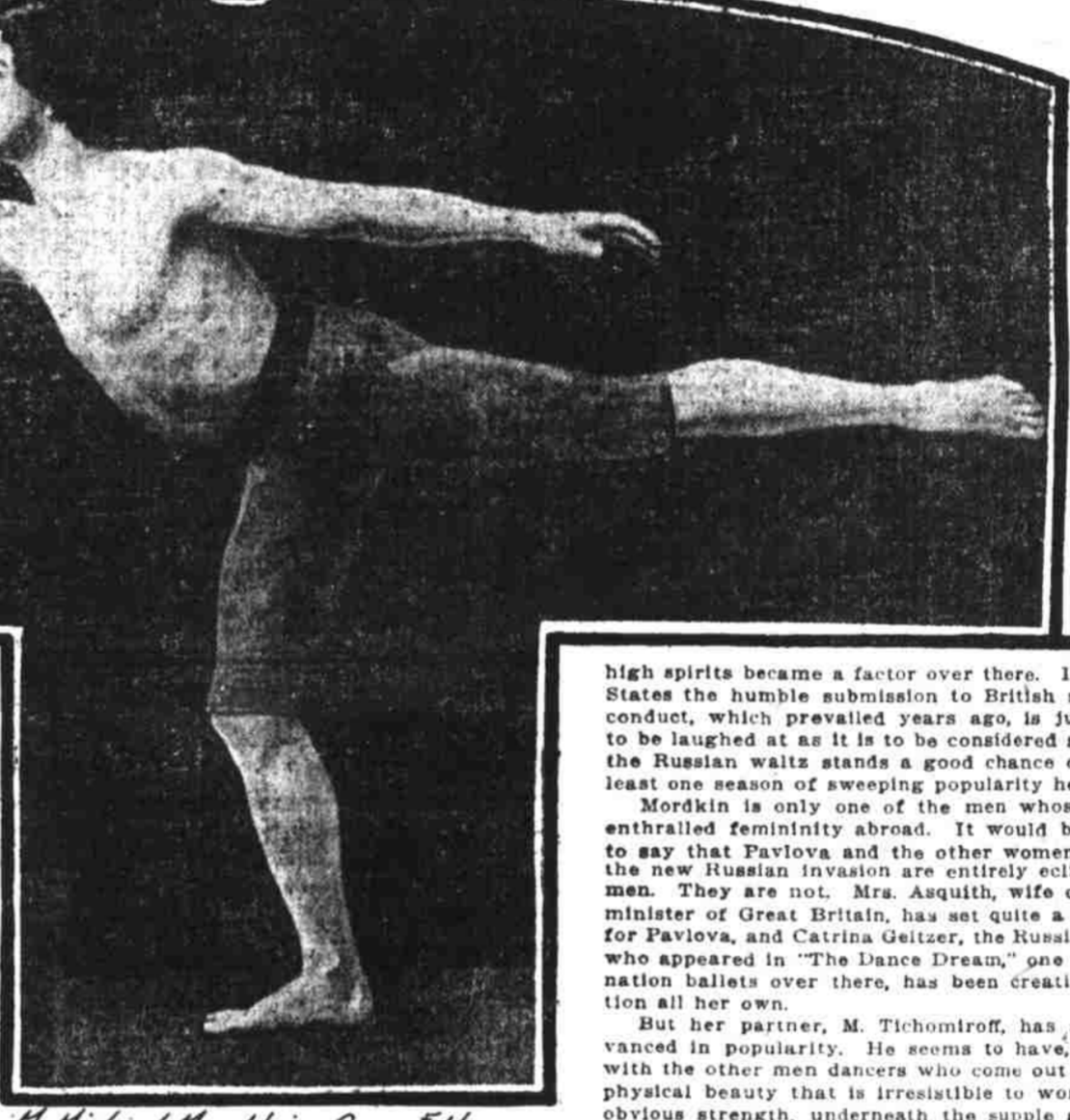
Well, that was precisely the instant the faithless Mordkin selected to let go of her. Centrifugal force whirled the fairy form of Pavlova far out and dropped her—hard, very hard. She sat down so hard that the house shook, and the whole audience realized, in cruel grins, that the belle of the Russian dancers, was composed of the most prosaic and solid flesh and bone.

If that had happened to a princess, about the same sort of an announcement would have traveled over the world to set aristocracy agog; with the dancers it traveled just as far, to set all classes agog. Mordkin, who has a wife of his own endowed with the delicate loveliness one sees in some charming Frenchwomen, lived this summer in very modest lodgings in Bloomsbury, where he was constantly under siege from English society women, who implored him to teach their daughters the art he so admirably expresses in his graceful person.

EIGHT YEARS OF PRACTICE

It must have amused his mocking spirit to hear them, cajoling, assure him they are confident his genius could transform their awkward squads of girls into beings of fiery suppleness, when he recalled the long and harsh ordeal of apprenticeship a real Russian dancer must serve at the Imperial School for Dancing in St. Petersburg, under M. Tokin, the merciless director.

Eight years is the term that is required for turning out a qualified performer, and he must be a cherub to begin with. The labor of training is an exercise of the heaviest order, resulting in an athlete beside whom the ordinary gymnast is simply so much raw material. Yet the dance is only half of the lesson to be learned. Those young students are training to be actors as well as dancers, in so far as facial expression can reveal the sentiments typified in every step and pose. It was, of course, farcical to think that he could metamorphose an ungainly girl into a sylph of airy lightness; but the immense fees that were thrust upon him to accomplish the impossible brooked no resistance. He took some pupils and did the best he could. Meanwhile, whenever he made his exit from the theater, great throngs of beauty-mad women awaited his appearance and almost mobbed him in their eagerness to be near the ideal of male grace and strength.



M. Michael Mordkin, One of the Most Noted of Russian Dancers

The performances were studied by thousands, rather than admired. Here and there in fashionable circles the "Russian waltz," a tempestuous performance that calls for all the swift agility the most nimble dancer can command, began to be a favorite number.

In the United States the fame of the Russian waltz promptly flared as far as Newport. Mrs. Pembroke Jones let it be known that as soon as Mordkin came over he should demonstrate the steps at her Newport residence, Sherman Lodge. Everybody rose to the tiptoe of anticipation.

But whether the tiptoes of practice—and nothing short of them will serve the terrific new waltz—will be felt is yet a little doubtful. While London's delight in it was just beginning to be noteworthy, Queen Mary let it be known that for all dancing functions at which she was present the undignified romps to which society has been addicted of late must be omitted. Mordkin and the Russian waltz were not referred to; ignoring both of them, while condemning in general the class to which they belonged, was the most effective reproof.

Her majesty's dictum is not, however, quite so final as Queen Victoria's used to be, and English social pleasures have loosened up amazingly since American

high spirits became a factor over there. In the United States the humble submission to British standards of conduct, which prevailed years ago, is just as liable to be laughed at as it is to be considered seriously. So the Russian waltz stands a good chance of having at least one season of sweeping popularity here.

Mordkin is only one of the men whose grace has enthralled femininity abroad. It would be a mistake to say that Pavlova and the other women dancers of the new Russian invasion are entirely eclipsed by the men. They are not. Mrs. Asquith, wife of the prime minister of Great Britain, has set quite a social vogue for Pavlova, and Catrina Getzer, the Russian ballerina who appeared in "The Dance Dream," one of the coronation ballets over there, has been creating a sensation all her own.

But her partner, M. Tichomiroff, has steadily advanced in popularity. He seems to have, in common with the other men dancers who come out of Russia, a physical beauty that is irresistible to women and an obvious strength, underneath the supple grace of his movements, which compels the respect of the men. The truly dominant new star of this brilliant little group is, however, M. Nyrinsky, a dancer who figured in the sensational ballet of "Scheherazade" at Covent Garden. For him the waiting throngs have an eagerness of welcome that argues something more than love of the artistic and beautiful. The influence of sex seems to radiate from him and bring his enthusiasts to him in abject shoals. Nor are the common run of people alone in their extravagant devotion to him. He figures as the most popular drawing card at private entertainments, especially for fashionable women who, two or three years ago, would have resented as an affront the intimation that they could possibly devote an evening to a function simply because a man dancer happened to be engaged by the hostess at 2500 per dance.

The ballet in which he appears is universally recognized as the limit to which erotic dancing can go. When it comes to the harem scene, where the beautiful odalisques riot with the stalwart Ethiopians they have admitted to the forbidden walls, audiences have fairly gasped at the abandon of the dancing and walt in shocked apprehension the climax. It is harmless enough; but the British stage has never had such a pace of passion set for it. Nyrinski lacks utterly the lofty type of beauty that characterizes Mordkin, whose chiseled features and

curling hair might belong to some boy favorite of old Rome or to the original of some Grecian statue of Hermes.

The Nyrinsky type is delicate enough, but sensual, with the grosser features and the flaming eyes popularly supposed to go with intense natures. He looks ferociously tropical, and his dancing bears out the promise of his looks.

The enormous vogue that has attended the appearance of these men dancers seems, thus far, to have daunted rather than inspired them with the vaunt of singers and actors suddenly taken up by society.

They haven't acquired the self-satisfied airs of the famous tenor who imagines he owns all women's hearts. They are rather like poor working men, with parts of rigid economy and hard common sense, who drop into fortune. It seems so unreal to them that they won't let a penny slip. They live modestly and hoard all their earnings, for such great incomes as they are receiving now, between their salaries and their fees, will amount in a short time to independent fortunes in Russia.

That is one reason why they are preserving the respect that is paid to them as men, and perhaps it is another reason why they remain the idols of the women, for it leaves them beyond possession.

Doesn't Speak as He Passes Himself By

UP NEAR Tidouste there is a man who has lived alone for twenty years. His house clings to the side of Knob Hill at its steepest and most uninviting place. His name is James, but any one who happens to know him and speaks to him at all calls him "Jimmy."

Jimmy got into the habit of talking to himself years ago, soon after his wife died. He has entertained himself in a conversational way since then without interruption until yesterday. Yesterday Jimmy fell out with himself, it seems, over some trifling matter, no doubt, and all colloquial relations abruptly ceased.

At least that was the inference drawn by Dan Hopkins, who happened to meet Jimmy on the road leading to town.

"Hello! Jimmy?" yelled Hopkins, "how are you today?"

"I don't know," replied Jimmy, with a trace of irritation in his voice, "I ain't on speakin' terms with meself jist now."

What Would the Next Row Be?

DENNIS PLINN had cleaned out the town hall after shows, political meetings, lectures, Memorial day exercises and other doings for sixteen years without making a single complaint. At last he fancied he had a kick coming, and he went into the mayor's office to register it.

"What is it, Dennis," asked the mayor, as Dennis meekly entered.

"It's about the hall, yer honor. The byes stand up in the rear, they do, an' they chew an' they spit durin' the intire performance. An' not a word-wad would O' say, yer honor, but the varmin's—they will spit all over the legs of the chairs in the back row, and on the places where the chairs do be fastened to the fure, an' hard work it is for a man of me age to stoop down an' scrub 'em off. There's a favor O' would ask ov yer honor this mornin' in respect to it."

"What is that, Dennis?"

"Indeed, O' would ask yer honor for permission an' authority to do away with the back row of seats intirely. Nobody loikes to sit in the back row any how, yer honor, an' sinless it is to have it in the hall at all, at all."

Poor, Indeed

A TAX collector in a Pennsylvania county returned an assessment of \$10,000 against a Mr. Miser for bonds believed to be owned by him and not listed for taxation. Mr. Miser appealed to the county commissioners to vacate the assessment, alleging that he possessed no such bonds. Mr. Miser was subjected to a vigorous examination as to the taxable property he owned, but he disclosed very little if any, in concluding the hearing the chairman of the board of commissioners remarked:

"We are convinced, Mr. Miser, that the assessor made a mistake in assessing you for the bonds, and we have concluded to cancel your entire tax return, as we are satisfied from your testimony before this board that you not only do not own the bonds in question, but that you do not even own up."

An Orphan on Father

SIX-YEAR-OLD Ethel, in her little cot in the next room, was disturbed one morning by the snoring of her father, who did admit that he snored when he lay on his back. Ethel sat up in bed. "Mamma," she cried, "can't you make papa stop his nose?"

SCHOOL AGAIN BY TOMMY

I GUESS my kite and ball and bat Will have to do without me, For school's begun and I must go; But they can think about me. We've had a fine old time this year That we'll all remember. But this vacation was so short— From June just till September. This goin' back to school again Would be a great deal better If 'twasn't for the startin' in And stoppin' your forgetter So sudden-like and painful that It almost makes you holler. It seems as if for one week more I'd almost give a dollar.

There may be some place, somewheres, that The boys just have vacation. Without this goin' back to school To spoil anticipation. I wish I knew where that place was; You bet I'd go and find it. When I get big—but what's the use? By that time I won't mind it. They say some fellers like to go To school and mind the teachers; But-mebbe that's just like pa says, That folks is all queer creatures, And people can't be quite the same As even their own brothers. So when some fellers don't like school, It's mebbe fine for others.

