

Querita Vincent Tells the Secret of Buck and Wing Dancing

"It's perfectly absurd," says Querita. "The idea!" She evidently means that it really is absurd. Querita usually means what she says. She said once upon a time that she was going to be a buck and wing dancer.

"It is absurd, I say, to think for a minute that the body can't be trained to assume any style of pose and motion," says Miss Vincent. "You can just as well learn the loose-jointed motions of the Southern dancers as the ramrod poses of society. The latter are far more artificial than the former."

Perhaps she is hardly a fair judge of what can be done with any given body. It is hard to believe that hers was ever made after the conventional pattern that Providence uses. It can be folded up for pocket use or bent over backward until it is double; it can fall to pieces, too, and then Querita can pick it up and put it together. And when you look at her you find it a bit hard to take her word for it that anybody's body can be trained to do likewise.

She says she can prove it, though. "When I was in Chicago I danced at Mrs. Potter Palmer's house," she says. "In the East, you know, that sort of thing is often done. After I was through, one of the guests asked me to give her private lessons."

"I almost laughed in her face. So would you if you had seen her."

"She was one of the would-be-English type of society girl. She walked as a pair of tongs would if it could, and she

Querita threw her arms about her joyfully. "That's it!" she cried. "That's the way. Let yourself go and you can learn the buck and wing!"

And with courage renewed they set to work again and in three lessons the pupil was well on the way toward rivaling her teacher. "She had enough natural grace and her full allowance of joints, but she had trained her body in the ways of stiffness, and she had to get back to first principles before she could dance. She was a success finally and the dancing practice gave her grace in all ways. There is no such all-round physical training as dancing."

Miss Vincent learned her buck and wing steps at first hand. While she was in New Orleans a few years ago she began watching the pickaninies on the levees. She watched them at first because they were blessed black babies and they amused her. Later she discovered that they knew something about dancing that they might teach her.

What refinement! The same old story of the government to turbulent people seven thousand miles away, while he makes no pledge to restore it to a larger number right at home?

He has recently been talking patronizingly to the public, asking them to vote for him on the platform. Let their answer be that if destruction is an evil, the men who nominated him have already destroyed it at home, if truth be told. That which he accuses Republicans to do abroad, his own party has done at home. His charge against Republicans is proved by a check of the record and the issue.

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When this dawned upon her she began to spend her pennies in getting them to dance more. From 9 to 12 every day she stayed on the levees, the pupil of the bucks and pickaninies. She absorbed while she was there. Then she went back to the hotel and tried the steps over and over until she had them perfectly.

After she had learned the steps of the Southern dances her next task was to make them all over. She took a tuck in them here, she let out a seam in them there, and by the time she was through you would never have known them for the steps they started to be.

In the first place, no two darkies dance alike. They make their own steps to suit themselves. So there are no ironclad rules for buck and wing dancing, and Querita takes the most impudent liberties with even such as there be. But she never gets away from the spirit of the thing. The keynote of buck and wing dancing is to fall to pieces, and this Querita follows faithfully.

There is a history attached to these

loose-jointed motions. In old days it was customary for the negroes to dance against time. Long before they were weary they would pretend to be and then set in a tumbling step with the purpose of making spectators believe that their finish was near. When came a sudden rally that proved the tumbling all a hoax. Little by little, though, it became incorporated in the dance, until it was the principal part of it.

"Cakewalking is built on a good deal the same plan," says Miss Vincent; "but a true cakewalk is almost a play when it is done by those who understand its significance. From the old French country dances it sprang—those that were known in the New Orleans region—and it developed under the encouragement of the plantation masters."

"The cakewalk of slave days was a wooing. In it the man's choice of a partner meant more than for the dance. It signified his proposal of marriage."

"Will you accept me, han' foh de cakewalk, Miss Jimma Mehlabe?" he would say. And Jimma Mehlabe's reply meant yes or no for life.

"But you can't guess what dancing means to the health," rambled on Querita. "I'd like to get into a good argument with anybody and show that dancing can win out against all kinds of exercise. I'd like to prove that it's a way ahead of swimming. It keeps the hair much dryer, for one thing; but that isn't the only reason. It's far and away better than fencing, because it isn't so one-sided. Golf is eclipsed beside it, for golf is a lazy game."

"Above all things, dancing gives grace. A good dancer is always a good walker. If you dance much and well, that is in a free way, not in stiff glides, every motion you make will be graceful."

Watch Querita, and see if you don't think her theory is worth something. She is as long as the moral law, you know.

TO SMILE.
SPORT.
WILLFUL WOMAN'S WILES.
The Tattler Man was telling the story of his life.

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Prophets and Songs of Prophets.

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volume was six inches thick. With the plates was a strange pair of transparent stone spectacles which Smith called "Crim and Thummin" and by means of these the illiterate young country boy translated the curious, unknown characters on the plates. The characters represented a language called Reformed Egyptian.

The original manuscript made by Joseph Smith is owned by a man named Sweth, who lives in Richmond, Missouri.

When the translation was finished the angel took the plates away and they have never been seen since. Alexander Smith states that the plates were seen by six or eight men besides his father, the last of whom died but a few years since. To launch a new sect in this narrow world is no easy matter, and Joseph Smith was persecuted with almost animal

ferocity by leaders of other denominations. The church history is a stormy one—deeply, darkly marked with the footprints of furious mobs; with traces of the mob weapon, tar and feathers; with the stain of that which alone quenches mob thirst—blood.

Sometimes the Saints showed more zeal than sense in standing by a cause; but their fortitude under persecution argued their honesty. And it is generally conceded, though reluctantly, that in all their colonies there was visible a spirit of industry, morality, order and cleanliness rarely, if ever, found in other communities of equal size. This was particularly true of their beautiful city of Nauvoo, on the banks of the Mississippi.

But at last there came a mob that realized the wildest of mob dreams. In the jail at Carthage, Illinois, they shot and killed Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, who was a patriarch of the original church. Some time before, dissension had crept in among the Saints. Brigham Young and his faction had gone about quietly teaching the doctrine of polygamy, claiming that Joseph Smith had had a revelation that plural marriage was the will of God.

Querita Vincent at the Orpheum in Some of Her Dancing Poses.

Photos by Strauss of St. Louis and Coover & Rasmussen of San Francisco.

His Heart Changed Its Position.

A curious case was tried before the civil courts in Vienna the other day regarding a claim arising out of a railway accident. The plaintiff stated that he had received internal injuries as the result of the accident. The medical experts maintained that the shock of the smash had caused the heart of the plaintiff to change from its normal position to one lower down in his body. This theory was received with incredulity by the jury, but their skepticism was satisfied when they applied their hands to the man's ribs and could feel the organ beating in the usual manner. The medical men stated that the sufferer might live for several years, notwithstanding the extraordinary displacement of his heart, but that he was more liable to heart failure and would experience great difficulty in doing his work. Under these circumstances the jury awarded the plaintiff heavy compensation.