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*(Caption to the photo: Karl Dane rehearses a new dance step between four beauties.)*

Danish Comedian Karl Dane

Among the names that The Big Parade made famous one of the most popular was without a doubt Karl Dane. Little by little funny Slim excited half of Lisbon and conquered the critics' esteem.

In truth, we must agree that King Vidor's master-piece, with its crushing reality of an atrocious cataclysm, with the intense drama of its many scenes, the raw colours with which the tragedy was painted, would have been a bitter pill to swallow were it not for Karl Dane's humour.

We had already seen him in other movies, like The Son of the Sheik, for example, or the Price of a Kiss, but we had never been as interested as when we watched him in The Great Parade.

However, no one can deny that the high regard he gained from that movie was fully deserved.

The rough working man countenance who was thrown by fate to a social class where all casts are alike, his crude and simple philosophy, his heroic indifference to danger, his constant and biting irony, all those things came together in Slim, who Karl Dane shaped in a way that could perhaps be matched, but never improved on.

Surely all our readers are eager to know the background of this excellent artist. Let us summarize it in the next couple of lines.

Rasmus Karl Thekelson Gottlieb was born in Copenhagen, in 1886. His father owned a theater and was also in charge of rehearsals, and it is therefore no exaggeration to say that as a boy he saw the limelights before he did the sunlight.

He gave his first steps on the backstage and it's therefore no surprise that his first job was as an actor before an audience, very early at the age of four.

Proof that sayings aren't always right is that Rasmus Gottlieb, son of a fish, soon realized his vocation was not to swim, or in this case, to act.

So although he started early he also realized soon enough that he had to look for another way of life.

At the age of fifteen he studied mechanics, and intended to become an engineer. But even then Rasmus secretly longed for adventure, to look for new sensations beyond the sea, to discover the mysteries hidden in the mists of the Baltic Ocean.

When the war came Denmark gathered its troops and Karl was summoned, even though he never had an opportunity to go.

The cataclysm of war seriously affected his country's financial situation, like it did with so many others, and Rasmus

Gottlieb's problems seriously increased.

Mechanics were badly affected and with it his plans for the future. When he realized how difficult his life would be in his country he decided to

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finally fulfill his dreams of a better fortune. One fine morning a ship sailed away from the Kioege bay, taking on board a young man full of hopes and ideals, although he had no more than a hundred kroner, which at the time was the equivalent to vinte or so escudos.

*(caption of the photo: Karl Dane in a scene from Slide, Kelly Slide, an MGM movie about sports.)*

With was with this kind of experience that Gottlieb one landed on American soil.

Fortunately, luck and his knowledge of mechanics, more than his knowledge of English which was very scarce, allowed him to get a job right on the day after his arrival.

In spite of that Karl wasn't very happy. He missed his home country and his family, and he felt that oppression one always feels on one's first days in a foreign land, where no one understands you and you understand no one, the hard times spent scraping by, all those things contributed for his bad mood.

Sooner afterwards Gottlieb got bored with his work, which didn't satisfy his ambitions, and remembering his early beginnings in the art of Talma he decided to try out his luck on the American stage. The most remarkable thing that resulted from that experience was how quickly he made the leap from the stage to the studios.

During that transition the Yankees' sense of practicality reduced Rasmus Karl Thekelson Gottlieb's name to simply Karl Dane, indicating his nationality for as you know Dane in English means Danish.

His first important movie was Four Years in Germany, but the role didn't please this eternally unsatisfied man, who immediately insisted on been given bigger roles.

He thus persuaded James Golden to trust him with the role of the villain in The Wolf of Kultur.

Later he was given a part next to Rudolph Valentino in The Son of the Sheik, where at last his comical vein got a chance to shine.

It was however in The Big Parade, as we said before, that he revealed the vastness of his resources.

Apart from this one there was also The Bohemian, Monte-Carlo, The Price of a Kiss, Red Skins, The Scarlet Letter, titles that proved to MGM that this was a valuable artist, if made good use of.

Comic duets were getting excellent results, in Europe Pat and Patachon and in America Wallace Beery and Raymond Hatton, to mention just the most celebrated. Thus the gigantic and bony Karl Dane and the tiny George K. Arthur were united.

They created a series of comedies that, although perhaps not very witty, owe a lot to the couple of actors, who made the most of their material.

So far we have only seen one: Rookies that for reasons not necessary to explain was called The Small parade.

The two greatest points of attraction in this movie were Karl Dane and the title, for many people were fooled by the resemblance to the Big Parade.

Apart from this film the comic duet made other ones.

Baby Mine is the crazy story of two medicine students, one called Jimmy (George K. Arthur) who is always conning his naive colleague Oswald (Karl Dane) convincing him he's the father of a child he had rented to the wife of a certain Italian man, all this so he could continue to satisfy his amorous interests. However the Italian man claims the child as his own, so

Jimmy must find another one, which leads Oswald to believe himself to be the father of twins.

His troubles double and a new child appears, to Oswald's astonishment who thus sees his descendents miraculously multiply, until a satisfactory resolution puts an end to all this mess.

In Circus Rookies, that in France was called Le Plus Singe des Trois, Karl Dane is Oscar Thrush, the daring tamer of one of the main attractions, a gorilla, and in love with the beautiful Belle (Louise Lorraine) trapeze artist.

But Francis Byrd (George K. Arthur) a reporter from a certain city visited by the circus, falls in love with Thrush's bride, and soon Oscar hates his rival, who in order to stay close to his lover joins the acrobats.

When the circus moves to another town a series of more or less tragic events take place in the train where they travel. Oscar places the gorilla inside Francis' cabinet, but it's Belle who is attacked.

The two rivals, like a four-sided Trovador, run to their lover's rescue. there is a big commotion, that ends with Francis winning over Belle's heart and defeating both the gorilla,

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*(Photo's caption: Karl Dane in several scenes from Detectives, The Small Parade and Circus.)*

and Oscar Thrush's wishes, le plus singe des trois. In Detectives, Karl Dane is a policeman, and a certain hotel groom (George K. Arthur) is constantly playing pranks on him on account of Ninette (Polly Moran) a telephone operator, who naturally is beautiful and loved by both.

There is also a jewel theft involving the two rivals, leading them to a gruesome adventure and to a mysterious house, where many surprises await them.

As in The Small Parade, neither humour nor originality can be said to be its strongest points. It's Karl Dane's name, however, that guarantees they always possess some attractive and this, as we all know, consists in his unique way to provoke hilarity among the spectators.