

WHIRLING DERVISHES.

"And there is a time to dance," was the dictum of the wisest of those ancients we are taught to believe inspired. But a constant element in that complex machine we know as "Society" makes it a point to reverse the comfortable theory of the Turk, and to believe whatever is wrong. Autocratic reformers these, often denouncing a custom simply because it is; rarely permitting argument upon it. Hence, to-day, Propriety, clothed in immeasurable purity as Peter the Hermit was in rags, preaches a new crusade against that most popular of modern manias, the "round-dances." We are begged to believe them a sinful waste of time and muscle, an abomination in the sight of common decency and of common-sense; and that the evil personage, who is the father of lies, is parent of these as well. But doubtless will be found for whom it is hard to believe that Solomon was radically wrong in his premise, or that the way of life must be thorny and sprinkled with tears and resonant of groans. Still, it must be admitted that dancing in excess is bad. So is walking, so is eating. And her champions proclaim that she of the twinkling feet does more good than counterbalances her slight improprieties. Further, they do assert that those who most revile her are would-be devotees on whom her grace does not descend. And, as in all mooted points of morals or manners, the war is fierce, growing more furious with each generation, and certainly faster with each succeeding season. There are more dancing people than there were; they dance harder, later, faster than they did; they dance at odd times and places, young or old, in or out of season. On the other hand, the non-dancers—from at first elevating their eyes, or at most holding up their palms—now breathe denunciations loud and deep, and write scathing essays against the abomination.

With the moral question involved, this is neither the time nor place to interfere; but the material fact stares us in the face, that dancing is, at this writing, more popular, all the world over, than ever before. Like sin, and cold in the head, it is not confined by geographical boundaries; like beggary and falling in love, its thriving depends upon no special atmosphere. That unique fanatic of the East, the Whirling Dervish, spins with as great velocity as ever; the red man of our prairies dances his scalp-dance as joyously, his peace-dance as grimly, as of yore. Under whispering olives and overloaded vines, dark-eyed villagers assemble at evening, and move through graceful *contradanza* and stately *bolero*, to the tinkling of the immemorial guitar. Fanned by the spice-laden breezes of the Golden Horn, the dreamy Turk forgets even to puff his beloved *nargileh*, as he follows, with motionless ecstasy, the voluptuous pose of the henna-ed and kohl-ed *Amet*. In the dusky shadow of crumbling Thebes—beneath the stony frown of the ox-horned Isis herself—dwells the burning-eyed *Ghawazee*, living only to wile the soul of man, and faint herself in the lascivious witchery of her wondrous dance. Cold-blooded England dances laboriously at Melbourne and at John O'Groats's house. Scotch reels are things of history; and what Irishman would "cover the buckle" with never a potato in the cabin? while the fair-haired swells of the Guards hold in quite equal estimation their triumphs over the waxed floor and those of the dark days before Inkermann. And as for sunny, laughter-loving France—she is nothing, if not dancing. Imperial Paris lavishes millions on the gilt and glitter that bedeck the fairy-land ballets with which the second empire soothes its fretful children; imperial Paris sees, poeks her longings and her scruples, retires to *salon* of minister—to Mabille—to where?—and dances madly, too. And that the head of the world's fashion smiles upon it, we have only to remember that the marquis who married *La Dieu* was famous principally for his debts and his dancing!—Perhaps she had not paid the former, had not the latter made him—enviable pinnacle!—leader of the empress' *cotillon*.

There is no reason that an otherwise clever and cultivated gentleman may not possess, besides, the ease and practice to make him foremost in this most graceful accomplishment; but then society receives and blesses him, not because of his other attributes, but rather, in spite of them. She accepts the gift of his heels, caring little for those of his heart, and with a silent but decided protest against those of his head. The Emperor may be ill, Wall street may be in a spasm, and the next-door neighbor may be inventoried for the red flag. What cares she? T. Totum, Esq., still spins with inconceivable rapidity at Mrs. Aurifer Midas' select soiree.

The origin of dancing is, of course, unknown. Whose light toe was first fantastic must ever remain a mystery with those of Elysium; for its antiquity is far beyond that of spoken or recorded tradition. We are only left to theorize that dancing was the spontaneous effort of undeveloped man to express, by gesture, joy or sorrow. All early nations were, to a certain extent, hieroglyphic; all strove to express an idea by a visible symbol; and the lessons of the Pyramids, of Nineveh, and of Aztec Mexico, teach us that drawing was the parent of which writing came. So the impulse that urged the savage to convey his calmer thought by a rude drawing would have taught him to give the more pressing emotion sound or gesture. We still find that the weaker of the modern languages abound in gesture; those possessing the poorer vocabularies demanding that face, shoulders, and arms shall aid the inefficient speech. The Italian or the Portuguese to-day speaks as much with his hands as he does with his tongue.

We constantly see those pocket editions of the savage man—spoiled children—stamp with rage and caper with delight. Who can tell what antic, far among the shadows of the unloathed and uncooked past, was the parent of the dance?

In many portions of the Old Testament dancing is mentioned as a simple matter of course. Pharaoh's daughter, dancing to the bath, finds the destined liberator among the bushes; the children of Israel celebrate their passage of the Red Sea by a dance upon the hither shore; Aaron sets them up a golden calf, and they dance around it—an example faithfully followed since in all climes; David, their warrior, statesman, and king, dances before the ark; and the elders of Shiloh command their young men to abduct the maidens of Shiloh, dancing at evening in the fields—a procedure that might lead the thinker to doubt if the Roman lawgiver had not read the Bible before the rape of the Sabines.

In the remotest nooks, whence science has traced tradition, we find dancing already a settled institution. The eldest Pharaoh led chains of dancing captives after their cars on many a mural monument. The most ancient manuscripts, preserved by the Chinese from the mustiness of their earliest civilization, show that music and dancing were important departments of state in the Celestial Empire. Japan dances to-day the self-same measure, to the thrumming of the

very *tum-tum*, that the founders of her state enjoyed somewhere about the birth of Time.

The youth of Sparta and the soldiers of Crete danced to the assault, keeping time to a rude measure they chanted. We can, however, imagine their steps only a crude *gas gymnastique*—an ungraceful version of that "Shanghai-drill" that so delights the bosom of our maidens, as performed by the bone and sinew of our volunteers. In the high Grecian civilization, we learn that Socrates led him to the bower of Aspasia, and, under her teachings, learned—

"To nimble caper in a lady's chamber, To the lascivious pleasures of a lute," or lyre. The highest Grecian idea of grace was drawn from the pose of the dancer; for the most perfect of their recovered statues is the god of the dance, and their most cunning chisel wrought the dancing-fawn.

But, in the Roman era, dancing became unfashionable among the great, and was almost given over to the slaves and actors who amused them at their feasts. The straiter laced of the period made the dance a butt for shafts of invective or ridicule, being apparently as much in earnest as more modern prudes, who perhaps made such their prototypes. Cicero gravely reprehends the sport in Gabinius, declaring it beneath his consular dignity; and Sallust assures Sempronius that to dance so well invites a doubt of her being an honest woman. Kingsley, too, in his "Hypatia"—that wonderful picture of the wonderful city—shows the inevitable disdain of the philosopher for the dancer.

It was only in the middle ages that a sort of order crept into the dance. What had hitherto been an unarranged gymnastic, dependent wholly on individual power, now first came under general rules; and, as language and music before it, the dance began to possess a grammar of motion. Then it once more came under the patronage of the great—became the fashion. At the French and Spanish—and later at the English—courts, the formal measure of *minuet*, and *polonaise* were walked on all state occasions, first by royalty itself, and then by the highest in the land. Some time later the *coranto* and *galliard* varied these by intruding their livelier ideas; next the *walz* was introduced; and, finally, such strange results of search after novelty as the *gavotte* and *laocota*.

In a poem published about the close of the sixteenth century, we find a description of the latter dance, which brings it into near relationship with the polka of to-day, proving this age has no right to letters-patent for this invention. Queen Elizabeth, if not a polker herself, most probably had the dance performed before her, for the description of the poem is exact:

"Yet is there one—a most delightful kind—A lofy jumping, or a leaping round; Where arm-in-arm two dancers are entwined, And whirr themselves, with strict embracements And still their feet an anape do sound—An anape is all their music's song—Those first two feet are short, and third is long."

The "anapest" here plainly marks the peculiarity of the polka step; and we are at liberty to picture to ourselves the knightly Sidney, "our burly cousin Burleigh," or the gentle Raleigh, doing a backstep at the bidding of Leicestershire, for the delectation of the royal guest of Kenilworth.

The descent may be long—but it is rapid—from the glittering pageants of chivalry to the glaring ones of "shoddy." A lustre or two since "our best society" was unstrung at its centre. Polka, like Harlequin unrehearsed, bounded over the head of all the proprieties, twirled round upon her toe, to the wonderment of the elect, and then settled comfortably down in their midst. Polka, the daughter of Progress, was not to be put down as her more quiet cousins-german had been. She knew that to do was but to dare; and, acting on the knowledge, she succeeded. Years before, the waltz, "imported from the Rhine," had become the feature of every May day frolic on the village-greens in England. But her capital did not embrace the stranger with great fervor. Almack's had already replaced the minuet of the previous generation by the stiff quadrille, and though a daring few encouraged the waltz, they could not sustain her long. Prim Propriety, of the strictly British stamp, refused to heed the whispers of that comely maiden, Common-sense; there were mysterious allusions to the Scarlet Woman; and the graceful child of Germany and Spain was voted a licentious gipsy, fit only for banishment to Mabille, or at best for a corner of Cremona. So the waltz, as all persecuted things of the Old World had done before her, across the water to us; though in her case the reception was a little different. Here, too, she was voted impure by the modesty of the period.

But immaculate society even then enjoyed its noble and elevating recreations. Then, as now, Mrs. Aurifer Midas would be at home on stated evenings; then, as now, Mr. Aurifer Midas would do his duty to society as groaning, he signed the heavy check for the yearly "crush." Nightly would the invariable Belinda deck her hair with pearls, drape her shapely bust with transparent illusion, and see that she was ravishingly *botte*. Nightly would the inevitable T. Totum coax on immaculate kids, complacently examine his own feet, and plunge through the crowd, to seek Belinda's, and lead them through funeral quadrilles. Dowagers donned diamonds and lace; papas groaned into unwonted dress-coats and unbrowned white vests; and the world of ton jammed itself into overcrammed rooms to eat, drink, and be merry—if practicable.

Then, as now, Mrs. Aurifer Midas' ball was always a success. There was the same display of diamonds and bust; much eating and drinking; more buzz and malice. The names of the most noted, eked out with stars, were duly chronicled, and dresses were commented on in the *Weekly Spatterer*; and sundry young gentlemen "slept at a friend's."

Still, an undefined and misty idea prevailed that the ball was not all it should be; that something might have made it plassanter. If the inevitable T. Totum had any mind it was haunted by a suspicion—and he whispered it to his invariable Belinda—that gobbling croquettes, bibbing Burgundy, and walking dismal "squares," was not, after all, the scene of party enjoyment.

The inevitable T. Totum whispered this rank treason, and—the revolution came! None could tell whence, when, how, but, like a flash of heat-lightning from the surcharged cloud of dullness brooding over Society, it came—and the "German" was born!—*Appleton's Journal*.

OBITUARY.

Sir John Simon, Bart., M. P.

The sudden death announced by cable of Sir John Simon, Bart., Member of the British House of Commons for the Isle of Wight. Sir John was a Roman Catholic in religion and a Liberal in politics. He first sat for the Isle of Wight in 1857. He was one of the largest land proprietors in that part of England. His son, Sir George, is present member of Parliament, but was not more than 20 years old, when he was elected not only in Parliament, where he was recognized, not as a talking, but as a working, member of his party, but in the best circles both of the general and the literary society of London, with which he was prided on his second qualities of intellect, and loved for his genial, manly, and unaffected nature.

THE SABBATH.

The following testimonies and experiences, yet less censure can attach to those men who are compelled to labor for their daily bread, than to owners and employers who require the service to be performed."—J. Durand, General Superintendent of the Little Miami, Columbus, and Zenia Railroad.

"It is for the interest of the company to allow our employees the rest of the Sabbath."—E. B. Phillips, President of the Michigan Southern and Northern Indiana Railroad.

degrade the tone of morals in the community; not of the clergy, or of statesmen, philosophers, and men of wide reputation in legal, medical, literary and commercial life, bearing on a subject attracting considerable attention at the present time, may not be uninteresting to our readers:

"If Sunday had not been observed as a day of rest during the last three centuries, I have

not the smallest doubt that we should have been at this moment a poorer and less civilized people than we are."—Lord Macaulay.

"There is no religion without worship, or no worship without the Sabbath."—Count Montalembert.

"The more faithfully I apply myself to the duties of the Lord's day, the more happy and successful is my business during the week."—Sir Matthew Hale.

"A corruption of morals usually follows the profanation of the Sabbath."—Blackstone.

"The Sabbath as a political institution is of inestimable value, independently of its claim to divine authority."—Adam Smith.

"Sunday is a day of account, and a candid account every seventh day is the best preparation for the great day of account."—Lord Kames.

"I can truly declare that to me the Sabbath has been invaluable."—William Wilder.

"Give the world half of Sunday, and you will find religion has no strong hold of the other."—Sir Walter Scott.

"Where there is no Christian Sabbath there is no Christian morality; and without this free institutions cannot long be sustained."—Justice McLean.

"The longer I live the more highly do I estimate the Christian Sabbath, and the more grateful do I feel towards those who impress its importance on the community."—Daniel Webster.

In a general order, issued November 15, 1862, President Lincoln commanded that "Sunday labor in the army and navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity. The discipline and character of the national forces should not suffer, nor the cause they defend be imperilled, by the profanation of the day or name of the Most High."

Attorney-General Bates, of the Cabinet, wrote:—"The religious character of an institution so ancient, so sacred, so lawful, and so necessary to the peace, the comfort, and the respectability of society, ought alone to be sufficient for its protection; but, that failing, surely the laws of the land made for its accomplishment ought to be as strictly enforced as the laws for the protection of person and property. If the Sunday laws be neglected or despised, the laws of person and property will soon share their fate and be equally disregarded."

"The Sabbath must be observed as a day of rest. This I do not state as an opinion, but knowing that it has its foundation upon a law in man's nature as fixed as that he must take food or die."—Dr. Willard Parker, of New York city.

As a day of rest, I view the Sabbath as a day of compensation for the inadequate restorative power of the body under continued labor and excitement. One day in seven, by the bounty of Providence, is thrown in as a day of compensation to perfect by its repose the animal system."—John Richard Farre, M. D., of London, England.

"La Presse, one of the great secular journals of Paris, has said, 'England owes much of her energy and character to the religious keeping of Sunday. Why cannot France follow her, as the Sabbath was made for all men, and we need its blessing?'

The present Lord Chancellor of England stated at a public meeting, "I am glad to say that our Sunday in London is not yet like a continental Sunday. Looking at the question from the lowest point of view, it is the especial duty and interest of working men to discourage all attempt to interfere with the seventh day as a day of rest; for, once let the Parisian system come into vogue in this country, under which the scaffolds of public buildings were as crowded with workmen on Sunday as on any other day, and they would have to work seven days for the pay now received for six."

"So far as my observation extends, those who are in the habit of avoiding worldly cares on the Sabbath are those most remarkable for the perfect performance of their duties during the week. I have a firm belief that such persons are able to do more work, and do it in a better manner, in six days than if they worked the whole seven."—John C. Warren, M. D., Professor in the Medical College of Harvard University.

"A very profound and wonderful reform has just been begun in Paris. The principal shops, including those of nearly all the linen drapers, hosiers, silk manufacturers, and vendors of ready-made apparel, will henceforth be closed on Sundays. The merchants have taken this step of their own accord, and the employees appeal to the good will of the public to aid them in making the measure general."—N. Y. Times, July 8, 1869.

"I have long been of the opinion that it is the interest of the railroad and steamboat companies to suspend operations on the Sabbath, as it demoralizes the men and makes them reckless, and so is the cause of many accidents. I believe railroad companies would be much more prosperous if Sunday running was entirely suspended. I suppose there are employed on the railways of the United States, on the Sabbath, thirty thousand men."—S. Ruth, Superintendent of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potowmack Railroad.

"Many years' experience and observation more and more convince me as a railroad man that even in an economic point of view there is no more profitable rule for us to follow than 'remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.'"—Colonel George A. Merrell, Superintendent of the Rutland and Burlington Railroad.

"From experience I know that laborers,

mechanics, managers, etc., will do more work, and do it better, in six days than in seven. Further, if we habitually ask our men to break God's law by a desecration of the Sabbath, it will not be long before they will break His law in other respects, by defrauding, etc."—J. P. Farley, Superintendent of the Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad.

"In nearly thirty years' experience on Western and Southern railroads, I have never found it necessary to run Sunday trains except when connecting or competing lines rendered it so. I think men perform more work in six days, resting every seventh, than when they work every day. I also think men are more reliable and trustworthy on roads where the Sabbath is observed than where the day of rest is ignored."—E. G. Barnes, Superintendent Selma, Rome, and Dalton Railroad.

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