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T R E A T I S E  
O N T H E  
A R T  
O F  
D A N C I N G.

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By *Giovanni-Andrea Gallini.*

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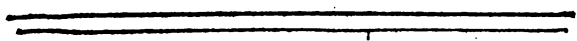
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MDCCLXXII.

5



T H E  
  
T A B L E  
  
O F  
  
C O N T E N T S.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**W**HAT I have here to say is rather in the nature of an apology than of a preface or advertisement. The very title of a Treatise upon the art of dancing by a dancing-master, implicitly threatens so much either of the exaggeration of the profession, or of the recommendation of himself, and most probably of both, that it cannot be improper for me to  
A be-

x    A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

bespeak the reader's favorable precaution against so natural a prejudice. My principal motive for hazarding this production is, indisputably, gratitude. The approbation with which my endeavours to please in the dances of my composition have been honored, inspired me with no sentiment so strongly as that of desiring to prove to the public, that sensibility of its favor; which, in an artist, is more than a duty. It is even one of the means of obtaining its favor, by its inspiring that aim at perfection,  
in

in order to the deserving it, which is unknown to a merely mercenary spirit. Under the influence of that sentiment, it occurred to me, that it might not be unpleasing to the public to have a fair state of the pretensions of this art to its encouragement, and even to its esteem, laid before it, by a practitioner of this art. In stating these pretensions, there is nothing I shall more avoid than the enthusiasm arising from that vanity or self-conceit, which leads people into the ridicule of over-rating the

A 2                      merit

merit or importance of their profession. I shall not, for example, presume to recommend dancing as a virtue; but I may, without presumption, represent it as one of the principal graces, and, in the just light, of being employed in adorning and making Virtue amiable, who is far from rejecting such assistance. In the view of a genteel exercise, it strengthens the body; in the view of a liberal accomplishment, it visibly diffuses a graceful agility through it; in the view of a private or public enter-

tertainment, it is not only a general instinct of nature, expressing health and joy by nothing so strongly as by dancing; but is susceptible withall of the most elegant collateral embellishments of taste, from poetry, music, painting, and machinery.

One of the greatest and most admired institutors of youth, whose fine taste has been allowed clear from the least tincture of pedantry, Quintilian recommends especially the talent of dancing, as conducive  
to

xiv ADVERTISEMENT.

to the formation of orators; not, as he very justly observes, that an orator should retain any thing of the air of a dancing-master, in his motion or gesture; but that the impression from the graces of that art should have insensibly stohn into his manner, and fashioned it to please.

Even that austere critic, Scaliger, made the principles of it so far his concern, that he was able personally to satisfy an Emperor's curiosity, as to the nature and meaning of  
of

ADVERTISEMENT. xv

of the Pirrhic dance, by executing it before him.

All this I mention purely to obviate the prepossession of the art being so frivolous, so unworthy of the attention of the manly and grave, as it is vulgarly, or on a superficial view, imagined. It is not high notions of it that I am so weak as to aim at impressing; all that I wish is to give just ones: it being perhaps as little eligible, for want of consideration, to see less in this art than



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than it really deserves, than,  
from a fond partiality for it,  
to see more than there is in  
it.

A

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A

TREATISE

ON THE

ART of DANCING.

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*Of the* ANTIENT *Dance.*

**I**N most of the nations among the antients, dancing was not only much practised, but constituted not even an inconsiderable part of their religious rites and ceremonies. The accounts we have of the sacred dances, of the Jews especially, as well as of other nations, evidently attest it.

B •

The

The Greeks, who probably took their first ideas of this art, as they did of most others, from Egypt, where it was in great esteem and practice, carried it up to a very high pitch. They were in general, in their bodies, extremely well conformed, and disposed for this exercise. Many of them piqued themselves on rivalling, in excellence of execution, the most celebrated masters of the art. That majestic air, so natural to them, while they preserved their liberty, the delicacy of their taste, and the cultivated agility of their limbs, all qualified them for making an agreeable figure in this kind of entertainment. Nothing could be more graceful than the motion of their arms. They did not so much regard the nimbleness and capering with the legs and feet, on which we lay so great a stress. Attitude, grace,

grace, expression, were their principal object. They executed scarce any thing in dancing, without special regard to that expression which may be termed the life and soul of it.

Their steps and motions were all distinct, clear, and neat; proceeding from a strength so suppled, as to give their joints all the requisite flexibility and obedience to command.

They did not so much affect the moderately comic, or half serious, as they did the great, the pompous, or heroic stile of dance. They spared for no pains nor cost, towards the perfection of their dances. The figures were exquisite. The least number of the figurers were forty or fifty. Their dresses were magnificent and in taste. Their decorations were sublime. A

B 2                      competent

20     A T R E A T I S E   O N   T H E  
competent skill in the theatrical, or  
actor's art, and a great one in that of  
dancing, was necessary for being admitted  
into the number of figurers. In short,  
every thing was in the highest order,  
and very fit to prove the mistake of  
those who imagine that the dances are,  
in operas for example, no more than a  
kind of necessary expletive of the inter-  
vals of the acts, for the repose of the singers.

The Greeks considered dancing in  
another point of light ; all their festivals  
and games, which were in greater  
number than in other countries, were  
intermixed and heightened with dances  
peculiarly composed in honor of their  
deities. From before their altars, and  
from their places of worship, they were  
soon introduced upon their theatres,  
to which they were undoubtedly a prior  
invention. The strophe, antistrophe,  
and

and epode, were nothing but certain measures performed by a chorus of dancers, in harmony with the voice; certain movements in dancing correspondent to the subject, which were all along considered as a constitutive part of the performance. The dancing even governed the measure of the stanzas; as the signification of the words strophe and antistrophe, plainly imports, they might be properly called danced hymns. The truth is, that tragedy and comedy, made also originally to be sung, but which, in process of time, upon truer principles of nature, came to be acted and declaimed, were but super-inductions to the choruses, of which, in tragedy especially, the tragic-writers, could not well get rid, as being part of the religious ceremony.

This

This solves, in a great measure, the seeming absurdity of their interference with the subject of the drama: being deemed so indispensable a part of the performance, that the scene itself was hardly more so: consequently, there was no secret supposed to be more violated by speaking before them, than before the inanimate scene itself. But what was at least excusable, on this footing, in the antients, would be an unpardonable absurdity in the moderns.

Athenæus, who has left us an account of many of the antient dances, as the *Maëtrismus*, a dance entirely for the female sex, the *Molossic*, the Persian *Sicinnis*, &c. observes, that in the earliest ages of antiquity, dancing was esteemed an exercise, not only not inconsistent with decency and gravity, but

## ART OF DANCING. 23

but practised by persons of the greatest worth and honor. Socrates himself, learnt the art, when he was already advanced in years.

Cautious as I am of using a false argument, I should say, that the making dances a part of their religious ceremonies, was a mark of their attributing even a degree of sanctity to them ; but that I am aware there were many things that found a place in their festivals and games, which, among those heathens, were so far from having any thing of sacred in them, that they did not even show a respect for common decency or morality.

But as to dancing, it may be presumed, that that exercise was considered as having nothing intrinsically in it, contrary to purity of manners or chastity,  
since



since it made a considerable part of the worship paid to the presiding goddess of that virtue, Diana, in the festivals consecrated to her. Her altar was held in the highest veneration by the antients. Temples of the greatest magnificence were erected in honor of this goddess. Who does not know the great Diana of Ephesus? The assemblies in her temples were solemn, and at stated periods. None were admitted but virgins of the most spotless character. They executed dances before the altar, in honor of the deity, with a most graceful decency; invoking her continual inspiration of pure thoughts, and her protection of their chastity. Those of them, who distinguished themselves above the rest, by superior graces of performance, received rewards not only from the priestesses of Diana, but from their own parents. Nor were the young  
men

men but curiously inquisitive, as to who particularly excelled on these occasions. Distinction in these dances was a great incentive to love, and produced many happy unions.

Such of these virgins as married, retained, in quality of wives, such a veneration for this sort of worship, that they formed an assembly of matrons, who on set days, performed much the same devotion, imploring, in concert, of the goddess, a continuance of her gifts, and of that spirit of purity, the fittest to make them edifying examples of conjugal love and maternal tenderness.

Innocent amusements having been ever reputed allowable, and even necessary expedients for relaxing both mind

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and

26    A TREATISE ON THE  
and body from the fatigue of serious or robust occupations, Diana had her temples, especially in countries proper for hunting, where the parents used to resort with their children, and encouraged them to partake of the diversions in which dancing had a principal share.

The antients have left us an unaccountable description of the Bacchanalians, whose deportment forms a striking contrast to the decent regularity observed in the worship of Diana. The Bacchanalians strolled the country, and, in the course of that vagabond scheme, erected temporary huts, their residence being always short wherever they came. In their intoxication they seemed to defy all decency and order; affecting noise, and a kind of tumultuous, boisterous joy, in which there could never be any true pleasure or harmony.

mony. They were, in the licentiousness of their manners, a nuisance to society; which they scandalized and disturbed by their riots, their mad frolics, and even by their quarrels. Their heads and waists were bound with ivy, and in their hands they brandished a thirrus, or kind of lance, garnished with vine-leaves. When by any foulness of weather they were driven into their huts, they passed their time in a kind of noisy merriment, of shoutings and dithrambic catches, accompanied by tympanums, by cymbals, by sistrums, and other instruments, in which noise was more consulted than music, and corresponded to the sort of time they kept to them, in the frantic agitations of their Bacchic enthusiasm. The Corybantes were called so from their disorderly dancing as they went along.

The Pirrhic dance differs not much from Plato's military dance. The invention of it is most generally attributed to Pirrhus, son of Achilles; at least this opinion is countenanced by Lucian, in his treatise upon dancing; though it is most probably derived from the Memphitic dance of Egypt. The manner of it was to dance armed to the sound of instruments. Xenophon takes notice of these dances in armour, especially among the Thracians, who were so warlike a people. In their dance to music, they exhibited the imitation of a battle. They executed various evolutions; they seemed to wound each other mortally, some falling down as if they had received their death-wound; while those who had given the blow sung to the song of triumph, called

ed

ed *Sitalia*, and then withdrew, leaving the rest to take up their seeming dead comrade, and to make preparations for his mock-funeral, in the pantomime stile of dance. He has also described the dance of the Magnesians, in which they represented their tilling the ground, in an attitude, and in readiness for defence, against expected moroders. They put themselves in a posture of protecting their plough, with other motions expressive of their resolution and courage, all adapted to the sound of the flute. The moroders arrive, prevail, and bind the husbandmen to their plough, and this terminates the dance. Sometimes the dance varies, and the husbandmen prevailing, bind the moroders.

The same author mentions also the Mysians who danced in armour, and used a particular sort of *peltae* or targets,  
on

30 A TREATISE ON THE  
on which they received the blows. In  
short, these armed dances had different  
names bestowed upon them, according  
to the countries in which they were  
used.

The Egyptians and Greeks were extravagantly expensive in their public festivals, of which, dancing always constituted a considerable part.

The Romans, among whom the more coarse and licentious dances derived from the Hetruscans, had at first prevailed, came at length to adopt the improvements of taste, and consequently of decency and regularity ; the festivals, of which dancing was to compose the principal entertainment, were adapted to the season of the year.

Every autumn, for example, it was a constant custom, for those who could  
afford

afford the expence, to build a magnificent saloon in the midst of a delightful garden. This ball-room was decorated in the most brilliant manner: At one end of the ball-room stood a statue of Pomona, surrounded with a great number of baskets made in the neatest manner, and full of all the finest fruits that the season produced. These, with the statue, were placed under a canopy hung round with clusters of real grapes and vine-leaves, so artfully disposed as to appear of the natural growth. These served to refresh both the eye and mouth. The performers of the ball went up to this part of the saloon, in couples, processionally, to avoid confusion. Each youth took care to help his partner to what she liked best, and then returned, in the same regular manner, to the other end of the room, when they served what remained to the rest of the

the



32 A TREATISE ON THE  
the spectators. After which the ball  
immediately began.

I was shown, by an Italian painter, a curious picture in his possession, of the antients celebrating one of this kind of festivals. The attitudes into which the figures were put, and which appeared to have been drawn for the conclusion of the ball, were beautiful beyond imagination.

In winter there were balls in the city of Rome; for which the appropriated apartments were commodious; and where the illuminations were so great, that notwithstanding the usual rigor of that season, the room was sufficiently warm.

Round the room there were tables and stands, on which was placed the desert; and there were generally twelve persons

sons chosen to distribute the refreshments, and do the honors of the ball. The whole was conducted with the utmost decency and regularity, while Rome preserved her respect for virtue and innocence of manners.

By the best accounts procurable, their serious dances were properly interspersed and invigorated with comic movements. Their first steps were solemn and majestic, and, by couples they turned under each other's arms; and when the whole thus turned together, they could not but afford a pleasing sight. After which they resumed the serious again, and so proceeded alternately till they concluded the dance.

In the spring, the country became naturally the scene of their dances. The best companies resorted, especially to  
D such

### 34 A TREATISE ON THE

such villages as were noted for the most pure and salubrious springs of water. If the weather was mild, they danced upon an open green; if not, they formed a large covered pavilion, in the middle of which they placed the statue of Flora, ornamented with flowers, round which they performed their dances. First the youth, then those of riper years, and lastly, those of a more advanced age. After each of these divisions had danced separately, they all joined and formed one great circle. The most distinguished for excellence in the performing these dances, had for reward the privilege of taking a flower, with great solemnity, from the statue of the goddess. This was esteemed so high an honor, that it is scarce imaginable how great an emulation this inspired; as this privilege was to be obtained by the impartial determination of the best judges.

Sum-

Summer was however the season in which the pleasure of dancing was carried to the highest pitch. For the scene of it, they chose a shady and delightful part of a wood, where the sunshine could not incommode them, and where care was taken to clear the ground underfoot, for their performance. A young lady of the most eminence for rank and beauty was chosen to personate the goddess Ceres. Her dress was of an exquisite taste, ornamented with tufts of gold, in imitation of wheat-sheaves: while her head was decked with a kind of crown composed of spangles, representing the ears of ripe corn, and perhaps, for the greater simplicity, of the natural grain itself. Those who danced round her, all wore wreaths of the choicest flowers, and were dressed in white, with their hair flowing loose, in the stile of wood-nymphs. On this

occasion, there was always a great croud of spectators; and the joy that appeared in each parent's eye, when their daughters were applauded, made no small part of the entertainment. As garlands, and wreaths of flowers composed the principal ornament of the persons who performed in this dance, such a respect was had for it by the people in general, that they abstained from gathering any flowers, till after this festival was over.

I have myself seen a drawing of this rural dance, in which I counted no less than sixty performers.

The celebrated Pilades is mentioned to have been the great improver of this dance. He excluded from it all jumping or capering, for fear of violating or of disfiguring the graceful regularity of the

the whole, which he considered as the most essential towards preserving a pleasing effect.

Not less than two months were the usual time of preparation for this dance, to which there was always a confluence of persons from all the neighbouring parts. But none were allowed the liberty of dancing, except persons of the first rank and distinction in the country; the whole being regulated by some person acting in quality of *choragus*, or director of the dance.

The reign of Augustus Cæsar was undoubtedly the epoch, of the establishment in Rome, of the art of dancing in its greatest splendor. Cahusac, an ingenious French author, in his historical treatise of this art, assigns to that emperor a deep political design in giving it  
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### 38. A TREATISE ON THE

so great an encouragement as he undoubtedly did ; that of diverting the Romans from serious thoughts on the loss of their liberty ; especially in fomenting a dissention among them, about so frivolous an object as the competition between those two celebrated dancers, Pilades and Bathillus. That something of this sort might be the design of that emperor, is not to be doubted ; but Cahusac, over-heated, perhaps, by his subject, exaggerates the importance of it beyond the bounds of cool reason. So much however is true, that those two dancers were extremely eminent in their art, and may be esteemed the founders of that theatrical dancing, or pantomime execution, for which it is not sufficient to be only a good dancer, but there is also required the being a good actor ; in both which lights, these two artists were allowed to excel, Pilades in the  
serious

serious or tragic dance, Bathillus in the comic.

These also founded a kind of academies of dancing, which produced several eminent artists, but none that ever equalled themselves in performance or reputation. What history records of them, and of their powers, as well as of that theatrical pantomime dance, of which they were the introducers, in Rome, would exceed belief, if it was not attested by such a number of authors as leave no room to think it an imposition.

But as to dancing itself, either considered in a religious, or in only an amusive light, it may be pronounced to have been among the Romans, as old as Rome itself, and like that rude in its beginnings, but to have received gradual



40 A TREATISE ON THE  
dual improvement, as fast as the other  
arts and sciences gained ground.

Proceffional dances were alfo much  
in vogue among that people. They had  
efpecially an anniverfary ceremony or  
proceffion, called, from its pre-emi-  
nence, fingly, *POMPA*, or the *Pomp*.

It was celebrated, in commemora-  
tion of a victory obtained over the  
Latians, the news of which was faid  
to have been brought by Caftor and  
Pollux, in perfon. This festival, was,  
at firft, confecrated to Jupiter, Juno,  
and Minerva. But it was afterwards  
made more general, and celebrated in  
honor of all the Gods. This procef-  
fion was in the month of September.  
It began at the temple of *Jupiter Capi-  
tolinus*, proceeded to the *Forum Roma-  
num*, from thence to the *Velabrum*, and  
after-

afterwards to the *Grand Circus*. You have in Onuphrius Panvinus, the order of this procession at large, of which the directors were the chief magistrates of the city: the sons of the nobility leading the van. Those of the Equestrian order, whose fathers were worth a hundred and fifty thousand sesterces, followed on horseback. It would be here foreign from my purpose to give the whole description of this procession, and of those who composed it. It is sufficient to observe, that processional dancing constituted a considerable part of it. The Pirrhic dance, executed to a martial air, called the *Proceleumaticus*, employed the men of arms. These were followed by persons who danced and leaped, in the manner of Satyrs, some of them in the dress ascribed to *Silenus*, attended by performers on instruments adapted to

E that

42 A TREATISE ON THE  
that character of dance. These made  
the comic part of the proceſſion, and  
the perſons repreſenting Satirs, took  
care to divert the people by leaps, by a  
diſplay of agility, and by odd uncouth at-  
titudes, ſuch as were in the character  
they had aſſumed. There were alſo  
in another part of the proceſſion twelve  
*Salii*, or prieſts of Mars, ſo called from  
their making ſacred dances in honor of  
that God, the moſt conſiderable part  
of their worſhip; theſe were headed  
by their maſter or *Præſul*, the leader of  
the dance, a term afterwards aſſumed  
by the Chriſtian Prelates. There were  
alſo the *Salian* virgins, beſides another  
diviſion of the *Salii* called *Agonenſes* or  
*Collini*.

Nor is the proceſſional dancing any  
thing ſurprizing; concerning that among  
the heathens, and even among the  
Hebrews,

Hebrews, they were greatly in use. Who does not know that David's dancing before the arch was but in consequence of its being one of the religious ceremonies on that occasion ?

The heathens used especially to form dances before their altars, and round the statues of their gods. The *Salii*, or priests of Mars, whose dances were so framed as to give an idea of military exercise and activity, threw into their performance steps so expressive and majestic, as not only to defend their motions and gestures from any idea of levity and burlesque, which it is so natural for the moderns to associate with that of dancing, but even to inspire the beholders with respect and a religious awe. The priests chosen for this function, were always persons of the noblest aspect, suitable to the dignity

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of the sacerdotal ministry. And so little  
needs that dignity of the heathen mi-  
nistry be thought to be wounded or  
violated by the act of dancing, in reli-  
gious worship, that dances were actually  
in use among the primitive Christians,  
in their religious assemblies. There  
was a place in their churches, especially  
allotted for these consecrated dances,  
upon solemn festivals, which even gave  
the name of *choir* to those parts of the  
church now only appropriated to the  
reading of the divine service, and to  
singing. In Spain, it long remained an  
established custom for Christians to as-  
semble in the church-porches, where,  
in honor of God, they sang sacred  
hymns, and to the tunes of them, per-  
formed dances, that were extremely  
pleasing, for the decent and beautiful  
simplicity of the execution. All which  
I mention purely to salve that incon-  
sistence,

sistence, of the levity of dancing with the gravity of divine worship. An inconsistency of which the antients had no idea ; since, on that occasion, they almost constantly joined dancing to singing.

They are both natural expressions of joy and festivity ; and as such they thought neither of them improper in an address of gratulation to the deity, whom they supposed rather pleased at such innocent oblations of the heart, exulting in his manifold bounties and blessings.

From before the altar, among the heathens, the admission of dances upon the theatre, was rather an extension of their power to entertain, than a total change of their destination ; since the theatres themselves were dedicated to  
the

the worship of *the heathen deities*, of which their making a part was one of the principal objections of the primitive Christians to the theatres themselves. However, it was from the theatres that dancing received its great and capital improvement.

As an exercise, the virtue of dancing was well known to the ancients, for its keeping up the strength and agility of the human body. There is a remark which I submit to the consideration of the reader, that it is not impossible but that the ancient Romans, who were, generally speaking, low in stature, and yet were eminently strong, owed that advantage to their cultivation of bodily exercise. This kept their limbs supple, and rendered their constitution stout and hardy. Now, very laborious exercises would rather wear out  
the

the machine than they would invigorate it, if there was not a due relaxation, which should not, however, be too abrupt a transition from the most fatiguing exercises to a state of absolute rest. Whereas that dancing, of which they were so fond, afforded them, not only a pleasing employ of vacant hours, but, withall, in its keeping up the pliability of their limbs, made them find more ease in the application of themselves to more athletic, or to more violent exercises, either of war or of the chase: while all together bred that firmness of their muscles, that robust compactness and vigor of body, which enabled them to achieve that military valor, to which they owed all their conquests and their glory.

Certain it is then, that among the Romans, even in the most martial days of  
that



48 A TREATISE ON, THE  
that republic, the art of dancing was  
taught, as one of the points of accom-  
plishment necessary to the education of  
youth ; and was even practised among  
the exercises of the Circus. I need not  
observe, that there were also various  
abuses of dancing, which they very just-  
ly accounted dishonorable to those who  
practised them, whether in public or  
private. These, in the degenerate days  
of Rome, grew to an enormous excess.  
But I presume no one will judge of an  
art by the abuse that may be made  
of it.

OF

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OF  
DANCING  
IN GENERAL.

**T**HIS is one of the arts, in which, as in all the rest, the study of nature is especially to be recommended. She is an unerring guide. She gives that harmony, that power of pleasing to the productions of those who consult her, which such as neglect her must never expect. They will furnish nothing but monsters and discords; or, at the best, but sometimes lucky hits, without meaning or connexion.

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All

All the imitative arts acknowledge this principle.

In Poetry, a happy choice of the most proper words for expressing the sentiments and images drawn from the observation of nature, constitutes the principal object of the poet.

In Painting, the disposition of the subject, the resemblance of the coloring to that of the original, in short the greatest possible adherence to nature, is the merit of that art.

In Music, that expression of the passions which should raise the same in the hearer, whether of joy, affliction, tenderness, or pity, can never have its effect without marking and adopting the respective sounds of each passion as they are furnished by nature.

In

In Dancing, the attitudes, gestures, and motions derive also their principle from nature, whether they characterise joy, rage, or affection, in the bodily expression respectively appropriated to the different affections of the soul. A consideration this, which clearly proves the mistake of those, who imagine the art of dancing solely confined to the legs, or even arms; whereas the expression of it should be pantomimically diffused through the whole body, the face especially included.

Monfieur Cahufac, in his ingenious treatise on this art, has very justly observed, that both singing and dancing must have existed from the primeval times; that is to say, from the first of the existence of human-kind itself.

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“ Observe, says he, the tender chil-  
“ dren, from their entry into the world,  
“ to the moment in which their reason  
“ unfolds itself, and you will see that  
“ it is primitive nature herself, that  
“ manifests herself in the sound of  
“ their voice, in the features of their  
“ face, in their looks, in all their mo-  
“ tions. Mark their sudden paleness,  
“ their quick contortions, their pierc-  
“ ing cries, when their soul is affected  
“ by a sensation of pain. Observe  
“ again, their engaging smile, their  
“ sparkling eyes, their rapid motions,  
“ when it is moved by a sentiment of  
“ pleasure. You will then be clearly  
“ persuaded of the principles of mu-  
“ sic and dancing proceeding from the  
“ beginning of the world down to  
“ us.”

Certain

## ART OF DANCING. 53

Certain it is, that even in children, the motions and gesture, strongly paint nature; and their infantine graces are not unworthy the remarks of an artist, who will be sure to find excellence in no way more obtainable than by a rational study of her, where she is the purest.

The cultivation of the natural graces, and a particular care to shun all affectation, all caricature, unless in comic or grotesque dances, cannot be too much recommended to those who wish to make any figure in this art. It is doing a great injustice to it, to place its excellence in capers, in brilliant motions of the legs, or in the execution of difficult steps, without meaning or significance, which require little more than strength and agility.

1

I have already observed, that the Greeks, who were so famous for this art, as indeed for most others, which is no wonder, since all the arts have so acknowledged an affinity with each other, studied especially grace and dignity in the execution of their dances. That levity of capering, that nimbleness of the legs, which we so much admire, held no rank in their opinion. They were inconsistent with that clearness of expression, and neatness of motion, of which they principally made a point. The great beauty of movements, or steps, is, for every one of them to be distinct ; not huddled and running into one another, so as that one should begin before the precedent one is finished. This so necessary avoidance of puzzled or ambiguous motion, can only be compassed by an attention to significance and justness of action.

action. This simplicity will arise from sensibility, from being actuated by feelings. No one has more than one predominant actual feeling at a time; when that is expressed clearly, the effect is as sure as it is instantaneous. The movement it gives, neither interferes with the immediately precedent, nor the immediately following one, though it is prepared or introduced by the one, and prepares or introduces the other.

This the Greeks could the better effectuate, from their preference of the sublime, or serious stile; which, having so much less of quickness or rapidity of execution, than the comic dance, admits of more attention to the neat expressiveness of every motion, gesture, attitude, or step.

As



As to the great nicety of the Greeks, in the ordering and disposing their dances, I refer to what I have before said, for its being to be observed, how much at present this art is fallen short of their perfection in it, and how difficult it must be for a composer of dances to produce them in that masterly manner they were used to be performed among the antients. Let his talent for invention or composition be never so rich or fertile, it will be impossible for him to do it justice in the display, unless he is seconded by performers well versed in the art, and especially expert in giving the expression of their part in the dance; not to mention the collateral aids of music, machinery, and decoration, which it is so requisite to adapt to the subject.

But

But where all these points so necessary are duly supplied, and dancing is executed in all its brilliancy, it would be no longer looked upon, especially at the Opera, as merely an expletive between the acts, just to afford the fingers a little breathing time. The dances might recover their former lustre, and give the public the same pleasure as to the Greeks and Romans, who made of them one of their most favorite entertainments, and carried them up to the highest pitch of taste and excellence.

The Romans seem to have followed the Greeks, in this passion for dancing; and the theatrical dances, upon the pantomime plan, were in Rome pushed to such a degree of perfection as is even hard to conceive. Whole tragedies plaid, act by act, scene by scene, in pantomime expression, give an idea of this

G

art,

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art, very different from that which is  
at present commonly received.

Every step in dancing has its name and value. But not one should be employed in a vague unmeaning manner. All the movements should be conformable to the expression required, and in harmony with one another. The steps regular, and properly varied, with a graceful suppleness in the limbs, a certain strength, address, and agility ; just positions exhibited with ease, delicacy, and above all, with propriety, characterise the masterly dancer, and in their union, give to his execution its due beauty. The least negligence in any of these points, is immediately felt, and detracts from the merit of the performance. Every step or motion that is not natural, or has any thing of stiffness, constraint, or affectation, is instinctively perceived

ceived by the spectator. The body must constantly preserve its proper position, without the least contortion, well adjusted to the steps ; while the motion of the arms, must be agreeable to that of the legs, and the head to be in concert with the whole.

But in this observation I pretend to no more than just furnishing a general idea of the requisites towards the execution : the particulars, it is impossible, to give in verbal description, or even by choreography or dances in score.

Many who pretend to understand the art of dancing, confound motions of strength, with those of agility, mistaking strength for slight, or slight for strength; tho' so different in their nature. It is the spring of the body, in harmony with sense, that gives the great power

to please and surprize. The same it is with the management of the arms ; but all this requires both the theory of the art, and the practice of it. One will hardly suffice without the other ; which makes excellence in it so rare.

The motion of the arms is as essential, at least, as that of the legs, for an expressive attitude: and both receive their justness from the nature of the passions they are meant to express. The passions are the springs which must actuate the machine, while a close observation of nature furnishes the art of giving to those motions the grace of ease and expertness. Any thing that, on the stage especially, has the air of being forced, or improper, cannot fail of having a bad effect. A frivolous, affected turn of the wrist, is surely no grace.

One

## ART OF DANCING. 51

One of the most nice and difficult points of the art of dancing is; certainly, the management and display of the arms; the adapting their motion to the character of the dance. In this many are too arbitrary in forming rules to themselves, without consulting nature, which would not fail of suggesting to them the justest movements. For want of this appropriation of gesture and attitude, the movements fit for one character are indistinctly employed in the representation of another. And into this error those will be sure to fall, who deviate from the unerring principles of nature; which has for every character an appropriate strain of motion and gesture.

Nothing then has a worse effect, than any impropriety in the management of the arms : it gives to the eye, the

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the same pain that discordance in music does to the ear.

There are some who move their arms with a tolerably natural grace, without knowing the true rules rising out of nature into art : but where the advantage of theory gives yet a greater security, consequently a greater ease and a nobler freedom to the motions of the performer ; the performance cannot but meet with fuller approbation. And yet it may be as bad to show too much art, as to have too little. The point is to employ no more of art than just what serves to grace nature, but never to hide or obscure her.

Great is the difference between the antient and the modern dances. The antient ones were full of sublime simplicity. But that simplicity was far  
from

from excluding the delicate, the graceful, and even the brilliant. The moderns are so accustomed to those dances from which nature is banished, and false refinements substituted in her room, that it is to be questioned whether they would relish the returning in practice to the purer principles of the art. Myself knowing better, and sensible that the principles of nature are the only true ones, have been sometimes forced to yield to the torrent of fashion, and to adopt in practice those flourishings of art, which in theory I despised ; and justly, for surely the plainest imitation of nature must be the grounds from which alone the performance can be carried up to any degree of excellence. It is with our art, as in architecture, if the foundation is not right, the superstructure will be wrong.

This



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This primitive source then must be studied, known, and well attended to; or we only follow the art blindly, and without certainty. Thence the common indifference of so many performers, who mind nothing more than a rote of the art, without tracing it to its origin, nature.

To succeed, we must abandon the false taste, and embrace the true; which is not only the best guide to perfection; but when rendered familiar, by much the most easy and the most delightful. It has all the advantages that truth has over falsehood.

The greater the simplicity of steps in a dance, the more beautiful it is; and requires the more attention in the performer to exactness and delicacy; for slowness and neatness being in the  
character

character of simplicity, afford the spectator both leisure and distinctness for his examination: whereas dances of intricate evolutions, or quick motions, in their confusion and hurry, allow no clearness, or time for particular observation.

If the merit of a theatrical dancer were to consist, as many imagine, in nothing but in the motions of the legs, in cutting lively or brilliant capers, in surprizing steps, in the agility of the body, in vigorous springs, in vaulting, in a tolerable management of the arms, and especially in being well acquainted with those parts of the stage where the perspective gives him the greatest advantage; the art of dancing might be, as it is generally looked upon to be, an art easily acquired. Whereas, for the attaining to a just perfection in it, there

H are

are many other points required, but none so much as the close imitation of beautiful nature ; and that especially in its greatest simplicity.

Nor should it be imagined that the simplicity I recommend, tends to save the composer of dances any trouble of invention : on the contrary, that sort of simplicity of execution intended to produce, by means of its adherence to nature, the greatest effect, will cost him more pains, more exertion of genius, than those dances of which the false brilliants of extravagant decoration, and of mere agility without meaning or expression, constitute the merit. It is with the composition of dances, as with that of music, the plainest and the most striking, are ever the most difficult to the composer.

The

## ART OF DANCING. 67

The comic, or grottesque dancers, indeed are in possession of a branch of this art, in which they are dispensed from exhibiting the serious or pathetic; however, they may be otherwise as well acquainted with the fundamental principles of the art, as the best masters. But as their success depends chiefly on awakening the risible faculty, they commonly chuse to throw their whole powers of execution into those motions, gestures, grimaces, and contortions, which are fittest to give pleasure by the raising a laugh. And certainly this has its merit; but in no other proportion to the truth of the art, which consists in moving the nobler passions, than as farce is to tragedy or to genteel comedy. They are in this art of dancing, what Hemskirk and Teniers are in that of painting.

H 2

The

The painter, can only in his draught present one single unvaried attitude in each personage that he paints : but it is the duty of the dancer, to give, in his own person, a succession of attitudes, all like those of the painter, taken from nature.

Thus a painter who should paint Orestes agitated by the furies, can only give him one single expression of his countenance and posture : but a dancer, charged with the representation of that character, can, seconded by a well-adapted music, execute a succession of motions and attitudes, that will more strongly and surely with more liveliness, convey the idea of that character, with all its transports of fury and disorder.

It

It was in this light, that the ancients required the union of the actor and of the dancer in the same person. They expected, on the theatre especially, dances of character, that should express to the eye the sensations of the soul : without which, they considered it as nothing but an art that had left nature behind it ; a mere corpse without the animating spirit ; or at the best, carrying with it a character of falsity or tastelessness. A thorough master of dancing, should, in every motion of every limb, convey some meaning ; or rather be all expression or pantomime, to his very fingers ends.

How many requisites must concur to form an accomplished possession of this talent ! It is not enough that the head should play on the shoulders with all the grace of a fine connection ; nor that

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that his countenance should be enlivened  
with significance and expression ; that  
his eyes should give forth the just lan-  
guage of the passions belonging to the  
character he represents ; that his  
shoulders have the easy fall they  
ought to have ; let even the motions of  
his arms be true ; let his elbows and  
wrists have that delicate turn of which  
the grace is so sensible ; let the move-  
ment of the whole person be free,  
genteel, and easy ; let the attitudes of  
the bending turn be agreeable ; his  
chest be neither too full nor too narrow ;  
his sides clean made, strong, and well  
turned ; his knees well articulated, and  
supple ; his legs neither too large, nor  
too small, but finely formed ; his in-  
step furnished with the strength neces-  
sary to execute and maintain the springs  
he makes ; his feet in just proportion to  
the support of the whole frame ; all  
these

these, accompanied with a regularity of motion ; and yet all these, however essential, constitute but a small part of the talent. Towards the perfection of it, there is yet more, much more required, in that sensibility of soul, which has in it so much more of the gift of nature, than of the acquisition of art ; and is perhaps in this, what it is in most other arts and sciences, if not genius itself, an indispensable foundation of genius. There is no executing well with the body, what is not duly felt by the soul : sentiment gives life to the execution, and propriety to the looks, motions and gestures.

Those who would make any considerable progress in this art, should, above all things, study justness of action. They cannot therefore too closely attend to the representation of nature,  
either



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either upon the stage, or in life. I cannot too often repeat it; those who keep most the great original, Nature, in view, will ever be the greatest masters of this art.

As to the different characters of dances, there are, properly speaking, four divisions of the characters of dances: the serious, the half serious, the comic, and the grottesque; but for executing any of them with grace, the artist should be well grounded in the principles of the serious dance, which will give him what may be called a delicacy of manner in all the rest.

But as one of these divisions may be more adapted to the humor, genius, or powers of an artist, than another, he should, if he aims at excellence, examine carefully for which it is that he is the most fit.

After

After determining which, whatever imperfections he may have from nature, he must set about correcting, as well as he can, by art. Nothing will hardly be found impossible for him to subdue, by an unshaken resolution, and an intense application.

Happy indeed is that artist, in whom both the requisites of nature and art are united : but where the first is not grossly deficient, it may be supplemented by the second. However well a beginner may be qualified for this profession by nature, if he does not cultivate the talent duly, he will be surpassed by another, inferior to him in natural endowments, but who shall have taken pains to acquire what was wanting to him, or to improve where

I                      deficient.

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deficient. The experience of all ages  
attests this.

The helps of a lively imagination, joined to great and assiduous practice, carry the art to the highest perfection. But practice will give no eminent distinction without study. Whoever shall flatter himself with forming himself by practice alone, without the true principles and sufficient grounds of the art, can only proceed upon a rote of tradition, which may appear infallible to him. But this adoption of unexamined rules, and this plodding on in a beaten track, will never lead to any thing great or eminent. It carries with it always something of the stiffness of a copy, without any thing of the graceful boldness of originality, or of the strokes of genius.

Vanity

Vanity should never mislead a man in the judgment he forms of his own talents : much less should an artist resort to the meanness of depending in the support of cabals : it must be the general approbation that must seal his patent of merit.

I have before observed that the grave or serious stile of dancing, is the great ground-work of the art. It is also the most difficult. Firmness of step, a graceful and regular motion of all the parts, suppleness, easy bendings and risings, the whole accompanied with a good air, and managed with the greatest ease of expertness and dexterity, constitute the merit of this kind of dancing. The soul itself should be seen in every motion of the body, and express something naturally noble, and even heroic.

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heroic. Every step should have its  
beauty.

The painter draws, or ought to draw  
his copy, the actor his action, and the  
statuary his model, all from the truth  
of nature. They are all respectively  
professors of imitative arts; and the  
dancer may well presume to take rank  
among them, since the imitation of  
nature is not less his duty than theirs;  
with this difference, that they have some  
advantages of which the dancer is defi-  
nitely. The Painter has time to settle  
and correct his attitudes, but the dancer  
must be exactly bound to the time of  
the music. The actor has the assistance  
of speech, and the statuary has all the  
time requisite to model his work. The  
dancer's effect is not only that of a  
moment, but he must every moment  
represent a succession of motions and  
attitudes,

attitudes, adapted to his character, whether his subject be heroic or pastoral, or in whatever kind of dancing he exhibits himself. He is by the expressiveness of his dumb show to supplement the want of speech, and that with clearness; that whatever he aims at representing may be instantaneously apprehended by the spectator, who must not be perplexed with hammering out to himself the meaning of one step, while the dancer shall have already begun another.

In the half-serious stile we observe vigor, lightness, agility, brilliant springs, with a steadiness and command of the body. It is the best kind of dancing for expressing the more general theatrical subjects. It also pleases more generally.

The

The grand pathetic of the serious stile of dancing is not what every one enters into. But all are pleased with a brilliant execution, in the quick motion of the legs, and the high springs of the body. A pastoral dance, represented in all the pantomime art, will be commonly preferred to the more serious stile, though this last requires doubtless the greatest excellence : but it is an excellence of which few but the connoisseurs are judges ; who are rarely numerous enough to encourage the composer of dances to form them entirely in that stile. All that he can do is to take a great part of his attitudes from the serious stile, but to give them another turn and air in the composition ; that he may avoid confounding the two different stiles of serious and half-serious. For this last,  
it

it is impossible to have too much agility and briskness.

The comic dancer is not tied up to the same rules or observations as are necessary to the serious and half serious styles. He is not so much obliged to study what may be called nature in high life. The rural sports, and exercises; the gestures of various mechanics or artificers will supply him with ideas for the execution of characters in this branch. The more his motions, steps, and attitudes are taken from nature, the more they will be sure to please.

The comic dance has for object the exciting mirth; whereas, on the contrary, the serious style aims more at soothing and captivating by the harmony and justness of its movements;  
by



by the grace and dignity of its steps ;  
by the pathos of the execution.

The comic stile, however its aim may be laughter, requires taste, delicacy, and invention ; and that the mirth it creates should not even be without wit. This depends not only upon the execution, but on the choice of the subject. It is not enough to value oneself upon a close imitation of nature, if the subject chosen for imitation is not worth imitating, or improper to represent ; that is to say, either trivial, indifferent, consequently uninteresting ; or disgusting and unpleasing. The one tires, the other shocks. Even in the lowest classes of life, the composer must seize only what is the fittest to give satisfaction ; and omit whatever can excite disagreeable ideas. It is from the animal joy of mechanics

## ART OF DANCING. 81

chanics or peasants in their cessations from labor, or from their celebration of festivals, that the artist will select his matter of composition; not from any circumstances of unjoyous poverty or loathsome distress. He must cull the flowers of life, not present the roots with the soil and dirt sticking to them.

Even contrasting characters, which are so seldom attempted on the stage, in theatrical dances, might not have a bad effect; whereas most of the figures in them are symmetrically coupled. Of the first I once saw in Germany a striking instance; an instance that served to confirm that affinity between the arts which renders them so serviceable to one another.

K

Passing

Passing through the Electorate of Cologne, I observed a number of persons of all ages, assembled on a convenient spot, and disposed, in couples, in order for dancing; but so oddly paired that the most ugly old man, had for his partner the most beautiful and youngest girl in the company, while, on the contrary, the most decrepid, deformed old woman, was led by the most handsome and vigorous youth. Inquiring the reason of so strange a groupe of figures, I was told that it was the humor of an eminent painter, who was preparing a picture for the gallery at Dusseldorp, the subject of which was to be this contrast; and that in order to take his draught from nature, he had given a treat to this rustic company, in the design of exhibiting at one view, the floridness of youth contrasted to the weakness and infirmities of old age, in a  
moral

moral light, of exposing the impropriety of those matches, in which the objection of a disparity of years should not be duly respected.

I have mentioned this purely to point out a new resource of invention, that may throw a pleasing variety into the composition of dances; and save them from too constant a simmetry, or uniformity, either of dress or figure, in the pairing the dancers: by which I am as far from meaning that that simmetry should be always neglected, as that it should be always observed.

The comic dance, having then the diversion of the spectator, in the way of laughing, for its object, should preserve a moderately buffoon simplicity, and the dancer, aided by a natural genius, but especially by throwing as

K 2

much

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much nature as possible into his execution, may promise himself to amuse and please the spectator ; even though he should not be very deep in the grounds of his art ; provided he has a good ear, and some pretty or brilliant steps to vary the dance. The spectators require no more.

As to the grotesque stile of dance, the effect of it chiefly depends on the leaps and height of the springs. There is more of bodily strength required in it than even of agility and flight. It is more calculated to surprize the eye, then to entertain it. It has something of the tumbler's, or wire-dancer's merit of difficulty and danger, rather than of art. But the worst of it is, that this vigor and agility last no longer than the season of youth, or rather decrease in proportion as age advances, and, by this means

## ART OF DANCING. 85

means, leave those who have trusted solely to that vigor and agility deprived of their essential merit. Whereas such as shall have joined to that vigor and agility, a proper study of the principles of their art; that talent will still remain as a resource for them. Commonly those dancers who have from nature eminently those gifts which enable them to shine in the grottesque branch, do not chuse to give themselves the trouble of going to the bottom of their art, and acquiring its perfection. Content with their bodily powers, and with the applause their performances actually do receive from the public, they look no further, and remain in ignorance of the rest of their duty. Against this dissipation then, which keeps them always superficial,  
they

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they cannot be too much, for their own  
advantage, admonished.

They will not otherwise get at the  
truth of their art, like him who  
qualifies himself for making a figure  
in the serious, and half-serious stiles,  
which also contribute to diffuse a grace  
over every other kind of dancing,  
however different from them.

But though the grotesque may be a  
caricature of nature, it is never to lose  
sight of it. It must ever bear a due re-  
lation to the objects of which it at-  
tempts to exhibit the imitation, how-  
ever exaggerated. But in this it  
is for genius to direct the artist. And  
it is very certain that this kind of danc-  
ing, well executed, affords to the pub-  
lic, great entertainment in the way, if  
what

what may be called broad mirth ; especially where the figure of the grotesque dancer, his gestures, dress, and the decorations, all contribute to the creation of the laugh. He must also avoid any thing studied or affected in his action. Every thing must appear as natural as possible, even amidst the grimaces, contortions, and extravagancies of the character.

OF





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OF  
SUNDRY REQUISITES,  
FOR  
PERFECTION OF THE  
ART  
OF  
DANCING.

I HAVE already observed how necessary it is that all the steps, in the theatrical dances, which have imitation for their object, should be intelligible at the first glance of the eye.

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This cannot be too much inculcated. The passions and manners of mankind, have all a different expression, which cannot be presented too plain, and too obvious. The adjustment of the motions to the character must be observed through every stile of dancing, the serious, the half-serious, the comic, and the grotesque. The various beauties of these different kinds of dances, all center in the propriety or truth of nature. Looks, movements, attitudes, gestures, should in the dancer, all have an appropriate meaning; so plainly expressed as to be instantaneously understood by the spectator, without giving him the trouble of unriddling them: otherwise, it is like talking to them in a foreign language for which an interpreter is needed.

But

But to give a sentiment, a man must have it first : where a pathetic sentiment is well possessed of the mind, the expression of it is diffused over the whole body.

The theatre shows to advantage a well proportioned dancer. A tall person appears the more majestic on it ; but those of a middling stature are more generally fit for every character ; and may make up in gracefulness what they want in size. The remarkably tall commonly want the graces to be seen in those of the more general standard.

A young dancer who displays a dawn of genius, cannot be too much exhorted to deliver himself up to the power of nature ; so that acquiring a particular manner of his own, he may himself proceed on original. If he would hope

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to

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to arrive at any eminence in the art, he must break the shackles of a servile imitation, and preserve nothing but the principles and grounds of his art, which will be so far from fettering him, that they will assist his soaring upon the wings of his own genius.

Where a dancer undertakes to represent a subject on the theatre, he must ground his plan of performance on the selecting all the most proper situations for furnishing the most strikingly pictures, prospects, and consequently, producing the greatest effect.

This was doubtless the great secret of Pilades, the founder, at least in Rome, of the pantomime art. It was on this choice of situations, that the under-

understanding whole pieces, both tragic and comic, executed in dances, entirely depends.

And here, upon mentioning the pantomime art, be it allowed me to defend it against the objections made to it, by those who consider it only under a partial or vulgar point of view.

If any one should pretend that the pantomime art is superior to the actor's power of representation in tragedy or comedy, or that such an entertainment of dumb show ought to exclude that of speaking characters; nothing could be more ridiculous or absurd than such a proposition.

That indeed would be rejecting one of the most noble improvements of nature, in favor of an art rather calculated

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culated for the relaxation of the mind  
than for the instruction of it ; in which  
it can only claim a subordinate share.

Those subjects, whether serious or  
comic, which are executed by dances,  
or in the pantomime strain, are chiefly  
intended for the throwing a variety in-  
to theatrical entertainments, without  
disputing any honors of rank.

The very same person who shall  
have at one time, taken pleasure in see-  
ing and hearing the noble and pathetic  
sentiments of tragedy, or the ridicule  
of human follies in a good comedy,  
finely represented, may, without any  
sort of inconsistency, not be displeased  
at seeing, at another time, a subject  
executed in dances, while the music,  
the decorations, all contribute to the  
happy diversification of his entertain-  
ment.

ment. Ought he therefore either to call his own taste to an account for his being pleased, or to grudge to others a pleasure, which nature itself justifies, in his having given to mankind a love of variety ?

Not is there perhaps, in the world, an art more the genuine offspring of Nature, more under her immediate command, than the art of dancing. For to say nothing of that dancing, which has no relation to the theatre, and which is her principal demonstrations of joy and festivity, the theatrical branch acknowledges her for its great and capital guide. All the motions, all the gestures, all the attitudes, all the looks, can have no merit, but in their faithful imitation of Nature: while man himself, man, the noblest of her productions, is ever the subject which the dancer



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dancer paints through all his passions  
and manners.

The painter presents man in one fixed attitude, with no more of life than the draught and colors can give to his figure: the dancer exhibits him in a succession of attitudes, and, instead of painting with the brush, paints, surely more to the life, with his own person. A dance in action, is not only a moving picture, but an animated one: while to the eloquence of the tongue, it substitutes that of the whole body.

The art, viewed in this light, shows how comparatively little the merely mechanical part of it, the agility of the legs and body, contributes to the accomplishment of the dancer; however necessary that also is. We might soon form a dancer, if the art consisted only in his being taught  
to

to shake his legs in cadence, to balance his body, or to move his arms unmeaningly. But if he has not a genius, susceptible of cultivation, and which is itself far the most essential gift, he will make no progress towards the desirable distinction : he is a body without a soul : his performance will have more of the poppet moved by wires, than of the actor giving that life to the character, which himself receives from the sensibility of genius.

There are many young beginners, who, looking on this art as a good way of livelihood, enter on the rudiments of it, with great ardor. But this ardor soon abates, in proportion, as they advance, and find there is more study and pains required from them than they expected to find, towards their arrival at any tolerable degree of

M perfection.

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perfection. Having considered this art  
as purely a mechanical one, they are  
surprised at the discovery of its exacting  
thought and reflection, for which  
their ideas of it had not prepared them.  
A man who has not sufficient share of  
genius to attempt the vanquishing these  
difficulties, of which, in his false con-  
ception of things, he has formed to him-  
self no notion ; either treats these great  
essentials of the art, as innovations, and  
such as he is not bound to admit, or in  
the despair of acquiring them, sits  
down contented with his mediocrity.  
It is well if he does not rail at, or at-  
tempt to turn into ridicule, perfections  
which are beyond his reach. And to  
say the truth, the art has not greater  
enemies than those professors of it, who  
stick at the surface, and want the spirit  
necessary to go to the bottom of it. In  
vain does the public refuse its applause  
to

to their indifferent, ordinary, uninteresting performance: rather than allow the fault to be in themselves, their vanity will lay it on the public: they never refuse themselves that approbation which others can see no reason for bestowing on them. They are perfectly satisfied with having executed in their little manner, the little they know or are capable of; they have no idea of any thing beyond their short reach.

Certainly the best season of life, for the study of this art, is, as for that of most others, for obvious reasons, the time of one's youth. It is the best time of laying the foundation both of theory and practice.

But the theory should especially be attended to, without however neglecting the practice. For though a dancer, by an assiduous practice, may, at

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the

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the first unexamining glance, appear as  
well in the eyes of the public, as he  
who possesses the rules; the illusion  
will not be lasting; it will soon be  
dissipated, especially where there is  
present an object of comparison. He  
whose motions are directed only by rote  
and custom, will soon be discovered  
essentially inferior to him whose practice  
is governed by a knowledge of the  
principles of his art.

A master does not do his duty by  
his pupil, in this art, if he fails of  
strongly inculcating to him the necessity  
of studying those principles; and of  
kindling in him that ardor for attain-  
ing to excellence, which if it is not  
itself genius, it is certain that no genius  
will do much without it.

Invention

Invention is also as much a requisite in our art as in any other. But to save the pains of study, we often borrow and copy from one another. Indolence is the bane of our art. The trouble of thinking necessary to the invention and composition of dances, appears to many too great a fatigue : this engages them to appropriate to themselves the fruits of other peoples invention ; and they appear to themselves well provided at a small expence, when they have made free with the productions of others. Some again, instead of cultivating their talent, chuse indolently to follow the great torrent of the fashion, and stick to the old tracks, without daring to strike out any thing new, so that their prejudices are, in fact, the principles by which they are governed, and which sometimes serves them for their excuse ; since they know better,

better, but do not care to give themselves the trouble of acting up to their knowledge. Thus they plod on in the safe, and broad road of mediocrity, but without any reputation or name. They are neither envied nor applauded.

As for those who borrow from others, content with being copies, when they ought to strive to be originals; nothing can more obstruct their progress in the discoveries of the depths of their art, than this scheme of subsisting on the merit of others.

Many, besides those who are incapable of invention, are tempted at once by their indolence, and by the hope of not being discovered or minded in their borrowing from others, to give stale or hackneyed compositions, which having seen in one country, they  
flatter

flatter themselves they may palm for new and original upon the public in another. Thence it is that the audience is cloyed with repetitions of pantomime dances ; perhaps some of them very pretty at their first appearance, but which cannot fail of tiring when too often repeated ; or when the same grounds or subject of action is only superficially or slightly diversified.

It is this barrenness of invention that the ingenious Goldoni has so well exposed in one of his plays, in the following speech, addressed to a young man.

“ \* For example, you, as the female dancer ;

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\* Per esempio vendra fora la ballerina, colla rocca, filando, ò con un secchio à



“dancer will come upon the stage,  
 “with a distaff, twirling it, or with a  
 “a pail to draw water; or with a  
 spade

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trar l'acqua, ò con una zappa à zappar. El vostro compagno vendra fora ò colla cariola à portar qualche cosa, ò colla falce à tagliar il grano, ò colla pipa a fumar, e si ben, che la scena fosse una sala, tanto e tanto, se vien a far da contadini ò da marinari. El vostro compagno non vi vedra: voi andarete a cercarlo, e el vi scaccierà via. Gli batterete una man su la spalla, ed el con un salto anderà dall'altra banda. Voigli correrete dietro, lui se scampera, e voi anderete in collera. Quando voi farete in collera, a lui le vendra la voglia di far pace, e lui vi pregherà, voi lo scacciate. Scamparete via, e lui vi correrà dietro. El se inginocchià, farete pace, voi, menando I pedini, l'invitarete a ballar: anche ello, menando I piedi, a segni dira, “balliamo,” e tirandovi indietro allegramente comincia-

“ spade for digging. Your companion  
 “ will come next perhaps driving a  
 “ wheel-barrow, or with a sickle to mow  
 “ corn, or with a pipe a-smoking; and  
 “ though the scene should be a saloon,  
 “ no matter, it will come soon to be  
                     N                      “ filled

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rete, el *Pas-de-deux*. La prima parte alle-  
 gra, la seconda grave, la terza una giga.  
 Procurarete di cacciargli dentro sei o sette  
 delle migliori arie di ballo che s'abbiano sen-  
 tito; farete tutti i passi che sapete fare, e che  
 sia il *Pas-de-deux* o da paesana, o da giar-  
 dinera, o da Granatiera, o da statue, i  
 passi faranno sempre gli istessi, correrse die-  
 tro, scampar, pianger, andar in collera,  
 far pace, tirar i bracci sopra la testa, saltar  
 in tempo e fora di tempo, menar gli  
 bracci, e le gambe, e la testa, e la vita,  
 e le spalle, e sopra tutto rider sempre col  
 popolo, e sforcer un pochetto il collo  
 quando si passa prossimo i lumi, e fare  
 delle belle smorfie all'udienza, e una bella  
 riverenza in ultima.

“ filled with rustics or sailors. Your  
 “ companion to be sure will not have  
 “ seen you, at first ; that is the rule ;  
 “ upon which you will make up to him,  
 “ and he will send you a packing. You  
 “ will tap him on the shoulder with one  
 “ hand, and he will give a spring from you  
 “ to the other side of the stage. You will  
 “ run after him ; he, on his part will  
 “ scamper away from you, and you  
 “ will take pet at it. When he sees  
 “ you angry, he will take it into his  
 “ head to make peace ; he will sue  
 “ to you, and you in your turn will  
 “ send him about his business. You  
 “ will run from him, and he after  
 “ you. He will be down on his knees  
 “ to you ; peace will be made ; then,  
 “ shaking your footsies, you will invite  
 “ him to dance. He also will answer  
 “ you with his feet, as much as to say,  
 “ come, let us dance.”

“ There

“ Then handing you backwards to  
 “ the top of the stage, you will begin  
 “ gaily a *Pas-de-deux*, or Duet dance.  
 “ The first part will be lively, the se-  
 “ cond grave, the third a jig. You will  
 “ have taken care to procure six or seven  
 “ of the best airs for a dance, put to-  
 “ gether, that can be imagined. You  
 “ will execute all the steps that you are  
 “ mistress of ; and let your character in  
 “ the *Pas-de-deux*, be that of a country  
 “ wench, a gardener’s servant, a grana-  
 “ dier’s trull, or a statue ; the steps  
 “ will be always the same ; and the  
 “ same actions for ever repeated ; such  
 “ as running after one another, dodg-  
 “ ing, crying, falling in a passion,  
 “ making peace again, bringing the  
 “ arms over the head, jumping in and  
 “ out of time, shaking legs and arms,  
 “ the head, the body, the shoulders,  
 “ and especially smirking and ogling  
 N 2 “ round

“ round you ; not forgetting gentle in-  
 “ flexions of the neck, as you pass close  
 “ under the lights, nor to make pretty  
 “ faces to the audience, and then, hey  
 “ for a fine curtesy at the end of the  
 “ dance !”

Nothing however would more ob-  
 struct the progress of this art, than thus  
 contenting one self with adopting  
 the productions of others. It even  
 would, in the disgust which repe-  
 tition occasions, bring on the decline  
 of this entertainment, in the opinion  
 of a public which is always fond of  
 novelty.

And of novelty, the beauties of na-  
 ture furnish an inexhaustible fund,  
 in their infinite variety. Among these  
 it is the business of the artist to  
 chuse such as can be brought upon  
 the

the scene, and theatrically adapted to the execution of his art. But for this he must be possessed of taste, which is a qualification as necessary to him, as a composer, as that of the graces are to him as a performer. Both are gifts. But if a due exercise of the art can add to the natural graces, taste does not stand less in need of cultivation: it refines itself by a judicious observation of the beauties and delicacies of nature. These he must incessantly study, in order to transplant into his art such as are capable of producing the most pleasing effect. He must particularly consult the fitness of time, place and manners; otherwise what would please in one dance might displease in another. Propriety is the great rule of this art, as of all others. A discordance in music hurts a nice ear; a false attitude or motion in dancing equally offends the judicious eye. The

The looks of the dancer are far from insignificant to the character he is representing. Their expression should be strictly conformable to his subject. The eye especially should speak. Thence it is that the Italian custom of dancing with uncovered faces, cannot but be more advantageous than that of dancing masked, as is commonly done in France; when the passions can never be so well represented as by the changes of expression, which the dancer should throw into his countenance.

And it is by these changes of countenance, as well as of attitude and gesture, that the dancer can express the gradations of the passions; whereas the painter is confined intirely to one passion, that of the particular moment in which he will have chosen  
to

to draw a character. For example, a painter, who means to represent a country-maid, under the influence of the passion of love, can only aim at expressing some particular degree of that passion, suitable to the circumstances of the rest of his picture, or to the situation in which he shall have placed her. But a dancer may successively represent all the gradations of love ; such as surprize at first sight, admiration, timidity, perplexity, agitation, languor, desire, ardor, eagerness, impatience, tumultuous transports, with all the external symptoms of that passion. All these may be executed in the most lively manner, in time and cadence, to a correspondent music or simphony. And so of all the other passions, whether of fear, revenge, joy, hatred, which have all their subdivisions expressible, by the quick shift and succession



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cession of steps, gestures, attitudes, and  
looks, respectively adapted to each gra-  
dation.

A mask then cannot but hide a  
great part of the necessary expres-  
sion, or justness of action. It can on-  
ly be favorable to those who have  
contracted ill habits of grimacing or  
of contortions of the face while they  
perform.

There are however some charac-  
ters in which a mask is even neces-  
sary: but then great care should be  
taken to model and fit it as exactly  
as possible to the face, as well as to  
have it perfectly natural to the cha-  
racter represented. The French are  
particularly, and not without reason,  
curious in this point.

The

The female dancers have naturally a greater ease of expression than the men. More pliable in their limbs, with more sensibility in the delicacy of their frame; all their motions and actions are more tenderly pathetic, more interesting than in our sex. We are besides prepossessed in their favor, and less disposed to remark or cavil at their faults. While on the other hand, that so natural desire they have of pleasing, independently of their profession, makes them studiously avoid any motion or gesture that might be disagreeable, and consequently any contortion of the face. They, instinctively then, one may say, make a point of the most graceful expression.

A woman, who should only depend on the exertion of strength in her legs or limbs, without attention to ex-

O                      pression,

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pression, would possess but a very defective talent. Such an one might surprize the public, by the masculine vigor of her springs ; but should she attempt to execute a dance, where tender expressions are requisite, she would certainly fail of pleasing.

The female dancers have also an advantage over the men, in that the petticoat can conceal many defects in their execution ; even, if the indulgence due to that amiable sex, did not only make great allowances, but give to the least agreeable steps in them, the power of obtaining applause.

At the Italian theatres at Rome, in the Carnival, where the female dancers are not suffered to perform the dances, and where the parts of the women are perform'd by men in the dresses of women,  
it

it appears plainly, how much the execution suffers by this expedient. However well they may be disguised, there is an inherent clumsiness in them, which it is impossible for them to shake off, so as to represent with justness the sprightly graces and delicacy of the female sex. The very idea of seeing men effeminated by such a dress, invincibly disgusts. An effeminate man appears even worse than a masculine woman.

But however the consulting a looking-glass gives to men, in general, the air of fops or coxcombs; it is to those who would make a figure in dancing a point of necessity. A glass is to them, what reflexion is to a thinking person; it serves to make them acquainted with their defects, and to correct them. To practice then before it is even recom-

O 2                      mendable,

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mendable, that practice will give  
the advantage of expertness, and ex-  
pertness will give the grace of ease,  
which is invaluable ; nothing being  
such an enemy to the graces as stiff-  
ness or affectation. This is a general  
rule both for composition and per-  
formance.

Education has doubtless a great share  
in giving early to the body a command  
of graceful positions, especially for  
the grand and serious dances, which,  
as I have before observed, are the  
principal grounds of the art. And  
once more, the great point is not to  
stick at mediocrity ; but to aim at an  
excellence in the art, that may give at  
least the best chance for not being con-  
founded with the croud. If it is true,  
that, among the talents, those which  
are calculated for pleasing, are not  
those

those that are the least sure of encouragement ; it is also equally true, that for any dependence to be had on them, it is something more than an ordinary degree of merit in them that is required.

In support of this admonition, I am here tempted to enliven this essay with the narrative of an adventure in real life, that may serve to break the too long a line of an attempt at instruction.

A celebrated female dancer in Italy, designing to perform at a certain capital, wrote to her correspondent there to provide her an apartment suitable to the genteel figure which she had always made in life. On her arrival, her acquaintance seeing she had brought nothing with her, but her own person and two servants,

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vants, asked her when she expected her  
baggage. She answered, with a smile,  
“ If you will come to-morrow morn-  
“ ing and breakfast with me, you, and  
“ whoever you will bring with you,  
“ shall see it, and I promise you it is  
“ worth your while seeing, being a  
“ sort of merchandize that is very much  
“ in fashion.”

Curiosity carried a number early  
to the rendezvous, where, after an  
elegant breakfast, she got up, and danc-  
ed before them in a most surprizingly  
charming manner.

“ These, said she, (pointing at her  
“ legs,) are all the baggage I have left ;  
“ the Alps have swallowed up all the  
“ rest.” The truth was, she had been  
really robbed of her baggage in her  
journey, and the merchandize on which  
she

she now depended, was her talent at dancing. Nor was she deceived, for her inimitable performance, joined to the vivacity with which she bore her misfortunes, in the spirit of the old Philosopher, who valued himself upon carrying his all about him, made her many friends, whose generous compassion soon enabled her to appear in her former state.

As to the composition of dances, it is impossible for a professor of this art, to make any figure without a competent stock of original ideas, reducible into practice. A dance should be a kind of regular dramatic poem to be executed by dancing, in a manner so clear, as to give to the understanding of the spectator no trouble in making out the meaning of the whole, or of any part of it. All  
ambiguity



ambiguity being as great a fault of style in such compositions, as in writing. It is even harder to be repaired; for a false expression in the motions, gestures, or looks, may confuse and bewilder the spectator so as that he will not easily recover the clue or thread of the fable intended to be represented.

Clearness then is one of the principal points of merit which the composer should have in view; if the effect, resulting from the choice and disposition of the ground-work of his drama, does honor to his inventiveness or taste; the justness, with which every character is to be performed, is not less essential to the success of his production, when carried into execution.

To be well assured of this, it cannot but be necessary that the composer

poser of the dance or ballet-master, should be himself a good performer, or at least understand the grounds of his art.

He must also, in his composition, be pre-assured of all the necessaries for their complete execution. Otherwise decorations either deficient or not well adapted; an insufficient number of performers, or their being bad ones; or, in short, the fault of a manager, who, through a misplaced economy, would not allow the requisite expences; all these, or any of these, might ruin the composition, and the composer might, after taking all imaginable pains to please, find his labor abortive, and himself condemned for what he could not help. There is no exhibiting with success any entertainment of this sort without hav-

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ing all the necessary performers and  
accompaniments. It will be in a great  
measure perfect or imperfect in propor-  
tion as they are supplied or withheld.

A good ballet-master must especially  
have regard to both poetical and picture-  
sque invention ; his aim being to unite  
both those arts under one exhibition.  
The poetical part of the composition be-  
ing necessary to furnish a well-com-  
posed piece that shall begin with a  
clear exposition, and proceed unfold-  
ing itself to the conclusion, in situ-  
ations well chosen, and well expressed.  
The picturesque part is also highly es-  
sential for the formation of the steps,  
attitudes, gestures, looks, grouping the  
performers, and planning their evolu-  
tions ; all for the greatest and justest  
effect.

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He should himself be thoroughly struck with his initial idea, which will lead him to the second, and so on methodically until the whole is concluded, without having recourse to a method justly exploded by the best masters, that of choregraphy or noting dances, which only serves to obstruct and infrigidate the fire of composition. When he shall have finished his composition, he may then coolly review it, and make what disposition and arrangement of the parts shall appear the best to him. Every interruption is to be avoided, in those moments, when the imagination is at its highest pitch of inventing and projecting. There are few artists who have not, at times, experienced in themselves a more than ordinary disposition or aptitude, for this operation of the mind ; and it is these critical mo-

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ments,

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ments, which may otherwise be ir-  
retrievable, they ought particularly to  
improve, with as little diversion from  
them as possible. They should pur-  
sue a thought, or a hint of a thought,  
from its first crudity to its utmost  
maturity.

A man of true genius in any of  
the imitative arts, and there is not  
one that has a juster claim to that  
title than the art of dancing, sensi-  
ble that nature is the varied and abun-  
dant spring of all objects of imitation,  
considers her and all her effects with  
a far different eye from those who  
have no intention of availing them-  
selves of the matter she furnishes for  
observation. He will discover essen-  
tial differences between objects, where  
a superficial beholder sees nothing but  
familiarities; and in his imitation he  
will

will so well know how to render those differences discernible, that in the composition of his dance, the most trite subject will assume the air of novelty with the grace of variety.

There is nothing disgusts so much as repetitions of the same thing ; and a composer of dances will avoid them as studiously as painters do in their pieces, or writers tautology.

The public complains, with great reason, that dances are frequently void of action, which is the fault of the performers not giving themselves the trouble to study just ones : satisfied with the more mechanical part of dancing, they never think of connecting the part of the actor with it, which however is indispensably necessary

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cessary to give to their performance,  
spirit, and animation.

A dance without meaning is a very insipid botch. The subject of the composition should always be strictly connected to the dances, so as that they should be in equal correspondence to one another. And, where a dance is expletively introduced in the intervals of the acts, the subject of it should have, at least, some affinity to the piece. A long custom has made the want of this attention pass unnoticed. It is surely an absurd and an unnatural patchwork, between the acts of a deep tragedy, to bring on, abruptly by way of diversion, a comic dance. By this contrast both entertainments are hurt; the abruptness of the transition is intolerable to the audience; and the thread, especially  
of

of the tragic fable, is unpleasingly broken. The spectators cannot bear to be so suddenly tossed from the serious to the mirthful, and from the mirthful to the serious. In short, such an heterogeneous adulteration has all the absurdity reproached to the motley mixture in tragi-comedy, without any thing of that connection which is preserved in that kind of justly exploded dramatic composition. How easy too to avoid this defect, by adapting the subjects of the dances to the different exigences of the different dramas, whether serious, comic, or farcical!

One great source of this disorder, is probably the managers considering dances in nothing better than in the light of merely a mechanical execution for the amusement of the eye,  
and



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and incapable of speaking to the mind.  
And in this mistake they are certainly justifiable by the great degeneracy of this art, from the pitch of perfection to which it was antiently carried, and to which the encouragement of the public could not fail to restore it. The managers would then see their interest too clearly in consulting the greater pleasure of the public, not to afford to this art, the requisite cultivation and means of improvement.

The composer, who must even have something of the poet in him ; the musician, the painter, the mechanic, are essentially necessary to the contribution of their respective arts, towards the harmony and perfection of composition, in a fine dramatic dance ; even the dresses are no inconsiderable part of the

the entertainment. The *costume*, or in a more general term, propriety, should have the direction of them. It is not magnificence, that is the great point, but their being well assorted to character and circumstances. The French are notoriously faulty in over-dressing their characters, and in making them fine and showy, where their simplicity would be their greatest ornament. I do not mean a simplicity that should have any thing mean, low or indifferent in it; but, for example, in rural characters, the simplicity of nature, if I may use the expression, in her holiday-cloaths.

As to the decorations and machines especially, I know of no place where there is less excuse for their being deficient in them than in London, where they are too manifestly, to bear

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any suspicion of flattery in the attributing it to them, executed to a perfection that is not known in any other part of Europe. The quickness with which the shifts and deceptions in the pantomime entertainments are performed here, have been attempted in many other parts; but the persons there employed, not having the same skill and depth in mechanics as the artists here, cannot come up to them in this point. And it is in this point precisely that a composer of dances may be furnished with great assistance in the effects from the theatrical illusion. And in an entertainment, where by an established tacit agreement between the audience and performers, there is such a latitude of introducing superhuman personages, either of the heathen deities, or of fairy-hood, incantations, and the like, those transformations and deceptions

tions of the fight are even in the order of natural consequences, from the pre-supposed and allowed power of such characters to operate them. At the same time the rules of probability must even there be observed. Nor is it amiss to be very sparing and reserved in the composition of those dances, grounded on the introduction of purely imaginary beings, such as the allegorical impersonation of the moral Beings, whether the Virtues or the Vices. Unless the invention is very interesting indeed, the characters distinctly marked, and the application very just and obvious; their effect is rarely answerable to expectation, especially on the audiences of this country. The taste here for those airy ideal characters is not very high, and perhaps not the worse for not being so.

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• Among the many losses which this art has sustained, one surely, not the least regrettable, even for our theatres, was that of the dances in armour, practised by the Greeks, which they used by way of diversion and of *exercise* for invigorating their bodies. Sometimes they had only bucklers and javelins in their hands: but, on certain occasions they performed in panoply, or complete suits of armour. Strengthened by their daily and various manly exercises, they were enabled to execute these dances, with a surprising exactness and dexterity. The martial simphony that accompanied them, was performed by a numerous band of music; for the clash of their arms being so loud, would else have drowned the tune or airs of the musicians. It is impossible to imagine  
a more

a more sublime, splendid and picturesque fight than what these dances afforded, in the brilliancy of their arms, and the variety of their evolutions; while the delight they took in it, inspired them with as much martial fire, as if they had been actually going to meet the enemy. And indeed this diversion was so much of the nature of the military exercise, that none could be admitted who were not thoroughly expert in all martial training. In time of peace, this kind of dance was considered as even necessary to keep up that suppleness and athletic disposition of body, to bear action and fatigue, essential to the military profession. If the practice had been neglected, but for a few days, they observed a numbness insensibly diffuse itself over the whole body. They were persuaded then that the best way of preserving their health, and  
fitness

fitness for action, and consequently to qualify them for the most heroic enterprises, was to keep up this kind of exercise, in the form of diversion.

These martial dances, have, in some operas of Italy, been attempted to be imitated, with some degree of success : but as the performers had not been trained up to such an exercise, like the Greeks, it was not to be expected that the representation should have the same perfection, or color of life.

The composition of the music, and the suiting the airs to the intended execution of a dance, is a point of which it is scarce needful to insist on the importance, from its being so obvious and so well known. Nothing can produce a more disagreeable discordance than a performer's dancing out  
of

of time. And here it may be observed, how much lies upon a dancer, in his being at once obliged to adapt his motions exactly to the music and to the character : which forms a double incumbence, neither point of which he can neglect, without falling into unpardonable errors.

Where dances are well composed, they may give a picture, to the life, of the manners and genius of each nation and each age, in conformity to the subject respectively chosen. But then the truth of the *costume*, and of natural and historical representation must be strictly preserved. Objects must be neither exaggerated beyond probability, nor diminished so as not to please or affect. A real genius will not be affraid of striking out of the common paths, and, sensible



fible that inventiveness is a merit, he will create new theatrical subjects, or produce varied combinations of old ones. And where the decorations, or requisite accompaniments are not supplied as he could wish, he must endeavour to make the most of what he can get, towards the exhibition of his production; if not with all the advantage of which it is susceptible, at least with all those he can procure for it. Where the best cannot be obtained, he must be content with the least bad. But especially a composer of dances should never lose sight of his duty in preserving to his art its power of competition, as well as its affinity with the other imitative arts, in the expression of nature; all the passions and sentiments being manifestly to be marked by motion, gestures, and attitudes, to the time of

a correspondent and well adapted music. While all this aided and set off, by the accompaniments of proper decorations of painting, and, where necessary, of machinery, makes that, a well composed dance, may very justly be deemed a small poem, thrown into the most lively action imaginable; into an action so expressive as not to need the aid of words, for conveying its meaning; but to make the want of them rather a pleasure than matter of regret; from its exercising, without fatiguing, the mind of the spectator, to which it can never be but an agreeable entertainment, to have something left for its own making out, always provided that there be no perplexing difficulty or ambiguity. Nothing of which is impossible to an artist who has the talent of making

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a right choice among the most pleasing objects of nature; of sufficiently feeling what he aims at expressing; of knowing how far it is allowable for his art, to proceed towards the embellishing nature, and where it should stop to avoid its becoming an impertinence; and especially of agreeably disposing his subject, in the most neat and intelligible manner that can be desired.

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SOME  
THOUGHTS  
On the UTILITY of  
LEARNING to DANCE,  
And Especially upon the  
MINUTE.

WAS I, in quality of a dancing-master, to offer even the strongest reasons of inducement to learn this art, they could not but justly lose much, if not all, of their weight, from my supposed interest in the offering

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fering them; besides the partiality  
every artist has for his art.

It would however exceed the bounds  
prescribed to modesty itself, were I to  
neglect availing myself of the autho-  
rity of others, who were not only  
far from being professors of this art,  
but who hold the highest rank in the  
public opinion for solidity of understand-  
ing, and purity of morals, and who yet  
did not disdain to give their opinion in  
favor of an art only imagined frivolous,  
for want of considering it in a just and  
enlarged view.

After this introduction, I need not  
be ashamed of quoting Mr. Locke,  
in his judicious treatise of education.

“ Nothing (says he) appears to me  
“ to give children so much becom-  
“ ing confidence and behaviour, and  
“ so to raise them to the conversa-  
“ tion

ART OF DANCING. 14

“ tion of those above their age, as danc-  
“ ing. I think they should be taught  
“ to dance as soon as they are capable  
“ of learning it ; for though this con-  
“ sists only in outward gracefulness of  
“ motion, yet, I know not how, it  
“ gives children manly thoughts and  
“ carriage more than any thing.”

In another place, he says,

“ Dancing being that which gives  
“ graceful motions to all our lives, and  
“ above all things, manliness, and a  
“ becoming confidence to young chil-  
“ dren, I think it cannot be learned  
“ too early, after they are once capable  
“ of it. But you must be sure to have  
“ a good master, that knows and can  
“ teach what is graceful and becom-  
“ ing, and what gives a freedom and  
“ easiness to all the motions of the  
“ body.

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“ body. One that teaches not this, is  
“ worfe than none at all ; natural awk-  
“ wardness being much better than a pish  
“ affected postures : and I think it  
“ much more passable, to put off the  
“ hat, and make a leg like an honest  
“ country-gentleman, than like an ill-  
“ fashioned dancing-master. For as  
“ for the jigging, and the figures of  
“ dance, I count that little or nothing  
“ better than as it tends to perfect grace-  
“ ful carriage.”

The Chevalier De Ramsay, author of Cyrus's travels, in his plan of education for a young Prince, has (page 14.) the following passage to this purpose.

“ To the study of poetry, should be  
“ joined that of the three arts of imi-  
“ tation. The antients represented the  
“ passions,

“passions, by gestures, colors, and sounds.  
 “Xenophon tells us of some wonderful  
 “effects of the Grecian dances, and  
 “how they moved and expressed the  
 “passions. We have now lost the  
 “perfection of that art; all that re-  
 “mains, is only what is necessary to  
 “give a handsome action and airs to a  
 “young gentleman. This ought not  
 “to be neglected, because upon the  
 “external figure and appearance, de-  
 “pends often the regard we have to the  
 “internal qualities of the mind. A  
 “graceful behaviour, in the house of  
 “Lords or Commons, commands the  
 “attention of a whole assembly.”

And most certainly in this last alle-  
 gation of advantage to be obtained by  
 a competent skill, or at least tincture  
 of the art, the Chevalier Ramsay, has  
 not exaggerated its utility. Quintilian  
 has



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has recommended it, especially in early years, when the limbs are the most pliable, for procuring that so necessary accomplishment, in the formation of orators gesture : observing withall, that where that is not becoming, nothing else hardly pleases.

But even independent of that consideration, nothing is more generally confessed, than that this branch of breeding qualifies persons for presenting themselves with a good grace. To whom can it be unknown that a favorable prepossession at the first sight is often of the highest advantage ; and that the power of first impressions is not easily surmountable ?

In assemblies or places of public resort, when we see a person of a genteel carriage or presence, he attracts our  
regard



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either a deficiency of breeding, or if not  
that, a high opinion of themselves,  
with what is not at all unconfidential  
to that, a contempt of others.

Such are certainly much mistaken,  
if they imagine that an art, which is  
principally designed to correct defects,  
should leave so capital an one subsist-  
ing as that of want of ease, and free-  
dom, in the gesture and gait. On  
the contrary, it is as great an enemy  
to stiffness, as it is to looseness of car-  
riage, and air. It equally reprobates an  
ungainly rusticity, and a mincing,  
tripping, over-soft manner. Its chief  
aim is to bring forth the natural graces,  
and not to smother them with appear-  
ances of study and art.

But of all the people in the world,  
the British would certainly be the most  
in

in the wrong for not laying a great enough stress on this part of education ; since none have more conspicuously the merit of figure and person ; and it would in them be a sort of ingratitude to Nature, who has done so much for them, not to do a little more for themselves, in acquiring an accomplishment, the utility of which has been acknowledged in all ages, and in all countries, and especially by the greatest and most sensible men in their own.

As to the ladies, there is one light in which perhaps they would not do amiss to view the practice of this art, besides that of mere diversion or improvement of their deportment : it is that of its being highly serviceable to their health, and to what it can never be expected they should be indifferent about, their beauty, it being the best

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and

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and surest way of preserving, or even  
giving it to their whole person.

It is in history a settled point, that beauty was no where more flourishing, nor less rare, than among such people as encouraged and cultivated exercise, especially in the fair sex. The various provinces and governments in Greece, all agreed, some in a less, some in a greater degree, in making exercise a point of female education. The Spartans carried this to perhaps an excess, since the training of the children of that sex, hardly yielded to that of the male in laboriousness and fatigue. Be this confessed to be an extreme: but then it was in some measure compensated by its being universally allowed, that the Spartan women owed to it that beauty in which they excelled the rest of the Grecian women, who were themselves

themselves held, in that point, preferable to the rest of the world. Hellen was a Spartan. Yet the legislator of that people, did not so much as consider this advantage among the ends proposed in prescribing so hardy an education to the weaker sex. His views were for giving them that health and vigor of body, which might enable them to produce a race of men the fittest to serve their country in war.

But as the best habit of body is ever inseparable from the greatest perfection of beauty, of which its possessor is susceptible, it very naturally followed, that the good plight to which exercise brought and preserved the females, gave also to their shape, that delicacy and suppleness, and to their every motion, that graceful agility which characterized the Grecian beauties, and distinguished

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tinguished them for that nymph-stile  
of figure, which we to this day admire  
in the description of their historians,  
of their poets, or in the representations  
that yet remain to us in their statues,  
or other monuments of antiquity.

But omitting to insist on the Spartan austerity, and especially on their gymnastic training for both sexes, and to take the milder methods of exercise in use among the Grecians, we find that the chace, that foot-races, and especially dancing, principally composed the amusement of the young ladies of that country ; where, in the great days of Greece, no maxim ever more practically prevailed, than that sloth or inactivity was equally the parent of diseases of the body, as of vices of the mind. Agreeable to which idea, one of the greatest physicians now in Europe, the celebrated Tronchin,

chin, while at Paris, vehemently de-claimed against this false delicacy and aversion against exercise; from which the ladies, especially of the higher rank of life, derived their bad habits of body, their pale color, with all the principles of weakness, and of a puny diseased constitution, which they necessarily intail on their innocent children. Thence it was that he condemned the using oneself too much to coaches or chairs, which, he observed, lowers the spirits, thickens the humors, numbs the nerves, and cramps the liberty of circulation.

Considering the efficacy of exercise, and that fashion has abolished or at least confined among a very few, the more robust methods of amusement, it can hardly not be eligible to cultivate and encourage an art, so innocent



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innocent and so agreeable as that of  
dancing, and which at once unites in  
itself the three great ends, of bodily  
improvement, of diversion, and of  
healthy exercise. As to this last espe-  
cially, it has this advantage, its be-  
ing susceptible at pleasure, of every  
modification, of being carried from  
the gentlest degree of motion, up to  
that of the most violent activity. And  
where riding is prescribed purely for  
the sake of the power of the con-  
cussion resulting from it, to prevent  
or to dissipate obstructions, the springs  
and agitations of the bodily frame,  
in the more active kind of dances,  
can hardly not answer the same purpose,  
especially as the motion is more equitably  
diffused, and suffers no checks or par-  
tiality from keeping the seat, as either  
in riding, or any other method of  
conveyance. At least, such an enter-  
tainment,

tainment, one would imagine, preferable, for many reasons, to an excess of such sedentary amusements as those of cards, and the like.

Certainly those of the fair sex who use exercise, will, in their exemption from a depraved or deficient appetite, in the freshness or in the glow of their color, in the firmness of their make, in the advantages to their shape, in the goodness in general of their constitution, find themselves not ill repaid for conquering any ill-habit of false delicacy and sloth, to which so many, otherwise fine young ladies, owe the disorders of their stomach, their pale sickly hue, and that languid state of health which must poison all their pleasures, and even endanger

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their lives. These are not strained nor far-fetched consequences.

But even as to those of either sex, the practice of dancing is attended with obviously good effects. Such as are blessed by nature with a graceful shape and are clean-limbed, receive still greater ease and grace from it; while at the same time, it prevents the gathering of those gross and foggy humors which in time form a disagreeable and inconvenient corpulence. On the other hand, those whose make and constitution occasion a kind of heavy proportion, whose muscular texture is not distinct, whose necks are short, shoulders round, chest narrow, and who, in short are, what may be called, rather clumsy figures; these will greatly find their account in a competent exercise of the art of dancing, not only as it will give them

them a freedom and ease one would not, at the first sight, imagine compatible with their figure, but may contribute much to the cure, or at least to the extenuation of such bodily defects, by giving a more free circulation to the blood, a habit of sprightliness and agility to the limbs, and preventing the accumulation of gross humors, and especially of fat, which is itself not among the least diseases, where it prevails to an excess. Not that I here mean anything so foolishly partial, as that nothing but dancing could operate all this; but only place it among not the least efficacious means.

Nothing is more certain than that exercises in general, diversions, such as that of hunting, and the games of dexterity, keep up the natural standard of strength and beauty, which luxury and sloth are sure to debase.

T 2                  Dancing

Dancing furnishes then to the fair-sex, whose sphere of exercise is naturally more confined than that of the men, at once a salutary amusement, and an opportunity of displaying their native graces. But as to men, fencing, riding and many other improvements have also doubtless their respective merit, and answer very valuable purposes.

But where only the gentlest exercise is requisite, the minuet offers its services, with the greatest effect; and when elegantly executed, forms one of the most agreeable fights either in private or public assemblies, or, occasionally, even on the theatre itself.

Yet I speak not of this dance here with any purpose of specifying rules for its attainment. Such an attempt would

would be vain and impracticable. Who does not know that almost every individual learner requires different instructions? The laying a stress on some particular motion or air which may be proper to be recommended to one, must be strictly forbidden to another. In some, their natural graces need only to be called forth; in others the destroying them by affectation is to be carefully checked. Where defects are incurable, the teacher must show how they may be palliated and sometimes even converted into graces. It will easily then be granted that there is no such thing as learning a minuet, or indeed any dance merely by book. The dead-letter of it can only be conveyed by the noting or description of the figure and of the mechanical part of it; but the spirit of it in the graces of the air and gesture, and the carriage of the dancer

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dancer can only be practically taught  
by a good master.

I have mentioned the distinction of a good master, most assuredly not in the way of a vain silly hint of self-recommendation ; but purely for the sake of giving a caution, too often neglected, against parents, or those charged with the education of youth, placing children, at the age when their muscles are most flexible, their limbs the most supple, and their minds the most ductile, and who are consequently susceptible of the best impressions, under such pretended masters of this art, who can only give them the worst, and who, instead of teaching, stand themselves in need of being taught. The consequence then of such a bad choice, is, that young people of the finest disposition in the world, contract, under such

such teachers, bad, awkward habits, that are not afterwards easily curable.

Those masters who possess the real grounds of their art, find in their uniting their practice with their knowledge, resources even against the usual depredations of age; which, though it may deprive them of somewhat of their youthful vigor, has scarce a sensible influence on their manner of performance. There will still long remain to them the traces of their former excellence.

I have myself seen the celebrated Dupré, at near the age of sixty, dance at Paris, with all the agility and sprightliness of youth, and with such powers of pleasing, as if the graces *in him* had braved superannuation.

Such



Such is the advantage of not having been content with a superficial tincture of this art ; or with a mere rote of imitation, without an aim at excellence or originality.

But though there is no necessity for most learners to enter so deep into the grounds and principles of the art, as those who are to make it their profession, it is at least but doing justice to one's scholars to give them those essential instructions as to the graces of air, position, and gesture ; without which they can never be but indifferent performers.

For example, instead of being so often told to turn their toes out, they should be admonished to turn their knees out, which will consequently give the true direction to the feet.

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A due attention should also be given to the motion of the instep, to the air of sinking and rising ; to the position of the hips, shoulders, and body ; to the graceful management of the arms, and particularly to the giving the hand with a genteel manner, to the inflections of the neck and head, and especially to the so captivating modesty of the eye ; in short, to the diffusing over the whole execution, an air of noble ease, and of natural gracefulness.

It might be too trite to mention here what is so indispensable and so much in course, the strict regard to be paid to the keeping time with the music.

Nothing has a better effect, nor more prepossessing in favor of the

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performance to follow, than the bow  
or curtsy at the opening the dance,  
made with an air of dignity and free-  
dom. On the contrary, nothing is  
more disgusting than that initial step  
of the minuet, when awkwardly ex-  
ecuted. It gives such an ill impression  
as is not easily removed by even a  
good performance in the remaining  
part of the dance.

There is another point of great im-  
portance to all, but to the ladies es-  
pecially, which is ever strictly recom-  
mended in the teaching of the mi-  
nuet; but which in fact, like most  
of the other graces of that dance,  
extends to other occasions of appearance  
in life. This point is the easy and  
noble port of the head. Many very  
pretty ladies lose much of the effect  
of their beauty, and of the signal  
power

power of the first impressions, as they enter a room, or a public assembly, by a vulgar or improper carriage of the head, either poking the neck, or stooping the head, or in the other extreme, of holding it up too stiff, on the Mama's perpetually teizing remonstrance, of "hold up your head, Miss," without considering that merely bridling, without the easy grace of a free play, is a worse fault than that of which she will have been corrected.

Certainly nothing can give a more noble air to the whole person than the head finely set, and turning gracefully, with every natural occasion for turning it, and especially without affectation, or stiffly pointing the chin, as if to show which way the wind fits.

But it must be impossible for those who stoop their heads down, to give their figure any air of dignity, or grace of politeness. They must always retain something of ignoble in their manner. Nothing then is more commendable than for those who are naturally inclined to this defect, to endeavor the avoiding it by a particular attention to this capital instruction in learning the minuet. It is also not enough to take the minuet-steps true to time, to turn out their knees, and to slide their step neatly, if that flexibility, or rise and fall from the graceful bending of the instep, is not attended to, which gives so elegant an air to the execution either of the minuet, or of the serious theatrical dances. Nothing can more than that, set off or show the beauty of the steps.

It

It should also be recommended to the dancers of the minuet, ever to have an expression of that sort of gaiety and cheerfulness in the countenance, which will give it an amiable and even a noble frankness. Nothing can be more out of character, or even displeasing, than a froward or too pensive a look. There may be a sprightly vacancy, an openness in the face, without the least tincture of any indecent air of levity : as there may be a captivating modesty, without any of that bashfulness which arises either from low breeding, wrong breeding, or no breeding at all.

But to execute a minuet in a very superior manner, it is recommendable to enter into some acquaintance, at least, with the principles of the serious or grave dances, with a naturally genteel person,

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person, a superficial knowledge of the  
steps, and a smattering of the rules,  
any one almost may soon be made to  
acquit himself tolerably of a minuet ;  
but to make a distinguished figure, some  
notion of the depths and refinements  
of the art, illustrated by proper prac-  
tice, are required.

It is especially incumbent on an  
artist, not to rest satisfied with having  
pleased : he should, from his know-  
ledge of the grounds of his art, be able  
to tell himself why he has pleased ;  
and thus by building upon solid prin-  
ciples, preferably to mere lucky hits,  
or to transient and accidental advan-  
tages of form or manner, insure the  
permanency of his power to please.

There is a vice in dancing, against  
which pupils cannot be too carefully  
guarded ;

guarded; it is that of affectation. It is essentially different from that desire of pleasing, which is so natural and so consistent even with the greatest modesty, in that it always builds on some falsity, mistaken for a means of pleasing, though nothing can more surely defeat that intention; there is not an axiom more true than that the graces are incompatible with affectation. They vanish at the first appearance of it: and the curse of affectation is, that it never but lets itself be seen, and wherever it is seen, it is sure to offend, and to frustrate its own design.

The simplicity of nature is the great fountain of all the graces; from which they flow spontaneous, when unchecked by affectation, which at once poisons and dries them up.

Nature



Nature does not refuse cultivation, but she will not bear being forced. The great art of the dancing-master is not to give graces, for that is impossible, but to call forth into a nobly modest display those latent ones in his scholars, which may have been buried for want of opportunities or of education to break forth in their native lustre, or which have been spoiled or perverted, by wrong instruction, or by bad models of imitations. In this last case, the master's business is rather to extirpate than to plant; to clear the ground of poisonous exotics, and to make way for the pleasing productions of nature.

This admirable prerogative of pleasing, inseparable from the natural graces, unpoisoned by affectation, is in nothing more strongly exemplified, than

than in the rural dances, where simplicity of manners, a sprightly ease, and an exemption from all design but that of innocent mirth, give to the young and handsome villagers, or country-maids, those inimitable graces for ever unknown to artifice and affectation. Not but, even in those rural assemblies, there may be found some characters tainted with affectation; but then in the country they are exceptions, whereas in town they constitute the generality, who are so apt to mistake airs for graces, though nothing can be more essentially different.

But how shall those masters guard a scholar sufficiently against affectation, who are themselves notoriously infected with it? Nay, this is so common to them, that it is even the foundation of a proverbial remark, that no gentleman

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man can be said to dance well, who dances like a dancing-master. Those false refinements, that finical, affected air so justly reproached to the generality of teachers, a master should correct in himself before he can well give lessons for avoiding them to his pupils. And, in truth, they are but wretched substitutes to the true grounds and principles of the art, in which nothing is more strongly inculcated than the total neglect of them, and the reliance on the engaging and noble simplicity of nature.

It is then no paradox to say that the more deep you are in the art, the less will it stifle nature. On the contrary, it will, in the noble assurance which a competent skill is sure to bring with it, give to the natural graces a greater freedom and ease of display. Imperfection  
of

of theory and practice cramps the faculties ; and gives either an unpleasing falteringness to the air, steps, and gestures, or wrong execution. And as the minuet derives its merit from an observation of the most agreeable steps, well chosen in nature and well combined by art, there is no inconsistency in avering that art may, in this, as in many other objects of imitative skill, essentially assist nature, and place her in the most advantageous point of light.

The truth of this will be easily granted, by numbers who have felt the pleasure of seeing a minuet gracefully executed by a couple who understood this dance perfectly. Nay, excellence in the performance of it, has given to an indifferent figure, at least a temporary advantage over a much superior one

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in point of person only ; and sometimes an advantage of which the impression has been more permanent.

But besides the effect of the moment in pleasing the spectators ; the being well versed in this dance especially contributes greatly to form the gait, and address, as well as the manner in which we should present ourselves. It has a sensible influence in the polishing and fashioning the air and deportment in all occasions of appearance in life. It helps to wear off any thing of clownishness in the carriage of the person, and breathes itself into otherwise the most indifferent actions, in a genteel and agreeable manner of performing them.

This secret and relative influence of the minuet, *Marcelle*, my ever respected

spected master, whom his own merit in his profession, and the humorous mention of him by *Helvetius*, in his famous book *DE L'ESPRIT*, have made so well known, constantly kept in view, in his method of teaching it. His scholars were generally known and distinguished from those of other masters, not only by their excellence in actual dancing, but by a certain superior air of easy-genteelness at other times. He himself danced the minuet to its utmost perfection. Not that he confined his practice to that dance alone; on the contrary, he confessed himself obliged for his greatest skill in that, to his having a general knowledge of all the other dances, which he had practised, but especially those of the serious stile.

But

But certainly it is not only to the professed dancer, that dancing in the serious stile, or the minuet, with grace and ease, is essential. The possessing this branch of dancing is of great service on the theatre, even to an actor. The effect of it steals into his manner, and gait, and gives him an air of presenting himself, that is sure to prepossess in his favor. Persons of every size or shape are susceptible of grace and improvement from it. The shoulders so drawn back as not to protuberate before, but as it were, to retreat from sight, or as the French express it *bien effacées*, the knees well turning outwards, with a free play ; the air of the shape noble and disengaged ; the turns and movements easy ; in short, all the graces that characterise a good execution of the minuet, will, insensibly on all other occasions, distribute through  
every

every limb and part of the body, a certain liberty and agreeableness of motion easier to be conceived than defined. To the actor, in all characters, it gives, as I have just before observed, a graceful mien and presence ; but, in serious characters, it especially suggests that striking portliness, that majestic tread of the stage, for which some actors from the very first of their appearance so happily dispose the public to a favorable reception of their merit in the rest of their part. An influence of the first impression, which a good actor will hardly despise, especially with due precaution against his contracting any thing forced or affected in his air or steps, from his attention to his improvement by dancing, as the very best things may be even pernicious by a misuse. Whatever is not natural, free, and easy, will undoubtedly



doubtedly, on the stage, as every where else, have a bad effect. A very little matter of excess will, from his aim at a grace, produce a ridiculous caricature. Too stiff a regulation of his motions or gestures, by measure and cadence, would even be worse than abandoning every thing to chance; which might, like the Eolian harp, sometimes suffer lucky hits to escape him; whereas affectation is as sure forever to displease, as it is not to escape the being seen where it exists.

Among the many reasons for this dance of the minuet having become general, is the possibility of dancing it to so many different airs, though the steps are invariable. If one tune does not please a performer, he may call for another; the minuet still remaining unalterable.

There

There is no occasion however for a learner to be confined to this dance. He should rather be encouraged, or have a curiosity be excited in him, to learn especially those dances, which are of the more tender or serious character, contributing, as they greatly do, to perfect one in the minuet; independently of the pleasure they besides give both in the performance and to the sight. The dances the most in request are, the *Saraband*, the *Bretagne* the *Furlana*, the *Passepied*, the *Folie d'Espagne*, the *Rigaudon*, the *Minuet du Dauphin* the *Louvre*, *La Mariée*, which is always danced at the Opera of Roland at Paris. Some of these are performed solo, others are duet-dances. The *Louvre* is held by many the most pleasing of them all, especially when well executed by both performers, in a just concert of motions; no dance affor-

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ding the arms more occasion for a  
graceful display of them, or a more  
delicate regularity of the steps ; being  
composed of the most select ones from  
theatrical dances, and formed upon the  
truest principles of the art. This dance  
is executed in most countries of Europe  
without any variation. It is generally  
followed or terminated by a minuet ;  
and these two dances, the Louvre and  
the minuet, are at present the most uni-  
versally in fashion, and will, in all pro-  
bability, continue so, from their being  
both pleasing beyond all others, to the  
performers, as well as to the spectators,  
and from their not being difficult to  
learn, if the scholar has but common  
docility.

Youth being for learning this art  
undoubtedly the best season, for rea-  
sons as I have before observed, too  
obvious

obvious to need insisting on, the master cannot pay too much attention to the availing himself of the pliancy of that age, to give his scholars the necessary instructions for preparing and well-disposing their limbs. This holds good, particularly with regard to that propensity innate to most persons of turning in their toes. I have already mentioned the expediency of curing this defect, by the directing them to acquire a habit of turning the knees outward, to which I have to add, that on the proper turn of the knee, chiefly depend the graces of the under part of the figure, that is to say, from the foot to the hip.

Frequent practice also of dancing, or of any salutary exercise, is also highly recommendable for obtaining a firm-

ness of body; for a tottering dancer can never plant his steps so as to afford a pleasing execution. It may sound a little odd, but, the truth is, that in dancing, sprightliness and agility are principally produced by bodily strength; while on the contrary, weakness, or infirmity, must give every step and spring, not only a tottering, but a heavy air. The legs that bear with the most ease the weight of the body, will naturally make it seem the lightest.

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A  
SUMMARY ACCOUNT  
Of various kinds of  
DANCES

In different Parts of the WORLD.

*Cantatur et saltatur apud omnes gentes, aliquo  
saltem modo,* QUINT.

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I  
EUROPE.

AS almost every country has dances particular to it, or, at least, so naturalized by adoption from others, that

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that in length of time they pass for  
originals ; a slight sketch of the most  
remarkable of them may serve to throw  
a light upon this subject, entertain-  
ing to some, and both entertaining  
and useful to others.

IN BRITAIN, you have the horn-  
pipe, a dance which is held an original  
of this country. Some of the steps  
of it are used in the country-dances  
here, which are themselves a kind  
of dance executed with more variety  
and agreeableness than in any part  
of Europe, where they are also imi-  
tatively performed, as in Italy, Ger-  
many and in several other countries.  
Nor is it without reason they obtain,  
here the preference over the like in  
other places. They are no where so  
well executed. The music is extremely  
well adapted, and the steps in ge-  
neral

neral are very pleasing. Some foreign comic dancers, on their coming here, apply themselves with great attention to the true study of the hornpipe, and by constant practice acquire the ability of performing it with success in foreign countries, where it always meets with the highest applause, when masterly executed. There was an instance of this, sometime ago at Venice, at an opera there, when the theatre was as well provided with good singers and dancers, as any other. But they had not the good fortune to please the public. A dancer luckily for the manager, presented himself, who danced the hornpipe in its due perfection. This novelty took so, and made such full houses, that the manager, who had begun with great loss, soon saw himself repaired, and was



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a gainer when he little expected  
it.

It is to the HIGHLANDERS in North-Britain, that I am told we are indebted for a dance in the comic vein, called the *Scotch Reel*, executed generally, and I believe always in *trio*, or by three. When well danced, it has a very pleasing effect: and indeed nothing can be imagined more agreeable, or more lively and brilliant, than the steps in many of the Scotch dances. There is a great variety of very natural and very pleasing ones. And a composer of comic dances, might, with great advantage to himself, upon a judicious assemblage of such steps as he might pick out of their dances, form a dance that, with well adapted dresses, correspondent music, and figures capable of a just performance,

ance, could hardly fail of a great success upon the theatre.

I do not know whether I shall not stand in need of an apology for mentioning here a dance once popular in England, but to which the idea of law is now currently annexed. It was originally adapted from the Moors, and is still known by the name of Morris-dancing, or Morel-c-dance. It is danced with swords, by persons oddly disguised, with a great deal of antic rural merriment: it is true that this diversion is now almost exploded, being entirely confined to the lower classes of life, and only kept up in some counties. What the reason may be of its going out of use, I cannot say; but am very sure, there was not only a great deal of natural mirth in it, but that it is susceptible enough of

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improvement, to rescue it from the contempt it may have incurred, through its being chiefly in use among the vulgar; though most probably it may have descended among them from the higher ranks. For certainly of them it was not quite unworthy, for the Pirrhic or military air it carries with it, and which probably was the cause of its introduction among so martial a people. Rude, as it was, it might require refinement, but it did not, perhaps, deserve to become quite obsolete.

In SPAIN, they have a dance, called, *Les Folies d'Espagne*, which is performed either by one or by two, with castanets. There is a dress peculiarly adapted to it, which has a very pleasing effect, as well as the dance itself.

In

IN FRANCE, their *Contre-dances*, are drawn from the true principles of the art, and the figures and steps are generally very agreeable. No nation cultivates this art with more taste and delicacy. Their *Provençale* dance, is most delightfully sprightly, and well imagined. The steps seem to correspond with the natural vivacity and gaiety of the Provençals. This dance is commonly performed to the pipe and tabor.

THE FLEMISH dances run in the most droll vein of true rural humor. The performers seem to be made for the dances, and the dances for the performers; so well assorted are the figures to the representation. Several eminent painters in the grotesque stile, Teniers especially, have formed many divert-

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ing pictures taken from life, upon this  
subject.

At NAPLES, they have various grotesque dances, which are originals in their kind, being extremely difficult to execute, not only for the variety of the steps, but for the intricacy and uncommonness, or rather singularity of them.

But while I am mentioning Naples, I ought not to omit that effect of dancing, which is attributed to it, upon those who are bitten with the *Tarantula*. The original of this opinion, was probably owing to some sensible physician, prescribing such a violent motion, more likely to be kept up in the patient, by the power of music, than by any thing else, as might enable him to expel the poison, by being thereby thrown into a copious sweat, and by other benefits  
from

from such a vehement agitation. This, it is supposed, was afterwards abused and turned into a mere trick, to assemble a croud and get money, either by sham bites, or by making a kind of show of this method of practice in real ones. However, that may be, the various grimaces or contortions, leaps and irregular steps, commonly used on this occasion, to be executed to that sort of music, or airs adapted to it, might afford a good subject for a grotesque dance, to be formed upon the plan of a burlesque or mock-imitation : and I am not quite sure that the idea of such a dance, has not been already carried into execution.

The castanets the NEAPOLITANS most frequently use, are of the largest size. It is also from Naples that we have taken the Punchinello dance.

At

At FLORENCE, they have a dance, called, *il Tresbone*. The country-women, in the villages, are very fond of it. They are generally speaking, very robust, and capable of holding out the fatigue of this dance, for a long time. To make themselves more light for it, they often pull off their shoes. The dance is opened by a couple, one of each sex. The woman holds in her hand a handkerchief, which she flings to him whom she chuses for her next partner, who, in his turn has an equal right to dispose of it in the same manner, to any woman of the company he chuses. Thus is the dance carried on without any interruption till the assembly breaks up.

The favorite dance of the VENETI-ANS, is what they call the *Furlana*, which is performed by two persons dancing  
a-round .

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a-round with the greatest rapidity. Those who have a good ear, keep time with the crossing their feet behind ; and some add a motion of their hands, as if they were rowing or tugging at an oar. This dance is practiced in several other parts of Italy.

The Peasants of TIROL, have one of the most pleasant and grotesque dances that can be imagined. They perform it in a sort of holy-day dress, made of skins, and adorned with ribbons. They wear wooden shoes, not uncuriously painted ; and the women especially express a kind of rural simplicity and frolic mirth, which has a very agreeable effect.

The GRISONS are in possession of an old dance, which is not without its merit, and which they would not exchange



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change for the politest in Europe ; they  
being as invariably attached to it, as to  
their drefs.

The HUNGARIANS are very noisy in  
their dances, with their iron heels, but  
when they are of an equal fize, and  
dreffed in their uniforms, the agility  
of their steps, and the regularity of  
drefs in the performers, render them  
not a difagreeable fight.

The GERMANS have a dance called  
the *Allemande*, in which the men and  
women form a ring. Each man hold-  
ing his partner round the waift, makes  
her whirl round with almoft incon-  
ceivable rapidity : they dance in a grand  
circle, feeming to purfue one another :  
in the courfe of which they execute  
feveral leaps, and fome particularly  
pleafing steps, when they turn, but fo  
very

very difficult as to appear such even to professed dancers themselves. When this dance is performed by a numerous company, it furnishes one of the most pleasing fights that can be imagined.

The POLISH nobility have a dance, to which the magnificence of their dress, and the elegance of the steps, the gracefulness of the attitudes, the fitness of the music, all contribute to produce a great effect. Were it performed here on the theatre, it would hardly fail of a general applause.

The COSSACS, have, amidst all their uncouth barbarism, a sort of dancing, which they execute to the sound of an instrument, somewhat resembling a Mandoline, but considerably larger, and which is highly diverting, from the extreme vivacity of the steps, and the

A a                      oddity

oddity of the contortions and grimaces, with which they exhibit it. For a grotesque dance there can hardly be imagined any thing more entertaining.

The RUSSIANS, afford nothing remarkable in their dances, which they now chiefly take from other countries. The dance of dwarfs with which the Czar Peter the Great, solemnized the nuptials of his niece to the Duke of Courland, was, probably rather a particular whim of his own, than a national usage.

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A S I A.

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**I**N TURKY, dances have been, as of old in Greece, and elsewhere instituted in form of a religious ceremony. The *Dervishes* who are a kind of devotionists execute a dance, called the *Semaat* in a circle, to a strange wild-symphony, when holding one another by the hand, they turn round with such rapidity, that, with pure giddiness, they often fall down in heaps upon one another.

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They have also in Turkey, as well as India and Persia, professed dancers, especially of the female sex, under the name of dancing-girls, who are bred up, from their childhood, to the profession; and are always sent for to any great entertainment, public or private, as at feasts, weddings, ceremonies of circumcision, and, in short, on all occasions of festivity and joy. They execute their dances to a simphony of various instruments, extremely resembling the antient ones, the *tympanum*, the *crotala*, the *cimbals*, and the like, as well as to songs, being a kind of small dramatic compositions. or what may properly be called *ballads*, which is a true word for a song at once sung and danced: *ballare* signifying to dance; and *ballata*, a song, composed to be danced. It is probable that from these eastern kind of dances, which are undoubtedly

doubtedly very antient, came the name, among the Romans, of *balatrones*. Nothing can be imagined more graceful, nor more expreſſive, than the geſtures and attitudes of thoſe dancing-girls, which may properly be called the eloquence of the body, in which indeed moſt of the Aſiatics and inhabitants of the ſouthern climates conſtitutionally excel, from a ſenſibility more exquisite than is the attribute of the more northern people ; but a ſenſibility ballanced by too many diſadvantages to be envied them. The Siameſe, we are told, have three dances, called the *Cone*, the *Lacone*, and the *Raban*. The *Cone* is a figure-dance, in which they uſe particularly a ſtring-inſtrument in the nature of a violin, with ſome others of the Aſiatic make. Thoſe who dance are armed and masked, and ſeem to be a fighting rather than

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than dancing. It is a kind of Indian  
Pirrhic. Their masks represent the  
most frightful hideous countenances of  
wild-beasts, or demons, that fancy can  
invent. In the *Lacone* the performers  
sing commutually stanzas of verses con-  
taining the history of their country.  
The Raban is a mixed dance, of men  
and women, not martial, nor histori-  
cal, but purely gallant ; in which the  
dancers have all long false nails of copper.  
They sing in this dance, which is only  
a slow march without any high moti-  
ons, but with a great many contortions  
of body and arms. Those who dance  
in the Raban and Cone have high  
gilt caps like sugar-loaves. The dance  
of the *Lacone* is appropriated to the  
dedication of their temples, when a  
new statue of their *Sommona-codom* is  
set up.

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In many parts of the East, at their weddings, in conducting the bride from her house to the bridegroom's, as in Persia especially, they make use of processional music and dancing. But, in the religious ceremonies of the Gentoos, when, at stated times, they draw the triumphal car, in which the image of the deity of the festival is carried, the procession is intermixed with troops of dancers of both sexes, who, proceed, in chorus, leaping, dancing, and falling into strange antics, as the procession moves along, of which they compose a part; these adapt their gestures and steps to the sounds of various instruments of music.

Considering withal that the Romans, in their most solemn processions, as in that called the *Pompa*, which I have before mentioned, in which not only the  
Pirrhic



Pirrhic dance was proceffionally executed, but other dances, in masquerade, by men who, in their habits, by leaping and by feats of agility, represented satirs, the *Sileni*, and *Fauni*, and were attended by minstrels playing on the flute and guitar ; besides which, there were *Salian* priests, and *Salian* virgins, who followed, in their order, and executed their respective religious dances ; it may bear a question whether not an unpleasing use might not be made, on the theatres, of proceffional dances properly introduced, and connected, especially in the burlesque way. In every country, and particularly in this, proceffions are esteemed an agreeable amusement to the eye ; and certainly they must receive more life and animation from a proper intermixture of dances, than what a mere solemn march can represent, where there is nothing to amuse but a long train of personages

personages in various habits, walking in parade. I only mention this however as a hint not impossible to be improved, and reduced into practice.

But even, where it might be improper or ridiculous to think of mixing dances with a procession, though it were but in burlesque, which must, if at all, be the preferable way of mixing them, the pleasure of those who delight in seeing processions and pageantry exhibited on the theatre, might be gratified, without any violence to propriety, by making them introductory to the dances of the grandest kind. For example ; where a dance in Chinese characters is intended, a procession might be previously brought in, of personages, of whom the habits, characters, and manners might be faithfully copied from nature, and from the truth of

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things, and convey to the spectator  
a juster notion of the people from  
which the representation was taken,  
of their drefs and public proceffions,  
than any verbal description, or even  
prints or pictures. After which, the  
dance might naturally take place, in  
celebration of the festival, of which  
the proceffion might be fuppofed the  
occafion.

In order to give a more diftinct  
idea of this hint, I have hereto an-  
nexed the print of a Chinefe procef-  
fion taken from the description of a  
traveller into that country ; by which  
a good compofer would well know  
how to make a proper choice of  
what might be exhibited, and what  
was fit to be left out ; efpecially ac-  
cording as the dance fhould be, feri-  
cus or burlefque. In the laft cafe ;  
even

even the horses might be represented by a theatrical imitation. And certainly, bringing the personages on in such a regular procession at first, would give a better opportunity of observing their dresses, than in the huddled, confused manner of grouping them, that has been sometimes practised: to say nothing of the pleasure afforded to the eye by the procession itself.

The print annexed represents the procession of a Chinese Mandarin of the first order. First appear two men who strike each upon a copper instrument called a gongh, resembling a hollow dish without a border, which has pretty much the effect of a kettle-drum.

Follow the ensign-bearers, on whose flags are written in large characters

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the Mandarin's titles of honour. Next  
fourteen standards, upon which ap-  
pear the proper symbols of his office,  
such as the dragon, tiger, phoenix,  
flying tortoise, and other winged crea-  
tures of fancy, emblematically exhi-  
bited.

Six officers, bearing a staff headed  
by an oblong square board, raised  
high, whereon are written in large  
golden characters the particular qua-  
lities of this Mandarin.

Two others bear, the one a large  
umbrella of yellow silk (the imperial  
color) of three folds, one above the  
other; the other officer carries the  
case in which the umbrella is kept.

Two archers on horseback, at the  
head of the chief guard: then the  
guards

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guards, armed with large hooks, adorned with silk fringe, in four rows one above another; two other files of men in armor, some bearing maces with long handles; others, maces in the form of a hand, or of a serpent: others, equipped with large hammers and long hatchets like a crescent. Other guards bearing sharp axes: some, weapons like scythes, only strait. Soldiers carrying three-edged halberds.

Two porters, carrying a splendid coffer, containing the seal of his office.

Two other men, beating each a *gongb*, which gives notice of the Mandarin's approach.

Two officers, armed with staves, to keep off the croud.

Two

Two mace-bearers with gilt maces in the shape of dragons, and a number of officers of justice, some equipped with bamboes, a kind of flat cudgels, to give the bastinado: others with chains, whips, cutlasses, and hangers.

Two standard-bearers, and the captain of the guard.

All this equipage precedes the Mandarin or Viceroy, who is carried in his chair, surrounded with pages and footmen, having near his person an officer who carries a large fan in the shape of a hand-fire-screen.

He is followed by guards, some armed with maces, and others with long-handled sabres; after whom come several ensigns and cornets, with a  
great

great number of domestics on horseback, every one bearing some necessary belonging to the Mandarin : as for example, a particular Tartarian cap, if the weather should oblige him to change the one he has on.

From the above, it may appear, what scope or range a composer may have for the exhibition of processions and pageantry of other nations, as well as of the Chinese ; in all which, nothing is more recommendable than adhering, in the representation, as much as the limitations of the theatre will admit, to the truth of things, as they actually pass in the countries where the scene is laid : which is but, in saying other words, in this, as in every other imitative branch, strike to nature as close as possible.

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A F R I C A.

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**T**HE spirit of dancing prevails, almost beyond imagination, among both men and women, in most parts of Africa. It is even more than instinct, it is a rage, in some countries of that part of the globe.

Upon the Gold-coast especially, the inhabitants are so passionately fond of it, that in the midst of their hardest labor, if they hear a person  
Cc sing,

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singing, or any musical instrument plaid,  
they cannot refrain from dancing.

There are even well attested stories of some Negroes flinging themselves at the feet of an European playing on a fiddle, entreating him to desist, unless he had a mind to tire them to death ; it being impossible for them to cease dancing, while he continued playing. Such is the irresistible passion for dancing among them.

With such an innate fondness for this art, one would imagine that children taken from this country, so strong-made and so well-limbed as they generally are, and so finely disposed by nature, might, if duly instructed, go great lengths towards perfection in the art. But I do not remember to have heard that the experi-  
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ment was ever made upon any of them, by some master capable of giving them such an improvement, as one would suppose them susceptible of.

Upon the Gold-coast, there long existed and probably still exists a custom, for the greater part of the inhabitants of a town or village to assemble together, most evenings of the year, at the market-place to dance, sing, and make merry for an hour or two, before bed-time. On this occasion, they appear in their best attire. The women, who come before the men, have a number of little bells tinkling at their feet. The men carry little fans or rather whisks in their hand made of the tails of elephants and horses, much like the brushes used to brush pictures; only that theirs are gilt at both

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ends. They meet usually about sun-  
set. Their music consists of horn-blow-  
ers or trumpeters, drummers, players  
on the flute, and the like ; being placed  
a-part by themselves. The men and  
women, who compose the dance, di-  
vide into couples, facing each other,  
as in our country-dances, and forming  
a general dance, fall into many wild  
ridiculous postures, advancing and re-  
treating, leaping, stamping on the  
ground, bowing their heads, as they  
pass, to each other, and muttering cer-  
tain words; then snapping their fingers,  
sometimes speaking loud, at other times  
• whispering, moving now slow, now  
quick, and shaking their fans.

Artus and Villault add, that they  
strike each another's shoulders alter-  
nately with those fans ; also that the  
women, laying straw-ropes in circles on  
the

the ground, jump into or dance round them ; and clicking them up with their toes, cast them in the air, catching them as they fall with their hands.

They are strangely delighted with these gambols ; but do not care to be seen at them by strangers, who can scarce refrain laughing, and consequently putting them out of countenance.

After an hour or two spent in this kind of exercise, they retire to their respective homes.

Their dances vary according to times, occurrences, and places. Those which are in honor of their religious festivals, are more grave and serious. There have been sometimes public dances instituted by order of their Kings, as at Abrambo,  
a large

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a large town in Widaw, where annually, for eight days together, there resorted a multitude of both sexes from all parts of the country. This was called the dancing-season. To this solemnity all came dressed in the best manner, according to their respective ability. The dance was ridiculous enough; but it served to keep up their agility of body. And amidst all the uncouth barbarism of their gestures and attitudes, nature breaks out into some expressions of joy, or of the passions, that would not be unworthy of an European's observation.

They have also their kind of Pirrhic dances, which they execute by mock-skirmishing in cadence, and striking on their targets with their cutlasses.

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I have already mentioned that it is from Africa, the Moresc-dances originally came. But what is somewhat surprising, the Portugueze themselves, among whom I will not however include the higher ranks of life in that nation, but, at least, the number of the people who adopted, from the Caffrees, or Negroes of their African possessions, a dance called by them *LasGheganças*, (Approaches) was so great that the late King of Portugal was obliged to prohibit it by a formal edict. The reason of which was, that some of the motions and gestures had so lascivious an air, and were so contrary to modesty, that the celebrated *Frey Gaspar*, a natural son, if I mistake not, of the late King of Portugal, represented so efficaciously to his Portugueze Majesty, the shame and scandal of this dance being any longer suffered,



ferred, that it was put down by royal authority. Nor was this done without occasioning heavy complaints against *Frey Gaspar*, against whom there were lampoons and ballads publickly sung, upon his having used his influence to procure that prohibition.

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A M E R I C A.

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**I**N this part of the world, so lately discovered, nothing is a stronger proof of the universality of dancing, of its being, in short, rather an human instinct, than an art, than the fondness for dancing every where diffused over this vast continent.

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IN BRAZIL, the dancers, whether men or women, make a point of dancing bare-headed. The reason of this is not mentioned : it cannot however be thought a very serious one, since nothing can be more comical than their gestures, their contortions of body, and the signs they make with the head to each other.

IN MEXICO, they have also their dances and music, but in the most uncouth and barbarian stile. For their simphony they have wooden drums, something in form of a kettle-drum, with a kind of pipe or flageolet, made of a hollow cane or reed, but very grating to an European ear. It is observed they love every thing that makes a noise how disagreeable soever the sound is. They will also hum over something like a tune, when they dance  
thirty

thirty or forty in a circle, stretching out their hands, and laying them on each others shoulders. They stamp and jump, and use the most antic gestures for several hours, till they are heartily weary. And one or two of the company sometimes step out of the ring, to make sport for the rest, by showing feats of activity, throwing up their lances into the air, catching them again, bending backwards, and springing forwards with great agility. Then when they are in a violent sweat, from this exercise, they will frequently jump into the water, without the least bad consequences to their health. Their women have their dancing and music too by themselves ; but never mingle in those of the men.

In VIRGINIA, according to the author of the history of that country,

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they have two different kinds of dancing ; the first, either single, or at the most in small companies ; or, secondly, in great numbers together, but without having any regard either to time or figure.

In the first kind one person only dances, or two, or three at most. While during their performance, the rest, who are seated round them in a ring, sing as loud as they can scream, and ring their little bells. Sometimes the dancers themselves sing, dart terribly threatening looks, stamp their feet upon the ground, and exhibit a thousand antic postures and grimaces.

In the other dance, consisting of a more numerous company of performers, the dance is executed round stakes set in the form of a circle, adorned  
with

with some sculpture, or round about a fire, which they light in a convenient place. Every one has his little bell, his bow and arrow in his hand. They also cover themselves with leaves, and thus equipped, begin their dance. Sometimes they set three young women in the midst of the circle.

IN PERU, the manner of dancing has something very particular. Instead of laying any stress on the motion of the arms, in most of their dances, their arms hang down, or are wrapped up in a kind of mantle, so that nothing is seen but the bending of the body, and the activity of the feet; they have however many figure-dances, in which they lay aside their cloaks or mantles, but the graces they add, are rather actions than gestures.

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The PERUVIAN Creolians dance after the same manner, without laying aside their long swords, the point of which they contrive to keep up before them so that it may not hinder them from rising, or in coupeeing, which is sometimes to such a degree that it looks like kneeling.

They have a dance there, adopted from the natives, which they call *Zapatos*, (shoes) because in dancing they alternately strike with the heels and toes, taking some steps, and coupeeing, as they traverse their ground.

Among the savages of North-America, we are told there are various dances practised, such as that of the calumet, the leaders dance, the war-dance, the marriage-dance, the sacrifice-dance, all which, respectively differ in the movements,

ments, and some, amidst all the wildness of their performance, are not without their graces. But the dance of the calumet is esteemed the finest; this is used at the reception of strangers whom they mean to honor, or of ambassadors to them on public occasions. This dance is commonly executed in an oval figure.

The AMERICANS, in some parts, prescribe this exercise by way of physic, in their distempers: a method of treatment, not, it seems unknown to the antients: but, in general, their motive for dancing, is the same as with the rest of the world, to give demonstrations of joy and welcome to their guests, or to divert themselves. On some occasions indeed, they make them part of the ceremony at their assemblies upon affairs, when even their



their public debates are preceded by dancing, as if they expected that that exercise would rouse their mental faculties, and clear their heads. The war-dance is also used by them, by way of proclamation of war against their enemies.

The foregoing summary sketch of some of the various dances, which are practised in different parts of the globe, and which, to describe universally and minutely, would fill whole volumes, may serve to show that nature has, in all parts of the inhabited world, given to man the instinct of dancing, as well as of speaking, or of singing. But it certainly depends on the nations who encourage the polite arts, once more to carry it up to that pitch of excellence, of which the history of the  
Greeks

Greeks and Romans shows it to have been susceptible, among the ancients, however the moderns may have long fallen short of it. There has indeed lately appeared a dawning hope of its recovery ; which, that it may not be frustrated, is the interest of all who wish well to an innocent and even useful pleasure.

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PANTOMIMES.

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AS this branch of the art of dancing is often mentioned, especially in this country, without a just idea being affixed to it, or any other idea than what is vulgarly taken from a species of compositions which are sometimes exhibited after the play, on the theatre here, (not to mention Sadler's wells) and go by the name of pantomime entertainments; it may not be unacceptable to the reader, my lay-

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ing down before him the true grounds  
and nature of this diversion, which  
once made so great a figure in the  
theatrical sphere of action.

And as, on this point, Monsieur  
Cahusac, an ingenious French writer,  
has treated the historical part of it with  
so much accuracy, that it was hardly  
possible to offer any thing new upon it,  
beyond what he has furnished; and  
that not to make use of his researches  
would only betray me into a fruitless  
affectation of originality, I am very  
ready to confess, that for the best and  
greatest part of what I am now going  
to offer upon this subject I am indebted  
to his production.

That prodigious perfection to which  
the antients carried the pantomime art,  
appeared so extraordinary to the cele-  
brated

brated abbot Du Bos, that, not being able to contradict the authorities which establish the truth of it, he was tempted to consider the art of dancing in those times as something wholly different from what is at present understood by dancing.

The chevalier Ramsay places it also among the lost arts. Both, no doubt, grounding their opinion on that deficiency of execution on the modern theatres, compared to what is incontestably transmitted to us, by history, of the excellence of the antient pantomimes.

But none have more contributed to establish the opinion of the pantomime art being an art totally different from that of dancing, and not merely an improvement of it, as was certainly the case, than some of the professors of the

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the art themselves, who even exclaimed  
against M. Cahusac, for his attempts  
to give juster notions, and to recom-  
mend the revival of it.

We are too apt to pronounce upon  
possibilities from our own measure of  
knowledge, or of capacity. Nothing is  
more common than to hear men of a pro-  
fession declare loudly against any prac-  
tice attempted to be established for the  
improvement of their art, and perempto-  
rily to aver such a practice being im-  
possible, for no other reason than that  
their own study and efforts had not  
been able to procure them the attain-  
ment of it. In this too they are se-  
conded by that croud of superficial peo-  
ple who frequent the theatres, and  
who can believe nothing beyond what  
themselves have seen: any thing above  
the reach of what they are accustomed  
or

or habituated to admire, always seems to them a chimera.

The reproach of incredulity is commonly made to men of the greatest knowledge, because they are not overapt to admit any proposition without proof: but this reproach may, with more justice, be ofteneft made to the ignorant, who generally reject, without discussion, every thing beyond their own narrow conception.

To these it may sound more than strange; it may appear incredible, that on the theatre of Athens, the dance of the Eumenides, or Furies, had so expressive a character, as to strike the spectators with irresistible terror. The Areopagus itself shuddered with horror and affright; men grown old in the profession of arms, trembled; the mul-



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multitude ran out ; women with child  
miscarried ; people imagined they saw  
in earnest those barbarous deities com-  
missioned with the vengeance of hea-  
ven, pursue and punish the crimes of  
the earth.

This passage of history is furnished  
by the same authors, who tell us, that  
Sophocles was a genius ; that nothing  
could withstand the eloquence of De-  
mosthenes ; that Themistocles was a  
hero ; that Socrates was the wisest of  
men ; and it was in the time of the most  
famous of the *Greeks* that even upon those  
highly privileged souls, in sight of ir-  
reproachable witnesses, the art of  
dancing produced such great effects.

At Rome, in the best days of this art,  
all the sentiments which the dancers ex-  
pressed, had each a character of truth,  
so

so great a power, such pathetic energy, that the multitude was more than once seen hurried away by the illusion, and mechanically to take part in the different emotions presented to them by the animated picture with which they were struck. In the representation of *Ajax in a frenzy*, the spectators took such violent impressions from the acting-dancer who represented him, that they perfectly broke out, into outcries; stripped, as it were, to fight, and actually came to blows among each other, as if they had caught their rage from what was passing on the theatre.

At another time they melted into tears at the tender affliction of *Hecuba*.

And upon whom were these lively impressions produced? Upon the co-

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temporaries of Mecenas, of Lucullus,  
Augustus, Virgil, Pollio; upon men  
of the most refined taste, whose  
criticism was as severe as their appro-  
bation honorable; who never spared  
their censure nor their applause, where  
either was due. How, especially un-  
der the eyes of Horace, could any thing  
pass the approbation of the public, unless  
under the seal of excellence in point of  
art and good taste? Would Augustus  
have declared himself the special patron  
of a kind of entertainment that had  
been deficient as to probability and ge-  
nius? Would Mecenas, the protector of  
Virgil, and of all the fine arts, have  
been pleased with a sight that was not  
a striking imitation of beautiful nature?

The proofs shown of the perfection  
of dancing at Athens, and under the  
reign of Augustus, being incontestable,  
it

it is plain that what now passes for the art of dancing, is as yet only in its infancy. To display the arms gracefully, to preserve the equilibrium in the positions, to form steps with a lightness of air; to unfold all the springs of the body in harmony to the music, all these points, sufficient to what may be called private, or to assembly-dancing, are little more than the alphabet of the theatrical dances, or of pantomime execution. The steps and figures are but the letters and words of this art. A writing-master is one who teaches the mechanical part of forming letters. A mere dancing-master is an artist who teaches to form steps. But the first is not more different from what we call a man of letters, or a *writer*, than the second is from what may deserve on the theatre, the name of principal dancer.

Besides the necessity of learning his art elementally, a dancer, like a writer, should have a style of his own, an original style: more or less valuable, according as he can exhibit, express, and paint with elegance a greater or lesser quantity of things admirable, agreeable, and useful.

Speech is scarce more expressive, than the gestural language. The art of painting, which places before our eyes the most pathetic, or the most gay images of human life, composes them of nothing but of attitudes, of positions of the arms, expressions of the countenance, and of all these parts dancing is composed, as well as painting.

But, as I have before observed, painting can express no more than an instant of action. Theatrical dancing can exhibit

hibit all the successive instants it chuses to paint. Its march proceeds from picture to picture, to which, motion gives life. In painting, life is only imitated ; in dancing, it is always the reality itself.

Dancing is, evidently, in its nature, an action upon the theatres ; nothing is wanting to it but meaning : it moves to the right, to the left ; it retrogrades, it advances, it forms steps, it delineates figures. There is only wanting to all this an arrangement of the motions, to furnish to the eye a theatrical action upon any subject whatever.

The history of the art proves that the dancers of genius, had no other means or assistance in the world but this to express all the human passions, and the possibilities

possibilities of it are in all times, the very same.

Both here, and in France, there have been some of these dramatic pieces in action, by dance, attempted, which have been well received by the public.

Some years ago, the Dutchess of Maine ordered simphonies to be composed for the scene of the fourth act of the *Horatii*; in which the young Horatius kills Camilla. Two dancers, one of each sex, represented this action at *Sceaux*; and their dance painted it with all the energy and pathos of which it was susceptible.

In Italy especially many subjects of a what may be called low comedy, are very naturally expressed by dancing. In short, there is hardly any comic action but what

what they represent upon their theatres, if not with perfection, at least satisfactorily. And certainly the dance in action has the same superiority over sheer unmeaning dancing, that a fine history-piece has over cutting flowers in paper. In the last there is little more required than mechanical nicety, and, at the best, it affords no great pretension to merit. But it is only for genius to order, distribute and compose, in the other. A Raphael is allowed to take place in the Temple of Fame, by a Virgil ; and the art of dancing is capable of having its Raphaels too. Pylades, and Bathillus were painters, and great ones, in their way. Picturesque composition is not less the duty of a composer of dances, than of a painter.

Among



Among the antients, that *Protheus*, of whom fabulous history records such wonders, was only one of their dancers, who, by the rapidity of his steps, by the strength of his expression, and by the employment of the theatrical deceptions, seemed at every instant, to change his form. The celebrated *Empusa* was a female dancer, whose agility was so prodigious that she appeared and vanished like a spirit.

But it was at Rome that the Pantomime art received its highest improvement. Pilades born in Cilicia, and Bathillus of Alexandria, where the two most surprising geniuses, who, under the reigns of Augustus Cæsar, displayed their talents in their utmost lustre. The first invented the solemn, grave and pathetic dances. The compositions of Bathillus

thillus were in the lively, gay, and sprightly stile.

Bathillus had been the slave of Mecenas, who had given him his freedom in favor of his talents. Having seen Pilades in Cilicia, he engaged him to come to Rome, where he had disposed Mecenas in his favor, who, becoming the declared protector of both, procured to them the encouragement of the Emperor.

A theatre was built for them : the Romans flocked to it, and saw, with surprise, a complete tragedy ; all the passions painted with the most vigorous strokes of representation : the exposition, plot, catastrophe expressed in the clearest and most pathetic manner, without any other means or assistance but that of dancing, executed to the simphonies

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the best adapted, and far superior to any that had been before heard in Rome.

Their surprise was not to end here. To this a second entertainment succeeded ; in which an ingenious action, without needing the voice or speech, presented all the characters, all the pleasant strokes, and humorous pictures of a good comedy.

And in both these kinds, the executive talents of Pilades and Bathillus corresponded to the boldness and beauty of the kind of compositions they had ventured to bring on the stage.

Pilades especially, who was at the head of this project, was the most singular man that had till then appeared on the theatre. His fertile imagination

tion constantly supplied him with new means of perfecting his art and embellishing his entertainments. Athenæus mentions his having written a book much esteemed on the depths and principles of his art.

Before him, some flutes composed the orchestra of the Romans. He reinforced it with all the known instruments. He added choruses of dances to his representations, and took care that their steps and figures, should always have some relation or affinity to the principal action. He provided them with dresses in the highest taste of propriety, and omitted nothing towards producing, keeping up, and pushing to the highest pitch, the charm of the theatrical illusion.

The actions on the Roman theatres were tragic, comic, or satirical; these last pretty nearly answering to what we understand by grotesque or farcical.

Esopus and Roscius had been, from their excellence in declamation, the delight and admiration of Rome. But on their leaving no successors to their degree of merit; the taste for dramatic poetry which was no longer supported by actors equal to them, began to decline; and the theatrical dances under such great masters as Pilades and Bathillus, either by their novelty, or by their merit, or by both, made the Romans the less feel their loss of those incomparable actors. The gestual language took place of that which was declaimed; and produced regular pieces acted in the three kinds of tragedy, comedy, and farce or grotesque. The  
spectators

spectators grew pleased with such an exercise of their understanding. Steps, motions, attitudes, figures, positions, now were substituted to speech; and there resulted from them an expression so natural, images so resembling, a pathos so moving, or a pleasantry so agreeable, that people imagined they heard the actions they saw. The gestures alone supplied the place of the sweetness of the voice, of the energy of speech, and of the charms of poetry.\*

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\*Hanc partem Musicæ disciplinæ Majores mutam nominârunt, quæ ore clauso loquitur, et quibusdam gesticulationibus facit intelligi, quod vix narrante lingua, aut scripturæ textu possit agnosci.

*Cassiod.* var. I. 20.

Loquacissimas manus, linguosos digitos, silentium clamor, expositionem tacitam.

*Idem.*

This kind of entertainment, so new, though formed upon a ground-work already known, planned and executed by genius, and adoped with a passionate fondness by the Romans, was called the *Italic dance* ; and in the transports of pleasures it caused them, they gave to the actors of it, the title of *Pantomimes*. This was no more than a lively, and not at all exaggerated expression, of the truth of their action, which was one continual picture to the eyes of the spectators. Their motion, their feet, their hands, their arms, were but so many different parts of the picture ; none of them were to remain idle ; but all, with propriety, were to concur to the formation of that assemblage, from which result the harmony, and, with pardon for the expression, the happy *all-together* of the composition and performance. A dancer learned from his  
very

very name of *pantomime*, that he could be in no esteem in Rome, but so far as he should be *all the actor*.

And, in fact, this art was carried to a point of perfection hard to believe; but for such a number of concurrent and authentic testimonies.

It appears also clearly from history, that this art, in its origin, (so favored by an arbitrary prince, and who also made some use of it, towards establishing his despotism, nay even primordially introduced by Bathillus, a slave) could no longer preserve its great excellence, than the spirit of liberty was not wholly worn out in the Roman breasts; and, like its other sister arts, gradually decayed and sunk under the subsequent emperors.

Pilades



Pilades gave a memorable instance of the (as yet) unextinguished spirit of liberty, when, upon his being banished Rome, for some time, by Augustus Cesar, upon account of the disturbances the pantomime parties occasioned, he told him plainly to his face, that he was ungrateful for the good his power received, by the diversion to the Romans from more serious thoughts on the loss of their liberty. "Why do not you," says he, "let the people amuse themselves with our quarrels?"

This dancer had such great powers in all his tragedies, that he could draw tears from even those of the spectators the least used to the melting mood.

But in truth, the effect of these pantomimes, in general, was prodigious.  
Tears

Tears and sobs interrupted often the representation of the tragedy of *Glaucus*, in which the pantomime Plancus played the principal character.

Bathillus, in painting the amours of Leda, never failed of exciting the utmost sensibility in the Roman ladies.

But what is more surprising yet, *Memphir*, a Pithagorean philosopher, as Athenæus tells us, expressed, by dancing, all the excellence of the philosophy of Pithagoras, with more elegance, more clearness and energy, than the most eloquent professor of philosophy could have done.

Upon considering all this, one is almost tempted to say, with M. Cahusac, " We have, upon the stage, ex-  
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cellent

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“cellent feet, lively legs, admirable  
“arms: what a pity it is, that with  
“all this we have so little of the art of  
“dancing!”

Our tragedy and our comedy have an extent and duration which are supported by the charms of speech, by the interestingness of narration, by the variety of the fallies of wit. The action is divided into acts, each act into scenes, these scenes successively present new situations, and these situations keep up the warmth of interest and attention, form the plot, lead to the conclusion or unravelment, and prepare it.

Such must have been, or such must be, (but with more precision and markingness) tragedies or comedies represented by dancing; as gesture is something more marking and succinct than  
speech.

A R T O F D A N C I N G. 251  
speech. There are required many words  
to express a thought, but one single  
motion may paint several thoughts, and  
situations.

In such compositions, then, made  
to be danced, the theatrical action  
must go forward with the utmost rapi-  
dity : there must not be one unmean-  
ing entry, figure, or step in them.  
Such a piece ought to be a close crowd-  
ed abstract of some excellent written  
dramatic piece.

Dancing, like painting, can only  
present situations to the eye; and every  
truly theatrical situation is nothing but  
a living picture.

If a composer of dances should un-  
dertake to represent upon the stage any  
great action or theatrical subject, he

H h 2

must

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must begin by making an extract from  
it, of all the most picturesque situations.  
No other parts beside these can enter  
into his plan ; all the others are defect-  
ive or useless, they can only embarrass,  
perplex, confound, and render it cold  
and insipid.

Whereas, if the situations succeed  
one another naturally, and in great  
number ; if their being well linked to-  
gether conducts them with rapidity,  
from the first situation to the last, which  
must clearly and strikingly unravel  
the whole ; the choice is complete,  
and the theatrical effect will be sure.

It is that final effect, of which, in the  
execution, the composer and performer  
must never lose sight. Successive  
pictures must be exhibited, and ani-  
mated with all the expression that can  
result

result from the impassioned motions of the dance.

This was doubtless the great secret of the art of Pilades, who so highly excelled in his ideas of theatrical expression : this is, perhaps, too for all kinds of theatrical composition, whether to be declaimed, or to be executed by dancing, a general rule that is not to be slighted.

One instance of the regard shewn by Pilades to theatrical propriety is preserved to us, and not unworthy of attention. He had been publicly challenged by Hilas, once a pupil of his, to represent the greatness of Agamemnon : Hilas came upon the stage with buskins, which, in the nature of stilts, made him of an artificial height ; in consequence of which he greatly overtopped

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topped the croud of actors who surrounded him. This passed well enough, 'till Pilades appeared with an air, stern and majestic. His serious steps, his arms a-cross, his motion sometimes slow, sometimes animated, with pauses full of meaning, his looks now fixed on the ground, now lifted to heaven, with all the attitudes of profound pensiveness, painted strongly a man taken up with great things, which he was meditating, weighing, and comparing, with all the dignity of kingly importance. The spectators, struck with the justness, with the energy and real elevation of so expressive a portraiture, unanimously adjudged the preference to Pilades, who, coolly turning to Hilar, said to him,  
“ *Young man, we had to represent a king*  
“ *who commanded over twenty kings : you*  
“ *made him tall : I showed him great.*”

It

It was in the reign of Nero, that a cynical mock-philosopher, called Demetrius, saw, for the first time, one of these pantomime compositions. Struck with the truth of the representation, he could not help expressing the greatest marks of astonishment: but whether his pride made him feel a sort of shame for the admiration he had involuntarily shewn, or whether naturally envious and selfish, he could not bear the cruel pain of being forced to approve any thing but his own singularities; he attributed to the music the strong impression that has been made upon him: as, in that reign, a false philosophy very naturally had a greater influence than the real, this man was, it seems, of consequence enough for the managers of the dances to take notice of this partiality, or at least to be piqued enough, for their own honor, to lay



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lay a scheme for undeceiving him. He  
was once more brought to their theatre,  
and seated in a conspicuous part of the  
house, without his having been ac-  
quainted with their intention.

The orchestra began : an actor opens  
the scene : on the moment of his en-  
trance, the simphony ceases, and the  
representation continues. Without any  
aid but that of the steps, the positions  
of the body, the movements of the  
arms, the piece is performed, in which  
are successively represented the amours  
of Mars and Venus, the Sun discover-  
ing them to the jealous husband of the  
goddess, the snares which he sets for  
his faithless spouse and her formidable  
gallant, the quick effect of the trea-  
cherous net, which, while it com-  
pleats the revenge of Vulcan, only pub-  
lishes his shame, the confusion of Ve-  
nus,

nus, the rage of Mars, the arch mirth of the gods, who came to enjoy the fight.

The whole audience gave to the excellence of the performance its due applause, but the Cinic, out of himself, could not help crying out, in a transport of delight ; “ *No ! this is not a representation ; it is the very thing itself.* ”

Much about the same time a dancer represented the *labors of Hercules*. He retraced in to true a manner all the different situations of that hero, that a king of Pontus, then at Rome, and who had never seen such a fight before, easily followed the thread of the action, and charmed with it, asked with great earnestness of the emperor, that he would let him have with him that extraordinary dancer, who had made

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such an impression upon him. "Do  
" not, says he to Nero, be surprised at  
" my request. I have for borderers  
" upon my kingdom, some Barbarian  
" nations whose language none of my  
" people could understand, nor they  
" learn ours. Such a man as this  
" dancer would be an admirable in-  
" terpreter between us."

It would then surely be a great error to imagine, that an habitual dexterity, a daily practice, with their arms, their legs and feet, were the only talents of these pantomime dancers. Their execution, without doubt, required all these advantages of the body in the most eminent degree ; but their compositions supposed, and indispensably implied an infinite number of combinations which belong intirely to the mind, or intellectual faculties ; as for example,  
espe-

especially an attentive and judicious discernment of the most interesting truths of human nature. How extensive a study this exacts, it is more easy to conceive than to attain.

And surely there is an evident necessity for studying men, before one can undertake to paint or represent them. It is not till after a profound examination of the passions, that one ought to flatter one's self with characterising them purely by the powers of external signs of actions. All the passions have affinities to each other, which it is only for a great justness of understanding to seize; they have shades that distinguish them, which nothing but a nice eye can perceive, and which easily escape a superficial observer.

In serious dancing, where the character of a hero is to be given, there are in his actions, in the course of his life, certain marking strokes, certain incidents or extraordinary passages, which are subjects proper for the stage, and which must be separated from others perhaps more brilliant in history, but which would infrigidate a theatrical composition.

In the state of dancing of our days, the dancers, and even the composers of dances, aspire to little more than the mechanical part of their art ; and, indeed, they hardly know any thing beyond that, and cannot in course, cultivate what they have no conception of.

When M. Cahusac wrote, he observed that this was sufficient for the  
spectators

spectators, who required nothing more than a brilliant execution from the dancers in the old track of steps and capers; and this is, in fact, true of the greater number now. But lately, the taste for dances of action, animated with meaning and conveying the idea of some fable or subject, has begun to gain ground. People are less tired with a dance, in which the understanding is exercised, without the fatigue of perplexity, than by merely seeing a succession of lively steps, and cabriols, however well executed; which, in point of merit, bear no more proportion to that of a well-composed dance, than a tiresome repetition of vignettes, of head-pieces and tail-pieces, would do to the gravings of historical pieces after a Raphael, a Michael Angelo, or a Correggio.

As

As hitherto the composer of the dances of action, have not been able to recover that height of perfection to which the antient pantomimes carried their art ; the most that any composers could do, I mean with success, (for there have been some attempts made, that, for want of a proper plan and execution, failed,) was to furnish certain dances, in the nature of *poemetti* or small dramatic poems, which, where the subject of action has been clearly and intelligibly executed, have ever been received with the most encouraging applause by the public.

And here the ingenious author to whom I am so much obliged in this chapter, furnishes me with rules of composition for the dances of action, which can hardly be too much recommended.

All

All theatrical compositions ought to have three essential parts.

By a lively dialogue, in a piece made to be spoken, or by an incident dextrously introduced in one made for a dance in action, the spectator is to be prepared for the subject that is to be represented, and to have some acquaintance of the character, quality, and manners of the persons of the drama: this is what is called *the exposition*.

The circumstances, the obstacles which arise out of the ground-work of the subject, embroil it, and retard its march without stopping it. A sort of embarrassment forms itself out of the actions of the characters, which perplexes the curiosity of the spectators, from whose even guess-work, the manner how all is to be ultimately unravelled is  
to



to be kept as great a secret as possible : and this embarrassment is what is called *the plot*.

From this embarrassment, one sees successively break forth lights, the more unexpected, the better. They unfold the action, and conduct it by insensible degrees to an ingenious conclusion : this is what is called *the unravelment*.

If any of these three parts is defective, the theatrical merit is imperfect. If they are all three in due proportion, the action is complete, and the charm of the representation is infallible.

As the theatrical dance then is a representation, it must be formed of these three essentially constitutive parts. Thus it will be more or less perfect, according

ing as its exposition shall be more or less clear, its plot more or less ingenious, its unravelment more or less striking.

But this division is not the only one that should be known and practised. A dramatic work is commonly composed of five or fewer acts; and an act is composed of scenes in dialogue or soliloquy. Now every act, every scene, should have, subordinately, its exposition, its plot, and its unravelment, just as the total of the piece has, of which they are the parts.

So ought also every representation in dancing to have those three parts, which constitute every thing that is action. Without their union, there is no action that is perfect: a fault in one of those parts will have a bad effect on the  
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others;

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others ; the chain is broke ; the picture,  
whatever beauty it may have in other  
respects, is without any theatrical  
merit.

Besides these general laws of the  
theatre, which are in common to those  
compositions of dances, that are to  
be executed on it, they are subjected  
to other particular rules, which are de-  
rived from the primitive principles of  
the art.

As the art of dancing essentially con-  
sists in painting by gestures and attitudes,  
there is nothing of what would be re-  
jected by a painter of good taste, that  
the dancer can admit ; and, consequen-  
tially, every thing that such a painter  
would chuse, ought to be laid hold of,  
distributed, and properly placed in a  
dance of action.

Here

Here, on this point, recurs that never too often repeated rule, as infallible as it is plain : *let nature, in every thing, be the guide of art ; and let art, in every thing, aim at imitating nature* : a rule this, than which there is not one more trite, more hackneyed in the theory, nor less regarded in the practice.

Nature then being always Nature, always invariable in her operations and productions ; there is no false conclusion, nor straining inferences, in averring, that the art of dancing could not but be a great gainer by a revival of the taste of the antients for the pantomime branch ; which, upon the theatre, converted a transient flashy amusement of the eye, into a rational or sensible entertainment, and made of dancers, who are otherwise, a mere mechan-

cal composition of feet, legs, and arms, without spirit or meaning, artists formed to paint with the most pathetic expression, the most striking situations of human nature: I am not afraid of using here the term of the most pathetic expression, injuriously to the great power of theatrical declamation; because the great effect and charm of the moment is, evidently, the more likely to be produced by attitudes or gestures alone, unseconded by the voice; for that the pleasure of the spectator will have been the greater for the quickness of his apprehension not having needed that help to understand the meaning of them. And this is so true of the force of impression depending on that part of bodily eloquence, that even in oratory, action was, by one of the greatest judges of that art, pronounced to be the most essential part of it.

This

This may be, perhaps, an exaggeration : but when people resort to a theatre to unbend, or relax, they will hardly think their pleasure tastelessly diversified by a fine pantomime execution of a dramatic composition, to the perfection of which, poetry, music, painting, decoration, and machinery will have all contributed their respective contingents.

For the subjects of these poetical dances, the composer will undoubtedly find those which are the most likely to please, in fabulous history, especially for the serious, or pathetic stile. This we find was the great resource of the antients, who had, in that point, a considerable advantage, from which the moderns are excluded, by the antient mythology having lost that effect, and warmth of interest, which accom-

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companied all transactions taken from  
it by their poets, and brought upon  
the theatre. The heroes of antiquity,  
the marvellous of their deities, and  
the histories of their amours, or of their  
exploits, can never make the same im-  
pression on the moderns so thoroughly dif-  
fering in manners and ways of think-  
ing, from those, to whom such ex-  
hibitions were a kind of domestic,  
and even religious remembrancers. The  
spectators of those times were more  
at home to what they saw represented  
upon their theatres; the ground-work  
of the fable represented to the audi-  
ence being generally foreknown, con-  
tributed greatly to the quickness of  
their apprehension; and its being  
part of their received theology, and  
often of the history of their own coun-  
try, procured it the more favorable at-  
tention.

The

The greatest part of these advantages are wanting in the employment of these fictions among the moderns ; and to which however they are, in some measure, compelled to have recourse, for want of theatrical subjects striking enough to be agreeably thrown into a dance ; by which I do not mean to exclude all subjects that have not those poetical fictions of Greek and Roman antiquity for a basis ; on the contrary, it might justly pass for a barrenness of invention, the being reduced constantly to borrow from them, but purely to point out a treasure, ever open to the artist who shall know how to make a selection with judgment and taste : always remembering, that the more universally the fable is foreknown, the more easy will the task be of rendering it intelligible in the execution.

There



There are, doubtless, some parts of the antient mythology so obscure, and so little known, that any plan taken from them, would, to the generality of the spectators, be as great a novelty, as if the composer had himself invented the subject. There are others again of which all the interest is entirely antiquated and exploded.

As to the pieces of composition in the comic vein, there is nothing like taking the subject of them from the most agreeable and the most marking occurrences in real, current life; and the stronger they are of the manners and practice of the times, the nearer they will seem to the truth of nature, and the surer at once to be understood, and to have a pleasing effect.

And

And here I shall take the liberty of concluding with offering two instances of poetic dances; the one in the serious, the other in the comic vein, which are furnished rather as hints of the improvable nature of such compositions, than in the least meant for models of them.

The first has for title,

## VENUS and ADONIS.

The decoration represents a wood intersected by several walks, which form an agreeable perspective of distances. At the bottom of the theatre, and in the middle, there is a grand walk, terminated by a small mount, on the summit of which is seen a colonnade, that forms the peristyle of a temple.

L 1

Venus,

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Venus, preceded by the Graces and  
several nimphs, comes out of the  
temple, descends the mount, and ad-  
vances to the front of the wood; the  
simphony to be the most agreeable and  
melodious imaginable, to announce  
the arrival of the goddess of love.

The Graces and the nimphs open the  
action, and by their gestures and steps,  
express their endeavour to sooth the im-  
patience of Venus on the absence of  
Adonis. The agitation in which she  
is, ought to be painted on her counte-  
nance, and expressed by the discom-  
posure of her steps, marking her an-  
xiety and desire of seeing her lover.

The sound of the chace is heard,  
which betokens the approach of Adonis.  
Joy breaks forth in the eyes, the ges-  
tures, and steps of Venus and her train.  
Adonis,

Adonis, followed by several hunters, enters through one of the side-walks of the wood. Venus runs to meet him, and seems to chide him for having been so long away. He shows her the head of a stag, which he has killed, and which is carried, as in triumph, upon a hunting-pole, by one of the hunters; and offers it, as the fruit of his chase, in homage to the goddess, who is presently appeased, and graciously receives his offering. These two lovers then express in a *pas-de-deux*, their mutual satisfaction.

The hunters mix with the Graces and nymphs, and form a dance which characterises their harmony.

Soon a noisy simphony, of military instrumental music, gives warning of the arrival of Mars. Venus, Adonis,

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the

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the Graces, the nimphe, and hunters,  
show signs of uneasiness and terror.

Mars, followed by several warriors, enters precipitately through a walk opposite to that by which Adonis and the hunters came. Venus separates from Adonis, having insisted on his getting out of the way of the formidable god of war. He withdraws with his train by the same way as he came. Mars, enraged with jealousy, makes a shew of going to pursue Adonis. Venus stops him, and employs, in her soothing and caresses, all the usual arts of appeasing and blinding a jealous lover. She prevails at length, not only to dissipate his passion, but to make him believe himself in the wrong for having been jealous.

The

The warriors address themselves to the Graces and nimphs, and form together a dance expressive of a sort of reconciliation ; after which Mars and his train return by the same way as they came.

Venus, the Graces, and the nimphs, see them go, and when they are got a little distance from them, testify their satisfaction at having got so well over this interruption.

Adonis returns alone : Venus springs to meet him, and gives him to understand that he has now nothing to fear ; that Mars will not return in haste.

In the same walk from which Adonis came, the hunters of his train are seen pursuing a wild boar, that tries to escape just by where the Graces and the nimphs  
are,

are, who, in their fright, attempt to fly from him : but he is already so near them, that they do not know how to avoid him. Adonis runs hastily to pierce the boar with his javelin ; but the boar gets him himself down. The hunters arrive at that instant, and kill the boar ; but Adonis is nevertheless mortally wounded, and expires.

Here it is that the music and the dance are to display their respective powers : the one by the most plaintive mournful sounds ; the other by gestures and steps in which grief and despair are strongly characterised, ought to express the profound affection into which Venus is plunged, and the share the Graces, the nymphs, and the hunters take in it.

Venus

Venus appears to implore the aid of all the gods, to restore her lover to her. She bathes him with her tears, and those precious tears have such a virtue, that Adonis appears all of a sudden transformed into an anemony or wind-flower.

The Graces and the nimphe express their surprise ; but the astonishment of the hunters should be yet more strongly marked.

Venus herself is not the more comforted by this metamorphosis. A flower cannot well supply the place of her lover. She turns then her eyes towards the earth, and seems to invoke the power of some deity inhabitant of its bowels.

The



The flower disappears; the earth opens, and Proserpine rises out of it, sitting on a chariot drawn by black horses, and having at her side Adonis restored to life.

It is natural to imagine the joy that is at this to be expressed, by the symphony, by the gestures, and steps of of Venus, of the Graces, the nymphs, and hunters,

Proserpine, getting out of her chariot, holding Adonis by the hand, presents him to Venus. A *pas-de-trois* or trio-dance follows, in which the joy of the two lovers at seeing one another again is to be characterised by all the expression, and all the graces of the most pleasing dance, while Proserpine testifies her satisfaction at having produced the re-union : after which, she  
gets

gets into her chariot, and re-descends into the earth.

The Graces, the nimphe, and hunters, expreſs how highly they are charmed at ſeeing Adoniſ again; Venus and Adoniſ form a *pas-de-deux*, or duet-dance, in which the Goddeſs takes off her girdle or *ceſtus*, and puts it upon Adoniſ, in the way of a ſhoulder-belt, or as now the ribbons of moſt orders of knight-hood are worn, which is to him a ſimbol of immortality.

The Graces and nimphe teſtify to Adoniſ how pleaſed they are to ſee him received into the number of the demi-gods: the hunters pay their homage to him, and the whole concludes by a general country-dance.

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The other specimen has for title,

### THE COQUETTE PUNISHED.

The decoration represents a delicious garden, in which there are several compartments, separated by canals and *jet-d'eaux*. This scenery should exhibit the prospect of at once a pleasure-garden, and a fruit-one.

In the bottom of this perspective, there appear several gardeners busied, some in pruning the hedges, others in sowing and planting: more towards the front are seen, some women at work, tying up the flowers, or cleaning them from pernicious leaves; others setting roots in vases. All this forms the scenical picture at the drawing up the curtain.

A

A simphony mixed with the most rural instruments of music, begins with soft and soothing airs.

One of the female gardeners, more showishly dressed than the others, and who is employed upon some necessary task about the flower-vases, seems however more attentive to the admiring the flowers, than to do her work : and as she is standing near a canal, she is, when she imagines none are taking notice of her, looking at her figure in the watery mirror, admiring herself, and adjusting her dress. Though she does all this by stealth, her companions remark her coquetry, make signs to each other, and point her out to the gardeners, who join the laugh at her, without the coquet's perceiving it, who is too much taken up with herself.

M m 2

The

The simphony should exprefs by the founds, as nearly as poffible, the mockery and burfts of laughter from the reft of the gardeners.

The coquet is fadly tempted to gather fome of the flowers for her own ufe, but dares not. In the moment that ſhe is expreffing the greateſt mind for it, enters a gardener, who is not one of thoſe employed at work, and who makes up to her, ſhows her a fine noſegay, and ſignifies to her that he is come on purpoſe to offer it her. The coquet immediately leaves off her work; and this *pas-de-deux* begins by all the little grimaces and falſe coyneſs that the coquette oppoſes to her acceptance of the noſegay, but which at the ſame time only the more betray the mind ſhe has for it. The gardener keeps preſſing her to receive it. Her companions,  
curious

curious to see how this will end, advance little by little towards them: the gardeners follow them; and all surrounding the coquette and her swain, form a dance, in which the men seem to excite the lover not to take a denial, and the women want to engage the coquette to receive the nosegay; but all this, with a bantering air: at length the coquette accepts it, sticks some of the flowers in her hair, and the rest in her bosom. Her companions and the gardeners, shew by their signs, that they were very sure she would take the nosegay and return to their work.

Another gardener now enters, on the side opposite to that on which the first came, and advancing with an air of gaiety, presents to the coquette, a small basket of fine fruit. In this *pas-de-trois*,

*de-trois*, she a-fresh makes a great many faces, about whether she will take the fruit or not. The swain of the nosegay expresses his vexation at the intervention of this rival, but the coquette manages so well that she pacifies his jealousy, and accepts the other's basket of fruit, which she hangs upon her arm. The gardeners do not quit their work, but they give to understand by shrewd signs, what they think of the coquette's game.

It is easy to conceive, that the composer of this music will, in the airs made for the *pas-de-deux*, and *pas-de-trois*, pay attention to the different affections that are to be characterised by the dance.

While the gardener who brought the nosegay, and the other who presented

sented the fruit, and the coquette, are all seemingly in good harmony, enters a third gardener, gallantly dressed, of a most engaging figure, having in his hands some pink-and-silver ribbons.

The simphony should announce the arrival of this amiable gardener, by an air all expressive of briskness and gay gallantry.

The gallant gardener approaches the coquette, and shews her those glittering ribbons, which at once catch her eye, and give her a violent longing for them. This new-comer takes notice of the flowers in her hair and bosom, and of the fruit-basket hung upon her arm. He gives her plainly to understand that she must return all this to his rivals, if she has a mind to have the ribbons. These  
begin



begin to express their resentment ; but the coquette is so transported with the pleasure of bedizening herself with those ribbons, that no regard can withhold her : she returns the flowers to the one, and the fruit to the other, and takes the ribbons. The two gardeners, who see themselves slighted in this manner, threaten him who has given the ribbons, and throw themselves into attitudes of falling upon him ; at which he puts on a resolute look, and does not seem to fear them. Her companions and the gardeners leave their work, and advance some steps forwards, being curious to see how the scene will end.

The simphony should here express, by different airs, the resentment of the  
two

two first swains, and the resentment of the gallant gardener.

The coquette uses her best arts to pacify the two angry gardeners ; but it is all in vain ; they express their indignation, and are determined to take their revenge upon their rival. Just in the instant that they are preparing to attack him, and that he is stoutly standing upon his defence, comes in a female gardener, amiable, lively, but without any mark of coquetry in her looks or dress ; who, by the eager and frightened air with which she interposes, and places herself between the gallant gardener and the others, to prevent their hurting him, discovers the tender regard she has for him.

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The two others, in respect to this charming girl, dare not proceed; but they give her to understand that the coquette has been so base as to return the flowers to the one, and the fruit to the other, that she might get the ribbons from the gardener whom she is protecting from their just resentment.

At this the offended fair one expresses to her lover her indignation, but does not the less for that make the others sensible that she will not suffer them to hurt him. She snatches next, from the coquette, the ribbons. The whole company round testify their approbation of what she has done, even the two gardeners, who were, the moment before, so angry, burst out a-laughing for joy, to see the coquette so well punished, being now left without flowers, fruit, or ribbons; at  
which

which she withdraws, overwhelmed with confusion, and with the loud laugh and rallying gestures of her companions and the other gardeners.

The gay gardener, vexed at having been surprised by his mistress, in an act of gallantry to another woman, wants to pass it off to her as merely a scheme to amuse himself, and to laugh at the coquette. At first she will not hear him ; she treads the ribbons under her feet, and is going away in a passion. He stops her, and entreats her forgiveness with an air so moving and penetrated, that, little by little, she is disarmed of her anger, and pardons him, in sign of which she gives him her hand.

There is no need of specifying here what the dance in action, accompanied  
by

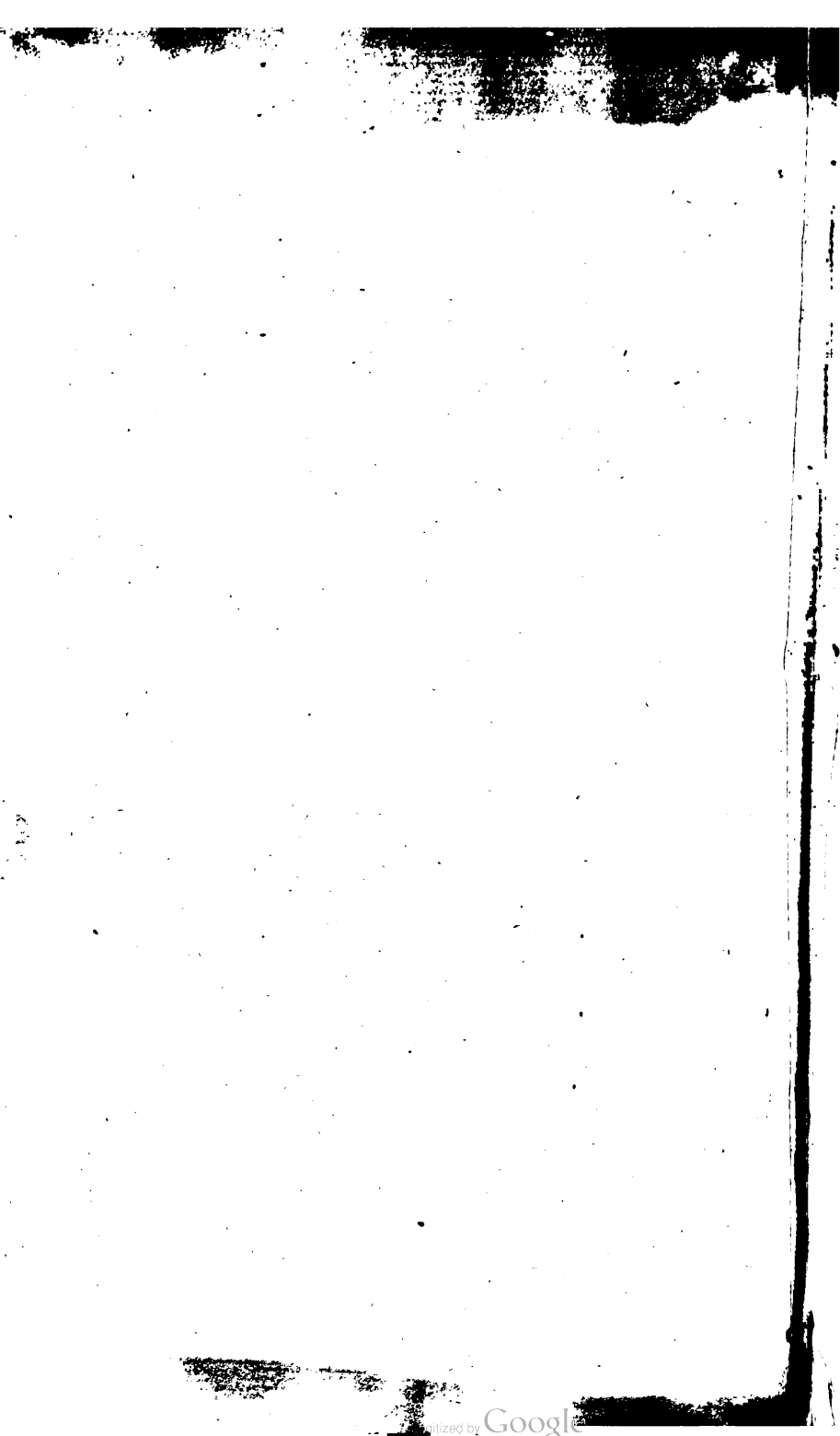
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by the music, should express in this *pas-de-deux*; it is too obvious.

The gardeners, men and women, testify their rejoicing at this reconciliation, and the dance becomes general.

F I N I S.





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