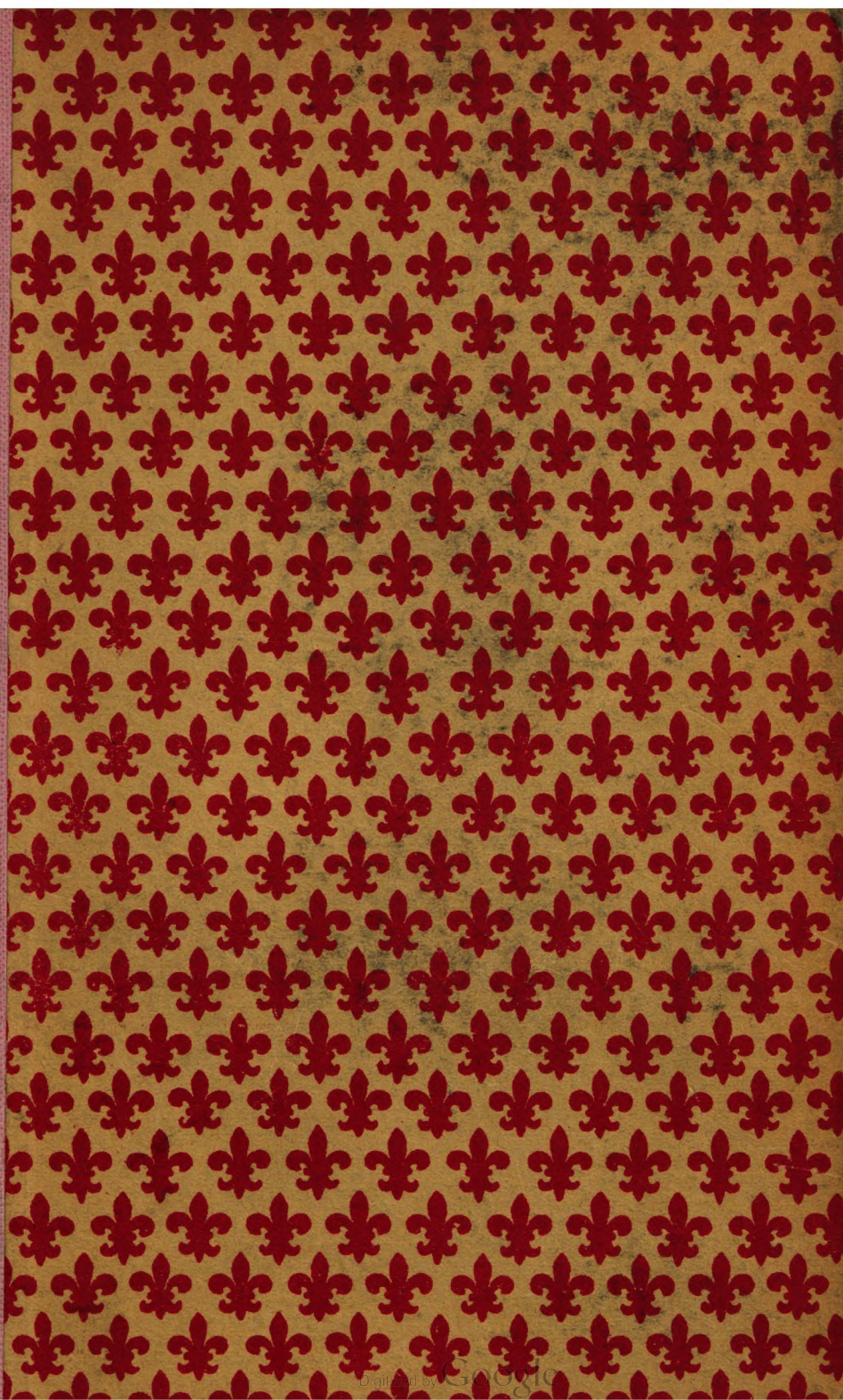

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>



SIS
ES
ON
ING



60

2

93

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE
CENTRALE - FIRENZE

50.000 - 10-939

PRICE FIVE SHILLINGS.

NOTES UPON DANCING,
HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL.

BY

C. BLASIS,

BALLET MASTER TO THE ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA,
COVENT GARDEN; FINISHING MASTER OF THE
IMPERIAL ACADEMY OF DANCING AT
MILAN; AUTHOR OF VARIOUS
OTHER WORKS, &c.



legae

London :

PUBLISHED BY M. DELAPORTE,
116, REGENT STREET, AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1847.

NOTES UPON DANCING,
HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL,

BY

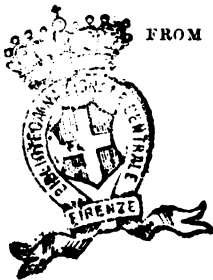
C. BLASIS,

BALLET MASTER TO THE ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA, COVENT GARDEN ;
FINISHING MASTER OF THE IMPERIAL ACADEMY OF
DANCING AT MILAN ; AUTHOR OF A TREATISE
ON DANCING, AND OTHER WORKS ON
THEATRICAL ART, PUBLISHED
IN ITALY, FRANCE, AND
ENGLAND.

FOLLOWED BY A HISTORY OF
THE IMPERIAL AND ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCING, AT MILAN,
TO WHICH ARE ADDED
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF THE BLASIS FAMILY,
INTERSPERSED WITH VARIOUS PASSAGES ON
THEATRICAL ART.

EDITED AND TRANSLATED,
FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH AND ITALIAN,
By R. BARTON.

WITH ENGRAVINGS.



London :

PUBLISHED BY M. DELAPORTE,
116, REGENT STREET, AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1847.

M'GOWAN AND CO., GREAT WINDMILL STREET, HAYMARKET.

60. 2. 93

U. P. H. S. S. S.

H. S. S.



*Virginia Blasis, Athrice-Cantante,
Born at Marseilles 1806.
Died at Florence 1838.*

an end, or



[Faded, illegible text]

ADVERTISEMENT.

(BY THE EDITOR.)

It will be seen, that the principle object of this work is to place that part of the entertainment at the Lyric Theatres or Opera, called the Ballet, on a new basis. This, the eminent artiste, who is the author of this work, has already effected in his own country, where he is patronized and supported by the government, and is there undoubtedly the first in his profession, as he is perhaps in Europe. The true object of the Ballet appears to be the Beautiful in motion, supported by expressive and well-adapted music. This may be effected in two ways, by two classes of movements; the one is quick, vehement and joyous, and is no other than Dancing—but the other class of motions is a far different thing; it is no less than a mute expression of feelings, passions, ideas, intentions, or any other sensations belonging to a reasonable being—this is properly termed Pantomime, and must also be sustained by music, which now becomes a kind of explanatory voice; and while it greatly assists the Mime, when well adapted to the subject to be expressed by his gestures, it produces upon the mind and feelings of the spectator an extraordinary effect. In executing the motions required for the subject, a Mime educated according to M. Blasis' system, presents the most beautiful and classical outlines of the figure, which are ever varying, and display to the sculptor and painter, a succession of studies for the human form. If the Ballet be considered in the light of a dramatic piece, containing a complete subject or plot, that is, a beginning, a middle, and an end, or ca-

tastrophe, it is totally impossible that this should be explained to the audience without the aid of able Mimes ; such an explanation is the basis of the business. In Italy, and in France, the Ballet is considered as a very important part of theatrical amusements, and much expense is incurred to satisfy public expectation. Italy, from the times of the Roman Emperors, has ever been the native country of expressive gesture, that is, of Pantomime, whereas France has ever been pre-eminent in the dance ; consequently, if the Italian Ballet is principally composed of Pantomimic action, the Ballet in France presents scarcely anything besides a succession of dances ; but our author, being perfectly acquainted with this state of the case, has produced a perfect piece by a union of the two styles. If dancing represents the joy and delight of some incident belonging to a piece dramatically constructed, the spectators ought to be informed by some means what had happened to cause so much gaiety ; this information is furnished by the Mime, who, by expressive looks and speaking gestures, interprets it to the audience. But we shall not here enlarge further upon this subject, we shall merely direct the reader's attention to the first two Parts of this work, and part of the third, where the author treats of the Ballet with extensive learning, much poetical fancy, and a profound and scientific knowledge of his profession. He seems, in fact, to be destined to give a new life and form to the Ballet in every country, and above all, to remove from it whatever was objectionable in a moral point of view, as may be concluded from the account of the Imperial Academy of Dancing at Milan. The memoirs of two other eminent members of the Blasis family will be found, it is presumed, to contain matter both interesting and instructive to lovers of theatrical lyric art.

London, 1847.

NOTES UPON DANCING,
HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL.

PART I.

RISE, PROGRESS, DECLINE, & REVIVAL OF DANCING.
WORKS ON DANCING.—CELEBRATED DANCERS.
DESCRIPTION OF ANCIENT & MODERN DANCES.

—————Terpsichore,
D'Euterpe, aimable sœur, comme Euterpe on l'encense,
Et mariant sa marche au son des instrumens,
Elle a le même trône, et les mêmes amans.—DORAT.

THE study of the Fine Arts is the most pleasing occupation to which the human mind can be dedicated. Such, frequently, is the delight attending it, that the clouds which the labours and cares of life often cast over our spirits are, for a while, dispersed and driven away; nor is amusement the only advantage attending this study—its utility is conspicuous. The knowledge of one branch or other of the fine arts has immortalized many men; and some nations, by that moral superiority which their cultivation has given them over others, have been rendered for ever illustrious and celebrated.

The countries where a Newton calculated infinity, a Shakespeare and a Milton wrote; where a Bramante and Michel Angelo raised their structures; where Raphael painted; where Dante, Ariosto and Tasso sung; that where Corneille, Molière, Racine and Rousseau flourished; the native land of Cervantes and Calderon; the country of Leibnitz, Schiller and Mozart; and that of the powerful and magnificent prince who governs on the banks of the Neva—these are the first countries of the world. The rest, whatever their antiquity or gifts of nature, have made but little progress with regard to the fine arts, or remain in total obscurity.

I have, in these preliminary remarks, perhaps departed from my subject; but let the motive plead my excuse. The arts are linked together in one and the same chain: poetry, music, painting and dancing bear a strong affinity to each other; and the enjoyments we derive from them, merit an equal gratitude and homage; and most enviable are they whose souls are susceptible of the pleasures which they inspire:

Le véritable esprit sait se plier à tout;
On ne vit qu' à demi quand on n'a qu'un seul goût.

VOLTAIRE.

Singing, no less delightful than natural to man, must in its progress have inspired him with certain gestures, relative to the various sounds which he uttered. His breast became agitated; his arms were expanded, or they approached each other; his feet began to form certain steps, more or less rapid; his features participated in these movements; in short, his whole body was soon responsive to the sounds that vibrated in his ears; and thus SINGING, which was the expression of one pleasure, gave rise to another, which was indeed innate, but till then unknown, and to which was given the name of DANCING. Such were unquestionably the primitive causes of the origin of this art.

Music and dancing have a very strong ascendancy over our intellectual faculties. "La musique," says

D'Alembert, " tantôt douce et insinuante, tantôt folâtre et gaie, tantôt simple et naïve, tantôt, enfin, sublime et pathétique, tour à tour nous charme, nous élève et nous déchire."

Music, it may be further observed, when united to choice words, rythmus and time, should be made to express whatever can be visibly represented at a theatre ; for the imitative art of music is capable of conveying to the ear all the various movements of bodies : it is able to depict slowness and rapidity, calm and agitation, motion and repose, trouble and tranquillity, gaiety and grief. Music is even often obliged to convey an idea of things to which sounds bear no resemblance ; as, for instance, height and depth, proximity and distance, weight and extent, strength and weakness, &c. It is indispensable that, in order to complete satisfactorily any composition, the assistance of the easy and the difficult *mode* should be employed. Musical expression may be made omnipotent, if I may be allowed such a term, in conveying to the perception, with extraordinary truth of delineation, the delightful feelings experienced at break of day ; the warbling of early birds ; the splendour of the rising sun ; the whispering of the breeze among bushes and trees ; the calm and majestic onward progress of a river ; the headlong rush of the roaring torrent ; the rain descending drop by drop ; the rattling of hail ; even the fluttering of the noiseless flakes of snow as they descend ; the darting motion of lightning ; the whispering, whistling or howling of the wind ; the roar of thunder ; the hissing rush of the thunderbolt ; the gradual darkening of the sky with masses of thick clouds ; the high-riding billows that seem striving to break over that ridgy circle, to which they are confined by nature ; the volcanic eruption pouring over the surrounding fields, and submerging the neighbouring villages with liquid fire ; and finally, the shaking and rending earth, swallowing up houses and inhabitants.

The talented composer should moreover be able, by means of his art, to describe and interpret not only the

physical world, but he should also endeavour to depict the interior world, that is, the moral feelings and emotions of the mind and the heart, whether grand and terrible, or gentle and endearing—such as sweetness and tenderness, langour and pain, wanton gaiety and hilarity, sadness and suffering, anger and rage—in a word, all the passions and all the virtues. Such music as this, must proceed from a glowing fancy and ready invention—from a 'composer who can lay under contribution all the means and resources to be found in melody, rythmus, and harmony, to assist him in his creations. Such a musician becomes another Prometheus: the figure being formed after the original prototype, he breathes into it the celestial flame, and it lives; he is like the creative poet, and the inspired painter; the latter, by the mysteries of his art, gives life and speech to his canvass, while the musician knows how to rouse and alarm us, filling us with trouble and agitation, or he gently leads us into calm repose. Not more beautifully than truly does the English poet sing—

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,
 While yet in early Greece she sung,
 The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
 Thronged around her magic cell,
 Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
 Possesst beyond the muse's painting;
 By turns they felt the glowing mind,
 Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined.—COLLINS.

And therefore doubtless the composer should aim at being such as the poet described by Horace,—

Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur
 Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter auget,
 Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
 Ut magnis. . . .—HOR., ARS POET.

It may, in fact, be safely concluded, that imitative music should be put on a level with any of the imitative poetry, to be found in Virgil. The verbal accent,

the inflexion of voice, the measure, expression, pathos, the predominating idea—in a word, whatever belongs to recited verse—may be exactly reproduced in music, which may be rendered cheerful or expressive, tender or affecting, imitative or dramatic, for any purpose. The composer, then, when taking Science as a guide, Philosophy as a counsellor, and Genius as a support, the melody and harmony he produces will be an eloquence of sounds that must persuade all minds, and he will become the faithful interpreter of every verse that goes to the composition of a musical drama.

The powers of this enchanting art are well known to every one. The learned Saverio Mattei relates, that the republic of Rome had expressly established a college of Tibicini, whose device was composed of the five following letters—Q. S. P. P. S.: “*Qui sacris publicis præsto sunt.*” They were held in high estimation, and treated in an honourable manner; they might even aspire to the first dignities in the commonwealth. Sometimes they were priests of Jupiter and Augurs; at others, admirals of fleets, captains of legions, commanders of the cavalry, &c., and history records of them in many passages.*

The name of the muse Terpsichore, who presides over Dancing, is composed of two Greek words, *τερπω*, to delight, and *χορος*, the dance; and the name of the muse Euterpe, who presides over Music, is derived from two words, *ευ*, and *τερπω*, “to delight.”

The former appears to have been created for the climates that are under the influence of a torrid sun. It is a pleasure everywhere,—there it is a passion; warmed by an incessant heat, the glowing constitution of the native of the south contains the seed of every pleasure; each moment of his rapid existence seems to him made only for enjoyment. The inhabitant of the north, on the other hand, forced by nature to maintain a constant combat with the rigors of the seasons, seldom aspires to delight; his whole care is engrossed

* Vide Reinesius, Gruter, Gudio, &c.

in securing himself from snows and frosts. The roughness of his manners almost extinguishes any sensibility, and those delicate feelings arising from exciting pleasures are to him wholly unknown. How could Dancing, that charming offspring of delight, display her graceful attractions amid the continual snow of ice-bound climates?

Music and Dancing are coeval with the first ages of the world. The Egyptians, the Persians, the Indians, the Chaldeans, the Ethiopians, the Cretans, the Thebans, the Phrygians, the Bœotians, antient Italy and the Etruscans, the Jews and the Arcadians, which are the most ancient of nations: Amphion, Museus, Linus, Orpheus, Olenus, Chiron, Thamyris, the prophetess Miriam, Zéila, David* and others, together with the dances that the Israelites performed in honour of the golden calf, proclaim the antiquity of dancing. It was necessarily in ages that succeeded their first origin, that ingenious and inventive men subjected the two arts to principles and rules.

We are informed by Moses, that the inventor of Music was Jubal, who was of the family of Cain; and that his brother, Tubal-Cain, was a worker in brass and iron. † It may therefore be supposed, that he conceived the idea from the reiterated blows of his brother's hammers on the anvil, the sounds of which induced him to compose musical tones, and further to regulate their time and cadence. But Macrobius and Boetius give the honour of the discovery to Pythagoras; yet it is remarkable that his discovery is recorded to have been made in the same manner. They relate that, as the philosopher was passing near a forge, he remarked the sounds that arose from the anvil as the hammers struck upon it in rotation; and that the variety of notes thus produced, gave him the first hints towards laying down rules for the art of melody.

With respect to the origin of dancing, Burette has

* Psalm cl. vers. 4.

† Genesis, chap. iv. vers. 21, 22.

gathered the following information from ancient writers : —“Opinions do not agree as to the names and the country of those from whom the Greeks received their first lessons in this elegant exercise. Some pretend, and amongst the number Theophrastus, that a certain flute-player, named Andron, a native of Catania in Sicily, was the first who accompanied the notes of his flute with various movements of the body, which responded to his music and harmonized with it; and that it was for this reason that the ancient Greeks expressed the verb “to dance,” by *σιχελίζεω*, wishing it thereby to be understood, that they originally derived dancing from Sicily.”

Lucian attributes its invention to Rhea, who taught it to her priests in Phrygia, and in the islands of Crete. * Others suppose that it is owing to the Romans, or, at least, that it was they who brought it to perfection. These last, indeed, seemed more than any others fitted by nature to practise it; they excelled in that kind of dancing which we must term voluptuous.

No nation among the ancients carried music and dancing to such perfection, as did the Greeks; the Athenians were passionately fond of the latter. Socrates and Plato approved of dancing; and the Thessalians and Lacedæmonians deemed it to be equal in rank to any of the fine arts.

Plutarch, in one of his five discourses, speaks of both music and dancing with the same admiration. The ancients gave a proof of their taste and judgment, in making the distinction that subsists between the various styles of theatrical dancing; they saw that it was requisite to classify them, and they accordingly divided them in the following manner :—the *Cordax*, the *Sicinnis* and the *Emmeleia*.

The *Emmeleia* was a sort of tragic movement or ballet, of which the elegance and majesty were greatly celebrated by Plato and other eminent men, who make mention of its use.

* Read—“Lucian’s Dialogue upon Dancing.”

The Sicinnis was a dance so called from the peculiar shaking of the body, and violent motion of the limbs practised in it. (*Vide Athenæus.*) This dance must be considered of the grotesque kind.

The Cordax was a loose kind of dance, introduced into comedies, and performed by persons supposed to be elevated with wine. (*Vide Ath.*) This dance was void of all dignity and decorum; its movements were gross and ridiculous; those who executed it made the most indecent motions with their backs, hips and loins. It was therefore an exhibition, I suppose, which may be compared with the Dythyrambic dance of the Bacchanals. In fact, certain songs of a violent and infuriated character, were sung in honour of Bacchus, accompanied by dances of the above description.

Besides these three kinds there was also another, called the *Pyrrhic*, or *Warrior* dance.* This dance imitated those movements and positions of the body, by the aid of which the wounds or darts of an enemy were avoided, that is, by bending, flying away, leaping or stooping. The attitudes also of the party attacking were described; the hurling of the javelin, and the postures when aiming a blow with the sword. Plato says that dancing, with all its varied corporeal exercises, draws its origin from an imitation of speech, described by the movements and gesticulations of every limb. (*Vide Plato de Leg.*)

The martial dance of Romulus, called the *Belli Crepa*, and that denominated *Salian*, modified by Numa, were no more than imitations of the *Pyrrhic*.

The dances most in use among the ancients, besides those we have described, were the dance of *Dædalus*,

* *Vide Meursius, Antiq. Græc. de Salt. verbo ΠΥΡΡΙΧΝ,—Pyrrhicam. Ea saltationis species est nomen ab inventore sortita, quem alii Pyrrhum, Achilles filium, alii Pyrrhum, quemdam Cretensem, vel etiam a ratione saltandi quod Pyrrichii pedis modulo soletet agitari, de quo pede. (Quint. lib. ix. cap. 14.) Hæc fuit saltatio, ut plures existimant, pro juvenibus ad militarem disciplinam exercendis; varii enim illius motus et flexus, vitandi vel inferendæ plagæ reddebant idoneus. (Casaub.)*

the Alcinous dance, the Salian, the Egyptian, the Corybantes, the Ionian, the Lydian, the Phrygian, the Etruscan, the Lesbian, besides a number of dances known as domestic, town dances, religious, poetic, mimic and theatrical dances.

Cliophantes of Thebes and Æschylus, greatly advanced the progress of dancing. The latter introduced it into his pieces, and, by uniting together all the imitative arts, gave the first model of theatrical representations. Painting had a great share in adding to their charms, and the pencil of Agatharcus, under the directions of the great dramatist, traced the first ornaments that embellished the stage. The same Agatharcus wrote a work upon scenic architecture, which must have then been of great utility and value. This celebrated artist constructed the theatre at Athens, and that magnificent edifice was looked upon as a model of that kind of building.

A few centuries afterwards, when the Romans exhibited their ravishing and magnificent spectacles, in the same style as the Greeks had done, dancing obtained the praise and admiration of such persons as Lucian, Apuleius, Martial, Seneca and other learned men, and always formed a part of the Roman pantomimes—a sort of performance entirely unknown to the Greeks. These last pieces were composed of subjects which might be either comic or heroic, and were expressed and interpreted by means of gesture alone, dances being introduced in their proper place. The names of Pyladus and Bathyllus, the original authors of the pantomimic art, remain celebrated on the pages of history, as renowned performers of this kind of *Ballet*, but which was then known by the name of the *Italian Dance*.*

La pantomime est due à l'antique Italie,
Où même elle éclipsa Melpomène et Thalie.—CHÉNIER.

The Romans were enraptured with these pantomimes, and they exalted to the skies the tyrant Au-

* Saltatio Italica.

gustus, who permitted these amusements and paid the expenses, merely to advance his own political schemes unmolested. The primitive Romans designated dancing by the word *Saltatio*; the Greeks called it *Orchesis*. Salius, an Arcadian, is said to have been the first who taught the former people the *Ars Saltationis*. With them, therefore, the *Salian* dance would seem to be the original; and this consisted in imitating all the gestures and motions that man can possibly make. And in this species of dancing, or rather gymnastics, mimics and buffoons usually exercised themselves.

Among the ancients, the name of *mimes* was originally given to those dialogues which described and alluded to their habits and morals. These dialogues were spoken by men, and, when necessary, by women also. The best compositions of this kind were those of Sophron, who lived before Plato, those by Xenarchus, and those of Publius Syrus, a Roman. Laberius, Philistion, Lentulus and Marulus, shone also in this class of comedy, which was very similar to the *Atellanes*, formerly represented at Aversa. The authors of these pieces were termed *mimographers*, from the Greek words *mimos*, an imitator, and *grapho*, which signifies "I write." The name of *mime* was afterwards given to those performers who imitated by their gestures only, what was spoken by the *histriones* or comedians, and singers or declaimers both in tragedy and comedy: for tragic declamation among the ancients, it must be remembered, was a species of recitative or chant. In the course of time, these mimes degenerated greatly, and became bombastic, frivolous and indecent, and were looked upon as no more than buffoons and jugglers. The men were generally treated with contempt, and the women as loose and abandoned characters.

When the habits and manners of the Romans had become generally licentious, the players performed publicly the *Amours of Mars and Venus*, with obscene gestures and circumstances. Suetonius tells us that under the reign of Nero, the infamous loves of *Pasiphaë* were frequently represented on the stage, and in

so natural a manner, that many believed the real scene was passing before them :—

Functam Pasiphaën, dictæo credite tauro,
Vidimus, accepit fabula prisca fidem.—MARTIAL.

In the reign of Augustus, two celebrated actors remodelled the art of mimicry, and carried it to a high degree of perfection. It was in their skilful hands that it acquired a splendour and importance unknown even to the brilliant ages of Greece. Their dexterity in representing sentiment by gesture, became at length astonishing.

It must be remarked here, that both mimes and pantomimes were anciently employed in the dance, with this difference, however, that the mimes, by indecent motions and obscene gesticulations, described the habits of vile and ignoble characters only, while, on the contrary, the pantomime personified and gesticulated all characters whatever : the actions of the base, and the deeds of the illustrious ; great captains, heroes, and even gods. Thus, the Romans gave the name of *pantomimi* (from the Greek words *pantos*, all, and *mimeomai*, to counterfeit) to those performers who expressed all kinds of things generally, by means of gesture and gesticulations. The two arts of pantomime and dancing, were afterwards called in common, *Saltatio*. The word *tripudium* was also used to signify dancing ; the Greeks included the whole under one name—*orchestica*.*

Lucian, in his celebrated dialogue upon Dancing, raised the art to much dignity, by representing it in its true light. He pointed out its utility ; showed the many advantages that might be derived from it ; described all the charms with which it is adorned ; and confirmed the judgment of those who had placed it in the same rank with Tragedy and Comedy.

Women were never permitted to perform either in tragedy or comedy, among the ancients : Polus acted the part of Electra, sister of Orestes. Men, therefore, undertook

* See Vossius, *Instit. Poet.* lib. ii. cap. 30.—Also the learned Dissertation by Dr. Zulatti.

every part, and there were some who became particularly celebrated for their talent in performing female characters. Nero, the worst, perhaps, of all the Roman emperors, was passionately attached to theatrical diversions, and always highly patronised this class of actors. He himself performed the part of *Niobe*, of *Canace in her accouchement*, and several other female characters. In pantomimes, however, women performed in their respective parts, and produced a much better effect. Those females whose names remain on record as having been distinguished in their art, are the following:—Arbuscula, Lucilia, Tymele, Denisa, Cytheris—of whose beauty, talent and wit, the poet Gallus became deeply enamoured—and Valeria Cloppia, which last gained celebrity also, by the composition of several pantomimes.

It is not long since that, in modern Rome, all the female parts, both in operas and ballets, were played by men. This custom was also equally followed both in France and England, till about the middle of the seventeenth century; while any caricatured female part was always played by men. In this particular line, Jeurrain, a French actor, became very celebrated. The actor Hubert, another French performer, was so perfect in this species of acting that Molière is generally supposed to have written expressly for him, the characters of *Madame Pernelle*, *Madame Jourdain*, *Madame de Sotenville*, and that of the *Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*.

The following is a list of the actors of antiquity:—Esopus, Roscius, Nestor, Paris, Laberius, Pylades, Hylas, pupil of the preceding, Bathylus, Mnesterius, Coramalus, Phabeton, Plancus, Sophronius, Polus, Aristodemus, Demetrius, Callistrates, Philonides, Neoptolemus, Apelles, and Stratocles.

We give also a short catalogue of modern mimes:—Messrs. Dauberval, Vestris, Ferdinand, Molinari, Costa, Dutacq, Bocci, Robillon, and A. and F. Ramaccini.—Mesds. Théodore, Chevigny, Bigottini, Pallerini, Léon, Pezzoli, Chéza, Bocci, Conti, Olivieri, and A. Ramaccini Blasis in the serious, *demi-caractère* and pastoral.

According to the information we derive from such

authors as have treated of the dances of their times, I am of opinion that the movement mentioned above, and very properly named *Saltatio* (leaping), must have been something very similar to the grotesque kind of performance, so prevalent in Italy some years since, but which seems at present nearly banished from the theatres of that country. The Italian *grotesque* is nothing but leaping, tumbling, and exhibiting feats of strength, and can only be endured in extravaganzas and ballets of the burlesque kind. Marino describes one of these grotesque performers as,—“One who ventures upon prodigious exertions, at once so extraordinary and dangerous, that the wonder which they inspire is always mixed with horror.”

This kind of performance, questionable as it is, has nevertheless lately met with a zealous supporter, who has had the temerity to insert in a journal of Turin an article, where he speaks of the theatre Carignan highly extolling the *grotesque*. This singular amateur, after having lavished his praises on dancers below even the middle class, continues: “The grotesque *artistes*, B., A. and S., must also be mentioned with praise, as performers who do their utmost to dignify this style of dancing (*jumping*), which, I know not for what reason, was for some time almost universally proscribed in Italy, its native country. It often serves to give a relief to that tedious sameness of grave steps, which serious dancers have introduced.” To the reader who is acquainted with the grotesque style, I leave the task of commenting on this passage. If Art possessed no better critics and connoisseurs than such as the above writer, we should very soon fall back into the usages of the thirteenth century; but, says Boileau,—

“Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire.”

It is only in one instance that such movements can be tolerated: we allude to the English pantomime, in which the grotesque perfectly agrees with the character denominated the *Clown*,—it is his element, and if he attempts any other species of gesture, he is immediately out of his sphere.

The corruption that had crept into the theatrical exhibitions of ancient Rome, induced Trajan to forbid them entirely; in consequence of which they were for awhile abandoned. Some time after that emperor's death they again made their appearance, but still accompanied by the same obscenities to which they owed their decline. In the same manner, the Christian pontiffs followed the example of Trajan, by prohibiting their performance.

At length, after a lapse of some centuries, modern Italy produced Bergonzo di Botta, the reviver of dancing, music, and histrionic diversions. He signalised himself in the fête which he had prepared for Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, on the marriage of that prince to Isabella of Arragon.* The taste and magnificence displayed in this superb festival at Tortona, was imitated by all the principal towns in Italy, which appeared eagerly to concur in the regeneration of these delightful arts.

Italy has been, at different periods, the garden or seminary of every art and science. It is the native country of Dante, Columbus, Galileo, and Machiavel; there also the genius of Dancing shone forth, with more grace and elegance than was known to the ancients:—

“D’ogni bell’ Arte, non sei madre, o Italia?”—S. PELLICO.

The Italians were, in fact, the first to subject the arms, legs, and body, to certain rules, and their system of gestures began in the sixteenth century. Before that time they danced, in my opinion, much in the same manner as the Greeks and Romans had done before them, and which consisted principally in giving high leaps, making extravagant contortions, uncouth and indelicate gestures, and finally pausing in attitudes which were anything but becoming. A common-place prac-

* See *Eucyclopédie Française*, art. “BAL.”—Nothing can be more curious than the description of these Italian fêtes; they show clearly by their magnificence, fancy, variety and taste, the enthusiastic genius of the Italians, and prove their love for what is lofty, pompous and picturesque. M. Blasis, a friend of the Countess Michiel of Venice, author of the “*Venetian Fêtes*,” dedicated to her the description of many fêtes which took place in the sixteenth century.

tice was the only instruction these dancers received, and if they made any improvement in their dancing, it depended upon the amount of pleasure they felt in any particular movement. Dancing, considered as an art, was then only in its infancy. Those who are desirous of further information on the subject of dancing among the ancients, may learn much from Lucian, Meursius, J. Pollux, Cassiodorus, Athenaeus, Scaliger, Cahusac, Ménétrier, Bonnet, Burette, Gironi, Brown, Chaussard, Baron, &c.

Taste and experience having at length established principles and precepts by which the steps, attitudes, and motions were systematically classed and arranged, all was afterwards done according to rule and method, and the strictest harmony was established with the time and cadence of the accompanying music. The works of the best sculptors and painters, must have served as models towards the attainment of grace and elegance in the various positions adopted in dancing, as they did to the Greek and Roman mimes, in their dumb gesticulations. Dancing thus made rapid strides towards its attainment to the rank of a delightful imitative art, ever acknowledging pantomime as its guide and companion.

Dancing, pantomime, and histrionic splendour, have in the present day, been carried to a very high degree of perfection. With respect to magnificence, historical truth of costume and scenery, nothing can be compared to the theatres in the principal towns in Italy—none can be admitted to dispute with them the palm of excellence, excepting the Opera of Paris, and the two Theatres Royal of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, of London. The predominating taste in Italy for theatrical representation, may be alleged as a reason for their superiority in these things, like the Romans of old, with whom, at one period, the universal cry was “*Panem et Circenses!*” The taste and style of scenery in modern times, however, aided by the power of machinery, and the talent displayed by the performers, far surpass the infantine attempts of the ancients.

Notwithstanding the vicious taste, and even ignorance, with which our ancestors are reproached by modern innovators, we have not extended much beyond them the principles of the art. Our execution is unquestionably more graceful, complicated and bold, than that of our old masters ; but is it not to them we are indebted for our pre-eminence? They afforded us the means of surpassing them; they showed us the paths that led to perfection; they pointed out to us the goal, and we attained it.

I am about to prove this, by quoting a passage from Marino's celebrated poem of "Adonis," which will, at the same time, serve as an authority for what has been said concerning the origin of modern dancing, and Italian dancers. The amateur of the art, will find in this extract many interesting details, and the professor much useful information. I have never yet seen anything of the kind so truly and graphically descriptive,—it is admirable.

The poet exaggerates at times, but it is a prerogative of his muse : still, all that he asserts is within the pale of possibility. He enables us to judge of the state in which dancing was, two centuries ago ; and the parallel that I shall draw, by means of notes prefixed to certain passages, between the steps and attitudes of those times, and such as we now practise, will be found as interesting as they are extraordinary.

Marino displays both taste and knowledge, in the art upon which he here discourses so sweetly. What he sings concerning Terpsichore, clearly indicates of how much improvement dancing was susceptible from the first. Our modern Ovid, in the twentieth canto of his poem of "Adonis," relates that Venus instituted games to celebrate the obsequies of the same Adonis. The divinities are all assembled, to contend for the different prizes. The muse of dancing (Terpsichore) bounds into the lists and pompously exhibits her skill ; and the following is the animated description which the enthusiasm of the poet has produced upon the subject:—

—Soletta a ballar resta in disparte
Tersicore, che diva è di quell' arte.

Si ritragge da capo, innanzi fassi,
Piega il ginocchio, e move il piè spedito,
E studia ben, come dispensi i passi, (1)
Mentre del dotto suon segue l'invito. (2)
Circonda il campo, e raggirando vassi
Pria che proceda, a carolar più trito,
Sì lieve, che porria, benchè profonde,
Premer senz' offender le vie dell'onde. (3)

Sul vago piè si libra, e il vago piede,
Movendo a passo misurato e lento,

(1) This is the preamble and preparation that the dancer should make for the performance of his step. At this moment, he disposes his arms and body in the most appropriate and becoming position, arranging also the movements of his legs, so that they may always preserve a perfect harmony with each other. The same form precisely is now employed, when on the point of commencing a dance, as if to indicate that all the movements are about to be executed with grace and according to rule.

(2) The steps must absolutely keep exact time to the music, and responsively mark each bar, cadence, &c. This unity is indispensable, and the effect it produces is admirable. Mesds. J. Ramaccini and Léon excelled in this part of their profession.

(3) The dancer gradually introduces all the varieties, comprised in his art. His manner of execution must be progressive, and contrasts must be so managed, as to give a kind of light and shade to the whole performance. Vivacity and elasticity are essential requisites in a good dancer; the spectator in fact delights to see in his movements something more than *earthly*. And this is what is so much admired in the lady mentioned above, Mad. Léon, the wife of a distinguished Ballet-master, and which induced a celebrated poet of ours, Count Paradisi, in one of his finest odes, to make this remark, which with his permission I shall quote:—

— l' agile
Piè d' Egle (Mad. Léon), la decante
Mollezza, e la pieghevole
Salma, che in alto lieve
Par che qual piuma o neve,
Perda al vento di scendere il vigor.

C

Con maestria, con leggiadria si vede
 Portar la vita in cento guise e cento.(4)
 Or, si scosta, or, si accosta, or fugge, or riede,
 Or, a manca, or, a destra in un momento,(5)
 Scorrendo il suol, siccome suol baleno
 Dell' aria esùva il limpido sereno.(6)

E con sì destri, e ben composti moti
 Radendo in prima il pian si avvolge ed erra,
 Che non si sa qual piede in aria roti,
 E qual fermo de' due toechi la terra.
 Fa suoi corsi, e suoi giri or pieni, or voti,
 Quando l'orbe distorna, e quando il serra,
 Con partimenti sì minuti, e spessi,
 Che il Meandro non ha tanti reflessi.(7)

Divide il tempo, e la misura eguale,
 Ed osserva in ogni atto ordine e norma,
 Secondo che ode il sonatore, e quale
 O grave il suono, o concitato ei forma,
 Tal, col piede atteggiando o scende, o sale
 E va tardo, o veloce a stampar l'orma.(8)

(4) Uprightness and equilibrium are essential requisites; and the *grands tems* must be correctly and elegantly executed. The dancer should ever remember that his person must always be presented to the spectators in a graceful position, and he must minutely vary his attitude, after every pause.

(5) There must be no monotony in the steps and *entrechats*; for the charms of variety and novelty should adorn the performance throughout.

(6) Rapidity gives a brilliancy to the steps, which renders their effect more delightful.

(7) Our modern Ovid in this stanza alludes to the *temps vigoureux*, *temps enlevés*, *entrechats*, *pas en tournant*, *pirouettes*, &c. His description is the echo of his own knowledge of the subject, and a perfect picture of all the movements; nothing in fact can convey a more precise idea of the performance of the best Ballet-dancers of the present time.

(8) Marino here indicates the harmony and consent, that must exist between the music and the dance, and how necessary it is that the artiste should render his legs, arms, and whole body, submissive and responsive to the sound that inspires his every motion. This,

Fiamma ed onda somiglia, e turbo e biscia,
Se poggia, o cala, o si rivolge, o striscia.(9)

Fan bel concerto l' un e l' altro fianco
Per le parti di mezzo, e per l' estreme,
Moto il destro non fa che subit' a nco
Non l'accompagni il suo compagno insieme.(10)
Concordi i pié, mentre si vibra il manco,
L' altro ancor, con la punta il terren preme.
Tempo non batte mai scarso, o soverchio,
Nè tira a caso mai linea, nè cerchio.(11)

together with the art of appropriating the steps to the time, the cadence and general character of the music, are primary qualifications in our art; they are indeed the very life of it.

(9) Pliability, agility, and a kind of graceful negligence, are delightful qualities in a dancer. I remember, on one occasion, dancing with Madame Léon in a *pas de deux*, which I composed myself, and in which we each held the end of a scarf, that contributed much to the variety and novelty of our attitudes and groupings. It was then that this excellent artiste displayed, with the most finished grace, all the qualities that I have enumerated above, in fact, every charm of which dancing is capable. Let every movement of the performer be executed with taste and decency, let there be no unnatural gestures, nothing that approaches in the least to the lascivious, all must contribute, as the poet says, to—

————— la decente
Mollezza ———

And this kind of dancing is what the public will be ever disposed to admire, and which indeed is the true style of that class of dancers upon which I am treating. Ease, elasticity, gracefulness and decency, will ever be preferred to the extravagant gesticulations, contortions, and grimaces of dancing *Phrynes*.

Among the ancients there were two distinct kinds of dancing, one for respectable and well-bred people, while the other kind was practised by debauchees, and the lower classes. And this distinction may be traced as existing in the time of Homer. (*Vide Iliad, Book 13.*) From whence it would seem, many of our modern dancers might learn something, even from those of the age of Alcinous.

(10) All the parts of the body must, throughout the entire variety of their motions, be in harmony one with the other. It is the highest point of perfection.

(11) These last verses unquestionably describe what we now call *petits battements* on the instep, or *ronds de jambe*. The poet in fact seems desirous of representing all the movements as done according to certain rules, and not as the effect of mere chance.

Tien ne' passaggi suoi modo diverso,
 Come diverso è de' concetti il tuono.
 Tanti nè fa per dritto, e per traverso,
 Quante le pause, e le periode sono.
 E tutta pronta ad ubbidire al verso,
 Che il cenuo insegna del maestro suono,
 Or si avanza, or si arretra, or smonta, or balza,
 E sempre con ragion si abbassa ed alza. (12)

Talor le fughe arresta, il corso posa,
 Indi muta tenore in un' istante,
 E con geometria maravigliosa,
 Apre il compasso delle vaghe piante,
 Onde viene a stampar sfera ingegnosa,
 E rota a quella del pavon sembante ;
 Tengono i piè la periferia e il centro ;
 Quel volteggia di fuor, questo sta dentro. (13)

Sul sinistro sostiensì, in forme nove
 L' agil corpo sì ratto aggira intorno,
 Che con fretta minor si volge e move
 Il volubil paleo, l' agevol torno.
 Con grazia poi non più veduta altrove
 Fa gentilmente, onde partì ritorno.
 Si erge, e sospende, e ribalzando in alto
 Rompe l' aria per mezzo, e trincia il salto. (14)

(12) The author of the 'Adonis' again reminds us of the concord subsisting between dancing and music. He might even be understood to mean that everything must be studied and duly executed, according to rule. The artiste, however, must endeavour, by ease and variety, to conceal the too formal appearance of systematical motions.

(13) The poet here presents us with an ingenious description of the *pirouette*. Its execution and effect are painted in the truest and most graphic manner. The dancer begins by turning *à la seconde*, and then continues the *pirouette* with *petits battements* or *ronds de jambe* :—

E'l corpo non leggiere e non gravoso
 D' intorno al centro si raggiri e volga.—TASSO.

(14) The first four lines of this stanza show what rapidity pirouetting admits of, and what elegance may be displayed in turning. The last lines speak of the preparation for the *cabriole*, and of the effect produced.

Il capo inchina pria che in alto saglia,
 E gamba, a gamba intreccia, ed incrocicchia,
 Dalle braccia ajutato il corpo scaglia,
 La persona ritira, e si rannichia.
 Poi spicca il lancio, e mentre l' aria taglia,
 Due volte con l' un piè, l' altro si picchia,
 E fà battendo, e ribattendo entrambe
 Sollevata dal pian, guizzar le gambe.(15)

Poichè ella è giunta in su quanto più pote,
 La vedi in giù diminuir cadente,
 E nel cader sì lieve il suol percote,
 Che scossa, o calpestio non se ne sente.
 E bel veder con che mirabil rote
 Sullo spazio primier piombi repente,
 Come più snella, alfin che strale, o lampo,
 Discorra a salti, e cavriole il campo.(16)—MARINO.

(15) It is impossible to explain more minutely, or in a more poetical manner, the time of the *entrechats*. These eight lines are admirable, and may serve as a lesson to dancers. Marino describes exactly the principal action, and every movement accompanying the spring from the ground. But our dancers would not now meet with much encouragement, in displaying such violent efforts as these, which, although natural, are far from being graceful. The *entrechat* must be performed in a more easy style. The strength of the instep, and tension of the calves and loins, give a sufficient impulse to the body. But facility and elegance in doing this movement can be acquired only by dint of study and constant practice.

(16) We have already observed that lightness, elevation, vivacity, vigour and elasticity, are essential qualities to form a good dancer. The poet again introduces them to our notice, and makes a proud display of them in the Goddess of Dancing.

A PROSE TRANSLATION OF THE STANZAS FROM MARINO,
 IN WHICH THE REFERENCES TO THE NOTES ARE
 THE SAME AS THOSE IN THE ORIGINAL.

Terpsichore, the Goddess of Dancing, finding herself alone, betakes herself to the pleasures of graceful

movements. First she retires, then advances, displaying, as she lightly trips along, a beautiful knee. While occupied in arranging a prelude of steps,(1) her attention is fixed on the harmonious sounds.(2) She flies around her new theatre ; her motion quickens, and her steps increase ; so buoyant she appears, that waves might well sustain her tread.(3) Skilfully she pauses on her small foot, giving to every limb some graceful attitude.(4) Now, she is seen to retire, and now again returns ; now she seems to vanish away, and now she re-appears. Darting from side to side, she glances over the ground(5) like the lightning that suddenly shoots through the serenity of a summer's night.(6)

Every motion of the Goddess is light and well-studied, and scarcely does she deign to touch the earth. She wantons gaily, and springs aloft with such velocity, that her winged feet deceive the sight, and seldom can we detect which foot it is that prints the soil. Shooting along in airy bounds, she traces circles with her limber feet ; then, with steps exact, retraces them, enlarging and diminishing ; as the dipping waves that dance along the bright Meander ;(7) such are the motions of her twinkling feet, whether on earth, or quivering in the air ; whether she lightly trips, or firmly treads the ground.(8)

When she springs aloft, she seems the spiry flame ; and when she skims along, like the undulating wave ; but her more stately turns assume the whirlwind's power, and seem like the eddying whirlpool stirred by the tempest.(9) An harmonious symmetry prevails throughout her whole person. The attitude of one limb induces corresponding movements in the rest. Each foot moves but by mental consent, it ever answers to the other in fraternal motion.(10) The strictest ties unite her to the measure, never is a line mistaken or a step misplaced.(11) The linked and entwined figures of her dance are varied to suit the change of melody ; marking each note, and minding every pause, promptly she obeys each phrase of music, which she respects as the

guide of every gesture. Now she advances, stops, rises, leaps aloft, bends gently, and then regains the upright attitude.(12)

Suddenly she pauses in mid-dance, assumes another attitude, and, on the instant, her whole style is changed ; her feet separating, form a figure not to be surpassed for mathematical precision ; she turns, she wheels around and seems a revolving sphere, or perhaps resembling rather the peacock's airy plumes. One foot is firmly fixed in the centre, while the other swiftly marks the outer circumference.(13) Adopting a new position and supporting her whole figure on the left foot, the rapidity of her motion is greater than the flight of the darted *Palet*. With grace inimitable she now regains the spot from whence she parted, there stops, then springs aloft and hangs her feet on nothing, quivering in the air.(14) Again she springs on high, and in that spring she strikes her feet twice together, and strongly agitates the lower limbs.(15) From her greatest elevation, she descends but slowly ; and so lightly does she regain the ground, that no one can distinguish when her noiseless foot alights. Around she flies ! how admirable ! and with what truth she finds again her first position. The darting lightning, or the winged arrow, goes not a swifter course than she, as she sweeps along with agile springs and airy bounds.(16)

Allowance being duly made for poetical licence and exaggeration, the above extract gives us a tolerably clear idea of what dancing was in the sixteenth century, the manner in which it was executed, and the estimation in which it was held. Persons in the profession, and connoisseurs, will instantly understand the poet, and be best able to appreciate the truth of the description

Italian dancing was universally applauded, and excited the admiration and imitation of foreigners ; among whom the Spanish were the first to follow it. They at first partially succeeded ; the use of the *castagnettes*

which they added, produced a pleasing effect; but having in the lapse of time incorporated with it a multiplicity of leaps, capers, uncouth postures, and, in a word, the most graceless and extravagant gestures, the art of dancing in Spain, became degraded and vicious, whilst in Italy it preserved a certain degree of dignity and decency. This corruption in taste and style among the Spaniards, must be chiefly attributed to the practice of the *Chica*, a dance of a very immoral nature, which the Moors had brought with them from Africa, where every tribe dances it, and particularly the natives of Congo. The negroes carried it with them to the Antillas, where it soon became naturalized.

This dance was so universal throughout South America and the West Indies, that, at the commencement of the present century, it was always danced in religious ceremonies and processions. Even nuns, during the night of Christmas eve, shewed themselves to the public through the gratings of their convent, expressing, by the indecent motions of the *Chica*, the joy they felt for the birth of Christ, who came to take away the sins of the world. This dance is passionately admired among the Creoles, who enthusiastically adopted it on its introduction among them.

America is not the only country that has been influenced by Africa in dancing; it was, in fact, from the Moors that Spain first received that dance now so peculiar to their country, namely, the Fandango, which is no other than the *Chica*, under a more decent form; the climate, and other circumstances, not permitting of the latter with all its native concomitants.

It is very difficult to discover the origin of this dance; the entire construction of it seems to be the effect of a burning climate, and ardent constitutions. The *Chica* may be danced to the sound of any instrument whatever, but always to one peculiar kind of melody, which is in a manner consecrated to it, and of which the time is extremely rapid. The female dancer holds one end of a handkerchief, or the two sides of her apron, and the chief art on her part consists in

agitating the lower part of the loins, whilst the rest of the body remains almost motionless. A male dancer now approaches her with a rapid bound, flies to her, retires, darts forward again, and appears to conjure her to yield to the emotions which she seems so forcibly to feel.

When the Chica is danced with its most expressive characteristics, there is, in the gestures and movements of the two dancers, a certain appearance better understood than described. The scene, in fact, offers to the eye all that is lascivious and voluptuous. It is a kind of contest, in which every amorous trick, and every means of conquest, are put into action. Fear, hope, disdain, tenderness, caprice, pleasure, refusals, flight, delirium, despair, all are here expressed, and the inhabitants of Paphos would have honored the inventor of it as a divinity. I shall not attempt to detail what impressions the sight of this dance must produce, when executed with all the voluptuousness of which it is susceptible. It animates every feature, awakens the whole train of a certain class of feelings, and would even disturb the sober imagination of old age.

The Chica is now banished from the balls of the white ladies of South America, being found far too offensive to decency; and is only sometimes performed in a few circles, in which the dancer meets with but little encouragement, and that from a small number only of spectators.

At Cairo, where there are no theatres, there is a peculiar kind of performers, or rather leapers, who go about to private houses, and represent a sort of theatrical scene, in which the most licentious and obscene attitudes are exhibited, bearing a strong resemblance to the Chica, and also to the ancient Mimes. In fact, many of the Greek and Roman dances may be safely compared to the Chica and the Fandango, and especially those practised when dancing in both nations was on the decline, and when consequently the art became an object of contempt, with persons of taste and respectability.

I am, indeed, almost inclined to believe that the Chica owes its origin to the dances of the ancients. Greece, so fertile and so varied in all her productions, at once gave birth to Socrates and Diogenes, to Phocion and Alcibiades, to Homer and to Aristophanes; to Agoracrites, * Cleophanes † and Callipides; ‡ all most extraordinary men, but of very opposite talents. Greece, then, I think, was very probably the original country of this voluptuous dance. The dance of the Angrismene, usually performed at festivals in honor of Venus, and still very common among the Greeks, may bear me out in my opinion.

The native of the Peninsula, under the influence of the climate where he is born, and with the natural heat and vivacity of his constitution, eagerly received the Chica, which soon became one of his chief delights. To this dance I therefore ascribe the indelicacy, and sometimes even the lasciviousness, so common in Spanish dancing. The Chica was afterwards known by the name of *Fandango*, of which Dr. Yriarte speaks in the following approving terms:—"The melodious *Fandango*, that spreads joy through the souls of natives and foreigners, of old men and of sages." (*Abridgment of the History of Spain.*)

The Fandango is danced by two persons, and accompanied by castanets, an instrument made of walnut wood, or of ebony. The music is in the time of $\frac{3}{4}$ and is a rapid movement. The sound of the castanets, together with the motion of the feet, arms and body, keep the time with the greatest nicety. The entire dance is full of life and action.

Certain regulations and restraints having been introduced into the theatre with respect to the Fandango, it assumed more dignity and formality in its movements; not the slightest gesture that could give offence to decency, being permitted. In consequence of this, it

* The first Greek Sculptor.

† The first Greek Painter.

‡ A Dancer and Famous Mimic, as well as an Actor.

came into general use with persons of quality. But the lower orders, amongst whom this dance is in continual request, accompany it with attitudes which savour of the vulgarity of the original manner of practising it; nor do their extravagant actions ever slacken or cease, till they are completely tired out.

I cannot here omit the fine description which Marino, in the above quoted poem, gives of this dance. The poet records the true manner in which it was performed in his time; and his time was nearly that of its origin.

Due castagnette di sonoro bosso,
 Tien nelle man la Giovinetta ardità;
 Che accompagnando il piè con grazia mosso,
 Fan forte ad or ad or scroccar le dita.
 Regge un timpano l' altro il qual percosso
 Con sonaglietti ad atteggiar l' invita;
 Ed alternando un bel concerto doppio
 Al suono a tempo accordono lo scoppio.

Quanti moti a lascivia, e quanti gesti
 Provocar ponno i più pudici affetti,
 Quanto corromper può gli animi onesti,
 Rappresentano agli occhi in vivi oggetti.
 Cenni, e baci disegna or quella, or questi,
 Fanno i fianchi ondeggiar, scontronsi i petti,
 Socchiudon gli occhi, e quasi infrà se stessi
 Vengon danzando agli ultimi complessi.—MARINO.

TRANSLATION.

“A young girl, of ardent temperament, places in her hands two *castagnettes* of sonorous wood. By the aid of her finger, she produces a clattering noise, and to that she keeps time, with the graceful movements of her feet. The young man, her partner, holds a tamboreen, or *tambour de basque*, which however is not now much in use. He strikes the little bells of this instrument, shewing a wish to invite his companion to accompany him in gesticulation. While dancing, both alternately play the same air, and both keep good time to the measure. Every description of lascivious

motion, every gesture calculated to offend decency, or corrupt innocence, is represented by these dancers, to the life. They salute alternately, and exchange amorous looks; at times they give to their hips certain immodest motions, then meet and press their breasts together, their eyes appear half closed, and they seem, even while dancing, to be approaching to the final consummation."

This is a very exact description of the Fandango, considered apart from its poetical ornaments. And in the present day, the mode of its execution is much the same, only more decent. Marino exclaims against its immorality, and the abuse that was made of it in Spain, and afterwards in Italy. He calls it

———Oscena danza.

Pera il sozzo inventor, che trà noi questa
Introdusse primier barbara usanza.
Chiama questo suo gioco empio e profano
Saravanda, e Ciaccona, il nuovo Ispano.

That is, "Perish the vile inventor of this barbarous and obscene dance, and he who first introduced it amongst us. And rightly is this filthy and profane amusement called by the Castilians, Saravanda and Ciaccona."

The Fandango forms so important a part of Spanish dancing, that we shall here enlarge upon this subject; describing it as danced in the present day, and not as practised when Marino wrote his poem. Music and dancing, in Spain, form the principal diversion of the people; much poetry is naturally mixed up with these two diversions, which seem to recall to the memory those ages of romance and chivalry, so dear to the Spaniard. The Fandango is the dance of the country. There were among the antients the Ionian, the Lydian, and the Lesbian dance, the Pyrrhic, with certain indecent dances, among the Romans; forming the delight of the people; there were the dances described by Homer; the dance of the Corybantes, and that of the Salians so celebrated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but none

of these can be compared with the Spanish Fandango. We are persuaded that the most abstemious anchorite could not see this dance performed, without finding his usual composure considerably disturbed, and perhaps detecting the escape of a sigh. When it is completely and perfectly performed, and the head, arms, feet and the whole body all contribute to its extraordinary movements, we are alternately struck with admiration, astonishment, fear, delight, and desire. The Fandango, as we have seen, is of ancient origin. And we find that the nations of antiquity had dances framed upon nearly the same type; Pliny in his letters frequently speaks of them; Callimachus in his hymn upon Delos, relates that Theseus ardently enjoyed dances of this kind. The Spanish dance of which we are speaking has now made the tour of the world, and is well known in other countries as well as in Spain; the Fandango, in fact, is danced in every country in Europe; it is much in use at Smyrna, and in other parts of Asia Minor, in Georgia, and particularly in Cashmere, where the women are much attached to dancing. The Fandango flourishes best in a congenial climate. Upon seeing Spanish women in the Fandango, we are ready to remark that they seem made expressly for such a dance; their peculiar shape adds greatly to the attraction of the dance. They have a dark complexion, their feet are handsome and small, their hair black and shining like ebony; large eyes, full of fire and expression; their mouth is small and well formed, with lips of vermilion between which appear their white teeth. They are slender about the waist, and every part of the body well proportioned, while every movement is graceful and picturesque. Their peculiar costume completes the picture of these charming dancers, who may be compared to the Indian Bayaderes, or rather they greatly excel them. Spanish dancers, as we have already remarked, accompany themselves with castanets, and very frequently with tambourines. They can also dance while playing the guitar, which is their beloved instrument: accompanied by his guitar, the Spaniard

can make love, sing or dance. It was the Moors who first brought the guitar into Spain, and it afterwards became a universal favorite. Men, women, children, and old men, all can play upon the guitar. This instrument serves as a kind of interpreter to those lovers who dare not tell their love, but go every night and play beneath the window of their mistresses, sighing and singing to their guitar, the sound of which, during the stillness of night, is certainly very delightful. The mysterious charm of this nocturnal serenading is greatly augmented by the surpassing beauty of the nights in Spain; the air is completely filled with the perfume of bergamot, pinks and orange flowers; in the squares, and beneath every balcony, singing and dancing is going on; the sound of the guitar, flute and castanets, is heard in every direction, and the fancy of the poet and the lover is highly inspired by the delightful scene. The custom of wearing a veil, and the style in which it is disposed upon the person, have caused it to be introduced into dancing as a graceful ornament, and it adds much to the picturesque attitudes and groupings; the veil, as is well known, is universally worn in Spain, as a part of female dress. No woman, whatever may be her rank, ever goes out on foot without her veil. The reason of this custom has been variously accounted for. Some allege the heat of the climate, others coquetry, and others modesty; we admit of all these as reasons. Popea, who was anything but modest, yet very handsome, wore a veil, which covered the one half of her face, no doubt to excite a desire to see the whole. With regard to the men, they may very well be compared to the Neapolitans, Calabrians, Sicilians, Genoese, or Venetians. In Spain the women that follow dancing as a public profession, belong to the people called Gitanos, (*Gipsies*) they are generally handsome, but their features are peculiar to themselves, presenting an original wildness of aspect not to be met with in others. They are active and perfectly well made, and possess many other personal advantages. They however display no taste in their

dress, the whole of which is bad and clumsily disposed, which is much to be regretted. The contrast between their natural personal attractions and their ill-contrived garments is very striking; nothing on the other hand can be more charming and attractive than a handsome Spanish or Sicilian woman, or a Gitana, dressed with taste and elegance.

The *Sarabande*, in the course of time, changed its character into one of a nobler kind. The philosopher Rousseau says, with regard to its peculiar music: "*Sarabande*—Air d'une danse grave, portant le même nom, laquelle paraît nous être venue d'Espagne, et se dansait autrefois avec des castagnettes. Cette danse n'est plus en usage, si ce n'est dans quelques vieux opéras Français. L'air de la *Sarabande* est à trois tems lents." That is—"The air of a slow dance of the same name, which it appears came to us from Spain, and was formerly danced with castanets. This dance is no longer in use, and can only be found in a few old French operas. The music of the *Sarabande* is in triple time, slow."

The *Ciaccona* or *Chaconne* also degenerated greatly, in former times. Rousseau speaks of its music in the following terms; "*Chaconne*—Sorte de pièce de musique faite pour la danse, dont la mesure est bien marquée et le mouvement modéré. La *Chaconne* est née en Italie, et elle y était, autrefois, fort en usage, de même qu'en Espagne. On ne la connaît plus en France, que dans les vieilles partitions." That is,—"*Chaconne* a piece of music adapted to a certain dance, the measure of which is strongly marked, but the movement moderate; the *Chaconne* took its rise in Italy, and was formerly much practised in that country, as well as in Spain. It is no longer to be heard of in France, and is to be found only in old scores." Jean Jacques wrote this some eighty years ago: but since that time, many new *Chaconnes* have been composed, and are still danced at Paris. We may observe from the above passages, that at different times the Italians and the Spanish made a kind of mutual exchange of their national dances.

The minuet is, of all ancient dances, that which has

continued longest in use. But it has undergone various modifications and changes. It originated in Poitou, and after having acquired some dignity in execution, became a particular favourite at all French and Italian balls.

It must have been clearly perceived from the last quotation out of the old poet, that the Fandango, or rather *Chica*, again changed its name, but without undergoing much change in its characteristics. It was introduced into Italy, but performed with some restraint. Almost every Spanish dance, such as the Bolero, the Cachucha, the Seguidillas, which are of Moorish origin, are also branches and imitations of the African *Chica* or Fandango; they are all, therefore, more or less marked by that looseness, I might even say obscenity, which characterises their model.

Dancing, among most nations, is a delightful and innocent amusement, but with the Spaniards it becomes a kind of dangerous excitement. Compare the Spanish dances with those of other countries, and it will be found that the *Chica*, the *Fandango*, the *Sarao*, and some others, bear the stamp of the strongest, deepest, and most immoderate passion; while the *Tarantella*, the *Fourlane*, the *Montferine*, the *Contre-danse*, the *Provençale*, the *Mazurka*, (usually called *la Russe*), *l'Ecossaise*, *l'Allemande*, *la Hongroise*, the *Polonaise*, the *Anglaise*, &c., all well known popular dances, are kept within such limits as to render them acceptable to all classes of society.

The *Sarao* is a proof of that abundance of national dances which the Spaniard possesses; the *Sarao* is an assembly held at private houses, during the Carnival, and composed of young persons of both sexes. A woman with a small basket of silk sashes, of different colours, stands at the door of the room where the *Sarao* is held, and presents a sash to each lady that enters. Another woman distributes the same kind of sashes to the gentlemen, and each immediately sees by the colour of his sash, the lady who is to be his partner for the evening. He approaches and salutes her, and remains near

her during the whole time that the Sarao lasts. He may further address her, with any tender phrase he chooses, without fearing that the lady should take any offence. This custom, however, gives rise to numberless intrigues; the evening terminates with dances analagous to the peculiar taste of the party.

The Spanish character may be learned, almost to its full extent, in these balls and diversions; the passion of love is constantly transporting the Spaniard out of himself, and may be clearly traced in every action of his life. In France and in Italy, the circumstance of a public street, a crowd, and a disguise, often occasion many things which they at the same time conceal; but in Spain there is no restraint, or, at least, there was not at the time when the Sarao was most in fashion. The inhabitants gave full scope to their inclinations; indulging publicly all their peculiar desires. In the most select assembly there was no restraint. The only people to whom, in my opinion, they may be compared, are the Venetians, or rather the Venetians as they were about seventy years ago.

The Fourlane is a dance well known at Venice, and much in vogue among the gondoliers. It is full of life, the music being in $\frac{6}{8}$ time, played in a *molto allegretto* style. It is called Fourlane, on account of its having been first danced in the *Frioul*. This dance is very similar to the Tarantella, but not quite so diversified.

Contredanse is a dance generally performed by eight persons, four ladies and four gentlemen. It is of modern invention, and comprises a variety of steps, according to the nature of the music. Liveliness is the peculiar characteristic of this dance. It may be varied *ad infinitum*, from the surprising number of evolutions which it admits of, and among which the principal are the circle, the half-circle, the cross of four, or moulinet, and the chain. Contredanses, quadrilles, and waltzes, the last of which took their rise in Switzerland, are generally amongst the most fashionable dances of the day. The performance of all these should be done with ease, and there should be an *élégance* in

the execution of the steps; brilliant *gavottes* are sometimes practised in genteel society, but they require much more study and practice than the other three mentioned above.

It may be here remarked, that Spain and the German provinces, abound in the variety of dances. France, on the contrary, possesses but a very small number of national dances, but, at the same time, is in possession of an immense number of airs, upon which dances might be composed. Italy, of all nations the most musical, is, perhaps, the poorest in national airs and songs. These remarks can naturally relate only to civilised countries.

The dance called *La Russe* is graceful; *L'Eccossaise* is also gay; *L'Anglaise* lively and whimsical.

} The Neapolitan *Tarantella* is, of all modern dances, the most lively and diversified, but, like the Sicilienne, it bears great resemblance to the Fandango. Both are, I believe, but particularly the former, a mixture of Spanish and Italian dancing, and must have originated at the time when the Spanish style was introduced into Italy. The *Tarantella* is the national dance of the Neapolitans. It is gay and somewhat voluptuous, displaying in its music, steps and attitudes, the taste and temperament of those who invented it.

This dance is generally supposed to have derived its name from the tarantella, a venomous spider of Sicily; those who have had the misfortune to be bitten by it, can escape dissolution only by violent perspiration, with which, being produced by hard exercise, the poison passes out of the body, through the pores of the skin. As sustained exercise is the principal and surest method, to produce the perspiration required, it was discovered by repeated experiments, that the unhappy sufferers were roused into motion only by the power of music. Under its influence they leaped about, until, being entirely wearied out, they were obliged to suspend their exertions; they then fell, and a most copious perspiration ensued, which seldom failed of effecting a radical cure.

The character of the music best adapted to the performance of this kind of miracle-dance is excessively

quick and energetic; its notes and cadences are strongly marked, and the time is in $\frac{6}{8}$. The reiterated strains of these triplets, together with the vivacity of the whole movement, are quite capable of producing an electrifying effect upon frames, the nervous system of which is already almost fatally deranged, and on the point of dissolution.

Claritio and Serrao, however, two Neapolitan physicians, have proved, it is said, by various experiments, that whatever has been said with regard to the poisonous bite of the tarantella spider, is false; and that the terrible accounts relative to this subject that exist, arise from ignorance and prejudice, and are propagated by quackery. Whether, notwithstanding the tarantella dance was first used as a remedy for the bite of the spider, or whether the gestures and attitudes with which the music inspired the sufferers, gave the first idea of forming them into a dance, it is impossible to determine; still there can be no doubt that, in some way or other, the dance is owing to the malady.

Love and pleasure are conspicuous throughout every movement. Every gesture and motion are full of seductive grace, animated by the accompanying mandolins, tambourines, and castagnettes; the woman tries, by the life and rapidity of her motions, to excite the love of her partner; who, in his turn, endeavours to win her favour, by his agility and his elegant and tender gestures. The two dancers now unite, then separate, return, fly into each others arms, again bound away, and by means of a great variety of gesticulations, they exhibit alternately, love, hatred, indifference, disdain, coquetry, and inconstancy. The eye of the spectator is incessantly interested and entertained, by the continual change of sentiments which they express; nor can anything be more pleasing than their picturesque groupings, and diversified evolutions. Sometimes they hold hands, or the man kneels whilst his partner dances around him; he then rises, when she starts away, and he eagerly pursues. Thus the whole dance consists almost entirely

of assault and defence, and defeat or victory seems equally the object of both the dancers.*

The fall of certain powers that had existed in Italy, occasioned the taste for dancing and ballets to decline. The Italians seemed to lose their relish for these amusements, and to be content to leave them to the French. Catherine of Medicis, indeed, when in France, made them the chief ornament of her court. Baltazarini Belgioioso, a very successful director and composer, greatly advanced their improvement, and did for the ballet what Jodelle had already done with regard to tragedy. In fact, it is to Trissino and to the other two ingenious men just mentioned, that we are indebted for our theatres, tragedies and ballets.†

The encouragement and support which histrionic diversions received from Louis XIV, contributed in a powerful manner to their cultivation. This gay and liberal monarch, ruling over a nation ever devoted to pleasure, was particularly partial to ballets; he introduced them into all his fêtes, and the garden of Versailles and the Tuileries have been the scene of many a spectacle of this kind, exhibited in a style of unprecedented splendour and magnificence.

The Chevalier Servandoni, a celebrated architect and perspective painter, offered to the public, at various theatres, a multiplicity of pieces, in which music, painting and machinery, were finely combined to delight the audiences. This man, in fact, who was a Florentine, must be considered as a main support and promoter of the theatrical ballet:—

Où tous les arts enchantent tous les sens.—BERNARD.

That is—"Where every art can charm our every sense." With him, indeed, and his times, began that scenic grandeur which the talents of successive artists

* What has been here said of the Tarantella, has been more than once translated into Italian, and lately in the 'Gazette' of Milan, as also in *Mélanges*, by D. Sacchi.

† The author must be understood to speak more particularly of France and Italy.

continued to improve, till in the present age theatrical exhibition has been carried to the highest point of perfection.

The Parisian professors at length established the true method of attaining to a graceful and dignified execution; and, consequently, the French school of dancing acquired a pre-eminence over Europe, equal to that of the Italian School of Music—a pre-eminence which both nations have ever since preserved.

Lany, who had obtained some reputation as a dancer of the *demi-caractère*, afterwards ranked first among the Ballet-masters of the opera at Paris. Beauchamps, who was the director of ballets to Louis XIV., together with Sodi, an Italian, a famous pantomimic performer, De Hesse, and Malter, were regarded as the best composers of their period. Beauchamps had the honor of giving lessons to his sovereign. Lully associated himself with him, and their united efforts brought forth Ballets, which have since served as models to the *grand opéras* of modern times, of which the great attraction consists of music and dancing. Every reader of French history knows how passionately attached Louis XIV. was to theatrical representation; and it is also well-known, that the monarch himself often performed. Accompanied by a part of his court, he danced in the opera of the *Temple de la Paix*, which was represented at his palace in 1685. The Princess of Conti, the Duchess of Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Blois, Count Brionne, the Marquis of Mouy and other personages of high rank, performed the principal parts in the Ballet. In this matter he did but follow the example set him by Catherine de Medicis, the Queen of Navarre, and Henri IV. He in turn was afterwards sometimes imitated by Louis XV.

Pitrot* succeeded the masters and composers above mentioned, and feeling in himself a capacity for heroic compositions, he produced his Ballet of '*Télémaque*,' which met with considerable applause. His

* During the reign of Louis XV.

contemporaries Picq, l'Etang, G. Angiolini and Canziani, which two last were Italians, and founded the Ballet at St. Petersburg, all distinguished themselves in tragic compositions. Noverre succeeded, and introduced the most important improvements into the theatrical dancing. Dupré, G. Vestris, and Florentine, Pitrot and Gardel the elder, were reckoned among the best of their time. Dumoulin did not much improve upon these last; he excelled in the *Pas de deux*, and in his manner of accompanying his partner in producing groups and attitudes. Fossan disputed the palm with him in the comic and pastoral. The most celebrated dancers of the other sex were, Mles. Sallé, Lany and Camargo, who followed and surpassed Mles. Guyot and Subligny; the former was a very graceful dancer in the serious line, the second in the *demi-caractère*; and Favier Florentine excelled in the brilliance and velocity of her execution, in which she was rivalled by Prévot. Messrs. Beauchamps, Pécour, Le Basque, Blondi, Ballon, Laval, Javilliers, Lépy; Mesds. Heinel, Puvigny, Fontaine and Pélin, were all honorably distinguished in their art. Mles. Guimard and Allard succeeded these latter, and eclipsed many of their predecessors in the grace and excellence of their steps.

Dauberval* shone in the comic line, and that of the *demi-caractère*; P. Gardel in the serious, and A. Vestris in a combination of both. These three, together with Laborie, Deshayes, Duport, Didelot, Baptiste, Beaulieu, Albert, Paul, Ferdinand, Lachouque, Barry, Coulon, Rozier, Perrot, &c.; Mesds. Chameroy, Gardel, Gosselin the elder, Léon, Fanny Bias, Bigottini, Millière, Clotilde, Lorrain, Coustou, Blondin, Martin, J. Ramaccini, Conti, Brugnoli, Taglioni, Montessu, Elssler, Ronzi, Cosentini, Torelli, Legallois, Noblet, A. Ramaccini, Fleurot, &c., all of them able supporters of their art, carried it to a very high degree of perfection. The following are some of the most celebrated names of the present day: Mesdmes. Baderna,

* Reign of Louis XVI.

Bertin, Cerito, Domenichettis, Ferraris, Fuoco, Fabris, Grancini, Grisi, Handrianoff, Neri, Rosati, Plunkett, &c. Messrs. Borri, Gabrieli, Gontié, Lorenzone, Mabile, Mochi, Penco, Petipa, Laeroce, St. Léon, &c. With other dancers named in the course of this work.

Messrs. Dauberval and Gardel stand pre-eminent as composers. The '*Télémaque*' and the '*Fille mal Gardée*' of the former, are justly regarded as perfect models of the serious and comic Ballet; still, the latter, in his '*Psyché*,' '*Achille à Scyros*,' '*Pâris*' and '*La Dansomanie*,' has completely established his superior talent in treating mythological and anacreontic subjects. He was also a fertile inventor of steps and dances. Didelot, the pupil of Dauberval, gave complete satisfaction in his '*Flore et Zéphyre*,' '*Psyché*' and '*Cendrillon*;' Coindé, author of the '*Amours de Vénus*,' '*Pygmalion*' and '*La Double Fête*,' earned an equal share of applause; as did also Clary, by his '*Nina*' and '*Ulysse*;' Blache, also, by his '*Almaviva et Rosine*' and his '*Filets de Vulcain*;' and finally, Aumer, who in '*Antoine et Cléopâtre*,' and in the '*Somnambula*;' deserve notice, as displaying much ingenuity in the improvements they introduced into the composition of Ballets. Messrs. Henry, Léon, Armand, the two Taglionis, Blache, jun., and some others, are deserving artistes.

Whilst dancing was making such rapid progress in France, we are constrained to confess that the degenerate taste of Italy was wholly engaged upon a certain species of clumsy and uncouth pantomimes. But upon the introduction of French composers and dancers, who were received with applause and generally encouraged, they greatly contributed to improve the style of performance in that country.

Noverre composed many of his Ballets at Milan, from whence his method and taste began to spread gradually through the principal towns of Italy. He had a large number of Italian pupils, among whom D. Rossi, F. Clerico, P. Franchi, Mazzarelli, P. Angiolini, Pansieri, and J. B. Giannini, deserve to be mentioned as artistes who raised Italian dancing from the

alject state in which it was then languishing ; but it is to Viganò and Gioia that dancing is indebted for its principal improvements.* To these names must be added, Gallet, Galzerani, Fabris, Cortesi, D'Egville, Coralli, Perrot, and Monticini.

As the Italians in general prefer the strong emotions of terror in theatrical representations, their Ballet masters have succeeded more particularly in historical and tragic subjects. The French, on the contrary, prefer the delicate sentiments of refined love and tenderness ; their composers, therefore, devote themselves almost exclusively to the anacreontic class of subjects.

From all that has been said, it is not difficult to perceive that poetry, music, and dancing, have always formed a principal part of the enjoyments of all nations. The love of sweet sounds, whether proceeding from words or instruments, is instinctive in human nature ; to these sounds dancing may be said to owe its existence ; and considered as arts, poetry, music, and dancing, have at all times been deemed worthy of study and cultivation. The eastern nations, to whom we are indebted for nearly all our first elements of knowledge, were ardently devoted to these arts. Among the Chinese, music and dancing are in high esteem ; and wherever a warm climate and clear sky, are to be found, there do these arts most flourish, sometimes bearing a kind of absolute sway over the joyous inhabitants.

“The dancing-women,” says Crauford, in his *Researches on India*, † “who, like the courtesans of ancient Greece, are the votaries of pleasure, are taught every qualification which may tend to captivate and amuse the other sex. They compose a separate class, live under the protection of goverment, and according to their own particular rules.”

In the code of Hindù laws and customs, it is said :—

* The noted Italian dancers of this period are, Fabiani, Cianfanelli, l'avier, the two Gioia's, the two Viganò's, Villeneuve, the two Taglioni's and Coralli. Mesdames Delcaro, Villeneuve, Monticini, Pezzoli, Pitro and Angiolini.

† Vol. 2. Page 147.

“If the property of a dancing-woman should by any circumstance become subject to seizure, the magistrate shall except her clothes, jewels, and dwelling. In the same manner, to a soldier shall be left his arms; and to a man exercising any profession, the implements of that profession; but the rest of his property may be confiscated.”

“The dancing-women appear in a variety of Dresses. Besides those already mentioned, they sometimes wear trowsers like the Persians; a Lama of worked muslin, or gold or silver tissue; the hair plaited and hanging down behind with spiral curls on each side of the face; and to the gold or silver rings on the ancles, in some of their dances, they attach small bells of the same metals. The figures of the Bacchantes, which occur in some antique paintings, engravings and sculptures, may serve to represent some of the dancing-women of India.”

“No religious ceremony, or festival of any kind, is thought to be performed with requisite propriety and magnificence unless accompanied by dancing, and every temple has a set of dancers belonging to it, which is more or less numerous according to the importance and wealth of the foundation.”

The Iroquois, and even the more savage Hurons, have their dances, their *pantomimes* and their music. In the year 1725 the Italian performers gave a very curious and novel exhibition at their theatre in Paris, which may serve very well to illustrate the remarks above. “Two savages, each about twenty-five years of age, tall and well made, (says the author of the *Mercure de France*, vol. ii.) who came lately from Louisiana, performed three different kinds of dances, both separate and together, and it was soon seen that their leaps and steps were widely different from those that are usually taught in Paris. Their gestures are, no doubt, easily understood in their own country, but here nothing can be more difficult than any attempt to explain them. The first dancer represented a chief of his own nation, more modestly dressed than is customary with the

Louisianians, but still not sufficiently covered to conceal all his nakedness. He wore on his head a kind of crown, adorned with feathers of various colours. The other had nothing to distinguish him from a common warrior. The former, by his manner of dancing and his various attitudes, expressed to the latter that he came with a proposal of peace, and accordingly presented to him his *calumet* or standard. After this they performed together the dance of peace. The second dance, which was warlike, described an assembly of savages, who appeared to be deliberating upon the subject of war, with some other tribe or nation. They represented by their various gestures all the horrors of a combat; while those whose opinions were in favour of war, joined the dance, and thus declared their votes. The third dance was performed in the following manner; the warrior, armed with his bow and quiver full of arrows, pretended to go in quest of the enemy, whilst the other sat down and beat a kind of drum, not much larger than an ordinary hat. Having discovered the foe, the warrior returns and informs his chief of it. He then imitates a fight, in which he pretends he has defeated the enemy, and then both perform the dance of victory." A short episode upon love, introduced into this gesticulated performance, would transform it into a good modern ballet.

The pleasure of dancing is shared both by the performer and the spectators, but those who do not practice it cannot clearly comprehend what peculiar delight the dancer feels. We shall, however, examine into what there is of the useful in this art. Its utility, in fact, is such as when fully explained, can scarcely fail of adding to its admirers and followers. By the ancients, dancing, no less than music, was upheld as an art of some importance in the state. Their religion laid claim to it, as a principal ornament on all solemn occasions, and no public festival was given without uniting it to other ceremonies and diversions. In holy writ, it is mentioned in many places. It was not only reckoned in a high degree honorable, but, as Pariset and Ville-

neuve observe, it formed the subject of many laws, framed by various legislators of antiquity, who caused it to be introduced into the education of youth, as a means of strengthening the muscles and sinews, of preserving agility, and developing the gracefulness of the human frame.

In music, similar advantages were perceived. Architas, Aristoxenes, Eupolis, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Cicero, C. Gracchus, Theophrastus, Nicomachus, Theodore, Pythagoras, and all his sect; Ptolemy, Plato, Lycurgus, Boetius, all men of unfading celebrity, whose wisdom and knowledge are the boast of science and philosophy, eulogised the art of music, approved of its practice, and considered it as forming part of the education of youth. Cimon, Epaminondas, Appius Claudius, M. Cecilius, L. Crassius, D. Sylla, and Cato, thought it not beneath their rank and their glory to sing, or to play upon some musical instrument. Music, in fact, was almost universally practised in Greece. Those who had no knowledge of this art were, to a certain degree, despised and regarded as barbarians. "The Arcadians," says Polybius, "having despised the laws of harmony, fell from civilisation and humanity into ferocious barbarism, and thenceforward were continually troubled with dissensions. The natives of Gaul, on the contrary," he adds, "who had formerly been savage and untractable, became, by a different education, gentle and docile." Dr. Zulatti has treated this subject at great length in his Dialogues, and with much good sense.

But to return, Plato, the gravest philosopher of antiquity, does not treat of Music and Dancing as mere amusements, but as essential parts of religious ceremonies and military exercises.* In his books of laws, he prudently prescribes such limits to Music and Dancing as were most likely, in his judgment, to keep them within the bounds of decency, and render them useful. A chief amusement with the Greeks was

* Rollin. Tom. 4. liv. 10. chap. 1.

Dancing, which they practised with taste and care, and, on account of its tendency to improve gesture, it was known by the name of *Chironomia*.* Theseus, Achilles, Pyrrhus, Pericles, Aspasia, Sophocles, Xenophon, Epaminondas, Demosthenes, and even Socrates,† as also many other illustrious men, often diverted themselves with this art. Philosophers, orators, generals, magistrates and poets, considered it both as a pleasure and a duty to cultivate this art. They even thought it an honour to appear at the theatre, and there exhibit their talents. The same custom prevailed at Rome, during a certain period; and the names of Plancus, Licinius, A. Claudius, Crassus, Gabinius and M. Cælius, were inscribed beside those of dancers and pantomimic actors. Thus, in fact, a multiplicity of high authorities, from the remotest antiquity, have successively proved that dancing is as useful as it is amusing.

But to describe more particularly and technically the effects produced upon the frame, by the practice of dancing, it must be remarked, that the whole body moves with more freedom, and acquires grace and ease. The shoulders and arms are thrown back, while the lower limbs become strong and active; the muscular masses about the hips, thighs, and legs, are developed and acquire symmetry; the feet constantly present an outward turn; and it follows that the entire gait and comportment display such firmness and elegance, that it is soon apparent the art of which we treat has been cultivated. Dancing is of signal service, and almost indispensable to young people; motion with them is continually necessary, while the exertion of their strength is a sure means of increasing it.

To all persons, whatever may be their situation in society, strength and activity are acceptable. All, there can be no doubt, would be happy to possess at least some exterior endowments allied to the beautiful;

* F. Quintil. *Instit. orat. lib. 1, cap. 9. v. Requeno.*

† Scaliger, tom. 3. cap. 13. *Athenæus lib. 4, cap. 6, et lib. 1, cap. 19.*

it is a natural desire. And among those whose rank enables them to frequent the best company, elegance of deportment is a first requisite. Now nothing can render the entire frame more graceful and firm, than dancing and pantomimic exercises. Many gymnastic exercises are calculated to strengthen or beautify particular parts of the body, while they weaken others, and sometimes even introduce a kind of deformity into them. Thus, fencing invigorates the arms and legs, but causes the rest of the frame to become in some degree unshapely. Horsemanship increases the thickness of the loins, but debilitates the thighs; and many other exercises, particularly if practised to excess, leave something objectionable about those who follow them, either by preference or from necessity. It is not, indeed, in the nature of any one exercise individually, or all united, to bestow that charm in motion and manners which dancing alone is capable of producing. The practice of this art subjects the head, shoulders, arms, hands, legs and feet, and every part of the body, to a certain symmetrical grace, the charm of which cannot be conveyed in words, but must be seen in the person to be completely felt and understood. To females, dancing is most generally useful and necessary; their more delicate constitutions require to be strengthened by such an exercise. And for multitudes who are condemned to follow an unmitigated sedentary occupation, dancing becomes, in reality, life-preserving.

It was a maxim with Captain Cook, which proves the penetration of that extraordinary man, that dancing was of special service to sailors. That celebrated navigator, in his endeavours to counteract the inroad of disease on board his vessels, by every means in his power, took particular care in calm weather to make his sailors and marines dance to the sound of the violin, and it was to this practice that he mainly ascribed the sound health enjoyed by his crew, during voyages of several years' continuance. The dance they generally indulged in, is called by the English the *Hornpipe*; it is of a most exhilarating character, and perhaps more animated even than the Tarantella.

“Bodily exercise,” says an English writer, “is conducive to health, vigour, liveliness, a good appetite, and sound sleep; but a sedentary occupation occasions many derangements in the nervous system, which sadden and often shorten existence, disturb repose, produce a certain disrelish for every thing, and bring on a continual languour and listlessness, of which otherwise it would be impossible to discover the cause.”

Very many able members of the medical profession, concur in recommending dancing as an excellent remedy for a variety of diseases. Music, also, simply so considered, has sometimes operated extraordinary cures. Democritus and Theophrastus have transmitted to posterity some instances of this miraculous kind of remedy. Plutarch and Boetius have recorded the names of Terpander, Thales of Crete, Ismenia, Xenocrates, Hyerophilus, and a few others, who made a valuable use of music to the same purpose. Nor should we here omit alluding to that passage in Scripture, where it is recorded that the music of David’s harp produced a calm in the troubled mind of the unhappy Saul, and that when he ceased, his paroxysms returned. The music of modern Italy, also, in this point of view, must be strongly recommended.

Tissot absolutely orders dancing to be practised in all schools, alleging that the minds of young persons, burthened with continual study, require some amusement above the trivial kind, on which they may fix with pleasure; and it may not be out of place to cite the four plain good verses on amusement by Phædrus.

Cito rumpes arcum, semper si tensum habueris,

At si laxaris, quum voles, erit utilis.

Sic ludus animo debet aliquando dari,

Ad cogitandum melior ut videat tibi.—PHÆDRUS, lib. 3. fab. 14.

“You must expect your bow to be soon broken if you keep it stretched; but if you slacken it you will always find it ready for use. Thus also the mind should be amused at times, for so it will be rendered more fit for thinking.”—The remark of Anaxarchus, the philosopher, is only another version of the two last

verses just quoted.—“We must allow ourselves amusement, and that often,” says he, “that the mind, after tasting a little useful repose, may return with an increase of vigour to the exercise of its delicate functions.” It is quite clear that one unvaried course of painful labour, unbroken by any relaxation or diversion, must at last produce melancholy and shorten existence. The physical part of the education of children, cannot be properly carried on without the aid of dancing. It preserves their health, and counteracts many vicious attitudes and habits of body, which they are too prone to contract. For those whose temperament is of a more social turn, and who therefore enter much into company, a knowledge of the art is indispensable. That peculiar attitude and disposition of the entire person, which it is necessary to assume in genteel and elegant society, on entering or retiring, on saluting or taking leave, are always, without doubt, performed with the most graceful propriety by those who have learned to dance.

I shall now conclude this part of the subject by remarking, that the art of dancing, besides the amusement that it affords, serves to improve our physical, and even to animate our moral powers; it brings relief to certain diseases, and effects a cure in others; it promotes the harmony of society, and to those who have the happiness to possess a good education, it is the finishing grace and ornament.

—————Quacunque potes dote placere, place.—OVID.*

DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL ORIGINAL DANCES.

THE ANGRISMENE.

The Angrismène, or *La Fâchée*, (the angry maiden) is performed by two persons, male and female. A young

* If you have talents that please, display them whenever you can.

girl first appears dancing, while the music plays a gentle *andantino*; having made the tour of the stage in a kind of gliding step and finished their division of the dance, a young man presents himself, also dancing; he moves gracefully round his partner, holding a handkerchief, and attempts to approach nearer, upon which the girl; by her countenance and gesture, expresses her dislike and escapes away. The suitor, seeing himself thus rejected, exhibits his grief, and seems to accuse fate for his ill fortune. He however again advances towards the object of his choice, and tries to move her compassion; but she, triumphing in some supposed superiority, again by strong gesticulation obliges him to retire, and appears to forbid him to mention his love. During this pantomime, all the steps and motions of both are in perfect unison with the music, and contribute greatly to express with precision the sentiments of anger and love. At length the young man, finding himself treated too harshly, appears to tremble with resentment, and as uncertain what course to pursue; after a short hesitation, he decides upon adopting violent means. At this moment she darts a severe and threatening look at him. He then becomes motionless, sighs, and seems to give himself up gradually to despair. He looks upward, and appears to entreat heaven to put an end to his existence, then tying his handkerchief about his throat, pulls it tight and seems upon the point of falling. The girl now instantly runs to support him, and shows by her gesture that she deploras her unnecessary rigour. She unties the handkerchief, calls to her lover, and seeks by every means to reanimate him; he gradually revives; the voice of his mistress has struck his ear; he looks around, finds himself in her arms, and his happiness appears complete. Both now seem to share equally in the happy change, and they appear to take an oath of fidelity. The dance then regains its former vivacity, and during its course is made the interpreter of their reciprocal affection.

This description may appear neither interesting nor very effective, conveyed as it is merely by words; but let

any one suppose all that is here described performed by two persons, who are not only finished dancers, but good mimes, and then let him suppose the accompanying music to be well adapted and full of expression, and finally we must leave him to represent to himself the fine effect of the whole.

SPANISH DANCES.*

The Spanish dances, from their peculiar character, always excite the curiosity of men of taste, and more especially of the lovers of the art of dancing. The Fandango is the great national dance of Spain, as admitted by the Spanish themselves. And, indeed, so large and general is it in its character and composition, that all their other dances appear to be derived from the Fandango, or at least imitations of it. The graceful and seductive groupings of this celebrated dance, together with the cadences and overpowering expression of the music, produce an extraordinary effect upon every spectator. Spaniards, whenever they witness it, give themselves up to a kind of ecstasy.

We shall now examine more closely, and describe more minutely, the nature of Spanish dances ; such an examination will not be without interest, for these dances present a kind of picture or transcript of the taste, feeling and character of the Spanish nation. The steps are to be remarked for their *balancé*, lightness, grace, and elasticity ; while the majesty of certain movements, would plainly indicate Spanish pride, haughtiness, love and arrogance.

In the execution of these dances, the arms are always expanded, and their movements, however directed, are continually undulating. By their posture they sometimes represent the protection they would afford to some beloved object, at others they describe, by the

* The following descriptions are extracted from a work by the author, entitled "A Collection of *Mélanges*," which he dedicated to his friend Mayquez, the celebrated Spanish tragedian ; the work was translated and published in Spanish, and met with great success.

same means, tenderness and sincerity. The eyes are frequently directed downwards towards the feet, and from that point glance over every part of the body, and seem to express the pleasure which symmetry of form inspires them with. The various agitations and undulations of the body, the feet, attitudes, and positions, whether lively or serious, all concur in presenting a picture of gallantry, desire, impatience, hesitation, grief, tenderness, despair, confusion, pardon, satisfaction and happiness. In this manner Spanish dancing is an exhibition of the passions, showing the effects they produce, and how they graduate one into the other; and at the same time portraying the general habits and manners of the people. And we seem to behold an enamoured Roderic at the feet of his Inez, or some gipsy heroine from Cervantes, or the respectful gallantry of some heroic Hidalgo of ancient Spanish romance. We have already observed that the origin of certain Spanish dances may be traced to the Americans, but the Moors, who inhabited Spain during so many centuries, and established so completely their own customs, without doubt left with the Spaniards, amongst other things, many of their dances.

As we have already given a full description of the Fandango (see page 28) we shall therefore pass on to

THE BOLERO.

The Bolero is a dance far more noble, modest and restrained, than the Fandango; it is executed by two persons. This movement is composed of five parts, namely the *paseo*, or promenade, which may be called the introduction; the *traversias*, or crossing, by which the position of the places is changed, and this is done both before and after the *diferencias*, a measure in which a change of steps is effected; then follows the *finales*, which is followed by the *bien parado*, a graceful attitude or grouping of the couple who are dancing. The air to which the Bolero is danced, is in $\frac{2}{4}$; there are some in the time of $\frac{3}{4}$. The music is

extremely varied and full of cadences. The air or music of this dance may be changed, but its peculiar rhythmus must be preserved, together with its characteristic time and preludes, which latter are sometimes called *pauses feintes* or false pauses. The steps of the Bolero are performed *terre à terre*; they are either sliding, beating or retreating, being always as it were clearly *struck* out.

THE SEGUIDILLAS BOLERAS.

When the *Boleros* are sung and accompanied by a guitar, they are called *Seguidillas Boleras*. The great difficulty of this dance consists in resuming the part called the *paseo*, which is immediately after the first part of the air in the prelude of the accompaniment, which precedes the *estribillo*. The *estribillo* is not indeed that part of the couplet where the moral is to be found, but, however, it contains the epigram.

THE SEGUIDILLAS MANCHEGAS.

This movement is danced by four, six, eight or nine persons; it is executed in rapid time and begins without the *paseo*. The *traversias*, or *crossing*, is shorter, and the *bien parado* is performed without gesture. This dance is very sprightly in its motions, and is a great favorite with the lower orders, who enjoy it with a very particular zest.

THE CACHUCHA.

The name of this dance is a word of very general signification, and is applied to an infinite number of articles, by way perhaps of abbreviation, as caps, fans, &c. The *Cachucha Solo* is danced either by a man or a woman alone, though better suited to the latter, and, is admirably calculated for and adapted to that medley of music, by which it is always accompanied, and which is sometimes calm and graceful, at others sprightly and vivacious, and sometimes impassioned and expressive.

THE SEGUIDILLAS TALEADAS.

This dance is a species of Bolero, and is interspersed with some measures from the Cachucha.

THE MINUET AFANDANGADO.

A minuet partly composed of the Fandango.

THE MINUET ALLEMANDADO.

A minuet intermixed with steps from the Allemande.

THE GUARACHA.

This dance, the music of which is in $\frac{3}{8}$, is danced by one person, accompanied by the guitar. Its movement, which should increase gradually in rapidity, renders it difficult of performance. It is but seldom danced, and never except at the Theatres.

EL ZAPATEADO.

This is the same sort of movement as the *Guaracha*, and is in the time of $\frac{3}{8}$. There is in this dance a considerable noise made by the feet; the steps are struck upon the ground, similar to the *Anglaise* and the *Sabotière*.

EL ZORONGO.

This dance has given a name to a head-dress for women, which in Spain is composed of ribands, mingled with the hair. Its steps are simple, following a very sprightly movement, and are executed backwards and forwards; and during the dance the hands are sometimes clapped to the time.

EL TRIPILI TRAPOLA.

This dance is nearly similar to the Zorongo, excepting that it finishes with three *demi-tours* or half-turns.

The characteristics of all these dances are quite original; their figures are varied and interesting; and the sight of their performance is always delightful, and in all countries they are witnessed with pleasure. All the movements of these dances are so peculiar and so original, that those of other nations cannot be compared with them in any respect.

The music which accompanies them, or rather that inspires their evolutions, is so harmonious and so full of original melody and sweetness, that it finds an instantaneous welcome in all hearts, and the feelings are in truth perfectly captivated for the time; and that person who is not at all moved by such music and such motions, must be unaccountably dull and insensible. The great musician of the age bears witness to the excellence of these Spanish dancing melodies by the embellishments he has bestowed upon them, when introduced into some of his finest productions: we allude to Rossini.

There is another and very important circumstance, which renders these dances still more captivating, and that is the picturesque costume of the dancers, than which nothing can be fancied handsomer in design, or more beautiful in its ornaments and variety of colours. To this attraction may be added the striking features of the Spanish girls, their expressive looks and their light figure, which seem formed for the dance. Thus adorned, every thing conspires to rivet and delight the eyes of the beholder; and it is not difficult to fancy, while these *Bayadères* are dancing, that some picture of Titian or Veronese has become animated.

Many of our readers will remark, that we have omitted to mention a certain dance, denominated the *Folies d'Espagne* (the Spanish mania). It is generally believed that this dance is very much admired and practised in Spain as an original Spanish dance; but we must, however, observe, that the air was the composition of Corelli, a celebrated violinist and composer of music, to which the Spanish danced so universally and unceasingly, that it became quite a mania with them. It was first sung, then played on an instrument, and finally

danced. Any kind of step was adapted to this air or tune, and every one formed for himself a measure, according to his own peculiar taste and style.

It may not, perhaps, be found unacceptable if we add here a short glossary, or etymological explanation, of those characteristic words by which the Spanish dances are designated. We shall make the attempt, notwithstanding the great difficulty with which it is attended, owing principally to the almost total deficiency of the Spanish Dictionary in this respect. Its definitions are never sufficiently precise to allow of a determinate conclusion being drawn from them.

Bolero—*Saltationis Hispaniæ genus*, is derived from the verb *volare*, to fly, the letter *v* being often changed into *b*, or from the noun *volero* or *vo/ador*, flying or running. The sense of these words has perhaps been applied to the *Bolero*, to indicate the lightness with which it ought to be executed.

Seguidillas.—Signifies no more than *continuation*, and, in fact, the air of the Seguidillas is the same as that of the *Bolero*, continued by the voice, and followed by a flourish of the accompanying instrument.

Taleadas.—Is an adjective and derived from the word *taleo*, which signifies a noisy amusement.

Manchegas.—Is an adjective, and indicates anything that belongs to *La Mancha*, a southern province of Spain, between Andalusia and New Castile.

Cachucha.—This word is not to be found in any dictionary of the Spanish language. It is customary to apply it to a fair, a bird, a cap, and in fact to any thing that is graceful and pretty. In the language of the Andalusian Gittanoes, or Gypsies, the word *Cachucha* signifies gold. In a more elevated position *Cachucha* means that part of the quiver in which Cupid puts his darts—*Sagitta capsula in pharetræ*. The following

verses may assist in giving some idea of the general sense in which this word is employed by the Spaniards.

SPANISH.

Mi Cachucha, por la mar,
A todos vientos camina,
Pero nunca va mejor
Que cuando va de bolina.

IMITATED.

Haste my darling (*Cachucha*) o'er the seas,
When gentle gales are blowing ;
But when the winds of winter roar,
Ah ! do not think of going.

Fandango.—This word means *go dance*.

Afandangado.—Signifies any thing belonging to the Fandango.

Guaracha.—Is an expression of the Negroes, and indicates joy and exultation.

Zapateado.—*Zapato* signifies a shoe, and *Zapateado* means struck by the shoe or foot.

Tripili trapola.—Is nothing more than a kind of expression, indicating a modulation of the voice, amongst the Gitanos or Andalusian Gipsies.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

NOTES UPON DANCING.

PART II.

THE ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT STATE OF
THE IMPERIAL AND ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCING
AT MILAN—EXTRACTS FROM THE GAZZETTA,
MODA, STRENNA, AND OTHER ITALIAN
JOURNALS.—THE PLEIADES.

THE Imperial and Royal Academy of Dancing at Milan, was founded in the year 1813, the object of the founders being to provide for the principal theatre of the capital, La Scala, which is at the same time the largest in Italy, a *corps de Ballet*, or body of dancers, by means of which the Ballet-composer and the Ballet-master might be enabled to carry out completely their ideas and intentions, and give satisfaction to the public. According to the scheme, the pupils are so provided for that an honorable and lucrative career is placed within their power. This establishment was from the first, as it continues to be, supported by the same provision that is made for the Royal and Imperial Theatres.

The first masters of this most useful institution were the Messrs. Chapelle and Coralli, who were engaged as first or finishing masters; M. Gérard as elementary master; and Sig. Garcia, as teacher of the Pantomimic art. These were succeeded by M. Léon and his lady, as finishing-master and mistress; M. Ville-neuve as elementary instructor, and Signora Monticini

for Pantomime. These were suddenly replaced by Messrs. Guillet and Bocci. The government now finding that the instruction received at the Academy did not correspond with their expectation, and that the institution they had established was likely to remain in a state of mediocrity, decided upon changing the masters and instructors, and having learned the celebrity of Sig. Blais and his lady, who were at once distinguished for dancing, pantomime and composition, and that Sig. Blais was besides well known and valued for his practical works upon his art, published in various countries of Europe, it was resolved that this highly eminent couple, who shared between themselves all those qualifications that constitute the finished artist and the able instructor, should be appointed to preside over the Imperial Academy; an election which was received with entire satisfaction and applause by the whole body of professors, and the theatrical world in general.

The scheme of instruction hitherto practised in the school was now immediately and totally changed; and, very shortly afterwards, the rapid improvement of the pupils became visible and surprised every one. Sig. Blais and his lady, in fact, more than answered the expectation of the government, and the wishes of their best friends and supporters. Their school soon became the first of its kind, while the splendid Ballets represented at La Scala were entirely supported and executed by their pupils, many of whom rivalled the first dancers in Europe, and by degrees appeared at all the principal theatres; while dancers, both young and experienced, repaired from all parts to Milan, either to study the whole art, or to finish at the Blais school.

As we have already intimated, the instruction of the pupils was confided to Signor and Signora Blais as finishing teachers of dancing and pantomime. M. Villeneuve remained as elementary teacher, and Sig. Bocci was continued as elementary teacher of Pantomime. Two violin players are also employed; one for the elementary department, and the other for the finishing school. There is also an inspector, whose office is

to preserve order and internal discipline. The instructors, inspector, and musicians, are all appointed by government, according to instructions proceeding from the management of the theatre. Besides the persons above-mentioned, there is annexed to the school two male attendants, and one female for the girls. The school is within the theatre of La Scala, and enjoys a most advantageous situation. There are two spacious rooms, one for elementary and the other for finishing instructions; the floors of these rooms are laid with a descent, like the stage itself, to accustom the pupils to dance upon an inclined plane. Two servants are allowed to the principal instructors, and one to the inspector; there are also four servants for the use of the pupils; two for the female classes, juvenile and full-grown; and two for the male classes of the same description. For these servants, together with a house-keeper, appropriate residences are assigned.

The dress worn by the pupils at their lessons was left to the care and taste of Sig. Blasis, who designed it. That of the females is composed of a boddice and skirt of white muslin, a black sash being worn round the waist. The dress of the males is composed of a jacket which fits the shape close, with trowsers, all of white cloth; round the waist a girdle of black leather is worn, confined and tightened by means of buckles, thus forming a support to the loins, which custom was always observed by the ancients in all their gymnastic exercises. The dress of dancers should always set close to the shape, and fit perfectly well, that no part of the outline of the figure may be concealed; care being taken that the dress be not so tight as to confine or embarrass any of the movements and attitudes. The shoe should be well made, and cling as it were to the foot; the shape of which it should contribute to improve. Those young persons who are deemed qualified to be admitted into the Academy, by the Commission acting under government, receive gratuitous instruction in dancing and pantomime, and, as soon as they have made a satisfactory progress, they are re-

moved to higher classes, according to the system of rewards pursued in the school, till at length they can be permitted to appear upon the stage of the great theatre of La Scala, when they receive a monthly allowance, which is augmented in proportion to the advance they make towards perfection, and to the service they render the theatre.*

The number of the pupils is fixed not to exceed thirty-two, in the proportion of twenty females to twelve males. But on account of the celebrity to which the Academy attained, the rapid progress of the pupils, their success, and the various interests of other theatres depending upon them, the number of candidates augmented to an extraordinary degree ; a circumstance which could never have been foreseen, from the unsatisfactory beginning of the institution. In consequence of this, the government, in a very liberal spirit, allowed numbers to be received into the establishment, as students, not upon the foundation.

* Many years before the arrival of Sig. Blasis at the Imperial Academy, the school made no progress, but rather retrograded from that point of perfection to which it was, according to the intentions of the government, to be advanced ; but, under the able tuition of Sig. and Signora Blasis, the pupils were found to be quite capable of reaching that excellence which had been resolved upon. It must, in the meantime, be confessed, that, during the directorship of Messrs. Chapelle and Léon, not a few of their scholars distinguished themselves, and attained to the first rank in their profession. At the time alluded to, Blasis performed occasionally at the theatre of La Scala, and took that opportunity of propagating his art, as revived and reformed by himself, advancing new principles, and introducing novel embellishments. Before much time had elapsed, all the dancers of La Scala placed themselves in the ranks of his followers ; while by his instructions he materially assisted and improved the first-class pupils, dancing with them in groups or *Pas* of three, four and five, and also in various *Pas d'ensemble*. He thus effected many very desirable improvements, and opened for himself a path to that honourable post to which he was afterwards appointed. Amongst those who made the most conspicuous improvements under his directions, were the Mesdames Conti, Torelli, Bianchi, Angiolini, Brugnoli, Cosentini, Rinaldi, Olivieri, Bertini, Grassini, Santambrogio, Zampuzzi, Trezzi, Valenza, Sirtori, Alisio, Quaglia, Rebaudengo, Frassi, the sisters Chabert and others. As also Messrs Appiani, Bianchi, Trabattoni, &c.

Before admission as pupils upon the original foundation, the candidates undergo an examination by the physician and surgeon attending the theatre, who report as to their conformation of body. After this, for a space not exceeding one year, they *practice attitudes*; and if, during that time, they do not give complete satisfaction, they are remanded for a longer period: but, if they are judged to be properly prepared, they are immediately admitted, that is, upon the first vacancy that occurs. The number of candidates was strictly limited to sixteen, consisting of ten females and six males, but, owing to circumstances already mentioned, this number has been augmented. No one is admitted before the age of eight years, nor after twelve, if a girl, or fourteen, if a boy. They must further prove, by legal witnesses, that they have had the small pox, that they are of robust constitution and in good health, and lastly, that their parents are respectable people, supporting themselves by some occupation.

The pupils when admitted must remain in the school, devoted to its service and to the service of the theatre, during the space of eight years, after which they cease to belong to the establishment. They are also divided into gratuitous pupils, those who are paid, and those who have finished their course, and who are called *emeriti*. During the first three years after admission, they are considered as in their apprenticeship, and receive no salary whatever, forming the gratuitous class. When this apprenticeship is completed, if a pupil is not found to be capable of entering the finishing class, that pupil is discharged from the school. Those who are paid, receive their salary annually. There is also a selection of twelve pupils, divided into four classes, one from each class receiving a larger salary. This class, to which is granted an augmentation of salary, is open to those only who have particularly distinguished themselves by their progress in the school, or whose conduct has been unexceptionable.

The pupils who are paid and have passed through the classes, named *emeriti*, must take part in the performance at the theatre.

The days of practice are, every day in the year, except the usual prescribed holidays. The practice in the dancing school continues during the space of three hours—that is, from nine in the morning till twelve. After this the pupils are exercised in the art of patomime, for one hour. Any neglect of duty is appropriately punished. Obedience, respect, quietness, order, with genteel and becoming behaviour, are strictly ordered to be observed in the school.

Such are the principal rules enacted for the government of the establishment, by which it may be seen that the Imperial Academy of Dancing of Milan is based upon the best principles, capable of rendering it most useful to numbers, and indispensable to the theatres: an institution that does honour to its founders and supporters, who have spared nothing to render it an ornament to the metropolis of Lombardy, which may be looked upon as the abode of talent, and the seat of literature and of the arts and sciences, and in the first rank of European capitals.

In the school of M. Villeneuve, the elementary principles of dancing formed the subject of study; in that of Sig. Bocci, the elementary principles of pantomime; while in that of Sig. Blasis, that which is called the *Grande Leçon*, that is, the difficulties of the art with its last finishing touches, are imparted to the student. According to the system of the last-named gentleman, every branch of dancing is taught, including every species; and that department in dancing is assigned to a pupil for which his form and natural disposition is best adapted. After proper preparation, his pupils are allowed to attempt a *pas seul—pas de deux—pas de trois—pas d'ensemble* and other steps, followed by every kind of dancing executed in the theatre. Signora Blasis presides over the department of Pantomime, in which it is her business to give the finishing lessons; and accordingly, in her presence—soliloquies, dialogues, scenes and complete acts, consisting of dancing and pantomime, are executed. By this means the pupils are properly and completely initiated into the most difficult parts of the pantomimic art.

Signor and Signora Blasis' system of instruction is formed upon the best principles of the art, in which every means is employed to produce the consummate artiste; means that have ever been employed by the most able instructors in the art of dancing and pantomime. Their aim is to conduct their pupils, by the shortest and most direct path, to the most desirable point to be attained in their art. They base all the principles of their method upon the art of design, and upon grace of form or outline, than which, when well understood, nothing can be more essential to the finished dancer.

Ease, freedom, lightness, life, vigour and the power of leaping, (*sbalzo*) are qualities in which they are careful that their pupils should excel, ever mindful that the strictest harmony should exist between the music and every motion. They are very well aware that in attitudes, movements, gestures and positions, are to be found those lines and outlines of which the ideal beauty of painting and sculpture consists; they therefore require that dancers, both male and female, should execute their dances with appropriate feeling and expression, adapted to the part they perform; their action ought not only to satisfy the eye, but it should also say something to the heart and the imagination—it should be the poetry of motion. The Academy is very frequently visited by persons in power, as also by persons of distinction, by artists and foreigners, and persons devoted to the study of the Fine Arts. These have unanimously borne witness to the excellence of the Blasis' system, and to the talents and rapid progress of the pupils.

When the institution had been scarcely two years under the direction of Signor and Signora Blasis, a certain writer whom we have mentioned, while remarking on the extraordinary improvement of the students in so short a time, speaks as follows of those who were the most distinguished of the school,—"Signora Devecchi is a dancer who understands her art; she is full of life, agility and precision; she keeps good time; and succeeds in every style. She is also an able pantomimist, and has been greatly applauded at La

Scala, even when contrasted with an artiste of more mature years. The manager of the Opera at Paris having seen her, made proposals to engage her in preference to any others; but Devecchi resolved upon going to the principal theatre at Lisbon, where, together with her sister, she has become a great favorite with the public. Young Borri seems as if he were modelled after the statue of Gian Bologna; he is full of vigour, vivacity and agility, and strikes his positions with fine taste. The rapidity of his progress has been almost incredible, certainly he is without an equal since the establishment of the school. Borri unites grace with vigour, and seems to divert himself with the difficulties of his art. His *pirouettes* are doubtless most extraordinary, they are introduced at the right time, and with the most correct and picturesque attitudes. The universal applause of a Milanese audience, and the high praise bestowed upon this young man in all the papers, bear witness to the truth of our remarks. If Sig. Borri should continue to pursue his studies with the same order as heretofore, with the excellent instruction that he receives, he must, in the course of about two years, become the first dancer of the age.* Signora Bertuzzi, who is endowed with a beautiful and elegant figure, dances charmingly; displaying great agility with modesty of manner; and, young as she is, might well be compared to older dancers of high renown. So universal was the applause that she obtained in the *Sylphide*, that a gentleman of rank became enamoured of the beautiful *ballerina*; and married her, by which circumstance a splendid career in her art was suddenly arrested. Young Marzagora shows great agility and executes the pirouette with perfect ease; she possesses a light nymph-like figure. Signora Bussola displays vigour and agility, and dances with feeling and sentiment. Signora Grancini is well-made; her dancing may be described as elegant and correct,

* This prophecy was verified; Borri has now been, for three years, the first dancer of Vienna.

and displays extraordinary strength in the toe-steps. She executes the various styles with ease and spirit, and performs the pantomimic passages with much animation. Domenichettis has a graceful figure; in her dancing, harmony, elegance and precision are equally conspicuous, while she introduces much variety into her execution. Signora Viganoni the elder has a genteel figure; her dancing is at once elegant, modest, and noble. Those very juvenile little creatures, Pirovano, Bertuzzi the younger, Marra, Fuoco, and others, promise to rival their companions." Besides these, other pupils of the establishment, admitted as private students, have gained great applause at various theatres in Italy and other countries. Amid this general success, the entire body of the pupils determined to meet, and ask permission of the Board of Directors appointed by government, to present Sig. Blasis and his lady with their own busts, as a mark of gratitude and esteem, and it being resolved by the Board that such a testimony was well merited, they had the pleasure of seeing their busts erected, executed by the excellent sculptor Thierry, with the following inscription—"To Carlo Blasis and A. Ramaccini Blasis, as a mark of esteem and gratitude, by the Pupils of the I. R. Academy of Dancing, and Pantomime—Milan, 1838"* Various engravings were made from these busts, amongst which that by Mantovani, executed for the *Fasti Teatrali Europei*, is the most beautiful. The gift of the pupils was accompanied by a fine ode, the production of the elegant and talented poet, C. Bassi.

"Sig. Blasis continues to be indefatigable in his labours; he mixes with the study of his own art, to which he is fondly attached, that of the Fine Arts. From these he takes whatever is noble or beautiful, and transferring it to his own use, he strives by this means, together with the aid of his writings and his pupils, to place dancing and pantomime on a level with any other of the imita-

* Original Italian—Gli allievi dell' I. R. Accademia di Ballo e di Mimica di Milano l'anno 1838. Consacrarano, a Carlo Blasis ed a A. Ramaccini Blasis.

tive arts. His endeavours have been crowned with the most unexampled and universal applause ; all unite in considering him to be, in the language of Dante, the "*Maestro di color che sanno*"—which may be rendered—"The instructor of the teacher."

"Dancing and Pantomime, with their gestures, attitudes and expression, should display on a larger scale, and with the addition of motion, whatever it is the object of painting and sculpture to represent. This is the leading principle of our *Maestro* ; the basis upon which he places his entire theory, practice and ultimate effect. This can be easily proved by the series of Ballet-compositions which he prepared himself for those of his own pupils who had attained to the first class, and who were received with a burst of applause, usually bestowed on those artistes only who are already become celebrated and renowned. The lady of Signor Blasis, who is the Finishing-mistress at the Institution, is herself an artiste, and, as is well known in Italy, universally celebrated both for excellence of execution and profound knowledge of her art, follows the same principles in her department, and shares with her husband the same convictions and love of her art. Among the pupils of Signor and Signora Blasis, who at the present moment, (1844) is the most celebrated, is Sig. Borri, a young man devotedly attached to his art, who as a dancer is second to none. To him we must add the following ladies, who are now in the first rank—the elegant and *harmonious** Domenichettis ; the correct, energetic and finished Grancini ; the vivacious Bussola ; the agile Marzagora ; the splendid Cherrier ; the fairy-sprite, Fuoco ; the graceful Gallavresi ; the dashing and bounding Bertuzzi. Besides these, there are many juvenile aspirants, who promise to be the Sylphs of the first theatres in Europe. Among the young men who give promise of becoming excellent dancers, we must mention the names of Croce, Ramaccini and

* This word, as applied to dancing, will be best understood by those who understand the whole art.

Vienna. In the pantomimic art, special mention must be made of the female pupils. The beautiful and expressive Cotica, with her ardent looks; Colomba and Catena; Bagnoli, for her noble style; Zambelli, Grancini and Bussola; with the young men, Borri and Croce, with some others.

“ Among the private pupils of their excellent Master and Mistress, the following ladies have greatly distinguished themselves,—Signoras Marietta Baderna, Crochat, Viganoni, Ravaglia, and Bissoni. To these may be added the young man, Sig. Penco, with some other youths, who promise to become one day the boast of the Academy. We may add here, to the honour of Signor and Signora Blasis and their school, that it very often happens, when the grand Ballets are given in the vast theatre of La Scala, that the *pupils alone* sustain the pantomimic parts, in which is contained the action of the piece, with great applause, as also the *Pas* of the principal dancers, with the general dancing of the piece, and they have thus become the stars of the composition.

“ Dancers from all parts now come to Milan to receive finishing lessons at the Imperial Academy; the greater part of them from foreign countries, whose names have been enrolled at La Scala, and who, ambitious of improving their style, and aware that the art has no limit to its perfection, enter a course of study under the Blasis', who assist and attend them in their *début* before a difficult and critical public, and at a theatre where they have powerful rivals to contend with. There is scarcely any traveller or person of distinction who has not paid a visit to the Academy, an institution that does so much honour to the government by which it is supported, and to the two celebrated professors under whose instruction it has made such marvellous progress.

“ The Academy, besides furnishing a *corps de ballet*, the most splendid of any now in existence, to the most magnificent theatre in the world (that of San Carlo at Naples being now much smaller) provides dancers for

the whole of the Peninsula, and other countries, and those that are sent always meet with success. In conclusion, we may say with Giulio Uberti, the author of the beautiful and witty poem entitled *l'Inverno* :—

L'arte nata in Italia, e grande in Francia,
Cui Blasis poi sublima, e di modeste
Grazie leggiadra al patrio ciel ridona."

Extract from No. 366, of

The "GAZZETTA DI MILANO," December 31, 1840.*

"The Academy of Dancing, like every thing else, has its history, one part of which shows the establishment in a favourable light, while another exposes it to severe remarks. At one time the prospect appears cloudy and threatening, at another promising and cheerful. Since the period of its foundation in 1813 to the present time, its whole course has been chequered by favourable and unfavourable incidents, of which, as they have excited considerable interest during a space of twenty-seven years, we shall relate some particulars, without extending our notice to any unusual length. We might trace and follow the Institution in its progress

* From all that has been stated in the foregoing part of this work, it would seem that Sig. Blasis is a man well qualified for the peculiar situation which he holds under the government, in which he has, in fact, displayed learning and capacity very unusual with persons in a similar situation. He appears to be really a man worthy of all praise; the first part of this work will prove that he has a learned and profound knowledge of his art, while the second part bears witness to his still more valuable qualification—practical talent. Having already reduced to practice his own beautiful theories, we here see him practically infusing his principles into those who are committed to his care. The enthusiasm, therefore, which is displayed in the following extracts, will be very well understood and appreciated, although it may appear rather overcharged to English taste. It must be remembered, that the rapid and extraordinary change produced by the system of Signor Blasis in that which forms one-half of the whole amusement at such a theatre as the gigantic La Scala, in the short space of two years, after a mis-management of twenty-seven, could not but excite the public attention generally, and the surprise and admiration of all that part of the Milanese public who delight in the splendours of the Ballet.—[ED.]

from the foundation, but we deem it quite sufficient, in the present instance, to confine ourselves to the last few years of the school, which have been by far the most prosperous. The Academy is placed under the patronage and protection of Government, and was instituted for giving gratuitous instruction in Dancing and Pantomime, and whatever pertains to these two arts, to a fixed number of male and female pupils. The salaries of the presiding masters, inferior teachers, and other persons belonging to the establishment, as well as those of the pupils able to enter into the service of the theatre, are furnished by the Government Theatrical Board. The rules of the Institution are vigorously but considerately enforced, as by such means only the object of the founders can be attained. The morals of the scholars are scrupulously attended to, their conduct being continually watched. Every superintendent must carefully fulfil his own particular charge. To one being assigned the rudimental lessons; to another, pantomimic instruction; to the two presiding professors, the finishing department of all that is taught. At stated periods, an examination takes place, before a commission of judges, properly constituted. Rewards and punishments are carefully and respectively appropriated; and indeed, every means is adopted that may contribute to preserve the high character of this excellent establishment.

“The audiences who now frequent the Scala, bear continual testimony to the rapid progress of the pupils, over whom, at the present period, Signor Blasis and his lady preside. The choice of this gentleman and his lady was of incalculable advantage to the school, which under former management had made such small progress, and consequently had met with very little encouragement. Within these two years, however, since the Blasis have undertaken this very difficult charge, things have undergone a rapid change: already, in fact, several distinguished pupils have been produced, who have really revived the fortunes of the theatre, by their grace and finished style. Among these Mlles. Fabbri, King and De Vecchi, are three

elegant creatures, who move as with wings, promising, by the grace and beauty of their movements, a brilliant and profitable career. Blasis has, it appears, nearly ready for production another nest of these bird-like beings, whose grace and agility have won applause from the first circles of our vast theatre. The names of Bertuzzi, Grancini, Bussola and Domenichettis, are already well-known to our youthful readers, for we have often found ourselves constrained to proclaim their merit. With respect to the male pupils, Blasis has imparted to Borri the highest and most beautiful qualities of his art; and his lessons, meeting in the pupil with a disposition favourable to their influence, have endowed him with grace without affectation, and vigour without heaviness. He always exhibits that easy elegance of motion, so well calculated to conceal those muscular efforts, that are indispensable in the public dancer.

“ Thus the Academy, as at present conducted, has gained a rich meed of applause, while a successful and profitable career is opened to many of its female pupils, young girls full of life and vigour, exhibiting in every motion grace and modesty, often to be seen waving a cloud of white veils, and never betraying the smallest approach to any unbecoming gesture. Whether in general unison, or separate solo steps, this troop of light gazelles is ever charming; they close, interlace, walk as it were upon the air, and then disperse over the vast space of the enormous stage. They smile and gaily gesticulate with each other, while all is done with gentleness and a certain feminine feeling beautiful to behold, producing a kind of dream, in which every motion is decorous, and every gesture subject to the rule of modesty—a fairy company made to inspire love mixed with respect.

“ Now, gentle reader, if Blasis be the man, or rather the magician, who has produced this transformation; if he has endowed these bodies with a lightness almost incorporeal; if he has adorned them with exquisite grace and elegance; if he has caused so much beauty

to flourish among the youthful band, adding to the tender flower both colour and perfume; why—it is high time that we should do him public honour. It cannot be forgotten that, towards the end of last season, two very young girls appeared in a Styrian dance, and produced an extraordinary impression by their unprecedented display of grace and science, such as is not always to be found in the mature and finished artiste—these were two of Blasis' pupils. We must, then, tender our best thanks to this able and laborious professor, who in so short a time has presented us with such lovely and fairy troops for our diversion. A man who, in the space of two years, has raised our school to such a point of perfection, that it may now, perhaps, be regarded as the first institution of the kind, known to exist.”

Lambertini.

From No. 88, of the “MODA,”

a Periodical published at Milan, November 2, 1840.

ACADEMY OF DANCING

CONNECTED WITH THE THEATRE OF LA SCALA.

——— “Bright troop of beautiful young creatures,” exclaims the writer in this periodical, “who seem darting into the air from a cloud of veils—now they undulate in white files, suggesting to us the image of a silver serpent; how gaily do they glance along upon their limber feet, amidst a multitude of mines and forms clothed in silk and velvet: smiling creatures of the short tunic and graceful limb. A lovely company, closely followed by the inquiring glass of some, and the sighs of others, who fancy they behold a kind of apotheosis of Stage-dancing. But we may ask—whence came these tender and beautiful young creatures? where did they learn so much grace and ease, those charming attitudes, those gentle swimming movements? Our readers have no doubt marked the swan, curving

down its graceful neck to behold its own image in the shining surface of the lake ; or they may have seen the gazelle, sporting in the morning light ; or the slender form of the kid, climbing the steep rocks among the Alps ; or the white deer, darting amidst the cliffs like a ball of snow flying from the hand of some holiday-keeping collegian—such are the impressions produced by these juvenile dancers. Was it by nature or art, industry or revelation, that they acquired such agile elegance, such magic of motion ? But, however it happened that you have been thus endowed and adorned, how is it that you have been content to forego till the present moment, the enthusiastic admiration and applause now showered down upon you ?

“ In other words, our vast theatre La Scala now possesses a treasure in this charming troop of most graceful young girls. Without entering into details of the past, we shall only observe, that it was not the fault of these beautiful young creatures, if, not dreaming of the bright reward of perseverance and industry, they were prevented by the carelessness and mismanagement of their teachers from arriving at the glorious prize that ever rewards the finished dancer. It is not you that are to be blamed, if, when there arrived from the banks of the Seine, the Thames, or the Sebeto,* powerful rivals, before whose brilliancy your smaller lights grew pale or were extinguished ; your school then was obscure and unknown ; at that time the magician had not arrived whose powerful wand was destined to produce the almost incredible prodigies we now behold. At that time the indifference and incapacity of your teachers effectually prevented you from entering that path which leads to reward and renown. But Blasis arrived and the thing was done—and now your school occupies the first rank, while you, as pupils, have proved your gratitude in profiting by the happy change ; and, such has been your progress, that, in the space of two years, your *corps de Ballet* has become superior to those

* The river near Naples.

of all the other theatres of Europe. There is, we know and record it with pleasure, a contention among you, as to who shall be most grateful for benefits received; while the liberality shown in furnishing means, and the earnest anxiety to employ them well, is indeed a gratifying sight.

“Such, we can assure our readers, is now the favourable state of things; the school, as conducted by Blasis, is making rapid and gigantic strides to perfection. The metamorphosis that has been produced, partakes in fact of the marvellous; all the pupils now fulfil their particular parts in the business of the Ballet with a grace and correctness hitherto unknown, and some of them, stepping out as it were from the general cohort, attempt the very difficult post of principal dancers, and succeed in such a way as to have very little apprehension about rivals, even such as have already completed one half of their career and are become highly celebrated. Bertuzzi, Matilde, Domenichettis, Bussola, Grancini, and Marzagora are already become favorites with the immense audiences of La Scala; and in a short time Pirovano, Bertuzzi, Amalia, Fuoco, Catena, Marra, Neri and others, will occupy the same desirable position. Although Blasis has not held his appointment of finishing-master more than two years, one of his pupils, De Vecchi, already occupies the first place in public favour at Lisbon, as principal dancer, and is in receipt of a most liberal salary. Another, of the name of King, has become highly celebrated and improves continually. F. Fabbri might also lay claim to the highest honours bestowed at any theatre. She has, in fact, both at Padua and other places, attained to the highest rank. If the male pupils of the Academy do not obtain so much public favour from their attainments, it is, perhaps, because they are less in number, or that their natural disposition is less favourable to high attainments in the art. But to make amends, there is one male pupil, Borri, who alone would be sufficient to establish the fame of any school; and notwithstanding the general indifference of the public to male per-

formers, Borri is always received with universal applause. Meloni, also, and Croce, two other male pupils, have shewn symptoms of future excellence.

“ The care and attention bestowed upon this Institution is almost paternal. The inspection into the moral conduct and general improvement of the pupils is rigorous and unremitting; and this surveillance, with respect to progress in their art and their theatrical duties, has no doubt been a main cause of the vast advances made in the school. The talent, love for the art, and tenderness shewn towards the younger pupils, the dexterity in discovering for what particular branch of the profession the physical qualities of any pupil are suited, the earnestness with which they urge their instruction, the gentleness, the well-timed yet moderate severity of their manner—are the excellent qualifications continually displayed by Sig. Blasis and his lady, and are admirably well calculated to second and support the intentions of the government. They are, indeed, rather parents than preceptors to many of their pupils; while to others they act as friends and advisers, sparing no pains nor labour to secure the future success of those whom they treat more as their children than as their pupils.

“ We shall not here enlarge upon the peculiar plan pursued in the formation of this establishment, nor shall we expatiate upon the manner in which the classes are divided, the costume, duties or rewards. We shall merely remark, that every year an examination takes place in the presence of a Commission, composed of the President, who is also a councillor at law, the Director of the Police, and the minister appointed to superintend theatres, assisted by four Professors. This Board decides upon the rewards and advancement of such pupils as are deserving. Having said thus much, we shall dismiss the subject with a hearty eulogium upon the excellence of the above provisions. The result of so much care may be perfectly estimated by all who frequent our great theatre; there they must have witnessed the Milan Academy of Dancing springing,

as if by enchantment, out of its former decay, and exhibiting a pre-eminence that cannot be rivalled by any other Institution of the same nature, that is known to exist.”

Bermani.

Various extracts from the “Strenna,” the “Pirata,” the “Commercio” of Florence; the “Gazzetta,” of Genoa and Turin; and from the “Modu” and “Figaro” of Milan.

IMPERIAL AND ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCING—MILAN.

“This artistic establishment, with respect to its rules and provisions, the powerful patronage and support of the government, and the rapid and extraordinary improvement of the pupils, must now be considered as the first in Europe; the Milan school is, in fact, looked upon as the true seminary for the education of principal theatrical dancers on both sides of the Alps; and these assertions continue to be supported and verified. We have already spoken at great length upon the affairs of the academy, as also upon the mode of instruction, learning, and works of the Professor Blasis and his lady. (See the “Strenna” for 1840, and the “Pirata,” No. 81.) We shall, therefore, only observe here, that these excellent persons still continue to furnish proofs of their zeal and ability, and that the pupils continue to improve and to rise in public opinion, that is in the opinion of all Italy, and of those foreigners who are lovers of dancing in its purest style, which latter frequently grace the academy with their presence, to witness the system of practical instruction there pursued by the two celebrated professors.

“Blasis, by means of his writings and his numerous pupils, has propagated on all sides a pure and classical taste for dancing. His pupils, who are now to be found in most of the countries of Europe, maintain the honour they have been taught to attach to their art, and by their performances have so much in-

creased public admiration for dancing, that in Italy, the country of the fine arts, there is scarcely a theatre that is not in possession of a male or female pupil of Blasis and his lady."

"In the last great Ballet at which we were present, our clever pupils, whose progress does not depend upon their years, maintained and increased our delight on beholding their improvement, demonstrating that their excellent master, Blasis, continues to keep them in the right path, and to produce in them by his able instruction, a love for truth and beauty. This school now fully and satisfactorily fulfils the wishes and intentions of the government by which it is superintended and supported. Not long since, the family of his Imperial Highness, Prince Charles, paid a visit; they were struck with astonishment at what they saw, and, with Baron de Lanzfeld, cordially congratulated the president of the institution. The Hereditary Prince of Russia also paid a most interesting visit. On that day, it must be confessed, the pupils surpassed themselves, and were honoured with the most flattering attention by the Prince and his illustrious attendants."

"It was affirmed, during the past season, that there are not less than forty theatres in which the principal dancers are all of them pupils of Blasis and his lady, or, at least, had all been instructed in his school. In Milan, Citerio, Neri, Scotti, Vente, and Tommasini, have distinguished themselves at La Scala; at the theatre of Canobbiana, Marra, Thierry, and Baracani; at Bergamo, Savina and Zambelli; at Brescia, Bussola; at Cremona, Cherrier; at Lodi, Chiesa; at Mantua, Mochi; at Venice, Milesi; at Verona, Barville; at Trieste, Monplaisir; at Naples, Ferraris; at Pest, Domenichettis; at Vienna, Borri, Crochat, Pirovano, Mèrante; at Novara, Gabriele; at Genoa, Penco, Gallavresi, Frassi and Turchi; at Parma, Lorenzone and Clerici; at Piacenza, Lavaggi, F. Zambelli and Lepry; at Modena, Ravaglia; at Florence, Gran-

cini, Pallerini and Mongorri ; at Copenhagen, Hope ; at Rome, Venturi ; at Paris, Fuoco, Fabbri, Chion ; at London, Baderna and Croce, who performed first at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, and afterwards at Covent Garden ; at Madrid, Penco and Rossetti ; at Lisbon, De Vecchi ; at Constantinople, Calvi and Bellini ; in America, Ciocca and Adcock ; at Cagliari, Wegeti ; at Amsterdam, Adèle ; and finally at Seville, Turchini.*

“ M. De Chape of Paris, a great amateur and patron of the art of dancing, having arrived in Italy, the land of the Arts, immediately paid a visit to Blasis' school ; he appeared to be struck with surprise at what he saw. He had afterwards a private interview with a celebrated presiding artiste, and sketched out the plan of an establishment similar to that which he had just seen, introducing the same rules and provisions, and taking the published works of Blasis for his guide in the mode of instruction. His scheme was presented to a minister of the French government, and was favourably received ; but on account of the expense, and the remarks upon the subject which appeared in a certain newspaper, it was not put in execution.

“ M. De Chape, however, did not lose the opportunity of making known his own opinion and convictions ; he published, in various Parisian journals, some well-written articles upon the Academy at Milan and the writings of Sig. Blasis, which latter he highly valued, considering them of universal service upon the subject. It may be here repeated that, in the Lombard capital, the Commission of Directors on theatrical affairs exercise a vigilant superintendence over the conduct, progress, theatrical duties, and the rewards of the pupils of the Academy. Upon the arrival of

* This is a very curious list ; it records a dispersion of pupils sufficiently wide-spread to establish the system and fame of any professor of any art. These are all, be it remembered, according to foregoing information, scholars of a moral school of dancing. Surely a new epoch must have arrived for the Ballet, and if modesty and decorum are made to predominate in every motion and gesture, the Ballet in England is likely to become much more popular than heretofore. [ED.]

Blasis and his lady, the Directors were:—the Government Councillors, Don G. Crippa, Don A. Decio, who was succeeded by Don G. Pagani; distinguished members of the magistracy, and highly respected for talent, intelligence, and the love they showed for the Fine Arts, and also their determination to uphold the moral character of the Academy committed to their care.

THE PLEIADES.*

*Borri—Baderna—Domenichettis—Fabbri—
Ferraris—Fuoco—Granzini.†*

BORRI.

———— the grey

Dawn and the Pleiades before him danced.—MILTON.

Divide il tempo, e la misura eguale,

Ed osserva in ogni atto ordine e norma,

Secondo che ode il suonatore, e quale

O grave il suono, o concitato ei forma,

Tal col piede atteggiando o scende, o sale,

E va tarda, o veloce a stampar l'orma.

Fiamma ed onda somiglia, e turbo, e biscia,

Se poggia, o cala, o si rivolge, o striscia.—MARINI.

This young dancer possesses an assembly of all those qualities that should contribute to the forma-

* The following descriptions appeared in the "Strenna" for 1846, a beautiful periodical published at Milan. They were written by a gentleman named Regli; our author merely affixed the title, and, according to the fashion of his country, where to anything a little elevated some classical idea is immediately attached, has here given the name of Pleiades to a joyous company of his disciples, children of his care, whom he has instructed in beautiful and decorous motions, and made them *stars* in their profession. That the Pleiades danced we know, for Milton has told us so, as may be seen in the quotation above. But if it be remarked that our author has introduced a gentleman amongst the classic daughters of Pleione, we can only observe, that it seems to have suited his purpose to invite their brother Hyas from the other constellation.—[ED.]

† Principal dancers and pupils of Signore and Signora Blasis, of the Imperial Academy of Dancing at Milan.

tion of the truly classic artiste. He is an energetic and intelligent dancer; and always elegant, picturesque, vigorous and sprightly. When he leaps into the air, and thus displays his whole figure, it very nearly resembles that of the celebrated Mercury by Gian Bologna. Borri has experienced the most flattering reception in the first theatres of Italy; and after having fulfilled an engagement of two years, at the Imperial Theatre in Vienna, he was re-engaged for the same number of years.

“The Milanese well remember the extraordinary success of this dancer, both at La Scala and at the Fenice theatre in Venice. Borri composes very beautiful dances (*Pas*) himself, a very difficult undertaking. Following the advice and example of his master, he devotes part of his time to the study of music and literature. A man will always succeed better in the art to which he dedicates himself, if he furnishes his mind with a store of general knowledge; and moreover, dancing and pantomime are closely allied to the arts of drawing, painting, modelling, and sculpture. And a knowledge of these, as is well-known, is a great and fundamental principle in Blasis’ systems, a principle which he unceasingly inculcates upon all his scholars.”

BADERNA.

Elle est tout ce qui charme et nos cœurs et nos yeux.—BERNIS.

Cloe cui mostrò Tersicore

Parlar cogli atti ed ogni gentil moto

Che a dolce voluttà mesce il pudore.—PARADISI.

“The general form and outline of this young lady’s figure, who has only reached her fifteenth year, would seem to be those of the Grecian Psyche; she is already an excellent dancer, and art may be said to have finished in her what nature had begun. Her style is chaste, elegant and graceful, and the general effect she

produces is picturesque and expressive. Baderna executes with ease every species of dancing, entering with ardour and intelligence into the various characteristics of the dances of different nations. Of this she has given a proof in the various theatres of Italy; and particularly in Bologna at the great theatre, in Milan at La Scala, and other theatres, where she produced an extraordinary effect in a *Pas Tableau* composed by her master; the applause she obtained was enthusiastic and universal; it was truly Italian, which is so well calculated to encourage and support the artiste. There is in the dancing of Baderna a spirit of poetry, the same spirit that should animate and exalt all the imitative arts. This young lady, whom an elegant writer (Cominazzi,) has named '*the youngest of the Graces*,' is endowed with deep feeling; her pantomime breathes of passionate sentiment, and is, as the English papers lately remarked—"full of intelligence and expression." In the dances appertaining to the piece of '*Robert the Devil*,' composed by Blasis in a picturesque style, Baderna demonstrated her artistic talent by the enchanting manner in which she interspersed her dancing with dramatic action,—it was perfect. At the theatres of La Scala, Canobbiana and Carcano, the principal theatres of Milan, where this opera was produced with great splendor, it was Baderna who always sustained the beautiful but difficult part in which this kind of dancing is required. The *New Cachucha*, one of the National Dances that her master composed for her, displayed her talents in the most brilliant manner; she introduced it wherever she appeared; in London it became a universal favourite, where the entire English press applauded this favourite dance. The young artiste had several times the honour of dancing it before her Majesty, whose approbation she was so happy as to obtain; and once, it was observed, the dance being demanded a second time, her Majesty waited to witness its repetition. Baderna executes the Cachucha with all that beauty, grace, fascinating ease, and picturesque and poetical feeling, that characterise this Spanish

dance, but she kept perfectly clear of those trivial and affected movements, as well as certain exaggerations amounting almost to the obscene, which are frequently so offensive in certain dancing Phrynes; on this account, the modesty and good sense of our young dancer was always highly and universally acknowledged.

“The *abandon* of graceful gesture, and all those expressive motions indicating love and delight, should always be kept within proper limits, and be veiled, as it were, by the hand of modesty; all this will suggest itself to the artiste of good taste and good character. After the conclusion of her engagement at Drury Lane, Baderna passed to the Royal Italian Opera at Covent Garden, as a principal dancer, and has always been a favorite with the public.”

DOMENICHETTIS.

Sul vago pié si libra, e il vago piede,
 Movendo a passo misurato e lento,
 Con maestria, con leggiadria si vede
 Portar la vita in cento guise e cento.
 Or si scosta, or si accosta, or fugge, or riede,
 Or' a manca, or' a destra, in un momento,
 Scorrendo il suol, siccome suol baleno
 Dell' aria estiva il limpido sereno.—MARINI.

This lady is an esteemed member of the Imperial Academy, having passed through all the classes and gained all the honors and rewards. Her style is the classic; it is neat, correct and elegant; full of harmony and sweetness of expression. The beautiful and nicely exact steps of this nymph of the Ballet are always varied and always graceful. Among the favourite dancers at the court of Vienna, Domenichettis is particularly distinguished; having already, in company with the other eminent pupils of the Academy, met with the most flattering reception at La Scala. In a word, she always shared in the applause that was bestowed upon artistes of first-rate talent at the prin-

cipal theatre of Milan. This excellent dancer is now the reigning favorite at the theatre of Pesth, where she made an engagement; and having fulfilled that, she will return to the German capital. When Domenichettis appears in any favorite Ballet, she always produces the deepest impression, both in her dancing and pantomime; her talent has also been celebrated by several elegant writers.

FERRARIS.

l'agile
 Piè d'Egle, la decente
 Mollezza e la pieghevole
 Salma, che in alto lieve,
 Par che qual piuma o neve,
 Perda al vento di scendere il vigor.—PARADISI.

L'alme Grazie, non mai sazie,
 Se d'incontro a te verran,
 Qualche passo, od alto o basso
 Da te forse apprenderan.—GIANNI.

Amalia Ferraris is a Piedmontese, of genteel personal appearance, and possesses a very beautiful figure. Among the younger dancers she is noted for extraordinary lightness of motion, vigour and strength, upon the point of the toes. Her rapid progress at the Academy was truly astonishing. Who is there amongst us that does not remember her first appearance at La Scala? It is well known that the fascination of her dancing was such, that people seemed as if spell-bound for the time. Ferraris, though a very Bayadère in the dance, never once transgresses the limits established by modesty. It was for this lady that Blasis composed one of his picturesque dances, and which was called Venus, Cupid, and Bacchus—it was no more than a succession of attitudes and groups, such as may be seen in the paintings of Carracci and Albano; the composition

was intended to display distinctly the three principal characteristics of dancing, and Ferraris succeeded in them all. She afterwards performed at Turin and Genoa, and returned loaded with additional honors. She next went to Naples and appeared at the theatre of San Carlo, where she made such an impression that all other dancers seemed to be totally forgotten. This was enough, the triumph was complete. The feelings produced by the performance of Ferraris were both sweet and deep, and, like other pupils of Blasis, she was honored with portraits, wreaths, and verses, and other demonstrations of public feeling. She has now been engaged three years at the last-named renowned theatre; such was her success, and so decided was the public wish to retain her. Signora Blasis composed for her a scene called the *Nuova Tirolese*, and another called the *Sevigliana*. It is now reported that this favorite *danseuse* has entered into a contract of marriage with a gentleman of rank. We may finish by relating, that the celebrated D'Alembert, being asked how it was that more dancers got married than singers, replied, "C'est à cause du mouvement."

FUOCO.

Telle en versant le nectar et la joie,
 D'un pas léger, sur la voûte des cieux,
 La jeune Hébé danse aux festins des dieux.—BERNARD.

This very young *danseuse* may be truly said to be modelled after the Hebe of the great and renowned sculptor Canova. Her style of execution is exact, quiet, sure, finished and graceful withal; the most difficult and arduous passages she performs with admirable ease. The height of art is to conceal art itself; this is one of the leading principles with Blasis and his lady; but they add, let your art become nature, which should be the aim of all great artists. Fuoco dances with energy and spirit, displaying a mind well informed in her art; her manner of performing the *pirouette* is correct, original, and extra-

ordinary; upon the point of the toe she is full of agility; she knows every resource and overcomes all obstacles. Fuoco fears no rivals, and the Milanese public bestow upon her the applause due to the brightest among the pupils of the Academy. Her late performances at La Scala were of the most splendid description, and she was accordingly received in a manner that is almost without an equal. She afterwards departed for Paris, where she appeared at the Opera, and achieved, if possible, still greater triumphs. Both the French and Italian press have bestowed upon this pupil of the Imperial Academy high and well-merited encomium. She next arrived in London, and was received at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in the same triumphant manner; and she now continues her brilliant career at the Royal Italian Opera, at Covent Garden. Fuoco's peculiar style of dancing distinguishes her from all other disciples of the art; it produces an extraordinary effect, and is highly valued. A writer in one of the public papers speaks of her manner in the following significant words: "Mdlle. Fuoco dances, she does not jump." Dancing, as an imitative art, must present what is beautiful, not a series of jumps; a dancer, properly so called, is neither a buffoon nor a boy at play. According to the public papers, general report, and private conversation, more than one bright star has grown pale by the side of Fuoco.

FABBRI.

Vaga donzella scuote.
 J tirsi colmi d'edera.
 Salta, e il terren percote
 Con l'agili sue piante
 Al suono della lira
 Di sacro ardor baccante.—ANACREON.

In cento modi i riguardanti appaga.—TASSO.

Light, bounding, aerial, and fanciful in every motion, like the Bacchantes figured upon the walls

of Herculaneum, the Muses of Giulio Romano, or the Hours of Raphael, are the characteristics of Flora Fabbri; she fills the spectator with delight and surprise by the joyous and ardent spirit of her dancing. Having met with the most triumphant success in Italy, she went to Paris, and contended for the palm with the most celebrated dancers of that capital. Her victory was brilliant and complete, and was recorded in all those journals more particularly devoted to the theatres. She afterwards repaired to London, and appeared at the favorite Theatre of Drury Lane, where new triumphs awaited her. On her return to Paris, she was again received with unanimous applause, and became a favorite of the French Opera. In a short time after, she departed for Venice, and was engaged at the principal theatre, the Fenice, in that city, succeeding to the fairy-footed Granzini, and adding to her former triumphs. She arrived during one of those celebrated meetings of learned and scientific men that does so much honor to Italy, and which was then sitting in a city filled with the marvels of Italian genius, rich in records of the past, and peerless in its own peculiar nature.

GRANZINI.

I piè movea sì presto e sì veementi
 Che dietro si lasciava uccelli e venti.—BERNI.

Or le sue membra in aria lusinghiera,
 E i sguardi, e i passi, e i gesti orna e compone :
 Le grazie e i vezzi sopra il volto schiera,
 Che a saettare un cuore ei si dispone.—PIGNOTTI.

Granzini is one of the most beautiful and sylph-like creatures that ever delighted us at our theatres. Her style is finished and elegant, her vigorous perseverance on the point of the toe is invincible, (she is in that respect unrivalled,) and she executes with ease every variety of dance; such are the peculiar quali-

cations of this sprightly dancer. Her pantomimic performance is spirited and intelligent, and full of expression, and is frequently rewarded with bursts of applause. Her dancing might be compared to a fine light piece of embroidery, waving in graceful folds. An amateur being present while Granzini was executing a dance or *Pas*, which was composed for her by her celebrated master, he observed, "Would not any one be tempted to say that diamonds are springing from the feet of that pupil?"

END OF THE SECOND PART.

NOTES UPON DANCING.

PART III.

MEMOIR OF C. BLASIS—LIST OF HIS WORKS—SY-
NOPTICAL TABLE—MEMOIR OF MADAME BLASIS
—MEMOIR OF F. A. BLASIS THE ELDER—
MEMOIR OF VIRGINIA BLASIS—NOTICE
UPON HER MONUMENT IN SANTA
CROCE AT FLORENCE.

CARLO BLASIS.

The family of De Blasis, as the name was more originally written, is of very ancient descent; in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, it was at Rome of Patrician rank, and then the letters of the name were *De Blasiis*. Branches from the same stock were to be found dispersed in Sicily, Naples, Gaul, and Spain, as may be proved from old chronicles and more recent history. Macchiavelli makes mention of the same family, and various monuments in Naples and Romagna bear the name of De Blasis inscribed upon them, in epitaphs. At the present time, there still exist in Sicily, Naples and Puglia, descendants of the De Blasis, who have occupied distinguished posts in the magistracy, the church, the army and the navy. From these circumstances, Carlo Blasis has been sometimes supposed a Sicilian, at others a Roman, or a native of Marseilles, where, indeed, he arrived with his father at the age of two years; and having passed his youth at Bordeaux, he has been considered to be of that city. The elder Blasis, forsaking the profession of his ancestors, devoted himself to literature and music, which



Carlo Blasis.
Ballet-Composer and First-Master
at the Imperial Academy of Dancing,
Milan.

latter art was then universally followed at Naples, captivating all hearts, and spreading its influence on all sides.

The grandfather of the subject of this memoir was an admiral; he succeeded in command to the celebrated Spanish admiral, Borrás, having, before this advancement, served under the famous Carracciolo, who was looked upon as a worthy rival of Nelson. His son Francesco, however, inspired with a love for different pursuits, was desirous that his children should become artistes. Being forced within the vortex of the revolution that then raged, overwhelming or disturbing both men and things, he was obliged to depart for France, and, having settled in Marseilles, he was thenceforward called simply Blasis, the *De* having been found to give offence to certain ears.

Carlo Blasis was born at Naples, whose atmosphere may be said to breathe of genius and classical remembrances, on the 4th of November, 1803, being the son of Francesco Antonio Blasis, and Vincenza Coluzzi Zurla Blasis, both of noble descent. His parents, on leaving their native city, took up their residence in Marseilles, where his father followed his profession industriously and advantageously.

According to his own observations upon the peculiar dispositions and inclinations of his children, the elder Blasis was determined to educate his son Carlo in classical learning, to which he added the study of the fine arts and dancing. His daughter Teresa was taught the art of singing and the piano-forte; and his younger daughter, Virginia, who was born in Marseilles, was destined to dramatic singing—that is, the opera.

The education of Carlo was at once literary and artistico-theatrical. From the instruction he received in his youth, he might have become either a painter, or a composer of music, or chorographic dancer. The last being the most lucrative, was made choice of, because it usually repays before that time of life when professors of the other two expect to reap any solid advantage from the exercise of their talents. But young Blasis did not for these reasons neglect his

other studies, but employed them in the profession he had selected, in which, from analogy, they rendered him important service in dancing, pantomime, and the composition of Ballets. Of this he has given undeniable proof in his works, which he continues even to the present time to publish. All that relates to the theory and practice of music, Blasis studied with his father; consisting of melody and harmony, with that mathematical and scientific view of the art that may be termed the philosophy of music. Drawing, gesture, drawing from life, painting, modelling, water-colour drawing, landscape, architecture and modelling, he studied under Messrs. Goubaud, a painter of Rome; Guys, Pelliccia, of Marseilles; Lacour, of Bordeaux, Pezzarelli and others. Geometry he learned of Féro-gio, and the other parts of the mathematics of the learned Wronski; his literary studies were under the direction of Guinot of Marseilles; anatomy was taught him by Sabbato de' Mauro, at the same city, and by Dutrouille at Bordeaux. These same studies he continued to pursue in the schools of Florence, Bologna, and Pavia. He was instructed in dancing by the first professors of the age. Thus it follows that our artiste is able, as it is customary for Ballet masters, himself to furnish designs of costumes for the theatrical dressing-room, with drawings for instruments, scenery and machinery. In fact, all the illustrations of his various treatises, with those in his principal work—*'Man Considered in his Physical, Moral and Intellectual Capacity'*—are designed by him.* The various masters procured for Blasis, to instruct him in classical learning, and in the arts and sciences, were all the most distinguished men that could be found in the different countries where he resided; and he gained no small stock of additional information from the conversation of learned men and artistes, who ever found

*L' Uomo Fisico, Intellettuale e Morale. This extraordinary work of our author is now printing in Milan. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 1000.—Giuseppe Chiusi, Milano; S. Vittore e 40 Martiri.

a hospitable reception at his father's house and also at his own. He missed no opportunity of frequenting libraries, museums, the celebrated galleries of men of rank, and the studios of eminent painters and sculptors. By this means his mind was enriched, his taste purified and perfected, and his capacity further developed.*

At all periods of life, and particularly in youth, the best means of acquiring knowledge is to be found in the conversation of men of worth and learning. It might even be wished that such instructors were ever by our side. Lessons so received, and from such persons, seldom fail of being profitable, from the respect we entertain for them, and the confidence with which their celebrity inspires us, their words sink deep into our minds and memories, for we feel persuaded that they could not lead us into error and that, no doubt need be attached to any thing they may please to impart to us. This excellent method of gaining knowledge was perfectly

*Blasis having formed an acquaintance with Thorwalsden, Canova, S. Giorgio, Pampaloni, Marchesi, Gandolfi, Fraccaroli, Palagi, Longhi, Bossi, Berini, Sabbatelli, Camuccini, Benvenuti, Bartolini, and other sculptors, painters and engravers, never forgot whenever he chanced to be in the cities where these eminent men were residing, to visit them in their *studios*, to examine the works of art upon which they were engaged—master-pieces for truth, beauty and expression, affording important instruction to the enlightened spectator. As our author holds in the highest estimation men of talent and objects of art, he has embellished his house at Milan with a vast assemblage of rare and curious things, consisting of drawings, engravings, sculpture, paintings of various kinds, carvings, models, cameos, gold chasing, precious stones, jewels, instruments of various kinds, and antiquarian objects. Besides these, he is in possession of a library containing a collection of the noblest and most useful productions of the human mind, productions that have appeared in the most civilised periods of the world. These works are in the Greek, Latin, Italian, French, English, German, Dutch, Spanish and other languages, with the best compositions on the arts, sciences, and theatrical art, as also the most esteemed translations. Sig. Blasis has also a very interesting collection of music, from Palestrina to the present time. Having travelled much, and always retaining his love for literature and the Fine Arts, he has found means to collect many rare and valuable editions. His library and gallery would be valued in London at about £10,000.

understood by the elder Blasis, and he ever took care to provide his son Carlo with the means of such instruction. Carlo was greedy of knowledge, and an admirer of high attainments, and, placed under the guidance of his father and his other tutors and instructors, he made rapid progress in the various studies to which he applied himself:—namely, classical learning, drawing, geometry, dancing, musical science, with the knowledge of several instruments and the study of languages. At the age of twelve years, he appeared as a principal dancer at the great theatre of Marseilles, and met with such success, that for two years after he continued to perform in the principal towns of France, displaying the most precocious talents for dancing and pantomimic action.* At length, accompanied by his family, he settled at Bordeaux, where his *début* was attended by the most brilliant success, although he contended for the palm with experienced artistes at a theatre that furnished Paris with its best dancers. Dauberval then presided over the Dancing School of Bordeaux, and by his judicious system established a good taste in the art. The elder Blasis and his family resided many years in Bordeaux, where he followed his profession with success, and produced works which greatly raised his reputation as a composer. Among these may be mentioned—‘*Omphale* ;’ ‘*Le Courroux d’Achille* ;’ ‘*Dibutade, ou l’Origine du Dessein* ;’ ‘*Méprise sur Méprise* ;’—with other works, both vocal and instrumental, from which pieces are selected and performed at concerts to the present time. His daughter Teresina followed the theatrical profession, and also gave instruction in vocal and instrumental music. The other daughter, Virginia, at an early age, delighted every one with the beauty of her voice and her dramatic talents.

* The cities and towns visited by young Blasis were Aix, Avignon, Valence, Lyon, Nismes, Montpellier, Toulouse, Bayonne, and a few others, where a taste for music and dancing prevailed, and in several instances to such a degree, that many amateurs assisted in the *Corps de Ballet*, while others took their seats in the orchestra.

Carlo continued ardently attached to his own peculiar studies, and advanced rapidly in the knowledge of whatever related to his art, always meeting with success in all the Ballets in which he performed, whether in dancing or pantomimic action. Among the characters which he undertook, were those of *Télémaque*; the *Déserteur*; *Jason*; *Almaviva*; *Calife Génereux*; *Bron-tès*, in the *Siège de Cythère*; *Mars*, in the *Filets de Vulcain*; *Lindor*, in *Mirza et Lindor*; *Germueil* in *Nina*; *Pygmalion*, in a Ballet of his own composition; *Pâris*, in the *Jugement de Pâris*; *Mercure*, in the *Jeux d'Eglé*; *Zéphyre*, in *Psyché*; *Apollon*, in the *Retour d'Apollon*; *Paul*, in *Paul et Virginie*; *Domingo*, in the same ballet; the *Officier*, in the *Dansomanie*; the *Berger*, in the *Vendangeurs*; *Collin*, in the *Fille mal Gardée*; *Lubin*, in *Annette et Lubin*; *Figaro*, in the *Mariage de Figaro*.*

Carlo Blasis was now invited to Paris, where, having obtained the approbation of eminent professors, he made his *début*, and with such extraordinary success, that he was immediately placed upon a level with the first dancers of that time, when some of the most consummate artistes flourished that have ever graced the Temple of Terpsichore. While residing in Paris, he took for his master and guide the celebrated Gardel, who selected for him as partner in his various parts, the excellent and renowned *danseuse* of the opera, Mdlle. Gosselin,

* The biographical information down to this point is extracted from various periodicals published at Bordeaux; particularly from the '*Mémorial Bordelais*,' and the '*Indicateur*,' of which the principal editors were *Dumoulin*, *Martignac*, *Delaville*, *Soulié*, *Bentégeac*, *Guiraud*, and *L'Hospital*. It may be here observed that young Blasis, upon reflecting what important assistance Pantomimic gesture derives from a knowledge of theatrical declamation, studied that art, taking for his models *Talma*, *Lafont*, *Joanny*, and *Martelly*. He recited, in a small amateur theatre, the *Œdipe* of Voltaire, and *Oreste* in the tragedy of *Iphigénie*, by Guimond de la Touche. From this essay it was found that he might have become a first-rate tragedian; and, in fact, he had a great love for that part of theatrical art, having been transported with what he had heard and read of the English *Garrick*. For these reasons he was induced to compose a small life of *Garrick*, which was a desideratum in Italian literature. It was published at Milan, by Guglielmini, 1840.

and afterwards Mdle. Le Gallois, an artiste of classical taste. Blasis studied and performed the following parts:—*Télémaque*; *Paris*; and the *Achille à Scyros*, by Gardel, the first professor of the art in France, with whom Blasis became so intimately acquainted, and such a favorite, that he was admitted to a share in the professional labours of the great chorographical composer; and he kept up the intimacy during many years, by means of an artistic epistolatory correspondence with the young disciple of Terpsichore, who always remained respectfully and devotedly attached to his old master, never neglecting to make honorable mention of him, whenever an opportunity presented itself, and to make his name known in the most civilised countries of Europe, while his name is almost forgotten at Paris.

On account of certain intrigues and cabals, which, to the disgrace of theatrical art, are but too often encouraged and allowed to triumph, Blasis found himself obliged to quit the Opera at Paris, notwithstanding having made the fairest offers; however, Duport and Deshayes, his predecessors, with many other artistes incapable of meanness and dishonesty, were constrained to submit to the same kind of influence. Blasis was next engaged at the theatre of La Scala at Milan, at a very handsome salary; but, before departing for Italy, he performed in the principal cities of the north of France, as he had done in the south of that country. He was everywhere received with high applause, and made a profitable tour, as dancer, pantomimic actor and composer. During the tour he composed *Divertissemens* for the *Grand Opéra*, both French and Italian; of which the following are the principal:—*Iphigénie en Tauride*; *Iphigénie en Aulide*; *la Vestale*; *Fernand Cortez*; *Castor et Pollux*; *Œdipe à Colonne*; *Orphée*; *Didon*; *la Caravane*; *Panurge*; *Elisca*; *Don Juan*; *les Mystères d' Isis*. To which must be added these subjects from his father's operas—*Omphale*; *Achille*; *Dibutade*; *Almanzor*; and others. As also, *Moyse*; *Guillaume Tell*; *la Muette de Portici*; *Robert le Diable*; &c. Having crossed the Alps, Blasis took up his residence in Milan, and appeared at the

splendid and celebrated theatre of La Scala, perhaps the noblest edifice that ever was raised for theatrical purposes.* He was received with unbounded applause, and immediately regarded as a model in dancing. He performed in every branch of his art, and succeeded in all, vanquishing every obstacle and every rival. Blasis displayed, in himself and his execution, all the excellencies of the whole art; he propagated his principles, and thus established and maintained a true taste in dancing. He continued to exercise his profession at this great theatre during fourteen seasons, a very uncommon circumstance. His chorographic compositions were regarded as classic, picturesque and poetical, and were all received with universal applause.

Leaving Milan, Blasis at length repaired to the other capital cities of Italy, where he sometimes gave a limited number of performances—at others, remained a whole season. Whenever he appeared, he was always received with entire satisfaction and applause. Articles and verses in his praise were written by men of talent, and appeared in the principal papers of the

* Since the theatre of St. Carlo, at Naples, was contracted in its dimensions, La Scala may be regarded as the largest, most splendid, and most convenient theatre in Europe. It is open during the entire year, and is in possession of the most valuable theatrical property of every description; it has a double company, for Opera and Ballet; and during the Carnival the company is tripled. The *Corps de Ballet* has no equal in Europe, whether for its numbers or perfection in art. The pupils of the Imperial Academy amount to about seventy; the number of additional pupils, not on the foundation, are about thirty. To these must be added the supernumeraries, children, chorus-dancers, figurantes, choryphees, and soldiers. The pomp and splendour of the scenery, with the rich and gorgeous display in the wardrobe, are truly surprising. There are Ballets performed for which 600 dresses have been prepared, and all rich in quality. The Orchestra is full and complete, consisting of a vast number of men of first-rate talent. Not less than thirty new Operas are produced in the course of the year; nearly one-half of which are composed by the most celebrated *Maestri*, expressly for this vast establishment. From twelve to fifteen Ballets are produced annually, all put upon the stage in the most sumptuous style. In some of the more splendid spectacles, 500 persons may be seen at once upon the stage; and in other pieces twenty-five horses, with forty bandits, are required.

various cities he visited ; portraits were published, in which he was represented in the costume and with the action of some favorite part, which had given general delight at the theatre. Turin, Genoa, Venice, Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Reggio, Florence, Leghorn, Modena, Senigallia, Bologna, Rome, and some other cities, were all unanimous in the applause they bestowed upon our artiste, for they perceived in him a man who practised his art according to well founded theoretical principles, and who sought to display that *ideal beauty*, which would place his art on a level with other imitative arts. The celebrated painters, Palagi and Bossi, which latter was also an author, took the pains to design Blasis in his various gestures and attitudes, as he appeared upon the stage of La Scala. The eminent engraver, Berini, who may be regarded as the modern Pirgotele, an intimate friend of Blasis, was also a great admirer of the latter, and considered his entire style of action as presenting lessons both for the painter and the sculptor, looking upon every movement, gesture and attitude, as academic and plastic. An able painter in fresco, a Venetian, after having seen Blasis, with his renowned partner Virginia Léon, in a *Pas-de-deux*, in which those graceful dancers entwined and enveloped themselves in a rose-coloured veil in a thousand fanciful ways, made drawings of all the different groupings, and afterwards introduced them into the embellishments and decorations of a splendid apartment in the house of a Venetian nobleman, who might be called the Lucullus of that city. The poet Almore Barbaro also wrote a description of these groups in some fine anacreontic verses, which were set to music by Paganini. The superiority which Blasis attained over his rivals must be attributed to his natural talent for his art, in the first place ; but this pre-eminence was sustained and confirmed by his knowledge of music and drawing, to the study of which he had industriously applied himself, and to these may be added sculpture and painting.

This great dancer, in his first Treatise upon his art,

strongly recommends his pupils to apply themselves to the study of drawing and music, as indispensable to every artiste ; he adds,—“ Let the male pupils apply themselves to the violin ; the female pupils to the piano. Drawing will suggest new and true ideas with respect to the grace, elegance, and expression of attitudes, but, above all, it is the guide to that *ideal beauty* (*beau idéal*) which is the object of his art. A knowledge of music will govern and regulate the steps by means of the ear, which will then readily understand and distinguish the various rythms and cadences of every successive movement that is played. Such a dancer will further know how to discern between the *air* and the *accompaniment*, his steps will be scrupulously subjected to the notes, and the result will be that exquisite effect which is produced, when there is an exact accord between motion and melody—music and dancing. There can be no doubt, that a knowledge of these arts is of most essential service also to the composer, and, whatever may be the power of his imagination, his productions will however not fail to be correct.” What can be more beautiful than the sight of these academic positions, or, as they are generally named, *arabesques* ? These attitudes are, no doubt, derived from ancient bas-reliefs, or the remains of Grecian or Roman paintings ; or from the Fresco pictures in the Vatican, which were executed after the noble Cartoons of Raphael, and other great Italian painters, who embellished, with the poetry of their pencils, all the principal edifices of their times. By the word Arabesque, must be understood picturesque groups of male and female dancers, presenting an endless variety of entwined positions or *entrelacemens*, by means of long wreaths, coronets, veils, hoops wreathed with flowers, and, sometimes, rural and antique instruments, which are held in the hand. The beautiful attitudes displayed in these groupings seldom fail to recall to our minds those ever interesting Bacchanalian figures so often seen in ancient bas-reliefs. The aerial lightness of their forms, the grace and charm of their movements, the numerous contrasts of

attitude successively presented, have very probably contributed to the adoption of this word in dancing, as best calculated to convey an idea of all these varieties. Perhaps we are the first who have undertaken to give a precise definition of this word, as applied to our art; and without such an explanation, the word might seem to be used in a kind of derision of the same word, as originally employed by painters and architects, and which was at first their exclusive property.

It is in the best productions of painting and sculpture that the dancer may study with profit how to display his figure with taste and elegance. They are a fountain of beauties, to which all those should repair who wish to distinguish themselves for the correctness and purity of their performances. In the Bacchanalian groups which I have composed, I have successfully introduced various attitudes, arabesques and groupings, the original idea of which were suggested to me, during my journey to Naples and through *Magna Grecia*, on viewing the paintings, bronzes and sculptures rescued from the ruins of Herculaneum. The study of these have certainly contributed to render my chorographical compositions more picturesque, more characteristic, and more animated. These precious remains of ancient art have always been regarded by modern artists as models; and, be it added, they are of infinite service to all those who desire to practice dancing as an art. The dancer, male or female, who knows not how to display the figure to advantage, who has no grace, and whose movements are without expression or meaning; whose gestures and attitudes are neither picturesque nor significant, producing no effect either upon the mind or the heart; such a one is no artiste and has mistaken his talent. In the present case, it is art, taste, feeling, and fancy united that form the great artiste—

Les arts sont frères et rivaux.—LA HARPE.

While Blasis was pursuing his studies in dancing, pantomime, and composition, he did not neglect either

literature or the Fine Arts. He published at Milan, in the French language, his first work, entitled:—“*A Theoretical, Practical, and Elementary Treatise on the Art of Dancing, embellished with Engravings drawn by himself, and engraved by Rados and Casartelli,*” who also engraved his portrait. This work he dedicated to his father, in an epistle full of gratitude and affection; it is a production that has no rival in its peculiar province, either in ancient or modern times; the subject is treated in a learned and complete manner; it soon became universally known and esteemed, and was regarded as the *vade mecum* of every dancer, professor and composer. The Italian, French, German, and English papers, spoke highly in its praise, and greatly eulogised the taste, intelligence, learning, and talent of the author. It was translated into Italian by Velli, in Venice; by Canevesi, in Milan; by Grini, in Florence and Odessa; by Valmarana, in Vicenza; by Campilli and published at Forli; Vienna and Madrid; by Bournonville into Danish; into Spanish by Bertoni; into English by Barton, London; into French by Vergnaud, Paris; by Costa and Lavaggi, Turin.

In the Treatise on Dancing (*Traité de la Danse, &c.*) it was justly remarked that the Art of Dancing was then, for the first time, precisely defined and reduced to fixed principles. Both ancients and moderns had merely written upon the history of the art, slightly mentioning a few particular dances. In fact we know nothing certain respecting the *Ars Saltatoria, orchestrica, orchesigraphica*, of the Greeks and Romans; but neither do we know any thing, with definite certainty, of what was the state of this art in the age that immediately precedes our own. Blasis, however, has given us a book that at least clearly demonstrates what system of dancing is pursued amongst the moderns, and also how he has himself improved and embellished that system, immeasurably extending the compass of its limits.

Our author afterwards wrote also in French a work

entitled, '*L'Origine et les Progrès de la Danse ancienne et moderne*;' (The Origin and Progress of ancient and modern Dancing,) which he published in Paris. It was remarked upon this work, in a literary periodical, that, "this very interesting and learned dissertation would have done honour even to any member of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*." The Chevalier Bossi, the historian, translated this production into Italian, as did also M. Velli into the same language; the English translation was made by Barton. The author dedicated this work to his two sisters Virginia and Teresa. And, it may be added, he was the first who published a history of modern dancing, with notices on principal dancers.*

Blasis again visited France, and, as before, performed in the principal cities, where he composed numerous Ballets in various styles, always meeting with success and applause from other artistes, as well as from amateurs and men of learning. He next, (1826,) passed over into England, and at the King's theatre, in London, (or, as it is now called, her Majesty's theatre,) was triumphantly received as dancer, actor, and Ballet-composer. Here he still continued to follow his literary studies and other enlightening pursuits, and in the year 1829-30 he published his important work in English, entitled, "*The Code of Terpsichore*,"† which may be considered as a work in

* Castil-Blaze, Baron, Lichtenthal, Sacchi, Mme. Voiart, and others, have used this work in their writings upon the history of art. The poet Bellini confessed to Blasis that he had taken the *Treatise on Dancing* as a model for his Poem of Callofilia. Another poet, Picciarelli, made an elegant poem from this book, that is, by selecting and consolidating all the poetical passages. He turns to good account Blasis's discourse upon "*Grace and the Graces*;" as well as that upon the Missirini and the Carnevari.

† We think it indispensably necessary to remark here, that this work, which certainly has nothing to equal it upon the same subject in the English language, was greatly injured soon after it was printed in 1830. The publisher's affairs became embarrassed, and almost the whole impression, in sheets, was assigned over to a creditor, also a bookseller. A few copies had been bound and sent

which the whole subject of Dancing is completely treated—historical, theoretical, and practical; the contents being more particularly—*The History of Dancing—Theatrical Dancing—The Art of Pantomime—Dramatic Art, as applied to Dancing—A Collection of the Author's Ballets, in various styles— and Private Dancing.** This work is embellished with beautiful engravings in out-line, and accompanied by music, composed by Virginia and Teresa Blasis. The book was dedicated to Virginia, who was then Prima Donna of the Italian Opera, at Paris. This laborious production was honoured by favorable articles in some of the first literary periodicals in England, France, Italy, Germany, and Spain. It was published by E. Bull, Holles Street, London, 1830.†

to various editors of Reviews, &c., by all of whom it was most favorably reviewed. M. Blasis was obliged to go on the continent, and, as there were no copies for sale, the work was consequently almost unknown, and has remained so in England. However, a few copies of "*The Code of Terpsichore*" having got to Paris, it was immediately faithfully translated into French, and before long the fame of the great dancer was spread into almost every corner of Europe, excepting England; and this same work has, notwithstanding, become perhaps a corner stone in the edifice of his fame, and contributed to procure for him that important office he now so ably fills at Milan. In the French edition this work is entitled, "*Manuel Complet de la Danse*," Paris 1830.—[Ed.]

* The celebrated Rasori, a friend and admirer of Blasis, after having complimented him upon his talent, and praised his learned treatise upon dancing, added, "Now, you must write a treatise on the Pantomime and you will then have included the whole subject of your art. Of that art you alone are the first *Maestro* and historian of modern times." Encouraged and animated by such words, and from so learned a man, Blasis immediately betook himself to the work and wrote his "*Trattato di Mimica*"—"Treatise on Pantomime." It may be here observed that Blasis generally wrote upon the advice of his friends, and not to satisfy those who were hostile to his views; to such he replied by his acts. Among others he thought himself fortunate in obtaining the approbation of the celebrated Campbell, whom he numbered with his friends. The learned and literary Cimorelli looked upon him as a superior writer on the fine arts; and the same tribute of praise was awarded to him by Bossi, Julien de Paris, Ticozzi, Carta, Zuccagni, and Sartorio, in their published works.

† The following short sentences are taken from the periodicals

“*The Code of Terpsichore*” was immediately translated into French by Vergnaud, and published at Paris, in 1830, and formed a volume of the well-known collection of Manuals published by Roret, and now to be found in every civilized country. All Encyclopedian works, composed after that of Roret, borrowed from “*The Code of Terpsichore*” to furnish the articles on Dancing, Pantomime, &c. The editors of another great collection or library, known also by the name of *Codes*, because they deemed it necessary to apportion a part of their undertaking to Dancing, which they entitled, “*Le Code de la Danse* ;” the “*Code of Dancing*,” had recourse to Blasis work. This version also was widely circulated and contributed to spread the fame of the able and learned *artiste* on all sides, and was quickly translated into various languages. Encyclopedias, repertories and other publications, in which the subject of the fine arts was treated, had regular recourse to Blasis, as an author where they would be sure to find the subjects of dancing, pantomime, and whatever relates to these arts, in a theatrical sense, fully and learnedly handled. Blasis, in fact, is the first who has written upon dancing in a style and manner suitable to the subject, and he will undoubtedly be looked upon as a precedent and model by succeeding writers upon this art.

While in London the editors of that beautiful and useful work, “*The Young Lady’s Book*,” then on the eve of publication, assigned to Blasis the chapters upon private dancing, which were embellished with wood-engravings, from designs by the author himself. This small treatise gave complete satisfaction ; it was translated into French and published in Paris.

named, which reviewed the work when it appeared, “All the arcana of the Art are here.”—*Gent. Magazine*. “An indispensable manual for teachers.”—*Athenæum*. “Of incalculable service to the pupil.”—*Belle Assemblée*. “A work of the highest merit.”—*London Musical Gazette*. “The plates are very superior.”—*The Times*. “From this book it is not too much to expect a marked influence on our own character, as an accomplished nation.”—*Court Journal*.

All the various writings of Blasis, which were dictated by an ardent love for his art and its advancement, and a wish to ennoble it and raise it to a level with the other imitative arts, were highly applauded by the principal periodicals of France, Italy, Germany and England. In London, the "Court Journal," as mentioned above, remarked further upon the "Code of Terpsichore," bestowing, at the same time, the highest commendations on that work, that, "This production would both enlighten and determine public opinion, as to what arts should contribute to beautiful and classical dancing, and to the pantomimic action of Ballets, and that both artistes and amateurs would henceforth be enabled to judge rightly as to the theory and practice of dancing."

After the publication of his works, Blasis was informed of the remark addressed by Gardel, to the principal artistes of Paris. "*Blasis*," he observed, "*a beaucoup plus fait pour l'art, que l'art n'a fait pour lui.*" "Blasis has done much more for his art, than his art has done for him." A. Vestris also, a competent judge, in a conversation with Blasis upon the improvements introduced by means of his works, said to him, "Your works are, without doubt, excellent pass-ports to those who would enter the court of Terpsichore."

Blasis now re-visited both Italy and England, several times, in the exercise of his profession; sometimes as dancer, at others as composer and author, publishing his productions and contributing articles to various journals. He was, at the same time, ever occupied in propagating his school and principles, demonstrating his method, and putting in practice all his improvements. All who followed the same profession became either his disciples or imitators. Being at Naples, where he was going to reside for five years, during which time he had entered into a satisfactory and profitable engagement at the theatre of San Carlo, an accident happened to him which suddenly terminated one of the most brilliant careers that any artiste had

ever experienced, and in the flower of his age. Every preparation was complete for his first appearance, and he had neglected nothing to qualify himself for an event so anxiously and universally expected; when, at a general rehearsal, while dancing in a grand *Pas de trois*, which he was to perform with Mesdames Brugnoli and Vaguemoulin, he injured his left leg. Every kind of remedy was tried without effect, and the most eminent physicians were consulted, but in vain. After this, although he could execute with perfect ease all the simpler and more natural movements, yet he could never fully achieve all that variety of vigorous bounds and springs indispensable to dancing. He however made an effort to renew his profession, but soon found that his strength no longer responded to his wishes; and not deeming it advisable to risk the loss or diminution of the fame he had already acquired, he was obliged to abandon entirely the active part of his profession, and upon such an occasion he could not avoid repeating a sentence which should never be forgotten by any artiste, namely, "To leave the theatre, before the theatre leaves them." Many, from not having acted upon the principle contained in this true, though rather homely, proverb, have degraded their talents and obscured the fame they had formerly acquired.*

In consequence of his accident, Blasis turned to account the extensive and profound knowledge of his

* The following is a list of the *Danseuses*, who have at various periods danced with M. Blasis. Mesdmes. Léon, Lorrain, Constant, Bégrand, Coustou, Chéza, Corby, the Blondins, Adèle Louis, Delille, Anatole, Gosselin, Martin, Mèchin, Pavia, Legallois, Grive, Brocard, Fleurot, Evéline, Céline, Buron, Lacroix, Bianchi, Pallérini, Pezzoli, the two Chaberts, Quaglia, Brugnoli, Adrienne, Aumer, Conti, Angiolini, Torelli, Sirtori, Piver, Dupen, Darcourt, Rebaudengo, Cosentini, Olivieri, Bertini, Bellini, the two Valenzas, Rossi, Grassini, Gregorini, St. Ambrogio, Rinaldi, Zampuzzi, Trezzi, Ravina, Alisio, Ciotti, Dourville and others; and finally, with A. Ramaccini who became Madm. Blasis. Blasis danced in his own Ballets, as well as in those of the principal composers, such as Dauberval, Gardel, Blache, Coindé, Milon, Gallet, Aumer, Didelot, Lefèvre, d' Egville, Hus, Clerico, Panzieri, Giannini, Viganó, Gioia, Fabris, Galzerani, Cortesi, Bertini, &c.

art that he possessed, as well as his acquirements in languages and literature, and in the fine arts; he therefore devoted himself entirely to the composition of Ballets, and to the chorographic art. He caused a great number of his Ballets to be performed in France and Italy, productions that were highly applauded, both by the more intelligent and the public in general. But he now undertook the composition of subjects for Ballets, both for Italy and France, better adapted to the taste and temper of the present times. Taking the French and Italian styles together, he selected from both those qualities that were undeniably good, and rejected those which were generally disliked. In the arguments or plots of Ballets, which he had published in London in his large work, he endeavoured to enlarge the usual sphere of such compositions, by introducing a greater variety of subjects, both historical and poetical, besides others of his own invention. He aimed at producing strong dramatic contrast in the dispositions, temperaments and passions of the various characters in each of his pantomimic dramas; and he sustained this contrast also in the local changes of scenery, assigning at the same time to every circumstance and everything its own proper colouring and tone of expression. In the enlarged view that he took of the Ballet, he considered it as a kind of poem or romance, framed and moulded according to those dramatic rules and principles which must be observed in all productions intended for theatrical representation. He farther gave himself full liberty to reject, on the one hand the pedantic and monotonous formalities of the classic drama, while on the other he avoided the unbridled license, so glaring in some of the productions of the romanticists. Compositions, whose aim is to interest and affect the heart through the eyes, deserve to be placed in the same rank with the other fine arts, and to become one of them. Thus a Ballet should be made a living picture, with that additional charm that ever accompanies it, namely, musical expression, or rather expressive music. Blasis as a Ballet-composer, was the first to venture upon sacred and Biblical subjects for

this species of theatrical representation. Amongst the subjects of this kind, upon which he exercised his talent, the best are, "*Giuditta*," "*Judith*," which he composed at the age of fourteen; "*Il Paradiso Perduto*," "*Paradise Lost*," and "*Giuseppe*," "*Joseph*." He was a promoter of the imaginary, or Shakespearian, class of Ballets, and perhaps his best composition of this kind is "*Mephistophiles*," or "*The Genius of Evil*," taken from Goethe, but greatly enlarged by the introduction of the conflict of the more powerful passions, while the German poet is entirely occupied with the fatal effects of misplaced love. This Ballet, which is the only one of its kind, was published at Milan in 1844.

The following description of the qualifications that the Ballet-composer should possess, is extracted from Blasis' works:—"The composer of Ballets should concentrate in himself all those rays of light, which a general knowledge of the Fine Arts spreads over the mind; thus qualified, his productions will always present that delightful hue and tone of colouring, which such a knowledge will enable him to impart to them; and the charm will be irresistible. In poetry, painting, sculpture and music, he will find an almost inexhaustible mine of materials, but it requires no small share of art, taste, study, tact and fancy, successfully to employ them. Pantomime can assume any shape, and express every passion; it is a very Proteus, and may be compared to the genius of an Ariosto or a Shakespeare. In the highest and most noble style of dancing are to be found the *contours* and attitudes observable in the productions of Raphael, Correggio, Guido, Carracci and Albano; every motion, step, and change of feature, should convey some idea, sensation or passion."

The productions of Blasis, published ten or twelve years since, may be said to have been the pioneers of those which he afterwards composed, and to have prepared the way for their favourable reception. But all his improvements were not introduced without much opposition, nor did he attain the object at which he aimed, without much labour. We shall now give a list of the principal

Ballets composed by Blasis, and classified according to their peculiar kinds. Several of these Ballets have been imitated, or entirely appropriated, by certain composers, who have not had the honesty to state the fact. A great part of the music is also composed by Blasis.

BALLET S

COMPOSED BY C. BLASIS,

CLASSIFIED UNDER THEIR PROPER HEADS.

Epic or Heroic.—The Wrath of Achilles—Achilles and Deidamia—The Siege of Troy.

General Historic.—Cyrus—Osiris.

Mythologic.—Aphrodite—Phedra and Hyppolytus, —Venus and Adonis—Danaus—Hercules in his Youth—Daphne and Pandrosa—Coronides—Omphale.

Anacreontic.—Anacreon and the Graces—The Loves of Cyllenius, or the Feast of Bacchus—Dibutate, or the Origin of Painting—Echo and Narcissus—Pygmalion—The Festival of Parnassus.

Greco-Historic.—Phrosyne and Melidorus—Thrasimedes and Theophania—the Messenians—Alcibiades.

Roman-Historic.—Nero at Baia—Caligula—Marcus Licinius.

Mixed-Historic.—Egbert the Great—Dudley—Christopher Columbus—Ugolino—Amenaide and Fernandez—The Indian Widow—the Fair Jewess—Vivaldi—Guicciardo—the Malediction—Trial by Fire—guerite of Bourgogne.

Oratorical or Biblical.—Joseph—Judith—Susanna—Paradise Lost.

Oriental.—Mokanna, or the Veiled Prophet—Estrella, or the Arab of the Desert.

Poetic.—Faust, or the Genius of Evil—the Witch

and the Troubadour—Sidonius and Dorisbe—Palmyra, the Daughter of Demogorgon—the Scandinavians—Pandora.

Mixed Character. — Leocadia — the Revenge — the Fair Maid of Provence—the Brigand and the Lady—Eliza, or the Feast of the Bucentaur—the Gamester—Byron at Venice—the Loves of Pergolesi—Corinna Tasso and Eleonora.

Semi-Serious (Demi-caractère) including the Comic, Pastoral and Heroi-Comic. — Herman and Lisbeth—the Country Girl at Paris—the Poet and the Farmer's Wife—Spanish Gallantries—the Adventures of a Night—Rosella, or the Heir—the Sicilian Girl—Master or Man—a Midsummer Night's Dream—Figaro in his Youth—Don Quixote.

From the preceding list it may be seen, that Blasis admitted every kind of dramatic subject into his compositions, and applied them to the *Ballet d'action* or the Pantomimic Ballet. He first divides them into acts and scenes, or rather pictures (*tableaux*;) he then subdivides them into parts or characters, and gives them that kind of histrionic form, which the Greeks gave to a certain kind of their poetry, denominating them *trilogies*. This scheme which was entirely new, was first introduced by Blasis, and was very soon imitated by other composers. The Ballets, of which we have given the list above, were all of them published and some performed in Italy, France and England. By means of his compositions and his personal instruction, our indefatigable artiste has restored and re-established what may be properly termed the Chorographic art, and, in furtherance of this object, he has, in the press, a Treatise, entitled: 'The Chorographic Art, or Instructions for the Composition of Ballets and Pantomimic Action,' (*Coregrafia, ossia l'Arte di scrivere il Ballo e la Mimica.*) This is a very useful work and was much

wanted, but was attended with great labour and difficulty in its composition, requiring at once a knowledge of drawing, geometry and music. This is to be followed by another and learned production, called 'A Dictionary of Dancing (*Dizionario del Ballo*)' being the first attempt of the kind.

About this time M. Blasis and his lady were appointed by the government to preside over the Imperial Academy of Dancing and Pantomime at Milan, and consequently this honorable and important appointment caused a change in their views for the future. They commenced fulfilling the duties belonging to their new office on the 1st of December, 1837. At certain periods the government grants them leave of absence during the space of a few months, but only one at a time, as it is not permitted at any time to leave the Academy entirely without master and mistress. Mad. Blasis several times took advantage of this permission, and went, during the Carnival, sometimes to Parma, and at others to Genoa, as first pantomimic actress-dancer. At the present moment M. Blasis is in London, and was engaged as Ballet composer to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. He afterwards went in the same capacity to the theatre of Covent Garden, being then just rebuilt, and opened for the first time as the Royal Italian Opera.

Under the direction of Blasis and his lady, the Academy of Milan, as has been already observed, has become the first in Europe. At the present time the pupils are powerful both in numbers and talent, and the best amongst them are always the first in public, and obtain the highest applause, while not a few of them have contested the palm with the first dancers of the age. It frequently happens that the whole weight of those pompous and gorgeous spectacles, the Ballets, which at La Scala are produced upon such a gigantic scale, falls almost entirely upon the pupils of the Academy; they fill the first parts both in dancing and pantomime, the second parts, and even the figurante troops, and sometimes the whole corps. They do the same also

at the Imperial theatre of the Canobbiana during the Carnival. Many foreign dancers of the first class now go to Milan, to finish and perfect themselves at Blasis' school.* With respect to the younger students, they come from all the cities and towns of Italy as well as from foreign parts; and having finished a course of study at the Academy, they entered into engagements at various theatres, where they began their career, which was even at once to their own profit and the honour of their instructors.

In order that no means might be left untried to form the able and complete artiste, Blasis has illustrated the rules of the art, and all the remarks suggested by taste to be found in his works, with engraved figures, drawn by himself after nature, and according to his own ideas of his art. These figures represent the positions of the body, arms, and legs; together with different *poses*, attitudes, and arabesques. The students having these examples before their eyes, will find no difficulty in comprehending the theoretical principles it is sought to inculcate. He has thus followed the observation of the poet of Tibur, who says, with great judgment, that we understand what we see better than what we hear:—

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.

To insure a correct execution of the figures, the author has indicated the principal positions, by which the student will understand exactly what *pose* he ought to make in the various attitudes of dancing; consequently he has only to study minutely the diversified diagrams to attain this object. As soon as students have well learned and practised this lesson, and they are become quite familiarized with its linear, or rather

* Amongst which are the following—Melles. St. Ange, Adcock, Varin, La Vallée, Beaucour, St. Georges, De Croix, Deranville, Adèle, Dupuis, Berton, Galletti, Rosati, the last one of the best in London. Messrs. Steiner, Chion, Hope, Monplaisir, Durussel, Letellier, Rao, &c.

mathematical, precision, they must then embellish their straight line exercise with *rondeur*, (roundness) flexibility and graceful undulation, taking care withal to indicate clearly that expression which the feelings of the heart impart to the entire frame. After a study of this kind, artistes will not fail to display their sentiments correctly and give satisfaction; proving at the same time that they have been educated in a school in which the system of instruction is based upon the best principles of art and of taste. This new method is safer and more effectual than long and wearying descriptions of movements and attitudes, from the study of which the pupil is, after all, apt to fall into many errors. This method, assisted by the study and imitation of the *antique*, and of the great painters of Italy, is that which is followed by Blasis at the Imperial Academy over which he presides. He has also applied this linear system to pantomime and chorographical dancing, and has written treatises upon the subject. He has also composed figures representing the various motions and positions of the limbs during the expression of sentiments, deep feelings, and the violent passions. These lines and out-lines, with their numberless combinations, retain their geometrical names; as perpendicular, horizontal, circular, oblique, compound, spherical, right angle, acute, open, obtuse, &c. These figures, which are both geometrical and picturesque, are drawn upon a large scale, and being placed before the pupils, they are at once understood and practised. In the mean time it is the business of the master, who should be well acquainted with the principles of drawing, and profoundly versed in his own art, to correct the imitations of the pupils, and to direct the entire study, which is at once both mental and corporal.

In order to form a correct judgment of any dancer, male or female, let them be examined at that moment when they pause in an attitude; or, when under some excitement, they are executing some difficult *pas*. If, during such a *pose* and such a *pas*, they are closely ob-

servicing the rules of their art and the rules of taste; if their body, arms and legs are in perfect harmony, and if, in a word, their whole figure is so disposed as to attract the attention of the painter or sculptor, such as these are artistes indeed; they are finished and perfect, and the palm is their due. The dancer who is able to undergo such a trial of his skill, is like one of those faultless statues of antiquity, which is made to turn round upon a pedestal that the searching eye of criticism may examine it on all sides, but on no side can a fault be detected; an artiste, in such a happy case, has attained his aim, and is at the head of his art. But every one cannot say:—“*Anch' io son pittore.*” If the public were entirely composed of connoisseurs, and all were endowed with correct taste, we should no longer see daubers and jumpers occupying the place of true painters and expert dancers.*

The two Blasis have caused a taste for dancing to spread on all sides, and in consequence of this, the number of theatres where ballets are performed, or where dancing merely is introduced, have increased; dancers are become extremely numerous, and are every where introduced with success. During that part of the winter season which upon the Continent is called the Carnival season, pupils from Blasis' school, as has been observed, are to be found in nearly forty theatres. Upon the subject of the Academy itself, we have already enlarged at great length in the preceding part of this work.

M. Blasis is indefatigable in his ceaseless labours; after the fatigues of the Academy he is closely engaged with his private lessons. These being completed, he next applies himself to the composition of *pas*, and other chorographic business; and lastly, he employs all

* The success of theatrical art must in a great measure depend upon the learning, taste and intelligence of managers; whilst its decline is principally owing to their ignorance and incapability; as also their blind partialities, which often induce them to neglect artistes of real merit in favour of pretenders, intriguers, and persons who are a disgrace to the profession.

the time that may remain in literary and scientific studies.

In the history of the Academy we were necessarily much occupied with the subject of Blasis' pupils ; here we shall consider the celebrated *Maestro*, first as a composer of Ballets, *pas*,* *ballabile*, and other chorographic matters ; afterwards as a philosophic writer on various subjects. Being always ardently devoted to the improvement and interests of the academical pupils, as well as desirous of increasing his own fame, he composed *pas* and dances for the Royal Theatres, which were there introduced into various Ballets of the respective theatres, and were calculated for the display of the particular talent of his scholars, for whom they were composed. These *pas* and dances form the principal ornament of the pantomimic Ballets into which they were introduced, the existence of the ballets sometimes depending entirely upon them. Upon these occasions, Blasis, wishing to give every one of the young dancers an opportunity of displaying his or her particular talent, undertook the composition of *pas* for three, four, five or six, or more ; and these *pas* were always successful, the applause being universal. Blasis, in fact, not only revived the composition of these *pas*, but also gave to them a new form, and this form he embellished with picturesque beauty, sentiment, expression and poetry. This species of dancing was never before brought to such perfection : it was soon spread into all parts, and was followed and imitated by every artiste.

* The word *ballabile* signifies a dance executed by a large number of persons ; that is, the general *corps* of the Ballet ; the term was introduced into France, and other countries, by Blasis. The same remark will apply to the words *prestesse*, *sveltesse*, *morbidesse*, and some others ; and also the phrase *genere puntato*, dancing where much is done upon the points of the toes. The author has also employed in the *Code of Terpsichore* many new technical terms, both Italian and French ; and the celebrated philologists Gherardini and Bazzarini, who were intimate with Blasis, took notes from the latter, in order to introduce into their great Dictionaries his new technical terms in dancing.

Either the originals, or copies from them, were everywhere performed, and they were justly named—Models and *Pas-Tableaux*.

These *pas*, besides being performed at La Scala and the Canobbiana, were frequently executed at the theatres of Carcano, and at the Re in the same city, by Sig. Blasis' private pupils. Our artiste also composed *ballabili* for thirty, forty, sixty, and even more; all of them obtaining the same success, and serving for studies to other artistes, like the cartoons of the great painters. The fact is, that in all these chorographic compositions, the pictorial talent of the author is plainly to be seen; groups, gestures and attitudes are all made to contribute to the picture. The anacreontic *ballabile*, in his grand ballet of the *Loves of Venus*, and the village *ballabili*, in another of his compositions, entitled *Elina*, were both performed at Milan, as also another in *Mosè*. These *ballabili* were all of them esteemed as master-pieces in the art, and formed studies for the artistes.

Upon the occasion of the coronation of the emperor of Austria in 1838 as king of Italy, Blasis, being commanded to prepare a grand theatrical spectacle at La Scala, composed a *ballabile*, representing the Lombard and Venetian people, who had arrived in Milan to witness the rejoicings. This grand movement was executed by one hundred and thirty-two dancers, male and female; and perhaps never did any composition of the kind display more pomp and variety; two-thirds of the whole company consisted of pupils from the Academy. Every part of this immense moving picture was filled with allegorical allusions to the imperial ceremonial that had just taken place.* The whole terminated

* Upon this occasion the stage of La Scala was for the first time, and probably for the last, splendidly decorated and embellished, from the floor to the ceiling: that is to say, the proscenium, the whole space between the curtain and the orchestra, which at this theatre is immense; in breadth equal to three stage-boxes in the largest theatres of Europe.

in the most brilliant and satisfactory manner, and gained for the author universal praise and admiration.

It may not be out of place to mention here, that when, some years since, the celebrated Duchess of St. Albans was accustomed to give public breakfasts at her villa near London, it was Blasis who composed and prepared the Spanish Dances that embellished those delightful entertainments. They were executed by a choice selection of first-rate artistes from the Italian Opera, and it is difficult to conceive the charm of such a performance, and in such a beautiful locality. The dances were arranged as quadrilles, and the *danseuses* were decorated with veils and provided with castanets, cymbals and mandolins. Thus furnished, whether in solos or in groups, they gave a true picture of all the peculiar characteristics of Spanish dancing; and the whole scene was so true and natural that it drew from Sir Thomas Lawrence, the celebrated painter, who was present, expressions of the highest admiration.

In many other chorographic labours, Blasis obtained high honor as a composer. Among these may be mentioned the *pas* of Venus, the Graces, Cupid, Flora, Zephyre, Terpsichore and Bacchus; a masterly composition, displaying the purest classic taste, exhibiting the most picturesque and expressive groups and attitudes that it is possible to imagine, and, in fine, proving to the intelligent how deeply Blasis had studied Raphael, Carracci and Albano. A *pas de trois*, adapted to the music of the overture to *William Tell*, was performed, during several successive seasons at La Scala, not less than one hundred and fifty times, and was always received with universal and enthusiastic applause, being executed by the most eminent of his pupils, namely—Domenichettis, Fuoco and Marzagora—who had thus the most favorable opportunity of displaying their rare talents and acquirements. In this dance, the beautiful music was so successfully interpreted and echoed by means of its rythmus, tone, expression, variety of steps, beauty of movements and gestures, and labyrinthine evolutions of its figures, that it was instantly approved and became a celebrated

favorite. The same extraordinary success attended a splendid Quintette-Dance or *pas de cinq*, which was superbly executed at La Scala by Mesdames Baderna, Marra, Thierry, Citerio and Neri. This composition was enthusiastically admired for the original invention it displayed, and for the union of various styles of dancing which it contained.* And at a subsequent period almost as much admiration was displayed at London for his singularly original Ballet '*The Pleiades*.'

Blasis' compositions are always written with an eye to the persons who are to execute them, they are therefore calculated for the stature and form of some individual, with his other natural capacity and general style of dancing; and this is done to insure harmony of feeling and a perfect execution. Our *maestro* having studied the character, customs and habits of various nations, succeeds perfectly well in the composition of national dances, in which he strictly preserves, defines and illustrates, all native peculiarities, as may be easily proved in his Northern, Italian, French and Spanish *pas* or dances, but particularly in the Spanish, as was lately witnessed in this country, by the '*New Cachucha*' which was executed by his distinguished pupil Mdlle. Baderna, who in this dance gained both in Italy and in London the same enthusiastic applause. The principal daily and weekly papers and periodicals of London also recorded their admiration of her talents; amongst these were—'The Times,' 'The Morning Chronicle,' 'The Morning Post,' 'The Morning Herald,' 'The Sunday Times,' 'The Musical World,' 'The Daily News,' 'The Spectator,' 'The Atlas,' 'The Pictorial Times,' 'The Fine Arts Journal,' 'The Court Journal,' 'The Observer,' 'The Examiner,' 'The Athenæum,' 'The Literary Gazette,' &c., &c. It is calculated that Blasis has composed more than two hundred *pas*, *ballabili*, and

* Sig. G. Romani, a competent judge of these things, an author, and editor of the *Figaro*, wrote a most clever article upon this dance, praising the art with which it is composed, the logical inference that united all its parts, and the general design that was visible throughout the whole movement.

characteristic dances for the theatres of Milan alone, without including the other theatres of Italy or those of London and other capitals and towns.*

It has been observed that no one of these compositions resembles the others, such is the warmth of fancy and fertility of invention possessed by the great artiste. It is he himself who undertakes the following departments in the construction of a Ballet. He traces the geometrical chorographic plan of the whole piece, upon the stage itself, then designs the groups and attitudes, costumes, scenery and machinery, selects the music, and sometimes composes short pieces, and sketches the instrumentation. His grand Ballet of 'Faust,' in particular, was prepared in this manner. The splendid *ballabili* that he composed for *Roberto il Diavolo*, (Robert the Devil) gained him the greatest honor and admiration and were executed at La Scala, the Canobbiana and the Carcano, the principal theatres of Milan, by Mdlle. Baderna, with the whole *corps de Ballet*. These *ballabili* were chiefly remarkable for the rich picturesque invention they displayed, and for the studies of form which they afforded to the sculptor.

Blasis, in the early part of his career, feeling a wish to devote himself more particularly to composition, in order to exercise his fancy and invention, so indispensable in such labours, undertook to dance impromptu to any air that might be played; he was thus forced, upon the instant, to find steps, attitudes, *enchainements*, and figures adapted to the rythmus, melody and transitions of the music. Being thoroughly master of his own art, and well-instructed in the science of music; and, besides this, possessing a good memory and quick natural

* Names of Professors who have composed music for Blasis.— F. A. Blasis the elder, Lictenthal, Coccia, Hayblinger, Brambilla, Chiocchia, Schira, Mercadante, Mandanici, Bajetti, Mussi, Panizza, Casamorata, Viviani, Canevassi, Pontelibero, Bignami senior, Bignami junior, Vaccaro, Romani, Bochsä, Senna, Carmi, Hugues, &c. This latter, as a leader of ballet-music, has perhaps no equal; he is a first-rate violinist and a good composer. He composed the music of the celebrated 'New Cachucha,' composed by Blasis for his pupil Baderna.

parts, he soon succeeded in this new method of developing the inventive faculty, and when at the theatres these *pas* were encored, upon a repetition he changed the whole succession of steps from the beginning to the finale; the surprise that this effort of memory excited, naturally added to the effect of the whole. This sort of extemporary exercise, enabled him almost on the instant to invent any kind of chorographic composition, and also accustomed his ear to catch, in a moment, the measure and rythmus of the music. He, therefore, proposes this exercise to young artists as of the greatest utility in developing and fertilizing their talent. His first attempts will most probably be incorrect, and he will fail in uniting properly the different parts upon which the harmony of the whole depends; but he will insensibly modify and correct these things, then introduce changes, and at length perfect the whole movement.

Our author, as already related, very frequently practised these improvisations, and with particular success. It has given him facility in composition, and particularly when he has been requested to introduce dances or pantomimic scenes into Ballets. Nothing can be more useful in awakening and bringing to light talent than this extemporary exercise. It may be added, that the elder Blasis was in the habit of improvising on the piano, and that while this was doing, Carlo, his son, endeavoured on the instant to follow the melodies that were poured forth by adapting suitable steps, &c. and producing *pas seuls*, *pas de deux*, and *pas de trois*.

Notwithstanding so much labour and unceasing application as presiding master and composer, he found time to pursue his study of the arts and literature, and to publish a volume from time to time, with dissertations and articles in various Italian journals, as he had formerly done in Paris and London, upon which occasions he was always favourably noticed, and regarded as an artiste possessing a kind of universal talent. It

must be confessed, that, when we reflect upon what Blasis has already produced, and still continues to produce, it might seem impossible, in his present situation, that he should be able to undertake and complete so many and such various works. To such an observation he himself would answer, with a saying which he has always found to be true—“*Le temps ne manque jamais à qui sait l'employer.*” —“ Time never fails him who knows how to employ it;” and to these he would add the following words of Tissot:—“*Dormons, dormons très peu; vivons toute notre vie, et pendant trois semaines que nous avons à vivre, ne dormons pas, ne soyons pas morts, pendant quinze jours.*” —“ Sleep, yes, we must sleep, but not too much; while we are alive, let us live, and since the space of life is but short, let us not be dead, that is asleep, two-thirds of the time.” Blasis, for his part, is employed from fourteen to fifteen hours every day. His continual activity, perseverance, and determined resolution, united to his versatile and fruitful talents, have enabled him to acquire a vast mass of learning and information, together with great facility of expression in writing. Our *Maestro* would sometimes express himself in this fashion:—“ I feel inspired with a love,* not for one but for all the arts; we can know but little of life if we have no taste for any thing beyond one particular pursuit. For my part, I have a taste for whatever is useful, beautiful, and good; where the arts flourish, and genius and talents are admired and patronized, there I am at home, for in this respect I am a citizen of the world. Wherever I am, I shall always encourage, as far as I am able, a taste for learning, and shall patronize artists, for I look upon this as a kind of duty always attended by fame. What can be more venerable than talent and worth united. Jealousy and envy I shall always endeavour to keep at a proper distance; and as to injuries, they make scarcely any impression upon me. To those who are hostile to my interests I leave the liberty of saying what they please,

* Il dit : “ *Tous les arts embrasent mon âme,*” &c.

provided they will leave me at liberty to act as I speak. I have, however, the happiness to find, that, amongst my friends are persons of worth and ability, whilst the other party is generally composed of the ignorant and illiberal." These sentences have become proverbial with him, and it is presumed sufficiently indicate the liberality and independence of his character.

In a small work published at Paris in 1818, treating upon the celebrated artistes of that time, and pointing out those rising talents who were likely to succeed them, young Blasis is noticed as follows:—"He received his first lessons in the art of dancing, and also studied some time, at the same school with a pupil of Coindé, who was an eminent ballet-master. His friends, being satisfied from what they saw, and from the information both of artistes and amateurs as to his inclination, decided upon devoting him entirely to the art he appeared to prefer. He and his fellow-student Paul, made their first appearance at Marseilles; the first at the great theatre, and the other at the theatre called the Pavillon, in the same city. The two young dancers made an extraordinary impression, and attracted crowded audiences to both theatres. Blasis succeeded best in the noble and elevated style, and Paul in the *demi-caractère*, or melo-dramatic. Blasis, after having performed in the South of France, remained a short time at Bordeaux, and then repaired to Paris. Gardel having examined him, was delighted with his precocious talents, learning, and intelligence. He immediately took him under his protection, and placed him at the head of his school. Blasis had no sooner commenced his new course of studies, under a new master, than the art of dancing was unfolded to him in all its splendour, and before long he was initiated into all the mysteries of Terpsichore. Instruction and continual practice overcame all difficulties, and his efforts were crowned with complete success. Encouraged and assisted by his master, he danced at the *Académie Royale de Musique*, and there obtained the complete approbation of all the connoisseurs and artistes, as well

as the general applause of the audience; and this triumph was recorded in the daily journals, particularly in the '*Journal de Paris*,' the '*Journal des Débats*,' and the '*Constitutionnel*.'

Bordeaux, after Paris, is the first city in France for the proper style of performing *grands ballets*. Its splendid theatre has always possessed good chorographic compositions, and has also furnished the Opera of Paris with multitudes of excellent dancers. Since the year 1814, this theatre has produced several first-rate artistes; amongst whom are Beaulieu, Albert, Ferdinand, Barry, and some others, who have maintained, and continue to maintain, the first rank in their profession, and with honour to themselves. The '*Journal de Paris*,' speaking of Blasis' appearance at the Opera, remarks that:—"The theatre of Bordeaux seems destined to furnish our theatres with dancers." About the same time it was remarked in the '*Mémorial Bordelais*,' and the '*Indicateur*,' both journals of Bordeaux, that—"Our great theatre, it seems, must henceforth become the last step in the ascent to Olympus (the Opera). At the present time Bordeaux possesses a great number of dancers of talent, who are under the direction of M. Blache, one of the best ballet-masters that we can boast of. The dancers at the theatre *Porte-St-Martin*, are from Bordeaux. We allude to—Madame Léon, a charming *danseuse*, Bégrand, Labotière, Clairençon, Blache jun., and several others of promising talent.—In a word, good wine, good politics, and good dancers, are all furnished to us from the banks of the Garonne!"

The '*Journal des Débats*,' and the '*Journal de Paris*,' upon the appearance of Blasis at the Opera, in what is known as the noble and classic line of dancing, observed that:—"For some time this department of dancing has been very improperly neglected; but it is now revived, and has been witnessed with great delight and admiration. In fact, the beauty of the *poses*, the majesty of the movements, the dignity displayed in the steps, give to this kind of dancing a certain im-

portance, and, considered in the light of an imitative art, we may be permitted to compare it with sculpture. The ancients greatly approved of this kind of performance, and it was brought to great perfection by them. If we neglect these beautiful exhibitions, it is because we are very far from having perfected them so completely as did the Greeks and Romans; nor do we possess either their taste or style in our attempts to produce ideal beauty. Their pantomimic performances had some analogy with our serious style, and it is for that reason that we ought to encourage the small number of artistes who devote themselves to a department in dancing that is so full of artistic taste and poetry." The first classic dancers that Italy ever possessed, and the most celebrated artistes who introduced into that country the beautiful French style of dancing, were M. Deshayes, Mdlle Millièrè, and lastly, M. Blasis. The latter more especially has proved himself to possess a more correct taste, and greater variety, than the other two. It is he who has introduced the *arabesques*, the imitation of the classic antique, expression, poetical effect, with a multitude of imitative *pas*, analogous to the original persons whose characters are represented. Blasis was the first who, by the help of his taste, judgment and learning, gave to modern dancing those natural and elegant forms to be found in the master-pieces of painting and sculpture. Thus, after having established the living prototype of this imitative dancing, which, while delighting the eyes by its grace, informs the mind, touches the heart, and gently insinuates itself into the very soul, he composed precepts for its attainment, and, aided by experience, taste and learning, placed it in the rank of the Fine Arts, a position pointed out, by its very nature, as its right. Blasis has enabled his profession to attain this elevation, by establishing fixed principles and rules, that demonstrate accurately and precisely his peculiar system, which is at once analogical and analytical. This system having been admired and closely followed, has produced the best effects; it has enlarged the sphere of the art and

ennobled its character, at the same time greatly accelerating the progress of the student.

Blasis, by writing and publishing his *Code*, and the *Manuel de la Danse*, raised the arts of dancing, pantomime and the ballet, to the level of poetry, declamation, painting, sculpture, music and eloquence. (See his *Synoptical Table of the Imitative Arts*.)—His improvements, practice, and entire system, are based upon nature and ideal beauty—the *beau-idéal*; they are so framed as to lead artistes ultimately to the study of esthetic expression. The works by which he has attained this lofty aim are written with taste, imagination, philosophy and extensive learning. Never yet did any artiste, in the same department, do so much for his art as our author; his works are composed upon a plan and in a manner suitable to the subject, and in every page prove him to be the able professor.*

The writings of Blasis will, probably, be looked upon by posterity as a sufficient authority upon what was the state of dancing, pantomimic action, chorographic configuration, and the Ballet, in his time. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans, nor any of the nations that succeeded them, have left us any work upon the same subject so full, clear, explanatory and exact, as our great artiste upon their dancing, Ballets, spectacles, and theatrical amusements; and Blasis could not desire more honor than this in his particular profession. By means of his system of instruction, his definite style of description, figures, chorographic drawings, and geometrical schemes, he will have furnished the means of restoring and re-establishing dancing, now the delight of our theatres, when the scythe of time may have diminished or destroyed that art. The works of which we speak, have already been translated into the principal languages of Europe. There is scarcely a dancer,

* See *The Constitutionnel*, *la Revue Encyclopédique*, *les Débats*, *le Journal de Paris*, *The Monthly Review*, *The Edinburgh Review*, *la Biblioteca Italiana di Milano*, *l'Antologia di Firenze*, *la Gazzetta di Milano*—(from 1820-28-31 to 1847.)

professor, or composer of Ballets, who loves his art, studies, and deserves the name of artiste, who does not possess the different treatises of Blasis. It may, in fact, be generally asserted, that the best informed artistes neither execute any thing themselves, nor teach others, without the assistance of these writings; there are, indeed, many masters who, without them, would never have been able to teach, and who, if they do know any thing upon the subject, have derived their knowledge from this source. Certain well-informed artistes have translated and commented on these treatises, while in very many private dancing schools the walls are decorated with figures from Blasis, representing *poses, arabesques, attitudes, and pas*, that the pupils, by having the example continually before their eyes, may at once study and imitate them upon the spot. Besides, every master is not in a state to place himself in attitudes, some of which are very difficult and require continual exercise. All the young dancers who have seen Blasis dance, endeavour to imitate his manner till they have gradually adopted his style for their own. They have been careful to imitate his steps, attitudes, arabesques, *pirouettes, enchainemens*, and original inventions, because they saw that his style was more expressive, more imitative, and more picturesque than any other method known.

His productions, and the learning they display, have gained him much honor from persons of rank and talent, and placed him on a level with writers and literary men, procuring for him their esteem and friendship wherever he has been. Even when he was young, Blasis was consulted by veteran artistes, and his advice was both listened to and followed. Messrs. Gardel, Vestris, Deshayes, Lebel, and other men of acknowledged talent, often held what may be called academic conversations with the young artiste, and displayed much curiosity and interest while listening to his discourse. D. Pini, of Cremona, the celebrated translator of Horace, and the learned writer Rasori, were in the habit of designating him as—" *giovane di corpo, e*

vecchio di senno”—“A youth in years, an old man in sense.” The writings of Blasis are calculated at once for the learned, the man of taste, and the artiste, and it is on this account that they are so generally known and admired. A spirit of philosophy and improvement prevails throughout all his productions; this is mixed with a quantity of learned and interesting matter, and the whole is made agreeable by traits of fancy and poetical embellishment.*

* The following well-turned sonnet, by Bazzarini, of Venice, being a kind of epitome of what has been said above in honour of Blasis, we shall here introduce it, without any attempt at translation or imitation.

Onde tant' arte mai, Carlo, apprendesti,
Per cui, se giri sì maëstro il piede
Sulle scene dell' Adria, chi ti vede
Ben convien che lo sguardo immoto arresti ?

Tu, del cui merto a fronte ogni altro cede,
Che bella invidia in tanti cor ridesti,
Certo da Lei quel sommo don traesti
Che fra le Muse in Elicona ha sede.

L'angla, la franca e l'itala favella,
Ricche per Te di mimiche dottrine,
Corona al capo cingon novella.

Ed Italia, che suo lustro ti chiama,
Alla tua gloria non porrà confine,
E fiati premio un' immanchevol fama,

To this we shall append a short passage, extracted from a Life of Blasis, written by P. Della Riva. It is a just tribute to the excellence of his character, and we shall leave this also in its own beautiful language.

“ Il Blasis ha modi gentili, un dir facondo e spontaneo, piacente figura, fisionomia aperta, espressiva; non sa che sia alterigia; vive alla sua famiglia, all'arte sua, alla virtù, e chiude nel seno un cuor nobile e sensitivo.—Voi gli vedete ancora umide di pianto le luci —pianto ch'egli tributa alla sua estinta sorella e cantante rinomatissima, Virginia Blasis, tenero ed amoroso pianto, con cui tuttavia ne lamenta l'amara perdita—Blasis crebbe su i libri, e sui libri si è formato, e de' libri ha vissuto e vive.—Le arti e le lettere furono e sono la sua vita—e non è quieto, nè si da pace, se non giunge a far raccolta sempre più di cognizioni ed importanti.”

We shall here subjoin a complete list of all his Works.

LIST OF WORKS BY C. BLASIS.

PUBLISHED—IN THE PRESS—AND UNPUBLISHED,

With Plans and Prospectuses of New Works, to which are added Essays and Articles from various Periodicals and Daily Journals.

PUBLISHED WORKS.

Traité élémentaire, Théorique et Pratique de l'Art de la Danse, contenant toutes les démonstrations et tous les principes généraux et particuliers qui doivent guider le danseur. Ouvrage orné de Planches; Milan, 1825.

Translations of the above work, by Velli, Venice; Grini, Florence; Valmarana, Vicenza; Campilli, Forli; Bournonville, Copenhagen; Barton, London; Canevesi, Milan; Vergnaud, Paris; Costa, Turin; Aveux and Montreal, Madrid; with other translations, as mentioned above.

De l'Origine et des Progrès de la Danse ancienne et moderne. Paris, London, 1828—1830. Translated by Velli, Venice; Bossi, Milan; Barton, London.

N. B. These two works were inserted into the —Galleria degli Artisti Celebri,” published by Velli, at Padua and Vicenza.

The Code of Terpsichore, London, 1828-1830, 8vo. Bull; with numerous engravings in outline and original music. The whole of this large work was closely translated into French by Vergnaud, and the title changed to—“Manuel complet de la Danse.” Paris, 1830.

Observations sur le Chant et sur l'Expression de la Musique Dramatique; Etat actuel, 1828, de la Musique, de la Danse, du Drame et des Exécutants en Italie; de la Tarentule, et de la Tarentella. These Essays were published in the Aurora, a weekly paper, in Italian; published in London, 1827-1828.

Traité de la Danse de Ville ; written for the Young Lady's Book, 1828-1829, London. It was translated by Clarke.*

Code Complet de la Danse ; ouvrage orné de Planches et de Musique, Paris, 1830. Translated into Italian by the author, and by Canevasi.

Prospetto Analitico di un grande Trattato di Mimica Naturale et Pantomima Teatrale, basato sulla Natura, la Fisica, la Geometria ed il Bello ideale. Milano, 1842.

Studi Sulle Arti Imitatrici ; la Poesia il (poema, la tragedia, la commedia, l'opera, il teatro) ; la declamazione, il gesto e la mimica, la scoltura, la pittura, la musica, la danza, il ballo pantomimico, la coregrafia e la composizione. Osservazioni sul bello, il sublime, il terribile, il grande, la grazia. Milano, 1844.

Biografia di Garrick. Milano, 1843.

Biografia di Fuseli. Milano, 1845. These two last appeared in a periodical entitled "Strenna Lombarda."

Della Musica Drammatica Italiana in Francia, e della Musica Francese, dal Secolo XVII. Sino al principio del XIX., 1820. Sunto Storico-Biografico. Milano, 1841.

Biografia di Pergolesi ; Genova, 1843. Published in the "Strenna Ligure," and at Milan in the "Moda."

Manuel Complet de la Danse ; comprenant la théorie, la pratique et l'histoire de cet art, depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu' à nos jours ; à l'usage des amateurs et des professeurs ; ouvrage orné d'un grand nombre de figures et de musique. The music in the Manuel, in the Code, and in the Code of Terpsichore, was composed by Virginia and Teresa Blasis, sisters of the Author.

Programmes of Ballets in every style, published in French, Italian, and English ; in Paris, London, Milan, Florence, Mantua, Modena, and other towns.

* This was the late learned and talented C. Clarke, Esq., Attorney, author, among other things, of the "Cigar," and the "Boy's own Book."

Quadro Sinottico della relazione che esiste frà le arti imitatrici. Milano, 1843.

“ Dissertazioni e Articoli,” published in the various journals of Milan; namely, the *Fama*, *Figaro*, *Gazzetta di Milano*, *Moda*, *Pirata*, &c.—Intorno ai studi, al genio, alle opere di Raffaello—Intorno ai Pittori antichi e moderni—Tibullo, Catullo, e Propertio—Ricontri Storici, letterarj—La scuola Politecnica di Parigi—Del genio e della filosofia della Letteratura Inglese—Il Bello ideale—L’Espressione naturale, artistica, filosofica—Gli atteggiamenti, studiati nelle statue e ne’ dipinti famosi—La Grazia e le Grazie—L’arte del Mimo, e cenno Storico sugli antichi Mimi—L’arte pantomimica, e cenno Storico—Garrick—Biografia di Gardel—Viganò—Biografia di V. Léon—Sallé, Camargo e altre Danzatrici di quella epoca—Mefistofele, ossia il Genio del Male, ballo poetico fantastico—La Tarantella. (*The Gazzetta of Milan*, and the *Aurora*, London.) Sullo Stato attuale del Teatro. (*Aurora*.) Descrizione delle Danze Spagnuole—Quadro Sinottico delle arti—Storia della Musica Italiana e Francese, de’ compositori, de’ poeti, degli attori-cantanti—Biografia di Pergolesi—Oliviero di Serres—La Festa del Bucintoro—Del Lusso—Dei Zingari—Dei Sibariti—Le Strenne—Bongiovanni—Su varj Artisti—Il Malvaggio—La Coquette—&c., &c. Notes upon Dancing—London, 1847.

WORKS IN THE PRESS.

La Pantomima, la Chironomia, la Filosofia della Musica Drammatica, l’Imitazione, la Critica, il Vestimento, Addottrinamenti teatrali; Termini di ballo e di mimica, ossia dizionario Francese e Italiano del Ballo, &c. Opera adorna di rami.

L’Art Dramatique appliqué à la Composition des Ballets. This subject is entirely new, and was

made known for the first time, by Bossi's translation into Italian, and by Barton into English.

L' Uomo Fisico, Intellettuale, e Morale; Opera filosofico-Artistica. Milano, Chiusi, 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 1000.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS IN MS.

Code de la Musique. The history of this art is here treated upon a new plan.

Galerie d' Euterpe.

Sur Alexandre-le-Grand et Parallèles.

Sur Lucain et son poème de la Pharsale.

Statistique des principaux théâtres de l' Europe, 1500—1847.

François Premier, et son règne.

Lexique d' érudition universelle.

L' Influence du génie Italien sur le monde, et du génie de César, d' Auguste, des Médicis, de Christophe Colomb, de Galileo, de Michel-Ange, de Raphaël, de Machiavel, de Léon X., de François Premier, de Louis XIV., et de Napoléon.

Les Danses Grecques Modernes.

Dissertation sur le sublime de la Bible, de Moÿse, de Job, des Orientaux, d' Homère, de Sophocle, d' Eschyle, de Pindare, de Virgile, de Dante, de Shakespeare, du Tasse, de Milton, de Klopstock, d' Ossian, de Corneille, du Camoëns, de Bossuet, d' Alfieri, de Pergolesi, de Phidias, du Laocoon, de l' Apollon, de Raphaël et de Michel-Ange." With descriptions of principal personages.

De la grande époque de Louis XV. en France, en Italie, et en Angleterre.

Un épisode du règne de Sixte-Quint.

Disegni del Trattato della Mimica; della Coregrafia; dell' Uomo fisico, intellettuale e morale; di Decorazioni; di Macchine; di Costumi; di Danze; di

Azioni pantomimiche ; di Gruppi ; di Grandi quadri ; di Piani geometrici e architettonici.

Commenti sul Dialogo di Luciano intorno alla Danza.

Grande Encyclopédie Théâtrale Universelle.

Les Mystères de l' Homme.

Promenades dans Londres.

National Dances still in use in various countries.

Explanatory Prospectus of the author's work now in the press at Milan, entitled—L' Uomo fisico, intellettuale e morale ; Opera filosofico-artistica.—An artistico-philosophical Discourse upon Man, with respect to his Physical, Intellectual, and Moral Powers.

By "Physical man," the author must be understood to mean his entire visible exterior, his limbs and body, and their motions, as demonstrating the affections of the soul by means of corporeal expression, which consists of physiognomical movements, gesture and attitude. It was thus that man, in his primitive state, expressed to his fellow-men the feelings of his heart and the convictions of his mind, which he could not well convey in words, supposing language to be, as yet, in a very imperfect state. Hence, the language of gesture and gesticulation was aboriginal with man. He depicted his thoughts and feelings by looks, motions of the face, arms, fingers, and legs, and by attitudes of the entire body.

In treating of the "Intellectual man," the author will examine the mind, its essence, characteristics, power, and other qualities, with its mode of operation in the attainment of any particular aim or object ; he will also attempt to develop and describe the general nature of the understanding, in such a manner as to be clearly and easily comprehended.

In the division containing the "Moral man," all that part of his nature which is diametrically opposed to the physical will be discussed and explained, as the

feelings, affections and passions. He will denominate physical, whatever belongs to matter, and moral that which pertains to mind.

All the corporal movements of the body belong to that part of man named physical; while the motions of the mind indicate the moral affections. The author has studied and analysed man so as to illustrate his own principles, and to suit the particular divisions of his work. He has examined the origin, conformation, and developement of his moral and physical qualities; he then follows him in his career of life, and feeling himself identified with all his interest, he pauses respectfully at all those events and crises to which man is exposed, and which produce powerful effects upon his character, passions and capacity. He next examines the various races, the different ages or stages of life and temperament, and this subject he treats more in detail than has ever yet been done; then impressions, which are minutely treated and explained, as to their cause, formation, developement, and immense influence. Then follow sensations, ideas, feelings, passions, transports, reason, capacity, memory, imagination, with a history of genius and individual disposition. To these are added considerations upon varieties of the species, state, rank, manners, habits, and customs, as also the state of man at various historical periods; and finally his condition in every climate, whether savage, nomadic, or civilized.

The author has followed nature and experience as his two principal instructors in his studies on the nature of man, and he has listened to philosophers only when they have derived their theories from the same sources. He professes to form his system upon analysis and analogy; he examines thoroughly the nature of his own existence, sensations and ideas, with the origin, parentage, and developement of all the passions; he endeavours to discover within himself what that excellent work of creation—Man—is. He has described the mind, soul, and body, accord-

ing to his own convictions. To facilitate the scheme of his labours, and more clearly to attain the object which he has proposed to himself, the author has established certain new theories, in which he has availed himself of the aids afforded by drawing, geometry, and physics, in producing his demonstrations. As for instance, in the explanation of looks, gestures, attitudes, locomotion, the centre of gravity, physical, intellectual and moral expression ; as also in explaining whatever is comprehended in metaphysics, and whatever constitutes the moral man ; a science which, as defined by the theory of our author, is brought within the reach of every intellect, and rendered visible and almost palpable. In order to effect this, and to describe every thing accurately and with just proportions, the author establishes certain points of contact by means of scales, suggests a new nomenclature, and subjoins synoptical tables. To these are added figures and drawings, representing all the movements, positions, and expressions of man, when agitated by physical, mental or moral commotion. By these means also, he traces the rise and progress of ideas, feelings, and passions, accompanied by a scale of gradations. This vast picture of man is executed after nature, according to the immutable laws of matter and conformably to the *beau idéal* of sculpture and painting ; and, however abstract the subject may seem, it is hoped that, as treated in this work, it will be easily comprehended by all, and will not fail to attract by its interesting details, the public attention in general.*

The work entitled "*Promenades dans Londres*,"—Walks in London, consists of letters addressed to

* D. Sacchi, speaking of this work, says, "It is a powerful effort of the mind, and full of talent." This work also caused Madrolle to say, "that the author was a man of the most comprehensive mind that he had ever known;" and he further designated Blasis as a universal genius.

a friend in Milan, describing the effects produced upon the writer, C. Blasis, an Italian, after an absence of seventeen years. We shall here give one letter as a specimen :—

London, 1847.

“ Dear R.—I am just returned from a long walk that I have been taking in one of the quarters of London ; but I should say rather tour or journey, for London is no longer a town, but a province.* I cannot refrain from putting down my thoughts upon this occasion. This is now the sixth time I have been in England, but it is more than sixteen years since I was here last ; and since that time what extraordinary changes have taken place ! My feelings of surprise and admiration are so great, that I find it difficult to contain myself, and, therefore, think it necessary to share them with you, and you are quite capable of understanding the remarks I shall make. During my excursion I soliloquized after the following fashion : ‘ Might we not say that it was Michael Angelo himself who had drawn up the plan of this immense capital, and having done so, confided its execution to Titans ? For mere men, such as they now appear, might seem incapable of the vast enterprise ; and the ancient Romans you know have totally disappeared some twenty ages ago. Two millions of inhabitants move about with ease in this enormous labyrinth ! It seems as if the god of Lemnos had transported his Cyclops and forges to the banks of the broad-flowing Thames, for there he appears to labour incessantly, creating prodigies of talent and industry. Iron, in the hands of the robust and laborious sons of Albion, is fashioned into admirable forms ; they *bend* it to every use. This powerful metal, added to the strength of their athletic arms, enables them to execute their ever increasing

* Original—“ Mon cher R.—Je reviens d’une longue promenade que j’ai faite dans un des quartiers de Londres, c’est un petit voyage ; Londres n’est point une ville, c’est un pays, &c.”

schemes of utility and improvement ; hence arose that complication of machinery which augments a hundred fold the fruits of their industry and activity. That which feeds the forges, resembling so many burning volcanoes, also nourishes the most overwhelming power of locomotion, and England, triumphing over every obstacle, darts in every direction over her own territory and over the ocean. Borne along by the gigantic power of steam, they execute their business with the velocity of the winds ; every moment of time is turned to account, and they can now effect in one year, what in former times would have required an age. From that same mineral that nourishes their fires, breaks forth the brightest, fiercest, and most penetrating light that it is possible to conceive ; a light that pierces through the thickest gloom, illumines the darkest night, and gives to labour unceasing duration, while the fruits of industry and the ordinary space of life are nearly doubled. It would seem as if, to accelerate the onward march of this laborious population, ever greedy of gain, nothing was wanting but the railway and the steam-boat, and, behold, a Watt and a Bolton were granted by a beneficent Providence to the British Isles. When lo, almost on the instant, vast masses of the population were transported, as on the wings of the wind, from one point to another, however distant, and from pole to pole. In this country distance is little thought of, for in fact space is almost annihilated. But something else was wanting to enable this industrious people to pursue their labours in spite of a cloudy and gloomy sky—well ! gas was discovered ! and now it circulates in every direction throughout this vast metropolis, in its metallic veins, and spreads far and wide upon the country roads. This portable light, like the sun, penetrates into every corner, and many are the blessings that attend its splendid career. Vulcan, that great workman of Olympus, seems first to have raised this vast capital of Albion, and then to have made a present of it to Mercury, who, upon finding it ever laborious, ever

industrious, there established the centre of commerce for the two worlds ; and this same commerce has made Albion the darling of Neptune, and the sovereign of the Seas.' You will pardon me, my dear friend, these mythological fancies, for when I speak to you of things that might well appear fabulous, they may be excused. Extraordinary is the rapidity with which everything is done in this country ; the true and precious value of time seems to be here perfectly understood. In London alone there are published more than 100 periodicals, and their assistance seems perfectly necessary, for otherwise, in this huge Babylon, what multitudes of things and events would be lost or forgotten. But it is a great part of the business of these journals, amongst other things, to put on record the general state of the town, and what is going on in it. Thus thought flies into every corner and speaks to every one. But this railway speed of conveying ideas, for printing is done by steam, is not enough for the English, they have now put into action the *electric telegraph*, and thus speech is made to dart away to almost any distance—I do not say with the speed of the swiftest flying bird—but with the velocity of thought. This mode of communication is the most prodigious yet discovered—what marvellous improvements for the convenience of society ! The Englishman easily accustoms himself to deep study and much reflection, and hence he becomes a surpassing engineer, a good mechanist, mathematician, astronomer, and politician ; he has given to the world excellent philosophical works ; together with the steam-boat, the railway and gas light. This is pretty well, my dear R.—What do you think of it? the word is 'forward!' You shall shortly have the history of a second walk. In the mean time take care of your health, be ever active, and believe me one of your best friends,

“ C. BLASIS.”

THE CODE OF TERPSICHORE, 8vo. London, 1830.

We have judged it necessary, in order to give a more exact idea of the nature and extent of this large work, to subjoin here a table of its contents, with the mottos, preceded by extracts from the editor's prefaces of the two editions, English and French. The French edition is entitled "Manuel de la Danse. Paris.

Extracts from the Prefaces.—'The works hitherto published on the Art of Dancing, Ballets, and Pantomime, are few in number, and, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, deficient in real merit and general utility. The subject has certainly been treated by Noverre in a masterly manner, considering the time when he wrote, and the apparent intention of his labours; he threw many new and brilliant lights upon the art, but his letters were more adapted to instruct the professor than to improve the pupil even at the time of their publication, and the art has since advanced with such rapidity, that his works are now of little use to either. The greater part of those who have written upon this subject, seem to have been persons of taste, talent, and learning; but they evidently were not dancers, so that, however attractive their productions may be to the general reader, the man of fashion or the literary man, they are of little practical utility to the Mime, the Dancer, or the Ballet Master. They contain a succession of theoretical and unconnected ideas, but do not develope any method of study and practice in all the various branches of the art. In fact, a practical work adapted to the present time, and calculated at once to assist the professor, to enlighten and amuse the amateur, and to instruct the student, appeared to have been a desideratum. Impressed with the truth of these remarks, after several years of study, research, and practical experience, encouraged by many whose literary opinions he values most highly, and emboldened by the flattering reception which several of his works have met with in France, Italy, and Spain, the author resolved upon undertaking the composition of a large and com-

prehensive work, upon the origin, progress, theory, and practice of dancing, including also treatises upon the composition and execution of *Ballets d'Action*, or Pantomimical Ballets. He has proposed and introduced improvements as he advances, and offered a new method of instruction which is more certain as well as shorter than any hitherto known. He has endeavoured to give a greater latitude to Pantomime than has yet been allowed to that art, applying the rules and various styles of the regular drama to chorographical composition. He has further attempted to demonstrate, that Ballets should not be made mere *divertissemens*, or dancing *spectacles*, and has restored his art to that place among the Fine Arts to which it may justly lay claim; for, in fact, all the passions of the human heart—the comic, the serious, the terrible, and the ludicrous—may be perfectly expressed by a skilful Ballet Master and an accomplished Mime. Blaisis has treated the subject in such a manner as to enlighten and instruct those who study and profess the art, and at the same time so as to interest persons of taste and learning, and readers in general.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PART I.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN DANCING.

“Terpsichore,

D'Euterpe aimable sœur, comme Euterpe on l'encense,

Et mariant sa marche au son des instrumens,

Elle a le même trône et les mêmes amans.”—DORAT.

The Cordax, the Sicinnis, the Emmelia, the Dithyrambic or Bacchanalian dance, the Pyrrhic, the Dædalian dance, the Alcinoüs, with other Greek and Roman dances, civil, military, religious, theatrical, &c. Various styles. Ionian, Lydian and Lacedemonian dances; Italian, French and Spanish dancing. National dances; the Chica, the Fandango, Sarabande, Chaconne, Carole, Tarantella, Saltarello, Bolero, Cachucha, Seguidillas, Sarao, Furlane, Country dance, Branles, Quadrilles, Provençale, Mazurka, Russe, Ecossoise, Alle-

mande, Hongroise, Sicilienne, Lavandarina, Bisagna, Hornpipe, Angrismène, Seguidillas Boleras, Seguidillas Taleadas, Manchegas, les Folies d' Espagne, Menuet Afandangado, Menuet Allemandado, Guaracha, El Zapateado, Zorongo, Tripili Trapola, Gitana, another kind of Cachucha, Tyrolienne, the Suisse and the Anglaise. Dancing considered with respect to its influence upon health and education.

PART II.

THEORY OF THEATRICAL DANCING.

“Que la danse toujours, ou gaie ou sérieuse,
Soit de nos sentimens l'image ingénieuse;
Que tous ses mouvemens du cœur soient les échos,
Ses gestes un langage, et ses pas des tableaux.”—DELILLE.

Chap. 1.—General instruction for pupils. Chap. 2.—Study of the legs. Chap. 3.—Study of the body. Chap. 4.—Study of the arms. Chap. 5.—Principal positions with their derivatives, preparations and terminations of steps and *tems*; poses, attitudes, arabesques, groups and attitudes *de grace et de genre*; action of the head; attitude of the body; of the centre of gravity in a dancer; new physical remarks; counterpoise; the figure moving against the wind; academic positions; a Bacchanalian; painters; sculptors; the Mercury of Gian Bologna; &c. Chap. 6.—*Tems*, steps, *enchaînements* and the *entrechât*; observations upon the cross-legged dancer; the bow-legged dancer; with physical remarks upon a person in the act of springing from the ground. Chap. 7.—Pirouettes; manner in which a dancer ought to prepare for the execution of his pirouettes; of the various positions he may take in turning, and of the different methods of stopping and ending them; a new style of pirouettes, invented by the author. Chap. 8.—The noble and elevated style of dancing; the *demi-caractère*; the comic and the pastoral; on difference of stature. Chap. 9.—The master; new method of instruction; the composition of *Pas*; on improvisation. Appendix.—First exercises, first positions, *battemens grands et petits, petits battemens*

tendus ; *battemens* on the instep ; *battemens en tournant* ; *ronds de jambe à terre, en dehors et en dedans* ; *ronds de jambe en l' air en dehors et en dedans*, slow and quick ; *temps, pas, enchaînemens* ; the lesson ; the gait, hand, manner of salutation and of walking ; explanation of figures in plates ; notes upon measure, rythmus and cadence of music for dancing.

PART III.

THE ART OF PANTOMIME, AND THE METHOD OF STUDY
NECESSARY TO COMPLETE A PANTOMIC ACTOR.

—“Atto degli occhi e delle membra.”—TASSO.

“Art ingenieux

“De peindre la parole et de parler aux yeux.”—BREBŒUF.

The mimic art ; the physiognomy or prosopography ; gesture ; attitudes in action, or imitative, indicative and figurative gesticulation ; emotions of the mind ; the passions, with their physical impulses ; symbolical language ; signs, ideas, sensations, feelings ; natural and artificial action ; men, characters, conditions, rank, &c.

Prosopography.—Ancient mimes ; modern mimes ; characters, parts ; dialogue soliloquies, &c. ; ancient and modern pantomime ; chironomia or chironomy ; nature and art ; on esthetic expression ; agreement between the mental and physical faculties and music ; theatrical and scenic diversions ; the origin of masks, masks worn in ancient Italian comedy, imitated by other nations ; celebrated actors at different periods in civilized countries.

PART IV.

ON THE COMPOSITION OF BALLETS, OR THE DRAMATIC ART
APPLIED TO DANCING, PANTOMIME, AND CHOROGRAPHY.

“Eloquente et muette,

Elle (*la danse*) est des passions la mobile interprète,

Elle parle à mon âme, elle parle à mes sens,

Et je vois dans ses jeux des tableaux agissans.

L

Le voile ingénieux de ses allégories
 Cache des vérités par ce voile embellies.
 Rivale de l'histoire, elle raconte aux yeux :
 Je revois les amours, les faits de nos aïeux ;
 Elle sait m'inspirer leur belliqueuse ivresse.
 J'admire leurs exploits, et je plains leur faiblesse."—DORAT.

Introduction.—Art, esthetic expression, philosophy of the Ballet. Chap. 1.—Exposition and prosopography of the Ballet.

"Qualunque oggetto si vegga nelle belle arti, si ha da conoscer subito che cosa fa, chi è, che significa, che vuole, che ci dice di bello e d'importante."—MILIZIA.

Chap. 2.—Plot, episode.

"Que tout soit lié dans l'action principale, et que tout marche vers le même but."—ANONYMOUS.

Chap. 3.—The catastrophe or dénouement.

"Que le trouble, toujours croissant de scène en scène,
 A son comble arrivé, se débrouille sans peine.
 L'esprit ne se sent point plus vivement frappé
 Que lorsqu'en un sujet d'intrigue enveloppé,
 D'un secret tout à coup la vérité connue,
 Change tout, donne à tout une face imprévue."—BOILEAU.

Chap. 4.—The unities.

"Tous les beaux arts ont quelque unité d'objet, source du plaisir qu'ils donnent à l'esprit ; car l'attention partagée ne se repose nulle part, et quand deux objets nous occupent, c'est une preuve qu'aucun des deux ne nous satisfait."—J. J. ROUSSEAU.

Chap. 5.—On the divisions of dramatic pieces.

"Neve minor quinto : neu sit productio actu
 Fabula, quæ posci vult, et spectata reponi."—HORACE.

"Fabula, sive tragica, sive comica, quinque actus habere debet."—ASCONIUS PEDIANUS.

Chap. 6.—Subjects proper to be selected, and

adapted to Ballets ; method of composition ; authors to be studied.

“ La virtù del *ballo* sta nel rimettere in atto le principali e le più vive impressioni che ricevono i nostri sensi.”—Q. VIVIANI.

“ Esso costuma più di affascinare il cuore, che concettizzare alla pensierosa ragione.”—DE VELO.

Chap. 7.—Dramatic action and passion ; poetry of composition.

“ Les passions sont les dieux du théâtre.”—MARMONTEL.

Chap. 8.—Terror rather than horror, is sufficient for any dramatic production ; imitation.

“ Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet ;

Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus.”—HORACE.

Chap. 9.—On the manner of raising and improving a subject ; the *beau idéal*.

“ Il n'est point de serpent ni de monstre odieux

Qui, par l'art imité, ne puisse plaire aux yeux ;

D'un pinceau délicat l'artifice agréable,

Du plus affreux objet fait un objet aimable.”—BOILEAU.

Chap. 10.—On Order.

“ ——— des proportions la savante beauté

A joint la symétrie à la variété.”—DELILLE.

Chap. 11.—On variety and contrast.

“ Jucundum nihil est, nisi quod reficit varietas.”—P. SYRUS.

“ Le contraste nous frappe en de contraire sens ;

Des termes opposés qu'à nos yeux elle étale,

L'imagination mesure l'intervalle.”—DELILLE.

Chap. 12.—Stage effect.

“ C'est là ce qui surprend, frappe, saisit, attache.”—BOILEAU.

Chap. 13.—On character, soliloquies and monologues.

“ Conservez à chacun son propre caractère.

Des siècles, des pays étudiez les mœurs ;

Les climats font souvent les diverses humeurs.”—BOILEAU.

Chap. 14.—On the dramatic moral.

“Se nessun componimento dee essere rettamente accostumato, e sano; ciò si conviene a quelli che debbono essere recitati in pubblico.”—C. GOZZI.

Chap. 15.—On the relation subsisting between music and dancing.

“La musique et la danse ensemblẽ se marient.”—LUCIAN.

Chap. 16.—Scenery.

“Loin les ornemens froids, les détails superflus ;
Tout ce qu'on peint de trop pèse sur le tissu.”—LEMIERRE.

Chap. 17.—On costume.

“La leggiadria del vestirsi, che tanta vaghezza a natural beltade accresce.”—ALGAROTTI.

Chap. 18.—French mimes and composers.

“L'âme veut être émue, et sentir est son sort :
L'inaction pour elle est une lente mort,
Et cette activité, partage de son être,
Au feu des passions elle le doit peut-être.”—DULARD.

Chap. 19.—Italian mimes and composers.

“Les arts imitatifs ôtent à la réalité ce qu'elle a d'odieux, et n'en retiennent que ce qu'elle a d'intéressant. Il suit de là qu'il faut épargner aux spectateurs les émotions trop pénibles et trop douloureuses.”—BARTHELEMY.

Chap. 20.—On the different kinds of Ballets.

“Sua cuique proposita lex, suos decor est; nec comædia in cothurnos assurgit, nec contra tragædia socco ingreditur.”—QUINCTILIAN.

Chap. 21.—On the models and method of studying them.

“Que le sujet choisi soit à la fois connu et convenable.”—ARISTOTLE.

Chap. 22.—The composer or Ballet-master.

“Rapproche les climats, les peuples et les tems,
Réalise la fable et reproduit l'histoire ;
* * * *

Et des feux de son âme embrase tous les cœurs.’—DELILLE.

Chap. 23.—General admonitions.

“Sia vergogna il giacer vile, e sepolto,
E'l risorger sia gloria.”—A GUIDI.

“——— Se tu segui tua stella,
Non puoi fallire a glorioso porto.”—DANTE

“Ne forçons point notre talent,
Nous ne ferions rien avec grâce.”—LA FONTAINE.

Chap. 24.—Programmes or written plots ...Notes.

“Que —— l'action préparée,
Sans peine du sujet aplanisse l'entrée.”—BOILEAU.

PART V.

PROGRAMMES, CONTAINING EXAMPLES OF EVERY SPECIES
OF BALLETS,—PRELIMINARY REMARKS, INNOVA-
TIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

“——— Miroir universel,
Les Siècles reculés, les grands événements,
Tous les faits consacrés dans la fable et l'histoire.”—DULARD.

Titles of Ballets composed by C. Blasis.—Vivaldi, Phædra, Zara, Caligula, Daphnis and Pandrosa, Palmyra, Nero at Baia, Achilles and Deidamia, Othello, Judith, (the three last-named Ballets were composed at the age of 14) Nocturnal Adventures, Dibutade, or the Origin of Painting; Coronis, Demogorgon, or the Genius of the Earth, Ugolino (with a happy catastrophe) Marguerite de Bourgogne, the modern Don Juan, the Youth of Hercules, the taking of Troy, The country Girl in Paris, l'Homme à bonnes-fortunes, Joseph, the Malediction, the Belle Provinciale, the Fête of Parnassus, Pygmalion, Aphrodite, Elina, the Nouveau Seigneur, the loves of Venus and Adonis, Orpheus, Spanish Gallantries, the Pretty Fermière, Leocadia, the Sorceress and the Troubadour, Estrella, or the Arab of the Desert; Rosella, Elisa,

the Fête of the Bucentaur, Echo and Narcissus, the loves of Pergolesi, the Heroes of Ossian, Christopher Columbus, Pandora, Mokanna.

PART VI.

PRIVATE DANCING IN ALL ITS VARIETIES, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF DANCES MOST IN FASHION.

“ Que vos grâces soient naturelles ;

Ne les contrefaites jamais :

Dès que l'on veut courir après,

On commence à s'éloigner d'elles.”—DEMOUSTIER.

New Quadrilles.—In composing the following Quadrilles, the author has departed from the usual course, by introducing more variety into their figures, and by endeavouring, in the disposition of those figures, to convey some idea corresponding with their names, so that the latter may not appear entirely arbitrary and unmeaning. Titles.—L'Aurore, la Folatre, le Calife, les Bacchantes, la Triomphante, le Petit-Maitre, la Coquette, la Jalouse, la Virginie.—The music is by Melles. Virginia and Teresa Blasis. Explanation of plates illustrating private dancing.

“ Les arts sont frères et rivaux.”—LA HARPE.

Conclusion.—The relations existing between Dancing and the Fine Arts are here artistically and esthetically considered; shewing how it is connected with poetry, eloquence, declamation, scenic action, comedy, tragedy, pastoral, the lyric drama, music, painting, and sculpture. This short dissertation is based upon analysis and analogy, and is accompanied by philosophical and critical observations upon all the imitative arts, and serves as another illustration of the Synoptical Table to be found in the present work.

This work was dedicated by the author to his sister Virginia, then *Prima Donna* of the Italian Opera at Paris, and first vocal artiste at the *Académie Royale de Musique*. She afterwards occupied the same brilliant post at the Italian Opera in London, and was triumphantly successful in both capitals.

NATIONAL DANCES.

Prospectus already printed — National Dances still in use in various countries.

“ —————
 Viens à nous, Terpsichore,
 Sous tes pas
 La sagesse est aimable, et se rit du trépas !
 Viens ; ————— et de ton joyeux délire,
 à ton tour
 Illumine les yeux de la beauté qu'inspire
 L'Amour.”

LE CHEVALIER DE CHATELAIN.

Containing a description of the steps, attitudes, costumes, peculiar characteristics, with original music, of the principal National or popular dances, as practised by various classes of society. This description will be accompanied by artistical and philosophical remarks upon the beauties peculiar to each species of dancing, shewing that the true spirit and plan of construction is closely connected with, and derived from, the tastes and habits of the different countries where they were invented. This work, which is the first of the kind that has appeared, will be illustrated and explained by engravings of figures, and accompanied by the original music. It will be divided into two Parts.—The First Part will comprise those graceful, attractive, picturesque and poetic dances of Southern climates, in which the heart indulges without reserve in its emotions, and the various movements are dictated by a glowing imagination. The second part will treat of the dances of Northern countries, where reserve, mixed with elegance and energy, and a kind of restrained gaiety, clearly indicate the character of the people with whom such dances are most in use. In this last-mentioned kind of dancing will be noted all those varieties and shades of difference, which, during a gradual departure from national traits, had been introduced, either from a desire to imitate foreign styles and manners, or by some national event belonging to the history of the country where they appear. This introduction of new and foreign forms in dancing,

produces new tastes, or else they greatly modify those national tastes which had already of a long time existed. It will now appear that this work is calculated to satisfy general curiosity upon such a subject, from the universal and interesting manner in which it treats of an art that is ever delightful, whether shared at the private party, or witnessed in public at the theatre. Remarks will be made upon those charming and celebrated *Danseuses*, who have, with so much talent, transplanted to the theatres the elegancies of polished life, as well as originalities from the country. These traits have been interwoven with so much art into scenic dances, that they have become a principle charm of the Ballet. These personal remarks, or rather biographical notices, will be much extended, and will commence from the Sixteenth century, and be continued to the present time, and to the last New Cachucha, lately danced by Malle. Baderna. Upon the whole, this work will be found both interesting and useful to amateurs, persons of fashion, professors of dancing, to painters and artists, and even to students.

Dances to be treated on.—The Almés, African, American, Auvergne, Angrismène, German, English, Andalusian, Arab, Scotch, Indian, Mazurka, Menuet, Menuet Afandangado, Menuet Allemandado, Sailors', Moorish, Marinara, Misitra, Monteferina, Musette, Quadrilles, Tyrolian, Tripili Trapola, Tarentella, Tuscan, Tambourine, Bayadère, Branle, Bolero, Bohemian, Ballade, Béarnaise, Basque, Biscayan, Breton, Berlinaise, Bourrée, Chica, Contre-Danse, (French) the country dance, Contre-Danse, (Italian) Calabrian, Cotillon, Carolian, Chaconne, Cachucha, Courante, Chansons dansantes, Cossack, Chinese, Ciganska, Cordax, Creolian, Congo, Catalan, Candiote, Dervish, Danish, Fandangó, Folies d' Espagne, Furlane, Flemish, Farandole, Gigue (jig), Gavotte, Guaracha, Gaditana, Gondolière, Gaillarde, Gitana, Greek, Genoese, Hungarian, Hussar, Hornpipe, Huron, Dutch, Iroquois, Lavandarina, Lithuanian, Lombard, Negro, Navarre, Polka, Passe-pieds, Provençale, Pavane, Piedmontese,

Procitana, Passacaille, Pyrrhic (modern Greek) Polish, Portuguese, Prussian, Pastoral, Russian, Ronde, Rigaudon, Sardish, Sabotière, Saltarello, Savoyard, Sauteuse, Swiss, Sicilian, Styrian, Sarabande, Seguidillas Bolerias, Seguidillas Manchegas, Seguidillas Taleadas, Swedish, Saxon, Sarao, Voltes, Venetian, Villanella, Waltz, Russian Waltz, Zapateado, Zorongo, Zingara, Zampognara, Trescone, &c.

The preceding biography of Carlo Blasis, has been extracted from some of the principal periodicals of Europe, as also from certain authors who have composed separate memoirs upon the subject. Of these we have principally made use of that composed by the elegant and talented Locatelli of Venice, and of that by G. Romani, published in his *Galleria Artistica*. We have also introduced many passages from the following sources:—“The Figaro, Milan; the *Galleria Teatrale*, by Velli; the memoirs by Pompeo della Riva; that by Regli in the *Strenna Teatrale*; another by Fabris in the *Rivista Musicale*, Florence; as also from memoirs published at Rome, Naples, Vienna and Madrid; also from the *Esame Frenologico*, by Castle, and one written by Acerbi in the *Biblioteca Italiana*; also those composed by Defendente Sacchi, Bongiovanni, Paradisi, Carta; those too to be found in the *Giornale Teatrale* of Padua, the *Gazzetta* of Pavia, and finally, from certain French and German Journals. The notice upon the Imperial Academy of Dancing at Milan, has been composed from the same sources, as also, the memoirs of Madame Blasis, F. Blasis the elder, and Virginia Blasis. “*Rien n’ est beau que le vrai*,” adds our author.

The following is a more detailed account of the French, Italian, English, German and Spanish journals and periodicals, from which the biographical notice of C. Blasis and his works, have been taken, dating from 1817 to 1847.—*Journal des Débats*, *Journal de Paris*; the *Temps*; the *Constitutionnel*; the *Biblioteca Italiana*; the *Antologia* of Florence; the

Gazzetta di Genova; the Osservatore Veneziano; the Gazzetta di Venezia; the Revue de Paris; the Revue Encyclopédique, Paris; the Figaro, Paris; the Mentor; the Corsaire, Paris; the Mémorial Bordelais; the Mercure, London; the Indépendent, London; the Furet, London; the Vespa, London; the Aurora, London; the Réunion, Paris; the Courrier; the Bulletin Polymathique, Bordeaux; France Théâtrale, Paris; the Critique Musicale, Paris; with various journals of Marseilles, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lyons, &c.; the Gazzettes of Madrid, Lisbon, Pesth, Bologna, &c.; Galignani's Messenger, Paris; the Globe, Paris; the Moniteur des Théâtres, Paris; the Politecnico, Milan; the Cosmorama, Milan; the Rivista Europea, Milan; the Strenna Teatrale, Milan, including 1838 to 1847; the Gazzetta Musicale, Milan; Gazzetta di Lugano; the Annali di Modena e Reggio; Gazzetta di Pavia; the Voce della Verità, Modena; the Teatri, Bologna; the Censore Universale, Milan; the Moda, Milan; the Pirata, Milan; the Indicatore, Milan; the Eco, Milan; the Fama, Milan; the Figaro, Milan; the Corriere della Dame, Milan; the Gazzetta, Turin; the Bazaar, Milan; the Giornale di Teatri, Milan; the Raccoglitore, Milan; the Glissons, Milan; the Gazzetta, Parma; the Wanderer, Vienna; Gazzette, Vienna; the Gazzette, Leipsic; Journals of Rome and Naples; the Revista of Rome; the Gondoliere, Venice; the Giornali of Brescia, Verona, Padua, and Vicenza; with those of Sicily.

In London, C. Blasis has been noticed and reviewed by the following periodicals and papers:—Monthly Review; Quarterly Review; New Monthly Magazine; the Dramatic Magazine; the Foreign Quarterly; the Weekly Review; Gentleman's Magazine; the Athenæum; the Literary Gazette; the Edinburgh Review; Blackwood's Magazine; London Musical Gazette; the Belle Assemblée; the Atlas; the Times; Morning Chronicle; Morning Post; the Court Journal; Spectator; the Age; the Globe; Cerberus; the Morning Herald; &c.

Names of the principal editors of the French Periodical press—Dumoulin, Martainville, Soulié, Dumène, l'Hospital, Guiraud, Le Gallois, Des Champs, Viennet, Roujoux, Dutrouille, Bentigéac, Albites, Coen, Augier, Edmond Géraud, Delaville, Martignac, Chatelain, Mars, Petit, Baron, Castil—Blaze, Pellecat, Caïmi, Léon de Bast, Le Page, De Chape, Lambert, Séville, Laval, &c. Hertmeit, Lichthental, Julien.

English Editors—Wilkinson, Glasscock, Lamb, Taylor, Mason, Clarke, Thompson, Baylis, Campbell, Schnider, Sola, Albites, Smith, Castle, Willis, &c.

Italian Editors—Acerbi, Gironi, Ferrario, Gherardini, Ticozzi, Barbieri, Bettoni, Gioia, Pezzi, Parolletti, Valentino, Paradisi, Bossi, Carta, Bazzarini, Velli, Locatelli, S. Quintino, Martini, Sergent-Marceau, Marchisio, Ritorni, Bongiovanni, Barabani, Aglio, Gazzaniga, Bevilacqua, Spranzi, Dionesi, Defendenti-Sacchi, Cominazzi, L. Romani, G. Romani, Imperatori, Regli, Romani, Lampugnani, Previdali, Boniotti, Pitaro, Solera, F. Romani, Tenca, Lambertini, Piazza, Sartorio, Bartolotti, Rasori, Grassi, Beltrame, sen., Beltrame, jun., Bellini, Malvezzi, Cassi, Zuccagni, Merini, Battaglia, Casamorata, Gabuzzi, Benati, Delle Piave, Lampati, Zini, Cremonesi, Cipro, Calvi, Fabris, Filippo, Tosi, Fiori, Curti, Fanton, Picciarelli, Villani, Pompeo della Riva, G. Berta, Suzzara, &c.

The following Italian writers in prose, amongst whom are some of the above-named, composed separate works on the same subject—Ritorni, Bongiovanni, Paradisi, Gironi, Bazzarini, Velli, Barabani, Michiel, Ticozzi, Defendenti. Sacchi, Bossi, Regli, Castil-Blaze, Castle, Madrolle, Bougran, Sergent, Carta, Gallois, Mayquetz, Léon de Valenza, &c.

Poets who have written of Sig. Blasis' school and pupils. (In Italy, as in ancient Greece and Rome, there exists always an enthusiastic admiration for all the arts and for artists; the latter have no sooner distinguished themselves by their productions, than they are every where treated with honour. The public in that country witness with delight the offerings of

the muses to their favorite, the coining of medals, the execution of busts, the erection of statues, and whatever else is calculated to do homage to talent and genius.)—Picciarelli, Pola, Fanton, Bevilacqua, Aglio, Marchetti, Spranzi, Valmarana, Dionese, Almore, Barbaro, Micheli, Bentigéac, Martelli, Fioccardo, Paradisi, Solera, Betteloni, Rossi, Martin, Bassi, Scribani, Belfranco, Uberti, Curti, Boldrini.

Translators of the various works of M. Blasis—Grini, Velli, Valmarana, Campilli, Gallois, Bournonville, Sacchi, Ticozzi, Schneider, Barton, Audin, Vergnaud, Canevari, Costa, Arnould, Montreal, C. Bossi, Bertoni, Sergent, Lacowitz, Clarke, Ranfagna, Ticozzi, &c.

Draughtsmen, painters, engravers, and sculptors who have assisted in the embellishment of Blasis' works. Draughtsmen and painters—Casartelli, Palagi, Durelli, Goubaud, De' Marchi, Carrer, Carloni, Gavioli, Boucheron, Sommarriva, De Maurizio, Bossi, Bignami, Lucio, Giuliani, Sassi, Pizzarello, with the artists concerned in the "*Code*" and "*Manuel*," and in the English "*Code of Terpsichore*," and "*Young Lady's Book*." Engravers—Rados, Cornienti, Carloni, Casartelli, Rolla, Mantovani, Lavaggi, Banks, and those who engraved for articles that appeared in the two periodicals, the "*Strenna*," and the "*Galleria Artistica*." Sculptors—Pampaloni, Thierry, Campi, Il Fiorentino, and Cali.

A SYNOPTICAL AND CHOROGRAPHICAL TABLE OF DANCING,

SHOWING

THE RELATIONS THAT SUBSIST

BETWEEN DANCING AND THE OTHER IMITATIVE ARTS.

NAMELY,

DESIGN, PAINTING, SCULPTURE, ENGRAVING, POETRY, ELOQUENCE,
MUSIC, DECLAMATION, ARCHITECTURE, THE DRAMATIC ART, &c.



I. DANCING—PROPERLY SO CALLED.

I.

Elements.	Character.
{ Positions. Steps. Attitudes. Groups.	{ Civil. Religious. Military. Theatrical. Mixed.
Design.	Music.
{ Engraving. Painting. Sculpture.	{ Instrumental. Vocal. Rhythmical. Imitative.

II.

PANTOMIME, INCLUDING CHIRONOMY.

ments.	ment.
{ Physiognomy. Gesture. Attitudes.	{ Declamation. Eloquence. Painting.

V.

V. SCENERY.

Elements.	Representing.
{ Scenery. Machinery. Properties. Lighting.	{ Painting. Perspective. Architecture. Sculpture. Carving. Modelling. Dioptries, Optics, Catoptries.

VI.

VI. COSTUME.

Elements.	Representing.
{ Dress. Head-dress. Chaussure.	{ Painting. Sculpture. The whole art of design.

MEMOIR
OF
MADAME A. RAMACCINI BLASIS.

This distinguished artiste was born in Florence, generally accounted the modern Athens, April 10, 1813. Her parents also belonged to the theatrical profession, and were ranked amongst the most celebrated of their time. Finding their daughter, both from her own inclination and from the personal advantages with which nature had endowed her, adapted to succeed in their own art, they had her instructed in the elements of dancing and pantomime. Mademoiselle Ramaccini made her public appearance at a very early age, and caused a great sensation by the display of precocious talent, even in very difficult characters. She had an insatiable desire to excel, and was unwearied in applying herself to all the requisite studies. Her parents having been engaged at the theatre of Vienna, the young *danseuse*, as well as her elder sister Giuditta, a first-rate artiste, accompanied them, and they appeared together. While residing in this splendid capital, the sisters continued their chorographic studies, under the tuition of Messrs. Baptiste and Dupont, and became finished artistes. After having remained some years at Vienna, where they were greatly admired as beautiful dancers and able pantomimic actresses, they accepted engagements for the principal theatres of Germany and Italy; and wherever they appeared, the success of the two young sylphs was brilliant and triumphant. About this time Giuditta, who had only attained her twentieth year, died; she had already earned for herself the title of "the Model," by which name she was known everywhere.*

* We can give no other name to the dancing of Giuditta than "poetical." She danced as the divinities produced by Grecian

The death of Giuditta was a terrible blow for the family of Ramaccini, and a great loss to the profession. All eyes were now turned to her sister, Annunziata, as the only person capable of supplying her loss. She was successively engaged at the theatres of San Carlo, at Naples; Pergola, at Florence; La Scala, at Milan; the Imperial Theatre, at Vienna; Pesth, Turin, Genoa, Rome, Reggio, Senigallia, Modena, Venice, Mantua, Ancona, Bologna, and other cities, in all of which she was universally applauded as a worthy successor to her sister; she had great merit as a pantomimic actress, and first-rate talent as a dancer. Signor Blasis having accompanied his celebrated sister Virginia to Genoa, where she was engaged at the theatre of Carlo Felice, he there became acquainted with the excellent and interesting Annunziata, and greatly admired her merit and exemplary conduct. Being requested to perform for a limited number of nights, he selected Mademoiselle Ramaccini as his partner in some of his own compositions, and divided with her the applause with which they were received. After these performances Signor Blasis gave the young *dansseuse* instructions in his own new system, with which she was already partly acquainted, having studied his

artists would have danced, had they become animated by a Promethean spark. These unrivalled creations having been thus made to live, and move, their every motion would be the personification of grace, elegance, beauty, ease, and sweetness of expression; their gesture would enchant, while their steps would be light as air, and the whole scene would exhibit a kind of celestial harmony of motion.—Such was the dancing of Giuditta Ramaccini. While this fascinating artiste was engaged at Venice, Lord Byron was residing in the same city. Upon coming from the theatre where he had seen Giuditta perform the part of *Juliet*, in the ballet of *Romeo and Juliet*, he said to his friend, the Countess Michieli:—"I have just seen the true history as it is in Porta (the historian of the unhappy lovers), and I have just seen a *Juliet* too, who exhibited all the powerful feeling to be found in Shakspeare, who has made her immortal."—This may be considered as the greatest tribute of praise that Giuditta Ramaccini ever received. The manners of Giuditta were always those of an educated lady; her natural disposition was generous and noble; she had superior natural parts, and bore an unimpeachable character. She had been taught music and drawing, and was an honour to her art.

publications, which were in the hands of all. At the termination of the engagement at Genoa, she became the wife of Signor Blasis, who still continued to give her instruction, till she at length became a consummate artiste in dancing, pantomime and chorography. They both advanced in a brilliant career, till, as has been already mentioned, the accident happened to Signor Blasis at Naples; when, after some fruitless attempts, he was obliged entirely to abandon the active part of his profession. Had this misfortune not have happened, the celebrated couple would have appeared at every theatre of note throughout Europe. Blasis was now obliged to give himself wholly to the composition of Ballets, and he accordingly composed for his wife these following:—*Leocadia—Elina—La Fattoressa—The Adventures of a Night—The Loves of Venus and Adonis*—with some others, together with divertissements, in all of which Madame Blasis gained the greatest applause as an artiste of the most versatile talents; she, in fact, obtained all those theatrical honors with which the public generally load their favourites; such as verses, portraits, coronets, medals, serenades, &c. After a few years of brilliant success, Madame Blasis was appointed, together with her husband, to the post of first professor at the Imperial Academy of Dancing at Milan, as has already been related in the history of that Institution. From having been herself in the first rank of the executive part of the art, she has become the able professor and instructress; and, together with her husband, continues to furnish the first theatres of Europe with principal dancers. At certain periods, Madame Blasis is permitted by the Government to appear at some of the principal cities, such as Genoa, Parma, &c.,* where she is received

* Signor Blasis, having obtained the same favour, repaired to London, where, after having been engaged as composer at Drury Lane, he was appointed to the same situation at the Italian Opera of Covent Garden, a theatre which has obtained the universal admiration this season, (1847) from the number of great artistes engaged by the management.

with all honour as the mistress of her art. The parts in which Madame Blasis produces the greatest effect are those of—Leocadia, the Fée, in the ballet of “The Fée and the Cavalier;” Venus, in “The Loves of Adonis and Venus;” the Lady, in “Buondelmonte;” the Finta Pazza, Proserpina, the Orfanella, the Fattorressa, Virginia; the Lady, in “Cianippo;” and her part in the “Morlacchi,” with some others, all of them parts full of novelty and interest. It may be perceived from the subjects of these ballets, that she undertakes and succeeds in every style—the noble, the pastoral and simple, the pathetic, the anacreontic, the tragic, and in the grand dramatic. In the part of the Fairy, in the “*Fée et le Chevalier*,” and in that of Venus, she proved herself to be a consummate dancer; while in the parts of Leocadia, and the Virginia Romana, she was considered to be unrivalled as a pantomimic actress.

Madame Blasis also filled the post of mistress at the Collegio di San Filippo, an institution for young ladies of elevated rank, at Milan; and to this she was recommended by the Imperial Government. She here distinguished herself by her superior manners and elegance of demeanour, and by the perfection of the system according to which she initiated the young ladies into all the graces of private dancing, together with the manner of saluting or taking leave, of entering a room and of leaving it, with whatever relates to the disposition and management of the person in the higher circles of society, which from their birth they would be in the habit of frequenting. Her pupils in this department of her profession amounted to no less a number than eighty.

The subject of our memoir is also capable of chorographic composition, and has produced pieces of pantomimic action as well as dances, all of which have met with success. She has lately composed for the theatre of La Scala a *Divertissement dansant*, which met with complete success, and was executed by the following pupils of the Academy:—Mesdemoiselles Neri, Citerio, Marra, Thierry and Viganoni, all of them ar-

tistes who have displayed distinguished talent, and will next year become ornaments to the theatres at Naples, Florence, Genoa, Venice and Rome.

The *pas-tableau*, in which the music of the overture to "Semiramide" is put into action and interpreted by dancing, gained for Madame Blasis, who composed it, the highest praise. Every step, attitude and group, is made to express the rythmus, melody and transitions in the original music. Both the composer and those who executed the movement, were called before the curtain. The best professors are those who know how to join theory with practice, and to such an excellent method of instruction Madame Blasis may undoubtedly lay claim.*

M E M O I R

OF

FRANCESCO BLASIS,

THE ELDER.

We shall now devote a few pages to the life of F. Blasis the elder, who is still living; and if Carlo and Virginia have earned any renown in the dramatic world, we may say it is wholly owing to his paternal care in the first instance; for he was their tutor in the musical, that is, the principal branch of their education in childhood and early youth, and afterwards provided them with professors, to whom he consigned them to finish their studies. We give this biographical notice in the anglicised words of D. Fabris, who published it at Florence in a periodical called the '*Rivista Musicale*, 1842, Nos. 26, 27, and 29.

* The pupils who (after those above named) give the greatest indication of future excellence, are--Mlles. Tomassini, Scotti, Gabba, Rossi, Constans, Melsens, Suardi, Terni, Morandi, Pasquali, Marchettini, Dominioni, Boschetti, Frisiani, Bazzi, and Anetta Luisa, Blasis the last a daughter of Sig. and Signora Blasis.

The conversation of an old professor is always a kind of treat; he introduces us to the past, judges of the productions of the present, according to his own knowledge in art, which years have made venerable, and forms an opinion of his contemporaries by comparing them with those that were. He relates the lives and labours of those eminent men whose works, owing to the instability of taste and fashion, have not descended to our times, bearing witness to their talent; and of these he speaks with a kind of filial affection, and esteems them as an honour to his country. His discourse thus becomes interesting for several reasons; while his daily habits are a kind of lesson, presenting a picture of the state of musical art, as it existed in former times, with all its peculiarities and embellishments.

Such a one as we have described is Francesco Blasis, whom it has often been our good fortune to meet. He was born at Naples, in the year 1765, and has consequently been personally acquainted with nearly all the various states of the lyric drama since that time; he must have witnessed its emancipation from the pens of those poets whom the times compelled to seek for subjects in far distant and almost unknown history, when nature presented an aspect very different from the happy dreams of Arcadia. He must also have felt that the musical drama was almost resuscitated upon the appearance of the unrivalled Rossini and Bellini, the sweetest of composers; men who gave new forms to the musical expression of our feelings.

Blasis has tried his talent in every style and department of music. In youth he composed simple and unpretending *burlette*; in more advanced years, serious pieces; and although these latter do not keep the stage, from change of taste in the public, the *burlette* are still performed at Naples. His masses, and other sacred compositions, are still listened to with interest and devotion.

His musical style is formed upon the principles of the old Italian school, and although he resided many

years in France, he always preserved the Italian mode of musical expression, as superior to any foreign forms. "The simplest musical inspirations of that country (Italy), he remarked, have always been my delight; and I prefer that natural melody, which is an instinct of the Italians, to the profound and elaborated harmonies of other countries.

"The Italians of my time," continued he, "were delighted with burlettas; the public mind had been undisturbed by any national reverse during many years of profound peace, and they were accustomed to gaiety; and even in tragic pieces they rejected whatever related to tyranny or death, always preferring pieces that terminate happily. In those times, such composers as Jomelli, Buranelli, Piccini, Sacchini, Trajetta, Guglielmi, Sarti, Anfossi, Paesiello, Cimarosa, Paer, and many others, set the same poem (*libretto*) to music, again and again; this might happen, perhaps, from a dearth of poets, or because Metastasio had just then attained to such a degree of perfection in his beautiful lyrical dramas, that no one could hope to equal him; or it might be, that no other poetical productions were thought worthy of the delightful melodies of the celebrated composers just mentioned; fashion also might be one reason for this, or, perhaps, the composers then loved to exercise their invention in producing new *motivos* and musical phrases better adapted to the same words, to which music had already been adapted. Thus the *Alessandro nelle Indie*, was first clothed with harmony, and adorned with melodies, by Piccini; but one year had scarcely passed away before Sacchini undertook to set the very same poem. But further, the *Demofonte* had been already set by more than ten composers, when Jomelli taking the same subject into hand, adorned it with such music that it was regarded as a master-piece. *Olimpiade*, in which is the air of 'Se cerca—se dice—L'amico dov'è?' was set nineteen times, and I, myself, have played the above air upon the piano varied nineteen times to suit the same words, and every *motivo*, or air, differed from the other, and

every one was admired for truth and novelty of expression.

“ At the time of which I am speaking, works of genius were not easily to be obtained, and every professor belonging to the Conservatories being obliged to betake himself to the chapel for his support, they were all of them compelled to produce a mass, a vespers service, &c., and these pieces were expected to display as much novelty as possible. Such being the case, they were driven to find out new *motivi* (tunes) upon the same words that had been given from age to age to be set to new music; and it was by this means that the genius of those great composers was developed, who afterwards confessed themselves unable to produce recitative, that is, dramatic declamation, and to be ignorant of the true historic feeling belonging to the dramatic situations of the characters, who were made to sing their music.

At the present time, the predominating characteristic of music is not genius but art; nor is it easy to find a composer who can treat the same poem (*libretto*) many different ways, or put various airs to the same words. The only man, perhaps, who has carefully preserved his own natural genius, is the renowned Rossini, who, during a space of twenty years, has produced at least thirty classical operas; but who now, after him, would dare to undertake the re-setting of ‘Semiramide,’ or ‘Otello,’ or the ‘Gazza Ladra,’ or the ‘Barbiere,’ or ‘Mosè,’ or ‘Guglielmo Tell’?

“ I cannot help having compassion on our modern composers. Their subjects are generally unsuitable, while the present method of instruction does not convey a clear idea of the distinct qualities of voices, the knowledge of which is indispensable for the execution of concerted pieces. For the composition of any concerted pieces, it is absolutely necessary to have the aid of these four kinds of voices—a base, tenor, contralto, and a soprano, as our above-named celebrated masters have abundantly shewn. Of this Rossini also has given undeniable proof in the quartet of *Bianca e Faliero*. But now the base is become baritone, if it may be so called;

while the tenor is expected to possess, in addition to its natural compass, certain sharp notes, which are above the register of the contralto. It follows, therefore, that a contralto can no longer exist, and, consequently, no such artistes as Pisaroni, Lorenzani, Mariani, or Cecconi, are now to be found. With respect to the soprano voices, if they are not of the shrillest and highest kind, they are unable to sing the noisy music of the modern school, and the greater part of these last do not reach the age of forty. We now often see that it is sufficient for a singer to have a voice, together with a year's instruction, or perhaps not so much, when he is thought fully prepared to appear in public with the name of *artiste*; but such as these very frequently, instead of being accompanied by the instruments of the orchestra, find it necessary to accompany the instruments.

“There exists also another great defect, which is, that many of our young composers do not habituate themselves to follow closely and philosophically the nature of the subject upon which they are engaged; they do not produce music that expresses exactly and individually, the passions required by the characters and situations of the drama; nor do they give the true sense of the words, and thus the accompanying music is contrary to the sense and sentiment of the poetry.* When, for instance, a singer has to deliver a tragic passage, for what reason should the audience be obliged to listen to a waltz played by the orchestra, or to witness some passage full of love and tenderness, overwhelmed amidst the uproar of brass instruments, or completely stifled by a *tutti* of the whole orchestra, or otherwise spoiled, perhaps by an accompaniment full of scientific and chromatic combinations?

“The orchestra itself is now reduced to the worst condition, by overcharged composition, and by the

* Nothing can be more just than these remarks; they are so natural that they apply almost as much to the poet himself as to the composer; and, let it be remembered, the man who delivers these principles is himself a composer, a profound musician, and an Italian. [Ed.]

astounding noise of wind instruments, the players of which are destroying their lungs, while the audience are completely stupified by these and the tumult of cymbals and drums. Such music may be very well employed in a march, or in a finale, where all the characters sing at once; but in an air, or a *cabaletta*, is it necessary to accompany a singer with keyed trumpets, as if he could not sing in tune without their aid? or in a duet intended to express love, or even hatred, must there be a full orchestra accompaniment? But enough—it seems to please the million, and we must conform.

“What, however, I find it impossible to excuse in our Italian composers is, the labour they bestow in furbishing up foreign compositions, and while thus preparing them for the public, regarding them as models; of this we have many examples. By thus exhibiting foreign productions clothed in our own musical idiom, it must appear that we are still in the infancy of the art, or that the genius of Italy has abandoned her native land. Did not such men as Hasse, Gluck, Graun, Nauman, Shuster, Misilveck, Marelowitz, Sterkel, Winter, Girowetz, Weigel, and that surpassing genius Mozart, who is the glory of German music, did they not in the last century come to Italy for the purpose of studying dramatic expression, and to drink, as it were, at the true Italian fount of melody? And did not Grétry, the reformer of the old school of music in France, study in Rome the method of setting to music the words intended to express sentiments, passions, and dramatic situations of characters. The great Haydn studied the classical works of Italy, and did honour to the melodious swans of modern Ausonia—what need of higher praise?”

Blasis, being descended from noble parentage, was destined to an elevated career. His parents made choice of the naval profession, and he began at an early age a nautical education; and being sent to a royal college, he went through the usual routine

of studies for persons destined to such a vocation. Having completed his sixteenth year, he left the college, and was placed on board a Neapolitan frigate, commanded by Don Pasquale Borrás, his maternal uncle, a Spaniard of rank, a knight of Malta, and an admiral in the service of King Ferdinand. But the antipathy which Blasis felt for the sea, soon determined him to resign his post, and having done so he immediately devoted himself to the study of music, of which he was passionately fond, and he at length attained to honorable distinction in that art.

He now, though not without great opposition on the part of his family, entered the celebrated Academy of *St. Maria di Loreto*, which was then under the direction of Fenaroli, who succeeded Durante. Blasis became a great favorite of the *Maestro*, and under his affectionate tuition studied with pleasure and ease his *partimenti* on fugues, figured base, &c., a work which has not yet been surpassed, and which was universally adopted by the musical profession as a production, of its kind, without any equal. Fenaroli, however, not entirely satisfied with his pupil's progress, and diffident of his own system, caused young Blasis to study the *temi* of Durante, Feo, Leo, Contumaci and others, and then advanced him to counterpoint.

It may appear extraordinary, that six years of unceasing labour were judged to be necessary before Blasis made trial of his own talents in composition, but, as he told me, "The celebrated masters of the last century began first by teaching the rudimental notes representing sounds, and the scales in the two *modes*, major and minor; after that the discords, then the manner of preparing and resolving them, the *salti* or the regular movements; the *basso legato* or slurred base; the semitone base; the *rivolti*; the harmonic circles; the manner of transposing from one tone to another, with respective modifications; the en-harmonic transpositions, with whatever relates to harmony. To all the theoretical principles the masters attached practical passages, composed and explained by themselves,

according to their own manner, but always in perfect accordance with fundamental principles and laws. The student having executed all the practical matter upon the harpsichord (now it would be the piano,) and having repeatedly proved that all these primary lessons, were well impressed upon his mind, he was exercised in the study of the figured base, upon passages from various classical composers, without forgetting, however, to repeat frequently the preceding lessons. The *partimenti* of Leo, Feo, Scarlatti and Fenaroli were those that were most generally studied, and particularly those of Fenaroli—which I do not notice because he was my esteemed master—but because the public also preferred them, and they are indeed very beautiful, while his great work upon Practical Harmony has immortalized him. He has there treated the subject without any *verbiage*, as the French term it; he has explained it by examples composed by himself.

“Many learned men have very well interpreted the system of harmony; as D’Alembert, Rousseau and Roux, after whom it was completely developed by Rameau; but all these have treated it so as to be understood only by those who have been already initiated into this noble art; but beginners require elementary principles, before attempting to comprehend dissertations upon musical science in general. Consequently, the best treatise upon the subject must always be that of Fenaroli, which cannot be too highly praised; and any attempt to write anything new upon the same subject, would only be augmenting the number of musical works to no purpose, and confusing the minds of students; while the only result would be a jumble of theory and practice, leading to no useful end.

“When the pupil had been well exercised in the works above mentioned, he should again practice all that he has already played, causing 2, 3, 4, and 5 parts, and even more, to be sung upon the same base. After this, he passed on to base exercises furnished by the master himself, or composed by the students, and this practice was called *Disposizioni a più parti*, intended

to teach the *imitative*, and to prepare the way for fugues. Then followed the fugue-exercise in many parts, and in various styles, and this was done upon fugues by Scarlatti, Leo, Sala, Contumaci, Tarantino, Fenaroli, Santucci and others; and thus the different subjects and systems might be known before passing on to the *canoni*.

“This was the method in which musical studies were then pursued; the course of instruction was indeed a long one, but it was one that conducted the pupil into the depths of the art. After these practical exercises, students passed on to the *ideal*. Professors taught the manner of composing church music according to different styles; then serious, tragic, and comic compositions for the theatres; keeping up a clear distinction amongst the three kinds, and taking the most particular care that the young composers should give the proper meaning of the words, and confine themselves strictly to a careful and faithful interpretation of dialogue, character and situation.

“In the last century, the art of singing was carried to the highest point of perfection, and the singers of that time were, and will always be, considered as the most classic models. And at the present moment, our best and greatest singers are those who have preserved, by tradition, the method of the old Italian school. At that time every singer of either sex kept to his or her own particular department, whether buffo or serious, secular or sacred. The voice was considered as an instrument, and it was thought necessary to educate it as such, each according to its particular quality and extent.

“The professors of vocal music began with the base notes; long and sustained (*tenuto*) at first *pianissimo*, then gradually increased in volume and power, till they attained the *forte*; and the voice was then made to return in the same manner, till it arrived at the point where it began. After this, the whole scale of natural notes which the singer's voice contained, was gone through, and the *la* in alto was not exceeded, except by the

soprani. The entire scale was then introduced, with all its tones and modifications the time observed being generally *largo*. Then came the *salti* (skips of intervals) movements of 3^a, 4^a, 5^a, 6^a, 7^a, 8^a, 9^a, and 10^a, ascending and descending, and this exercise was required to be executed in the major and minor *mode*, according to the extent and quality of the voice; after this the scale of semitones, and always in *adagio* time; this being completed, the student was exercised on the scales, in all the tones; both in major and minor modes, and in quick time, as quick as the student had power to perform it; then the *salti*; afterwards the semitones; always taking care that the learner did not scream, howl, whine, or strain his voice; which defects are but too palpable in the style of many young artistes.

“ At this period the pupil was exercised in the shake upon two notes, at the distance of three tones, which will necessarily consist of one entire, and two semitones; afterwards the shake upon two tones, which consist of a semitone major; then the *mordente* of two, three, four, or more notes; after that, the *volatine* (*roulades*), ascending and descending; then the *salti* (leaps of the voice) in 4^a minor and major; and now they entered upon the great scale of long and short *arpeggios*. Thus everything was made to contribute to the formation of the perfect singer, and the consummate instrumental player; but such perfection cannot be attained without constant practice. The course, as before observed, may perhaps appear long and tedious, but we did not wish to send forth an artist who sings false. The next, and perhaps the most important, division of the whole course, consists of the rules and regulations of declamation or recitative; in the course of which the artistes of former times took so much pains, as it is the truest means of conveying the words to be sung. Our ancestors (the Italians) studied musical declamation by means of recitative, for in those times the recitative was accompanied by the base alone, for which reason the words of the singer could be clearly understood; his voice was left at full liberty, and attained thus to a per-

fect style of musical declamation. But now, according to modern taste, the most interesting part of the drama is neglected ; that in which, very probably, is contained the nucleus of the catastrophe, sometimes expressed by two or three soliloquies, which being totally expunged or imperfectly understood by the composer, the character is often placed in a false position."

Having completed the course of his musical studies, Blasis began to display his own talents by the composition of sacred vocal music ; and afterwards, according to the fashion of the schools, where scholars are made to compose *Philipics* and *Catalinics* (if we may be permitted the last word), he composed various pieces from the *Didone* ; that is, upon the words of *Metastasio's* poem, which had already been set to music by the most celebrated composers, many times over. His production was thus obliged to undergo a comparison with those that had already appeared upon the same subject ; by this means, the beauties, failings, and faults were immediately apparent and pointed out to the young student.

In 1784 he left the Academy with the title of *Maestro*, and soon after gave his first piece to the public ; it was entitled, "*Il Geloso Ravveduto, o sia I Pazzi*," a burletta, which was not only well received, but obtained for Blasis an invitation to Venice ; where, having become director of the Conservatory of the *Ospedaletto*, he composed the two Latin oratorios of "*Abimeleck Abnone e Proditus*" and "*Mulier Thecui*." He afterwards became director of the Conservatory of the *Mendicanti* at Venice, and, while there, produced a very splendid *Miserere*. But he did not confine himself to the composition of oratorios, for at this time he wrote for the theatre of St. Samuele in the same city, "*Arminio*," a serious or tragic opera, abounding in deep feeling and musical beauties. For the theatre of St. Moisè, he produced the *Burbero Benefico*, which was well received, and reproduced in successive seasons.*

* Sacchini, about the year 1780, was chosen Maestro to the Conservatory of the *Ospedaletto*, in which situation he gave complete

But times were now changed—a man (Napoléon) favoured by fortune, had arisen to dominion, and, guided by his genius, whether fatal or fortunate for Italy it is hard to decide, destroyed a mass of power which the wisdom of man had erected, and time had consolidated. Venice fell, and the victor assigned her as a compensation to those who had submitted to the new forms of government he had introduced and established. Blasis was now about to return to Naples, when he was invited over to England, with the offer of presiding over the Opera in London.

The French, by means of vaunts and promises, had roused the people against the existing state of things, and had instilled into them a desire of change, which became rooted. In the meantime the attempt to conquer Egypt had diverted the attention of Napoleon to other regions, where he led the flower of the French army. During these events, a fearful reaction took place in Romagna and in the kingdom of Naples, and such were the scenes of tumult and destruction, that people of peaceful habits were glad to seek for safety in other countries, however great the sacrifice. For these reasons Blasis accepted with pleasure the invitation to England, and having bade adieu to his home and family, embarked. But at this time the sea was as unsafe as land, and the vessel in which he sailed was soon captured by a French pirate, and he amongst others, was carried prisoner to Marseilles. Notwithstanding the unsettled and tempestuous state of those times, France was then governed by men of ability, and persons of genius were still held in respect by

satisfaction by his honourable efforts. Having departed for France, the post remained vacant for a length of time, the duties belonging to it being fulfilled by certain under-professors, until another principal should be elected, and in 1784, Blasis was appointed to the post; he was then not more than nineteen years of age, and it was no small honour to him to be chosen at such an age to succeed such a composer as Sacchini. Sacchini resided in England nine years, and it is recorded that his operas amount to no less a number than eighty; he studied under the celebrated Durante, of whom Blasis also is a disciple.

them; consequently, when it became known that Blasis was a composer, he was allowed to go at large in the city of Marseilles. Like a man who is satisfied with any spot in any land, provided peace be there, he submitted to his fate and exclaimed — *Hæc est requies mea* — but separated as he was from all his friends, and deprived of any prospect for the future, he was soon threatened by the approach of want, and therefore began to employ himself in his profession. Like many other exiles in those times, he was glad to turn to account whatever talents he might possess, and accordingly began to give lessons in singing and counterpoint. By this means he gradually acquired pupils, wealth and fame; and feeling a desire to be reunited to his family, he caused his aged father, wife and children, to come to him at Marseilles.

While residing here, and assiduously attending to the progress of his pupils, he did not neglect the education of his own children. War, in the meantime, had become almost the sole occupation of the people, their thoughts were employed on nothing else, while multitudes of young men were snatched from their homes to certain destruction, which attended them in distant countries. This caused parents to watch very cautiously over their offspring, regarding them as victims destined to be sacrificed to the glory of the great man. Hence fathers employed every means to turn their sons' inclinations from the fatal profession, urging them to make choice of some employment suitable to their capacity, to preserve them from the much dreaded conscription. Blasis, in common with others, being well aware of this state of things, and at the same time greatly attached to his children, determined to make choice of a theatrical profession for his eldest son Carlo, and accordingly had him initiated into the art of Dancing, to which he appeared inclined, at the same time not neglecting Literature and the Fine Arts. His daughter Teresa was instructed in vocal music and was taught the Piano.

Tranquillity being now in some measure restored,

by the same powerful hand that made Europe tremble from side to side, Blasis, without being permitted to return to his own country, was allowed to reside in any part of France. In consequence of this, in the year 1811, he repaired to Bordeaux, a city in which theatrical art was much patronized. Here his son raised great expectations as a dancer, while Blasis himself found employment for his own talents, in teaching the various branches of musical art, and in the composition of original works.

A gentleman of the name of Barincou, having written a *libretto* in French, to which he gave the universal title of "*the Poem*," wished to have it set to music; the subject was the mythological one of "*Omphale*." In France at that time, as in Germany now, that which in Italian Opera is called *recitative*, was simply spoken as prose, or it was altogether omitted, as is now done by many singers; but Blasis set the whole accurately, adapting accompaniments, and introducing airs according to the characters, situations, and passions to be described, and by so doing, awakened a kind of storm of applause. He endeavoured, moreover, to produce entire unity in his music, and, as had been done by many celebrated composers, kept down his *motivi* (melodies), in order that a general character might predominate, calculated to affect the feelings by truth of expression. The public were struck with admiration to see an Italian affix so just a musical interpretation to the words of a language not his own, and adapt Italian melodies to French poetry, which is by nature so deficient in harmony.

A few years after, the same poet, in 1817, wrote a piece which he entitled "*Achille*," and requested the same composer to embellish it with his music. Blasis had composed an overture for "*Omphale*," which had given great satisfaction, so that expectation with respect to this opera, was much raised. To prove himself a man of some talent, he was resolved to compose for this piece an overture or symphony, which should

contain all the most prominent and important passages to be found in the opera, and thus present the audience with an abridgment of the whole piece. The book of the words contained also directions for a Ballet, and so anxious was he to preserve a uniform style in the music throughout, that he was resolved to compose the Ballet music also. Upon the whole, his productions gave such complete satisfaction, that he was universally elected a member of the Academy of Bordeaux, and of the Society of the Museum, and this at once introduced him to the most learned composers and principal artists of that city. Being at length chosen president of that department to which he belonged, as was customary, he was obliged to deliver an introductory discourse, and he took advantage of this opportunity to expatiate upon the theory of music in general, and upon harmony; together with a method of instruction more clear and simple, and less pedantic than that which prevailed.

This discourse was so well composed, and contained things of so much importance, that those who were present determined to have it printed, that the public in general might benefit by a knowledge of its contents. The professor, however, modestly declined, nor could the solicitations of certain printers who were interested in its publication, overcome his objections; for he observed, that after what had been written by composers of the last century, he felt convinced that nothing very useful or essential could be added. After this he produced various overtures or symphonies as they are otherwise termed; amongst these, the most admired was that of "Jason and Medea," many times performed at the Great Theatre, Bordeaux, and at all the public academies.

While the illustrious Canning was residing at Bordeaux, he invited Blasis to give some musical instruction to his daughters. After the lesson, Canning with his family frequently entered into learned discussions upon the arts, and more particularly that of music. Upon this subject, Blasis conversed not only as a

professor, but also more generally and as a philosopher, and, amongst other things, avowed his conviction of the powerful effect that music was capable of producing upon the physical and mental qualities of man, and confuted those who were of an opposite opinion, both by theoretical arguments, and actual experience. Mr. Canning supported this opinion of the composer, and Blasis confirmed his assertion by facts.

About this time M. P. Pierre, a chief commissioner of police, at Bordeaux, was afflicted with deep melancholy and oppression of mind; all medical assistance had proved ineffectual. M. Blasis who was in the habit of visiting the house of M. Pierre, observing the symptoms of his malady, was convinced that it was entirely mental. One day he called and begged to be allowed to see the sick man, at a time when he was suffering greatly, which was granted. He entered the room without being perceived, and, placing himself at the piano, he began preluding in every key, when he observed that M. Pierre grew gradually calm, and listened with satisfaction. M. Blasis then executed some entire pieces; sometimes changing the melody entirely, and at others varying the rythm, according to the effect that he remarked was produced upon the patient. When he had finished, M. Pierre again fell into his dejection; upon this, Blasis again began to play, and M. Pierre again regained his spirits, and felt relief. However, by continued repetitions of this treatment, he slowly but permanently recovered, and in the space of a few weeks he was perfectly cured. This cure, which appears very much to partake of the marvellous, in the meantime, gained for the musician no small share of honour.

Mr. Canning appeared to be delighted with this anecdote, and the happy result of the medico-musical treatment, and was very witty and agreeable upon the defeat of the adverse party. C. Blasis, who is profoundly skilled in his art, and well acquainted with all its mysterious influences, while at Paris, applied the same

remedy with the same happy result, in the case of a renowned general of the Empire, who suffered from mental oppression. At Marseilles also, when on a visit at the houses of general Cervoni, one of Napoleon's favourites, and of the prefect M. Despernon, he gave a proof of his knowledge and experience in this matter, to several persons who were admitted to their parties. M. Blasis is fully convinced that there are in music, certain sounds and chords capable of producing by turns, love and hatred, anger and affection, proud and abject feelings, rudeness and elegance, courage and cowardice, and, in fact, all the passions with every virtue and every vice.

Blasis now repaired to Paris, being obliged to superintend the appearance of his Son at the *Grand Opéra*. Here he was enabled to devote himself entirely to the instruction of his two daughters. Teresa, the elder, became a celebrated pianist, while his younger daughter, Virginia, as a vocalist, afterwards became the delight of Italy and of Europe, though unfortunately but for a short period.

Beginning to feel the effects of increasing years, Blasis, oppressed by the losses he had suffered, wished to re-visit his native country, and the bright sun and beautiful skies of Italy seemed to offer him consolation in his affliction. His wife had died at Paris, and his son Carlo had met with a misfortune which obliged him to abandon the active part of his profession, and he was determined to return to Italy, as being the object of his dearest wishes. But new sorrows awaited the respected professor. After having witnessed the successful career of his beloved daughter, Virginia, in 1838, to his great grief, she died, after twelve days only of great suffering, from a disorder in the chest. While labouring under this heavy stroke of affliction, Blasis established himself at Florence, with a resolution no more to leave a spot where the remains of his beloved daughter repose. Here he continues to follow his musical occupations, and finds a kind of

soothing pleasure in revisiting the tomb that contains what was once so dear to him.*

A CATALOGUE OF MUSIC,
COMPOSED BY F. BLASIS, THE ELDER,
BETWEEN 1784 AND 1840.

S A C R E D.

- A Mass in F., for four voices, with organ and orchestra.
A Magnificat in F.
A Dixit in F.
A Mass in R., for two choruses.
A Motetto in A for four voices with solos.
A mass in A.
A Dixit in B b.
A Credo in F.
A Mass in F minor.
Various pieces for one, two, or three voices.

ORATORIOS IN LATIN.

- Absalom.
Mulier Thecuitis.
Abimeleck.

DRAMATIC OPERAS. (*Italian.*)

- Adone e Venere.
L'Isola di Bellamarina.
L'Arminio.
La Didone.
Lo Sposo in Bersaglio.
Il Geloso Ravveduto.
La Zulima.

* Blasis has given vent to the sorrows that embitter his latter years, by the composition of a sacred *Cantata* (Anthem) for three voices; the words are by a person of rank; and for the anniversary of his daughter's death, a *Pregghiera* for four voices, with the chorus "*Venite, adoremus.*" But, as it contained parts for female voices, it could not be performed. Besides being Member of many Academies, he was created a member of the council of the Philharmonic Society at Florence.

Il Burbero di buon cuore.
La Donna Capricciosa.

DRAMATIC OPERAS. (*French.*)

Omphale }
Achille } Opera-Ballets.
Almanzor, or L'épreuve de la Jeunesse.
Dibutade, or L'Origine du Dessin.
Méprise sur Méprise.
Le Triomphe de la Paix.
La Fête du Village.

SCENAS AND CANTATAS. (*French.*)

Psyché.
Iphigénie en Tauride.
Le Jugement de Pâris.
Cantatas upon the Death of Grétry.
Apollon et les Muses.
Invocation à l'éternel.
Airs for the Trois Sultanes.
Romances (Thirty).
Quartett for Wind Instruments.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

12 Overtures for a Full Orchestra.
3 Quartetts for two violins, tenor and base.
4 Sestetts.
A Grand Trio for the Piano Forte, tenor and base.
Concerto for the Piano with Orchestral Accompaniments.
Sonatas, Capriccios and Preludes for the Piano.

BALLET MUSIC.

Daphné et Pandrose.
Achille et Briséis.
Ermann et Lisbeth.
Phèdre.
Pas seul—deux—Terzetti, &c.

STUDIES IN VOCAL MUSIC.

Singing Exercises.
Solfeggios for many voices.
Vocal Divertimenti, or Soprano Solos, the words from

Metastasio, with accompaniments for the Piano, dedicated to the composer's two daughters, Teresa and Virginia, 1820.

Studies for the Piano-forte.

Studies for the Tenor.

A Theoretical and Practical Treatise on figured-base accompaniment, or *Partimenti*, for learning harmony, modulation, and the *harmonic circles*, with examples.

A Cantata for three voices and a full orchestra—words by the Marchese F., composed at Florencè, 1838, upon the death of the composer's daughter Virginia.

Venite Adoremus. A Preghiera for four voices and chorus; the words by Sig. N. upon the death of Virginia Blasis.

MEMOIR

OF

VIRGINIA BLASIS.*

“Così trapassa al trapassar d' un giorno,
Della vita mortale il fiore e il verde.”—TASSO.

[The following biographical notice of Virginia Blasis, written a few months after her death, is extracted from a periodical work published at Milan and entitled the “*Strenna Teatrale Europea*.” As singer and actress, she had attained to the highest rank, while, in private life, she bore a character of unimpeachable worth and virtue, and was greatly and universally esteemed. Her brilliant career was, however, suddenly arrested by the hand of death, and in the flower of her age. This

* Note of the Editor of the *Strenna*—“Amongst the many biographical notices devoted to the memory of this excellent *cantatrice*, I have made choice of the above, not only on account of its general correctness, but because I am thus enabled to prefix many notes which render it more complete. In the meantime, I take this opportunity of saying, I am delighted with the spirit that prevails in all the accounts, all uniting in admiration of the talents and private character of the deceased lady. Truth has its worshippers even in this world.”

notice, it appears, was written a few months only after her death, and therefore contains expressions of much warmth, representing in lively colours the general grief that then (1839) prevailed throughout the city of Florence, where she died.]

STRENNA EUROPEA, MILAN, 1839.

“Let us weep ! for Virginia Blais is no more ! Thus, at the foot of the Appenine hills, a powerful gust suddenly uproots the noble oak, flourishing in green and robust youth, and forces it with all its leafy honours, into the turbid current of the Arno, whose murmurs might seem to lament the untimely fall. The sudden removal of Virginia has something in it almost supernatural, so recently did she appear before us, giving a second life to the characters she represented ; it may be said that she fell amid triumph and applause. Thus, in ancient times, if we may be allowed the comparison, did the victorious gladiator sink amid the shouts of the circus. Like Malibran, whose inspirations were extinguished in a moment two years since, so was Virginia snatched away from the scenes of her triumphs, and in the flower of her age ; destroyed perhaps by the corroding effect of genius upon the physical powers—

“E compie sua giornata innanzi sera.”

(And day had passed before the eve began.)

It was thus that the incomparable Raphael perished immaturely ; as also that extraordinary genius Antonio Allegri ; and to these may be added that vocal wonder, Malibran, with her that we now lament, and to whose memory we now devote these lines. You, whose hearts are filled with a kind of adoration for the beautiful, will not be wanting in respect and admiration for genius, and knowing that genius is too often attended by a kind of fatality, you will readily join us in our lamentation.

Virginia Blais was born beneath the pure skies of Provence, a climate bearing a close resemblance to that of Italy, at Marseilles, in August, 1804. Her father, F. Blais, is an Italian, and member of the Conservatory at Naples, and still highly esteemed as a composer and professor. Her mother was named

Vincenza Coluzzi. At a very early age, she was instructed in the art of dancing, in which her brother, Carlo, became so celebrated; but after a few years, it being observed that the child began to pour forth some very brilliant soprano notes, and that, moreover, she learned to sing an air, with a kind of intuitive facility, her friends changed their intentions, and upon her reaching the age of ten years, they decided upon having her educated as a vocalist. In consequence of this, her father, an able professor and profound musician, together with her sister Teresa, an excellent pianist, undertook to give her musical instruction. They trained her voice with unwearied care; and her lessons consisted of vocal and instrumental music, to which were added instructions in dramatic action. Having been much exercised in this last branch of her education, she did not fail to find opportunities of reciting both in French and Italian, which was done before a select party of amateurs; her brother Carlo acting as her guide and companion, in whatever related to gesture or dancing. Virginia heartily seconded the intentions of her friends, who now perceived in her an untiring application to study, which was aided by a quick comprehension, united to great resolution and perseverance, with a decided inclination for the theatre. As soon as Virginia had attained the age of fifteen, Blasis, accompanied by his family, returned without delay into Italy, in order to superintend her first appearance, which, after the necessary arrangements were completed, took place at Piacenza, her first character being in the *Sposa Fedele*, by Pacini, and next to this she sang and enacted the *Barone di Dolsheim*, by the same composer; and afterwards in Mercadante's *Elisa e Claudio*: she thus sustained three characters of very different kinds, and obtained universal applause both as a singer and an actress, in parts which required in an equal degree both vocal and histrionic talents. Never, perhaps, was the old proverb more perfectly exemplified than in this case. *Chi ben comincia è alla metà dell' opera.*—(What is well-begun is half done.) Virginia went through the trying scenes of her noviciate

of first attempts with perfect pleasure and complete success; while the continual improvement she manifested at Ferrara, Ravenna and Verona, was quite marvellous. In Verona she first attempted the Opera Seria, by sustaining the characters of *Didone*, *Palmira* and *Gabriella*, and such was the excellence of her dramatic declamation, expression of face, and dignity of action, that she appeared admirably fitted to represent tragic characters of deep pathos. She afterwards entered into short engagements at Padua, Vicenza, Bergamo, and Brescia, these cities striving with each other for the possession of the rising young artiste. At Turin, Genoa, and Rome, she met with the most brilliant reception, delighting the audience when she interpreted the muse of comedy, and producing the most powerful effects when she entered the confines of tragedy. Having now become of first-rate importance in Italy, where music hath established her dominion, Virginia crossed the Alps, and for two entire years she was the ornament and support of the Italian Opera at Paris, where she gained fresh honours in a competition with other able artistes, by undertaking parts in the masterpieces of Rossini,* in which others of great talents had already triumphed. About this time she also appeared at the Royal Academy of Music in the same capital, and sang in the *Vestale* of Spontini, the *Assedio di Corinto* and the *Mosè*, which great musical productions Rossini had re-embellished for the French theatre. Here, surrounded by the most celebrated professors, her reception was splendid, and she was as much applauded for her dramatic action, as for her vocal talents.

The *Vestale* of Spontini presents the finest opportunity conceivable for the display both of vocal and histrionic attainments—the passion that devours the unhappy recluse, the terrible consequences, and the dreadful termination—all these circumstances belonging to the piece are treated by a masterly hand; the design is true, and the colours are powerful. Mdllc.

* The operas of this great composer in which she more particularly distinguished herself, were those of *Semiramide*, *Otello*, the *Barbiere*, *Matilda di Chabran*, and the *Gazza Ladra*.

Blasis was particularly partial to this character, and whenever she performed it, was received with a tumult of applause, and never in a more marked manner than in the year that preceded her death. The most rigid critics on theatrical matters agreed unanimously that in this splendid part, the vocal actress surpassed herself. And in the character of Norma, whose heart is torn with a similar unhappy passion, our artist gained equal applause, from the powerful picture she presented. Chatelain, who was editor of a paper entitled the *Panorama of London*, speaking of the performance of Norma, observes "The principal character in this Opera was confided to Mdlle. Blasis, and that able artiste went through her task with that rare talent which has every where caused her to be received with unmixed delight. Mdlle Blasis passes from the comic to the serious with extraordinary facility, and is equally successful in both departments, which makes her a valuable member of any theatrical company. Her style and manner in those parts requiring genteel and lady-like demeanour, are excellent; in more elevated characters, she assumes, with equal ease, a lofty bearing and majesty of deportment. In the present instance, the Norma of Mdlle. Blasis was deservedly triumphant. —"King's Theatre, 1837." (*Panorama—London and Paris.*) Whenever a part was assigned to Mdlle. Blasis that she liked, and that was more adapted to her powers, that enthusiasm was awakened within her, without which indeed we cannot hope for success, she became really great, and rose to a level with the loftiest conceptions of the poet and the composer.*

* The following writers have often made her the subject of their praise, both in verse and prose. Marchetti, Galloni, Scribani, Branciforti, Fanton, Barabani, Aglio, Rossi, Pola, Martin, the two Beltrami's, Fossombroni, Rossi of Florence, F. F. of Genoa, XXX of Mantua, Rabbi of Turin, Léon de Bast, Velli, Locatelli, Lampato, the two Romani's, Comminazzi, Regli, Prividali, Castil-Blaze, Wilkinson, Lichental, Fabris, Berta, Albites, Sola, Petit, Smith, Glascock, Mason, Battaglia, Sergent, Marceau, Madrolle, Malvezzi, Pezzi, Barbieri, Mars, Fiori, Tosi, Hogarth, &c.

The following painters, engravers and sculptors have produced her figure in various ways—Casartelli, De Marchi, Sommariva, Cornienti, Mantovani, Bankes, Bignami, Goubaud, Durelli, Carloni,

Shortly after this, she quitted France, and arrived in London, where her name soon became the great attraction at the King's Theatre (now Her Majesty's Theatre.) While here, she was equally successful in *Semiramide*, *Desdemona*, *Norma*, *Anna Bolena*, *Alaide*, *Matilde*, *Ninetta*, *Caterina di Guisa*, *La Pastorella* and *Scaramuccia*. But in the *Gazza Ladra*, she created a sensation till then unknown; her performance in that inexpressibly affecting scene, where she bids adieu to her father, was truly heart-rending; but afterwards, when the part passed into the hands of others, the same scene, for the want of proper feeling, passed away almost without being observed. During the tumultuous popular meetings that took place in Scotland and Ireland, while she was in those countries, the charm of her singing may be said to have softened the asperity and strife that then prevailed, into something like a calm.* Not satisfied, however, with her various triumphs in her own more peculiar sphere, Virginia resolved to make an attempt on the national stage in London; for the union of Italian melody with the comparatively rough sounds of the English language was then a delightful novelty. The applause was universal, she appeared

Correri, Boucheron, Cali, Ballangy, Minasi, Bell, Smith, Giuliani, Campi, Thierry, Pampaloni, &c.

Ballangy produced a lithograph portrait of Virginia soon after her death. Cali, the celebrated sculptor attached to the court of Naples, having nearly completed his grand group of the Rape of the Sabine Virgins, and not being satisfied with the form of the hands in some of the figures, studied from those of our artiste, which were perfectly beautiful. The same sculptor, who was also a painter, produced a very remarkable portrait of Mdlle. Blasis. But one of the most beautiful portraits is that in oil, in the Academy of Music at Bologna, representing Mdlle. Blasis in the character of the *Donna del Lago*. Thierry, the sculptor at Milan, who produced the busts of Mons. and Madme. Blasis, is now employed upon a statue of Virginia, in the character of *Norma*. The model for this statue was universally admired at the public exhibition of Brera at Milan.

* It is not very clear to what our Italian Editor may here refer, or in what way the eminent vocalist may have calmed these same meetings—*radunanze*—but so stands the text. [ED.]

in fact, like some bright star breaking through the dark cloudy atmosphere of the English horizon. National prejudices were for a while laid aside, and in the periodicals and public papers Mdlle. Blasis was compared to the celebrated *Miss Kelly* in her comic parts, and to *Mrs. Siddons* in the tragic, both which actresses are, and with good reason, regarded as models.* It must be clear that no praise could surpass this, of comparing the young singer, for her dramatic action, to the two most celebrated actresses of the modern English stage.

But her attachment to the beautiful skies and the sweet language of her native country, soon decided Mdlle. Blasis to return to Italy, where further triumphs awaited her. Upon her arrival she was joyously received at the Fenice in Venice, at Genoa, Turin, Bologna, and Florence, where she was regarded by the public as one of the principal supports of high art in the lyric drama. She now devoted herself entirely to the study of tragic parts of the first class; and in *Norma*, *Beatrice di Tenda*, and the *Pirata*, she was considered to be without a rival. Crowned with additional wreaths of triumph she again visited the banks of the Thames, and was again received with universal delight; the praise bestowed upon her was, in fact, very general throughout the vast metropolis, being every where regarded as *the favourite singer (la prediletta cantante)*. Encouraged by public desire, she now attempted the part of *Anna*, and also that of *Zerlina* in *Don Giovanni*, a bold undertaking, requiring the opposite qualities of the severe tragic style for the one, and the gay and brilliant for the other. The number of her characters being greatly increased, em-

* Without stopping to enquire from whence our editor obtained his information, we shall only observe that his estimate is right; these two great geniuses were certainly adored by the English nation. But it further appears that if poor Mdlle. Blasis had lived that she might, at least, have attained to Siddonian renown in her native lyric drama, which, in a moment of generous excitement, was accorded to her by the journalists of that time. [ED.]

bracing the serious, semi-serious or melodramatic, and the comic or buffo; she was indefatigable in her studies.* She entered heartily into the feelings of whatever character she assumed, and triumphed as much by the beauty and propriety of her dramatic action, as by her vocal talent.†

Mdlle. Blais performed the part of Matilde, in the opera of *Matilde di Shabran*, to perfection. It was on this account that the piece was revived and re-produced in Italy, at Paris, and at London; the difficulties, both vocal and dramatic, with which the part abounds, had caused it to be banished from the stage. Mdlle. Blais made a brilliant display of all that artifice, wit, elegance, grace, coquetry and sentimentality, so indispensable in a true representation of this delightful part. She assumed the easy grace of the highest circles, and depicted with exquisite taste the lady of rank; but this was no more than her natural character, for by education she was a perfect lady. She had no rival in the part of Ninetta in the *Gazza Ladra*; for all who undertook the same character, freely yielded the palm to her. Whenever she played this part in Paris, the audience could not restrain their tears. She had studied this part profoundly and had formed a complete conception of the whole. In London, while performing the great scene of the separation from her father, several ladies fainted, and it was understood that, in one instance, a serious indisposition was the consequence. She was, without difficulty, compared to the greatest English actresses that had ever appeared upon the stage.

* Her theatrical walk embraced a round of Operas, amounting to fifty, by the first and greatest composers.

† "Upon her first appearance in England, and before she became so well known throughout the United Kingdom, she affixed to her name *Mademoiselle*, but afterwards, when her name became more familiarised in the country, and the elegance, gentility, and high tone of her manners were remarked to be more than the natural consequence of a good education, the title of young lady was used whenever it was necessary to speak or write about her; and this title, be it observed, is no small honour, and granted to very few, by the precise English"—(*difficili Inglesi*).—Editor of the "Sirena."

It was for her that the poet Romani wrote *Francesca da Rimini*. The writers in various journals avowed that, "she was the veritable Francesca, whose amiable character and tragic history, Dante had drawn with such deep and painful feelings." And this is high praise. Mdlle. Blasis may be considered as the last great artiste who understood the true manner of singing the operas of Rossini; it is not enough in the execution of these works, to have a good voice and powerful lungs, the artiste who undertakes to appear in them, must be at once an able musician and a good actor.

By her talent alone, she revived the opera of *Beatrice di Tenda*, which had been nearly forgotten; and her beautiful voice, pathetic and exquisite singing, and unrivalled acting, caused *Beatrice di Tenda* to become a public favourite. This was the last opera in which the consummate artiste appeared; it was in this piece that were heard the last notes of the dying swan; she died soon after, at Florence, where she had raised the most enthusiastic admiration by the manner in which she sang the passionate melodies of *Beatrice*. The extraordinary honour paid to her after her death—might have been envied even by a sovereign—such were the expressions of the poet Martin, in the verses he composed for a Cantata, performed two weeks after the death of the *Cantatrice*.

According to the universal opinion that prevailed throughout Italy, in the character of Norma she had no rival. Nothing could exceed the rich melody of her Cavatina, and in the last scenes of the last act, she displayed great tragic powers, and also in the finale of the first act. After one of the performances of Norma, Marie Louise, Grand Duchess of Parma, on leaving the theatre, said, "I have seen this part performed by all our best singers and artistes of the day, but Mdlle. Blasis is the only one in this character, who has drawn tears from me." And this princess, who is an excellent musician, had seen a long succession of singers. She was very partial to Mdlle. Blasis, and was greatly affected at her loss; she preserves in her cabinet several of her portraits. Fossombrone, a minister of

the Duke of Tuscany, produced two beautiful pieces in verse, to the memory of the great artiste, whose worth and talents he highly admired.

In the opera of Don Giovanni, she performed equally well both the parts of Zerlina and that of Donna Anna, and thus gave a proof of that rare versatility of talent for which she was so celebrated.

A desire of returning to her *own* Italy, as she was accustomed to call her country, prevailed over every other consideration. It was there she had been so kindly encouraged in her first attempts, and ever received with hearty Italian applause, till she obtained that lofty eminence in her art, which she then enjoyed. Greatly delighted was she with the thoughts of revisiting Italy, like one, who, after a life of toil and trouble, attains the object of his desire, and weary and spent, at length reaches home, with a resolution never more to abandon it. But, alas, such was not to be the lot of our artiste. What did the brightest talent and the most brilliant triumphs avail her—triumphs achieved in the land of the arts, and of Michael-Angelo? How did she prevail upon spell-bound audiences to join with her in pouring forth the maledictions of Norma on the city of the Cæsars, or to pardon with Beatrice the murderous husband—they now weep for their favorite, torn from them by a malignant disease, that burned within,* before she had gained—

“ Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita.”

* The cause of the disorder to which Virginia Blasis fell a victim, had existed for many years. She had been from her childhood, continually subject to an internal spasmodic complaint on the left side, for which the assistance of the first physicians of Europe had been engaged. During the last five months of her life, she had fallen into a very lamentable state of dejection and anxiety, being unable to take anything more substantial than jellies and liquids. She appeared to suffer much in her mind, notwithstanding which, she promptly undertook and fulfilled her engagements. On the evening of the 5th of May, while at a musical rehearsal at the Alfieri theatre, where she had consented to bestow her services gratis for a charity, she remained for a long time exposed, while in a great perspiration, to a current of air, until the perspiration suddenly stopped. This caused

It may be said that to certain students only are the secrets of the dramatic art unveiled ; but these secrets, unlike those of the oriental and Egyptian mysteries, are to be found only in the depths of the heart and the mind. And how many years are employed in discovering them, bringing them to light, and adorning them !—or in other words, those who are desirous of raising themselves from the lower walks of theatrical art, must submit to unwearied study and a long and painful struggle. One class of artistes, is treated with contempt and indifference by the multitude, while the gifted are exalted by them to the skies, but these latter are often lamented in their untimely end. Thus it was with Virginia Blasis ; having reached the object of her labours, at the moment when she might say—“The palm is mine, for I am in possession of the secret of delighting the world”—she was suddenly snatched away. At this time she was expected both at Trieste and Parma, in which last city she had become a favourite with the ex-empress, Marie Louise. Having so recently been the delight of the Florentine audiences, her unexpected death excited a great sensation throughout the city ; and so vast was the multitude that joined in the funeral procession, that it might be said to resemble the obsequies of some renowned general, followed by his whole army.

Virginia Blasis was endowed with a very beautiful high soprano voice ; it was flexible, brilliant, and silvery ; she could also display, if needful, a register of lower notes, sweet and clear, which produced the greatest effect, frequently moving the audience to tears, and could execute with equal facility a vast variety of subjects. She possessed a good figure and a pleasing countenance, and on the stage her gesture was imposing and majestic ; her eyes were full of fire

the piercing and insupportable pleuritic pains, which, notwithstanding the best medical advice that could be procured, and ceaseless and affectionate care and attendance of her friends, after seven days of great anguish, to the inexpressible grief of all, terminated fatally.

and the powerful expression ; the most indifferent became spell-bound by her piercing glance ; it was a tyranny of vision. She had a noble gait and carriage, which gave her the appearance of a high-born matron, accustomed to pace through the halls of the great and of kings ; her action was free and natural, art in this respect seemed only to have corrected the redundancy of nature, bringing it within such limits, that it became admirably fitted to accompany the music. When she condescended to perform gay and comic characters, the tones of her voice became lighter and more winning, her manner of execution arch and polished ; the play of her features, and her whole person, presented a piquancy and easy grace, difficult to describe. We have already remarked how laboriously she studied every part she assumed ; by this means she discovered and elicited new readings, where others had found nothing that required more than ordinary expression ; this talent was entirely owing to an unwearied study of the art of declamation, and the principles of Pantomime. Virginia could depict love and jealousy, that rock upon which all the affections are wrecked, in a masterly style ; her grief and tears were nature itself, and so were her gaiety, laughter and joy. Her own natural character was endowed with great firmness and resolution ; and this it was that sustained her in the difficult part she had chosen, and enabled her to overcome all difficulties and attain that eminence upon which she had fixed her eye.

Her heart was the abode of many virtues ; she was an excellent daughter, a tender sister and a firm friend, and ever ready to assist the poor and unfortunate. The whole of her conduct was in the highest degree, pure and irreproachable ; she was universally esteemed and fondly beloved by her friends. Envy, so very common with persons of her profession, did not enter into her nature ; she could bestow praises upon her rivals, and was ever striving to amend what was defective in herself. She was closely attached to a careful selection of theatrical friends,

and kind and encouraging to young beginners in theatrical art. And it was remarked, that while performing on the stage she did not aim at her own individual triumph, but laboured for the general scenic effect, and for the honor of her art. She lived but for her family, and ever devoted herself to their interests, and in the midst of her sufferings, when at the point of death, it was parting from them that seemed to be the worst of her afflictions. Thus, supported by that fortitude which ever accompanies virtue, she calmly resigned her well-merited earthly renown, and departed to join, it is to be hoped, her own melodious voice with the choirs above.*

The remains of our lamented singer and actress (*attrice-cantante*) were consigned to the earth in the cloister of the church of Santa Croce, where her friends, as a testimony of their unspeakable grief, intend to erect a monument to her memory;† and that the work may be executed in a manner worthy of the occasion, it has been confided to the hand of the sculptor Pampaloni, celebrated, as it is well known, for many first-rate productions.

On the 15th of June, the Requiem of Mozart was performed in memory of the deceased lady in the church of Badia, at Florence. Upon this occasion the whole body of musical professors at Florence,

* Upon this melancholy occasion the afflicted father addressed a letter to his son Carlo, from which we select the following passages:—
 “Virginia is with the angels and singing the praises of the Lord. Oh Carlo, it was on Saturday, at two o'clock in the morning, that she was taken ill, and on the following Saturday, at three, she departed for a better world, and left an old and devoted father and a sister deeply sunk in inconsolable affliction. For the last six years the death of her mother had weighed heavily upon her heart; it was a wound which remembrance kept continually open, and was greatly increased by recent sufferings, and was the principal cause of her death. During her last moments she called without ceasing for me, though I was present. As her end drew near, she made an effort, and raising herself in the bed, she clung closely round my neck and kissing without ceasing, while the tears flowed abundantly, as did mine, said, ‘Farewell, father!’ Great God! what a treasure hast thou taken from me!”

† This was written in 1839.

amounting to more than two hundred and sixty, assembled spontaneously to offer their tribute to worth and talent. But a small part only of the multitude that hastened to the ceremony could be accommodated in the church, so universal was the desire to do honor to her memory.

Sig. Teodoro Martin, an artiste of first-rate talent, upon the occasion of his benefit was determined to pay homage to the memory of one whose talents he had so enthusiastically admired. The manner in which this was done, was at once worthy of himself and of the lamented Virginia. Dr. G. Rossi wrote a *Cantata*, entitled "The Tombs,"—" *Le Tombe*,"—consisting of a copy of beautiful verses, from which we extract the following :—

" ————— M'ascoltate ;
Era un voto del suo cor.

" Or che un 'urna è a lei concessa
Senza un fior non la lasciate.
Fu presaga ! ed ella stessa
Cento volte ha chiesto un fior."

" Listen, it was the wish of her heart ; now that she is in the tomb—to cast thereon a few—few flowers. She was good, and when in life we have gladly offered her hundreds of flowery wreaths." Allusion was here made to the first verse in the *Finale* of *Beatrice di Tenda*, which Virginia had been accustomed to sing in so affecting a manner at the Pergola theatre ; and to render the allusion more clear, the original music was introduced. It will be remembered that the last scene of *Beatrice* closely represents the mildness of Virginia Blasis' disposition, and the calm resignation of her death. Rossi's verses were adapted to very beautiful music, composed by Nencini. This cantata was executed by Schutz and Agliati, supported by a numerous chorus, intended to represent the inhabitants of Florence. The theatre was crowded to excess, and while the singers, poet, and composer

were greatly applauded, numbers of the audience were observed to be in tears.

The following extracts, taken from private letters, will convey some idea of the universal sorrow that prevailed in Florence, and particularly amongst the upper classes, at this untimely loss. Madame Léon, who had been a very intimate friend of Mdlle. Blasis, writes thus—"This place (Florence) is filled with sorrow, mixed with enthusiastic respect and admiration for the departed angel; and well did she deserve our homage and our tears." Two months after, in another letter from the same lady, is the following passage:—"Here in Florence, the sorrow continues unabated. You will be surprised when I tell you that persons, of whom I know scarcely anything, stop me in the street to beg of me, as a remembrance, a riband, a glove, a lock of hair, or anything that once belonged to her. Foreigners have offered considerable sums, merely to see the apartment in which this celebrated and worthy young woman resided. My family are in need of my assistance, otherwise I should be content to die to-morrow, could I make an end like hers."

Sig. Jacovacci of Rome, two months after the death of Virginia, wrote thus to her brother Carlo: "You have lost a woman of exalted worth. I was at Florence as you may remember—the whole town, gentry, citizens, the whole theatrical profession—all, without exception, deplored the loss; she was the general subject of conversation; her high talents, beautiful voice, gentleness, charity, humility, with many other estimable qualities, were the universal theme of admiration. I felt, in fact, a desire to see the street and house in which she died, and to impress the locality in my memory. I paid a second visit before writing to you. I was present both at the rehearsal and performance of the musical piece composed in honor of this excellent creature, and can bear witness to the universal grief displayed by the audience. If



A X N

A VIRGINIA DE-BLAVIS
NATA IN MARSIGLIA NEL MDCCCIV.
MORTA IN FIRENZE NEL MDCCCXXXVIII.
FIGLIA SORELLA IMPAREGGIABILE
COI POVERJ CARITATEVOLE
SALUTATA SOMMA NELL' ARTE DEL CANTO
IL PADRE E I FRATELLI Q.M.POSERO.

Monument erected in the Church of Santa Croce at Florence.

Y. A. WILSON, JR., 1978
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH
FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1978
SALE PRICE: \$0.85 (U.S. ONLY) POSTAGE AND
FEE PAID BY THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.

I had been fortunate enough to know that your relatives resided in Florence, I would most gladly have paid them a visit of condolence, and deeply do I feel my having missed such an opportunity."

THE MONUMENT.

"Deh se un' urna è a me concessa,
Senza un fior non la lasciate."*

The monument erected to the memory of Virginia Blasis, of which we give an engraving, is considered in Italy as a beautiful work of art, we shall therefore here append a more particular description of this production, extracted from the Italian periodical called the "Strenna," including an account of the ceremony of its inauguration, according to the Catholic ritual.

"The verses above, which express so admirably the lengthened sorrows of Beatrice di Tenda, and to which we have so often listened with deep emotion, were the last which we heard from the mouth of that excellent young woman, who in Italian song was second to none. If the sentiment expressed in these verses were indeed her own, it has been nobly complied with, by her countrymen. She reposes amidst the great and the renowned, in the magnificent temple of Santa Croce,† and her tomb will be continually consecrated by prayers and tears. For, exposed as she was to the

* If, alas, you judge me worthy of an urn, leave not that urn without a few, few flowers.

† The church of Santa Croce is celebrated both for its architecture, and for the paintings and sculpture it contains. Within its walls repose the great and the celebrated, and at Florence, it is regarded as Westminster Abbey is in London. Amongst a vast number of splendid monuments, are those of Galileo, Michael-Angelo, Dante, Alfieri, and many others of high renown.

most trying temptations, she withstood, she remained virtuous and good.

“On the 11th of December, 1839, the splendid church of Santa Croce was hung with black, and sweet smelling herbs and flowers were strewn around in different parts of the building, presenting a most impressive spectacle. The beautiful monument to the memory of Virginia was placed conspicuously in the midst of the building, surrounded with all those decorations that religion, assisted by the arts, is accustomed on such occasions to display. More than two thousand persons, consisting of Florentine families of the first distinction, together with citizens and foreigners, were present. A spacious orchestra had been erected round the organ, containing 460 musicians of the first talent of Florence and the surrounding country. A solemn mass by Cherubini was executed, the orchestra being led by Sig. Biagi, one of the first professors of Italy. Amongst this splendid vocal and instrumental company, we observed the father, (who is also an able professor,) of the deceased lady, giving vent to his grief in the sacred melody by which he was surrounded; but we question whether the most moving strain could express all he felt. Amidst all this splendid spectacle, the beautiful monument seemed to reign supreme; it is the work of Pampaloni, an artist capable of expressing in marble the purest and most exalted ideas. To him was assigned the task of sculpturing a Blasis, and it was an opportunity for producing an angel.

“The statue by Pampaloni, is what is called a *celestial* figure, somewhat larger than life, representing Virginia at the moment when she utters these words—

“Deh se un’ urna è a me concessa, &c.”

(If, alas, you judge me worthy of an urn, &c.)—She is kneeling upon the Sarcophagus, her hands crossed upon her breast, and her face raised towards heaven in the act of prayer, A veil of light material descends from her head and reaches to her feet, giving to the artist an opportunity of displaying a quantity of beautiful folds,

beneath which appears the thin peculiar kind of vest, intended to resemble that worn by *Beatrice di Tenda*; the drapery is abundant, but does not in the least prevent us from tracing the outline of this masterpiece. There are many ways in which a consummate artist can display his talent without continually having recourse to unclothed figures on one hand, or to Greek and Roman costumes on the other. Pampaloni has proved this by his nice and delicate treatment of this figure. On the surface upon which the statue reposes, a few musical notes are traced, and upon the base, which is a most correct architectural production of the two *Giovanazzi*, is sculptured a festoon with a few symbols, suitable to monuments of this description. Such is the monument of Virginia Blasis; it is perfect in its simplicity, not loaded with inexplicable allegorical beings and school-boy deities, nor crowded with the common place muses.

“The monument bears the following inscription in the Italian language.—

A VIRGINIA DE BLASIS

NATA A MARSIGLIA NEL MDCCCIV.

MORTA IN FIRENZE NEL MDCCCXXXVIII.

FIGLIA E SORELLA IMPAREGGIABILE

CO' POVERI CARITATEVOLE

SALUTATA SOMMA NELL' ARTE DEL CANTO

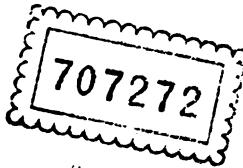
IL PADRE E I FRATELLI Q. M. POSERÀ.

“To the Memory of Virginia de Blasis—born in Marseilles, 1804—died in Florence, 1838. As a daughter and sister incomparable; to the poor ever charitable. In the art of song she was declared consummate. This Monument was erected by her father and the rest of the family.”

“This epitaph, without neglecting that pomp of style so necessary in such a place, sufficiently reveals

the estimable qualities that adorned the excellent lady deceased. She was endowed with rare talent in her art ; but this vanishes away like a vapour when not found in company with worth and virtue ; but the life of the singer we lament, was pure and harmless, and the melody with which she delighted us here, we trust she is gone to continue elsewhere. Her name and renown at least must remain with us many long ages, recorded as it is on such a monument as we have described, and in such a temple as Santa Croce."

THE END.



CONTENTS.

PART I.

PAGE.

Rise, Progress, Decline, and Revival of Dancing; Works on Dancing; Celebrated Dancers; Description of Ancient and Modern Dances	1—55
---	------

PART II.

The Origin, Progress, and Present State of the Imperial and Royal Academy of Dancing, at Milan; Extracts from the Gazzetta, Moda, Strenna, and other Italian Journals; the Plciades.....	56 · 85
--	---------

PART III.

Memoir of C. Blasis; List of his Works; Synoptical Table; Memoir of Madame Blasis; Memoir of F. A. Blasis the Elder; Memoir of Virginia Blasis; Notice upon her Monument in Santa Croce, at Florence.....	86—190
---	--------



60.2.93



BNC-FIRENZE

