

Immorality of Modern Dances

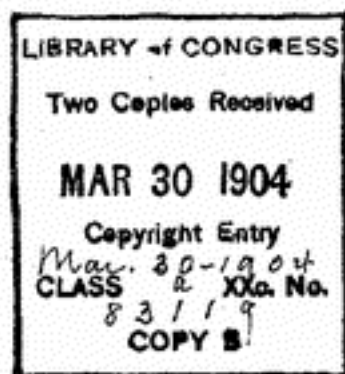
EDITED BY
~~Beryl~~ BERYL AND ASSOCIATES.

Swing it, Mr. W!
INSTRUCTIVE! ENLIGHTENING! EVERY
MORAL TEACHER SHOULD READ THIS
TREATISE. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
BY CLERGYMEN OF THE ROMAN
CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES AS
WELL AS BY JEWISH
RABBI.

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TO THE
WELL-MINDED
AND LOVING
PARENTS OF
AMERICA,
THESE LINES
ARE HUMBLY
DEDICATED.

P R E F A C E

THE vice of modern dancing has become so prevalent in all classes of society that it has begun to be looked upon as good form to dance on all possible occasions. To extirpate this vice will require not only the utmost exertion, but first the united power of those specially chosen by Divine Providence to watch over the flock of Christ to protect it, to defend it from all evil, and, as good shepherds, to lead it to God in holiness after the example of Jesus, who said, "I am the good Shepherd" (John x. 2); secondly the united power of the laity.

How, then, are the true shepherds of Christ's flock to be united in strong battle array against a vice which is causing such havoc in the flock? In a battle which, to many of them, seems to have but one end—their utter rout. They recognize the havoc caused by modern dancing to the souls of their flock, but they seem powerless to suppress the evil. They know full well that many men and women who pose as pillars of the church are at times very much interested in clubs and societies which give dances, and

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that to speak against dancing would cause them to be unpopular and would lessen their collections; and, rather than endure either the unpopularity or the decreased receipts, they allow their parishioners to dance wherever and whenever they see fit. Such pastors are cowards. They lack the courage of their convictions. They are not true shepherds, but are self-interested hirelings; and no wonder that the wolf of the Saturday night dance snatches and scatters the sheep which should be in their pews on Sundays, but are not. The laity have also to join the noble rank of the clergy in the fight to destroy at least in part one of the greatest and boldest evils of the age. The upright class of the laity, Protestant and Catholic, are scandalized at the conduct of some divines, who against the discipline of their respective churches, uphold modern dances.

Modesty compelled the artist to make the illustrations as little objectionable as possible; still they are calculated to suggest the ugly reality seen in the ball-room and in the private parlor, and its most deplorable, immediate effects.

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MODERN DANCES

IMMORALITY OF MODERN DANCES

We cannot refrain from quoting just here an open letter written January 4, 1903, which made a profound sensation throughout the United States. The clergyman who wrote that letter was evidently fully convinced of a modern vice causing an extraordinary havoc in the flock of Christ.

The following invitation to a reception tendered to out of town societies by the Federated Catholic Societies of Allegany County prompted me to write an open letter, which appeared in the Cumberland "Daily News," of January 6th, 1903:

"CUMBERLAND, MD., Jan. 2nd, 1903.

"REV. DON LUIGI SARTORI,

"Rev. and dear Father:

"You are cordially invited to be present at a reception to be held at Sts. Peter & Paul's Hall, Fayette St. and Plum Alley, Cumberland, Md., Wednesday evening, Jan. 28th, 1903, tendered to the out of town

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"Catholic Federated Societies of Allegany County by
"the Cumberland Societies.

"Faithfully yours,

"FRANK A. WALHOPE,

"Secretary."

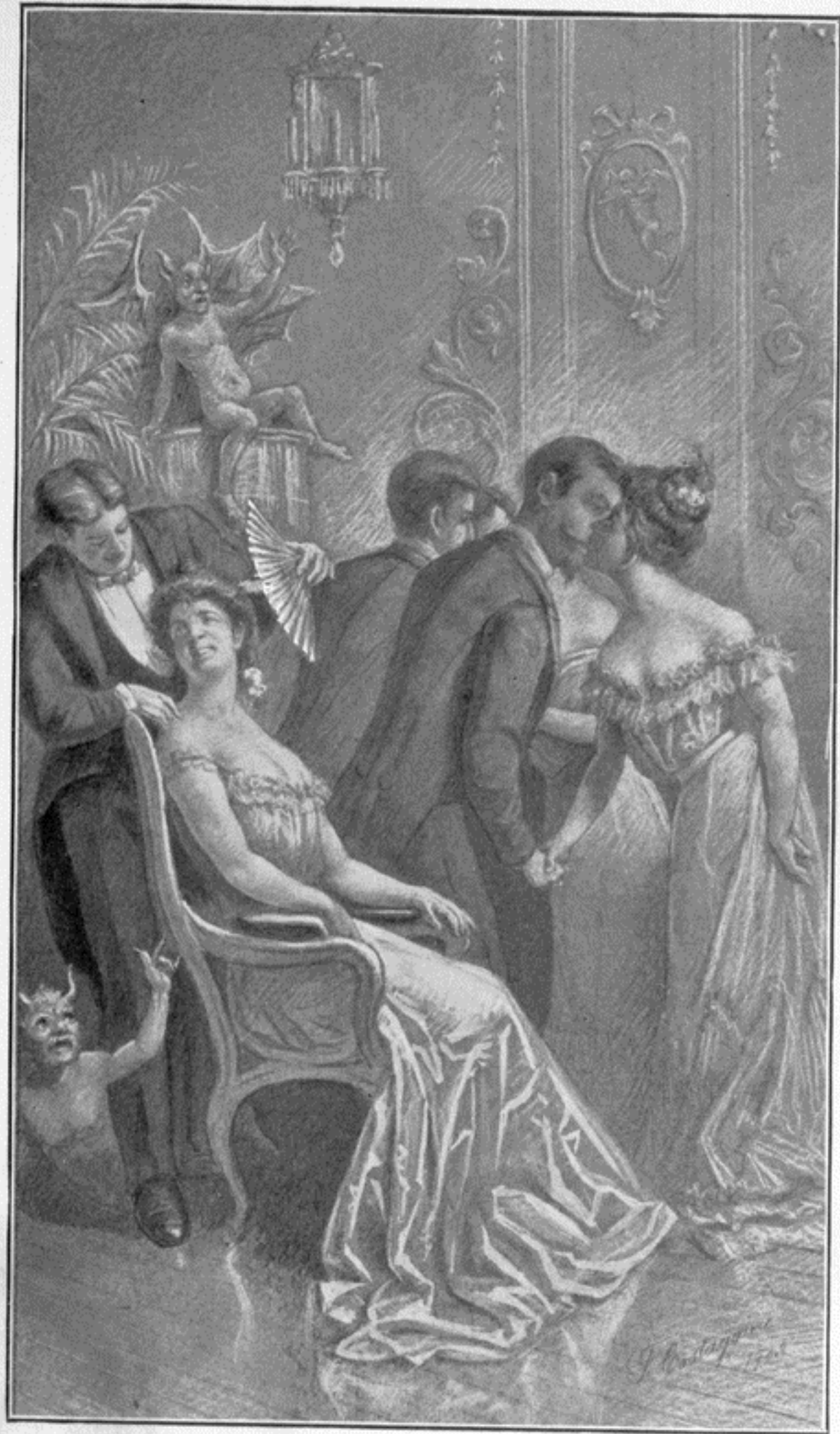
AN OPEN LETTER.

To the Federated Catholic Societies of Allegany
County, from Rev. Father Don Luigi Sartori,
Rector of St. Joseph's Catholic Church of
Midland, Maryland.

Cumberland, Md., Jan. 6th, 1903.

The "Daily News" is in receipt of a communication from Father Don Luigi Sartori, the able, eloquent and earnest Catholic divine of Midland, addressed to the Federated Catholic Societies of Allegany county, in which Father Sartori indites a vigorous protest against dancing and calls upon the local societies of his church to aid him in eradicating one of the "principal evils antagonizing the work of a parish priest." His letter, which follows, will doubtless attract widespread and deserved interest:

GENTLEMEN:—I have before me a kind invitation from the Cumberland Federated Catholic Societies to be present at a reception to be held at Sts. Peter and



LUSTFUL EXPECTANCY FOR THE MODERN DANCES.

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Paul's Hall, Fayette St. and Plum Alley, January 28th instant, tendered to the out of town Federated Catholic Societies of Allegany county

The invitation to such a reception prompted me to write this open letter. Your Federation ought to be in Allegany a power to help pastors in the work of preventing scandals and eradicating vices and removing dangers alluring young people to sin. There are many evils antagonizing the work of a parish priest in this region, but I deem one a principal, *i.e.* dancing of any kind comprehending square dances, which in some respects are worse than round dances. In my experience in the ministry for over twenty-seven years I have discovered the evil tendency of the practice in the hearts of the young people, rendering them callous to Catholic duties, undermining modesty, which ought to be the distinct virtue of the young, especially of the young maid. I have seen the consequences of such an evil, and I became fully convinced that it brought ruin to an enormous number of young people. In fact, dancing of any kind is to-day one of the greatest evils in the United States. Young men and young women are rushing like maniacs to such a sinful diversion, which becomes a fierce torrent tearing away all kinds of embankments, which the priests of God have endeavored to erect with great labor, to check its mad rage.

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This letter does not call for arguments to prove my assertions and my conviction. It is enough here to state that the practice is not in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Catholic Church and the teaching of her saintly Fathers. The people are not willing to give up for Christ this divertisement, which affords pleasure to the flesh. Priests feel that they are a failure in their earnest efforts to combat the evil for the salvation of souls.

Come forward, Federated Catholic Societies of Alleghany county and nobly fight with the clergy this home evil, for Christ, His Church and for the welfare of the commonwealth.

Great to-day is the admiration for the Methodists of this country, who raised \$20,000,000 as a thank offering, but greater still is my admiration for them for their noble stand against any kind of dancing.

This note was not suggested by anybody. I alone am responsible for it and I accept the consequences of unpopularity. I know my motives are sincere. I am fully aware of my exceedingly strong conviction in the matter.

Hoping you will condescend to consider this private note, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

FATHER SARTORI.

Midland, Jan. 4th, 1903.

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ARGUMENTS.

The above mentioned clergyman stated that his open letter did not call for arguments to prove his assertions and conviction. Evidently he did not intend to discuss the question before the public. He said "it is enough here to state that the practice is not in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Catholic Church and the teaching of her Saintly Fathers." We Protestants say Amen to all this statement. We believe in the ten commandments as well as the Catholic Church does. We make use of the doctrine taken from the Catholic Church on the question of modern dances along with the doctrine of all Christian Churches, and the experience and reasoning of the laity to prove the following propositions:

(a) Excepting the privilege and propriety of a lawful marriage* and regretted accidental and unavoidable cases, the Christian Religion does not permit anywhere, man or woman to assume and retain for a

* A ballroom is no place for married people unwarrantably to hug one another.

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considerable length of time, even under the hypocritical plea of innocence, a close embrace with a person of the opposite sex, young or old. But man and woman in the modern dances assume and retain for a considerable length of time a close embrace. Therefore the Christian Religion forbids modern dances.

(b) We go further and formulate the following proposition: Excepting the privilege and propriety of a lawful marriage close bodily contact between male and female for sensual pleasure is condemned by the Christian Religion. But the modern dances demand such a close contact between male and female for sensual pleasure. Therefore modern dances are condemned by the Christian Religion.

On purpose and to avoid annoyance of readers, we will not prove the above kindred propositions with the scholastic theological formalities. Both propositions, however, are defended throughout this book as one. Every argument is intended to condemn the *pose* of modern dancing or the close contact, *i. e.*, hugging between the opposite sex.

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ANCIENT AND SCRIPTURAL DANCES.

Ancient and scriptural dances did not demand close contact between the male and female. They were more or less of a religious character. There can be no doubt that as time went on, abuses crept into such dances, as is evident from the Greek bacchanalian and the Roman saturnalia dances.

Dancing is of very ancient origin. The Egyptians danced to show graceful gestures and attitudes. They danced in their temples in honor of their gods, and their dances consisted of mysterious imitations of the celestial movements and of the harmony of the universe. The Greeks in the beginning connected dancing with nearly every religious ceremony. Their dancing was a gymnastic and military as well as a mimetic and religious exercise. The Romans did more or less the same.

It is wrong in some Bible Histories to represent Moses, full of indignation, smashing the tables of the law in sight of dancers in close bodily contact around the golden calf. The position is exactly that of modern dancing. The idea of Waltzes in Moses' time! There is certainly nothing in the biblical or even oriental archæology to justify the

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assumption that the Hebrews ever indulged in so-called "round dances" in which men and women come into close contact. Such dances were unknown then, as they are still unknown among orientals. In the East, young men and young women then, as now, were wont to dance separately—the men together and the women also by themselves. Even persons of the same sex rarely touched each other except with the hand. The Hebrew word for dances means "leap for joy." Both sexes bore a part in the dances they introduced into their solemn festivities, but they always remained in separate companies.

All savages down to the present time, as seen at the World's Fair, Chicago, in 1893, have indulged in dancing singly, and the dance was of a martial character in connection with their warfare and victories.

The American aborigines danced in their religious celebrations. Their descendants among the Sioux imitated, at the Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, 1901, the ancient Scalp Dance around the scalps brought back by a war party. They danced in a circle, with their heads adorned with ostrich feathers, laughing, yelling, brandishing their weapons, boasting their prowess, distorting their faces, and imitating all the fury of battle. In such dances the young women assisted by joining in the chorus or by standing in the centre of the ring; but they

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were rarely permitted to join, even singly, in the dance.

The savages of the South Sea Islands, exhibited at the World's Fair, Chicago, performed the same kind of dances, but did not perform modern dances like those of the savages of so-called modern civilization.

When Christianity supplanted Paganism, it found many objectionable practices and customs which it had to eradicate. One was dancing, which was usually connected with religious festivals. History records the fourteenth century "dance of death"—the mediæval dance with the skeleton form of death which was supposed to lead dancers to the grave.

Painters and poets treated this subject with mingled humor and seriousness. Pope Zacharias, A.D. 744, condemned religious dancing in churches as ill-according with the gravity and sacredness of the sanctuary.

Dancing in course of time assumed sinful features. Men and women began to dance together yet without close contact. This diversion, though dangerous, could be indulged in with propriety. Soon, however, it became an abuse and an incentive to the most dangerous of all passions, by inducing lewd songs, immodest dress, movements and gestures which shocked modesty. The Roman Catholic Church, her theologians and her saintly Fathers had to condemn this evil in society.

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DANCES.

A psychological study of the dance gives us an insight into the evils following in its wake. In the study of the origin of ancient dances it is found that the manifestation of sentimental feelings is a simulation of actions useful to life but grounded on the principles of æsthetics, *i.e.*, imitation.

The "Corybantian dance," known in Crete and Phrygia, was of the wildest character. In it the armed performers clashed their swords and even their shields with the most extravagant fury.

The "Pyrrhic dance" is described by Plato as one in which the dancers, by rapid movements of the body, show the way to ward off the enemy's javelins or sword, and at the same time the manner of attacking him.

In man the dance represents two principles of imitation, one the assault, the strife and victory over other men with whom he may be at war; the other his sensual love, with its wars and victories. Both bring to life a great pleasure, because the former refers directly to the preservation of the individual's life, the latter to the propagation of the species.

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The old-time square dances, which are still practised by southern Italian country people, represent the first principle above mentioned. They consist of gyrations and rapid combinations of various motions, of successive advances and retreats and of attempts to embrace. In these dances men reproduce that feature of love seen in inferior male animals which, to conquer the affections of their mates, make a display of all the charms they may possess.

In these square dances, pleasure of the soul and thought is predominant, and an effort is shown by these simple country people to preserve intact the fascination of life. Such a dance is merely a mimic conquest of the spirit. In such a dance there is no close contact between a man and woman. Nevertheless, this kind of dance becomes dangerous, but we would not dare to compare it with the indecent square dances practised in all regions of the vast United States and throughout the world, because the latter include the embrace and cannot be properly called square dances, but are semi-waltzes or equal to Waltzes, for this word "square" means "equal." Hence the following formula:

Square dance = Waltz.

The modern round or square dances represent the second principle aforementioned. Man in the Waltz or

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in the other round dances does not imitate the sensational strife, but the finale of the strife, *i.e.* the victory, and hence the shameful close embrace. For this reason upright men stigmatize the Waltz in its various phases of "Dip," "Glide," "Saratoga," etc., as the abomination of the day. It is necessary for Christianity to teach what actions fall under the ban of God's Commandments, *i.e.*, what is and what is not a sin. It is the representative of God on earth and has authority from Him, and, as His lawful representative, to explain to us His commandments. By the Sixth Commandment, according to the Roman Catholic Church, and seventh according to the Methodist Church, God forbids adultery, and the Church tells us what specific sins are embraced in this generic command. She says that by this commandment, not only is adultery forbidden, but also all sins of impurity, such as unchaste looks, words, jests, and whatever violates modesty or leads to impurity. No sin is more shameful, and none is followed by such dreadful consequences as the sin of impurity. The awful fate of Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of the awful hatred God feels towards those who indulge in impurity. The Church teaches us to avoid curiosity of the eyes, vanity, and immodesty in dress, indecent dances, to guard against familiarity with the opposite sex. We defy any man to deny this

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doctrine of Christianity, and we base our condemnation of all modern dances requiring close contact between man and woman on this positive teaching based on the very law of God.

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THE SINFUL POSE OF ROUND DANCES.

With Christianity, therefore, we condemn dances which demand close bodily contact between man and woman. On this very important question we will quote only a few modern theologians for Roman Catholics; because, as a rule, they found their opinions on whatever school they may follow. They quote the opinions of the leaders of such schools, and in consequence give only opinions which had a bearing on the old-time dances and the dances which could be, and no doubt were, performed in a very modest manner. This may be said to be the reason why the old school theologians wrote pages and pages on probabilism which has no practical bearing on the round dances of our day. We never find theologians who *ex professo* treat the round dancing question.

Modern dances should be judged from the practical knowledge and personal experience of laymen—men moved by the grace of God to state the truth, men who know positively whereof they speak. The Roman Catholic Fathers and the Bishops who have condemned modern dances have learned the truth about the evil nature of such dances from the laity; and clergymen ought to learn the same truth from that source.

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We have seen at different times and in many places, particularly at Summer resorts, full-dress balls which, in reality, were hardly half-dressed balls when one considers the flimsy and oftentimes scanty attire of the women. We contend that ministers of the Gospel are at times justified in seeing, albeit with secret indignation, and at the same time without giving scandal, some of the public evils of dancing. Particularly is this the case in country hotels during vacation time, when it is next to impossible to pass by the parlor in the evening without seeing men and women whirling each other about furiously in the mazes of the seductive dance. And how can they witness such disgraceful scenes without burning with secret indignation? And how can they, whose very life is pledged to the cause of Christ, remain silent when they see souls which have been entrusted to their care being lured to destruction by the sinful pleasure of the ballroom?

Mr. W. C. Wilkinson, who published in one of the *American Quarterly Reviews* an article on "The Dance of Modern Society," says: "The Dance consists substantially of a system of means contrived with more than human ingenuity to excite the instinct of sex to action, however subtle and disguised at the moment, in its sequel to the most bestial and degrading."

Gail Hamilton, in an Eastern journal, says: "The thing in its very nature is unclean and cannot be

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washed. The very pose of the parties suggests impurity."

Mr. T. A. Faulkner, ex-dancing master and practical authority on modern dances and the author of a convincing booklet, "From the Ballroom to Hell," edited in 1894, describes the position assumed in waltzing according to the rules of modern dancing. The following is his description of the sinful pose. "A beautiful girl, pure and innocent, the only remaining treasure of wealthy parents, is presented to a dancing master to learn the fashionable modern dances according to their well-established rules. At first she seems shocked at the manner in which he embraces her to teach her the latest Waltz. It is her first experience in the arms of a strange man, with his limbs pressed to hers; and in her natural modesty she shrinks from so familiar a touch. It brings a bright blush of indignation to her cheeks, and she thinks what an unladylike and indecent position to assume with a man who but a few hours before was an utter stranger. But she says to herself, 'This is the position everyone must take who learns to dance in the most approved style—church-members and all, so of course, it is no harm for me.' She thus takes the first step, casting aside that delicate God-given instinct which should be the guide of every pure woman in such matters." The ex-dancing master adds

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that at the end of three months this very girl was ruined.

The rule of modern dances is close contact between male and female in order to dance well. The same authority says, "It is a horrible fact, but a fact nevertheless, that it is absolutely necessary that a woman shall be able and willing to reciprocate the feelings of her partner before she can graduate as a perfect dancer, so that even if it be allowed that a woman may waltz virtuously she cannot in that case waltz well. And it matters not how perfectly she knows and takes her steps; she must yield herself entirely to her partner's embrace and also to his motions. Until a girl can and will do this, she is regarded as a 'scrub' by the male experts." How can a decent man or woman reconcile such a diabolical doctrine with the Sixth Commandment as explained above? Christianity often quotes the following words of Christ: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matt. xvi. 24.) And from this sublime utterance she has learned the true spirit of mortification which is in opposition to that doctrine, which gives full scope to the inordinate passions and inclinations of modern dancers, who will not hear of mortification of the flesh, of self-denial, or of carrying one's cross after Christ.

Consider the immodest pose taken in the Waltz, and

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if you are not already blinded by lust, you will have to admit that it is a direct violation of the Sixth Commandment and diametrically opposed to the teaching of Christ and His immaculate Church.

You cannot argue that modern dances are in themselves "indifferent actions," but must admit that they are positive sins. Listen to Mrs. Sherwood, who is considered a standard authority on social usages. She writes: "No gentleman in greeting a lady will hold her hand a moment longer than necessary." What decent woman would so far violate the teachings of the Sixth Commandment as to throw herself into the arms of a strange man? Would a lady with a spark of self-respect, in any place except in a ballroom or some other such place lay her head upon the shoulder of a man, place her breast against his, and allow him to encircle her waist with his arms, place his foot between her feet, and clasp her hands in his? Would a decent woman, a follower of Christ, persuade herself of the righteousness of such filthy action and say: "My pastor does not disapprove. He sees no harm in round dancing." If he does not, why does he not engage in a Waltz with some charming girl of his parish and dance with her for hours to his heart's content? Were he to do so, the very ones who cry out against him if he dares to raise his voice in warning against the sinfulness of

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the dance would be the first to denounce him as an immoral man—one ill-fitted to lead his flock.

St. Jerome, in his book against Vigilantius who criticised the Saint because he lived a life of retirement, said, "Fateor imbecillitatem meam," *i.e.*, I confess my frailty. In recounting the possible occasions of sin, he mentions as a probable one the danger of being attracted by a worldly woman who might allure a man to sinful embraces. If the Saint feared the gaze of an attractive worldly woman and felt that he could not resist even such remote temptation, how, it may be asked, can young men and young women, dancing with partners of the opposite sex, promise themselves immunity from sin? Do they not place themselves in a very proximate occasion of sin, or, rather, do they not rush blindly into sin itself by engaging in the illicit embrace so graphically described by the ex-dancing master above quoted?

Jerome was a man of extraordinary austerities, practised day and night, reducing his body to a perfect skeleton, a man of constant mental and vocal prayer, a man who must have subdued all his passions to the spirit. His diffidence referred only to himself, fearing that he might not employ the grace of God for his final perseverance. His diffidence was founded on his great humility, which urged him to be daily more and more watchful for his eternal salvation.

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Note the great contrast between this great Saint of God and these presumptuous dancers. Theirs is certainly a case of

*"Fools rush in
Where angels fear to tread."*

We cannot believe in the assertions of modern dancers that round dancing is not for them an occasion of sin. Surely God will not protect those who willingly plunge into the proximate occasion of sin. We know that we have to fight interior and exterior enemies—the world, the flesh and the devil. The ballroom may be said to represent all three. The habitues of the ballroom are, as a general rule, weak spiritually, and of their own strength are not able to resist temptation. They are like reeds which bend to the ground with every wind that blows, and the grace of God will not come to their assistance while they hug each other in the voluptuous Waltz. And carrying our argument still further, we would ask what do the dancing masters mean by "reciprocity of feeling and emotion by male and female partners engaged in the Waltz?" They mean nothing else but enjoying the natural pleasures of the flesh coming from such close contact of their bodies. They speak from experience. They lay down real facts.

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We believe they state the truth. Modern dancers are convinced in their hearts of this truth whether they acknowledge it or not. We do not believe girls or young men whenever they claim that they do not experience improper feelings or emotions while engaged in the Waltz. Moreover, this class of dancers comprehends or embraces, as a rule, the young men and women who are vigorous and passionate. They are lovers, admirers of the opposite sex, handsome young men, pretty young women—all eager for attraction. Why do they indulge in round dancing? We say it is for the gratification of their passions. Would young men and young women care to dance for hours and hours with partners of the same sex? What they want is close corporal contact for pleasure. This explains the fury with which people rush to the ballroom for the modern dances that afford them such a great pleasure. But in the name of God, we ask how can young persons share carnal feelings or emotions and continually arouse them by assuming the Waltz position, going backward and forward, receding and rotating, and always in close embrace as though they were spitted on the same bodkin and still claim that they do not commit sin? Is such conduct decent or indecent? We declare that such an action is a breach of the Sixth Commandment, which says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and also comes under the condemnation of Christ, who

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said, "And I say unto you, that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." St. Matthew v. 27, 28.

It is justice unto God that our souls should rule over the body and its sensual motions and lust. This dominion is demanded by the Creator and hence justly due to the soul, because the soul is the superior part of man. "Let not sin reign therefore in your mortal body "so as to obey the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your "members as instruments of iniquity unto sin: but pre- "sent yourself to God as those that are alive from the "dead; and your members as instruments of justice "unto God." (Rom. vi. 12-13.)

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SINFUL MODERN SQUARE DANCES.

Modern square dances are no longer left as a refuge for the more modest dancers. Young men and young women are eager for the pleasure of the sexual contact. For this reason the Waltz is inseparably wedded to the quadrille. If one speaks against dances he will be told that square dances are allowed; and some will even go so far as to say that "our pastor sees no harm in them," and that "all the societies in our parish have them." Only an indecent girl or young man would give utterance to such words.

Modern square dances contain a great deal of the indelicate French dance of the eighteenth century, called the "Branle," consisting of several persons joining hands, leaping in circles and keeping each other in continual motion. They include, to a certain extent, the immodest Spanish "Pavane," in which the performers look maliciously at each other, strutting like peacocks, fluttering, fondling, cooing and wooing, approaching and retreating and imitating something in the animal kingdom, until at last, tired of the contest, and from a certain distance, both parties rush like maniacs to the wild close embrace for which they were fully prepared. To some extent they imitate the lech-

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erous Satyrs and the deliriously lustful Bacchantes, whom history describes as frolicsome and addicted to various shameful kinds of sensual enjoyment.

A quadrille is called. A silly girl says "nobody objects to this. It is a square dance." But watch the partners taking their places. Hear the leader call out, "First couple forward. Cross over. Change partners. Waltz up and down the center. Change over." Note with what eagerness they embrace each other. "All hands waltz around the outside." And before they realize it they are lost in the Waltz-quadrille—women so closely united with men that they can hardly be separated, undulating, swaying and whirling, keeping time with the delirious melody of the musical instruments. Two souls with a single thought; two hearts that beat as one.

We claim that the modern so-called square dances have a feature which renders them worse than the Waltz in at least one respect, namely, the malicious preparation to enjoy the mad rush to a close embrace, and the impudence of the woman offering her body in the Waltz to all dancers, refusing none, howsoever degraded, foul, drunken and shameless he may be. Modern square dances must be condemned not only for the pleasure which comes from this close contact, but also because they are misnamed so that they may deceive some by covering the filth of round dancing.

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INTRODUCTION OF MODERN DANCES.

Before quoting the authority of the saintly Fathers of the Church against modern dances, it would be well to preface a remark. The objectionable Waltz, which is at the head of modern dancing, was introduced by the triumphal soldiers of Napoleon I., after his return from Germany after the grand encounter at Austerlitz, in which three of the greatest armies of Europe, each commanded by an Emperor, were signally defeated on December 2nd, 1805. The "Gallopade," or "Gallop," the "Polka" or "Polk," the "Mazourka," the "Redowa," and the "Cracowiak" came from Hungary and the Slavic countries, and were introduced into France probably in 1830. The above modern dances were introduced into this country some years later. The "Dip," the "Glide," the "Saratoga," and the "German" made their debut in 1876 or thereabouts.

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MODERN DANCES UNKNOWN TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC FATHERS AND ANCIENT THEOLOGIANS.

The saintly Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the theologians who wrote on dancing previous to the beginning of the nineteenth century, were not aware of the abomination of the modern dances and had in mind only square dances which did not demand bodily contact between the sexes, and they thought that such dances could possibly be performed without sin, though they were dangerous.

Benedict XIV., A.D., 1758, records the unanimous sentiment of theologians, which is that the saintly Fathers speak of those dances as leading to and involving sin. (Inst. 76, No. 3.) We cannot find any contradiction between these theologians and the saintly Fathers, because the former wrote concerning the dances themselves in their movements, leaving out entirely the mode of performing them, which of course could be modest or immodest. They all agree, however, in stating that the actual manner in which these dances are performed causes them to be a source of great danger. Hence the ancient theologians and the saintly Fathers

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who point out the dangers of these dances and their attendant evil consequences, are in substantial agreement. We claim, however, that the distinctions and sub-distinctions of those old theologians concerning dancing has no bearing whatsoever on modern dances, especially the Waltz, because these dances, as now performed, were unknown to them. To refer the question of the immorality of modern dancing to the ancient Fathers is absurd in the extreme. Had the old theologians and the saintly Fathers known the dances as practised in our time, they would, no doubt, have hurled their anathemas at them and have declared them to be a flagrant violation of the Sixth Commandment.

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MODERN DANCES ARE NOT INDIFFERENT ACTIONS.

The old Roman Catholic theologians, with such knowledge, would not remain followers of the Scotus school, admitting individual indifferent actions, bearing on the serious question of modern dances. The reason is that, a man does something necessarily useful and becoming to rational nature, that is, to the soul or to the body, or he does something entirely useless and unbecoming to rational nature, that is, to the soul or to the body, or he does something entirely useless and unbecoming. In the first case he does something leading to an end naturally good, and does a good action. In the second case he does something to rational nature—soul and body—unbecoming, or at least superfluous, for reason teaches that beings or things ought not to be multiplied without necessity or usefulness or some convenience. Moreover, reason dictates that human actions are done with deliberation and tend to a good or bad end, and therefore human actions are either good or bad and cannot be indifferent. Hence the old theologians, pre-

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suming, of course, they had a knowledge of modern dances, would be on this question thorough Thomists, never daring to call the pose taken in the Waltz, *i.e.*, the close contact of male and female, an indifferent act, but would call it an outright sinful one. For if they agree with the saintly Fathers in saying that the dances of their time were full of danger in their execution, certainly those dances could not have been called good actions, and if they were not good actions they must have been bad ones. Therefore, with stronger reason, those saintly Fathers of the Catholic Church, had they had a knowledge of modern dancing, would have called them evil actions, *i.e.*, sinful actions against the Sixth Commandment.

In this sense, therefore, we will be justified in quoting as authorities some of the saintly Fathers in condemning modern dances as sinful. We say Amen to their doctrine.

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE FATHERS CON- DEMNS MODERN DANCES.

St. Ambrose, who died on the fourth of April, A.D., 397, is one of the Fathers whom we may cite to corroborate our theory on modern dances. Although he lived in the early age of the Church, his spirit and his doctrine are still extant and may be said to bear strongly on the question of modern dances. In writing of the beheading of John the Baptist, he says, "Salome, the daughter of Herodias, pleased Herod by dancing in so much that he promised her, with an oath, to grant her whatever she asked, though it might be a half of his dominions. Her mother, devoured as she was by lust, instructed her to demand the head of the prisoner, John the Baptist." From this incident, St. Ambrose and other saintly Fathers take occasion to show the dangerous consequences of a passion for dancing and the depravity from which it often takes its rise. The Saint says that scarce anything can be said more severe of a lady than to call her a dancer. He did not know the nature of modern dances, and

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had he known it what would he have said in condemnation of them?

St. Augustine, born at Sagaste, in his New Year's discourse, A.D., 198, preached a strong sermon against dances, and like St. Maximus of Turin in his fifth homily, preached about A.D., 45, vehemently denounces the evil, showing the contrast between dancers and pious people who follow Christ and lead a life according to the spirit of the Church and renounce whatever holds man wedded to the passions and to the world.

Even Sallust, a friend of Julius Cæsar, says of Sempronia, a Roman lady, "that she dances too well for an honest woman."

Plutarch, who calls dancing a spur to lust, says that the first rape committed upon the famous Helena when she was carried by Theseus into Thrace was occasioned by her dancing with other maidens around the altar of Diana at Sparta.

The indecent dancing of Salome in the presence of lewd Herod produced the martyrdom of John the Baptist and resulted in many other crimes.

We may also quote St. Peter Chrysologos, who died at Imola, Italy, probably on the second day of December, A.D., 450. His reputation as a preacher was such as to entitle him to the surname of "Chrysologos," which means "golden tongue." He was a thorough

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man of God, and manifested in his very eloquent sermons, as well as in his life, the true spirit of the Church which leads men to interior peace of the soul and fills them with God's holy grace. He is an example for imitation for those who would regulate and subdue their passions. The holy Bishop fasted and offered his tears to God for the sins of his people, whom he never ceased to teach both by force of his example and the eloquence of his words. When he entered on his charge he found that many abuses arising from Paganism had crept into his flock. One of the chief of these abuses was the furious manner of celebrating the New Year's Day by dancing. To the total extirpation of this evil the holy pastor devoted his time and his energy. In one of his noted sermons against dancing, he said, "He who will divert himself with the devil can never reign with Christ." (Sermon of Calendas.) And bear in mind that the dances of those days were not the abominations of modern dances; and the question naturally arises, how would the saintly Bishop condemn the dances of our day?

We will quote one more authority in the person of St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, model of Bishops, and the restorer of ecclesiastical discipline. He was present at the opening of the Ecumenical Council of Trent in 1560. He quotes from Petrarch and calls

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the dances of his time a circle, the center of which is the devil. He did not know about the vicious circles which our modern dances make, and we are sure that if he had he would have put a bigger devil inside those circles.

His condemnation is still in force, and bears strongly on the question.

To lessen the authority of the venerable Catholic Fathers of the Church on the subject of dancing, many affect to treat them as persons unacquainted with the world, and to call their morality, which is none other than that of the Church, too severe. The testimony of an abandoned character may perhaps have some weight with such persons. Roger de Rabutin, Count of Bussi, who lived many years in the French court, and who is well known as the author of several books of a loose moral character written in his youth, and is also well known for his edifying repentance many years before his death, in his book on "The Use of Adversity," addressed to his children, cautions them in the strongest terms against a love of dancing, assuring them from his own experience that this diversion is dangerous to many people. He called dancing "dangerous" because he wrote in 1694 and the Waltz, etc., were not as yet known, otherwise he would have called this diversion "sinful." "A ball," he said, "is generally a post too hot

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“even for an anchorite. Dancing may be done by
“aged persons without danger. In such persons it
“would be ridiculous; and to persons that are young,
“let custom say what it will, it is dangerous. In a
“word, I aver that the promiscuous ball is no place
“for the Christian.”

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MODERN THEOLOGIAN'S ON THE QUESTION.

It was not our intention to quote modern theologians on the question, because, as we stated when we described the sinful pose, we did not think we could find any. All Catholic theologians, as a rule, base their arguments on old dances which did not admit close bodily contact between the sexes. If these dances were performed modestly and without impure intentions, they were considered by those theologians to be lawful, but yet dangerous. This doctrine, however, has no bearing on the Waltz and other modern dances. Such a doctrine is calculated to mislead people. It is absurd to cite such a doctrine in defence of the modern ball, which excludes modesty entirely. It is wrong to say that modern dances are in themselves indifferent actions intended for joy and that they are not forbidden by any law. The present question is not of dancing in the abstract. Modern dancing does not exist in the abstract. It exists like most things in a certain way, and is a true, actual, concrete thing—a substance with ugly accidents, modes or manners, a social institution,

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well determined in form, with specific rules, demanding physical proximity and close contact between the sexes, and always inclining by further regulations to multiply opportunities for something more daring.

Modern theologians ought to base their opinions on the pose of modern dances and give their verdict before God on His holy law, otherwise their authority as theologians would be *ignis fatuus*, simply nil.

Good Christians will never call the Waltz, the Polka, the Mazourka, the Redowa, the Dip, the Glide, the Saratoga, the German, etc., etc., "dangerous," but in regard to the pose assumed in these dances they claim it to be sinful and as such never to be tolerated. They have a right for such opinion, and to be adherent to the realistic camp on this question.

Devout Christians hold round dancing to be immodest in general as well as in particular cases. We do not admit the possibility of round dancing at a distance. This could not be waltzing according to the exigencies and rules of waltzing, etc. In waltzing, bodily contact cannot be avoided. It would be presumption to assume the position of the Waltz and claim modesty and innocence. Men and women are not justified in exposing themselves to lust or to allure partners or onlookers to it. We think this doctrine is according to the teaching of Christ and His Church and her saintly Fathers.

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Though it was not our intention, as we have said, to quote modern theologians, we cannot refrain from quoting Bouvier, Gury, Sabetti and Genicot, all theologians of recognized ability in the Roman Catholic Church. They all teach that round dancing should not be permitted. The weight of their authority may carry conviction to some who have charge of souls, especially Roman Catholic clergymen.

Bouvier says: "*Interesse choreis graviter inhonestis ratione nuditatum, modi saltandi, verborum, cantuum, gestuum est peccatum mortale: hinc saltatio germanica, vulgo dicta 'Walse,' numquam permitti potest.*"

The translation: "To be present at balls seriously indecent by immodest dress, manner of dancing, words, songs, jests is a mortal sin: hence the German dance, vulgarly called Waltz, can never be permitted." (J. B. Bouvier, Edit. 3 Mechlin iuxta 7 Ed. Cenomanensem. Cap. iv. art. iii. § iii., 1 page, 91.)

Gury, speaking of modern dances, says: "*Chorae inhonestae ratione nuditatum, modi saltandi, verborum, gestuum, cantuum, sunt semper graviter illicitae ut patet. Inter illas autem a pluribus recensentur saltationes recentiores quae gallice dicuntur: la Walse, la Polka, le Galop, et aliae istis similes.*"

The translation: "It is evident that indecent balls by reason of immodest dress or of the manner of dancing, words, jests, songs are always grievously illicit."

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"Amongst such dances according to many theologians
"must be numbered the modern dances called in French,
"la Walse, la Polka, le Galop and others of the same
"kind." (Gury I., No. 242. II. Ratisbona Edit. 4,
1868.)

Sabetti (1902), a well-known and a great theologian, states that some theologians called round dancing "very unlawful." Genicot's Moral Theology, published in 1898, mentions various theologians, who most severely condemned dances which admit close bodily contact between man and woman; and he says it is impossible to avoid a grievous sin of lust while engaged in such dances. He corroborates the statement by the experience and evidence given by penitents.*

* Catholic readers, please take notice that Bouvier, Gury, Sabetti and Genicot are eminent moralists, approved by your Church.

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THE AUTHORITY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GENERAL AGAINST MODERN DANCES.

In the history of the Roman Catholic Church, we find that Bishops entrusted with the care of saving souls were very solicitous to eradicate the evil of dancing from their dioceses. The history of the early Church tells us that Bishops assembled in council and condemned vigorously the various dances of their day, especially the New Year's Day, the Twelfthtide, and Shrovetide dances inherited from the pagan Roman civilization. These dances were condemned by the councils of the Church, the most prominent of which was the Council of Tours, held in A.D. 567. It is true there were not round dances in those days, but we suppose that some of the dances were immodest, though not admitting the sinful pose of the present-day Waltz. The condemnation of these Bishops is still followed in the Church and is an argument against modern dancing, showing the spirit of the Church and her Bishops to be against such diversion, and we feel that were these noble men in our midst to-day, they would most emphatically cry

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out against the sinful practice as a de facto violation of the Sixth Commandment.

Priests are impressed by Benedict XIV.'s magnificent treatise on the Diocesan Synod, of which it has been said that it should be the manual of Bishops. The true spirit of the Church eradicating abuses is found in that treatise. This great Pope saw the evil of dancing. With fiery words he pronounced balls in general to be filthy amusements. (L. XI., c. 10, No. 11.) See also Bouvier quoting him. (Vol. IV, p. 100, Edition 1868.) We are sure that no conscientious Bishop would approve filthy amusements for his flock. Benedict XIV lived in 1758. Had he lived in 1800 or thereabouts he would have been horrified at the immorality of the modern Waltz, and would in very deed have stigmatized it as the most vehement destroyer of morality.

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THE FIRST AND SECOND BALTIMORE PLENARY COUNCIL AGAINST MODERN DANCES.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States were fully aware of the iniquity of modern dances introduced into this country from Germany for the corruption of society when they assembled in Baltimore in 1866 to hold the Second Plenary Council. They condemned most severely modern balls and recorded a special decree against them. (Decree 472.) They condemned them as immodest dances, which they said were increasing daily, and just now, 1904, are a perfect fury.

The Fathers certainly told the truth. Modern dances have been on the increase ever since they were introduced into this country. Dancing masters, our modern mephitic corrupters of youth, have invented more daring dances, alluring young people to practise them because of their sensual fascination. Milwaukee, Wis., may be said to be the Germany of America. A few months ago, we read a special dispatch to the "Baltimore American," to the effect that the Dancing Mas-

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ters' Association adopted the "Five-step" and five other dances on June 12, 1902. The dances are "The Lyric," a Polka, submitted by H. L. Walker, of Buffalo; "The Pompadour," a Five-step Schottische, by Isadore Sampson; "The Delmar," a Redowa with a two-step combination, submitted by E. B. Gaynor, of Chicago; and "The Stirlings," by Austin McFaddin. This is the most complicated of any of the dances and is a combination of Minuet, Gavotte and Waltz. It is set to original music and the dancing masters say it is very attractive. Isadore Sampson also presented a children's dance, which he calls "The Eros." It is set to Mazourka music. The new dances were demonstrated before the association by their authors and were greatly admired by the teachers.

The Fathers declare such diversion to constitute an offense against God, society and the family. They included in their condemnation not only those who promote those dances, but also those who encourage them by their presence. The Bishops did not refer their condemnation to the old-style square dances, which exclude bodily contact of the different sexes and which could be performed decently, but they condemned the Waltz and other modern dances which according to the code of corrupted modern society, demand close embrace.

The First Plenary Council of Baltimore (1852) pro-

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tests against round dances especially, because they are highly indecent. The Second Plenary Council of Baltimore (1868) says: "We consider it to be our duty to warn our people against those amusements which may easily become to them an occasion of sin, and especially against those fashionable dances, which, as at present carried on, are revolting to every feeling of decency and propriety, and are fraught with the greatest dangers to morals." And to all those priests who have the care of souls, the same council, in its 472d decree, says: "Let them **ATTACK** and **BOLDLY*** condemn immodest dances, which are becoming more and more common every day. Let them admonish the faithful how much they sin, not only against God, but against society, against their families and against themselves, who take part in these dances or at least seem to countenance them by their presence. Let them teach parents particularly of how grievous a judgment they become guilty if they expose their young sons and daughters to the danger of losing purity and innocence of mind by allowing them to be thus entrapped in the snares of the devil." This is the literal translation from the Latin text.

Soon after the council, Archbishop Martin John

* We do not hear much of Catholic clergy attacking boldly the round dances. Some allow them for gain under the plea of helping the Church. This is a well known fact throughout the U. S.

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Spalding enacted in the Diocesan Synod the following statute: "As the Fathers of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, in their pastoral letter to the people, wholly condemned those dances which are commonly called Waltzes and round dances, we decree that they are not to be taught nor to be tolerated in the colleges, academies and schools of the diocese, even for the sake of recreation among persons of the same sex."

If the Fathers of the First and Second Plenary Council of Baltimore call modern dances immodest, they are most emphatically so by reason of the pose. And if they are immodest they essentially constitute a violation against the Sixth Commandment. Parents mark well the above quoted words of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore. You are guilty of enormous sin by exposing your children, yet unconscious, to evil, to be entrapped by the meshes of the devil. It is a sad commentary on the conduct of some of the present-day pastors to think that this very important Decree has become null and void on account of their inactivity and their laxity in enforcing Church discipline.

This serious legislation is still in force and prevaricators only will regard it abrogated. We back up the authority of the II. Roman Plenary Baltimore Council by giving to the American young descendants of the faithful and pure Irish nation the authority of Arch-

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bishop Walsh of Dublin, addressing his people in one of his Lenten Pastorals, saying:

“Never engage in those improper dances imported
“from other countries and retaining foreign names,
“such as Polkas and Waltzes, which are so repugnant
“to the notions of strict morality, are condemned by
“many of the highest and most respectable members of
“society and are at direct variance with that purity and
“modesty of the female character for which Ireland
“has been ever distinguished.”

In addition to the censures above quoted it might not be amiss to add the condemnation of modern dancing by Bishop McCluskey of Louisville, Ky., which is of a very recent date. In his Decree published June 16th, 1903, he says: “In view of the shockingly indecent style of modern dance we hereby forbid dancing of any kind at any of the fairs, picnics, entertainments or outings.”

The Cumberland “Evening Times,” Md., published the following open letter:

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SHEER DEVILIZATION.

THUS FATHER SARTORI DESIGNATES THE MODERN
DANCE.

The following is a copy of a letter addressed to
Bishop McCluskey, of Louisville, by Rev. Father
Sartori, of Midland:

MIDLAND, MD., June 18th, 1903.

RT. REV. WILLIAM GEORGE MCCLUSKEY,
Louisville, Ky.

Rt. Rev. and Dear Sir:

I read in the Cumberland "Evening Times," Md.,
June 17th, 1903, your decree condemning dancing of
any kind at any of the fairs, picnics, entertainments
or outings, giving as a reason for condemnation "the
shockingly indecent style of the modern dance." You
are right, my Lord, the Waltz is a main feature of the
square dances, and together with the Polka, Gallop,
Mazourka and other dances of the kind constitutes to-
day the most bold and impudent vice raging in the
land, threatening to overthrow the Bishops' and

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Priests' authority for the license pandering to carnal passions.

The modern dance for high and low society is not civilization, but sheer devilization. It is nothing else but sinful gratification of the flesh. Let Catholics and Catholic Societies be ashamed to practise the modern dance, which is a downright insult to Christ and His immaculate Church.

Congratulating your Lordship, for your timely and noble stand taken in your diocese, and hoping others of your Fellow Bishops will follow your praiseworthy example, I remain, Rt. Rev. Sir,

Yours truly,

DON LUIGI SARTORI.

Rt. Rev. Wm. G. McCluskey, D.D.

The above condemnations show the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church to be against modern dancing, not because it is a harmless recreation, but because it is a sinful diversion and a source of still more grievous sins to all who engage in it or encourage it by their presence.

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MODERN DANCES MADE RESERVED CASES.

Two saintly Roman Catholic Bishops, since gone to their reward, were present at the Plenary Council. One was the late Archbishop of Baltimore, Martin John Spalding, Apostolic Delegate, who presided over the Council, and the other was the pious and learned Bishop Eugene O'Connell, Bishop of Marysville, Cal. Both these prelates made modern dancing requiring close bodily contact between the sexes a reserved case.

And now the question naturally arises, what is a reserved case, according to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church? According to all Roman Catholic theologians, a reserved case is a restriction of jurisdiction in absolving from a certain sin, the jurisdiction for absolving from other sins remaining. (See Elbel, Vol. III, p. 321, No. 330, Ed. II. Pad. 1895.) From this it follows that a reserved case is nothing else but a mortal sin which the ecclesiastical authorities have a right to reserve to themselves so that they alone may absolve from such a sin, or they alone can delegate their power to absolve to others. (Co. of Tr.) This legislation is intended to restrict evil in society. The

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Pope may reserve cases for the universal Church, the Bishops for their dioceses, the regular prelates for their orders or monasteries, and the pastors for their parishes. (See Elbel, Vol. III, p. 322, No. 331, Ed. II. Pad. 1895.) The Roman Catholic Church can reserve exterior and interior mortal sins. This is the common opinion of her theologians. As a matter of fact, however, that Church, which is a merciful mother, wishes to render the burden of confession as easy as possible. That Church reserves only external mortal sins which are certain and not doubtful.

The aforementioned Bishop O'Connell up to the time of his death kept such reservation intact. Priests in his vast diocese, oftentimes two hundred miles away from the episcopal residence, could not absolve modern dancers without permission, and had to apply to him for delegated faculties. It was, no doubt, an arduous, but, nevertheless, a just legislation for both penitents and priests.

After Archbishop Spalding's death his worthy successor, the late Archbishop James Roosevelt Bayley, D.D., a former Episcopal minister, and a relative of our president, desired to retain the same reservation, but met with objection from some of the more prominent priests of the diocese, who said this reservation caused them to do penance for the bad conduct of the Catholics who persisted in

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sinful dancing, they, and not the penitent, being compelled to apply either orally or in writing for the necessary faculties to absolve those who engaged in round dancing. At a General Conference of the Baltimore Archdiocese, the Archbishop reluctantly complied with the request of the priests. But what does this removal of the reservation mean in the Roman Catholic Church? Does it mean that round dancing is less sinful? No! It simply means that priests may, without asking special faculties, absolve those who engage in immodest modern dances, provided, of course, they promise to dance no more and that they show that they are truly sorry for their offence. The removal of the reservation leaves the sin as it was before—a certain, and a mortal exterior sin, owing to the indecent pose assumed by the dancers which is at once an allurement to lust for them and a source of scandal to the beholders.

And here it will be proper to remark that the above-mentioned prelates were eminent theologians and men of God, and knew full well the good they were doing for the commonwealth. They took part in the Plenary Council which condemned modern dancing, and exercised their episcopal power to enforce this decree in their own dioceses. We are positive that some bad Roman Catholics in the Baltimore archdiocese

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and elsewhere strive to persuade themselves that because dancing is no longer a reserved case that they are privileged to engage in the sinful practice of the modern dances.

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MODERN DANCES ARE CONDEMNED BY PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The Roman Catholic Church does not stand alone in her warfare against the evil of modern dancing, both in the city and country, but has as a strong ally many of the Protestant Christian churches. Modern dances are not condemned as universally as they should be by ministers of the Gospel of any particular church. Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, are more or less embarrassed with debts. Pastors oftentimes need the co-operation of every member of their parish to help to liquidate these debts, and, unless they are filled with religious fervor or if they dread unpopularity, they feel that they will not be assisted in liquidating debt if they boldly assail what might be considered some of the pet vices of their parishioners. Moreover, they know that entertainments, fairs, etc., for the benefit of the church are not as a rule successful, financially, unless they are followed by a modern hugging dance; and sooner than run the risk of losing a few filthy dollars made in such a way they sacrifice the interests of God, of religion and morality.

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The Third Roman Plenary Council of Baltimore (Chap. V, p. 167, No. 291) condemns this practice, declaring that such objectionable means of raising money cannot benefit the Church, but rather call down from heaven the wrath of God. We deprecate the indifference of the priests which is known to exist in certain localities in reference to the matter of round dancing, and we hold up for their emulation the conduct of some of our Protestant and Jewish brethren. The efforts of some Protestant Bishops and clergymen might serve as an incentive to those indifferent priests to take a bolder stand against the evil of modern dancing.

Listen to the opinions of the Episcopal Church authorities: Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont, condemns modern dances in the name of his church. He says that, "They are the premature incitement of the passions." The late Bishop Meade, of Virginia, affirmed that social dancing is in itself wrong, improper and of a bad effect. Bishop Coxe, of Western New York, in a pastoral to his people says: "The enormities and lasciviousness of dances, too commonly tolerated in our times, are disgraceful to the age and irreconcilable with the Gospel of Christ."

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TESTIMONY OF THE METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

A booklet written by a Methodist preacher, and entitled, "An Appeal to All Christians Against Dancing," proves that the members of the Methodist-Episcopal Church are not allowed to dance with impunity. "It is a flagrant violation of the general rules of our churches, both North and South." The sentiments of this Church against modern dances were vigorously expressed in the resolutions of the Frederick District Preachers' Meeting, presented to Rev. Father Sartori, of Midland, Md., by a special committee, endorsing fully his open letter of January 4th, 1903, against the evils of dancing. The resolutions follow:

"Resolved, That we, the Frederick District Preachers' Meeting, of the Baltimore Annual Conference, in session assembled this day, January 12th, 1903, in Centre Street M. E. Church, Cumberland, Md., do most heartily commend the position the Rev. Don Luigi Sartori, of the Catholic Church, of Midland, Md., has taken on the subject of dancing, as appears in the papers of recent date. We assure him of our

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most hearty co-operation in his efforts to suppress this and all other existing evils which undermine morality, modesty, virtue and the Gospel of Christ."

(Signed)

"U. S. A. HAVENER,

"A. A. ZIMMERMAN,

"C. A. JONES.

"Sixteen members present, and the above was passed unanimously."

In reply to the above resolutions Father Sartori sent the following letter to the Frederick District Preachers' Meeting:

MIDLAND, MD., March 18th, 1903.

"To the Methodist Preachers of the Frederick District, who will assemble in Centre St. M. E. Church, Cumberland, Md., for the monthly conference, March 9th, 1903.

"Revs. and Dear Sirs: It is with great pleasure that I notice in the Midland Press the excellent subject of your discussion for to-morrow: 'How best can we protect our young people from the worldly tendencies of the present age?' This will be a most practical conference. One of the greatest evils of the age, universally tolerated for want of common sense and true manhood, is modern dancing, alluring our young people to perdition.

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"The commonwealth is indebted to you, Rev. Gentlemen, for your noble determination to eradicate the evil in Allegany and Frederick counties. The fruit of your zealous labors begins to show. For this all right-thinking men and women of Frederick and Allegany counties tender you their thanks, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It is my conviction that modern dancing, admitting bodily contact between male and female, is a downright violation of the Sixth Commandment.

"As a pastor I have the power to delay or refuse the reception of Sacraments to round dancers, to players for the dance, to spectators, or any one, who, as a matter of fact, encourages the practice. I am ready to prove this right.* I doubt just now if in my parish six girls are to be found indulging in the evil. I put a ban on the evil in the parish.

"You and I and others are in this strife for better morals of the young people. We have in a special manner to protect the girls. The dancing room for

* See J. B. Bouvier, *Diss. in Sextum. Ed., XVII., Paris, Art. III., § III. No. 7, page 109.* Mind that the author does not mention round dancing, but with all Roman Catholic theologians admits the danger of dancing in general.

See also Elbel, Vol. III., No. 321, p. 322. Ed. II., Paderbornae, 1895.

Bouvier & Elbel are approved authorities of the Catholic Church. (Sartori.)

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them is one of the principal evils. Our Catholic young men of Allegany belong to the Total Abstinence Temperance Society and do not frequent saloons. My total abstinence society counts about 150 members, mostly young men. The main evil for them would be the ball-room. This evil must be prevented.

"We do not agree, reverend gentlemen, in religious tenets, but certainly we may agree in a noble work to better the morals of our young people.

"I am, reverend gentlemen, yours gratefully,

"FATHER SARTORI.

"P. S.—This note is not confidential, and you may use it as you please."

That open letter elicited the following reply:

"Centre Street M. E. Church,

"CUMBERLAND, MD., March 9th, 1903.

"REV. FATHER SARTORI.

"Dear Brother:

"Your letter of the 8th instant, on the 'evil tendencies of the present age,' addressed to the Preachers of the Frederick District Association of the M. E. Church, was referred to a committee of the undersigned for suitable reply.

"And we take this occasion, reverend brother, to express our sincere joy in the fraternal utterances of

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your present communication, and in the brave and successful fight you are making for pure morals and Christian character. The members of our Association were delighted with the mention of your great success in the temperance reform, and we assure you that our fellowship is made stronger and sweeter as we reflect upon our common work in daily and practical Christian life. The grace of God is working through us to the same great end. Our happiness will be increased to hear of your continued prosperity.

"If you will favor us with a copy of your forthcoming treatise on the 'evils of dancing,' we will esteem it as an additional bond of Christian brotherhood.

"Yours in Christian fellowship,

"A. J. GILL, President,

"L. A. THIRLKELD, Secretary."

MODERN DANCES

TESTIMONY OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

The opinion of the Baptist Church on modern dancing may be learned from an article which appeared in the Baptist Quarterly, in which the editor uses the most forcible language in arraigning the sinful practice of dancing. He says: "The dance consists substantially of a system of means contrived with more than human ingenuity to invite the instinct of sex to action, however subtle and disguised at the moment, in a sequel the most bestial and degrading. Passion, passion, and nothing else, is the true basis of the popularity of the dance. * * * It mingles the SEXES IN SUCH CLOSENESS OF PERSONAL APPROACH AND CONTACT as outside of the dance is nowhere tolerated in respectable society. It does this under a complexity of circumstances that conspire to heighten the impropriety of it. It is evening, and the hour is late. There is a delicious and unconscious intoxication of music and motion in the blood. There is a strange, confusing sense of being individually unobserved among so many, while yet the noble shame which guards the purity of man and woman alone together is absent. Such is the occasion, and still hour after

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hour it whirls its giddy kaleidoscope around, bringing hearts so near that they almost beat against each other, mixing the warm mutual breaths, darting the fiery personal electricity across between the commingled fingers, flushing the face and lighting the eye with a quick language."

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TESTIMONY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The Rev. William S. Potts, D.D., of the Second Presbyterian Church, of St. Louis, Mo., in a sermon which he published, condemns modern dances in the name of his church, because of their filthiness. Of the public ball he says: "The female is expected to make her appearance in a ball dress, which means that as much of the person as modesty will at all permit shall be exposed. She may be held in the embrace of a smooth stranger whom she never saw before, and whose heart is filled with lust, and her panting breast drawn close to his while waltzing or practising any of the still more delicate dances now so fashionable."

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TESTIMONY OF THE LAITY.

We have no regard whatever for actual dancing masters, who are the cause of damning numberless souls. The social world, though corrupted, begins to show a little uneasiness concerning the downright impudence of modern dances and compels the hypocritical dancing masters of the present time to make a detrimental confession to their cause. The New York papers, September 15th, 1903, published that the local instructors in dancing have taken up seriously the movement for the reform of ballroom manners and the popular form of round dances. They might as well strive to reform Satan himself. We quote what they had said:

"The degeneracy was so marked, that something radical had to be done."

A well-known dancing master who was at a summer resort this season (1903), stated as follows: "One evening, early in the season, the proprietor, after we had had some of the popular style of romping dances, spoke to a few of the young men and said he thought they ought to remember that it was just as incumbent on them to behave with circumspection and dignity

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in the ballroom as it was in all the other parts of the house."

The above forced statement is strengthening our position on the question of modern dances. We go further in this line of argument, quoting other laymen, who command more attention in the social world than those just mentioned. The testimony of these men, condemning modern dances, is of the greatest importance. Men and women of modern society are better acquainted with the evils of modern dancing than are most modern theologians. These members of society may be called "common sense theologians," and their opinions as such must of necessity carry very great weight. Some of these society people have witnessed dances both in the new world and in the old, and are very positive in their condemnation of some of the dances of modern society. Sermons and philippics from the pulpits of churches will have little or no effect on those for whom modern dancing has such a fascination, for the very good reason that they are seldom in the church to hear the sermons delivered. But when in books or in the public prints appears anything under the heading of dancing, they read it with the utmost avidity; and hence it would be well to quote the opinions of some competent critics on this all-important subject.

Mr. N. Francis Cook, LL.D., the author of a work which has attracted general attention, entitled "Satan

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in Society," enters a plea for social purity. He says that dancing exerts a prodigious influence upon female morality, and says that attendance at balls should be forbidden fruit, prohibited as positively as strychnine or arsenic. (Chap. 2.)

Mr. William Herman, of San Francisco, the author of "The Dance of Death," published in 1877, says those are hypocrites who dare to defend modern dances by claiming that they are innocent recreation and healthful exercises, and who quote "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" He declares that "round dancing is but an open and shameful gratification of sensual desire and a cooler of burning lust. It is an actual realization of a certain physical ecstasy which no pure person should experience, save under the sanction of matrimony. * * * It is a profanation of our civilization, an indecent assault upon common sense." He once asked a lady in society to give her experience on waltzing. The lady said: "In the soft floating of the Waltz I found a strange pleasure, rather difficult to intelligibly describe. * * * Folded in his * * * warm embrace, a sweet thrill would shake me from head to foot. * * * If my partner failed to arouse these, to me, most pleasurable sensations, I did not dance with him the second time." A little further on the same author states that the privileges of matrimony relieve the necessity claimed by worldlings for

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the dance. Dancers, he said, when married, will be the first to proclaim their abhorrence of dancing.

L. Vives writes: "Il faut bien dire que la danse est quasi le comble de tous vices; * * * c'est le commencement d'une ordure, laquelle je ne veux déclarer. Pour parler rondement il m'est d'avis que c'est une manière de toute villaine et barbare." We translate the above testimony thus: "It is right to say that the dance is the consummation of all vices; * * * it is the beginning of a filthiness which I do not intend to mention. To speak frankly, I think it a custom thoroughly villainous and barbarous."

Lord Byron was a very gifted author but a very dissolute man. He describes in shameful language the waltz, but in doing so he states nothing but the truth. I quote only a few lines in order that the reader may understand his idea of the infernal and ruinous fascination of a custom which is recognized and tolerated and even encouraged in the cities and towns throughout the country in this our day.

*"Waltz—waltz alone, both legs and arms demands
Liberal of foot and lavish of her hands;
Hands which may freely range in public sight
Where ne'er before—but—pray 'put out the light.'"*

We have positive facts to prove that lights were occasionally put out in localities where round dancing was held for the benefit of the Church.

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*"Seductive waltz, though on thy native shore,
Even Werter's self proclaimed thee half a whore." **

Prof. La Floris says that there are in San Francisco twenty-five hundred abandoned women, and three-fourths of these women were led to their downfall through the influence of dancing.

Ex-dancing Master T. A. Faulkner, who for several years held the championship of the Pacific Coast in fancy and round dancing, and was author of many of the round dances which are now the popular fads of the day, states that the most accomplished and most perfect dancers are to be found among abandoned women. And why? Because, he says, they are graduates of dancing schools. At Los Angeles, "The City of the Angels," he visited two hundred women in houses of ill-fame, and one hundred and sixty-three frankly told him that the direct cause of their downfall was the dancing school and the ballroom.

Governor Mickey, of Nebraska, is opposed to dancing on the following good grounds:

"I am opposed to dancing," he said, "on moral grounds. Liberties are permitted in the ballroom not tolerated elsewhere. Most of the disgraced women attribute their fall to dancing, for human vultures haunt

* Lord Byron ought to have mentioned that a prostitute invented the Waltz.

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to understand. One thing alone I shall mention: I have observed that those who enjoy this dance enjoy no other—that they are exhausted and miserable after indulging in it, and at the end of ‘the season’ they are broken down in health. All who have participated in it must feel greatly mortified and humiliated on reading your book, and many will be angry and bitterly denounce you; therefore I say I admire your courage, your heroism in defense of virtue, which is in danger of being entirely lost to society by reason of this bold dance. Let them suffer mortification! They have been ridiculing and scorning and slighting every modest and obedient girl who failed to participate with them, for these many years.

“I am sorry you could not give the name of the young lady whom you quote against the dance, because others will be accused; and ladies whose families, for generations, have strictly avoided such dances, would be sorry to be supposed to have had any experience, even at the price of being considered ‘eminent and renowned.’ I respect the lady, as I do you, for being willing to denounce this from her own experience. If consistent with your obligation toward her, I would be glad to know her name, which, of course, I would not even mention without your consent. Should you find the newspapers ‘hounding’ the wrong persons for this young lady, please give her name to the public,

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if she is still willing; at least, describe her, so that she cannot be easily confounded with others.

"I have as yet received only the copy you sent, not the ones I ordered. With great admiration and regard.

Very truly yours,

"ELLEN E. SHERMAN."

"912 GARRISON AVE., ST. LOUIS, MO., Oct. 19th, 1877.

"MR. RULOFSON:

"Dear Sir:—I owe you an apology for my long silence. I am very much obliged for the two books received. I am deeply interested in the result of your book; the more so as I hear the wail that goes up from the wounded and the guilty; but as you strike to heal, the wail inspires neither awe nor sympathy. So many are implicated in this evil custom, either personally or in their daughters, sisters, or near relatives, that there are very few who are entirely disinterested, and, therefore, but few who can form an impartial judgment. Many editors are afraid to praise your book, and stationers to keep it; and many clergymen shrink from a public denunciation of the dance, because their direct personal appeals have been ineffectual to prevent their own relatives or the children of prominent parishioners, from joining in it. A verdict cannot be procured against polygamy in a community of polyg-

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amists. The anger and mortification of our friends is natural, and not unexpected, but they have betrayed more malice than they were supposed to possess, since their only defense of their pet amusement is individual abuse. True, the dance admits of no rational defense, but they could personally plead 'not guilty' to pernicious effects, and each leave the verdict to time and a quiet examination of conscience. The Church has always condemned this kind of dance. The mildest of her saints (St. Francis de Sales) warns against such excesses, and Bishops of the United States in Council long since, earnestly exhorted Catholics to refrain from it. Parents are responsible for the defiance of all this authority; it is they who assume the risk for their children and themselves. It is not to be expected that young girls, who are unconscious of evil in the beginning should reflect long enough to summon the moral courage to resist the allurements of the dance, unless with encouragement and support of their parents. To the honor of pure maidenhood, be it said, however, that there *are* young girls who decline from instinctive delicacy, even when their parents would have them join the throng who dance down the broad road of worldly pleasure.

"I take with a grain of allowance what I hear of a grand jury indicting you on account of your book, for even anger and revenge could not render men so

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unreasonable as to admit a prosecution for the description, while the dance is still permitted. Your opportunities for seeing and hearing the fatal results of this custom have been greater than mine. I have looked on (when compelled to see it) with abhorrence, but I have not cared to reflect what its precise results might be, nor to judge its effects beyond the utter physical prostration it produces, in its most innocent votaries, and the vitiation of their tastes for any wholesome amusement. To that I can testify. The very sight of it, when danced in the least harmful manner, forces upon the mind the conviction of all you state regarding its often serious results; but rather than abandon what all the Churches condemn, they slander and persecute the one who dares to raise a voice against it. But, as I said before, their side of the case admits of no other defense.

"It was not from any unwillingness to bear abuse that I hesitated to enter the lists against the dance. You know my reason. Now that my name has appeared, I would earnestly repel any suspicion of having ever participated, and guard the memory of my parents from the aspersion of having ever countenanced it. This was my sole motive in requesting the name of the lady who gave her experience. Persons who read the book before reading my letter supposed you referred to me, without reflecting that your compliment-

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any description did not answer for me. How can those who claim to be innocent, say that *none* are guilty? If any are guilty (and who doubts it?) are not even the most innocent accessory to their sins? I hope you will send me whatever appears on this subject, pro and con. I leave you to make whatever use of this letter you please. There is no doubt but you have done a brave act, and that it will result in great good.

"I am, with sincere regard,

"Very truly yours,

"ELLEN EWING SHERMAN."

When the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VII., visited this country in 1860 during the administration of President Buchanan, at a great ball given in his honor he met a daughter of Mrs. Gen. Sherman and requested her to waltz with him, but she politely refused. After returning to England, the Prince forwarded to Miss Sherman an elegant souvenir addressed to the First Lady of the United States. The Prince was impressed by the modesty of the young lady, who probably was compelled by etiquette to be present.

A foreigner certainly cannot be impressed by modesty, at least, in a modern American ballroom. The French Government in 1902 sent to America the millionaire, M. Lazare Weiller, the Administrator of the General Telephone Department of France, to study

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the conditions of life. One evening he found himself seated at the opera in New York next to a very charming and interesting young lady of the "Four Hundred." "Tell me, sir," she said, "what has most impressed you in American society?" With a certain amount of impudence he replied: "The absence of modesty." The young lady answered, "You are right in your statement, monsieur, we are not modest, because modesty is a degraded form of foolishness and in our character everything is true."

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REFUTATION OF TWO ARGUMENTS USED IN DEFENSE OF MODERN DANCES.

It is quite natural that modern dancers should attempt a defense of their indulgence. The principal reasons given by them are: 1st, that we indulge in modern dances because they are physically and morally healthy, and moreover, they are a graceful exercise; 2nd, we practise these exercises because all people, both of high and humble society, practise them.

In proof of the arguments advanced, some dancers may say that a few months ago Yale College decided to teach dancing as a physical and a healthy exercise. But what kind of dancing has Yale decided to introduce? Is it the modern dancing, such as we have been condemning, or, on the contrary, is it not a dance such as would be required in the gymnastic work of the Freshman class of a modern college? Dr. William G. Anderson, the Physical Director of the Yale Gymnasium, is responsible for the introduction of these dances. He no doubt got his idea from reading of the exercises of the ancient Greeks,—exercises which have been mentioned in this booklet when ancient

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dancing was described. The Freshman will be allowed to select dancing as one of the forms of exercise which they are required to take. Two evenings each week will be devoted to it. The lessons will be started with the Irish jigs, then the Irish tilt will be taken up, and finally clog and soft shoe dancing. As long as the Freshman stick to these dances there can be no objection to such exercises. It is a manly, hygienic exercise—one which builds up the human constitution both physically and mentally, and one in which the enervated effeminacy of some modern dancers is conspicuous by its absence.

Modern dancing, strictly so-called, *i.e.*, the Waltz, etc., does not build up the physical constitution, but rather undermines it. The experience of the dancers themselves will bear out this statement. Who are those who attend the objectionable picnics, balls, dancing schools, etc.? They are, as a rule, those who work hard for their living, and many of them are young men and young women in cities and in farming districts and in the mining regions, who are obliged to rise early. Is it a wholesome moral and physical exercise to dance in a stifling room or in the open air, in scanty attire, until one or two o'clock in the morning, and, after a few hours' rest, repair to work? The young women especially, who get in a perspiration during the dance, and as soon as it is over rush to

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a cool place or to an open door or window, with their arms and chests exposed and tight lacing and paper soled shoes, will find in such a transition of atmosphere nothing but evil hygienic effects. Nature fixes her own necessary penalties for violations of her laws—penalties which will be severe. Is there any wonder then that so many young women are nowadays consumptive? Physically and morally they are wrecks, and that too because of excessive indulgence in dancing.

Young men and young women may work systematically six days in the week and rise fresh every morning, but let them attend modern dances for only a few hours each evening and see what will happen. Health and vigor, both of mind and body will vanish like the dew before the sun. It is not the extraordinary exercise which harms the dancer, but rather the coming into such close contact with the opposite sex. It is the fury of lust craving incessantly for more pleasure that undermines the soul, the body, the sinews and nerves. Experience and statistics show beyond doubt that passionate excessive dancing girls can hardly reach twenty-five years of age and men thirty-one. Even if they should reach that age they will be in most instances broken in health physically and morally. This is the claim of prominent physicians in this country.

Healthy exercise indeed! What a lie! The Waltz, Polka, Gallop and other dances of the same kind are

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disastrous in their effects to both sexes. Yet the woman is the greater sufferer physically and morally, because what is fatal for a woman may be less fatal, to a certain extent, for a man. See the girl in the morning when seated at the breakfast table. She is broken down physically and morally, a used-up creature. The Waltz has painted those dark circles round her eyes and planted those wrinkles on her brow. She is paying for the "stolen waters." She is ill and peevish. Poor little thing! She has been working so hard for many nights! Modern dances are surely the most strenuous activity in all the range of social exertions!

According to the calculations of a London medical authority, the average Waltz takes dancers over three-quarters of a mile, and a square dance represents a distance of half a mile. This reckoning on the Two-step is not given, but it is reasonable to conclude that nearly a mile must be covered in one of these dances. An evening devoted to this form of enjoyment frequently includes as many as twenty dances, generally divided evenly between Waltzes and the Two-step. According to the statistics above quoted these dances would represent a distance of nearly eighteen miles, lengthened considerably by the usual encores and extras.

The New York American and Journal, Sunday, April

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26th, 1903, states that a modern dancer dances thirty miles at the average ball. The writer says that a Waltz of average duration represents approximately a run of one thousand yards. This is the longest dance, with the exception of the Quadrille, which, with its four figures, covers nearly one thousand, eight hundred yards. The Mazourka is only equivalent to about nine hundred yards, and the polka to eight hundred, while the lazy Pas de quatre, *i.e.*, "Four-step," is barely seven hundred yards. Carrying his statistical ingenuity still further, he estimates that the usual series of dances at an ordinary ball, beginning at 10 P.M., and finishing at 5 A.M., represents no less than fifty-six thousand steps, equivalent to thirty miles on level ground. A mile is one thousand, seven hundred and sixty yards; and thirty miles will give fifty-two thousand, eight hundred yards. What a physical, healthy exercise is this for one night's work!

We scorn the claim that the body of young men and women of birth should be formed by such reckless and indecent exercises to promote health and strength and contribute to give an easy, graceful mien and carriage and straight attitude, a firm and steady walk and a gentleness and politeness in behavior. Grace-giving, forsooth! The grace of the harlot or of the libertine is not the most desirable possession. Let society men and women learn from the best moral

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schools of physical culture, from moral galateos or books on etiquette or oratory the necessary rules to obtain ease, grace and effectiveness in posture, expression and gestures and surely they do not need to learn that art from immoral modern dances.

After all, the natural pose and gestures of the young are pleasing. We side with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who states that all the gestures of children are graceful, and that the "reign of distortion and unnatural attitudes commences with the introduction of the dancing master."

The pure, modest girl has acquired her natural, dignified, graceful and impressive noble bearing from the school of Christ, and is admired by all, for virtue attracts. Whereas the modern dancer, pert girl, has learned her impudent coquettish posing, step and lustful contortion from the school of Satan in a ballroom and she secretly is despised even by her ungodly fellow-dancers. Indeed the young dancers of to-day and especially the young women have not inherited much common sense!

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SECOND OBJECTION REFUTED.

It is not logical to state that because modern dances are indulged in everywhere that they are lawful. It is true that modern dances are indulged in by a great multitude, including some of the more respectable members of society, but are these society people what might be termed the "best society" according to the teaching of Christ and His Church? Christian societies, which pretend to guard the interests of Christ and His Church, practise modern dancing, but not with His sanction or the sanction of His immaculate Church. Episcopalians, Methodist-Episcopals, Baptists, Presbyterians, and in fact those of every religious denomination, indulge in modern dances, but in doing so they are not acting in accordance with the teachings of their church, but rather against them. Members of many other churches also indulge in dancing, but they can hardly claim the sanction of their church for so doing. Even the Jews of our day practise modern round dancing, but they cannot claim the sanction of their ancient church in so doing, because it is a fact, easily authenticated, that the ancient Jews when dancing did not allow close bodily contact of the different sexes, and moreover,

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that they danced with those of their own sex. Because Christians and Jews in all countries indulge in modern dances it does not follow that such dances are strictly moral. Such dancers cannot be said to be representative church members. They might rather be said to be men and women who are acting contrary to the teaching of their church, contrary to the dictates of their conscience, and men and women of little hope of future salvation. Their hearts and affections seem to be centered on the things of this world. They seem to have no other desire than to have what is commonly called a "good time," to give full scope to their passions, to dread no vice that appears necessary for the gratification of their passions, and to be desirous for the accomplishment of their wicked designs. These are the people who engage in modern dances. But that such a large class of people engage in round dancing does not prove that round dances are moral. On the contrary, results prove very conclusively the immorality of modern dancing, all dicta to the contrary notwithstanding. The world is wicked. Modern dancers are worldlings, although some of them may pretend to be pillars of their church. Pshaw! They are not. Christ, His Church, and the Saintly Fathers do not agree with them on this question. Their conduct is nothing short of a rebellion against religion. It is a crying shame that a

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Christian man or woman should rebel against the Saviour and His Church by indulging in round dancing, since round dancing is so explicitly forbidden by Christianity. It is a shame, yea more, it is little less than sinful that pastors of churches should use means which are absolutely forbidden by the Church to raise money in the name of God. Woe to such abettors!

*And you that abet him in this kind
Cherish rebellion, and are rebels all.*

—SHAKESPEARE.

Our condemnation of modern dancing is as general as is the practice itself. To all who oppose Christianity, whether by dancing or by encouraging such a practice, we say with the Scripture that they are rebels and traitors: "Evil men and seducers grow worse and worse, erring and driving into error." (11 Tim. iii. 13.) "Traitors, stubborn, puffed-up, and lovers of pleasures more than God." (11 Tim. iii. 4.) To pastors who encourage such dances we would apply the words of the Prophet: "My people have been a lost flock. Their shepherds have caused them to go astray." (Jer. 1. 6.) These hirelings care nothing for the sheep. They are cowardly, self-interested hirelings. Yet Christ said, "the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." (John x. 11.)

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But though there are many practising and abetting modern dances, let it be understood clearly that their conduct does not reflect the sentiment of any great part of the Christian world. In every walk of life men are to be found who, like ourselves, are convinced of the immorality of modern dances—men who would shrink from the danger of exposing their wives and daughters to the fatal allurements of the modern dance hall. They clearly see the evil, and condemn it most strongly.

They know that a daughter ought not to hunt a husband at a ballroom, nor should a son resort thither to choose a wife, because the place is nothing more or less than a great marketplace of beauty. They agree with Bulwer, who said, "For my part, were I a buyer, I should like making my purchases in a less public mart." They know men who have been fond of dancing until they were married and after that danced at but rare intervals. And why not? Because such men recognize that a dance hall is a fit place good enough to procure a wife, but is not a fit place to which to take a wife. They know, with Samuel Butler, that modern dances "transform all wives to Delilahs." They know too that hugging other people's wives and daughters is an immoral action. They know that vendettas and tragedies without number are recorded in the annals of nations as sequels of the Waltz

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and other modern dances. They know, moreover, that such dances are the wide road which leads to the divorce court, and that they bring in their wake universal strifes and miseries, abomination and desolation into what had been once happy homes.

A few months ago, the famous Burdick murder mystery, which took place in Buffalo, New York, was the topic of sensational remarks in the cities and counties of the Union, from New York to San Francisco, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The press in the larger cities gave great prominence to this murder case, and it was a common thing to see such headlines as the following: "POINTS TOWARDS PENNELL'S GUILT! JUDGE MURPHY'S FINDING IN THE MURDER MYSTERY!" After stating the facts which bear on the case, the Judge said: "Altogether these facts would, in my opinion, constitute a just ground of suspicion on which a 'warrant could be issued were he alive.'" Burdick was brained in his den, and Pennell, the murderer, was killed together with his wife, by being hurled from his automobile into an abandoned quarry. This, we think, is the verdict of the public, that Pennell destroyed himself rather than face the trial in open court. His motive was twofold—first, to conceal the homicide, and second, to avoid the exposure of his adulterous relations with his vic-

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tim's wife which the divorce proceedings would necessarily bring forth.

At the trial the court brought out the fact that Pennell and Burdick's wife found their heaven in the lascivious Waltz at their Buffalo dancing club. The faithless woman on the witness-stand was compelled to make profession of criminal degradation. She admitted that Pennell's love-letter stated the fact, that he found "paradise within her arms." Her friend, Mrs. Paine, of New York, in open court, referring to the party, affirmed "I do not blame a man for wanting to dance with a nice plump, little figure rather than with a poker. * * * Allie Burdick always had a lot of attention, because she was the best dancer at the club. She didn't care about Ed Burdick. The Pennells and Burdicks both belonged to the Colonial Club, and took me to one of the club dances. I remember Allie said, 'I am glad you are here, Gerty, because you will keep Ed busy, and I can have a good time.'"

Rev. Dr. Levi M. Powers, pastor of the Messiah's Church, which Mr. Burdick attended, made the following statements to the State Attorney of what Mr. Burdick told him concerning Pennell. "Pennell is a college man. He is cultivated, has traveled, can quote poetry, and has time for dancing with women. I am only a money getter. I had a little more education than Allie. I suppose Allie has fascinated him."

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We are fully convinced that the tragedy above referred to was the direct result of an alliance formed in the ballroom. This tragedy would serve as an illustration from daily life of the evil consequences flowing from the modern ballroom and the modern dance, and should serve to convince wise men and wise women that the evil really exists, and should cause them to be more determined in their fight against it.

Thank God that we are not alone in our crusade against the shameful vice of modern dancing. The fact that many round dance does not prove the morality of round dancing, but rather proves that many both of high and low society are corrupted by it. According to the authority of many theologians and of ex-dancing masters, the dancing aristocracy in the city returning early in the morning from the modern ballroom, very often will accomplish their shameful purposes in a closed carriage, with curtains drawn, after command has been given to "drive slowly;" and the peasantry oftentimes sin on the lonesome country road on their return from the country dance.

Every word said in this treatise will be endorsed by men of God and the right-minded laity. The press of our country which has at heart the common good of all citizens, and conscious of the necessity of good morals for both the material and spiritual success of this great country, oftentimes cries out against

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the sinfulness of the modern dance. We are sure that we will find editors in all the towns and cities of the country who have the courage of their convictions, and who are not afraid to condemn most roundly modern dances because they know that thousands of their readers believe like themselves that modern dances are against public morality, and that dancing as carried on nowadays is an iniquitous diversion which in time will bring disgrace to a great part of the population. The Midland Press, Md., may be quoted as one which speaks boldly against this modern evil:

“Rev. Father Sartori’s fight against the dancing evil, begun apparently single-handed, is gaining strength every day. First the Methodist preachers of this district rallied to his lead with a ringing set of resolutions; then individual ministers of that conference began preaching sermons along the same lines; now Rev. Thos. Stanton, the able temperance advocate, has been reported as preaching a sermon on the subject, while the press all about is taking up the cudgels. A letter a week ago from a country settlement to one of the Keyser, West Va., papers, was devoted to dancing in that isolated section, and quoted Father Sartori’s utterances as authority in that argument. Thus it would appear that a decided reform movement has been launched here and

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will perhaps make a great change in the moral and mental views of this section ere its force is spent."

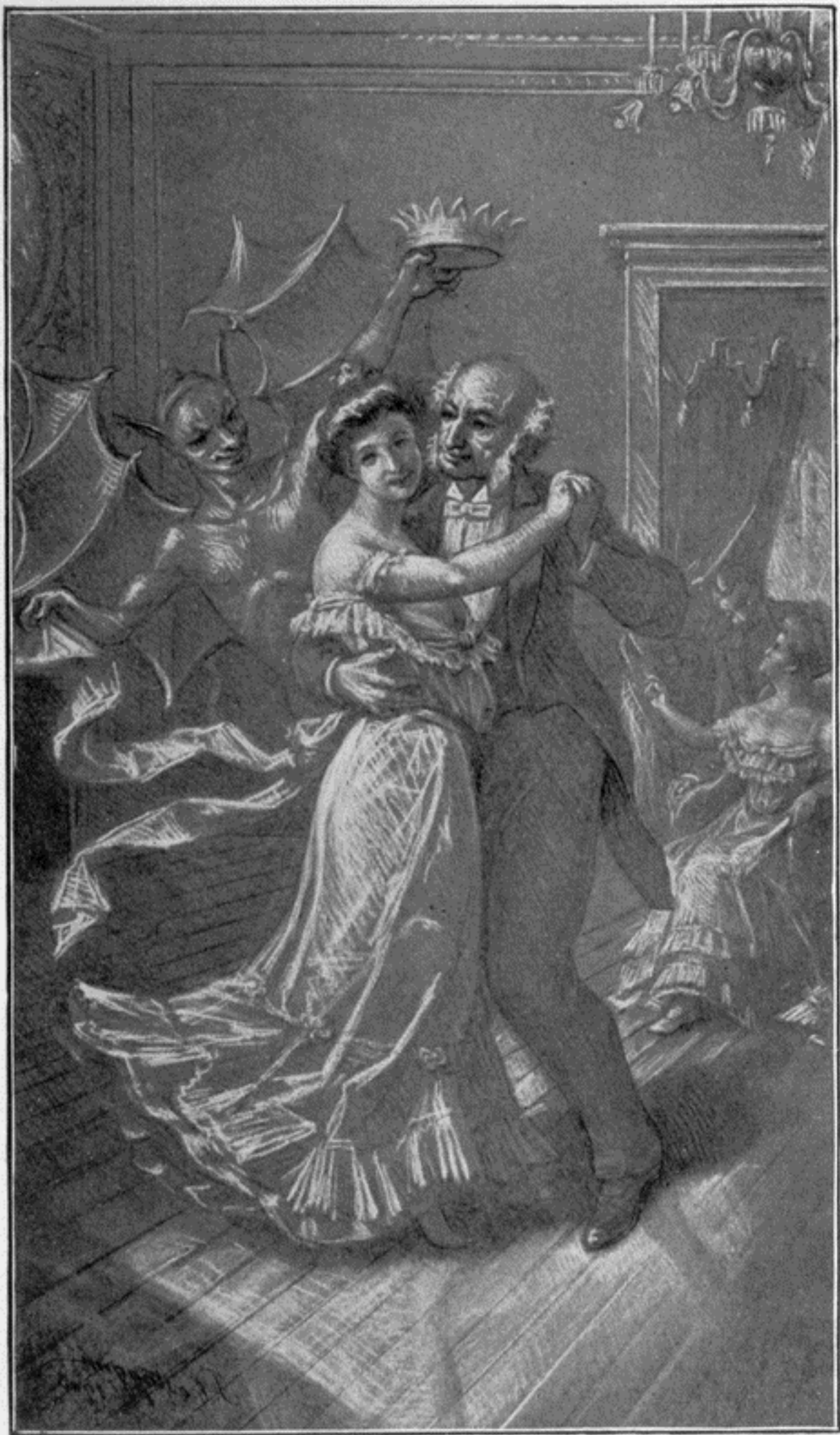
The fact that dancing is so generally engaged in does not prove that it is amusement of right-minded people, nor does it prove that the exercise is either beneficial or moral.

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THE QUALIFICATIONS OF CONDEMNATION OF MODERN DANCING.

If the arguments which we have brought forth against modern dancing are valid ones, there is only one conclusion which can be drawn from them, and that is that the practice should be suppressed. We claim that round dancing which admits of close bodily contact should be forbidden to all, both young and old. Aged people ought to know that carnal passions last a greater or less degree to the very end of life.* Moreover, the world would simply ridicule old people who engaged in the Waltz with a young man or young woman. Even old people among themselves are forbidden to assume an immodest position. And why not? Moreover, they are bound to abstain from such diversion for the sake of good example and to discountenance evil practices. Married people, for the same reason, are bound to do all they can to eradicate the evil and to avoid all round dancing. Besides at a ball it is possible for them to abuse the marriage privileges. Fathers and mothers likewise are not allowed to indulge in round dancing among themselves, nor are they sup-

* Human nature only dies half an hour after the soul takes its departure from the body. (St. Francis de Sales.)



CARNAL PASSIONS ARE NOT RESPECTERS OF
AGE.

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posed to teach or have their children taught waltzing. Brothers and sisters also come under this condemnation, if they engage in this evil practice. Experience teaches that they are often guilty of the sin of lust on account of the close contact which is required for modern dancing. Why should they assume this sinful pose and commit very grievous sins on no other plea than that of close kinship? Modesty is a divine injunction for all without distinction. Hence even children, who are supposed to be as yet unconscious of the attraction of the sexes, ought not to be allowed to indulge in round dancing, for in course of time, it will prove for them a fatal fascination. No modern dancing school ought to be tolerated. Roman Catholics ought to know that the Archdiocesan Synod of Baltimore held in 1875, under that venerable Prelate, the late Archbishop James Roosevelt Bayley, forbids teaching Waltzes and round dancing in the colleges, schools and academies of the archdiocese, and prohibits even persons of the same sex from round dancing. The good Archbishop, like his worthy predecessor Archbishop Martin J. Spalding, knew full well the evil tendency of modern dances and did all in his power to prevent such an evil gaining any inroad into the flock intrusted to his care by Christ. That Synod is still a law in the archdiocese of Baltimore, Maryland.

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CONCLUSION.

We have quoted from the Fathers of the early Roman Catholic Church to prove that dancing even in their days was condemned by the Church. We have shown that the dances of the early age were not as immoral as those of the present day. For the Roman Catholics we have also quoted the modern theologians who say that round dancing cannot be indulged in without incurring the proximate danger of committing sin.

We have also made use of the testimony of the Bishops and Ministers of the various Catholic and Protestant denominations who are vehement in their denunciations of the modern dances and the evils flowing from the ballroom.

We have quoted extracts from the daily press which refute the claim that dancing may be indulged in because it is a simple and healthful exercise. These quotations show by figures that dancing, far from being a simple and healthful exercise, is, on the contrary, a very severe strain on the nervous system.

We have also quoted the testimony of several mod-

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ern dancing masters, and they certainly are very strong in their denunciation of the modern Waltz.

To our mind the letters of Mrs. Gen. Sherman cannot be refuted. They are in themselves a masterly arraignment against the modern dances.

The experience of conscientious and zealous priests and ministers who have charge of souls teaches them that dancing as carried on nowadays both in the private home and the public ballroom, the picnic ground and summer resorts, is sinful and leads to the commission of still more grievous mortal sin, and the practice is the beginning of the downfall of many who would otherwise be upright young men and women and ornaments of society.

Finally, we have said that dancing should be forbidden to all, both young and old. These lines were written to remind worldlings of their iniquities, which shall call for heavenly vengeance. They know from experience the evil, and yet they must be told of it by some one whose duty it is to oppose it for the temporal and eternal welfare of those who engage in this sinful practice.

People who engage in round dancing cannot be and will not be scandalized by the plain utterances which we have used. Others who are not modern dancers, or are even ignorant of the present dancing evil, may derive some slight benefit by learning of the real nature of the

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evil, and may be warned by the reading of this book against taking a step which might finally lead to corruption. This plain statement of facts should not offend the natural delicacy of feeling of the upright young man or woman. The whole Scripture is full of exceptional plainness of speech, written with the express purpose of impressing the reader with the fact that there are certain actions which God can never tolerate. They ought to know that the truth must be told sometimes in order to unmask the bold, hypocritical, lustful, and stubborn class of dancers, both in city and country who openly defy Christ, His Church and His ministers by their persistence in an evil which is undeniable, and which threatens to engulf modern society like a monstrous tidal wave, deluging the remotest confines of the land, and drowning every germ of religious and moral growth in the young.

Let our last words be addressed to all Christian young people. Do not suffer yourselves to be guided in your diversions by the world and its votaries, nor by the Mephistophelian modern dancing master, nor by your ever craving passions, but rather by the letter and spirit of self-denial taught by Christ. Lend a willing ear to the entreaties of your spiritual guides, who cry out in season and out of season against the vice of modern dancing, and be convinced that the conduct of those who indulge in the modern dances

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is not in accord with the teaching of Christ who died nailed to the cross, and shed the last drop of His most precious blood for your salvation.

No one should impugn our motive in writing thus boldly against what we consider to be one of the greatest vices of modern times. We know that there will be some who will disagree with us and will condemn us most roundly. They will say and that too with an appearance of truth, that round dancing in itself cannot be sinful. But we claim that on account of the close proximity of the sexes which the modern dances demand that waltzing and all other round dancing is a proximate occasion of sin, and as such should be avoided.

We would ask all ministers in the vineyard of the Lord, and all people who believe in Christ, to raise their voices whenever possible against a vice which is slowly but surely sapping the very foundations of morality in the younger generation of our people. We would try to convince them that money realized from such a source cannot bring with it much good, but rather entails more or less of a curse.

In conclusion, we would say that this book has been issued with the hope of benefitting, to at least a slight degree, those who happen to read it; that they might, if guilty of the sinful practice, abandon it as soon as possible for the love of Christ, and that if they are

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opposed to the unlawful diversion, that they will become more and more zealous in fighting against the immorality of modern dances.

We end this book by saying that if our two kindred propositions are rejected, our opponents will be forced to proclaim that unwarranted hugging and bundling between male and female is allowed by the Christian Religion.

January 1st, 1904.