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AGAINST

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By a Person of Honour.

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~~THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON~~

A
S A T Y R
A G A I N S T
D A N C I N G.

SURE of all Arts that ever were invented,
To thy Production Sence the least consented,
But since the Capring Humours of the Age,
The Whimfies of the Beaux and of the Stage,
Almost despair'd for want of Airy Nonsense,
Thou wer't advanc'd: And well enough in Conscience
Thy fluid and fantastick Figure brought
The utmost of an Immaterial Thought;
Then Sence complied as jarring Senates do,
To vain Petitions of the Ignoble Crew,
To please the Mob, and silence every Afs,
In their behalf some foolish Act they pass:
But Nature seeing thee a useles thing,
This wise Decree did on thy Folly bring;
That as grave Prudence in the Soul was spread,
And fill'd the most material Part, the Head;

v
Thou

~~Thou shoud'st a visible Remoteness meet,~~
 Performing thy vain Office at the Feet ;
 The Feet, which vilely to the Earth declin'd,
 Are the remotest Members to the Mind :
 Yet these manur'd with Cotton Pantaloons,
 Soft tender Heels, gay Hose, compleat Buffoons,
 The Shoes must be precise, the Soles as thin,
 As theirs, who Puppet-like shall dance therein.
 Then with Resistless never-failing Power,
 Each Step shall win a Maid, and Girl deflow'r.
 The Ladies shall know better, and despise
 The empty Fops. but when will they be wise!
 Each Bound, each Leap such wondrous Grace imparts,
 'Tis absolute Cupeeing gains their Hearts :
 And Faith 'tis well that where the Pow'r of Wit
 Has no Effect, this Monkey Art may hit.
 Thus *David*, when he was a Captive made,
 And fearing that his Usage might be bad,
 Did feign himself a Madman, and was seen
 To act your *Scaramouch* and *Harlaquin*
 So well, as if from *France* he cull'd his Rules,
 Or learnt 'em here in *English* Boarding Schools ;
 But thus he sav'd his Life, which to his Cost
 Had he affected Witticisms, h'ad lost :
 I know not if he Danc'd, but if he had,
 The Conqu'ror wou'd have thought the King stark mad.

The

The former Age perhaps might tolerate it,
 But only this, this Age cou'd animate it ;
 Sublime Inventions having been so few
 We only cou'd have bad ones having new.
 As vigorous Nature languishes each Day,
 The Pow'r of understanding does Decay,
 And feebly from its ancient Glory falls away.
 The sicken'd Mind phantastickly pursues
 Vain Shadows and Chimera's as abstruse ;
 To unsubstantial Fancies, idle Dreams
 It bends, gay Folly only it esteems,
 And that Absurdities might be advancing,
 It caught a Whimsie, and created dancing.
 Time ran to soon, and spent it self to fast,
 When for to bring this Age, it left the last ;
 For as that Age aspired still to lead
 Its Glories on to that that shou'd succeed,
 That that succeeded Thought it was too mean
 That borrow'd Vertues shou'd on it be seen ;
 Therefore it left their Principles alone,
 For new and damn'd Inventions of its own.
 The vicious now are Lewder, and the Saints
 Begin to grumble at their hard Restraints.
 Tho' Spaniards urge their Cuckoldome by Bars,
 And Englishmen derive it from their Stars,

Weigh well our Freedom, and it will appear,
 They've not by half the Cuckolds we have here.
 The golden, Silver, and the brazen Age,
 Have long abandon'd this inglorious Stage,
 To that of Iron (which is yet not past)
 A horny Age has join'd it self at last.
 Tho' all that brutal Tribe by Meditation,
 Appears the Scandal of the fair Creation :
 Those whom a worthy Gentleman creates,
 Are free of being rank'd with such hard Fates.
 But when the spurious Offsprings of the Age,
 The Issues of the Dancing-School and Stage,
 Contribute to a Reverend Head such Shame,
 The Cuckold's worse, the Wife much more to blame.
 What are those publick Schools but Snares of Sin,
 To bubble Cits, and draw their Daughters in?
 The Mode is so diffus'd throughout the Nation,
 That what is Ruin, they call Education.
 The Masters, and a precise phantastick Rout
 Of wretched Posture, sling their Toes about,
 In a becoming Corner of the Room
 (Which they can construe nicely, I presume)
 The Representatives of Folly stand,
 Erect their Heads, beat Time, and throw their Hands,
 And all to show (what only cou'd advance
 From such vain Fops) a miserable Dance.

Thus

Thus when the Mountain, with laborious Weight,
 Groan'd to deliver its oppressing Freight,
 A tiny Mouſe, the total Buſineſs was
 That did the heavy Revolutions Cauſe.

- But as to me, damn their Coupees and Leaps,
 Their Bounds, their Hops, their Back and forward Steps;
 Their Figures too eternally I'd curſe,
 Did they not of their apiſh ſelves make worſe.
 In all that idle Tumult of their Toes,
 Nothing to me's more grateful than the Cloſe.
 Methinks a Dance is charming when 'tis done,
 So late 'tis ended and ſo ſoon begun;
 Like Books, whoſe vile Beginnings bring Confuſion,
 And after a Release by their Concluſion,
 The Members have no Succour from the Brain
 Tow'rds the Performance of a thing ſo vain.
 The Head as loath ſuch Nonſence to compleat,
 With Indignation ſpurns it at the Feet.

O! *France* with Pride thou may'ſt thy ſelf extol,
 Above the World, and look contempt on all,
 Since even thy gay Abſurdities are found,
 In wiſer Nations, than thy own, renown'd.

- How happy you, who wanting Sence to move,
 With airy Nonſence, can victorious prove!
 The Fair thus wave what *Batterton* will ſay,
 And only talk how finely danc'd *L'abbee*;

Thoſe

Those Cuts in th' air how sudden nice and clean;
 These Entertainments ruin ev'ry Scene.
 While God-like Kings are rectifying States,
 And our Attention on their Prudence waits,
 How much do we degenerate to Beau's
 To be diverted from their Thought by Shows?
 Yet nothing will our modern Plays enhance,
 But Dame *Ragou L'abbe* or Ladder Dance.
 What wonder Plays such cursed Fates shou'd find,
 When we th' addition'd Nonfence only mind?
 Tho' they are barbarously writ and new,
 Their present Stock of Nonfence will not do.
 The Poet to set off each monstrous Scene
 Must shove in more and have a Dance between;
 Some cap'ring Monsieur, or some Country Clown
 Shall influence a Play and draw the Town;
 Bewitch the Criticks, as old *Orpheus* sham'd
 The Devils from tormenting of the Damn'd.
 Thus to evade the Criticks mortal Dint,
 'Tis fit that every Play have dancing in't:
 For shou'd the Stage from the Expence Refrain
 Of keeping Dancers, Poets wou'd be fain
 To borrow Gold to bribe 'em back again;
 As Lords wou'd quit their Pedigree as soon
 As be without a Flatt'rer and Buffoon;

As

As a Romance our wonder wou'd imprint,
If Woods and Rivers were not mention'd in't.

So modern Plays wou'd usher meer surprife
If without entries they did once suffice ;

Yet I must justifie my noble Rage,

Curse the Buffoons and damn th' ignoble Stage ;

Which does precariously it self sustain,

By Dance and Mimickry and all that's vain ;

Like Bawds by plying Whores to Lust preserve

A fulsome Life, and so forbear to starve ;

Curse on the Sot whose Noddle cou'd advance

No farther then the Product of a Dance

And doubly damn'd be he that lik'd it first

Th' Inventor and th' Encourager be cursd.

The Volubility such of a Fop,

He shou'd like two superfluous Branches lop ;

His Feet he shou'd have cut with Indignation,

That so his Head might have the Information,

That it was set on a more wise Foundation ;

For even now the conscious Head arraigns,

The Trouble that the triping Feet sustains,

Had ev'ry Coxcomb that does dancing love,

The Peacok's glorious Radiancy above ;

• Like him in Shame his Splendour wou'd retreat,

At the vile Object of his cap'ring Feet ;

Whene're I dance I take along these Rules,

And fancy all the gaping Audience Fools ;

♣ For who with solid Judgment would repair
 To see a Dance? What wise Men would come there
 They might as well seek out some Rivers brink
 And stand to see the Bubbles rise and sink
 I (rather than be churlish) think it fit,
 Variety of Follies to admit,
 For Complaisance, and be alone the Wit,
 With patience I support the Ridicule
 And am at Pains to show my self a Fool
 If 'tis approv'd, I'm not with Pride possess'd:
 Since 'tis but vain and foolish at the best,
 If 'tis condemn'd I am not stung so soon,
 But have my end in being its Buffoon;
 I would the utmost of its Folly tell;
 And gad 'tis said, I do my Figures well,
 A Sot by Nature is a heavy Curse
 But to be one by Art is yet much worse
 Rough Nature, Art should polish and Improve:
 But modern Art even Nature does remove.
 For Nature that bestow'd us humane Shapes
 Vile dancing Metamorphoses to Apes.
 • 'Tis idle Folly, tho' it spares no Pains;
 • 'Tis the Convulsion of the Feet and Brains,
 It leaves no Mark of what it is but flies,
 While 'tis a doing, and then poorly dies,
 As Fishes on the Surface of the Main,
 Just show their Heads, and then Drop down again.

The

The Labours of the Mind themselves display,
 Tho' the great Author is not in the way ;
 In lasting Numbers their bright Rules is spread,
 T' instruct us here below tho' they are dead ;
 Your Coxcomb's of the tripping Trade can ne're
 Describe their Faculty unless they're there ;
 They cannot send a Leg t' instruct you how,
 The *Curfy* is, and what is't makes the *Bow*,
 Unless they are such damn'd confounded Fools
 To teach it in explanatory Rules ;
 And gad, I think so meanly of their Wit,
 Tis ten to one, but those damn'd Rules are writ,
 And now not being able to contain
 My fretted Sides, I laugh and drop my Pen,
 To think 'mongst the Worlds distracted Crew
 There's Mathematicks ev'n in dancing too.

F I N I S.

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The Labours of the Mind, that they display
I do not think Author is not in the way;
In Latin, which we have taught to be
The name is here below the they are dead;
Your Concepts of the striking a note can never
Describe their beauty unless they are there;
They cannot form a large intricate nor how
The Copy is, and what is a make the Day;
Unless they are, and should be contained too
To find their explanation, unless
And yet, I think, to many of their way
The one to one, but should be named unless
And now not being able to contain
My former ideas, I laugh and drop my pen,
To think, what is the way, which directed
I have's Masterpieces, even in the ending too



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