

Digital Collections

Dangers of the Dance

Item Type	Book
Authors	Porter, John William
Publisher	Baptist Book Concern
Download date	2026-03-27 16:31:41
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10392/5542

DEDICATED

To Mrs. Alice Hendershott,

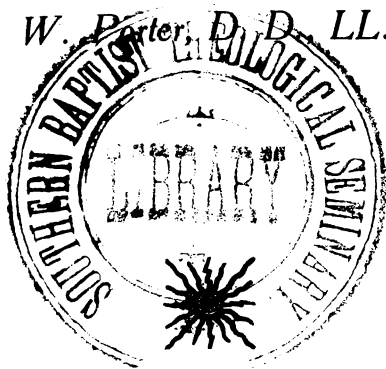
**Whose noble and unselfish life has proved an
inspiration and a blessing
to others.**



Dangers of the Dance

By

J. W. Porter, D. D. LL. D.



Baptist Book Concern
Incorporated
LOUISVILLE, KY.

COPYRIGHT, 1922
BY BAPTIST BOOK CONCERN
LOUISVILLE, KY.

PREFACE.

The writer realizes the delicate nature of the subject, and also that it is one which requires plain speech. No one, certainly not the preacher, would care to discuss the subject unless impelled by a solemn sense of duty. When the preacher dares protest against this consuming craze, his contention is discounted by his supposed lack of knowledge of this perilous pastime. The defenders of the dance stoutly maintain that only those who have danced are qualified to speak on the question. If this be true, the writer still insists that he speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees.

The very fact that for the past three years there has been more dancing, and viler dances, than at any period in the world's history, should be a sufficient apology for this publication.

Should anyone criticise this candid consideration of the subject or profess to be shocked by some of the statements it contains, the writer would answer that the description of an act, if true, cannot be worse than the act itself. The only question at issue, is the truth or the falsity of the statements involved. Surely no one who has indulged in the deadly dance, can reasonably object to a true description of the performance, and its logical and probable results.

29494

175.3

Surely the time is at hand, when for the sake of the churches and the nation, the matter can no longer be ignored. The wave of licentiousness, now sweeping over the country, and threatening the very foundations of our civilization, is due in large measure to the ballroom. The decline of social ideals, and the lowering of Christian standards have led to the downfall of other nations, and will, if unchecked, be the ruin of our own country.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Dancing Defined—Origin of the Dance—The Bible and the Dance.

CHAPTER II.

Religious Denominations and the Dance—Roman Catholic—Episcopalian—Presbyterian—Methodist—Baptist—The Preacher Who Apologizes for the Dance.

CHAPTER III.

Dancing Injures Christian Influence—Dancers Not Soul-Winners—Dancing Gives Offense—Dancing has the Appearance of Evil—The Position of the Ballroom in Private—Dancing Contrary to the Clear Teaching of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER IV.

Oversteps the Bounds of Propriety—The Dance Progressive—The Dress of the Ballroom—Corsets Checked—The Dance Loves Darkness—Byron on the Waltz—The Dance Links Itself With Other Evils.

CHAPTER V.

The Dance Based on Sex—The Testimony of a Lady Who Danced—A Young Lady's First Waltz—The Ballroom the Playground for the

Libertine—The Dance Causes the Wreck of
Unnumbered Homes.

CHAPTER VI.

The Dance Leads to the Pit—Mrs. F. M. Whitte-
more—Testimony of a Dancing Master—Three-
Fourths of the Inmates of Brothels Came to
Their Downfall by Way of the Ballroom—Adul-
tery in the Heart—International Dancing Mas-
ters' Association—The Daily Press on Dancing
—Dancing in Our Schools.

CHAPTER VII.

Excuses for Dancing—Beneficial to Health—Intel-
lectual—Custom—Makes One Graceful—Church
Members Dance—Parlor Dancing—Summary.

CHAPTER I.

DANCING DEFINED.

Dancing has been defined as keeping step to music. This definition, many years ago, would have been correct, but it utterly fails to define the dance of today. The dance, as now practiced, demands the use of body, limbs and feet and that too, in a manner well calculated to excite the lower passions. All the modern dances are solely sensual, and this fact is, and must be admitted by the great majority of those who indulge in this sinful pleasure.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DANCE.

The dance, in one form or another, is of very ancient origin and was usually practiced as a religious rite and always as a manifestation of joy. The astronomical dances were invented by the Egyptians, to represent the movements of the heavenly bodies. Children's dances were common in Lacedaemonia and were given in honor of Diana. May dances originated in Rome. At daybreak the boys and girls went out to gather flowers, and the day was spent in dancing and other festivities. Military dances, which are among the oldest of the dances, were executed with swords and javelins. Sacred dances were common at a very remote period. They were practiced by the Jews. See Ex. 32:21, 2 Sam. 6:14, Ps. 10:4. In ancient

times the Gauls, Germans, Spaniards and English indulged in dancing as a religious rite. The American Indians held their war-dances as an act of worship, when they were going on the warpath, and also to celebrate their victories. The Dancing Dervishes engaged in dancing as an act of worship. In no religious dance, nor in ancient dances of any character, did the opposite sexes dance together.

The Dance of Death, a phrase frequently applied to modern dances, was originally applied to a series of wood-cuts made by Hans Holbein in 1538. In these, death is represented as dancing after all classes of people, but is swallowed up at last.

The round dance is of modern origin, with an unfortunate heredity. The waltz, the first of the round dances, was imported to America from Germany in 1795, though it was many years before it was tolerated by respectable people. We get the word "waltz" from "walzen," which means to roll. Though of Bohemian origin, it is said to have been born in a Parisian brothel, and it is a calamity that it was not restricted to the place of its nativity. Until the introduction of viler dances, within the last two decades, it held first place with the devotees of the ballroom. The two-step is of American origin. The tango (tango Argentina) came to us from Argentina. It was

outlawed in the country of its birth, but has secured a large following in our country. In 1911, the negroid and animal dances began with the turkey-trot, in San Francisco, California. The vilest dances now common among us are but variations of the turkey-trot. They seemed to have reached the limits of indecency and vulgarity. The editor of one of our great daily papers recently said:

“The question with the questionable dancing is, there is no question about it, it is unquestionably bad.”

THE BIBLE AND THE DANCE.

In view of the fact that some have tried to justify dancing by the Bible, it is well that this claim be candidly considered. It will be found that dances sanctioned by the Scriptures were an expression of religious fervor and gratitude, and there could be no possible objection in anyone engaging in similar dances. Miriam and her maidens danced for joy because her people had been delivered from the hand of the oppressor. The good women danced for joy over David's victories, and before the long lost Ark. It will be noted that men and women did not dance together, and the soul of the modern dance, the sensual, was entirely wanting. There was no contact of bodies

of women with women or men with men, much less of men with women.

Dr. Lyman Beecher, who has made an exhaustive study of dancing in Bible times, says:

(1) Dancing was a religious act, both of the true and idol worship.

(2) It was practiced exclusively on joyous occasions, such as festivities or great victories.

(3) It was performed by maidens only.

(4) It was performed only in the daytime, in the open air, in highways, fields, or groves.

(5) Men who perverted dancing from a sacred use to purposes of amusement were deemed infamous.

(6) No instances of dancing are found on record in the Bible, in which two sexes united in the exercises, either in or out of worship or as an amusement.

(7) There is no instance on record of social dancing for amusement, except that of the vain fellows devoid of shame, or the irreligious families described by Job, which produced impiety and ended in destruction; of Herodias, which terminated in the rash vow of Herod and the murder of John the Baptist.

The above is an incontrovertible statement of the character of the dances mentioned in the Bible.

Religious dancing fell into discredit with the feast of agapae. Augustine denounced the practice, though even as late as the middle of the eighteenth century there were still traces of religious dancing in the cathedrals of Spain and Portugal. It was a ballet dancer that caused the death of John the Baptist, and this type of dancing is still preserved in the vaudeville and cabaret.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE AND THE DANCE.

The fact that the Christian conscience condemns the dance should be sufficient to deter all Christians from dancing. It may be urged that many Christians do dance, and that few churches discipline for dancing. This is true, and the very fact that many Christians patronize or participate in the dance has tended to hush criticism, and aided and abetted this sinful amusement.

The claims that several of the denominations are not opposed to the dance deserves refutation. All the great denominations have, at one time or another, denounced the dance. The following quotations afford abundant testimony to the attitude of the denominations mentioned:

ROMAN CATHOLIC.

Some years since, the Plenary Council, in a meeting at Baltimore, condemned the dance as "fraught with the greatest danger to morals." A number of dances have been forbidden by papal edict. Cardinal Caviarliari, an intimate associate of the Pope, sent out a pastoral letter instructing all the priests of his jurisdiction to "deny absolution to all Catholics, who at confession admit having indulged in forbidden dances, unless they promise to renounce them." He further says:

"These dances are a form of moral turpitude. The dance, publicly exhibited, is revolting and disgusting. Only persons who have lost all moral sense can enjoy them. It is the shame of our days."

Archbishop Spaulding says:

"Nineteen out of twenty fallen women coming to the confessional attribute their downfall to the dance."

Bishop Schrembs, of Toledo, writes:

"There is a wave of sensualism sweeping over the land today, and on its crest it has carried with it the suggestive fashions of dress, and the nauseating revels and dances of the brothel. Dress and the dance under such conditions are destroying the very sense of womanly reserve and decency. They are born of the sensualism of the brothel, and they quite naturally beget sensualism in return."

Archbishop Elder, of Cincinnati, many years ago, issued a circular letter to all the clergy of his diocese in which he said: "There must be no round dancing at any time, and no dancing of any kind after dark."

Cardinal O'Connell, of Boston, sees in the ball-room "An ever-increasing disregard of even the rudiments of common decency of dress, of deportment, of conservation, and of conduct. If this is

the new woman, then God spare us of any further developments of an abnormal creature.”

The Rev. James Blenk, Archbishop of New Orleans, said of the vile dances:

“Has it come to this that our boasted city, our boasted civilization, even our Christianity should be banished to make room for the vile corruption freighted with the miasma of the underworld? I appeal to the mothers and fathers, for the love of God, to set your faces against this outrage.”

In 1916 Pope Benedict put a ban on dancing under the auspices of parish churches.

EPISCOPALIANS.

The Clergy of Virginia, in their address to people of their respective parishes, said:

“We have to say of those within the scope of our observation, who after due endeavors for their conviction, have still professed their inability to see any harm in these and like things, and have continued to be the defenders of dancing, whether they practiced it or not, that in no instance have they been persons, who on other grounds and apart from this particular question have given satisfactory evidence of having been born of the Spirit.”

Bishop Hopkins says:

“In the period of youthful education I have shown that dancing is chargeable with waste of

time, the interruption of useful study, indulgence of personal vanity and display, and the premature excitement of passions. No argument can make it consistent with baptism."

Bishop McIlvain says:

"The only line I would draw is entire exclusion."

Bishop Meade says:

"The social dance is not among the neutral things we may do at pleasure, among the lawful, but not expedient; but it is within itself wrong, improper and of bad effect."

Bishop Cox, of Western New York, in a Lenten pastoral said:

"The lasciviousness of dances is so disgraceful to the age, and so irreconcilable to the Gospel of Christ, that I feel it my duty to the souls of my flock to warn those who run with the world to the same excess of riot in these things they presume, not to come to the Lord's table.

Bishop Johnson, of San Antonio, in addressing the diocesan council of West Texas says:

"These dances have passed the limit and are properly classed as vulgar, immodest and indecent, and therefore ought to be ostracised by all respectable people." His denunciation of the dances was unanimously endorsed by the council.

PRESBYTERIANS.

The Presbyterian denomination has expressed

itself on various occasions, and in language that cannot be misunderstood. The General Assembly passed this resolution:

“We regard the promiscuous round dancing by members of the church as a mournful inconsistency, and the giving of parties for such dancing, on the part of heads of families, as tending to compromise the religious profession and the sending of children of Christian parents to dancing schools, as an error in family discipline.”

“The pleasure of the theatre and the ballroom is forbidden in the answer to the 139th question in the larger catechism. The spirit of the prohibition extends to all kindred amusements, which are calculated to awaken thoughts and feelings inconsistent with the seventh commandment, as explained by the Saviour in Matthew 5:27-28.

The late Albert Barnes, an eminent Presbyterian commentator, says:

“Dancing, balls and parties lead to forgetfulness of God. They nourish passion and sensual desires. They often lead to the seduction and ruin of the innocent. No child dances into heaven, but many a one has danced into hell.”

Dr. B. M. Palmer, of New Orleans, and for many years the leading Southern Presbyterian minister, says:

“Promiscuous dancing between sexes is essentially voluptuous and demoralizing. Nor is it suf-

ficient answer to say that multitudes dance who are never conscious of any improper associations. It might not be safe for many whose characters are above suspicion even themselves to make too nice an analysis of the pleasure they experience in the dance."

The Presbyterian Board of Publication published a tract containing the following:

"The dancing school instead of being called a school of easy manners, is rather to be styled a place where girls are taught to substitute the finesse of the coquet for true feminine delicacy, and where boys take their primary lessons in the arts of seduction."

Dr. W. S. Potts, of the Second Presbyterian Church, of St. Louis, says of the ballroom:

"The female is expected to make her appearance in a ball-dress, which means that as much of her person as modesty will permit shall be exposed. She may be held in the embrace of the smooth-tongued stranger whom she never saw before, and whose heart is foiled with lust, and her panting breast drawn close to his, while waltzing or practicing any of the still more indelicate dances, now most fashionable."

METHODIST.

The Methodist denomination has interpreted their Book of Discipline as positively prohibiting

dancing, and all efforts to change this has thus far failed. Their great commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, says:

“Dancing was to me an unmixed moral evil; for although by the mercy of God, it led me not to a depravity of manners, it greatly weakened the moral principle, drowned the voice of a well-instructed conscience, and was the first cause of impelling me to seek my happiness in this life. Everything yielded to the disposition it had produced, and everything was absorbed by it. I hold it justly in abhorrence for the moral injury it did me.”

Bishop Candler, one of the leading Methodist bishops of our nation, says:

“It is not always possible to prove, for example, that the dance leads directly, in every case, to immorality, though unquestionably it has resulted thus in thousands of cases.”

The following is from the Methodist Discipline:

“It is contrary to the spirit of the Discipline and the New Testament to teach modern dancing, or to practice promiscuous dancing, and such a case comes under the rule of the Discipline forbidding improper tempers, words, or actions.”

BAPTIST.

Dr. Alva Hovey, the long-honored President of Newton Theological Seminary, says:

“Our accusation is that the dance, instead of affording an opportunity for mutually ennobling companionship between man and woman, inspired with a chaste and sweet interfused remembrance of their contrasted relationship to each other—that the dance instead of this, consists substantially of a system of means contrived with more than human ingenuity to *incite the instincts of sex to action*, however subtle and disguised at the moment. We charge that *passion*, passion, and nothing else, is the true basis of the popularity of the dance. For it is no accident that the dance is what it is. It mingles the sexes in such closeness of contact and personal approach as, outside of the dance, is nowhere tolerated in respectable society.”

Dr. Russell H. Conwell, of Philadelphia, and for more than fifty years one of America’s most useful ministers. says :

“Men and women act now in public, because they call it ‘dancing,’ in a manner which would never be allowed in the parlor or home. Such action never would be allowed anywhere else, because it must arouse a dangerous, wicked appetite that brings about criminal results. I have looked in at some of these balls, and I can say to you now, young women, that you are doing the most wicked thing this side of murder when you dance

with young men in places like that, under those circumstances, embraced, as you are, in the modern dance. Beware! God will hold you responsible for the temptations you put in their way!

Baptist churches have no organization with power to speak for the denomination, and can therefore make no official declaration in this regard, but it is well understood that an overwhelming majority of Baptist churches are utterly opposed to the dance. Many Baptist churches discipline members who engage in the practice. There is not a consecrated influential Baptist minister in America who endorses the dance. There is not an instance on record of a Baptist church endorsing the dance. Wherever a Baptist organization has spoken on the subject the dance has uniformly been condemned.

In spite of the well known attitude of the various denominations, leading preachers and evangelists, there may yet be found, here and there, a preacher who expressly or tacitly endorses this, one of, if not the greatest of modern evils. The least that can be said of such a minister is that he is consciously, or unconsciously, untrue to God and man. The time-serving preacher, who for the sake of popularity, inveigles young people into his church by crucifying the

Gospel, that he may be crowned by a wicked and adulterous generation, is somewhat responsible for the prevalence of this salacious sin—"false, fleeting, perjured Clarence."

The Rev. Harry H. Hubbell, pastor of a Presbyterian church in Buffalo, recently said in this connection:

"The evils of cabarets and dance halls can be cured by providing music and dancing right in the churches, minus the objectionable elements encountered on the average public dance floor." Commenting on this, the editor of the Baptist Advance, in a recent issue of his paper, says:

"If we 'get' the gentleman, human nature has no corruption from which it needs to be cured. All that is wanted is to give the people what they want under church auspices. Just provide in the churches for dancing, drunkenness, adultery, etc., 'properly supervised,' and then let nature take its course. The right way is not to check the passions, but to provide for their indulgence. If anybody doubts that the devil's preachers are on the job, this case ought to remove all doubt. We have frequently remarked that the devil is in serious earnest about capturing the whole Christian enterprise. And he seems to be working mainly from the inside. If he can get control of enough preachers and religious leaders, he will have gone

a long way toward capturing the whole thing. If he can succeed, the whole world will become as ancient Sodom."

The words of Ella Wheeler Wilcox may, with all propriety, be applied to the preacher who dances or encourages dancing:

“And money can buy us grace,
If it rings on the plate of the church,
And money can neatly erase
Each sign of a sinful smirch.
For I saw men everywhere,
Hotfooting the road of vice,
And women and preachers smiled on them,
As long as they paid the price.”

CHAPTER III.

DANCING INJURES CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.

That dancing cripples one's influence for Christ is a closed question with most Christians. It is tragically true that but few dancers are active church members. One's love for his church is almost invariably in an inverse ratio to his love for the ballroom. Certainly dancers are not soul winners, and there is no record of anyone being converted in a ballroom. Sooner or later dancers lose their power with God and man. Even an unbeliever is often heard to remark, "I would not dance, if I belonged to the church." It is sad enough that the conscience of an unbeliever should be more sensitive than that of a professed believer. Everywhere and under all circumstances, the world discounts the religion of the dancer. In a long ministry the writer has never known one who engaged in the dance that would not neglect his prayer-meeting for the ballroom. The devotee of the dance-hall not only brings reproach upon his church, but crucifies his own influence.

It is a significant fact that dying men and women do not send for their ballroom companions. The dancer would be ill at ease in the death chamber. The embrace of the ballroom shrinks from the embrace of death. We have

never known one who would be willing to go from the ballroom to the grave.

Mrs. Sallie Richester Ford says of dancing Christians: "But these Christians are not the ones who yield the most influence for the cause of Christ. They are usually persons who are worldly in their tastes and whose maxims, even in religion, are of a worldly character. They are not the Christians who are found at prayer-meeting, beside the bed of suffering, or giving of their substance to the cause of Christ."

Without doubt, the ballroom has blighted the influence of countless thousands of Christians. Many of our churches have lost their power and become objects of contempt and derision on account of dancing members. The late Fred Hale, one of our most successful evangelists, says of the dancing Christian:

"It ruins his influence over the unconverted. Ask any penitent soul seeking freedom from his burden of sin if he prefers one from the ballroom to lead him to Christ. I hear it often remarked by outsiders, that it is inconsistent for church members to dance. The dancing Christian is a stumbling block in the way of others."

— Dr. J. M. Pendleton says:

"In a ministry of more than fifty years, I have never known a pious dancer."

Jesus says:

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

IT GIVES OFFENSE.

It will not be denied that dancing gives offense to many of the followers of Christ. Entirely apart from the merits of the question, the very fact that it is a stone of stumbling should preclude Christian participation. Paul said that if eating meat (offered to idols) makes his brother offend he would eat no more meat. For his brother's sake he was willing to surrender his own right. We can well afford to surrender our own rights for the higher rights of others. The following Scripture should settle the question with every right-thinking Christian: “But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”—1 Cor. 8:12-13. Millions of Christ's most consecrated followers are grieved and hurt by dancing Christians. The Gospel is being hindered and Christ crucified in the house of his supposed friends by the devilry and disgrace of the ballroom.

If the dances were perfectly innocent, they would become sinful by wounding the consciences of thousands of the most consecrated and useful Christians. We may well ask, if one can be a Christian who knowingly and willfully practices something that causes pain and offense to the pastor, and the more spiritually minded of his church? In so doing, our sin is not less against the brethren, than against Christ. Paul says: "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."—1 Cor. 8:12. It is a sin to offend and equally sinful to cause others to offend.

Even those whose eyes have been blinded by this fascinating sin will admit that it is of doubtful propriety. This alone should be sufficient to prevent them from indulging in the dance. Obviously it is a sin for a Christian to indulge in anything concerning which many have serious doubts. Paul says: "He that doubteth is damned (condemned) if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."—Rom. 14:23. This great principle not only applies to dancing, but is applicable to everything concerning which we have doubts. To give offense, or to cause others to offend, is a very serious matter, as is evidenced by the following Scripture:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones

which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”—Rom. 18:6.

DANCING HAS THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL.

Whatever the merits or demerits of the dance, it will be generally admitted that the dances of today have the “appearance” of evil. We are commanded to avoid even the appearance of evil—“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”—1 Thes. 5:22.

In the opinion of the writer, it would be rather difficult to present a picture that carries with it more of the “appearance” of evil than that of the modern dance. Gail Hamilton says: “The pose of the parties suggests impurity.” A Philadelphia army officer, after witnessing one of the debauching dances, said: “If I should see a man offering to dance with my wife in that way, I would horse-whip him on the spot.”

It is undoubtedly true, that should a husband catch his wife in the parlor, in exactly the same position with a man that she occupied with him in the ballroom, he would be tempted to shoot him on the spot. If a man with his hand tightly clasping the hand of a woman, not his wife, his arm around her waist, her head on his shoulder, his feet between her feet, does not have the

“appearance” of evil, it must be that evil is only an “illusion of mortal mind.” If it has no “appearance” of evil, why should not the same position be assumed at other times and in other places?

No one realizes more than the dancer that the position assumed in the dance has the appearance of evil, suggests evil, and is evil, and an evil withal, of which most of them are conscious, and from which comes the charm of the dance.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

DANCING CONTRARY TO THE CLEAR TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Admittedly, dancing is a worldly amusement, and inevitably identifies the Christian with the world, and worldlings. The very fact that it is a worldly amusement removes it from the sphere of Christian life and activity.

Paul says:

“And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.”—Rom. 8:2.

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”—Phil. 2:15.

The command not to be "conformed" to the world, forbids dancing just as clearly and emphatically as though it had been said, "Thou shalt not dance." If dancing does not constitute conformity to the world, then conformity to the world is a physical impossibility.

Again Paul says: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in the time past, that they which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 5:19-21.

"Revelling," which we get from the Greek word komos, means dancing, or festivity with music and dancing. It will be observed that Paul here classes dancing with "adultery," "drunkenness," "murder," etc. It has been said, with all truth, that dancing is as unscriptural as the other sins with which Paul classes it.

James says: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God."—James 4:4.

Christians are commanded to be separate from the world: "Wherefore come out from among

them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you." 2 Cor. 6:17. We are commanded to let our light shine that we may glorify God, and this cannot be done by dancing, good bad or indifferent. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."— 1 Cor. 10:3.

CHAPTER IV.

OVERSTEPS THE BOUNDS OF PROPRIETY.

There can be no doubt that the modern dance oversteps the bounds of ordinary propriety and common decency. Perhaps it may be replied that this is not true of all dances. This is true, but it is used as mere subterfuge. The square dance was all right, but the dance has not been kept square. The old Virginia reel and cotillion have virtually disappeared. The man who dares suggest that the dancing of the night be confined to square dancing would raise, with the dancers, a question concerning his sanity. The question is the dances of today, and not those of a century ago. Consciously, or unconsciously, it is the physical contact of the two sexes that is lacking in the square dances, that gives life and spice to this insinuating amusement.

It is all right to clap your hands and shuffle your feet for joy, but it is all wrong to generate sensual pleasure by clasping hands and shuffling feet and limbs with the opposite sex.

THE DANCE PROGRESSIVE.

The dance began with those of the same sex dancing together. Originally it would have been considered a downright disgrace for a man and woman to dance together. Then came the square

dance, in which the hands were the only point of contact. Then came the waltz, turkey trot, grizzly bear, bunny hug, buzzard lope and the shimmey, *ad nauseam ad infinitum*. Practically all these dances have been participated in by young ladies of our so-called best families, and in many of our educational institutions, and in some of our denominational schools.

If one never takes the first downward step, he will never reach the bottom.

THE DRESS OF THE BALLROOM.

The ballroom is not only frequently suggestive, but in many instances, positively disgraceful. On such occasions the dresses are often

“Light and white,
and slight and tight.”

With low neck and short sleeves and lower cut, without sleeves, the dancers are not, as generally supposed, in “full evening dress,” but rather full evening undress. The half-nude woman may pass in ultra fashionable society as “divinely gowned,” but in plain English her dress is sensually suggestive, and her appearance vulgar. Dress is modest, or immodest, whether in the ballroom or brothel.

Many of the fashionable dances now have a check-room, where the ladies check their corsets before dancing. This is quite common in what

is known as "polite society." Many young men have gone so far as to refuse to dance with a woman who has on her corset. The reason for this is quite obvious to all who are acquainted with the dance. The plain truth is, the corset is an impediment in the process of developing the lower passions. If this is not the reason will some apologist for the dance please give a satisfactory one? The man wishes the corset dispensed with that sexual feelings may be more easily and intensely aroused. Corsets are checked, be it remembered, not in the low dives, but in dances in our most fashionable hotels. The volcano of pent-up passion aroused in the ballroom may not always remain inactive.

THE DANCE LOVES DARKNESS.

We are told that certain people "love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." It is a fact that most of the villiany of earth is perpetrated in the night-time. Evil abhors the clear light of day. No innocent amusement will seek the cover of darkness.

Why is it that practically all dancing is done in the night time? Card-parties and all other forms of amusements are held in the daylight. No dancer wishes a day-light dance. Does Byron offer the correct explanation?

"Far be from thee and thine the name of prude;
Mock'd, yet triumphant, sneered at, unsubdued;

Thy legs must move to conquer as they fly,
 If but thy coats are reasonably high;
 Thy breast is bare enough, requires no shield:
 Dance forth—sans amour thou shalt take the field,
 And own—impregnable to most assaults,
 Tho not too lawfully begotten "Waltz."

Not love-lorn Quixote, when his Sancho thought
 The knight's fandango, friskier than it ought;
 Not soft Herodias, when, with winning tread,
 Her nimble feet danced off another's head;
 Not Cleopatra on her galley's deck,
 Displayed so much of leg, or more of neck,
 Than thou ambrosial waltz, when first the moon
 Beheld the twirling to a Saxon tune!

Endearing waltz! to thy more melting tune
 Bow Irish jig and ancient rigadoun.
 Scotch reels avaunt! and country dance forego
 Your future claims to each fantastic toe!
 Waltz, Waltz alone, both legs and arms demands,
 Liberal of feet and lavish of her hands;
 Hands which may freely range in public sight
 Where ne'er before-but-pray "put out the light."
 Methinks the glare of yonder chandelier
 Shines much too far, or I am much too near:
 And true though strange, Waltz whispers this remark,
 "My slippery steps are safer in the dark!"

To teach the young ideas how to rise,
 Flush in the cheek, and languish in the eyes;
 Rush to the heart and lighten through the frame,
 With half-told wish and ill-dissembled flame;
 For prurient nature still will storm the breast—
 Who, tempted thus, can answer for the rest?

But ye—who never felt a single thought,
 Who wisely wish the charms you view to reap,
 For what our morals are to be, or ought;
 Say—would you make those beauties quite so cheap?
 Hot from the hands promiscuously applied,
 Round the slight waist, or down the glowing side,
 Where were the rapture then to clasp the form
 From this lewd grasp and lawless contact warm?

THE DANCE LINKS ITSELF WITH OTHER EVILS.

The dance, itself an unmitigated evil, attracts and is intimately associated with other evils. The ballroom and the bar-room are natural affinities and as long as liquor lasts, seemingly inseparable. This is not a coincidence, but a natural sequence. The man emboldened by liquor and stirred with an over-powering passion; and the woman excited by wine and agitated by voluptuous music, and a feeling she dare not describe, will speak and listen to words that would have been deemed unpardonable in calmer moments. Liquor and the dance-hall are responsible for fifty per cent of the murders of America. The very nature of the dance makes it a storm-center, and bickerings, strife, murder and adultery follow in its terrible train.

CHAPTER V.

THE DANCE IS BASED ON SEX.

If this be not true, why is it that women do not dance with women, and men with men? The answer to this question is well known to every experienced dancer, and forever condemns the dance. The mix-up is the magnet. A man dancing with a man is about as satisfactory as near-beer to the old drunkard. The matter of sex is the one and abiding basis of dancing. Many a young woman first discovers her sex in the ballroom. For a season, many a pure and noble girl is all unconscious of the pleasure she derives from the dance. The position assumed in the ballroom is, at best, immodest, and at worst, villainously vulgar. The writer measures his words when he says, that the man or woman who can continue long in the dance, without impure thoughts or feelings, is physically deficient. The boast that one can constantly engage in the modern dance without impure thoughts or the excitement of the lower passions, is either untrue, or a candid confession of physical impotence. It is quite common for a young man to spend a portion of the night in the ballroom and the remainder in a brothel. The one is well calculated to create a desire for the other. During my pastorate in Virginia there was a big ball at Old Point Com-

fort. One of the leading brothels of the city was phoned to remain open till after the ball closed. Several of the dancers came in a body, and spent the remainder of the night in the brothel.

Dr. William Cleaver Wilkinson, one-time professor of Chicago University, says; "The dance, then, to say it at once and plainly, is an immoral amusement, immoral, I mean in itself. . . Do we not know that the relation of the sexes, which was to have overflowed the world like a fountain of Paradise, has been perverted into the prolific cause of more crime and misery than any other single thing that can be named? And shall I not cry shame upon a usage, that, under cover of respectability, regularly titillates and tantalizes an animal appetite, as insatiable as hunger, more cruel than revenge?"

Horace Bushnell says of the dances: "They are contrived possibilities which belong to high life, when it runs low." In spite of this it is quite common to hear the remark, "I can't see any harm in dancing." If the normally developed man or woman cannot see the harm, they may discern it by feeling. It is not unusual to hear the devotee of the ballroom say: "I don't care to dance with her, she is not responsive." In other words, the woman referred to does not reciprocate his sensual feelings and return the suggestive move-

ments of his limbs and body. In plain words, the woman does not dance in a way to excite his animal nature.

Dr. William A. McKeever says: "The new social dance is a dance of death. Young fifteen-year-old striplings are forced by the dance into an intense sexual development, instead of experiencing the normal, slowly awakening sex consciousness." Certainly a young girl, who is thus stimulated, is more likely to lose her health or virtue.

Dr. W. W. Gardiner says: "But bad as are the effects of modern dancing on virtuous young women, its effects are far worse on young men, though more hidden; and this fact accounts for the growing laxity of morals and the increasing drunkenness and licentiousness among young men at the present time. Yet it is strangely true that known libertines often lead in the dance of modern society and are received into the most respectable families, while the innocent and unsuspecting girls, whom they have ruined in the dance, are driven from virtuous society and doomed to a life of shame and contempt."

Evermore it is true as written, "When lust is conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."—James 1:5.

Dr. Frank C. Richardson, of Boston, recently

aroused the wrath of the dancing masters by saying:

“The dance hall is the nursery of the divorce court, the training shop of prostitution, and the graduation school of infamy. The various steps and poses of the dances are contrived, with devilish ingenuity, to incite the instincts of sex.”

Dr. Gardiner, in his admirable treatise on this subject gives, in her own words, the experiences of a woman, who occupied a leading place in social life and later became a consecrated Christian, and achieved considerable literary renown. It is as follows:

“You ask me to say what I think about ‘round dances.’ I am glad of the opportunity to lay my opinion on that subject before the world; though I scarcely know what to write. I will, however, venture to lay bare a young girl’s heart and mind, by giving you my own experience in the days when I waltzed.

“In the soft floating of the waltz I found a strange pleasure, rather difficult to intelligibly describe. The mere anticipation fluttered my pulse, and when my partner approached to claim my promised hand for the dance, I felt my cheeks glow a little sometimes, and I could not look him in the eyes with the same frank gayety as heretofore.

“But the climax of my confusion was reached when, folded in his warm embrace, and giddy with the whirl, a strange, sweet thrill would shake me from head to foot, leaving me weak and almost powerless, and really obliged to depend for support upon the arm which encircled me. If my partner failed from ignorance, lack of skill, or innocence, to arouse these, to me, most pleasurable sensations, I did not dance with him the second time.

“I am speaking openly and frankly, and when I say that I did not understand what I felt, or what were the real and greatest pleasures I derived from this so-called dancing, I expect to be believed. But if my cheeks grew red with uncomprehended pleasure then, they grow pale with shame today when I think of it all.

“All this while no one said to me: ‘You do wrong;’ etc. . . . Yet we had been taught that it was right to dance; our parents did it, our friends did it, and we were permitted to do it. I will say that all the girls with whom I associated, with one exception, had much the same experience in dancing; felt the same strangely sweet emotions, and that almost imperative necessity for a closer communion than that which even the freedom of the Waltz permits, without knowing exactly why, or even comprehending what.

“Married now, with home and children around me, I can at least thank God for the experience which will assuredly be the means of preventing my little daughters from indulging in any such dangerous pleasure. But if a young girl, pure and innocent in the beginning, can be brought to feel what I have confessed to have felt, what must be the experience of a married woman?”

It is admitted that the position assumed in the ballroom would not be tolerated in other places. The Rev. Wayland Perry Sinks says:

“Would a lady with a spark of self-respect, at any other place than in the dance, lay her head upon the shoulder of a man, not her husband, place her breast against his and allow him to encircle her waist with his arms, place his foot between hers, and clasp her hand in his?”

A very pertinent inquiry is, why the man and woman disengage themselves from the position assumed in the dance as soon as the music stops? Would it be right to murder a man provided the murder was accompanied with witnesses and music?

It is worthy of note that husbands rarely encourage their wives to dance. Alas, they know too well the pitfalls. If the dance should be permitted at all, it should be restricted to husband and wife, and then, only with drawn blinds. What would

the child think in turning the pages of the family album to see the picture of mother, as she appeared in the ball-room, in the close embrace of another than her lawful husband? Ponder the picture. Her hand tightly clasped; her waist encircled, her body moving in sensual rhythm with a man with whom she was scarcely acquainted.

THE FIRST DANCING LESSON.

It is a pity that those who attempt to defend the dance could not see a young lady taking her first dancing lesson. When the dancing master, who is rarely a tax-payer, or a Christian, but often a low libertine, first puts his leperous arm about her, the crimson comes to her cheeks, and she shrinks from his embrace. She is soon reassured by this social anarchist, that the position is perfectly proper, and that it is essential to the dance. Knowing that other ladies have suffered the same familiarities, she soon seems "at home," in his lustful embrace. The blush, God's danger signal, soon disappears, and alas too often, forever. The innate sense of modesty receives a shock, and one of the God-given barriers is gone. Many pure and noble young girls are, at first, all unconscious of the nature of the pleasure they derive from the ballroom, and the danger is they may learn it to their sorrow and shame. Take sex out of the dance and its charm has departed. The ballroom

is the playground for the libertine, and the recruiting station for the brothel. There are not a few young men who are expert dancers, who bring about the ruin of girls through the dance, and then receive pay from a brothel for delivering their victims. The Indian girl in the American forest was safer than the American girl in the ballroom.

Dr. Howard Crosby has well said:

“The foundation of a large part of domestic misery and domestic crime, which startles us after its public outcropping, was laid when parents allowed the sacredness of their daughters’ persons and the purity of their maidenly instincts to be rudely shocked in the waltz.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE DANCE LEADS TO THE PIT.

It is true that some have passed the fiery furnace of the ballroom without being consumed, or perhaps of their garments smelling of the fire, but these constitute the exception, and not the rule. It is unqualifiedly true that countless thousands have been ruined by the dance. Some years since, one of the Christian organizations made a canvass of the red light district of New York. The inmate of every brothel was asked the cause of her downfall. Three-fourths of their number attributed their downfall directly to the dance. A chief of police, of the same city, as quoted in the New York Journal of Education, claimed that, according to his observation, three-fourths of the abandoned girls of the city were ruined by dancing.

Mrs. E. M. Whittemore, who for thirty years has conducted "The Door of Hope," in New York City, and founded rescue homes in other cities, declares, that in her opinion, seven out of ten of the fallen girls came to their ruin directly or indirectly by the dance. Out of one million women in America, who have lost their virtue, it is perfectly safe to say 600,000 went to their ruin by way of the ballroom.

T. A. Faulkner, an ex-dancing master, and

champion of the Pacific Coast Dancers Association, was eminently qualified to give expert testimony on this subject. After giving his heart to Christ, and renouncing the dance, he said "I shall be happy if I can lead one-fiftieth of the number to Christ that I have lead to ruin." He found that out of two hundred inmates of brothels in Los Angeles, one hundred and sixty-three of the number ascribed their fall to the ballroom. He also cites the case of a select dancing school, where eleven of those who attended the school in three months, later went to brothels. It is a well known fact that many of the most accomplished dancers are inmates of bawdy houses. Some years ago the fallen women of Memphis, Tennessee, would give an annual ball. Many from a distance attended these balls, and experts declared that they afforded the finest specimen of dancing known to our country. This is not strange, in view of the fact that many of the inmates of houses of shame have taken dancing lessons.

The dance halls of our land are now doing perhaps as much damage to the womanhood of our country as the bar-room did for the manhood of our nation. Between the two evils, it would be difficult to choose the least. Both have meant death, and worse than death to countless thou-

sands of our people. Determined efforts are being made in many of our cities to close the red light district. This is commendable, but it will be well nigh impossible to permanently close these districts, so long as the dance halls are permitted to continue their work of recruiting.

During the late war many dance halls were closed by military orders. The authorities soon found that they were a menace to health, mind and morals. From these orgies, in which not a few girls of most excellent families participated, came licentiousness, disease and death.

ADULTERY IN THE HEART.

Over the doors of every ballroom should be written, "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." If these words are true, and they are as true as the Christ who spoke them, then adultery is the commonplace of the ballroom. It is practically impossible for normally constructed men and women to engage in the modern dance without the feeling of lust being aroused, at least in one or more of them. It is entirely safe to say that there is rarely a ball at which this dreadful sin is not committed.

Maj. Penn, a great lawyer and a great evangelist, says:

"I read in the Scriptures, in that ever memor-

able Sermon on the Mount, this significant declaration: 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' (Matt. 5:28.) Christ only gives the great sin a name by calling it adultery. It was in this way that the seed was sown in the heart of the Psalmist David, that caused him to commit one of the greatest crimes ever committed on earth. (See 2 Sam. 11:2-17.) In the same way the seed has been sown in the hearts of many thousands of men in the ballroom, in the party dances. With whom is this great sin committed? With virtuous wives, daughters and sisters.

"When the ball closes, the young men take the girls to their homes. In a little while the girls—darling angels—are in the land of dreams, but they certainly never dream that they have been 'sowing the seeds of eternal shame, sowing the seeds of a maddened brain.' They never dream that they are responsible for all the sins and crimes that flow from the ballroom; but they certainly are, because if they would not go to those places, there never would be another ball or hop or dance upon earth; for men will not dance by themselves.

"But where do the young men go after the ball or dance closes? I do not say that all the young men go to the drinking saloons as soon as they

carry their girls home, or as soon as the ball or dance is over. No, many of them (with inflamed passions) go to other places, such as are described in the 5th chapter of Proverbs. Men will not deny this. Who caused these men to go to those places? Shall I answer and tell the truth? If I do, I must say that it is the virtuous wives, daughters, sisters and sweethearts who have been participating with them in the dance. Every man knows that this is true. In view of these facts, will husbands, parents or brothers ever again permit their wives, daughters or sisters to be seen at another ball or dance?"

Modern dancing can never be justified, as long as Christ's interpretation of the seventh commandment remains true.

INTERNATIONAL DANCING MASTERS' ASSOCIATION.

Even this association recently passed resolution against some of the viler dances. And yet, some of these very degenerates taught the very dances they are now condemning. It is the case of the saloonkeeper turning temperance advocate that he may continue to ply his trade. It is only a pious pretence to save their iniquitous business. Let these purveyors of licensed lust, many of whom are in the "arts of hell refined," know that their day is done. And just here it should be said that the writer has, in his time, met not a few dancing

masters, but he cannot now recall one, who was a taxpayer, a Christian, or who possessed the confidence of his community.

The daily papers and magazines have become outspoken in their denunciation of this withering blight to American manhood and womanhood.

The following is an editorial, which recently appeared in the *Courier-Journal*:

“DEATH TO THE DANCE.”

“Dangerous to the future of the race as well as to the morals of persons who engage in them,” modern dances now popular in America and Europe have been recently pronounced by surgeons, mental specialists, students of nervous disorders, psychologists, savants and literary men of France.

The tango, the shimmy, the fox trot and the maxixe, according to a symposium of opinions printed in the *Revue Mondiale* of Paris, are “gravely imperiling the life of the French nation.”

Actresses and academicians unite in roundly condemning these newly devised experiments in Terpsichore’s art. Women who engage in them suffer physically more than do men—indeed, the effect upon women is so markedly baneful that “depopulation of France may result.”

This is the sober judgment of competent minds in what is thought by many persons to be the

most pleasure-loving, but what is known by informed observers to be the most practical minded, of European peoples, the French.

Paul Bourget, member of the French Academy, will make a French girl ruined by these dances the subject of a novel. He will delineate the moral declension wrought through a craze for dancing in a, if not in the, French woman of today, tracing her degradation from its incipiency through the varying gradations till, sapped by opiates, the dance's victim passes into the abyss. This character, it is said, will be typical of the havoc worked by immoderate indulgence in extreme dances. Another prominent French author pronounces "the dance evil" equal to "the drink evil" as set out in Zola's "L'Assommoir."

"Low and ugly" is Abel Hermant's characterization. "A precocious and dangerous defloration" is Victor Marguerite's opinion of it. Regina Badet, the nude dancer whose grace charms Paris, is "thoroughly shocked by the sensuous bearing of dancers generally." One academician, while "dismayed by the craze for dancing," traces the evil to "the reaction from the rigor of France's five years of war."

It is not a little significant that the first serious protest of national scope or national character against these modern dances should come from

what is generally supposed to be a volatile, pleasure-seeking, none-too-serious-minded nation. Had this impressive warning emanated from the phlegmatic Scandinavian or the stolid German or the sober-minded Dutch or even from the British reputed by Emerson to take even their pleasures sadly, little note might have been made of it. But it is different from La Belle France, from "Gay Paree."

DANCING IN SCHOOLS.

One of the most lamentable things in connection with the dance is the fact that dancing is being taught in many of our public schools, and has been taught in some denominational institutions. A beginning in the public schools is made in the lower grades with folk-lore dances, and the worst forms of the modern dance is engaged in by the high school students. It is bad enough for a mature woman to participate in these dances, but that girls yet in their teens should indulge in this lascivious pastime is unspeakable, and that too with the knowledge and encouragement of the management of our schools.

Dr. W. F. Mallieu says: "Dancing in the public schools in Boston is primarily responsible for the conditions of immorality that are almost as bad as the white slave traffic. There ought to be a state law against dancing in any public school."

*Library, Southern Baptist
Theological Seminary*

Prof. Musterberg, Harvard's famous psychologist, says: "The modern dance is erotic and sex-inciting. The love of excitement expresses itself in the dance, and the dance heightens the love of excitement. Within the recent past, investigations have shown that dancing was encouraged in some of our denominational schools, but they have now been forced to do away with the deadly dance. In several instances it was found that the matrons were primarily responsible. Far better your daughter die in comparative ignorance, than to be sent to a school where she will acquire the habit of dancing."

Our public schools are built for educational purposes, and not for the premature development of sex-consciousness. The patrons should see to it, that these buildings are no longer prostituted for such purposes.

CHAPTER VII.

EXCUSES FOR DANCING.

BENEFICIAL TO THE HEALTH.

It is claimed in behalf of the dance, that it is a health-producing exercise. This is untrue. To the contrary, it is perhaps doing more than any other one thing to destroy the health of young men and women. Late hours, excessive exercise, and an undue stimulating of the passions cannot be beneficial to health or morals. Thousands have gone to their graves from disorders contracted in the ballroom. It is a provoking appeal to the animal passions that is well calculated to sap the very foundations of health. The average life of the habitual male dancer is said to be thirty-one years, while that of the female is only twenty-seven. No director of a gymnasium would ever think of putting on a dancing program for the purpose of promoting the health of young men and women.

Sometime since, a Methodist preacher of Austin, Texas, sent the following question to fifty physicians of the city:

“Do you consider the modern dance, as engaged in by our young people, beneficial or detrimental to health?” Forty-six of the number replied that “it was positively detrimental;” three failed to

reply, and only one of the fifty thought it a healthful exercise. A large number of them thought the dance a blight to the moral, as well as the physical nature, and the leading specialist of the city declared that dancing was "deadly, disastrous and damning." The leading surgeon of Johns Hopkins says: "The sensual dance is bringing the nation to moral bankruptcy." Hundreds of women go to the operating table later in life, as a direct result of the ballroom. We have never known a physician to prescribe the dance for the health of anyone. Writers in the medical journals are now outspoken in their denunciation of the dance. Thousands of lives are wrecked yearly by this consuming craze.

"And bear about the mockery of woe,
To mid-night dances, and the public show."

AN INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE.

Some justify the dance on the ground that it is conducive to intellectual development. It is a fact that the uneducated negro and the untutored savage are often expert dancers. Some of the most exquisite dancers are to be found in lunatic asylums. It is but just to say that dancing is prescribed by the authorities of some of the lunatic asylums for the inmates. Indeed, dancing is about the only amusement indulged in by the inmates in these places, and it is about the

only thing a crazy man or woman can do as well as a sane one. Neither mind, nor morals are essential to the dance.

Prof. O'Shea, of Wisconsin, says: "No people have long endured among whom the ballroom and the relations which it develops occupied an important place during the period of early youth. When an adolescent catches the dancing fever and it runs its course, his mental evolution ceases betimes. As has been said—

"A very merry, dancing drinking time,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time."

Many high school boys and girls are turned from the college course on account of the dance. Lydia Lupokovo, a Russian dancer of international reputation, said: "Far from relieving stupidity, the dance contributes to stupidity. Think of the head-emptying process of whirling about a room to the accompaniment of the insane sounds (I cannot call it music) for four or five hours. It drags the character down, it drags the brains down."

CUSTOM MAKES IT RIGHT.

Many will say that custom justifies the dance. Like the saloon, we tolerated it because we became accustomed to it, but surely this did not justify its existence. Custom cannot make wrong right, or transform adultery to virtue. As we

now wonder why we ever tolerated the saloon, we shall one day look back and wonder why the dance was engaged in by respectable people.

MAKES ONE GRACEFUL.

It has been claimed for the dance that it contributes to grace of manner and carriage. For this very reason many well-meaning mothers have encouraged their daughters to take dancing lessons. It is hardly necessary to say that some are graceful who indulge in the dance, but they are graceful in spite of, rather than by virtue of the dance. The ballroom cannot create, but does destroy gracefulness. The devotee of the ballroom unconsciously contracts a swaggering swing, that is the antithesis of a graceful carriage. The woman who frequently indulges in the waltz or viler dances easily betrays her ballroom carriage on the streets. The ballroom is one of the best possible places for the destruction of grace of heart and manner. The dance does not bring grace, but often disgrace. Dr. Brooks says:

“Compare the natural grace of a pure girl, taught by a pure mother, and by a native grace of delicacy, with the disgusting affectation and brazen effrontery of a pert miss who has been trained by a foreign dancing master not to blush, and you can judge for yourself whether there is any force in the oft-repeated plea that children

should be sent to a dancing school to learn manners."

"Dancing like all Gaul is divided into three parts—one-third esthetic—one-third physical—one-third is sensual." Every honest investigator agrees that the dance does not contribute to grace of the dance, as now practiced in America, will of manner or carriage. The habitual dancer acquires a swinging carriage that easily betrays her as a devotee of the ballroom. Dancing destroys grace. There are a very few graceful people who dance, who being naturally graceful, maintain their graceful manner for a season, in spite of the voluptuous swing of the ballroom.

Dr. John Roach Straiton says: "The weak excuses which some church people make in justification of the dance are indeed idle. Some say that we ought to dance for the sake of 'grace.' But the very idea of anybody developing grace by learning to bounce like a bunny and trot like a fox and gallop like a goose and grapple like a grizzly bear and shake like a plate of gelatine with the St. Vitus dance!"

MANY GOOD CHURCH MEMBERS DANCE.

It may be replied that many church members dance. This is lamentably true, and is equally true of other forms of sin and sinning. Many church members drink, swear and commit

adultery, but this fact does not justify participation in these sins. The fact that many respectable people dance has deterred a just criticism of this withering curse. Good people, however, cannot make a bad thing good. Sin is sin, in rags or in broadcloth; whether in a den of dismal odors or the perfumed ballroom. Scant garments, however costly, cannot justify semi-nudeness. You cannot refine vulgarity or deify deviltry. Many church members meet their Christian Waterloo in the ballroom—

“A thousand hearts beat happily, and when,
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes, looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell.”

Certainly the performance suggested “marriage bells,” and married life. From the very nature of the case, married people who encourage young people to dance, deserve greater censure than the young people.

PARLOR DANCING.

It is urged in the defense of this iniquity that it is all right, provided the dancing is done in the parlor. It is the difference of getting drunk at home or in the saloon. It is true that many mothers permit vile dancing in their parlors, who would object to their daughters attending a dance hall. Indecency is not made decent by surroundings. It is not a question of geography, but of

conduct. The mother may rest assured, however, that if her daughter dances in the parlor, she will, sooner or later, dance in the public dance hall. The parlor dance is the natural introduction to the ballroom. Modern dancing is suggestive and sinful anywhere and under all circumstances.

Harold Begbie says: "Think what it means, that these filthy and lascivious dances are tolerated in private homes."

The modern dance is evil, and evil only, and cannot be justified or excused.

Gen. Albert Pike, of Washington, D. C., a great man and mason said: "The waltz is only fit for houses of prostitution, and I have never been able to understand how any father could permit his daughter, or any husband his wife, to waltz with other men. Yet this is the thing that is tolerated, defended and encouraged all over the land, and to which many Christians (so-called) are lending countenance, and which they openly sustain by their practice. In the name of God and humanity, for the sake of our fair daughters and loved sons, in behalf of the peace and safety of home, what are they thinking about?"

If the words of this eminent man are true, and they are, what must be said of the more modern dances?

SUMMARY.

1. It injures the body.
2. It injures the mind.
3. It injures the soul.
4. No possible good and much probable harm may come of it.
5. It is closely allied with other evils.
6. It does not bring grace, but often leads to disgrace.
7. The position assumed is suggestive and indecent.
8. It has wrought the ruin of thousands of men and women.
9. It cripples Christian influence.
10. It gives offense to many Christians.
11. All denominations have spoken against it.
12. It is clearly opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures.
13. It stands in the way of the salvation of sinners.
14. It has the appearance of evil, and is evil.
15. It naturally leads to the violation of the Seventh Commandment.
16. It is one of God's worst enemies, and Satan's best friends.