THE ART OF MUSIC: VOLUME TEN

The Dance

Department Editor:

IVAN NARODNY

Introduction by

ANNA PAVLOWA

Ballerina, Imperial Russian Ballet



NEW YORK

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF MUSIC

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Odalisque in ‘Scheherazade’ (Russian Ballet)
Design by Léon Bakst

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THE DANCE

INTRODUCTION

'THE gods themselves danced, as the stars dance in the sky,' is a saying of the ancient Mexicans. 'To dance is to take part in the cosmic control of the world,' said the ancient Greek philosophers. 'What do you dance?' asks the African Bantu of a member of another tribe after his greeting. Livingston said that when an African wild man danced, that was his religion. It is said that the savages do not preach their religion but dance it. According to the Bible, the ancient Hebrews danced before their Ark of the Covenant. St. Basil describes the angels dancing in Heaven. According to Dante, dancing is the real occupation of the inmates of Heaven, Christ acting as the leader of a celestial ballet. 'Dancing,' said Lucian, 'is as old as love.' Dance had a sacred and mystic meaning to the early Christians upon whom the Bible had made a deep impression: 'We have piped unto you and ye have not danced.'

The service of the Greek Church—even to-day—is for the most part only a kind of sacred dance, accompanied by chants and singing. The priest, walking and gesturing with an incense-pan up and down before the numerous ikons, kneeling, bowing to the saints, performing queer cabalistic figures with his hands in the air, and following always a certain rhythm, is essentially a dancer. It is said that dancing of a similar kind was performed in the English

cathedrals until the fourteenth century. In France the priests danced in the choir at the Easter Mass up to the seventh century. In Spain similar religious dancing took deepest root and flourished longest. In the Cathedrals of Seville, Toledo, Valencia and Xeres the dancing survives and is the feature at a few special festivals.

'The American Indian tribes seem to have had their own religious dances, varied and elaborate, often with a richness of meaning which the patient study of the modern investigators has but slowly revealed,' writes Havelock Ellis. It is a well-known fact that dancing in ancient Egypt and Greece was an art that was practiced in their temples. 'A good education,' wrote Plato, 'consists in knowing how to sing well and how to dance well.' According to Plutarch, Helen of Sparta was practicing the Dance of Innocence in the Temple of Artemis when she was surprised and carried away by Theseus. We are told by Greek classics that young maidens performed dances before the altars of various goddesses, consisting of 'grave steps and graceful, modest attitudes belonging to that order of choric movement called *emmeleia*.' The ancient Egyptian Astronomic Dance can be considered the sublimest of all dances; here, by regulated figures, steps, and movements, the order and harmonious motion of the celestial bodies was represented to the music of the flute, lyre and syrinx. Plato alludes to this dance as 'a divine institution.'

In spite of the high status of dancing in the ancient civilizations, it has not progressed steadily, as have the other arts. It has remained the least systematized and least respected of arts, generally considered as lacking in seriousness of intention,

fitness to express grave emotions, and power to touch the heights and depths of the intellect. Being an art that expresses itself first in the human body, the dance has aroused reprobation in certain pious, puritanical minds of mediæval type, who have considered it a collection of 'immodest and dissolute movements by which the cupidity of the flesh is aroused.' It is this particular view that has damned dance with bell, book and candle. The main reason for this has been the hostile attitude of the church to all folk-arts which manifested a more or less conspicuous ethnographic individuality—that is, were stamped as of Pagan and not Christian origin. All folk-dancing, broadly speaking, is a natural form of æsthetic courtship. The male intends to win the female by his beauty, grace and vigor, or vice versa. From the point of view of sexual selection we can understand, on the one hand, the immense ardor with which every sensuous part of the human body has been brought into the play of the dance, and, on the other, the arguments of the pseudo-moralists to classify it with the frivolous and least tolerated arts.

The stamp of frivolity, put upon the dance by the Christian clergy, has retarded its natural development for several centuries. Italy and Germany, having been the cradles of all modern music and stage arts, have given little inspiration to a systematic development of the art of dancing. The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that have meant so much to the perfection of the opera, vocal and orchestra technique, gave nothing of any significance to choreography. The church that tolerated Bach, Paësiello, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, put an open ban upon everything that had any relation to the dance. The great musical classics of the past centuries have treated dance as an

insignificant side issue, thereby putting a label of inferiority upon this loftiest of arts. All the dance music of the great classics sounds naïve and lacking in choreographic images. Yet dance and music are like light and shadow, each depending upon the other. As canvas is to a painter, so is music to a dancer the essential element upon which he can draw his picture. The fact that the art of dancing has not evolved into its normal state of equality with the other arts, is wholly due to the lack of musical leadership. Neither the reforms of Noverre nor those of Fokine nor Marius Petipa can be of fundamental value if they lack the phonetic designs which alone a choreographic artist can transform into plastic events. Essentially, and æsthetically speaking, dancing should be the elemental expression alike of symbolic religion and love, as it used to be from the earliest human times.

Dancing and architecture are the two primary and plastic arts: the one in Time, the other in Space; the one expressing the soul directly through the medium of the human body, the other giving only an outline of the soul through the medium of fossilized forms. The origin of these two arts is earlier than man himself. Both require mathematics, the one rhythmically, the other symmetrically. For dancing the mathematical forms are to be found in music, for architecture, in geometry. ‘The significance of dancing, in the wide sense, thus lies in the fact that it is simply an intimate concrete appeal of that general rhythm which marks all the physical and spiritual manifestations of life,’ writes Havelock Ellis. ‘The art of dancing moreover is intimately entwined with all human traditions of war, of labor, of pleasure, of education, while some of the wisest philosophers and ancient civilizations have regarded the dance as the

pattern in accordance with which the moral life of man must be woven. To realize therefore what dance means for mankind—the poignancy and the many-sidedness of its appeal—we must survey the whole sweep of human life, both at its highest and at its deepest moments.'

ANNA PAVLOWA.

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THE DANCE

CHAPTER I

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DANCING

Æsthetic basis of the dance; national character expressed in dances; 'survival value' of dancing; primitive dance and sexual selection; professionalism in dancing—Music and the dance; religion and the dance; historic analysis of folk-dancing and ballet.

I

EVERY true art is a direct and immediate act of life. As in music and dancing, so in life, rhythm is the skeleton of tone and movement and also the basis of existence. We breathe rhythmically and our heart beats rhythmically. We walk, laugh and weep rhythmically. Rhythm is the only frame to the moving material of the visuo-audible art. What except rhythm can unite living men in order to convert them from a chaotically moving crowd into a work of art? It was undoubtedly the innate feeling for rhythm that actuated the primitive man to dance. All existing races show a strong tendency to dance, as well in their primitive as in the more or less civilized state. The plastic forms of the human body lend themselves more to an æsthetic expression that contains architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry,

drama and music, than anything else in creation. The mimic expressions of the face, the agility of the steps, the grace of gestures and poses are all natural means which a man can employ in his dance. The symmetric lines of the body that are produced after the melodic patterns of the music form the æsthetic basis of the art of dancing. The ability to give a living meaning to these lines is what makes a dance beautiful and divine. Although frequently the beauty of a line and movement can be observed in animals and birds, yet there it is an unconscious act, lacking in that individual and subjective feeling that we call inspiration.

The foremost element in every dance is—the step. Step is also, practically speaking, the first movement of life. In consequence of pure physical laws each step requires a new impulse and thus divides it into two periods: motion and repose. The continuance of these two rhythmic periods produces the feeling of symmetry and joy, which in its turn creates the various combined movements that again are divided into various sub-motions and partial measures. The development of steps in a dance is based on two principles: the movement of the feet, and the combined movement of the body and hands for grace or mimicry. Consequently dance is nothing but a chain of bodily movements that are subjected to a certain musical rhythm and follow the emotional expressions of the dancer. According to an innate principle dance, like speech, was practiced by the primitive races as a medium of the most vital expressions. By means of a dance the savages express their joy, sorrow, anger, tenderness and love. Dance has its peculiar psychology, which varies according to racial temperament, climate and other conditions. This is best illustrated in the various styles of the

folk-dance. To the vigorous races of Northern Europe in their cold and damp climate dancing became naturally a function of the legs. The Scandinavian and Finnish folk-dances betray more heavy and massive motion, while those of Spain, Hungary and Italy or France give an impression of romantic grace, coquettish agility and fire. The folk-dances of the Cossacks are usually violent and acrobatic, as is their life. Energy or dreaminess, fire or coolness, and a multitude of other racial qualities assert themselves automatically in a folk-dance. The list of forces that make and preserve a nation's dances is incomplete without the addition of the powerful element of national pride, weakness or other peculiarities. On the contrary, in the Far East, in Japan, Java, China, etc., dancing is exclusively a motion of the hands and fingers alone. In ancient Rome dancing was predominantly the rhythmic motion of the body, with vibratory or rotatory movements of breast or flanks. The Stomach Dance of the Arabians betrays the wild passion of a nomadic desert race.

According to Louis Robinson, dancing is an innate instinct that has an indirect bearing upon the existence of the human race. Robinson argues that throughout Nature instincts, like the organs of our bodies, are the product of the strict laws of evolution, and have been built up to meet some need. At some critical time in the past they had a certain survival value—i. e., they were capable of determining in the struggle for existence which individuals or tribes should go under and which should survive. This principle can be taken as one of the axioms which must be our pilots in every attempt to account for the faculties which each of us brings into the world, as distinct from those acquired in the life of the individual.

Practically every savage people has elaborate dances and spends a good deal of time in such exercises. Among adults dancing takes the place of the play of children. When we come to analyze the play of all young creatures from the historical standpoint we find it forms part of an elaborate natural system of physical training. The perpetual motion of the kitten while it is awake is obviously a training for those accomplishments which in later life mean a livelihood. Such astonishing skill and agility as are shown by the cats in securing prey cannot be attained by any ready-made machinery like that of the dragon-fly or the mantis: they must be built up and manufactured. Herein the nervous mechanism of the mammalia has prevailed over the limited mechanical perfection of lower things such as reptiles, fish, and insects. Most of them can do some one thing or other supremely well, but the mammalia, with their better nervous system and receptive brains, can excel in many things. We, with our greater gifts of the same sort, are the most versatile and teachable of all; hence we prevail over the rest of creation. The kitten, the puppy, and the young savage, by their continual restless and organized activity, gain great advantage in certain movements necessary in after life, and foster the growth of the particular muscles which later on will be absolutely requisite in the serious business of holding their place in the world. Obviously such instincts would become out of date and inappropriate should the general manner of living undergo a complete change. Hence we find that much of the play of young children in civilized lands has little or no reference to the serious life which comes afterwards. Such instincts, however, were developed during or before the long stretch of time of the Stone

Age, when all men played hide and seek, and chased one another, and threw things, and ran, and jumped, and wrestled for exactly the same reason that makes us scan commercial articles, attend markets, and work in our studies or offices. What is observable in any nursery or playground affords a good illustration of the persistence of instincts long after the need which created them has passed away. For some reason the play instinct in most creatures tends to lapse at the time of full bodily maturity. It does not cease entirely, but apparently it no longer suffices as an incentive for the battle of life.

Man in the savage state is naturally lazy and does not like to exert himself when food comes easily. When no urgent need or human authority is pushing him, he prefers to eat to repletion and then to lie in the sun or loaf. We even find this primitive habit cropping up in strenuous lands where the stimulus of moral education and competition has been at work for generations.

We are all aware that, when we are lazy for any length of time, we get slack and soft. The primitive savage who lives by hunting and is in continual danger of raids from his neighbors, cannot afford to get slack. He must keep himself fit every day of life. How was this to be managed by our prehistoric forefathers when there was no fighting, with the weather soft, and a delicious fish easily to be caught quite near the dwelling? It is pretty safe to say that, owing to the want of condition—if they were not dancing tribes—they did not leave descendants which are among us in the twentieth century.

It seems strange how readily a group of negroes who are apparently exhausted after a long day's work will join in dance with their fellows, and how,

when not very tired, they will in their laziest moments spring up and take vigorous exercise of this kind. Every doctor will tell you that there are plenty of women to-day who have not the strength nor the energy to do any work or to walk a couple of miles, but who will dance from evening till morning without showing any great fatigue. Among such Pagans as the Zulus and Masai, who organize themselves for war almost as well as has ever been done by the most civilized Christians, there is practically no distinction between military exercises and dancing. This is proof enough to show that dancing had a survival value throughout the long stretch of the Stone Age. Dancing taught primitive men to move in compact bodies without confusion, and especially without getting so bunched together that they could not use their weapons.

To-day the true war-dance only persists among us in the form of military marchings, but the other primitive dances have left numerous descendants of all kinds and degrees, down to the modern tango. Among these non-military dances the survival value, apart from the healthy exercise which they provided and their general disciplinary effects, worked through the agency of sexual selection.

In the case of the primitive dances the working of sexual selection was beneficial as conducive to racial fitness. The dances in which women took part gave opportunity for appraisement of exactly the kind needed for a sound choice of mates under savage conditions. It afforded the chance, so lacking in our present civilization, of advertising any admirable qualities which might be possessed. It was a test not only of physical grace and perfection, but of activity, taste and temper. It contributed to honest

matrimonial dealing—especially when danced in the approved ballroom costumes of savage times.

There have been many discussions as to why clothes were first worn—whether for ornament, warmth, or decency—but one may fairly say without any doubt whatever that, from the first ages until now, dance clothing has been mainly decorative. Here we find an ethical justification of matters connected with dancing dress, which has often provoked severe criticism among puritans. Without a doubt from the earliest times until now the dance has been a chief purifying agent in the marriage market—has played the part, in fact, of those market inspectors appointed to guard against adulteration.

It is a most extraordinary thing, when we come to consider man's place in Nature, that he ever began to dance. Not that dancing is uncommon in Nature; many birds, especially those of the crane tribe, execute elaborate dances during their season of courtship, and as a mere pastime when they have nothing else to do. Few, if any, of the mammalia appear to indulge in organized dances, unless we give such a name to the frisking of young lambs and the prancing evolutions of horses and antelopes. Assuredly, in our direct line of descent nothing of the kind could have existed as far back as our knowledge and imagination will carry us. You cannot very well dance in the trees, which, according to Darwin, were the real nurseries of our species; and when you come down to solid earth your weak prehensile lower members would only make you ridiculous and contemptible if they attempted any performance of the kind.

Mother Nature, however, is a dame of infinite varieties, and seems continually to be trying the most

bizarre experiments apparently without the least prompting or justification. The products of these experiments are called ‘sports,’ and there seems no limit to their possibilities. Chimpanzees delight in thumping hollow trees and knocking pieces of wood together, while it is said that the gorilla waddles to war to the sound of the drum, improvising a substitute by beating his hands against his brawny chest.

In the Western world professionalism in dancing has happily not had the blighting effect on the pursuit that it seems to have had on some other forms of pastime. But if we go to the East we find that practically all other forms of dancing have ceased to exist. We see the effect of this tendency most fully developed in China, where the recreative dancing of European society seems to be quite beyond the comprehension of a well-bred Chinese, who naïvely asks the question: ‘Why do you not pay people to dance for you?’

Stage dancing seems to be an interesting instance of the degeneration into pure luxury or something which was at one time a helpful influence to the race. This is a tendency observable in many phases of life when the pressure of evolutionary forces is somewhat relaxed. Most of the luxuries pertain to matters which at one time had a survival value, and it cannot be said that they have retired from among the evolutionary forces even to-day; but their effect, if still beneficial to the race, lies in aiding Nature to eliminate the unfit.

II

From the earliest times on dancing has been dependent upon music of some kind. The question whether music is older than dancing has not been answered satisfactorily by academic anthropologists yet. However, all scholars agree that the appearance of these two arts must have been more or less simultaneous, the one influencing the other. But undoubtedly the first dance music was not instrumental but vocal. The savages to-day dance most of their sexual dances to rhythmic recitation of certain words. Music is in every phase of evolution the only true essence of that which forms the subject of the dance.

To the transformation of more or less primitive folk-dances into those of strictly religious character is due the principal idea of the modern ballet. In the Oriental temples dancing underwent a strange transformation. While dancing was made the basis of dramatic and symbolic ideas, yet this very fact became detrimental to the musical influence upon the choreography. The Egyptians, whom we consider the pioneers in religious dances, originated elaborate temple ballets, which were based more upon a dramatic than a musical theme. Though the tradition speaks of rounds, of symbolic and sidereal motions, and the instruments chiefly employed, as the Egyptian guitar, used both by men and women, the single and double pipe, the harp, lyre, and flute, yet essentially this all resembled a pantomime rather than actual dance.

It is very likely that all the ancient sacred dances originated with the subconscious idea of counteracting the sensuous or strictly playful influence of the social dances. The whole pedigree of our Western religions seems to show a remarkable

absence of this method of encouraging religious feeling. The reasons why such manifestations were discouraged by Jewish and Christian moralists pertains to physiology rather than theology. As already said, man's nature is compounded of many diverse elements, and the machinery of emotion at present at work within us dates back to our animal past. Our most refined and exalted feelings spring from the same nervous reservoirs and pass through the very channels which were at one time solely occupied by grosser passions. The Egyptian church that grew directly of the folk-art of the country was a stranger to Greece and Rome, and still more so to our Christian religion. The ethical ideals that actuated the Egyptian priests in introducing dancing at the altar, sprang directly from the soil and meant, in bringing the better part of human nature to the top, to act as a kind of separator. The priests discovered that the higher emotions, with the help of sacred dancing, can be put to excellent service as impulses to improved conduct. The Christian missionaries, coming from the East, found nothing elevating and ennobling in our Western dancing, which did not appeal to them on account of the very differences of the style and racial character. It is due to their opposition that the religious dances have faded out under the Western civilization. The warfare against dancing generally, on the part of the Apostles of Christianity, dates back to the fanatic era of theological and nationalistic differences. In all countries where the religion descends directly from a racial folk-lore, dancing has remained in high esteem at home and in the temples. This we find true in Egypt, Greece, India and China. In the Jewish form of worship there seems to have been no formally recognized dancing, although we have records of

several displays of this kind, as in the case of King David, when, ‘clothed in a linen ephod, he danced before the Ark of the Lord with all his might.’

In Greece, cradle of the arts, the Muses manifested themselves to man as a dancing choir, led by Terpsichore. The Romans imitated the Greeks in all their arts and imported with the Greek slaves Greek dances. But Rome was too barbaric to appreciate the full value of Greece’s poetic arts. The solemn religious dance instituted by Numa and practiced by the Salian priests soon degenerated into ceremonial march that was abolished when Rome became Christian, through a papal decree in 744. Darkness of night fell on the development of secular and religious dancing, a darkness that endured for centuries. The influence of the Nile in Egypt and Cadiz in Spain, which for centuries had been the two great centres of the ancient dancing and supplied their dancers to the Roman potentates, faded out slowly in the history of European nations. The folk-dances were labelled as low and undignified amusements of Pagan peasants. Dance in every form remained an outcast, despised and condemned until the court circles of Italy and France distorted it to an amusement at domestic gatherings and masquerades. It is said that the modern ballet had its origin in the spectacular masquerades arranged for the marriage of Galeazzo, Visconti, Duke of Milan, in 1489. The impression of this performance spread to the Court of Florence. Catherine de Medici, the Queen of France, brought the Italian court pantomime to Paris, where the French kings and queens grew to admire dancing and took actual part in it. The attempts of Noverre to elevate the art of dancing to what it had been in ancient Egypt and Greece, were successful only externally. Music, the soul of dancing in the modern

sense, was lacking, and without this soul the art of plastic form is incomplete. Though the Russian reformers elevated dancing from a domestic amusement to a serious and lofty stage art, they did not succeed wholly in giving to it the foundation that it deserves among the other arts. All the past and living goddesses of choreography have not had the freedom, the phonetic means and dramatic threads to thrill their audiences as they would, if man had not distorted and hidden the natural meaning of the dance that inspired his barbaric ancestors.

The philosophical conclusion of our historic analysis of dance leads back to the same axioms that actuated the savage in his practice of agility: the sexual selection and primitive sport, both necessary for evolution and the existence of the race. However, there is neither sexual motive nor instinct for ‘physical culture’ in the ‘Heavenly Alchemy’ of evolution that has created the poetic movements of Taglioni and her successors. The ancient racial propensities have developed into more spiritual ideas. Like the tendency of evolution generally, to universalize an individual and individualize the universe, so in dance the racial characteristics are transformed into cosmic motives. In this stage beauty becomes symbolic and concrete emotions take on a more and more abstract form. The survival value of the greatest art of the dance lies in ennobling the intellect and soul, which has necessarily an indirect bearing upon the physical. Ultimately this means perfection of the whole human organism. It inspires the mind and influences the body.

Civilization has brought humanity to a state where the physical needs depend upon the psychical. We have devised a more complicated form of sexual

selection and more complicated means of existence than the primitive dances employed in our animal past. Beauty in the long course of evolution has grown more spiritual, accordingly dancing as an art has become an evolutionary medium of the intellect.

CHAPTER II

DANCING IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Earliest Egyptian records of dancing; hieroglyphic evidence; the Astral dance; Egyptian court and temple rituals; festival of the Sacred Bull—Music of the Egyptian dances; Egyptian dance technique; points of similarity between Egyptian and modern dancing; Hawasis and Almeiis; the Graveyard dance; modern imitations.

I

LONG before the rest of the world had emerged from barbarism Egypt had reached a high state of civilization. But the history of Egyptian civilization was hidden behind a curtain of mysteries, until the key to the hieroglyphs was discovered. Then, the imposing pyramids opened suddenly their sealed lips and the world stood aghast at their revelations. The ruins of Memphis and Thebes became books of interesting reading. The discovered inscriptions and papyri revealed the high state of development that the dance had reached in the ancient Egyptian temples. The first dancing in Egyptian history is recorded by Manetho, the priest of Heliopolis who lived in 5004 B. C.,—which is approximately one thousand years before the creation of the world,

according to Biblical chronology. Plato alludes to Egyptian art and dancing performed ten thousand years before his time. Schliemann, the great archeologist, maintained that the history of Egypt was written in various dance-phases, as can be seen from the inscriptions of their ancient sarcophagi and pyramids.

Scarce as are the hieroglyphic materials, nevertheless they reveal to us that the Egyptians, during the reign of the Pharaohs, highly admired the art of dancing. Most of the Egyptian documents or inscriptions begin with dancing figures. These figures are to be found in the most ancient records, which proves that dancing must have been known as an art to the Egyptians not for hundreds but for thousands of years. Herodotus, 'the father of history,' tells us that the dances performed to Osiris were as elaborate as the music of a hundred instruments and a chorus of three hundred singers. According to Diodorus, Hermes gave to mankind the first laws of eurhythmics. 'Hermes taught the Egyptians the art of graceful body movements.' A fragmentary inscription of a sarcophagus in the Museum of Petrograd describes that Maneros, 'who conquered so many nations, did this not by means of torch and sword but by teaching the divine art of music and dancing.' The ancient Egyptian legend surrounds Maneros with nine dancing Muses, which the Greeks probably copied from Egypt later. Music and dancing were employed by the Egyptians at home, in social festivals, on the occasion of marriage, birth and death, and in the temples. Their folk-dances were as gay and fiery as the temperament of the race. This is best illustrated in the recently discovered frescoes of peasants dancing, evidently after their daily work in the fields.

Being worshippers of all the celestial bodies, the Egyptians practiced in their temples certain astronomical ballets. It is said that Hermes, the inventor of the lyre, produced from his instrument as many tones as there were stars in the sky. The three strings of his lyre meant Winter, Summer and Spring. This gives an idea to what an extent astronomy and nature figured in all their dancing and music. The Astral Dance was an imitation of the movement of the various constellations. In this their imagination knew no limit. The altar, around which most of the astral dances were performed, represented the sun. According to the descriptions of Plutarch, the dancers made with their hands the signs of the zodiac in the air, while dancing rhythmically from the east to the west, in imitation of the movement of various planets. After every circle the dancers stopped for a few moments as if petrified, which was meant to represent the immovability of the earth. By means of combined gestures and mimic expressions, the priests gave intelligible pantomimic stories of the astral system and the harmony of eternal motion. Lucian called this one of the most divine inventions.

It is a pity that all the hieroglyphic records known to us do not give any adequate explanation of the ancient Egyptian Astral Dance. The descriptions left by Greek writers are too general and are frequently incorrect. Various scholars have made efforts to discover the mystic meaning of the dance of the ‘Seven Moving Planets,’ but in vain. How much the idea of an astral dance has impressed the European ballet-masters is proved in that Dauberval and Gardel produced in the eighteenth century ballets of this character. However, in this case the performers were not priests but fantastically dressed ballet dancers who, representing various stars and

planets, jumped and turned around the *prima ballerina*, who represented the sun.

To what an extent the love of pantomime and dancing prevailed in Egypt can be judged from the recently made decipherings by Setche of the inscriptions of the sarcophagus of a prime minister which describes the code of an elaborate court ritual. The inscription tells how a newly-appointed minister should meet his ruler. He should enter the imperial hall, dancing so that from his gestures, poses and miming could be read devotion, loyalty, chivalry, grace, tenderness, vigor and energy. Pharaoh, in his turn, would meet the minister with a different sort of dance. The reception would end with the joining of all the court functionaries, musicians and priests in a great procession.

The Egyptian clergy exercised a great influence upon the people. Imitating the court of the Pharaohs, they surrounded the religious rituals with unnecessary secrets. The more mysterious they made the ceremonies the more they impressed the people. In consequence of such an attitude on the part of the clergy, a large majority of religious dances grew so complicated in their symbolic details that they degenerated into nonsense. A large number of the Egyptian sacred dances were based on the cult of Isis and Osiris, the one a feminine, the other a masculine divinity. This gave the fundamental idea of maintaining a large number of the so-called ‘sacred’ courtesans, who took an active part in most of the temple dances. Herodotus tells us that the presence of these ‘sacred’ courtesans in the Egyptian temple ceremonies during the last Dynasties is responsible for the downfall of this ancient civilization.

Most of the Egyptian temple dances were

performed by men and women alike. On the other hand, there existed special feminine and strictly masculine ballets. Of the feminine dances, the most known is the dance which was performed during the celebrated sacrificial festival of the sacred bull Apis. After the black bull on whose back grew naturally the figure of a white eagle was found, forty temple maidens were selected to feed it forty days on the shores of the Nile. All this time the maidens had to practice the great ballet that they were to perform thereafter. The Festival of the Sacred Bull was opened with a solemn dance of the priests in the temple of Osiris at Memphis. Then the bull was carried through the city by the maidens in a spectacular procession, accompanied by singing and dancing. When the bull was brought before the huge statue of Osiris the real ballet was performed by priests and maidens together. The ballet, which lasted for half a day, was opened with a slow introduction in march form. In this the dancers personified the birth process of divinities, particularly of Osiris. In the second movement, which probably resembled a modern *allegro energico*, were depicted the youth and romantic adventures of Osiris with the goddess Isis. Priests in fantastic costumes represented Osiris and his warriors, while the maidens played the rôle of Isis and her companions. The last movement of the ballet closed with a festival *finale*, which meant the victory of Osiris in conquering India. When the sacred bull was drowned in the Nile a violent funeral ballet was performed by the priests. As the recently discovered bas-reliefs illustrate, the dancing priests wore costumes consisting of a yellow tunic and round caps.

While some of the Egyptologues maintain that

dancing was performed only on special occasions such as the above, others are of the opinion that every Egyptian temple service contained some kind of dance. However, the hieroglyphic inscriptions of various periods prove that there were hundreds of different temple dances. Of particular interest is the recently discovered 'Dance of Four Dimensions,' which was performed in the temple of Isis. In this both priests and priestesses participated. It differed from the other dances in that the dancers carried along their musical instruments.

II

Since the art of dancing had reached such a high degree of culture in Egypt it is evident that the people must have possessed a highly developed form of music. Though musical history denies the fact that harmony was known to the ancient civilization, yet the recent archeologic discoveries and hieroglyphic decipherings speak eloquently of the use of various instruments in a kind of orchestra, and there are frequent allusions to temple choirs of a hundred and more singers. Dr. Schliemann even believes that the Egyptians had their specific musical notation which was still in use by the Arabs when they came to Spain. It is only natural to believe that an art of such a high standard was taught in a school, as the technique that they evidence is the result of long and systematic studies. 'It is very likely,' a Russian archeologist writes, 'that the Egyptian academy of music and dancing was connected with the temple of Ammon.'

It is evident that the Egyptians knew practically

every choreographic rule and possessed a technique which our most celebrated dancers have not yet reached. Their mimic expressions are superb, as are their eurhythmic gestures and poses. Since the temple in Egypt united under its supreme patronage all the arts, it is only natural that dancing and music knew no other forms of expression, except the home. However, the court of Pharaohs played a big rôle in stimulating a secular style of dance, which the Greeks later performed in a modified form on their stage. Various inscriptions and sarcophagus bas-reliefs depict a corps of several hundred dancers that was maintained by the ruler. The Queen Cleopatra was so fond of dancing that she herself gave performances in a specially constructed hall, dimly lighted and richly decorated. Here she danced nude to her guests behind numerous gauze curtains, using constantly the effects of fused light produced by different colored lanterns. She had a well trained and beautiful voice and played masterfully on various instruments. Also, in connection with her dances, Cleopatra used heavy redolescent perfumes by means of which she put her audience into a ‘passionate trance.’

That the Egyptian dancers knew *pirouettes*, *fouetté pirouettes*, *arabesques*, *pas de cheval*, and other modern ballet tricks 5,000 years ago is proven by the dancing figures that can be seen at the sarcophagi at Beni Hassan. These figures illustrating ballet corps are usual. A common style of Egyptian dancing was the peculiar reverse movement of the two dancers which reached a rhythmic perfection, particularly in dances where many participated, that is absolutely unknown to our choreographic artists. Some dances show great architectural beauty in their pyramidic combinations. The use of the hands at the same time

with the use of the legs is evidently more in keeping with a certain style and harmony of line, than that employed by our ballet or classic dancers.

There is in the Egyptian gallery of the British Museum a wall painting taken from a tomb at Thebes. The painting is supposed to have been executed during the eighteenth or nineteenth dynasty, and in it are depicted two dancing girls facing in opposite directions. There is plenty of action and agility depicted in these figures. In one the hands are raised high above the head; in the other they are lowered. One female not dancing is represented playing a double pipe, and others are clapping their hands. The accompanists are dressed, but the dancers wear only a gauze tunic.

All Egyptian professional dancers are represented either nude or very slightly dressed and the performances were given by the people of highest respectability. All Egyptologues are of the opinion that the outline of the transparent robe worn by these dancing girls may, in certain instances, have become effaced; but others say that it is certain they danced naked, as their successors, the Almeiis, do. The view of Sir Gardner Wilkinson that the Egyptians forbade the higher classes to learn dancing as an amusement or profession, because they dreaded the excitement resulting from such an occupation, the excess of which ruffled and discomposed the mind, contradicts the opinions of other scholars on the same subject. We read in the Bible that after the Israelites had safely accomplished the passage across the Red Sea, Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, herself a prophetess, took a tambourine in her hand, and danced with other women to celebrate the overthrow of their late task-masters. There are other

instances in the Bible which tend to show that among the Jews, who were reared on Egyptian civilization, it was customary for people of the most exalted rank to dance. There is a reproduction of Amenophis II. from one of the oldest tombs of Thebes that goes to show that Egyptians of all classes were highly proficient in the art of dancing. Four upper class women are represented as playing and dancing at the same time, but their instruments are for the most part obliterated. A fifth figure is resting on one knee, with her hands crossed before her breast. The posing of the heads in these figures is masterful. In another painting from Beni Hassan, executed about three thousand five hundred years ago, a dancer is represented in the act of performing a *pirouette* in the extended fourth position. The arms are fully outstretched, and the general attitude of the figure is precisely what it might be in executing a similar movement at the present day. It is also noticeable that the angle formed by the upper part of the foot and fore part of the leg is obtuse, which is quite in accordance with modern choreographic rules, while the natural inclination of an inexperienced and untrained dancer when holding the limb in such a position would be to bend the foot towards the shin, or at least to keep it in its normal position at right angles.

From many paintings and sculptures that have been discovered, we may gather that the primary rules by which the movements of the dancers are governed have not altered since the time of the Pharaohs. The first thing the Egyptian dancers were taught was evidently to turn their toes outward and downward, and special attention was paid to the positions of their arms, which were gracefully extended and raised high, with the hands almost

joining above the head. In the small tablet of Baken Amen representing the adoration of Osiris, now in the British Museum, all arm positions of the dancing figures are excellent. In one of the sculptures from Thebes a figure is unmistakably performing an *entrechât*. Other figures go to show that the Egyptians employed frequently *jetés*, *coupés*, *cabrioles*, toe and finger tricks. There are reproductions representing dance figures for two performers, executing apparently a kind of minuet. Between the dancers in each figure are inscriptions which refer to the name of the dance. Thus, for instance, one was called mek na snut, or making a *pirouette*. This appears to have been a movement in which the dancers turned each other under the arms, as in the *pas d'Allemande*.

Besides the temple dances, Egypt had travelling ballet companies, giving their performances in the open air gardens of towns and villages. The nomadic Hawasis whose profession to-day is chiefly dancing, are undoubtedly barbarized descendants of the Hawasis that entertained the Pharaohs with their passionate and fiery social dances. Most of the Hawasi dances were of a sensuous nature, performed exclusively by girls, either naked or in light gauze dresses. The themes of all these dances were often so distinctly feminine, depicting the romantic nature of a woman so graphically, that they were performed only as a part of wedding ceremonies. In regard to this style of dance Sir Gardner Wilkinson expresses the conviction 'that there is reason to believe that dances representing a continuous action or argument of a story were in use privately and were executed by ladies attached to the harem or household.'



Egyptian women dancing with cymbals
From an ancient fresco (in the original colors)

Another secular class of Egyptian dances was that performed by Almeiis. While the style and subject of the Hawasi dances tended to express the sexual passions, the Almeiis had learned to be ‘classic’ and scholarly. The Almeiis of to-day maintain that they descend directly from the dancing Pharaohs. The romantic element in the Almeii dances remains within the limits of a strict code of propriety. For that reason the dancing Almeiis, like the clergy, enjoyed an immunity from the common law. The Almeiis of to-day enjoy the same ancient reputation throughout the East and are invited by the Mohammedan chiefs to teach dancing to their harems. They can be seen dancing in the Arabian desert and in Tunis, Algiers, Tripoli and Morocco. But their present-day dances lack the subtleties and technique that their ancestors possessed five thousand years ago. Their celebrated Sword and Stomach Dances have degenerated into deplorable vaudeville shows. Petipa, the celebrated Russian ballet master, has succeeded in composing a brilliant ballet on the theme of Almeii dances, called ‘The

Daughter of the Pharaoh.' However, excellent as the Russian ballet dancers are, they have never performed it to the satisfaction of its author.

One of the weird ancient Egyptian dances that has survived and is practiced by several Oriental races, particularly in Arabia, Persia and Sahara, is the Graveyard Dance. It is known that the Almeiis used to perform this dance at midnight on the graveyards of rich Egyptians, frequently around the pyramids. Though semi-religious, it did not belong to the classified sacred dances performed under the supervision of the clergy. Prof. Elisseieff thinks that this dance probably originated in lower Egypt and belonged there to a recognized temple ceremony, but the priests in upper Egypt failed to recognize it, so the Almeiis monopolized it with great advantage.

The Graveyard Dance performed in the East to-day is wild, weird and ghastly. It is performed by women, dressed in long robes, which cover even their heads. It is danced on moonlight nights by professional Almeiis. These are hired by the relatives or descendants of the rich dead to accompany the wandering soul until it reaches that sphere which belongs to it. There is much strange symbolism and morbid beauty in the Graveyard Dance. Just as weird as the dance is the music, produced from pipes and drums, often accompanied by hooting or sobbing voices. It begins in a slow measure, the dancers marching like spectral shadows in a circle around the musicians. Gradually the music grows quicker, as does the dance. It ends in a wild fury after which the dancers drop unconscious to the ground.

The dances of the living Almeiis and Hawasis and their imitators give little idea of the high art of dancing that was practiced thousands of years ago in

ancient Egypt. The modern axis and stomach dances that are practiced by the daughters of the various tribes of the desert are crude acrobatic feats and vulgar degenerations of the graceful and highly developed art that has vanished with the whole ancient civilization of Egypt. In 1900 there appeared in Paris a supposed-to-be descendant of the celebrated ancient Almeiis, *La belle, unique et incomparable Fatma*, giving performances of 'Egyptian Wedding Scenes' and a 'Dance of Glasses,' which created a sensation among the decadent artists and writers. However, her success was more due to her beautiful body and its vivid gestures in suggesting certain erotic emotions, than to any real art. On the other hand, Isadora Duncan, Mme. Villiani and Desmond have attempted to arouse interest in the Egyptian dances by giving performances that they have claimed to be the genuine classic art of the Nile. According to them, all that a modern dancer needs in becoming Egyptian is to dress as the Egyptians did and produce poses, if possible, with the fewest possible garments, that are to be seen in the ancient fresco paintings, sculptures and hieroglyphs. Then again, the Russian ballet, touring in Europe, announced in its repertoire an Egyptian ballet *Cleopatra*, which was to be a revelation of unseen beauties of the lost ancient civilization. However, all efforts of the modern imagination are unable to lift the veil of the ages.

Though posterity can catch more accurate fragments in the degenerated dances of Almeiis, Hawasis and the few folk-dances of Young Egypt than in the artificial imitations of various choreographic modernists, as a whole we know but a microscopic part of the vanished age of the Pharaohs. The few scarce records that we possess of

the Egyptian dancing speak eloquently of an art far superior to anything which our boasted civilization has yet reached.

CHAPTER III

DANCING IN INDIA

Lack of art sense among the Hindoos; dancing and the Brahmin religion; the Apsarazases, Bayaderes and Devadazis; Hindoo music and the dance; dancing in modern Indian; Fakir dances; philosophic symbolism of the Indian dance.

THE civilization of ancient India was, with the exception of China, the only rival to that of Egypt. But it is remarkable that the Indian mind took a totally different direction from the Egyptian. The tendency towards spiritual expansion that manifested itself in Egypt and Greece became in India a tendency towards concentration. The Indian mind lacked the gift of observation and mathematical proportions, so essential in art, that was possessed by the subjects of the Pharaohs. For this reason we find a magnificent Indian philosophy and mystic science, but an undeveloped feeling for æsthetic values. With the exception of weird and bizarre architecture, that manifested itself most powerfully in the pagodas and temples, the Indian sculpture, painting, music and dancing are too primitive for our taste, as they probably were for that of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks.

In all the Indian constructive arts, in their temple decorations and frescoes, we find very few dancing

figures, still fewer graceful reproductions of the human body. Their gods and goddesses look to us like monsters. The Indian Venera, to be seen in the Pagoda of Bangilore, looks like a caricature, as compared with the Greek Aphrodite. The Indian goddess of dancing, Ramble, who, according to the legend, was a courtesan of Indra, and gave birth to two daughters, Nandra (Luxury) and Bringa (Pleasure), lacks all the loftiness and charm which surrounded the dancing goddesses of Egypt and Greece. There is neither life nor grace in any of the Indian temple art. Even the smile of Indian gods is stupid and inexpressive. The lack of humor and joy mirrors itself best in the art of the Bayaderes, the celebrated dancers of India. Their gestures and movements are void of that exultant gaiety and optimism that predominates in dances of other nations. An air of gloom and pessimism emanates from all the Indian art.

There is no doubt that the peculiarities of Indian music have been obstacles to the development of the national dance. Although it is full of color and feeling, yet the division of their scale into so many more tone units than ours makes it extremely difficult for a dancer to catch the delicate nuances and lines and reproduce them in movement. A few dancing designs here and there give the impression that this art has not changed during the four thousand years of the nation's existence. Since the whole Indian civilization is the same to-day that it was thousands of years ago, we are pretty safe in our assumption that the dances of the Bayaderes exhibited at Calcutta or Benares now were pretty nearly the same during the life of Buddha. The modern dances, like the old ones, show similarity in the fact that the Indian dancers stand nearly at one

spot and hardly move their feet, while mimicking, and moving their body, arms, hands and fingers. The individual peculiarity of all Indian dances lies in the impressionistic poses of their hands and the body.

India deserves to be called the Land of a Thousand Religions. Religion to an Indian represents everything. Like wisdom and life, dance is of divine origin. From time immemorial dancing has been a part of Indian temple ceremonies. The Brahmin religion is interwoven with beautiful legends and myths, according to which dancing was the first blessing that Brahma gave to mankind. One of the legends tells us that the divine Tshamuda danced to music while standing on an egg and holding a huge turtle on her back. In such a position she is to-day giving performances to Brahma in the Nirvana. Such a magic Paradise, with plenty of dancing and music, lasting from early morning till late in evening, is promised after death to all faithful souls.

A widespread Indian legend is that which describes the magic dancing of the Apsarazases, or divine nymphs, with which the Indian imagination has populated every hill and brook. The only occupation of the Apsarazases is singing and aerial dancing. For this purpose these sacred nymphs are supplied with feathery wings which enable them to fly freely in the air. Dancers who reach the very climax of their art get magic wings like every Apsarazas and vanish alive from the earth. This legend laid the foundation of the Indian sacred dances, which were taught by the priests to young maidens kept specially for that purpose near the temples. While the European tourist calls all Indian dancers Bayaderes, regardless whether they give their performances on the streets or in the temples,

an Indian calls the temple dancers Devadazis, or the ‘slaves of God.’ The common street or social dancer is called Nautch Girl. The Indian Devadazis are raised and educated much as are the Christian nuns. After being graduated from a dancing school, the girls are taken by the priests to the temples in which they give daily performances to the pilgrims and live as sacred courtesans with the clergy.

The main function of the Devadazis consists in giving performances, either singly or in groups, to the priests and the pilgrims. Some of their dances take place in front of the pagodas, others inside. The dancers always wear a long garment, covering their body and legs, leaving only the hands and arms bare. Rich people can hire these temple dancers to give performances in their homes, otherwise they never appear outside the temple atmosphere. To an Indian dancer the most important parts of her body are her breasts and fingers. Though she appears in dance barefoot, frequently with rings in her toes, she pays comparatively little attention to her feet. Many of the modern Bayaderes wear an elaborate costume of yellow with wide pantalettes and richly embroidered wraps around the shoulders, leaving arms and breasts bare.

The music accompanying the dances of the Indian Bayaderes is produced by an orchestra consisting of wood wind instruments similar to our flute and oboe, a few string instruments, two different drums and a few tambourines. The leader of the orchestra gives a sign by striking certain brass plates and the Bayaderes, lifting their veils, advance in front of the musicians and begin the dance. The dance, consisting usually only of mimic expressions of two dancers, has a strange melody and a stranger

rhythm. Neither the music nor the dance can be compared with anything known in our Western art. Now and then the feet beat measure, otherwise there is little display of leg agility. The face, particularly the eyes, of the Indian dancers are very expressive. But the alphabet of the dance mimicry is so large that it requires a special study in order to understand and appreciate the fine movements of an artist.

All the Indian social ceremonies, such as marriage, birth and burial, are celebrated with dancing and music. This is particularly true of the social ceremonies of the rich. The standing of the dancers is high in India, so that even in the palace of the Rajah dancers are treated like the guests. In certain parts of India the Bayaderes have the right to live as guests at any house without paying. Prince Uchtomsky, who made a special study of Indian life and art, writes that in cities visited by the European tourists one rarely gets a glimpse of the real Bayaderes. According to him there are many Indian Bayadere dancers that surpass in their suggestive power our most passionate ballets. Every line of their miniature impressionism in dance has an exotic beauty which implies more than it expresses.

The Indian dancers are usually women, though Pierre Loti writes that he witnessed several dances performed by men. These dances, as described by him, tally closely with those which the writer saw frequently performed by various Mongolian tribes in South-Eastern Russia. But we are inclined to think that these, being wild in their character, could not be classified as dances of Indian origin.

To a certain class of Indian dancing belong the well-known fakir dances, performed by begging pilgrims at public gatherings. These represent the

surviving fanaticism of an ancient sect. Their strange performances are to be seen everywhere in Northern India. Absolutely naked and with dishevelled hair, they moan, shriek and groan, jumping wildly up and down and shaking their hands convulsively. When the fanatical execution has reached its climax the fakirs stab themselves with knives or hot irons until they fall into a trance. It is a kind of Oriental 'Death Dance.' To an outsider it is unexplainable how they can endure such self-torture for any length of time. In most cases the knives that the fakirs use are so constructed that they do not go deep into the body but scratch only the skin and produce slight wounds. Though their bloody performances make a deep and shocking impression upon the onlookers, yet dances of this kind cannot be classified as an art.

The best dancers that India has ever produced are those who resembled brooding philosophers and prophetic priestesses rather than pleasing artists. The Indian conception of beauty lies in the spiritual and intellectual and but little in the physical and æsthetic forms. The main purpose of the great Indian *ballerinas* is to inspire their audiences to thought and meditation upon the great powers of nature and the mystic purposes of human life. Their art is exotic and introspective and lacks absolutely the element of purely beautiful inspiration, produced by the great Western dancers. Those of our Western students of art who make us believe that they can perform genuine Indian dances are grossly mistaken, simply because the real Indian dance is not an art and amusement, but the preaching of a certain philosophy. Our materialistic logic is unable to catch the subtle philosophic symbolism that appeals to an Indian mind. We are brought up to enjoy the positive and not the negative plane of life. For us beauty is

joy, for the Hindus it is sorrow. An Indian dancer who can move her audience to tears with her dancing will fail to make the least impression upon our audiences.

CHAPTER IV

DANCES OF THE CHINESE, THE JAPANESE AND THE AMERICAN INDIANS

Influence of the Chinese moral teachings; general characteristics of Chinese dancing; court and social dances of ancient China; Yu-Vang's 'historical ballet'; modern Chinese dancing; dancing Mandarins; modern imitations; the Lantern Festival—Japan: the legend of Amaterasu; emotional variety of the Japanese dance; pantomime and mimicry; general characteristics and classification of Japanese dances—The American Indians: The Dream dance; the Ghost dance; the Snake dance.

I

IN China the art of dancing was in full bloom for centuries before the Christian era. The great Chinese historians tell us that music and dancing were developed and stood in high esteem in China from the dynasty of Huang-Ta till the rule of They, which is a period of not less than 2450 years. Europe with its civilization did not yet exist when choreography was publicly taught in China. Like every other form of Chinese evolution, dancing thus fell into a state of

spiritual torpidity. Forbearance, the foremost virtue of the Chinese race, that was preached by their ancient moralists, like Kon-Fu-Tse and others, stifled in the long run all the passionate emotions of the people and exerted a most detrimental influence upon the arts. Under such conditions the Chinese view of life grew materialistic and dry, the very opposite of the Indian. This peculiarity did not fail to make itself felt in Chinese dancing. The gradual killing of passionate emotions killed also the tendency to imagination in the race. The fantasy that populated the air and water, the mountains and forests of other nations with myths, legends, gods and goddesses, was transformed in China into the most realistic reasonings and mechanical dexterity. The industrial spirit of the great nation killed all romantic and poetic aspirations in art, religion and literature. The music of China is as syncopated and monotonous as her views of life. The only poetry that the Chinese possess is that which was written 4000 years ago.

You, which means in Chinese language 'dance,' lacks the principal forms of agility of our choreography. *Pirouettes*, *jetés*, *cabrioles* and *pas's* are unknown terms to a Chinese *ballerina*. Their dancing, consisting of slow gestures of the arms, the shaking of head, bowing to the ceiling, and other similar manipulations, makes at the first glance an impression that suggests to our imagination the officiating of Greek priests. The power of a dancer lies in the atmosphere that she creates and the peculiar imitating poses of the body. Chinese dance music is correspondingly slow of rhythm and reminds us in many ways of our ultra-modern orchestral music. However, we read in the works of the Chinese classics that their art of dancing was

much higher about two and three thousand years ago.

The ancient Chinese philosophers recommended dancing to strengthen the human body and mind. They emphasized the mimic expressions which all races of the world should learn as an unspoken and universal language. It is written that the great ruler Li-Kaong-Ti took dancing and music lessons from the great teacher of music, Teu-Kung, so that he was able to give entertainments in these arts to his family and guests. He founded a dancing academy at the court and invited learned Mandarins to take charge of the institution. Gradually dancing was introduced in all the colleges and public schools. All Chinese educated classes had to be good dancers at that time. The rulers used to dance to the public at great annual festivals to express their gratitude or dissatisfaction. The receptions of various Viceroys at the national capital were opened with dancing performed by the great functionaries and statesmen of the empire. People judged the characteristics of their newly appointed officials and judges from the individual peculiarities of their dance. The Chinese court kept regularly 64 sworn dancers, who were obliged to give historic ‘ballets’ to the rulers. The orchestra was composed of flutes, a drum, one or several tambourines with bells, and a queer instrument in the shape of the figure ‘2.’ About a thousand years before Christ an imperial decree was issued for the purpose of limiting the number of dancers that one or another of the statesmen could employ.

Eight different dances were performed at the Chinese court and eight dancers participated in each dance. The first dance was *Ivi-Men*—Moving Clouds; this was given in honor of the celestial spirits. The

second dance was the *Ta-knen*—Great Circle; this was performed when the Emperor brought sacrifice at a round votive altar. The third dance was *Ta-gien*—General Motion; this was performed during the sacrificial festival at the square altar. The fourth dance was *Ta-mao*—Dance of Harmony; this was the most graceful dance and was dedicated to the Four Elements. The fifth dance was *Gia*—Beneficial Dance; this dance was dedicated to the spirits of the mountains and rivers, and was slow and majestic. The sixth dance was *Ta-gu*—Dance of Gratitude; this was dedicated to women. The seventh dance was *Ta-u*—Great War Dance; this was dedicated to the spirit of Man. The eighth dance was *U-gientze*—Dance of Waves; this was dedicated to the ancestors and was of elaborate form, containing nine different movements and nine different rhythms. These were all long 'ballets' and lasted for several hours each. But besides these there were six smaller dances. One of these was called the Dance of the Mystic Bird; another the Dance of Oxtail; another the Dance of the Flag; another the Dance of Feathers; another the Sword Dance; and the last the Dance of Humanity. This was performed only by the Mandarins.

The Chinese historians write that Confucius did not like the Sword Dance, but highly praised the others. Confucius describes the Emperor Yu-Vang, who lived 1100 years before Christ, as the author of many new dances and composer of music to accompany them. One of his dances was a great historical ballet, which must have resembled the Roman pantomimes. This ballet has been performed in a distorted form in the nineteenth century and is mentioned by several Russian writers who lived or travelled in China. Judging from the Chinese writers, the historical ballet must have been a spectacular

performance in the style of the Oberammergau Passion Play. It opened with the creation of the world and sea and ended with the latest phase of national history. Some of the dancers represented fish, animals and birds; others, monsters, spirits, rulers and social classes. The music of this ballet was of peculiar symphonic form, very melodious and dramatic. Only fragmentary records of the ancient notation had been preserved in the imperial palace at Pekin, but during recent political disturbances even these vanished and the world has thus been deprived of one of the most valuable of musical documents.

In China the social and religious dancers were one and the same. The touring dancing companies to be seen to-day in China give a faint idea of the ancient choreography. Japanese dancing has made a deep impression upon the Chinese dancers, so that there is a marked element of mixture in the performances that one sees in the present Chinese towns. The Chinese dancers from olden times on have been men and women. It seems as if men predominated before, while now the feminine element is in majority. The Chinese dancing costumes are bizarre and picturesque. There are no barefoot dancers among them and their bodies are heavily covered with garments. Nude dancers are unknown in China.

An odd class of Chinese dancers are the dancing Mandarins. In Su-Chu-Fu there exists still an old school that was founded 2500 years ago for the purpose of teaching dancing to the Mandarins. They presumably learned with the idea of using the art in religious rituals. The style of their dancing differs slightly from that of the professional class. Dancing Mandarins can be seen now in China, but their

cabalistic gestures and queer mimic expressions are unintelligible to the Western mind. There are no folk or national dances in China and the people do not dance in the same sense as we in our social dances. The idea of a social dance is a torture to an average Chinaman. He enjoys seeing dancing, but never takes part in it. The rich Chinese frequently hire professional dancers and let them give performances at their houses. The Chinese wedding dances are never performed by the bride, groom, or their guests, but by hired professional dancers or dancing Mandarins. The historians tell us that this was not so in remote antiquity. There was a time when the Chinese people danced, though their dances were mostly slow and pantomimic. The Russian ballet dancers, who have toured in China, have told that their performances filled the Chinese audiences with horror and disgust, as our Western acrobatic technique makes them afraid of possible neck-breaking accidents.

The attempts of Europeans to create Chinese ballets for our Western stage have been in so far miserable failures. ‘Kia-King’ by Titus, ‘Chinese Wedding’ by Calzevaro, and ‘Lily’ by San-Leon give no true impression of Chinese choreography of any age. Nor are their music or their scenarios similar to any genuine Chinese ballets of the above-named titles.

In our story of Chinese dancing it is worth while to mention the celebrated ‘Lantern Festival’ that is performed every New Year night. It is very likely that the Chinese had once long ago a lantern dance, which has degenerated now into a simple marching procession, in which the people participate in the same sense as the Italians do in their carnival.

Confucius writes of it as of a festival in honor of the sun, the source of the light and life. This festival is celebrated three nights continually. Everything considered, we come to the conclusion that the art of dancing of the land of Mandarins has been of little influence and significance to our choreography. The reason for this lies partly in the racial morale, partly in a national psychology that breathes peace and externalism.

II

Of a quite different character are the dances of Japan, of which Marcella A. Hincks gives to us a comprehensive picture. According to her, dancing in Japan is an essential part of religion and national tradition. In one of the oldest Japanese legends we are told that the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, being angry, hid herself in a cave, so that the world was plunged in darkness and life on earth became intolerable. The eight million deities of the Japanese heaven, seeing the sorrow and destruction wrought by Amaterasu's absence from the world, sought by every means possible to coax her from her retreat. But nothing could prevail on her to leave it, until one god, wiser than the others, devised a plan whereby the angered goddess might be lured from her hiding place. Among the immortals was the beautiful Ame-No-Azume, whom they sent to dance and sing at the mouth of the cave, and the goddess, attracted by the unusual sound of music and dancing, and unable to withstand her curiosity, emerged from the concealment, to gaze upon the dancer. So once more she gave the light of her smile to the world. The people never forgot that dancing had been the means

of bringing back Amaterasu to Japan, therefore from time immemorial the dance has been honored as a religious ceremony and practiced as a fine art throughout the Land of the Rising Sun.

Dancing in Japan is not associated with pleasure and joyful feeling alone; every emotion, grave or gay, may become the subject of a dance. Some time ago funeral dances were performed around the corpse, which was placed in a building specially constructed for that purpose, and though it is said that originally the dancers hoped to recall the dead to life by the power and charm of their dance, later the measures were performed merely as a farewell ceremony.

The Japanese dance is of the greatest importance and interest historically. Like her civilization, and the greater number of her arts, Japan borrowed many of her dance ideas from China, though the genius of the people very soon developed many new forms of dance, quite distinct from the Chinese importation. From the earliest times dancing has been closely associated with religion: in both the Shinto and the Buddhist faiths we find it occupying foremost place in worship. The Buddhist priests of the thirteenth century made use of dancing as a refining influence, which helped to refine the uncultured military class by which Japan was more or less ruled during the early Middle Ages.

The Japanese dance, like that of the ancient Greeks, is predominantly of a pantomimic nature, and strives to represent in gesture a historic incident, some mythical legend, or a scene from folk-lore; its chief characteristic is always expressiveness, and it invariably possesses a strong emotional tendency. The Japanese have an extraordinary mimic gift

which they have cultivated to such an extent that it is doubtful whether any other people has ever developed such a wide and expressive art of gesture. Dancing in the European sense the Japanese would call *dengaku* or acrobatic.

Like the tea ceremony, the Japanese dance is esoteric as well as exoteric, and to apprehend the meaning of every gesture is no easy task to the uninitiated. Thus to arch the hand over the eyes conveys that the dancer is weeping; to extend the arms while looking eagerly in the direction indicated by the hand suggests that the dancer is thinking of some one in a far-away country. The arms crossed at the chest mean meditation, etc. There is, for instance, a set of special gestures for the *No* dances, divided first of all into a certain number of fundamental gestures and poses, and then into numerous variations of these, and figures devised from them, much as the technique of the European ballet dancing consists of 'fundamental positions' and endless less important 'positions.'

The conventional gestures, sleeve-waving and fan-waving movements, constitute the greatest difficulty in the way of an intelligent interpretation of the Japanese dance. The technique is also elaborate and the vocabulary of the dancing terms large, but the positions and the attitudes of the limbs are radically different from those of the European dance, the feet being little seen, and their action considered subordinate, though the stamping of the feet is important in some cases. The ease of movement, the smoothness and the legato effect of a Japanese dance can only be obtained by the most rigorous physical training. The Japanese strive to master the technique so thoroughly that every

movement of the body is produced with perfect ease and spontaneity; their ideal is art hidden by its own perfection.

The dances of Japan may be grouped under three broad divisions of equal importance: Religious, classical, and popular. The last vestiges of a religious dance of great antiquity may still be seen at the half-yearly ceremonials of Confucius, when eight pairs of dancers in gorgeous robes, each holding a triple pheasant's feather in one hand and a six-holed flute in the other, posture and dance as an accompaniment to the Confucian hymn. It is said that the *Bugaku* dance was introduced 2000 years ago.

The Japanese history of dancing begins from the eighth to twelfth centuries. The *Bugaku* and the *Kagura*, another ancient Japanese sacred dance, are considered the bases of all the other dances. The movements in both dances strive to express reverence, adoration and humility. The music of the old Japanese dances is solemn, weird and always in a minor key, and the instruments used are flutes and a drum. Stages were erected at all the principal Shinto temples and each temple had its staff of dancers. The *Kagura* dance can still be seen at the temple of Kasuga at Nara. Like the Chinese, the Japanese lack dances known to us as folk-dancing. In the art of dancing Japan far surpasses China, this being due to the more emotional and poetic character of the race. The dancing of Japan, like its other arts, is outspokenly impressionistic and symbolic. It is graceful and dainty and gives evidence of thorough refinement.

Dances of pungent racial tinge are those of the American Indians. The best known of the Indian pantomimes are the Ghost, Snake, and Dream

Dances. Very little observed and recorded are their various war dances; still less their social dances. Stolid, impassive and stoic as is the man himself, so are his dances and other æsthetic expressions. Void of frivolous gaiety and passionate joy as an Indian remains in his life, so is his dance. His dance turns more about some mystic or religious idea than about a sexual one. There is that peculiar heavy and secretive trait in an Indian folk-dance that manifests itself so conspicuously in the dances of the Siberian Mongolians, as the Buriats, Kalmuks, and particularly the Finns. Though our space is limited, we shall here attempt to give an outline of the better known peculiarities of Indian folk-dances, particularly of the Dream Dance of the Chippewa tribe.

The Chippewas or Ojibways were, at the arrival of the whites, one of the largest of the tribes of North America. They originally occupied the region embracing both shores of Lake Superior and Lake Huron. We owe the description of the Dream Dance to S. A. Barrett, according to whose view it is based on the story of an Indian girl who escaped into the lake upon the arrival of the white men and hid herself among the lilies, thinking they would soon leave. She remained in the lake for ten days without food or sleep, until the Great Spirit from the clouds rescued her miraculously and carried her back to her people. In memory of this event the ceremony of the Dream Dance was instituted and is performed annually in the open air, about the first of July. A special dance ground, from fifty to eighty feet in diameter, was prepared and marked off by a circle of logs or by a low fence. This circle was provided with an opening toward the west and one toward the east.

The objects about which this whole ceremony

centres are a large drum and a special calumet, the former elaborately decorated with strips of fur, beadwork, cloth, coins, etc. It is hung by means of loops upon four elaborately decorated stakes. Often they are provided with bells. To this the greatest reverence is paid throughout the dance, a special guard being kept for it. The calumet serves as a sacrificial altar, the function of which is the burning of sacred tobacco, in order that its incense may be carried to the particular deity in whose honor the offering is made. The drum is beaten by ten to fifteen drummers, each beating it with a stick two feet long, as an accompaniment to the song which serves as the dance tune. Each song lasts from five to ten minutes, and is repeated for several hours continually.

The drum-strokes are beaten in pairs, which gives the impression of difference in the interval of time between the two strokes of one pair and the initial stroke of the next. In this dance, which is always performed by a man of highest standing in the community, a dancer may go through the necessary motions with the feet without moving from the position in which he is standing, or he may dance one or more times around the circle. Frequently the dancers take at first a complete turn around the circle and come back to the vicinity of the original seats and dance here until the tune is finished. The movement is of a skipping step, from the east to the west. Perfect time is kept in the music no matter what movement may be employed by the dancer. Two motions up and down are first made with one heel and then two motions with the other, these being in perfect unison with the double strokes of the drum sticks. The position assumed in the dancing is perfectly erect, the weight of the body being rapidly shifted from one foot to the other, as the dancing

proceeds. The foot is kept in a position which is nearly horizontal, the toe just touching the ground at each stroke of the drum. The dance begins at eleven o'clock in the morning and lasts until four in the afternoon. A special festival meal is served during the dance in the circle.

Of somewhat different nature is the Ghost Dance, which is performed in the unclosed area, the ground being consecrated by the priests before the beginning of the ceremony. The features of this are the sacred crow, certain feathers, arrows, and game sticks, and a large pole which is placed in the centre of the dancing area. About this the dancers circle in a more lively motion and with lighter steps than the dancers in the Dream Dance. In this there are no musical instruments used. The men, women and children take part in the Ghost Dance, their faces painted with symbolic designs. The participants form a circle, each person grasping the hand of his adjacent neighbor, and all moving sidewise with a dragging, shuffling step, in time to the songs which provide the music. The purpose of the Dream Dance is to communicate with the Great Spirit of Life. The Ghost Dance has for its object the communication of the participants with the spirits of the departed relatives and friends, this being accomplished by hypnotic trances induced through the agency of the medicine man.

The Snake Dance is a ceremony performed by the Indians of the southern states. This is of a ghastly nature, as the dancer holds two rattlesnakes in his mouth while executing his evolutions. Not only must the dancer be an artist who can manage the movement of his face so that the heads of the deadly snakes cannot touch his face or bare upper body, but he has to know the secret words that neutralize the

poison of the snake, in case he should be bitten. This dance, like the two above named, is executed in a circle to the chant of special singers. Though the Indian uses musical instruments for his social ceremonies, such as the turtle-shell harp, wooden flute and whistles, he never applies their tunes to the dances that have a more serious or religious meaning. The Snake Dance, like the Dream Dance, is based on a legend, but the story of it is more involved, tragic and mystic, therefore its ghastly nature and weird symbolic gestures appear more vivid and direct than the themes of any other of the Indian folk-dances. But the steps and poses of every Indian dance are similar to each other, slow, compact, impassive and dignified. A strong mystic and symbolic feeling pervades the limited gestures and mimic expressions. Æsthetic ideas with the Indian are closely interwoven with those of ethics and religion. There is nothing graceful, amusing, delicate or charming in an Indian dance, therefore our dance authorities have ignored them.

CHAPTER V

DANCES OF HEBREWS AND ARABS

Biblical allusions; sacred dances; the Salome episode and its modern influence—The Arabs; Moorish florescence in the Middle Ages; characteristics of the Moorish dances; the dance in daily life; the harem, the Dance of Greeting; pictorial quality of the Arab dances.

I

THAT dancing was practiced in temples and homes of the ancient Hebrews is evident from numerous Biblical allusions, and is only natural when we consider that they were educated in Egypt, the cradle of dancing. Some scholars maintain that dancing was a part of Hebrew worship, pointing as a proof of their theory to David's dancing before the Ark of the Covenant and the fact that Moses, after the crossing of the Red Sea, bade the children of Israel to dance. Others, basing their arguments on the Talmud, deny this. It is very likely that the dancing which the Hebrews had learned in Egypt soon degenerated into crude shows, due to their long nomadic desert life, far from civilization. Only now and then did some of their kings indulge in dancing and try to revive the vanishing art. David and

Solomon introduced dancing at their courts and in the temple, as we can see in the Bible: ‘Praise the Lord—praise him with timbrel and dance.’ ‘Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance.’ ‘Thou shalt be again adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances,’ etc. On another occasion we read how the sons of Benjamin were taught to capture their wives. ‘If the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife.—And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number of them that danced, whom they caught.’

The Dance of the Golden Calf, which was plausibly an imitation of the Egyptian Apis Dance, was most severely forbidden by Moses. Since this dance was one of the principal ceremonial dances of Egypt, it is evident that it had rooted deep into the soul of the people and Moses had to resort to violent methods in order to abolish it entirely. We read in the Bible that to honor the slayer of Goliath, the women came out from all the cities of Israel and received him with singing and dancing. Other historic sources tell us that the ancient Hebrews frequently hired dancers and musicians for their social ceremonies. There are various Byzantine designs and inscriptions of the fifth and sixth centuries, in which King David is depicted as a ballet master, with a lyre in his hand, surrounded by dancing men and women. We read that when Solomon finished the New Temple in Jerusalem it was dedicated with singing and dancing. It is evident that the ancient Hebrew sacred dances were performed by men, while women figured exclusively in the social dancing. The Jews in Morocco employ professional dancers for the celebration of the

marriage ceremony to-day.

The best known of the ancient Hebrew dances is that of the celebrated Salome. Thus we read in a chapter of St. Matthew of the beheading of John the Baptist: ‘But when Herod’s birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatever she would ask.’ These short remarks of the New Testament describe a gruesome tragedy that has inspired hundreds of artists to amplify with their imagination what has been left unsaid in the Gospel. Moreau, Botticelli, Dolci, Reno and Stuck have produced immortal paintings of Salome. Some of them have depicted her as a stately society lady of her times, the others show her either frivolous, abnormal or under the spell of narcotics and wine. Many gruesome legends have risen about the death of Salome, according to which she committed suicide by drowning. But an accurate historic investigation has revealed that she was married to the Tetrarch Philip, after whose death she became the wife of Aristobul, the son of Herod, and died at the age of 54.

Be that as it may, the Salome episode is an eloquent proof that dancing was cultivated by the Hebrews and that their daughters were educated in this art either by Egyptian or Greek masters. Several other historic allusions show that Greek dancers went often to Jerusalem to give there performances during the national festivals. Plutarch writes that rich Hebrews came to the Olympic and Dionysian Festivals and were eager to learn Greek music and dancing. But evidently the Greek arts had the least influence upon the Hebrews, whose minds had been trained in the strict Mosaic code of morals to follow

only the autocratic commandments of the Lord, and to leave all the arts of other races alone. Like the Confucian philosophy in China, the Mosaic ethics in Palestine put a stamp of æsthetic stagnation on Hebrew national life. For this very reason the Hebrews never developed a national art, particularly a national music or national dance.

The *Salome* of Richard Strauss has inspired many of our Western dancers to personify the ancient heroine. With the exception of Ida Rubinstein and Natasha Trouhanova, the Salome dances of all the European or American aspirants have been of no importance. There are characteristics to be seen in a few old inscriptions of dancing Hebrew priests which express most forcibly their peculiar nervous poses and quick gestures. European choreography has for the most part failed to grasp the principal features of the vanished Hebrew dances.

II

Of all living Oriental races the Arabs show the most innate instinct for dancing. Judging from the ruins of the architecture that the Moors have left in Spain we can see that they knew more than the mere elementary rules of æsthetic line and form, which is the very essential of a dance. The ruins of the majestic Alhambra speak a language that fills us with an awe. No architects of other races, either dead or living, have reached that harmony of line which is plainly visible in this structural masterpiece of humanity. Since, according to the views of all æsthetic psychologists, dancing and architecture develop as allied arts, the Moors must have

developed a high degree of dancing in the Middle Ages, when the rest of the world was shaken by barbaric wars and ruled by ecclesiastic fanaticism. However, the Mohammedan religion prohibits painting and sculpture, therefore we find no frescoes or decorations in the walls of the Moorish castles or Mosques that could give an idea of the style and perfection of the dancing that was taught in Cadiz.

The Greek and Roman writers allude frequently to the fiery and passionate dances that were exhibited by the graduates of Cadiz, 'which surpassed anything the people had seen before.' We know that the Moors taught dancing to their boys and girls alike. Furthermore, we know that their dances differed distinctly from those of the Greeks and Egyptians. The dancing teachers at Cadiz emphasized agility of legs, softness and grace of the body and a vivid technique of imitation. Passion was the principal theme of their feminine dances, and was expressed with the technique of virtuosity. It is said that the Califs of Seville kept a staff of fifty trained dancers at their court.

The essential feature of Arabian dancing was the graphic production of pictorial episodes, in rich harmonious lines of the body, sensuous grace of the poses and sinuous elegance of movement. A special emphasis was placed upon the exhibition of the most perfect womanly beauty. To complete the task of architectural perfection an Arabic dancer was taught to study carefully the geometric laws of nature and eliminate the crudities acquired in everyday life. The principal musical instrument of the Moorish dancers was the African guitar, which was their national invention. Most of the great Arab dancers were women, who preferred to dance without a masculine

partner. Ordinarily they danced to the music of two or three differently tuned guitars, and only on festival occasions or in appearances at court was the music supplied by an orchestra of ten or more. Already the Arabs had their musical notation, set in three colors: red, green, and blue. Fragments of their mediæval music notation were recently discovered by a French scholar and were successfully deciphered. It appears that many of the dance melodies still in use in Spain are of Moorish descent. The Kinneys,[A] who seemingly have made a study of Spanish and modern Arab dancing, write of it graphically, as follows:

[A] Troy and Margaret West Kinney: The Dance (New York, 1914).

'Of formulated dances the Arab has few, and those no more set than are the words of our stories: the point must not be missed, but we may choose our own vocabulary. In terms of the dance, the Arab entertainer tells stories; in the case of known and popular stories she follows the accepted narrative, but improvises the movements and poses that express it, exactly as though they were spoken words instead of pantomime. Somewhat less freedom necessarily obtains in the narration of dance-poems than in the recital of trifling incidents; but within the necessary limits, originality is prized. In the mimetic vocabulary are certain phrases that are depended upon to convey their definite meanings. New word-equivalents, however, are always in order, if they can stand the searching test of eyes educated in beauty and minds trained to exact thinking.

'Nearly unlimited as it is in scope, delightful as it

unfailingly is to those who know it, Arabic dancing suits occasions of a variety of which the dances of Europe never dreamed. In the café it diverts and sometimes demoralizes. In his house the master watches the dancing of his slaves, dreaming under the narcotic spell of rhythm. On those rare occasions when the demands of diplomacy or business compel him to bring a guest into his house, the dancing of slaves is depended upon to entertain. His wives dance before him to please his eye, and to cajole him into conformity with their desires. Even the news of the day is danced, since the doctrines of Mohammed deprecate the printing of almost everything except the Koran. Reports of current events reach the male population in the market and the café. At home men talk little of outside affairs, and women do not get out except to visit others of their kind, as isolated from the world as themselves. But they get all the news that is likely to interest them, none the less; at least the happenings in the world of Mohammedanism.

'As vendors of information of passing events, there are women that wander in pairs from city to city, from harem to harem, like bards of the early North. As women they are admitted to women's apartments. There, while one rhythmically pantomimes deeds of war to the cloistered ones that never saw a soldier, or graphically imitates the punishment of a malefactor in the market place, her companion chants, with falsetto whines, a descriptive and rhythmic accompaniment. Thus is the harem protected against the risk of narrowness.

'In the daily life of the harem, dancing is one of the favored pastimes. Women dance to amuse themselves and to entertain one another. In the

dance, as in music and embroidery, there is endless interest, and a spirit of emulation usually friendly.

‘One of the comparatively formalized mimetic expressions is the “Dance of Greeting,” the function of which is to honor a guest when occasion brings him into the house. Let it be imagined that coffee and cigarettes have been served to two grave gentlemen; that one has expressed bewilderment at the magnificence of the establishment, and his opinion that too great honor has been done him in permitting him to enter it; that the host has duly made reply that his grandchildren will tell with pride of the day when the poor house was so honored that such a one set his foot within it. After which a sherbet, more coffee and cigarettes. When the time seems propitious, the host suggests to the guest that if in his great kindness he will look at her, he—the host—would like permission to order a slave to try to entertain with a dance.

‘The musicians squatting against the wall begin the wailing of the flute, the hypnotic throb of “darabukkeh.” She who is designed to dance the Greeting enters holding before her a long scarf that half conceals her; the expression on her face is surprise, as though honor had fallen to her beyond her merits or expectation. Upon reaching her place she extends her arms forward, then slowly moves them, and with them the scarf, to one side, until she is revealed. When a nod confirms the command to dance, she quickly drops the scarf to the floor, advances to a place before the guest and near him, and honors him with a slave’s salutation. Then arising she proceeds to her silent Greeting. * * *

‘The Arabian dance is not a dance of movement; it is a dance of pictures, to which movement is

wholly subordinate. Each bar of the music accompanies a picture complete in itself. Within the measure of each bar the dancer has time for the movements leading from one picture to the next, and to hold the picture for the instant necessary to give emphasis. At whatever moment she may be stopped, therefore, she is within less than a moment's pose so perfectly balanced that it appears as a natural termination of the dance. The Oriental's general indifference to the forces of accumulation and climax are consistent with such a capricious ending. In his dance each phrase is complete in itself; it may be likened to one of those serial stories in our magazines, in which each installment of the story is self-sufficient.

'To the Occidental unused to Oriental art, the absence of crescendo and climax, and the substituted iteration carried on endlessly, is uninteresting. Nevertheless, a few days of life among Oriental conditions suffice to throw many a scoffer into attunement with the Oriental art idea, which is to soothe, not to stimulate. Moorish ornament is an indefinitely repeated series of marvellously designed units, each complete in itself, yet inextricably interwoven with its neighbors. In music the beats continue unchanging through bar after bar, phrase after phrase. The rhythmic repetition of the tile-designs on the wall, the decorative repetition of the beats of music, produce a spell of dreamy visioning comparable only to the effect of some potent but harmless narcotic.'

From all modern observations and ancient records it is evident that the Arabs' dances differed essentially from their Eastern neighbors. Spain undoubtedly is the only Occidental country that has

preserved in its vivid national dances, *Jotas*, *Boleros*, *Seguidillas* and *Fandangos*, the mutilated and deformed elements of the vanished choreography of Cadiz. Though the Moor has left so few records of his highly cultivated art of dancing, yet his spectral shadow hangs over the race beyond the Pyrenees. Of all the living civilized nations the Spaniards, more than any others, are justly the very incarnation of the vanished magic Arabs in dance. A studious observer finds in Spanish dances all the hysteria, magic, seductiveness and softness that was practiced by mediæval Arab dancers. And then the costumes—most picturesque and romantic—that the Spanish women use in their dances are similar in their lines and colors to those that were worn by the Moorish girls who entertained with their magic dances a Cleopatra and a Cæsar.

CHAPTER VI

DANCING IN ANCIENT GREECE

Homeric testimony; importance of the dance in Greek life; Xenophon's description; Greek religion and the dance; Terpsichore—Dancing of youths, educational value; Greek dance music; Hyporchema and Saltation; Gymnopœdia; the Pyrrhic dance; the Dipoda and the Babasis; the Emmeleia; the Cordax; the Hormos—Greek theatres; comparison of periods; the Eleusinian mysteries; the Dionysian mysteries; the Heteræ; technique.

I

BEST known to us of all the ancient and exotic dances are those of the Greeks. In Greece dancing was an actual language, interpreting all sentiments and passions. Aristotle speaks of Saltators whose dances mirrored the manners, the passions and the actions of men. About three hundred years before the Augustan era dancing in Greece had reached an apotheosis that it has never reached in any other country in the history of ancient civilization. Accurate information about the ancient Greek dances is given not only in numerous fresco paintings, reliefs and sculptures, but in the works of Homer, Aristotle,

Plato, Lucian, Aristophanes, Hesiod and many others.

That dancing was highly esteemed as an accomplishment for young ladies in the Heroic Age we may gather from the sixth book of the Odyssey, when gentle white-armed Nausicaa, the daughter of a king, is represented as leading her companions in the choral lay after they had washed their linen in the stream, and amused themselves awhile with a game of ball. Ulysses compliments her especially upon her choric skill, saying that if she should chance to be one of those mortals who dwell on earth her brother and venerable mother must be ever delighted when they behold her entering the dance. We read how Ulysses was entertained at the court of Alcinous, the father of the young lady who had befriended him, and whose dancing he had so greatly admired. The admiration of the wanderer was excited by the rapid and skillful movements of the dancers, who were not maidens only, but youths in the prime of life. Presently two of the most accomplished youths, Halius and Laodamus, were selected by Alcinous to exhibit their skill in a dance, during which one performer threw a ball high in the air while the other caught it between his feet before it reached the ground. From the further description it appears that this was a true dance and not a mere acrobatic performance, and that the purple ball was used by the participants simply as an accessory.

The twenty-third book of the same poem tells us that dancing among the guests at wedding festivals formed in these early times an essential part of the ceremonies. The wanderer, having been recognized by the faithful Penelope, tells his son, Telemachus, to let the divine bard who has the tuneful harp lead the sportive dance, so that anyone hearing it from

without may say it is a marriage. Homer thought so highly of dancing that in the 'Iliad' he calls it 'irreproachable.' In describing various scenes which Vulcan wrought on the shield of Achilles, he associates dancing with hymeneal festivities. No Athenian festivals were ever celebrated without dancing. The design with which the gods used to adorn the shields of heroes represented the dance contrived by Dædalus for fair-haired Ariadne. In this dance youths with tunics and golden swords suspended from silver belts, and virgins clothed in fine linen robes and wearing beautiful garlands, danced together, holding each other by the wrists. They danced in a circle, bounding nimbly with skilled feet, as when a potter, sitting, shall make trial of a wheel fitted to his hands, whether it will run; and at other times they ran back to their places between one another.

Galen complained that 'so much do they give themselves up to this pleasure, with such activity do they pursue it, that the necessary arts are neglected.' The Greek festivals in which dancing was a feature were innumerable. The Pythian, Marathon, Olympic and all other great national games opened with and ended with dancing. The funeral feats of Androgeonia and Pollux, the festivals of Bacchus, Jupiter, Minerva, Diana, Apollo, and the Feasts of the Muses and of Naxos were celebrated predominantly with dancing ceremonies. According to Scaliger dancing played an important part in the Pythian games, representations which may be looked upon as the first utterances of the dramatic Muse, as they were divided into five acts, and were composed of poetic narrative with imitative music performed by choruses and dances. Lucian assures us that if dancing formed no part of the program in the

Olympian games, it was because the Greeks thought no prizes could adequately reward it. Socrates danced with Aspasia and Aristides danced at a banquet given by Dionysius of Syracuse.

The Greeks danced always and everywhere. They danced in the temples, in the woods and in the fields. Every social or family event, birth, marriage and death, gave occasion for a dance. Cybele, the mother of the Immortals, taught dancing to the Corybantes upon Mount Ida and to the Curetes in the island of Crete. Apollo dictated choreographic laws through the mouths of his priestesses. Priapus, one of the Titans, taught the god of war how to dance before instructing him in strategics. The heroes followed the example of the gods. Theseus celebrated his victory over the Minotaur with dances. Castor and Pollux created the Caryatis, a nude dance performed by Spartan maids on the banks of the Eurotas.

It is written that Æschylus and Aristophanes danced in public in their own plays. Philip of Macedonia married a dancer by whom he had a son who succeeded Alexander. Nicomedes, King of Pithynia, was the son of a dancing girl. This art was so esteemed that great dancers and ballet masters were chosen to act as public men. The best Greek dancers came from the Arcadians. The main aim of the Greek dancers was to contrive the most perfect plastic lines in the various poses of the human body, and in this sculpture was their ideal. It is said that the divine sculpture of Greece was inspired by the high standard of national choreography.

Though we know little of the Greek dance music, yet occasional allusions inform us that it was instrumental and vocal. Thus Athenæus says: ‘The Hyporchematic Dance is that in which the chorus

dances while singing.' Xenophon writes in his sixth book of 'Anabasis' as follows: 'After libations were made, and the guests had sung a pæan, there rose up first the Thracians, and danced in arms to the music of a flute, and jumped up very high with light jumps, and used their swords. And at last one of them strikes another, so that it seemed to everyone that the man was wounded; and he fell down in a very clever manner, and all the bystanders raised an outcry. And he who struck him, having stripped him of his arms, went out singing *sitacles*; and others of the Thracians carried out his antagonist as if he were dead, but in reality he was not hurt. After this some Ænianians and Magnesians rose up, who danced the dance called Carpæa, they, too, being in armor. And the fashion of the dance was like this: One man, having laid aside his arms, is sowing and driving a yoke of oxen, constantly looking around, as if he were afraid. Then comes up a robber; but the sower, as soon as he sees him, snatches up his arms, and fights in defence of his team in regular time to the music of the flute, and at last the robber, having bound the man, carries off the team; but sometimes the sower conquers the robber, and then, binding him alongside his oxen, he ties his hands behind him and drives him forward.'

Another ancient Greek dance is graphically described by Xenophon as it was given by Callias to entertain his guests, among whom was Socrates. The dance represented the marriage of Dionysos and Ariadne. 'Ariadne, dressed like a bride, comes in and takes her place. Dionysos enters, dancing to the music. The spectators did all admire the young man's carriage, and Ariadne herself is so affected with the sight that she may hardly sit. After a while Dionysos, beholding Ariadne, and, incensed with love, bowing

to her knees, embraces and kisses her first, and kisses her with grace. She embraces him again, and kisses him with the like affection.'

The nature of the Greek religion was such that many of their sacred dances would, according to our conventions, be far more shocking than those which they performed socially. In the Homeric hymn to Apollo we read how the Ionians with their wives and children were accustomed to assemble in honor of the god, and delight him with their singing and dancing. The poet describes that dancing was at that time an art in which everybody could join, and that it was by no means cultivated only by professional artists. Though the Ionians contributed much to the development of the art of dancing, yet in later years these degenerated into voluptuous gesticulations and sensuous poses known by the Romans as 'Ionic Movements.' In another part of the same poem Homer depicts 'the fair-haired Graces, the wise Hours and Harmony, and Hebe and Venus, the daughter of Jove, dance, holding each other by the wrists. Apollo strikes the harp, taking grand and lofty steps, and a shining haze surrounds him, and the light glitters on his feet and on his well-fitted tunic.' Pan, who was considered by the Greeks as well as by the Egyptians one of the greater gods, is represented by Homer as going hither and thither in the midst of the dancers moving rapidly with his feet. However, his dancing must have been singularly devoid of grace, as most of the designs known to us depict him as a patron of shepherds in Arcadia, gay and old-fashioned. All other gods and goddesses of the first order were supposed to be accomplished artists in dancing. The recently found bronze vase in a Phœnician sarcophagus, on the island of Crete, contains designs of unusually soft forms of naked dancing girls

following Apollo. This best illustration of the Apollo ceremony goes to show that the Phœnicians had learned dancing from the Greeks and imitated them successfully.

As thorough as were all the Greek gods and goddesses in their knowledge and talent of dancing, yet they were far surpassed by Terpsichore, the real goddess of dancing and one of the nine Muses who always surrounded Apollo. Most of the recovered Greek drawings and sculptures represent Terpsichore either sitting or standing, but always with a lyre in her hand. The invention of the lyre was attributed to her. A painting, discovered in the excavated city, Herculaneum, represents her standing with the lyre in her uplifted hand. Another smaller drawing describes her with a wreath on her head while executing a graceful dance with other Muses. Various mediæval artists represented in their works Terpsichore dancing with a flower in her hand and an ethereal veil floating around her head. One of the Greek legends tells us that she was the mother of the singing Sirens.

II

All records indicate that dances in Greece were performed by men and women alike. In some of these dances they wore a loose garment, keeping their arms and legs bare; in others they danced perfectly naked. Some dances were performed by girls alone and others by boys, but often they mingled freely. The Greek customs generally permitted the freest intercourse between young people of both sexes, who were specially brought

into contact at the great religious festivals and choruses. It seems that the youths who had distinguished themselves at the public dances expected no other reward than smiles of appreciation from the girls present, and dreaded nothing so much as their indifference. The constant practice of dancing by youths of both sexes from their earliest years was meant to impart to them precision of movement, suppleness of body, pliant and firm action of limbs, celerity of motion and all those physical qualities that would be advantageous in warfare and elevating or ennobling in everyday life. Plato praises the quickness of the body as the most reliable medium of warfare. The Greeks developed such beautiful bodies that they disliked to hide their plastic lines with any garments, therefore they preferred to appear naked, and more so in the temples and theaters than in their homes or in society. The fact that all the Greek sculpture is nude can be attributed, not to any abstract art ideals, but to the actual custom of the time.

The first form of the Greek dance music was vocal, sung by a chorus; in later times they began to use as accompaniment to singing certain *chrotals*, or castañets. During the Homeric era, the lyre was used predominately. In later centuries the flute (*aulos*) was introduced. The vocal music was produced by soloists and by male or mixed choruses. Frequently the dancers themselves sang or played the music and danced at the same time. However, the dancers of the fourth century never furnished their own music. According to the three principal divisions of the Greek mythology (the cult of Earth and Heaven, the cult of Chronos, Titans and Cyclops, and the cult of Zeus and the 12 Olympic divinities) the sacred dances of Greece can be divided into similar groups.

All the Greek deities, even Zeus, were considered accomplished dancers. Since they enjoyed dancing themselves it was only natural that they should like to see dancing included as part of their worship. Cupid, the naughty little god of love, is depicted in most cases dancing. The fourth century figurine of a Bacchante in thin and supple draperies, whirling around on one foot, looks very much like a ballet dancer of to-day.

The oldest of the Greek dances was probably the *Hyporchema*, which was accompanied by the chorus. Though developed in different styles, it always kept a religious character and was looked upon as the first Greek attempts at saltation, in which, as the name betrays, song and dance were intermingled. The earliest use made of saltation was in connection with poetry. Athenæus says, however, that the early poets had resource to the figures of saltation only as symbols of images and ideas depicted in their verse. All dances of the *Hyporchema* class were dignified and elevated, men and women alike taking part in them. Some attribute their origin to the Delians, who sang them around the altars of Apollo. Others ascribe their invention to the Cretans, taught by Thales.

Of later descent, but more practiced than the *Hyporchema*, were the *Gymnopædia*, favored especially by the Lacedæmonians in their festivals of Apollo. This was considered one of the most noble and praiseworthy of the ancient dances. At the festivals the Gymnopædias were at first performed by large choruses of men and boys, but later the maidens were permitted to join them also. Then the men and women danced in separate choirs. The *choragus*, or leader, was crowned with palm leaves, and it was his privilege to defray the expenses of the

chorus. All who took part in this had to be well-trained dancers, as it was the custom in Sparta that all children should commence to receive choreographic instruction from the age of five. Max Müller says, though this dance was performed perfectly nude, it enjoyed a high reputation. Müller is of opinion that music was generally cultivated by the Dorians and Arcadians owing to the circumstance that 'women took part in it, and sang and danced in public, both with men and by themselves.' Music and dancing were taught to the females at the Laconian capital, while housekeeping was regarded as a degrading occupation.

One of the public dances most favored by the Lacedæmonians was the Pyrrhic Dance. Lucian attributes its invention to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, who so much excelled in this that he enriched it with a fine new species, which from his surname Pyrrhicus received its title. The influence of this dance must have extended to the remotest and most barbarous nations, for not only the Romans but the Mongolians practiced it. That it underwent considerable modification in later times is evident from what Athenæus says: 'The Pyrrhic Dance as it exists in our own time appears to be a sort of Bacchic dance, and a little more pacific than the old one; for the dancers carry thyrsi instead of spears, and they point and dart canes at one another, and carry torches. And they dance figures having reference to Bacchus and the Indians, and to the story of Pentheus; and they require for the Pyrrhic Dance the most beautiful airs.'

The Pyrrhic Dance in its early stage was a kind of war dance, as the performers employed every type of arms. The figures of the dance represented a kind of

mimic battle, and the movements of the dancers were generally light, rapid, and eminently characteristic. There were figures representing the pursuit or retreat of an enemy; then again there were movements and positions of the body by which spear thrusts, darts, and wounds generally could be avoided. Other kind of movements suggested aggressive actions, striking with the sword or using the arrow. All these movements were performed in the most accurate rhythm to the music of flutes.

The number of the ancient Greek dances is so large that we can count on this occasion only those which are already known more or less through classic literature. Wide popularity was enjoyed by the *Lysistrata*, *Dipoda*, *Bibasis*, *Hymnea*, and the stage dances, *Cordax*, *Emmeleia*, *Hormos*, *Endymatia* and the celebrated religious Mysteries of Aphrodite, Apollo, Demetrius, Dionysius, etc.

Most of those elegant female dancers whom we find represented on ancient bas-reliefs, with their heads crowned, reeds in their hands raised above them, are executing the *Dipoda*, which Aristophanes has used as the climax in his celebrated comedy *Lysistrata*. This is what the author himself writes of the dance: ‘Come here to celebrate Sparta, where there are choruses in honor of the gods and the noise of dancing, where, like young horses, the maidens on the banks of the Eurotas rapidly move their feet, and their dresses are agitated like those of bacchanals, brandishing the thyrsus and sporting, and the chaste daughter of Leda, the lovely leader of the chorus, directs them. Now come, bind up your hair, and leap like fawns; now strike the measured tune which cheers the chorus.’ It is said that the simple, flowing chitons which they wore as garments flowed freely

with the movements of their limbs, or fell in naturally graceful lines appropriate to the poses they assumed.

A dance of wonderful agility was that of the *Bibasis*. According to Max Müller, a Laconian maiden danced the *Bibasis* a thousand times more than any other girl had done. The peculiarity of this dance was to spring upward from the ground and perform a *cabriole en arrière*, striking the feet together behind before alighting. The *cabriole* is executed by the modern dancers with both feet in the air; and both legs act in the beating movement, rapidly separating and closing. To this a leap, called *jetté*, in the modern terminology, was probably added. The upward spring was made first from one foot and then from the other and striking the heels behind. The number of the successful strokes was counted, and the most skillful performer received the prize. It is said that Æschylus and Sophocles improved considerably the *Bibasis Dance*, musically and choreographically, for both authors were accomplished musicians and dance authorities.

The *Emmeleia* was one of the most respected and popular dramatic dances of the Greek stage. Plato speaks of it as a dance of extraordinary gentleness, gravity and nobility, appropriate to the highest sentiments. It possessed extraordinary mobility and dramatic vigor, and yet was graceful, majestic and impressive. This dance, as it was produced on the Athenian stage, is said to have been so terribly realistic that many of the spectators rushed shocked from the theatre, imagining that they really beheld the incarnated sisters of sorrow whose very names they did not dare to mention. These awful ministers of divine vengeance, who were supposed to punish

the guilty both on earth and in the infernal regions, appeared in black and blood-stained garments. Their aspect was frightful and their poses emanated an air of death. On their heads they carried wreathed serpents, while in their hands were wriggling scorpions and a burning torch.

The music used for the *Emmeleia* was supplied by an 'orchestra'[B] and chorus. Both the musicians and the singers were divided into two groups, one of which was to the right, the other to the left of the dancers. This gives an idea of the so-called 'strophic' principle. There are allusions to the fact that the Egyptians used music to the Astral Dances in this form. Though we do not know the character of the Greek dance music, particularly of the *Emmeleia*, yet fragmentary allusions here and there give an idea that they were mostly in a minor key and of very changeable measure. Kirchoff, who made a special study of this dance, came to the theoretic conclusion that this was predominantly recitative and resembled partly the later operas of Wagner—of course, only melodically—and partly the Finnish *Rune* tunes. As there was much action that could not be danced, the *Emmeleia* required a perfect mimic technique and thorough knowledge of 'eurhythmic' rules. A few of the old Greek writers speak of dance music as dignified and stately, which attributed seriousness or sorrow to the grave steps, gracefulness and modesty to the gay and joyful poses.

[B] As to the significance of this word, see Vol. I, pp. 120ff.

Of a very opposite character was the *Cordax* Dance. According to most accounts it lacked in

respectability and some writers speak of it as an ‘indecorous dance.’ Lucian says it was considered a shame to dance it when sober. In some parts of Greece it took a comic character and was often marred by buffoonery. According to Burette, people had recourse to this dance when excited by wine. *Cordax* was a Satyr who gave his name to it. Since it was frivolous and comic, it was performed only by less reputable female dancers. It is said that in its first phase the *Cordax* was an extremely comic dance and the people enjoyed its refreshing humor and burlesque style. Like the Spanish *Zarzuelas*, the *Cordax* dances were small local comic pantomimes. In it the dancers ridiculed public men whom no one dared to criticize otherwise. Like every other stage art of this kind the *Cordax* dances grew indecent and were later abolished.

A dance of distinctly sexual nature was the *Hormos*, which was dedicated to Artemis. Lucian tells us that the *Hormos* was commenced by a youth, absolutely unclad, and started with steps in military nature, such as he was afterwards to practice in the field. Then followed a maiden, who, leading up her companions, danced in a gentle and graceful manner. Finally, ‘the whole formed a chain of masculine vigor and feminine modesty entwined together.’ Sometimes the dance went in a circle, sometimes in pairs of a maiden and a youth. Sometimes passionate and sensuous gestures were made by both sexes, though only for a moment, and the dance ended with a floating, graceful adagio. It was an allegorical playlet in dance of human passions and their control. The music for the youths was twice as rapid as that for the maidens.

Lucian writes that at some of the festivals three

great choruses were formed for the dancers: of boys, of young men, and of old men. The old men danced, singing of their life of valor and wisdom. The chorus of the young men took up the theme and answered that they could accomplish deeds greater than any that had been achieved. The boys finished the song boasting that they would surpass both in deeds of glory. The *choragos*, who acted at the same time as a conductor and ballet-master, was regarded a man of the highest standing.

III

The Greek theatres, in which the dances and dramas were performed regularly, were of vast dimensions. The Theatre of Dionysius at Athens, being built in the shape of a horseshoe, could accommodate an audience of 30,000 spectators. A deep and wide stage was constructed for the dramatic performances. The theatre was not merely, as with us, a place of entertainment, but also a temple of the god whose altar was the central part of the semicircle of seats, where the worshippers sat, during the festival days, from sunrise to sunset. The stage decorations were of three sorts: for tragedies, the front of a palace, with five doors; for comedy, a street with houses; for satire, rocks and trees. There were no accessories of any kind on the stage. Instead of a roof there was the blue sky. The front part of the stage was used for the chorus, instruments and dancing. Lucian mentions how even the Bacchanalian dance was treated so seriously on the stage that the people would sit whole days in the theatre to view the Titans and Corybantes, Satyrs and shepherds. ‘The most curious part of it is,’ he

writes, ‘that the noblest and greatest personages in every city are the dancers, and so little are they ashamed of it that they applaud themselves more upon their dexterity in that species of talent than on their nobility, their posts of honor, or the dignities of their forefathers.’

How learned the public dancers were in Greece is best illustrated by a dialogue that occurred between Lucian and Croton. In this one of the speakers maintains that any person desiring to become a public dancer should know by heart Homer and Hesiod, should know the national mythology and legends, should be acquainted with the history of Egypt, should have a good voice and know how to sing well, and should be a man of high personal character. A dancer should be neither too tall or too short, too thin or too fat. If a dancer ever failed in his efforts to please the audience he ran the risk of being pelted with stones. The Greek audiences were accustomed to express their disapprobation in a very decided manner.

It is interesting to compare the Greek dancing figures of various periods, which actually give an idea of the development of their choreography, and also of the change which took place in their costumes and styles. In the first half of the sixth century the Ionic style prevailed in garments. The feminine body was heavily draped. Later, until the Persian War, a costume of a chiton, with wide sleeves and sharply cut was in fashion. This century is rich in reproductions of dancing figures, which have a tendency to keep one another’s hands and strive to be decorative. The fifth century figures give an impression of poised grace and plastic perfection of the body. The fourth century figures show dancers

with great individuality and perfection in the use of the arms. Numerous bas-reliefs of this era represent women dancing with veils which give to them a peculiar magic of motion. Like all the Orientals, the Greek women used to wear veils while outside of their homes. The veil was a natural medium of decoration and a symbol for the pantomime of the dance. Frequently the dancing garments of this era are so slight that they add only a mystifying charm to the apparently nude dancers. The poses of their limbs and arms give evidence of rhythm and technique. The mimic expressions play seemingly a foremost rôle, as their smiling faces and bashful looks betray the power of their fascination. They show expert skill in the use of the veils, with which they now seemingly cover their bodies, opening them again to give a glimpse of their great beauty. The exquisitely artistic statuettes found at Tanagra give some idea of the beauty of motion as practised by young women dancers, when, in the marvellous setting of the antique theatres, under the blue skies of Greece, they gave performances to audiences with whom the love of beauty was a passion.

At some of the religious ceremonial dances only boys and girls appeared, at others young men or girls, or both together, danced. Of a rather voluptuous nature were the dances performed in the temples of Aphrodite and Dionysos. Of special importance were the dances connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries, always celebrated in Athens. Their performance and the form of their construction were surrounded with greatest secrecy. Plato, who was initiated into them, spoke very highly of their meaning. It is evident that their real influence upon the people began in the sixth century. In the beginning the Mysteries were performed once every

five years. Later they became annual performances. According to Desrat, they had much in common with the *Rondes* of the Middle Ages. The procession of the Mysteries proceeded from the temple of Demetrius, in Attica, and passed along a wooded road to Athens. A special resting place was the Fountain of Magic Dances, where the girls performed dances of unusual poetic grace. Late in the evening the procession entered the temple with a dance of torches. Here, on a stage specially erected for this purpose, were performed the dances of the Mysteries. Very little is known of the character of these dances. It is likely that they were dramatized legends of Demetrius, who was depicted as a pilgrim, wandering from place to place, in search of his lost daughter. Another phase of the Mysteries was to produce in symbolic gestures and poses and by proper staging, episodes of the life beyond. The performance began in twilight, the first scene being the pantomime in Hell, whither the soul of Demetrius was carried by infernal powers. It represented the utmost horror. During all the performance no word was spoken. After the scene in Hell came another in Heaven. The most impressive of all the dances was the 'Leap with Torches,' in which only the women appeared. It was said to be the most fantastic and acrobatic of all the Greek religious dances. Plutarch says that the impression was that of spectral ghosts playing perpetually with flames. It was meant to act as a purgatory fire that cleansed all the souls from their wickedness. The Mysteries ended in the night of the fourth day with a Dance of Baskets, in which the women appeared with covered baskets on their heads in a solemn march rhythm and vanished into the darkening temple. The Eleusinian Mysteries were abolished by an imperial decree in 381 A. D.

Not less popular than the Eleusinian were the Dionysian Mysteries. It is said that these developed as the festival of the first-fruits, but were later dedicated to the god Dionysos, the patron of wine and pleasure. To him is ascribed the invention of enthusiasm and ecstasy, the essential element of all beauty. The symbol of all the Dionysian dances was the goat, which also figured in the Mysteries. It was one of the most sensuous performances that imagination could invent. In it men and women took part, but men wore usually women's dresses and the women men's. In the centre of the dancers, before the statue of Dionysos, stood a huge cup filled with wine. The ceremony lasted three days and was performed in every town and hamlet of the country. According to the Greek mythology, Dionysos is represented in a group of dancing women and men. As Satyrs were supposed to be daily companions of Dionysos, the Satyr Dance was a feature of the Mysteries. Of one of the Dionysian dances we read in 'Daphnis and Chloë': 'Meanwhile Dryas danced a vintage dance, making believe to gather grapes, to carry them in baskets, to tread them down in the vat, to pour the juice into tubs, and then to drink the new wine: all of which he did so naturally and so featly that they deemed they saw before their eyes the vines, the vats, the tubs, and Dryas drinking in good health.'



Greek and Roman Dances as Depicted on Ancient Vases

Other features of the Dionysian Mysteries were the Dances of Nymphs, the Dances of the Knees, and the *Skoliasmos*, in the nature of gymnastics, in which the performers hopped on inflated wine-skins,

rubbed over with oil to make them slippery. The ancient writers describe these dances as lascivious and comic. In the Satyr Dance the dancers wore goat-skins and appeared as Satyrs. Several of these dances consisted of graceful and more modest movements, measured to the sound of flutes. Some of them were accompanied by light songs, daring sarcasm, and licentiously suggestive poems. Dances in which animals were imitated were numerous. There was a Crane Dance, supposed to be invented by Theseus, and Owl, Vulture, and Fox Dances.

The Mysteries of Demetrius took a more centralized form than the Mysteries of Dionysos. Each town had its individual secrets of romantic mysteries. In Athens the cult of love turned very much around the legend of Mænads, which, like little devils, shadowed the people day and night. In the Museum of Naples can be seen a vase with dancing Mænads, which represents best the ancient spirits of love. Plato says that the Mænad Dance consisted principally of the embracing and caressing of men and women.

Reinach believes that all Greek mythology, art and science grew out of the Greek folk-songs and folk-dances. According to him, the rhythm and melody of dance music changed in strict correspondence with the theme. All the sacred dances dedicated to Demetrius and Apollo, or to Aphrodite, were in legato form, graceful, melodious and full of color; on the other hand, those dedicated to Bacchus and Dionysos were of quicker tempo, syncopated style and less melodious. Reinach succeeded in deciphering the words and music of an ancient Greek dance song that was discovered in the ruins of the temple of Delphi. This was presumably

danced at the Delphic festivals and is dedicated to Apollo. Since the cult of Apollo was widespread in Greece there were not a few dances dedicated and performed to this god. We are told that palm-leaves were given as prizes for the best of the Apollo dancers.

Besides the artists who appeared either in sacred or classic dances, there existed in Greece a class of professional dancers called Heteræ. These were women of flirting and coquettish type. In our sense, they must have been a kind of *Varieté* or professional social dancers. During the time of Pericles there were 500 Heteræ in Athens. Thus Sappho, Aspasia and Cleonica were trained to be Heteræ dancers. At one time in Greek history the Heteræ became a danger to the family. Aspasia was the mistress of Pericles until she became his wife. Being well educated, the Heteræ were women of attractive type and most of the great Greek thinkers, artists or statesmen felt the spell of their charm. Sappho called her house the 'home of the Muses,' where plastic beauty rivalled with poetry and music. The tragedy of Sappho has inspired many writers, ancient and modern, to immortalize her in their works, particularly the story according to which she sang and flung herself down into the sea. Performed by great celebrities the dances of the Heteræ were by no means vulgar, but lyric and suggestively sensuous. They were performed with garments or without, with floating veils and to the music of a flute. The dancers of this class used to give performances at their homes or in specially established gardens. All the Hetera dances were dedicated to Aphrodite and the ambition of the performers was to imitate the lovely poses of the celebrated goddess. According to most descriptions they resembled our past century's *minuets*, *gavottes*

and *pavanes*.

Emmanuel, who has written an interesting work on the Greek choreography, maintains that the accuracy of rhythm was of foremost importance. A choreographic time-marker was attached to sandals that produced sounds modified to the changing sentiments of the action. A little tambourine or cymbals were occasionally employed. A special branch of dance instruction was the *Chironomia*, or the art of using the hands. Greek dancing was by no means predominantly gesturing with hands, as some people think, but it was the harmonious use of every limb of the human body, in connection with the corresponding art of pantomime. There were numerous dancing schools in Greece, and each of them had its particular method of instruction. The first exercise in a school was the learning of flexibility of the body, which lasted a few years. A special school dance was the *Esclatism*, which was chiefly a rhythmic gymnastic, on the order of Jaques-Dalcroze's method at Hellerau. We know comparatively little of the details of the ancient technical mechanism of choreography. Unfortunately all the ancient dancing figures represent merely one moment of a dance, therefore it is extremely difficult to grasp the principal points of the vanished art.

CHAPTER VII

DANCING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Æsthetic subservience to Greece; Pylades and Bathyllus; the *Bellicrepa saltatio*; the Ludiones; the Roman pantomime; the Lupercalia and Floralia; Bacchantic orgies; the Augustinian age; importations from Cadiz; famous dancers.

As with all their arts, the ancient Romans borrowed their dancing from the Greeks. A nation raised in adoration of military and aristocratic ideals, conceited, and with a strong tendency to materialism and formalities, the Romans contributed little to choreography. Their civilization was imitative rather than creative. Their art is void of ethnographic characteristics and a kind of artificial stiffness breathes from their best achievements. The only conspicuous contribution of the Roman dancers to the evolution of dance lies in their unique dramatic and ecclesiastic pantomimes and their celebrated masque dances. But it seems surprising that dancing was far more highly developed and esteemed in the earlier period of Roman history than in those days of luxury and vice which preceded the downfall of the empire. Under the republic, dancing was considered one of the foremost factors in education, and the children of patricians and statesmen were obliged to take lessons in Greek dancing. But of the social views

of later centuries we read from Quintilian that ‘it disgraced the dignity of a man,’ or as Cicero said, ‘No sober man dances, unless he is mad.’ Horace rebukes the Romans for dancing as for an infamy. Various other Roman writers tell us how much the women of standing were criticized for their lack of virtue if they entertained a dancer at their house or shook hands with him.

On the other hand, we have an eloquent proof of the Roman frenzy for the stage dance in the exciting intrigues of Pylades and Bathyllus, which set the whole Republic in a ferment. De Jaulnaye, the great historian, writes that the rivalries of Pylades and Bathyllus occupied the Romans as much as the gravest affairs of state. Every citizen was a Bathyllian or a Pyladian. Glancing over the history of the disturbances created by these two mummers, we seem to be reading that of the volatile nation whose quarrels about music were so prolonged, so obstinate, and, above all, so senseless that no one knew what were the real points of dispute, when the philosopher of Geneva wrote the famous letter to which no serious reply was ever made. Augustus (the Emperor) reproved Pylades on one occasion for his perpetual quarrels with Bathyllus. ‘Cæsar,’ replied the dancer, ‘it is well for you that the people are engrossed by our disputes; their attention is thus diverted from your actions!’ While Pylades is described as a great tragic actor and dancer, Bathyllus is represented as having been endowed not only with extraordinary talent, but also with great personal beauty, and is said as having been the idol of the Roman ladies. It is said that the banishment of Pylades from Rome almost brought about a serious revolution, that was prevented by the recall of the imperial decree.

One of the most interesting ancient dances practised by the Romans was *Bellicrepa saltatio*, a military dance, instituted by Romulus after the seizure of the Sabine women, in order that a similar misfortune might never befall his own country. To Numa Pompilius, the gentle Sabine, who became king after the mysterious disappearance of Romulus, is ascribed the origin of Roman religious dances. Especially celebrated were the dancing priests of Mars, and the order of Salien priests, numbering twelve, who were selected from citizens of first rank. Their mission was to worship the gods by dances. As a sign of special distinction they wore in their ceremonials richly embroidered purple tunics, brazen breastplates and their heads covered with gilded helmets. In one hand they held a javelin, while the other carried the celestial shield called the *ancilia*. They beat the time with their swords upon this *ancilia*, and marched through the city singing hymns to the time of their solemn dancing.

According to Livy, pantomimes were invented to please the gods and to distract the people, horrified by the plague that created havoc in the sacred city of Rome. The *Ludiones*, the celebrated Roman bards, are said to have performed their dances first before the houses of the rich to the music of the flute, but later appeared in the circuses and in special show tents. Their example found followers among the Roman youth. All the Roman dancers gave performances masqued, and it was the custom that in the sacred, as well as in the great dramatic pantomimes women were excluded, though during the later period of the Empire, particularly during the reign of Nero, women dancers appeared.

The best known of the ancient Roman

pantomimes were those performed at the festival of Pallas, of Pan and of Dionysus or Bacchus. Juvenal writes that Bathyllus, having composed a pantomime on the subject of Jupiter, performed it with such realism that the Roman women were profoundly moved. The same is said of the dances invented and performed by Pylades, some of which were later given by the priests of Apollo. The art of Roman pantomime developed gradually to classic standards and ranged over the whole domain of mythology, poetry and drama. Dancers, called *Mimii*, like Bathyllus and Pylades, translated the most subtle emotions by gestures and poses of extreme graphic power so that their audiences understood every meaning of their mute language. This plastic form of mute drama made the dancing of the Romans a great art. The Emperor Augustus is said to have been a great admirer of Bathyllus, and so also was Nero. It is said that an African ruler, while the guest of Nero, was so impressed by the dancer that he said to Nero that he would like to have such an artist for his court. 'And what would you do with him?' asked the Emperor. 'I have around me,' said the other, 'several neighboring tribes who speak different languages, and as they are unable to understand mine, I thought, if I had this man with me, it would be quite possible for him to explain by gesture all that I wished to express.'

Very unusual was the Roman festival of Pan, or the *Lupercalia*, at which half-naked youths danced about the streets with whips in their hands, lashing freely everyone whom they chanced to meet. The Roman women liked to be lashed on this occasion, as they believed it would keep them young. Another kind of Pan festival was celebrated by the peasants in the spring at which the young men and maidens

joined in the dances, which took place in the woods or on the fields. They wore garlands of flowers and wreaths of oak on their heads. Similar dances, only more solemn and magnificent, were performed at the festival of Pallas by shepherds. Dancing and singing around blazing bonfires in a circle they worshipped the goddess of fruitfulness. Frequently the officiators were disreputable women who appeared dressed in long white robes, symbolic of chastity. Then there were the great *Floralia* or May Day festivals which in the beginning were of sufficiently decent manner but eventually degenerated into scenes of unbounded licentiousness. Still wilder than these were the orgies of Bacchus, which contributed greatly to the demoralization of the people until the consuls Albinus and Philippus banished them from Rome by a decree of the Senate.

On account of their sensuous character the Romans were unable to keep their art of dancing in such poetic and yet simple æsthetic frames as did the Greeks, for which reason all the Roman women characters in a pantomime were disguised young men. They lacked the ability of self-control in the stage art which in Greece had reached a standard of classic perfection. It is sufficient to say that they must have been wicked enough when a ruler like Tiberius commanded the dancers to be expelled from Rome. But Tacitus relates that, while publicly Tiberius reprimanded Sestius Gallus for the elaborate balls given at his house, privately he made arrangements to be his guest on the condition that he should himself be entertained in the usual manner. Of his successor, Caligula, Suetonius writes: ‘So fond was the emperor of singing and dancing that he could not refrain from singing with the tragedians and imitating the gestures of the dancers either by

way of applause or correction.'

During the reign of Augustus the art of pantomime reached its zenith. The dances of this time were more spectacular and impressive on account of their carefully executed stage effects. As far as music was concerned, this was produced by flutes and harps, sometimes by singing voices. The Romans never cared for dancing itself, but they were fond of it as a spectacle. A great rôle in Roman life at this juncture was played by the female dancers from Cadiz, which were said to be so brilliant and passionate that poets declared it impossible to withstand the great charm these women exercised over the spectators. Some one says 'they were all poetry and voluptuous charm.' An English writer maintains that the famous Venus of Cailipyge was modelled from a Caditian dancer in high favor at Rome. Another noted writer calls the *delicias caditanas* the most fascinating performances that ever could be seen, and calls all other dances of the Romans and even the Greeks amateurish puerilities.

Of great Roman female dancers we know by name Lucceia, who was said to give performances when she was one hundred years old; Stephania, 'the first to dance on the stage in comedy descriptive of Roman manners'; Galeria Copiola, who danced before Emperor Augustus ninety-one years after her first appearance; and Alliamatula, who danced before Nero at the age of one hundred and twenty. The most known of all the great women dancers in ancient Rome was Telethusa, a fascinating girl from Cadiz, to whose extraordinary beauty and art the poet Martial dedicated many of his songs.

CHAPTER VIII

DANCING IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The mediæval eclipse; ecclesiastical dancing in Spain; the strolling ballets of Spain and Italy; suppression of dancing by the church; dances of the mediæval nobility; Renaissance court ballets; the English masques; famous masques of the seventeenth century.

THERE is a lapse of time, nearly a thousand years, from the fall of the ancient civilization of Greece and Rome to the Grand Ballet of France, when the art of dancing was almost stifled by the Mediæval ecclesiastic scholasticism. Since we have practically no records of the dancing that was fostered in Cadiz, which was probably the most conspicuous at that time, we must confess that the greatly esteemed art of the ancients nearly came to a ruin. If it had not been for Spain, where dancing was introduced even into the churches, it might have taken centuries longer to revive the vanishing ideas of the ancient choreography and keep alive the plastic religion. We are told that a bishop of Valencia adopted certain sacred dances in the churches of Seville, Toledo and Valencia, which were performed before the altar. In Galicia a slow hymn-dance was performed by a tall priest, while carrying a gorgeously dressed boy on his shoulders, at the

festival of Corpus Christi.

Much as the church fathers fought dancing in other countries, they had to admit it in Spain. It is said that the choir-boys of Seville Cathedral executed *danzas* during a part of the religious processions in mediæval Spain, and that this practice was authorized in 1439 by a Bull of Pope Eugenius IV. Of these choir-boy dancers Baron Davillier writes: 'They are easily to be recognized in the streets of Seville by their red caps, their red cloaks adorned with red neckties, their black stockings, and shoes with rosettes and metal buttons. The hat (worn during the dance), slightly conical in shape, is turned up on one side, and fastened with a bow of white velvet, from which rises a tuft of blue and white feathers. The most characteristic feature of the costume is the *golilla*, a sort of lace ruff, starched and pleated, which encircles the neck. Lace cuffs, slashed trunk-hose or *galzoncillo* blue silk stockings and white shoes with rosettes, complete the costume of which Doré made a sketch when he saw it in Seville Cathedral, on the *octave* of the Conception. The dance of the boys attracts as many spectators to Seville as the ceremonies of Holy Week, and the immense cathedral is full to overflowing on the days when they are to figure in a function.'

Vuillier writes of another occasion of the Spanish temple dances: 'One of these festivals is celebrated on the 15th of August, the day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the other on the following day, the feast of the patron of the village of Alaro. On these occasions a body of dancers called *Els Cosiers* play the principal part. It consists of six boys dressed in white, with ribbons of many colors, wearing on their heads caps trimmed with flowers. One of them, *La*

Dama, disguised as a woman, carries a fan in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. Two others are dressed as demons with horns and cloven feet. The party is followed by some musicians playing on the *cheremias*, the *tamborino*, and the *fabiol*. After vespers the *Cosiers* join the procession as it leaves the church. Three of them take up positions on either side of the Virgin, who is preceded by a demon; every few yards they perform steps. Each demon is armed with a flexible rod with which he keeps off the crowd. The procession stops in all the squares and principal places, and there the *Cosiers* perform one of their dances to the sound of the *tamborino* and the *fabiol*. When the procession returns to the church they dance together round the statue of the Virgin.'

Of a very primitive but unique nature were the mediæval strolling ballets of Spain and Italy. Some old writers assert that they originated in Italy and passed later into Spain, but others tell the contrary. Later the Portuguese organized a strolling ballet in adoration of St. Carlos. Castil-Blaze writes of a strolling ballet that was instituted by the King René of Provence, in 1462, called the *Lou Gue*. This consisted of allegorical scenes of the Bible and was danced in the style of Roman mythological pantomimes. Most of the conspicuous characters of the Bible and history were enacted in this ballet. The procession of the ballet went through a city to the square of a garden before some cathedral or castle. Fame headed the march, blowing a trumpet and carrying a gorgeous shield on a winged horse. He was followed by the rest of the company in various comic and spectacular costumes. There were the Duke of Urbino, King Herod, Fauns, Dryads, and Apostles, and finally the Jews, dancing round a Golden Calf.

‘King René wrote this religious ballet in all its details,’ writes Castil-Blaze. ‘Decorations, dance music, marches, all were of his invention, and his music has always been faithfully preserved and performed. The air of *Lou Gue* has some curious modulations; the minuet of the Queen of Sheba, the march of the Prince of Love, upon which so many *noëls* have been founded, and, above all the *Veie de Noue*, are full of originality. But the wrestler’s melody is good René’s masterpiece, if it be true that he is its author, as tradition affirms. This classic air has a pleasing melody with gracefully written harmonies; the strolling minstrels of Provence play it on their flutes to a rhythmical drum accompaniment, walking round the arena where the wrestlers are competing.’

Some queer religious pantomimes came into vogue in France about the twelfth century, and of these the torch dances, executed on the first Sunday in Lent, enjoyed the greatest popularity; but they were all suppressed by the clergy and later became degenerate. In Paris the clergy sold dancing indulgences to the rich patricians for a considerable sum of money. The high society was taught to despise dancing as an amusement unworthy of its position. It remained only a popular diversion among the middle class. The theatrical ballets and strolling pantomimes disappeared altogether. The theatre was declared by the clergy a Pagan institution and every art connected with the stage of infernal origin. But, strange to say, mediæval stage dancing was first introduced by women. Men appeared only as spectators of such performances. Thus we read in a ballad of the twelfth century that the *damosels* arranged a grand ball and the knights came to look on.

The first dances that the mediæval nobility introduced at their castles, in which they themselves participated, were the famous *Caroles*. These were performed to the vocal accompaniment of the dancers themselves, although sometimes a strolling band was hired. Out of these grew gradually the various mediæval social dances and the court ballets and gay masquerades, which reached a climax during the middle of the seventeenth century. The most celebrated of this kind were the *Ballets des Ardents*, arranged by the Duchess de Berri and attended by the whole court. However, the most conspicuous of the mediæval attempts in this respect was the *Fête* given in 1489 by Bergonzio di Botta of Tortona, in honor of Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, on the occasion of his marriage of Isabella of Aragon. Of this we read:

'The Amphitryon chose for his theatre a magnificent hall surrounded by a gallery, in which several bands of music had been stationed; an empty table occupied the middle. At the moment when the Duke and the Duchess appeared, Jason and Argonauts advanced proudly to the sound of martial music. They bore the Golden Fleece; this was the tablecloth, with which they covered the table, after having executed a stately dance, expressive of their admiration of so beautiful a princess and of a sovereign to possess her. Next came Mercury, who related how he had been clever enough to trick Apollo, shepherd of Admetus, and rob him of a fat calf, which he returned to present to the newly married pair, after having had it nobly trussed and prepared by the best cook of Olympus. While he was placing it upon the table, three quadrilles that followed him danced round the fatted calf, as the Hebrews had formerly capered round that of gold.'

The writer describes how Diana, Mercury and the Nymphs followed the first scene. Then Orpheus appears to the music of flutes and lutes. ‘Each singer, each dancer had his special orchestra, which was arranged for him according to the sentiments expressed by his song or by his dance. It was an excellent plan, and served to vary the symphonies; it announced the return of a character who had already appeared, and produced a varied succession of trumpets, of violins with their sharp notes, of the arpeggios of lutes, and of the soft melodies of flutes and reed pipes. The orchestrations of Monteverdi prove that composers at that time varied their instrumentation thus, and this particular artifice was not one of the least causes of the prodigious success of opera in the first years of its creation.’

This was followed by a solo singer accompanied by a lyre, after whose aria Atlanta and Theseus appeared to the sound of brass instruments. After this appeared a ballet of Tritons. During the intermission refreshments were served and the spectacle ended with the scenes of Orpheus, Hymen and Cupid. Finally, Lucretia, Penelope, Thomyris, Judith, Portia, and Sulpici advanced and laid at the feet of the Duchess the palms of virtue that they had won during their lives.

There is no doubt that this spectacular fête of the Duke of Milan gave the initial impetus to the following Grand Ballets at the French Court, which in turn became the embryos of the modern stage dances. It is also very likely that the well-known masques, so much in vogue during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were an outcome of the original Milan pageant. In particularly high favor stood the masques at the English court. Thus we read

that in 1605 ‘The Masque of Blackness’ was given at Whitehall, in which Queen Anne and her ladies blackened their skins and appeared as blackamoors. The Spanish Ambassador, having to kiss Her Majesty’s hand, gave voice to his fears that the black might come off. Three years later ‘The Masque of Beauty’ was given. Both were written by Ben Jonson. The speeches of the masques were mostly in verse, but sometimes in prose. In the ‘Masque of Castillo,’ written by John Crowne in 1675, the Princess Anne and Mary took part at St. James’ Palace and the performance was a great success. Though Bacon designated masques as mere toys, nevertheless he enjoyed them as spectacles on account of their rich colors and costumes. In 1632 James Shirley wrote ‘The Triumph of Peace,’ upon which production a sum of £21,000 was expended. This was given for the first time before the king and queen at Whitehall and was repeated in Merchant Tailors’ Hall. The music to this was composed by William Lawes and Simon Ives. The scenes and costumes were designed and superintended by the famous architect Inigo Jones.

Nearly all the masques of olden times were written in honor of the marriage of royalty or of some great nobleman and were mostly given at Christmastide Twelfth Night. They were said to be many-sided in their construction, music and themes. For the most part they were dramatic, festive and gay, the allegorical characters giving them an element of poetic charm. Dancing was one of their most potent elements, and this was graceful, dainty and lively. The dancers called maskers were a special feature in the masques, though they had nothing to do with speech or song. The dresses in these masques were not always accurate, for the parts were

sometimes acted by women in farthingales, though they impersonated classic goddesses. Masques were patronized in England for only two centuries, Henry VIII, Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I being their main sponsors. Queen Anne of Denmark was so much delighted with them that she acted one of the characters.

Alfonso Ferrabosco, a noted musician of Italian descent, was the composer of many masques during the reign of James I. Other composers were Nicholas Laniere and John Coperario. 'Salmacida Spolia' by Sir William Davenant, with music by Ferrabosco, was said to be one of the most spectacular masques of the seventeenth century. It consisted of pretty scenes and songs between the dances, so full of allegory and devices, and so gay in costumes and light that it was a favorite of English nobility for three generations. The most popular of the English masques were 'Love's Triumph Callipolis' by Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, which was performed at the court in 1630; the 'Sun's Darling,' performed in 1623; the 'Masque of Owles,' performed for King Charles I; and 'Tempe Restored' by Aurelian Townsend, performed in 1632, with Queen Henrietta Maria and fourteen ladies as the leading characters. In the last-named masque the beasts form a procession, fourteen stars descend to the music of the spheres, and Tempe is restored to the true followers of the Muses. Large figures were posted on either side of the stage, one a winged woman, the other a man, with the lighted torch of Knowledge and Ignorance. Women with snaky locks mingled with Harmony in the songs of the chorus of Circe. Dances by the queen and her ladies added to the spectacular character of the scene.

CHAPTER IX

THE GRAND BALLET OF FRANCE

Louis XIV and the ballet; the Pavane and the Courante; reforms under Louis XV; Noverre and the *ballet d'action*; Auguste Vestris and others; famous ballets of the period—the Revolution and the Consulate; the French technique, the foundation of 'choreographic grammar'; the 'five positions'; the ballet steps—Famous *danseuses*: Sallé, Camargo; Madeleine Guimard; Allard.

I

THOUGH Catherine de Medici, Henri IV, and Cardinal Richelieu are often quoted as the first rulers who enabled and encouraged their subjects to revive the ancient dances and thus lay the foundation of the modern ballet, the honor really belongs to Louis XIV. His love for dancing was so vital that he himself figured frequently on the stage, and emphasized the fact that the theatre was not a Pagan or immoral institution. He personally inspired Lully, Benserade and Molière to devote their genius to the stage. He introduced Minuets, Gavottes, Pavanes and Courantes at his court functions and they were copied by all the other rulers and by the nobility. In 1661 the Royal Academy of Dancing was founded.

To its graduates were given the privileges that were enjoyed only by the highest officers of the empire. It is said that the king danced in the Masque of Cassandra when he was thirteen years of age. The French historians write that Louis XIV danced in twenty-seven grand ballets, not to mention the intermezzi of lyrical tragedies and comedy-ballets. In the *Ballet du Carrousel*, given in 1662 on a large open space before the Tuileries, the king danced in the rôle of a Roman emperor and his brother in that of a Turkish sultan. On the occasion of the king's marriage in 1660 the ballet 'Hercules in Love' was given at the palace.

Lully's ballet, 'Cupid and Bacchus,' was said to be a piece full of imagination, dramatic, vigorous and rich in timely mood. 'The Triumph of Love,' performed in 1681, being the first ballet in which women appeared, is considered one of the best creations of this time musically and scenically. One of the most popular comic ballets of that era was *Impatiencem*, composed of series of disconnected scenes of extremely humorous nature. Pecour and Le Basque were the two celebrated dancers of those days, while Beauchamp, a talented composer and artist of considerable imaginative power, acted as Director of the Academy of Dancing and ballet-master in the Opéra. All his ballets were distinguished by their extraordinary complexity of mechanical contrivances, by imposing effects and their allegorical character. However, towards the end of the century Dupré appeared on the stage and soon far surpassed all his predecessors. Noverre speaks of him as the god of dancing, whose harmony of movements was of marvellous perfection.

The principal tendency of dancing of this era was

to be magnificent and noble, but it lacked individuality and failed to stir the emotions. The best examples of this kind of stateliness and stiffness are offered by the Pavane and Courante, which still survive. The gentleman, with hat in one hand, a gilded sword at his side, an imposing cloak thrown over his arm, gravely bowed before his partner, stiff and statuesque in her long train, and began the dance walking gravely around the room. The Pavane was ridiculously ceremonial and conventional. The Courante was different, somewhat resembling the Minuet. It was rather graceful, consisting of backward and forward steps. How fond the king was of the Courante is evident of what Regnard writes: 'Pecour gives him lessons in the Courante every morning.' Littré says that the Courante began by bows and courtseys, after which the dancer and the partner performed a set figure, which formed a sort of elongated ellipse. This step was in two parts: the first consisted in making *plié relevé*, at the same time bringing the foot from behind into the fourth position in front by a *pas glissé*; the second consisted of a *jetté* with one foot, and a *coupé* with the other. The dancers performed the back stay step twice, returning to position, and turned, beginning the movement again by repeating the first springing step and the back stay step, so that the partners changed places and turn. All these three figures were then repeated, commencing with the opposite foot. Eight bars of music were always occupied with the slow *pas de basque* in a circle. This briefly shows the same designs and forms in the dance of this era that we find in the Rococco style of architecture.

But the beginning of the eighteenth century shows a marked reaction against the statuesque solemnity, the dead stiffness and merciless etiquette

that had prevailed. An era of artificial reforms begins with Louis XV. To this period belongs the origin of our modern industrialism. The views and feelings of the feudal system begin to give place to those of coming realism and individualism. But the change is insignificant, as the art of dancing lacks in this as it did in the other, energy, feeling and soul. The one was more impressive through its grand outlines, the other excelled through its dainty charm, like the fashions, decorations and other arts of that time. Long, gilded mirrors, gay garlands of flowers, frail elliptic carvings, graceful designs, gauzy tissues, mauve ribbons, painted faces and hands, perfumed atmosphere, these and numerous other impressions emanate of the art of dancing of the first part of the eighteenth century, although to this era belong the vigorous attempts of Jean-Georges Noverre, the greatest of all the dance authorities of the past centuries.

Noverre, the celebrated ballet-master of France, is considered the father of the ballet and classic dancing generally. The brothers Gardel and Dauberval based their ideas upon the principles of Noverre. It was he who drove the masks, paniers, and padded coat-skirts from the stage and made it human. ‘A ballet,’ he said, ‘is a picture, or rather a series of pictures, connected by the action which forms the subject of the ballet. To me the stage is a canvas on which the composer paints his ideas, notes his music and displays scenery colored by appropriate costumes. A picture is an imitation of Nature; but a good ballet is Nature itself, ennobled by all the charms of art. The music is to dancing what the libretto is to the music.’ According to his theory the action of the dancer should be an instrument for the rendering of the written idea.

Before Noverre laid the foundation to his *ballet d'action*, dancing had existed as an auxiliary form to opera and was lacking in any signs of life. The dancers wearing powdered hair piled up a foot on their heads, and the men in their long-skirted coats made the impression more of a big puppet-show than of a living dance. This made the use of intricate and plastic movements of the body and, moreover, of mimic expressions, absolutely impossible. This is Noverre's argument:

'I wish to reduce by three-quarters the ridiculous paniers of our danseuses. They are opposed equally to freedom, to quickness and to the prompt and animated action of the dance. They deprive the figure of its elegance and of the just proportions which it ought to possess. They diminish the beauty of the arms; they bury, so to speak, the graces. They embarrass and distract the dancer to such a degree that the movement of her panier sometimes occupies her more seriously than that of her limbs.'

In spite of his great reputation and influence, Noverre found it difficult to reform the stage fundamentally. He failed to perform his own ballets in the way he wished. Thus in the 'Horatii' Camilla appeared in hooped petticoat, her hair piled up and decorated with fantastic ribbons and flowers. However, his reforms gained ground little by little. Much as he tried, he failed in reforming the stage celebrities of his time. This actuated the great reformer to say, 'what we lack is not talent, but emulation. It almost seems, in fact, as if this were deliberately repressed. How I should rejoice to see a great dancer performing some noble part without plumes or wig or masks! I should then be able to applaud his sublime talent with satisfaction to

myself; and I could then justly apply the term “great” to him, whereas now the most I say is: “*Ah la bella gamba!*” It is evident, therefore, that theatrical dancing demands many reforms. They cannot, of course, all be carried out at once; but we might at least begin. Let us do away with those gold painted masks, which deprive us of what would be one of the most interesting features of a *pas-de-deux*, the expressions of the performers’ faces. The disappearance of the periwig would follow of itself, and a shepherd would no longer dance in a plumed helmet.’

It is said that the Noverre’s ballets reached the number of fifty. But most known of them are ‘The Death of Ajax,’ ‘The Clemency of Titus,’ ‘The Caprices of Galatea,’ ‘Orpheus’ Descent Into Hell,’ ‘Rinaldo and Armida,’ ‘The Roses of Love,’ ‘The Judgment of Paris,’ etc. Several of these he produced at the courts of Stuttgart, Vienna, St. Petersburg and Florence. It was through his influence upon the Empress Anna of Russia that the great Russian Imperial Ballet School was founded, whose graduates have been electrifying the European audiences during the present and past decades.

Noverre’s reform ideas were much perfected by the French composers and dancers of the following generation, men whom we have previously mentioned—Gardel, Dauberval, the Vestris brothers, and, in addition, Duport, Blasis and Milon. Auguste Vestris was twelve years old when he made his début in Paris, in 1772, in the ballet *La Cinquantaine*, and aroused the wildest enthusiasm in the audience. His high leaps were so popular that his father used to boast, ‘If Auguste does not stay up in the air, it is because he is unwilling to humiliate his comrades.’

For thirty-six years he was *premier danseur* of the Opéra of Paris, and preserved his popularity till the age of sixty-six, when he retired to give lessons in dancing at the Academy. Of an eighteenth-century performance Weber writes graphically:

'On June 11, 1778, Mile. Guimard and the younger Vestris danced in the new ballet, *Les Petits Riens*, with Dauberval and Mlle. Anglin. The performance was a great success. The only author mentioned was Noverre, the celebrated ballet-master. It was he who had imagined the three scenes, which were in fact the groundwork of his ballet. The first scene represented Love, caught in a net and put in a cage; the second, a game of blind-man's buff; and in the third, which was the greatest success, Love led two shepherdesses up to a third, disguised as a shepherd, who discovered the trick by unveiling her bosom. "Encore!" cried the audience. Mlle. Guimard, the younger Vestris, and Noverre were heartily applauded, but not one "bravo!" was given to the composer of the music—who was no other than the divine Mozart. Mozart, who, fifteen years before, had been acclaimed in Paris as an infant prodigy and an inspired composer, was vegetating in the city in poverty and obscurity. The success of *Les Petits Riens* apparently made little difference to him, for a few days after the performance we find him leaving Paris, and seeking employment as an organist to ensure his daily bread.'

This sad episode of the treatment of one of the greatest musical geniuses of his time is partly proof of how little valued was the musical side of a ballet at that time, yet it is also a graphic picture of the mental level of audiences of any time—ours not excluded—who judge a genius by public sentiment

artificially aroused, either by means of some press-agent or by incidental novelty.

Of the Gardel ballets the most popular were *Paul et Virginie*, *La Dansomanie*, *Psyche*, *L'Oracle*, *Telemaque*, and *Le Déserteur*. The writer witnessed a performance of *Psyche* given by the Russian Imperial Ballet with all the true atmosphere of its age, and it made a peculiar impression, similar to that which we get in visiting ethnographic museums of Europe. It was performed in Paris first time on December 14, 1790, at the Théâtre des Arts and pleased the people so immensely that it has been repeated not fewer than a thousand times since. The *Dansomanie*, which was given during the Revolution, was less effective and the author was apparently depressed, though he had chosen a subject of timely character—peasants, villagers and Savoyard farmers acting as the heroes. His ballet, *Guillaume Tell*, promised to be more successful, as the Committee of Public Safety had ordered its performance, but the money granted for its staging was stolen by politicians and Gardel took back his manuscript. It was given after his death. But his spectacular ballet *Marseillaise* created a furore when it was given at the Opéra. The ballet opened with a blast of trumpets, and was executed by dancers dressed as warriors and participants in a hungry mob. Mlle. Maillard, personifying Liberty, took her rôle so well that the actors on the stage and the audience fell on their knees before her, as though in prayer. The solemn hymn passage of this part of the opera, and the slow, majestic dance of the artist were so impressive that the audience burst into sobs.

II

Though the ballet lost its previous splendor under the Revolution, yet it became more vigorous in its enforced simplicity. The French writers admit that the ballets performed in connection with the *fêtes* of the Republic were marked by more serious tendencies and possessed certain profound emotional qualities. Actors and dancers soon accommodated themselves to the new ideals of social life. The Festival of the Supreme Being, conducted by Robespierre himself, was the most important of the itinerant ballets of that time. It was a ceremony of classic nature, performed with slow and march-like steps. Special ceremonial dances were also performed by the colossal statue of Wisdom to the accompaniment of an orchestra. The members of the Convention had their places on a specially erected platform, while choirs chanted a hymn to the Supreme Being. The President set fire with a torch to an image of Atheism. 'An immense mountain,' writes Castil-Blaze, 'symbolized the national altar; upon its summits rises the tree of Liberty, the Representatives range themselves under its protective branches, fathers with their sons assemble on the part of the mountain set aside for them; mothers with their daughters place themselves on the other side; their fecundity and the virtues of their husbands are their sole titles to a place there. A profound silence reigns all around; touching strains of harmonious melody are heard: the fathers and their sons sing the first strophe; they swear with one accord that they will not lay down their arms until they have annihilated the enemies of the Republic, and all the people take up the finale.'

This short picture gives a fairly clear idea of the Revolutionary period, which laid a new foundation to the French arts, including the art of dancing. The

historians tell us that scarcely was the Terror at an end when twenty-three theatres and eighteen hundred dancing salons were open every evening in Paris. The costumes worn by the dancers under the first Republic were more or less imitations of those of the ancient Greeks. The women arranged their hair in imitation of the coiffures of Aspasia and Sappho, and appeared with bare arms, bare bosoms, sandalled feet, and hair bound in plaits round their heads. Even during the Terror people danced in every restaurant on the boulevards, in the Champs Élysées, and along the quays. It is said the people danced in order to forget the tragedies of the day. Milon was a celebrated composer and ballet-master under the Consulate. The most popular of his ballets during this period were *Les Sauvages de la Mer du Sud*, *Lucas et Laurette*, *Héro et Leandre*, *Clary*, *Nina*, *Le Carnaval de Venise*, etc. As in their dress and their ideals, so also in their dancing the people showed an outspoken tendency to appear *à la sauvage*. However, the political turmoils that shook France in these centuries, when the art of ballet crystallized into a systematic shape, assisted its natural development, chiefly by forcing it to swing from one extreme to the other.

The foundation which the French grand ballet laid for the art of dancing still prevails in all the dancing schools of Europe. The ballet codes of all the modern nations use the same French grammar of technique as that which was taught to Mlles. Sallé, Camargo, and Guimard during the past centuries. To the French Academy of Dancing the world owes the principles of the ballet-technique, the *pirouettes*, *jetés*, *chassés*, etc. The French ballet-masters found it necessary to divide dancing into five different positions, which formed the foundation of all

dancing; and then classified the various styles of steps. In describing first, the positions, we begin with the right foot, but the movements would be the same if we would choose the left foot. First position: place the heels against each other, the knees and toes turned well out, the legs firm and straight, the body erect and well balanced, standing equally on the two feet. Second position: pass the right foot to the side to the length of the foot, the weight of the body resting on both feet, the right heel turned forward. Third position: bring the heel of the extended foot close to the hollow of the other instep, in the middle. Fourth position: move the right toe to the front, the toe pointed, the heel forward. Fifth position: let the feet be completely crossed, the heel of one foot brought to the toe of the other.

In systematizing the dance steps the French based their technique upon the ancient method. Here we find the *pas marché*, or the walking step, in which the toe is pointed and is accompanied by a springy gait, for it is often combined with a *jeté* and a *demi coupé*, as the primary steps of the ballet. This is followed by the *jeté*, which means, spring forward on the pointed toe of the front foot so that the weight is thrown on it. To perform this it is necessary first to bend the knee and jump on the foot; second, to bring the toe of the right foot into the above-described third position; third, advance the right foot in small steps; fourth, bring the left foot behind into the fifth position and raise the right.

The *pas coupé* is a step that requires the raising of one foot to the second position, then bringing it quickly to the other foot, which is then raised. Literally it means a step cut short. A step to the side is called *coupé lateral*, it is a *coupé dessous* if the same

movement is executed in front or behind. Then there is a *demi coupé*, in which the step is half made. The *chassé* is a step in which the feet appear to be chasing each other close to the ground. It requires the advancing of the front foot, bringing the other close to it behind, then advancing the hind foot to the front, with an *assemblé* round the other foot. The first movement requires a step forward with right foot, bringing the toe of the left to the heel of the front foot. Then step forward, bring the foot back to third position with an *assemblé*, and let the other foot take the fifth position in front.

The *battements* is balancing on one foot, while the other is extended to the side, front or back, and returning to the fifth position, in front or at the back. In the *petit battements* the movements are made with the toe on the ground. For theatrical dancing the leg is raised as high as possible. The *arabesque* is a step that requires the placing of the foot in the third position, then a slide of the left foot to the second position, turning the face and body in the same direction, the left hand curved above the head. In the second movement the right foot should be well extended behind, and the right hand stretched out behind. Of a quite different nature is the *cabriole*, which means striking the feet or calves of the legs together in the course of a leap. A *demi-cabriole* is a leap from one foot to the other, striking the feet while aloft. It requires the feet to be in the third position, sliding the right foot to the side, passing the left foot to the back, springing on the right foot, and turning and leaving the left foot still behind; the fourth movement brings the left foot forward with the right knee to the third position. Executed by trained ballet dancers with both feet in the air while the legs are rapidly separated and brought together,

it is an effective trick.

Well known even to social dancers, as the basis of the polka-step, is the *pas bourrée*. This requires the dancer to stand on the front foot while the back one is raised. In the first movement the back foot is brought into the third position on the toes. The second movement is the beating of the front foot, and third movement the beating of back and front feet. To this step belongs the *pas de bourrée emboîté*, which requires the advancing of the right foot to the fourth position, the toe pointed and the knee straight, the bringing up of the left foot to the fourth position with the toe pointed behind the right, and the advancing of the right foot with the toe pointed to the fourth position without any raising or sinking of the body; it is all performed on the toes.

Quite acrobatic in character are the celebrated *pirouettes*—movements composed of a *demi-coupé* and two steps on the points of the toes. The *pirouette* starts by bringing one foot to the fifth position behind, the toe touching the heel, then raising both heels and turning on the toe, reversing the position of the feet, and revolving on the toe. A *pirouette* used in the old dances consists of a turn on one foot and the raising of the heel of the other, stepping with the toe of this foot four times and so getting around the other one. In some of the slow *pirouettes* the movement seems to consist of the raising of the foot and jumping round as in some of the country dances. To this class belongs the *fouetté*, which gives a fluid, swinging impression.

Of ancient French origin is the *pas de basque*, which starts in the fifth position with the bringing of the right foot forward with pointed toe, and passing in a semi-circle to the second position with the

weight on the right foot, then with a *glissade* through the third position into the fourth. The *glissade* is a slide. Slide the front foot from the third position with pointed toe slightly raised to the right; then bring the left toe to the right heel, and *vice versa*. The first movement is the sliding of the foot from the third to the second position; the second, the left foot is drawn into the third position forward and repeats.

The *fleuret* is a movement composed of a *demi-coupé* and two steps on the points of the toes. Start in the fourth position without touching the ground, bend the knees equally and pass the right foot in front in the fourth position, and so rise on the points of the toes and walk two steps on the toes, letting the heel be firm as you finish. This can be done also at the back and sides. The 'balance' is performed by rising and falling on the side of one foot, while the other is brought up close. The *brisé* and *entre-chat* are related movements. They occur during the spring while in the air. The feet cross and recross, and assume various positions. The *changement de pied* is a conventional step. In the first movement the dancer springs upward from the third position with the right foot forward; in the second, he throws this foot back and the left forward, dropping down into the third position, the situation of the feet being changed; this can be done in the same manner starting from the fifth position. The *pas sauté* is a jumping step, performed by bending the knee and leaping on one foot while the other is raised. Of more or less importance are the *assemblé* and the *ballotté*. The movement in the former is that of bringing the foot from an open to a closed position, as from the second position to the fifth. The latter is a crossing of the feet alternately before and behind. Then there is the *pivot*, in which the dancer revolves on one foot while

the other beats time in turning around.

This is briefly the elementary grammar of the French ballet technique, upon which the mechanical part of the art of dancing has been based. This was thought to be of essential value for a dancer in producing the most effective lines of the various positions and gestures of the body. According to the views of the authorities of the French Academy, mental application to physical effort were the chief requirements of a dancer. The gymnastic, and particularly the acrobatic, features occupied the foremost place in the ballet performances. Thus dancers in a ballet were not considered human beings but rather moving figures in a decorative design. Even the celebrated *prima ballerinas*, Mlles. Sallé, Camargo and Guimard, who are considered as the first accomplished women dancers on the European stage, with their 'ravishing figures,' and 'enchanting appearances' as Voltaire praised them in his poems, remained acrobatic puppets, as compared with our modern terpsichorean celebrities.

III

The advent of the above-named three French ballet dancers was due to the genial reforms of Noverre, the Shakespeare of the dance, in the eighteenth century. We know very little of the principal qualities of Mlle. Sallé's art, except that she disliked rapid measures and choreographic eccentricities. She was the principal dancer in many of Noverre's ballets, especially in 'The Caprices of Galatea' and 'Rinaldo and Armida,' and in several Gardel ballets. In 1734 she appeared at Covent

Garden in London, in the ballet of 'Pygmalion and Galatea,' and seemed to electrify her audiences so much that Handel wrote for her the ballet 'Terpsichore,' and at the close of the ballet purses filled with jewels were showered on the stage at her feet.

The real favorite of the eighteenth century opera habitués was Mlle. Camargo. Her success is said to have been so sensational that the crowds around the doors of the theatre in London fought for the mere privilege of seeing her. She was also famous for her enchanting body and fascinating personality. Though born in Brussels, she was the daughter of a Spanish ballet-master, therefore she had at her command all the impassioned art of the ancient Caditians. At the age of ten she was sent by the Princess de Ligne to Paris and became a pupil of Madame Prévost, the foremost dancing teacher of that time. At the age of eleven she made her début at Rouen; but she continued her study until she was sixteen when she appeared for the first time at the Opera in Paris with unparalleled success. 'Nimble, coquettish, and light as a sylph, she sparkled with intelligence,' writes Castil-Blaze. 'She added to distinction and fire of execution a bewitching gayety which was all her own. Her figure was very favorable to her talent: hands, feet, limbs, stature, all were perfect. But her face, though expressive, was not remarkably beautiful. And as in the case of the famous harlequin Dominique, her gayety was a gayety of the stage only; in private life she was sadness itself.'

Camargo is credited with having brought about an absolute revolution in opera by her fanciful and ingenious improvisations. In spite of the prevailing stiffness and rigid rules in the ballet she made a

special place for herself by depicting the characters that she had to personify on the stage. She delighted in the conquering of technical difficulties. Stormy love affairs affected her so much that for six years she retired from the stage. But she quitted public life in 1741 and lived in seclusion the rest of her life. She left two children with the Duc de Richelieu and Comte de Clermont. She died at sixty years of age and 'was remembered as the grave, sweet woman whose last years had been spent in loneliness and meditation.'

Madeleine Guimard, whose fame loomed up soon after the retirement of Camargo, remained for forty years a commanding figure in the French ballet. Born in Paris in 1743, she made her début at the age of eighteen and was acclaimed as an artist of exquisite figure, marvellous grace, and extremely distinguished manners. She knew how to make money out of her rich patrons but she was also most reckless in the expenditure of her wealth and her affections. She possessed two elaborate villas, one at Pantin, the other in the Chaussée d'Antin, in both of which she had built little stages on which she and her contemporary stage celebrities gave performances to the high society of Paris. Fleury says that 'it was a gala day for one of our actors when he could escape from the desert of the *Comédie Française* and disport himself on the boards of a theatre so perfectly arranged.' She entertained the guests of the court at her houses and loved to make her arrangements to clash with those given at the court. She was said to be pensioned by a Royal prince, a banker and a bishop, but lost nearly everything in the revolutionary storms. Retiring from the Opéra in 1789, she married the dancer Despreaux, who died soon after. Her old age was verging on misery and

she died neglected in a miserable three-room apartment in the Rue Menars, at the age of seventy-three.

A great dramatic *ballerina* after Camargo was Mlle. Allard, whose partners were Vestris, Dauberval and Gardel. Her frenzied admirers claimed that she far surpassed Camargo because of her added fire, her unusual agility and the expressive beauty of her poses. At one time she would be an ideal Sylvia, gentle and graceful to her finger-tips, then again she was the terrible Medea; now she personified the ethereal charms of a goddess of youth, then the voluptuous passions of a sultana. She figured as the *prima ballerina* in many of the ballets written by Maximilian Gardel, Milon, Mozart and Rossini.

Of other dancers of the French school who enjoyed public favor under the Republic and the early Napoleonic era Duport is the only conspicuous figure. Being a special favorite with Napoleon, he was the star in the ballets of Blasis and Blache. He composed some ballets himself in which he played the leading rôles. But these gained little success. Napoleon wrote to Cambaceres from Lyons that it was inconceivable to him why Duport had been allowed to compose ballets. 'This young man has not been in vogue a year. When one has made such a marked success in a particular line, it is a little precipitate to invade the specialty of other men, who have grown gray at their work.' This clearly shows how much the great emperor was interested in the ballet, and how well he could criticize its artistic values.

The Napoleonic era stopped temporarily the development of the ballet. Pieces composed during this time gained production more easily on foreign

stages than at home. Thus the brilliant *Antoine et Cléopatre*, with music by Kreutzer, lived a few performances at home, whereas it became one of the most successful ballets abroad. The same was the case with Blache's ballets 'Don Juan,' 'Gustave Vasa' and 'Malakavel,' which became the favorites of the St. Petersburg audiences, while they remained unknown at home. It seems as if the political events which marked such a great step towards democratic ideas in France and Europe became a serious stumbling-stone to the evolution of the dance. Democratic England always relied on autocratic France, Italy, Austria and Russia for stimulation in dancing. All the great ballet celebrities of continental Europe found in England responsive and generous audiences, but never any serious rivals. Who of the great French *prima ballerinas* or male dancers, from Mlle. Sallé till Carlotta Grisi, did not make pilgrimages to Drury Lane?



Danseuses en Scène (The Ballet)
Painting by E. Degas

Though to the period of the Renaissance and the European national awakening belong all the immortal musical geniuses, like Bach, Mozart, Gluck, Beethoven, Schubert and others, who laid the foundations of the opera and symphony, yet these men seemed to ignore the ballet (if we leave out of consideration their inferior or incidental works). Gluck wrote a few pieces of this order, and so did Mozart; but they are not the works of their inspiration. Scribe, Rossini, Auber, Weber and Meyerbeer gave occasional expression to ballet music, particularly in connection with their operas, but they regarded these works as inferior to their operas. There are two reasons for this: ecclesiastical prejudice and the revolutionary mob. Just as a fanatical clergy branded the dance as Pagan and immoral, so the mob has always regarded the ballet as an aristocratic luxury. Science seems to us essentially democratic; but from the arts there breathes an air of snobbishness and luxury. The history of civilization has not yet recorded a truly democratic art, particularly a democratic ballet.

CHAPTER X

THE FOLK-DANCES OF EUROPE

The rise of nationalism—The Spanish folk-dances: the Fandango; the Jota; the Bolero; the Seguidilla; other Spanish folk-dances; general characteristics; costumes—England: the Morris dance; the Country dance; the Sword dance; the Horn dance—Scotland: Scotch Reel, Hornpipe, etc.—Ireland: the Jig; British social dances—France: Rondé, Bourrée and Farandole—Italy: the Tarantella, etc.—Hungary: the Czardas, Szolo and related dances; the Esthonians—Germany: the *Fackeltanz*, etc.—Finland; Scandinavia and Holland—The Lithuanians, Poles and Southern Slavs; the Roumanians and Armenians—The Russians: ballad dances; the Kasatchy and Kamarienskaya; conclusion.

THE greatest factor in the stimulation of European art, particularly music, drama and ballet after the bloody Napoleonic wars, was the rise of nationalism, vigorously manifested in the folk-art—dresses, customs, decorations, buildings, songs and dances—of various nations. The first steps in this direction were taken by the Scandinavians: Grieg, Ibsen, Björnson and August Bournoville. What Noverre was to aristocratic France that Bournoville was to Scandinavia. Instead of searching for models and inspiration in the aristocratic traditions of the

past centuries, these men turned to the inexhaustible treasuries of the national folk-art. And they truly discovered new beauties in the simple racial traits of the people. In the previously despised peasant art they found unexpected æsthetic gems, out of which they began to form the individual beauties of their new art.

The Scandinavians were soon followed by the young Russian dreamers: Glinka, Dargomijsky, Seroff, Balakireff, Moussorgsky and Tschaikowsky in music and also in ballet; Gogol, Turgenieff, Dostoievsky and Ostrovsky in drama and literature, turned in their creations to the rich and unexploited folk-lore of the people. Russian music, perhaps more than any other, is a true mirror of the racial soul. There is fire, gloom, sorrow and joy, remodelled and expressed in the same racial spirit as that in which the moujik sings his *Ai Ouchnem*, or builds his *izba*.

The electrifying effect of the Russian dancers upon the European audiences is not due to the influence of the French Academy, on the model of which the Russian Imperial Ballet School was formed, as many music and dance critics of the old and new worlds seem to think, but to the primitive racial spirit, to the great stage geniuses of the Russian Empire, who began their work on the basis of ethnographic principles. It is therefore in the folk-dances that we must look for the solution of future dance problems, it is in the ethnographic element that is laid the foundation of the modern art dance.

I

While taking into consideration the folk-dances

of various European nations, we find that those of Spain are the richest in racial individuality, most passionate in their æsthetic conception, and most powerful in their dynamic language. With their mediæval mystery, magic passion, merciless fury, angelic grace and seductive plastic forms the Spanish folk-dances remain the most impressive examples of folk-art. The centuries of Inquisition, romantic tragedies of the Moors and the silhouettes of an Alhambra are all expressed in the voluptuous lines of a *Jota* or *Fandango*, regardless of whether they are performed by an Andalusian or an Aragon beauty.

So manifold is the Spanish folk-dance and so rich the Spanish imagination that each province has its own peculiar dance, of which, as in the case of the *Zarzuelas*, the inhabitants are immensely proud, and which they dance on the occasion of the fêtes of their patron-saints. The Andalusians boast of their *Bondinas*, the Galicians of their *Muynieras*, the Murcians of their *Torras* and *Pavanas*, etc. Dancing is the great pastime of a Spaniard. A dance of distinctly Moorish traits is the *Polo*. This is performed to the music of the *gaita*, a kind of bagpipe, and to the songs accompanying it. Devilier tells us how the male dancer looks over the girls present and, smiling on one of them, sings: 'Come hither, little one, and we'll dance a *Polo* that'll shake down half Seville.' 'The girl so addressed was perhaps twenty years of age, plump, robust, strapping and supple. Stepping proudly forward, with that easy swaying of the hips which is called the *meneo*, she stood in the centre of the court awaiting her cavalier. Then castañets struck up, accompanied by the gay jingle of tambourines and the bystanders kept time by tapping the flags of the yard with their heels or their sword-canes, or by slapping the backs of the fingers of the right hand,

and then striking the two palms together. The dancer, marvellously seconded by her partner, had little need of these incitements; now she twisted this way, and now that, as if to escape the pursuit of her cavalier; again she seemed to challenge him, lifting and lowering to right and to left the flounced skirt of her calico dress, showing a white starched petticoat and a well-turned, nervous leg. The spectators grew more and more excited. Striking a tambourine, some one cast it down at the girl's feet; and she danced round it with redoubled animation and agility. But soon the exhausted dancers had to sink upon a bench of the courtyard.'

One of the most typical of the Spanish folk-dances is the celebrated *Fandango*, that surpasses in its wild passions and vulcanic vigor everything of its kind. If you see it performed in the shadows of the ruined Moorish castles and mosques to a measure in rapid triple time, and hear the sharp clank of ebony or ivory castañets beating strange, throbbing rhythms, you stand spellbound and electrified, a mute witness of striking ethnographic magic. You seem to feel the pulse of the semi-tropical, semi-African race. The flutter and glitter, passion and quivering seductiveness, are a glimpse into the æsthetic depths of a national soul. The dance seems to inflame the dancers as well as the spectators. A Spanish poet speaks of the *Fandango* as of an electric shock that animates all hearts. 'Men and women,' he writes, 'young and old, acknowledge the power of the Fandango air over the ears and soul of every Spaniard. The young men spring to their places, rattling castañets, or imitating their sound by snapping their fingers. The girls are remarkable for the willowy languor and lightness of their movements, the voluptuousness of their attitudes—

beating the exactest time with tapping heels. Partners tease and entreat and pursue each other by turns. Suddenly the music stops, and each dancer shows his skill by remaining absolutely motionless, bounding again into the full life of the *Fandango* as the orchestra strikes up. The sound of the guitar, the violin, the rapid tic-tac of the heels (*taconeos*), the crack of fingers and castañets, the supple swaying of the dancers, fill the spectators with ecstasy.'

An equally well known of the Spanish folk-dances is the *Jota*, which is said to have originated in the province of Aragon, though the inhabitants of Valencia and Andalusia claim that the *Jota* is the invention of their ancestors centuries before the Aragonians knew of it. It is a more ceremonial and less passionate dance than the *Fandango*, as it is performed on Christmas Eve and at other festivals with the purpose of invoking the favor of the Virgin. The Kinneys write of it: 'It is a good, sound fruit of the soil, full of substance, and inviting to the eye as good sound fruit may be. No academy's hothouse care has been needed to develop or protect it; the hand of the peasant has cultivated without dirtying it. And that, when you look over the history of dancing in some more progressive nations, is a pretty significant thing. The people of Aragon are not novelty-hunters. Perhaps that is why they have been satisfied while perfecting the dance of their province not to pervert it from its proper motive—which is to express in terms of poetry both the vigor and the innocence of rustic, romping, boy-and-girl courtship.'

'A trace of stiffness of limb and angularity of movement, proper to the *Jota*, imbued it with a continuous hint of the rural grotesque. Yet, as the angular spire of the Gothic cathedral need be no less

graceful than the rounded dome of the mosque, so the *Jota* concedes nothing in beauty to the more rolling movement of the dance of Andalusia. It is broad and big of movement; the castañets most of the time are held strongly out at arm's length. One of its many surprises is the manner of the pauses: the movement is so fast, the pauses are so electrically abrupt, and the group in which the dancers hold themselves statue-like through a couple of measures is so suddenly formed, that a layman's effort to understand the transition would be like trying to analyze the movements of the particles in a kaleidoscope.'

The *Jotas* of the other provinces, particularly of Andalusia and Valencia, are less racial than *la Jota Aragonesa*, but nevertheless they are true to the spirit of their localities. Thus the Andalusian *Jota* breathes mystery and romantic gloom, while that of Valencia is fluid and graceful in every movement. The great violinist Sarasate was so fond of the *Jota* that he made special trips after his concert season in the capitals of the world to his home town in Spain, and immensely enjoyed dancing with his old friends and the townspeople or playing the violin to them free of charge.

An extremely graceful and dignified Spanish folk-dance is the *Bolero*. This dance more than any other resembles the general architectonic and decorative style of the Spanish middle class. It has round and fluid lines, rich, soft forms, and graceful poses. In many respects it rather suggests a mediæval ballroom than a simple folk-dance. Some authors say that it is an invention of Sebastian Cerezo, a celebrated dancer of the eighteenth century, but the Spaniards themselves maintain that it dates back to the Arab

rule or before. Blasis writes of it: ‘The *Bolero* consists of five parts: the *paseo*, or promenade, which is introductory; the *differencia*, in which the step is changed; the *traversia*, in which places are changed; then the so-called *finale*; followed in conclusion by the *bien parado*, distinguished by graceful attitudes, and a combined pose of both the dancers. The *Bolero* is generally in duple time, though some *Boleros* are written in triple time. Its music is varied and abounds in cadences. The tune or air may change, but the peculiar rhythm must be preserved, as well as the time and the preludes, otherwise known as feigned pauses—*feintes pauses*. The *Bolero* step is low and gliding, *battu* or *coupé*, but always well marked.’

A folk-dance of great antiquity, according to Fuentes, is the *Seguidilla*, which has certain affinities with the *Bolero*. It is a spirited, gay and modest country dance of the Andalusian peasants. The *Seguidillas* of some provinces have a rapid rhythm and are accompanied by humorous recitative songs. It is said that in La Mancha, whose inhabitants are famous for their passionate love of dancing, verses to *Seguidillas* are improvised by popular poets to suit every occasion. The *Seguidillas* are dances that you see performed on any occasion at country inns and at social festivals. Though requiring less physical strength and dynamic technique than many others, nevertheless the *Seguidilla* is difficult to untrained aspirants. But like most of the Spanish folk-dances it betrays caprice, coquettishness and romantic tendencies of some sort. The theme of the *Seguidilla* poems is always love. Davillier says that the *Seguidilla* that he saw at Albacetex ‘began in a minor key with some rapid *arpeggios*; and each dancer chose his partner, the various couples facing each other some three or four paces apart. Presently, two or

three emphatic chords indicated to the singers that their turn had come, and they sang the first verse of the *copla* (the song that accompanies a dance); meanwhile the dancers, toes pointed and arms rounded, waited for their signal. The singers paused, and the guitarist began the air of an old *Seguidilla*. At the fourth bar the castañets struck in, the singers continued their *copla*, and all the dancers began enthusiastically turning, returning, following and fleeing from each other. At the ninth bar, which indicates the finish of the first part, there was a slight pause; the dancers stood motionless and the guitar twanged on. Then, with a change of step, the second part began, each dancer taking his original place again. It was then we were able to judge of the most interesting and graceful part of the dance—the *bien parado*—literally: well stopped. The *bien parado* in the *Seguidillas* is the abrupt breaking off of one figure to make way for a new one. It is a very important point that the dancers should stand motionless, and, as it were, petrified, in the position in which they are surprised by the final notes of the air. Those who managed to do this gracefully were applauded with repeated cries of *bien parado*!

'Such are the classic lines upon which the dance is regulated, but how shall we describe its effect upon the dancers? The ardent melody, at once voluptuous and melancholy, the rapid clank of castañets, the melting enthusiasm of the dancers, the suppliant looks and gestures of their partners, the languorous grace and elegance of the impassioned movements—all give to the picture an irresistible attraction only to be appreciated to the full by Spaniards. They alone have the qualities necessary for the performance of their national dance; they alone have the special fire that inspires its

movements with passion and with life.'

Noteworthy among the other Spanish folk-dances is *El Jaleo*, a wild and animated dance, consisting of acrobatic leaping and bounding, pirouet wheeling and fury-like fleeing and rushing. It needs a strong and experienced gypsy girl or a seasoned country dancer to give it its peculiar electrifying quality. *El Garrotin* is described as a pantomimic dance, in which the gesture of the hands and arms plays a leading rôle. The Kinneys write that *La Farruca* is an interesting folk-dance. 'After one becomes accustomed to it sufficiently to be able to dominate one's own delight and astonishment, one may look at it as a study of contrasts. Now the performers advance with undulation so slow, so subtle that the Saracenic coquetry of liquid arms and feline body is less seen than felt. Mystery of movement envelops their bodies like twilight. Of this perhaps eight measures, when—crash! Prestissimo! Like gatling-fire the volley of heel-tapping. The movements have become the eye-baffling darting of swallows. No preparation for the change, no crescendo nor accelerando; in the matter of abruptness one is reminded of some of the effects familiar in the playing of Hungarian orchestras.'

The *Cachucha*, *Tascara* and *Zorongo* are Spanish folk-dances of more or less local color. While the *Zorongo* is a rapid dance, performed in backwards and forwards movements, the dancer beating time with his hands, the *Cachucha* is danced by a single dancer of either sex, in triple time. Its steps are gay, graceful and impassionate, head and bust playing a conspicuous rôle. The *Tascara* dance is more fantastic and symbolic than hardly any other of Spain. The movements are slow and languorous. It requires

more backward curving and strange posing than agility and grace. In olden times Tascara was imagined as a dragon with an enormous mouth and fantastic wings. The slow movements of the dance grow gradually in speed and near the end the castañets strike, for without them a Spanish dancer seems to feel uneasy.

The choreographic designs of all the Spanish folk-dances are rich in graceful curves, with abrupt sharp corners here and there, like the national architecture. They speak of a sweet glow of emotion and make a direct appeal to the passions. In dances of certain provinces and certain ages we discern the influence of Egypt, particularly of the Arabs. They give evidence of an ancient training which has grown into the blood and bones of the nation. They betray more the forms of Moorish arabesques than the clear-cut images of the Roman, Greek, or Gothic style. You can feel in their vigorous rhythm and colorful tunes simple, unspoiled souls, filled with energy and hope. To this the picturesque and romantic dresses of their women add that atmosphere and background which the individual stage dance seeks in proper scenery and costumes. In this the Spaniards are born masters. Take, for instance, the black velvet bodice, golden-yellow satin skirt, net-work dotted with little black balls, draped over the hips of an Andalusian belle, and you have a combination of colors and designs that so aptly fit a *Fandango* or *Bolero* that it seems as if a genius had been at work in this harmonious combination. Not less effective are the silver-spangled costume of an Aragonian dancing girl, and the costume of Spanish male dancers, which is suggestive of humor, brilliancy and simple strength. The laced black breeches lashed at the knee, the black velvety waist-coat, broad blue sash, and the

red handkerchief tied around the head, and you have the most harmonious counterpart to the picturesque woman dancer. The music, steps, gestures, poses, dress and choreographic figures of the dance melt into a grandiose masterpiece of some gigantic yet unknown genius. The colors, the wide skirt, the light sandals, the comfortable costumes and the animated gestures fit so perfectly together and produce in the symbolic lines of the movement a language that speaks so clearly of the æsthetic peculiarities of the nation that we are convinced we have here the best lesson in the fundamental principles of a new art dance.

II

How true a mirror the folk-dances and the folk-songs have been and are in showing the racial differences in regard to beauty, is best to be seen if we take the reader from semi-tropical Spain into cold, conventional England, where æsthetic views have developed so differently. In this field we owe much to Cecil Sharp, whose careful works on English folk-dances are of exceptional service to the student of choreography.

The most typical of English folk-dances are the Morris Dances, the Country Dances, and the Sword Dances. All three lack the fire and boisterous passions of the Spanish *Jotas*, *Boleros* and *Fandangos*. They betray the traits of a more phlegmatic and more critical, perhaps more intellectual, but less emotional race. Take, for instance, the Morris Dance, and you find it to be a manifestation of vigor rather than of grace. The same you will find true of all the

other English folk-dances. They are, in spirit, the organized, traditional expressions of virility and sound health—they smack of cudgel-play, of wrestling and of honest fisticuffs. There is nothing dreamy, nothing romantic, nothing coquettish about them. Speaking particularly of the Morris Dance, Mr. Sharp writes:

'It is a formula based upon and arising out of the life of man, as it is lived by men who hold much speculation upon the mystery of our whence and whither to be unprofitable; by men of meagre fancy, but of great kindness to the weak; by men who fight their quarrels on the spot with naked hands, drink together when the fight is done, and forget it, or, if they remember, then the memory is a friendly one. It is the dance of folk who are slow to anger, but of great obstinacy—forthright of act and speech; to watch it in its thumping sturdiness is to hold such things as poniards and stilettos, the swordsman with the domino, the man who stabs in the back—as unimaginable things. The Morris Dance is a perfect expression in rhythm and movement of the English character.'

The Morris dancers wear bells strapped to their shins, and properly to ring them requires considerable kicking and stamping. This ringing is done to emphasize the *fortissimo* part of the music. The foot, when lifted, is never drawn back, but always thrust forward. The toe is never pointed in line with the leg, but held at a right angle to it, as in the standing position. The stepping foot is lifted as in walking, as if to step forward, then the leg is vigorously straightened to a kick, so as to make the bells ring. At the same instant that the forward leg is straightened, a hop is made on the rear foot; the

dancer alights upon the toe, but lets the heel follow immediately and firmly, so that he stands upon the flat foot. The dancer jumps as high as his own foot, holding his legs and body straight while he is in the air, alighting upon the toes (but only so as to break the shock sufficiently), then letting the heels come firmly down. In alighting from the jump, the knees are bent just enough to save the dancer from injurious shock, and are straightened immediately. The Morris Dance is danced by men, usually six. Occasionally, but rarely, women have figured as performers. The music in early times was furnished by the bagpipe, whistle and tabor; but for a century or so a fiddle did the service. The dress of the dancers was a tall hat with a band of red, green and white ribbons, an elaborately frilled and pleated white shirt, fawn-shaded breeches with braces of white webbing, blue tie with the ends long and loose, substantial boots, and rough, gray wool stockings. All dancers carry a white handkerchief, the middle finger thrust through a hole in one corner.

Of somewhat different type is the Country Dance, which is performed by men and women together. Though less of a festival nature than the Morris, the Country Dance has been practised as the ordinary, every-day dance of the people. It is performed in couples and contains gestures that suggest flirtation. For this no special dress is needed. The figures and steps are simple and more graceful than those of the Morris Dance. Its step is of a springy walking nature, two to each bar, executed by women with a natural unaffected grace, and on the part of men with a complacent bearing and a certain jauntiness of manner. Like the Morris, the Country Dance never requires pointed toes, arched legs or affected swayings. The galop, waltz and polka steps are

occasionally used. The movements are performed smoothly and quietly, the feet more sliding than walking. The figures are numerous and involve many repetitions.

Of a very spectacular character are the Sword Dances, which bear a stamp of high antiquity. During the mythologic era they may have been practised as war dances, as we find similar ones practised by all primitive tribes. The history of all nations speaks of sword dances of some kind. There is to be seen in the Berlin Museum a picture from the seventeenth century that shows two double rings of dancers in white shirts, holding up on a frame of interlaced swords two swordsmen clad entirely in colors. There are also, separately, seven sword-dancers, six in white shirts, the first only clothed in red, like one of the swordsmen. They dance in file toward the left, each sloping his own sword back over his left shoulder and grasping the sword-point of the men next in front of him. The last man only shoulders his sword.

In England there seem to have been six principal sword dances, three long and three short. The long-sword dance of Yorkshire requires six men dancers, the Captain, and the Fool. These are accompanied by a musician who plays either a fiddle, bagpipe or accordion. The dancers wear red tunics, cut soldier fashion and trimmed with white braid down the front and around the collar and sleeves; white trousers with a red stripe an inch or more wide down the side of each leg; brown canvas shoes, and tightly fitting cricket caps, quartered in red and white. Each dancer carries a sword; the leader, an ordinary military weapon, and the others swords forged by a village blacksmith. The Captain wears a blue coat of

flowered cloth, ordinary trousers and a peaked cap of white flannel. He used to carry a drum, slung round his waist, upon which he accompanied the dance tunes. The Fool used to wear a cocked hat, decorated with peacock feathers. He wore a dinner-bell and a fox's tail attached to the back buckle of his trousers, and he used to run among the spectators making humorous exclamations. The steps, a kind of leisurely tramp, or jog-trot, fall on the first and middle beats of each bar of the music, and the tramp of the feet should synchronize with the rhythm of the tune. The dancers move slowly round in a ring, clockwise, stepping in time with the music and clashing their swords together on the first and middle beats of each bar of the first strain of the music. The swords are held points up, hilts level with the chin, the blades nearly vertical, forming a cone immediately above the centre of the circle. Each dancer places his sword over his left shoulder and grasps the sword-point belonging to the dancer in front of him. He then faces the centre of the ring, passes his sword over his head and lets his arms fall naturally to his sides. The dance consists of eight different figures. In the last figure the dancers draw close together, linked by their swords, each crossing his right hand well over his head. Each man then drops the tip of his neighbor's sword and, using both his hands, presses the hilt of his own sword under the point of the sword adjacent to it. In this way the swords are tightly meshed together in the form of a double triangle, or six-pointed star. The process of fastening the swords together is carried out as quickly and smartly as possible.

The writer saw a series of English folk-dances given at the MacDowell Festival at Peterboro, N. H., in 1914, among them the sword-dance described.

The performance was exceedingly effective, though the instructor had only inexperienced young amateurs at his disposal. The character of the English folk-dances made rather the impression of a wholesome sport than of a social ceremonial. It seemed as if they were void of all emotional suggestions and their language was clever and realistic rather than fanciful and imaginative.

Though of the same order as the previously described Morris, Country and Sword Dances, yet of a more fantastic appearance is the Horn Dance, which the English have borrowed from the Finns, and greatly changed after their own taste. The English Horn Dance requires ten performers, six dancers, a fool, Maid Marian, a hobby-horse, and a boy carrying a bow and arrow. These are accompanied by a musician, who plays an accordion, and a boy with a triangle. Each dancer carries a pair of reindeer horns. The antlers borne by the first three dancers are painted a white or cream color, the remaining three a dark blue. The horns are set in a wooden counterfeit skull, from which depends a short wooden pole or handle about eighteen inches long. Each dancer bears the head in front of him, and supports it by grasping the handle with his right hand and balancing the horn with his left. The fool has a stick with a bladder attached to it; Maid Marian is impersonated by a man dressed in woman's clothes and carries a wooden ladle which is used to collect money. The boy holds a bow and arrow which he clicks together in time with the music. The step is similar to the country dance step, an easy, rhythmical, graceful and springy walking movement.

III

The Scotch folk-dances, which surpass the English by their more rigorous movement and spirited steps, picture graphically the simple, industrious traits of a thrifty race. The most characteristic of the Scotch folk-dances are the *Highland Fling*, the *Scotch Reel*, and the *Shean Treuse*. All the Scotch dances are more or less variants of the previously described English ones. They have the same strong, sporty rhythm and jaunty bearing as the others. Their choreographic figures are so closely related to the English, and the English to theirs, that it were superfluous to give a detailed description of them on this occasion. Perhaps the *Scotch Reel* shows most typical traits of the Scottish race. This dance requires four ladies and four gentlemen, who all join hands, forming a circle. Then the gentlemen and ladies cross their hands and move eight steps forward and eight steps back in the style of a promenade. The gentleman balances his partner, swinging his right and left arms alternately and proceeds through the chain, the ladies separating left, the gentlemen right, until all arrive at their previous positions. The first lady goes into the centre of the ring while others hop around her until they reach their original position, after which the lady in the centre balances to her partner and back to the opposite gentleman in a half-swing, forming occasionally a chain of three. Thus it goes on until all the four ladies have done, after which the gentlemen follow the same figures and steps. All their steps are of a sharp, skipping nature and the lines of their poses remind one of the designs on their checked decorations and on the patterns of their bright and plain dresses. Noteworthy among the Scotch folk-

dances is the *Hornpipe*, which has been a favored dance of the sailors and peasants. Its lively, rapid measure, so far as the feet are concerned, the folded arms, the firm and stiff body are typical characteristics of a Scotchman's manners. The dance owes its name to the fact that it is performed to the music of a pipe with a horn rim at the open end. There are an infinite variety of *Hornpipes* and of music to which they can be danced, either in common or triple time, the final note having a special stress laid on it.

Of somewhat different character than the English and Scotch folk-dances are those of Ireland. The Irish *Jig* enjoys a popularity throughout the world. Already the name suggests a light, frolicking and airy movement. Since the days of Charles II and Queen Anne, this dance has been associated with humorous verses. The *Jigs* were already in vogue at the time of Shakespeare, who speaks of them as leading pieces in the theatrical repertoires. A dancing or singing *Jig* was the real climax of a piece, often being given as an entertainment during the intermissions. Audiences were accustomed to call for a *Jig* as a happy ending to a show. The Irish people, possessing a natural love for music and dancing, have put their soul into the *Jig*. It mirrors best the semi-sentimental, the semi-adventurous racial traits of an Irishman.

There are single and double *Jigs*; the distinction rests on the number of beats in the bar and they have often enough been danced to the strains of the bagpipe. As a rule, the foot should strike six times to a bar, and it needs a certain amount of enthusiasm to get into the spirit of the thing, the music thereof being most exhilarating. It adds to the charm if the dancers appear as Paddy in a brown coat, green

breeches, and the soft hat with the pipe in it, and his partner in emerald green stockings and skirt, with a red kerchief about her head. The music of a *Jig* is usually an old Irish ditty, and anything more spirited or more in tune to the step could not be found. The first sixteen bars of the dance are occupied with the pitch in which the leg is thrown out. Sixteen bars are given to the toe and heel step. Thirty-two bars are occupied with the diagonal cock-step, supposed to represent the strutting of a cock. Sixteen bars are danced to a rocking-step, in which the legs are crossed. Eight bars are given to pointing; sixteen to stamping firmly with both feet, then the dancers advance and pivot. Finally, sixteen bars are given to a round and round movement. It requires a great deal of hand movement and body vivacity. It has been said by certain Irishmen that a *Jig* is in its apparent fun and fury a short symbolic drama of Irish life. The first figures mean love making, wooing, wedding and marriage. Then come the troubles of married life, the repentance and sinking into the grave.

To old Irish, Scotch and English folk-dances belong the ‘All in a Garden Green,’ ‘Buckingham House,’ ‘Dargason,’ ‘Heartsease,’ and ‘Oranges and Lemons.’ They are all graceful and dignified, but depict more the English middle class or nobility than the people. Thus in the ‘All in a Garden Green’ the man begins by shaking the hand of his lady partner and kissing her twice, which was rather the custom of the fashionable ballroom than of a puritan people. They all give the impression of a refinement of manners that belongs more to the early French social dances than to the folk-dances of a heavy and realistic race. We know how the English high society and court imitated the French in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries, so it is only natural that it accepted with certain modifications the French social dances.

IV

It seems like a paradox that a country which gave to the world the classic ballet in the modern sense, Noverre, Blasis and Vestris, never produced any folk-dances of such racial flavor as we find in many other nations. The old French Rustic Dances, 'Rounds,' *Bourrées*, the Breton Dances, and the *Farandole*, betray only in certain figures the characteristics of the French race; otherwise they make the impression of a pleasing and polished bourgeois art. The *Ronde*, considered as the first form of French folk-dances, being performed in circles by taking each other by the hand, is to be found among races like the Finns, Esthonians, Letts and Lithuanians, as we read from the old epics of these nations. Thus we read in the *Kalewipoeg* that ring dances—*ringi tants*—of eleventh-century Esthonians were practically of the same order as the French *Rondes*. The Greeks had 'Rounds,' so had other ancient civilized races.

An old French dance is the *Bourrée* of Auvergne. It is said to be a shepherd dance originally; but Catherine de Medici introduced it at court and polished out all the heavy, simple and characteristic traits of the people. From that time it has figured as a semi-fashionable dance danced in the society. Bach, Gluck, Handel, and many others since have either composed *Bourrées* or treated *Bourrée* themes in their orchestral compositions. Originally the *Bourrée* was a

simple mimic dance of the peasants. The woman moved round the man as if to tease him. He advanced and returned, glanced at her and ignored her. In the meanwhile she continued her flirting. Then the man snapped his finger, stamped his foot and gave an expression of his masculinity. That induced her to yield, and the dance stopped—only to begin anew.

Like the *Bourrée*, the *Farandole*, which originated in Southern France, was concocted into a dance of the *Beaux Monde* and deprived of its racial language. The *Farandole* that one sees danced in Provence is only a pretty social dance and has little of the old flavor. The dancers performing it stand in a long line, holding the ends of each other's handkerchiefs and winding rapidly under each other's arms or gyrating around a single couple in a long spiral. The modern 'Cotillions' and 'Quadrilles' are based on the old French *Farandole*.

It is likely that the idolized French ballet killed the interest of the people in their simple and idyllic folk-dances. The peasant going to the town felt the contempt that a patrician had for the country art and naturally grew to dislike his traditional old-fashioned village dance. The music that he heard in the city cafés cast its spell upon him, as did the city dances. Urban ideals have been of great influence upon the French country people, upon their traditional folk-dances and folk-songs, and this has deprived the race of valuable ethnographic reserve capital, in which many other nations excel. The French, like the English, have been strong in cosmic tendencies but weak in ethnic. While science grows out of the cosmic principles, art's vigor lies in those of ethnographic nature. An average Frenchman is a

great connoisseur of dancing and indulges in it with a particular pleasure. But his love of the refined and most accomplished impressions puts him naturally outside a simple and coarse peasant art.

The Italian is less pretentious in his taste than the former. But an average Italian, regardless of whether he be a peasant from the most secluded corner of the country or a citizen of Naples, lives and dies in music, particularly in song. The predilection that a Frenchman shows for the ballet transforms itself in the case of an Italian into a love for the opera. Italy has produced great composers, great musicians and singers, but only a few great dancers. An Italian dancer is either acrobatic or blunt. She seems to lack the more subtle qualities of plastic expression, the ability to speak in gestures and mimic forms. This is best illustrated in the celebrated folk-dance, the *Tarantella*.

The *Tarantella* owes its name to a great poisonous spider, whose bite was supposed to be cured only by dancing to the point of exhaustion. The Italians perform it to the music of a tambourine, which in the hands of an expert gives an amazing variety of tones. Like the skirt, apron and the head-dress of the dancing girl, the tambourine is adorned with glaring red, white and green colored ribbons. The white under-bodice of the Italian peasant dress is capable of any amount of embroidery, the hair intertwisted and interplaited with ribbons, the aprons interwoven with colors, and, instead of the usual square head-dress, with its hard oblong board resting on the head, a scarf is gracefully folded over the foundation and caught back with bright ribbons; this is the special Tarantella dress of a girl. The Italian costumes, both ancient and modern, are full

of grace and beauty and give the appropriate atmosphere to a dance.

The *Tarantella*, being a tragic dance, demands considerable temperament, fire and dramatic gift. It begins with the dancers saluting each other, and dancing a while timidly. Then they withdraw, return, stretch out their arms and whirl vehemently in a giddy circle. It has many surprising and acrobatic turns. Towards the middle the partners turn their backs on each other in order to take up new figures. It ends with a tragic, whirling collapse of the girl and the man looking sadly on. It is typical of hysteric fury, revenge, superstition, hatred, fanaticism, passion and agony. It speaks of a quick and sanguine temperament. An Englishman, Scandinavian or Dutchman could never dance a *Tarantella*. It is the dance of a temperamental race.

Like the ancient Romans, the Italians are fond of pantomimes and spectacular effects, with little discrimination for poetry and poise. We can see the same traits in the Italian ballet, which has an outspoken tendency to the acrobatic. All the Italian ballet teachers in Russia are kept there only for their acrobatic specialties. You find in Italy everywhere singing parties, but comparatively little dancing. Some provinces may be more inclined to dancing than those around Naples and Rome. We have heard of a pretty dance, called *Trescona*, that the people dance in Florence, but we have never seen it performed. Other Italian folk-dances are the *La Siciliana*, *Saltarello*, *Ruggera* and *Forlana*. Some of them are more graceful and less dramatic than the *Tarantella*, but they have comparatively little racial vigor, little original appeal. They are either pantomimic or imbued with gymnastic tricks, and

with a strong tendency towards the extravagant or the grotesque. However, the *Tarantella* is and remains the crown of Italian folk-dances. How much it has impressed the Italian and foreign composers is evident in the numerous compositions that they have devoted to this theme. Rubinstein's 'Tarantella' is one of the best.

V

We find a remarkable contrast to the Italian style and spirit in the folk-dances of the Hungarians, whose popular themes have been successfully employed by Liszt and Brahms in their instrumental and orchestral compositions. A nation of Mongolian descent, of impassionate and virile temperament, living its own life, isolated from the æsthetic influence of their European neighbors, little conventional, optimistic, fantastic and lovers of adventure, the Hungarians are born dancers. True to the quick and fiery temperament of the race, the Hungarian dances are vivid sketches, full of action and color. Music and dancing have been for centuries past the foremost recreations of the race. Their ancient legends speak of worship that consisted only of music and dancing. Unlike other nations, their dance music is exceedingly pretty, melodious and full of imaginary beauty. The Hungarian folk-dance is expressive, rich in pictorial episodes, symbolic and elevating.

The Hungarian costume for a *Czardas* is singularly effective, the petticoat of cloth of gold, the red velvet bodice opening over a stomacher of gold and precious stones, crimson and green blending in

the sash which surrounds the waist. It is said that the name *Czardas* is derived from an inn where it was danced by the peasants in past centuries. In every *Czardas* the music governs the dance, which is romantic, full of lyric beauty and very changeable. It is mostly written in 2/4 time, in the major mode. The dance consists of a slow and quick movement, the music beginning with *andante maesteso*, changing gradually to *allegro vivace*. It is of ancient origin and was probably used as a worship dance. It is danced to different tunes of one and the same character, as far as the figures are concerned. Six, eight, ten, or more couples place themselves in a circle, the dancer passing his arm round the waist of his partner. As long as the *andante* movement is given, he turns his partner to the right and left, clapping his spurred heels together and striking the ground with his toe and heel, and then they continue the step as a round dance. In some provinces the women put their hands on their partners' shoulders and jump high from the ground with their assistance. So fond is the Hungarian of his *Czardas* that, as soon as he hears the stirring tunes of the dance played by a gypsy band or fiddler, it seems to electrify him so that he can hardly listen to it without dancing. As the music continues, the dance gets wilder and wilder until it ends abruptly. The steps of the Hungarian folk-dances are as varied as the music. Now they are gliding and sharp, then again graceful and curved. Some of the dances are quiet and of seductive nature, others of involved steps and tricky tempo.

The *Szolo* is said to be a semi-acrobatic dance, in which the woman is swung through the air in a horizontal position from which she descends as if she were coming down from a flight. The *Verbunkes* is a dance of military character, performed mostly by

men (ten or twelve), each dancer being provided with a bottle of wine which he swings as he dances, singing in between a patriotic song as an additional accompaniment to the occasional gypsy band. Unlike the English folk-dances, the Hungarian are mostly built upon some romantic theme, either legendary or symbolic. Being a nation with rural traditions and rural ideas, Hungary has no sport spirit in any of her folk-dances. There is a strong feeling for Bohemianism and nomadic abandon in their mute language. Mostly the Hungarian dances are gay, sparkling with life and fantasy. They suggest Oriental designs mixed with Occidentalism, a world of queer dreams and sentimentalism.

Folk-dances related to those of Hungary, that deserve to be known, are the Esthonian *Kuljak*, *Kaara Jaan*, and *Risti Tants*. Descendants from the same stock as the Hungarians and the Finns, the Esthonians settled down in the Russian Baltic Provinces about the seventh or eighth centuries and since that time have formed their independent racial art and traditions, which they have cultivated and preserved till to-day. The great Esthonian epic *Kalewipoeg*, known so little to the outside world, remains, like Homer's *Iliad*, and the Indian *Mahabarata*, a valuable treasury of ethnographic art, and it is from this book that we have gained an authentic knowledge of the character of the Esthonian folk-dances, though the writer has seen some of them performed in the country.

The *Kuljak*, like many other Esthonian folk-dances, is performed to the accompaniment of a harp —*kannel*—and the singing voices of the dancers themselves. It is danced by men and women alike, in a similar formation as the Irish *Jig*. But the *Kuljak*

tempo is very similar to that of the *Czardas*, with the exception of the latter's tune and the formation of the figures. Like the national costumes of the Esthonians, their folk-art is more sombre and poetic than the Hungarian, but less romantic and less fiery. The *Kuljak* steps are sharp, angular and timid, without that boisterous and jaunty expression which is so conspicuously evident in the dances of the southern nations. The peculiarity of the *Kuljak* is that it is performed around a bonfire or kettle filled with burning substance. Sometimes the dancers circle round the fire holding each other's hands, sometimes they go in gliding promenade step, sometimes they dance singly, as if challenging or fearing the cracking and high-leaping flame. There is no doubt that this is a rare survival of the ancient sacrificial temple dance. The legendary and mythologic element is the unique peculiarity of the Esthonian folk-dances. The *Risti-Tants*—'Cross Dance'—which is performed by men and women, first, in crossing the hands, then in making the cross designs with the steps, is of great antiquity and many of its cabalistic figures are incomprehensible to the modern mind. Like the designs of the Esthonian national dress, the figures of their primitive and simple folk-dances have a tendency of never-ending lines. The colors, white, black and red—the symbols of red blood, white light and black earth—suggest dreamy, melancholy, but determined traits of a semi-Oriental race. Dance here is not a sport, not an amusement, not a medium of love-making, not a social function, but a magic motion to influence the great powers of Nature, and a semi-mythologic ceremony for the purpose of future joy and happiness. On this occasion the æsthetic element is interwoven with the ethical, the art is at the same time religion.

VI

The German mind has not been strikingly original or racial in folk-dances. It has taken more an abstract and purely musical direction and paid little attention to the dance. If we leave out the dances of the Bavarians, Saxons and Tyroleans, there is little that is of any ethnographic interest in this respect. The Prussian *Fackeltanz* belongs more to the elaborate pantomimes of the order of ancient Rome, rather than to regular dances. The mediæval Germany that was ruled politically and ecclesiastically from Rome never felt the influence of the rural country people, but, on the contrary, was mostly under the æsthetic and intellectual influence of the feudal barons and urban middle class. Under the influence of these two classes, German music, poetry, drama and literature came into existence. The German classic art is predominantly aristocratic and ecclesiastic. The early German artists were constrained to gather in the aristocratic salons of the rich patricians. The peasant was rarely a model of early German artists, but a German *Freiherr*, *Bürger* or *Handwerker* has been the subject of many German dramas, operas and musical compositions, and of much painting, sculpture and dancing. Wilhelm Angerstein tells us in his interesting book *Volkstänze in deutschen Mittelalter* that already in 1300 there existed German guild dances—*Zunfttänze*—such as the *Messertanz* ('knife dance') in Nürnberg, *Schafftertanz* ('cooper's dance') in Munich, etc. Besides these there were the aristocratic *Schreittänze* and *Schleiftänze*. The *Drehtanz*, out of which originated the later *Walzer*, was an aristocratic and patrician, but never a truly rural folk-dance.

There is no question that the German people has

always been interested in dancing, a fact which is best illustrated in the frequent outbursts of mediæval *Tanzwuth*—'dance craze'—that affected the population of various cities. These phenomena became occasionally so threatening to the public morality that in 1024 the Bishop Burchard von Worms issued a special decree putting dancing under the ban of the church. In 1237 over two thousand children left Erfurt, dancing. In 1418 an epidemic rage for dancing manifested itself in Strassburg. The well-known *Veitstanz*—St. Vitus' dance—originated in mediæval Germany and spread itself all over the world. The *Schuhplatteltanz* of Bavaria is a real folk-dance and contains in its gay and grotesque figures characteristic spiritual traits of the Tyrolean peasants. Most of the tunes of the *Schuhplatteltänze* are gay, joyful and bubbling with mountainous brilliancy, as is the dance. Though played in the waltz-rhythm, the dance is by no means a waltz, but a pretty, quaint little ballet of the people. There are some six to eight different figures in the dance as one can best see it performed in some villages near Innsbruck. It is danced by a man and girl, and begins with a graceful, slow promenade of the couple. Then she starts to flirt with him by spinning coquettishly round and round until he is enchanted and puts his hand gracefully round her waist. Now they dance together awhile, seemingly in love. But suddenly she seems to have changed her mind and tries to turn him down. The dance is full of buoyant joy and clever mimic expressions. It gives the impression of a healthy mountain race, optimistic, simple and humorous. Though occasionally rough, there are passages of sweet and sentimental grace which convey the impression of an old-fashioned Minuet.

The *Schmoller* is a characteristic dance of the

Saxonian peasants, in which the man never reaches his hand to the lady, though they perform the four or five movements in the rhythm of the *Mazurka* with considerable turning and stamping the heels. A quaint old dance is the *Siebensprung* of Schwaben which is danced to the accompaniment of a song with humorous verses. The *Taubentanz* of the Black Forest region is a very graceful and simple dance with distinct mazurka steps, in which the gentleman reaches only his right hand to the lady. The *Zwölfmonatstanz* of Wurtemberg is a semi-social dance, which is performed by twelve couples. The *Fackeltanz* has been for centuries a ceremonial display of Prussian nobility and the court. The following is a short account, from the *Figaro*, of a Torch Dance as it was performed at the marriage of the sister of Kaiser Wilhelm II:

'Twelve youthful pages, pretty and dainty as the pages of opera, slowly entered by a side door under the direction of the chamberlains. They carried torch-holders in wrought silver, containing thick white wax-candles, which they handed to the twelve ministers. The marshal raised his *bâton*, the orchestra from the gallery opposite the emperor slowly began a tuneful *Polonaise*. The bride and bridegroom placed themselves after the ministers, who made the tour of the room, the chamberlain completed the *cortège*, which stopped before the emperor. The bride made a slight curtsey, the emperor rose and offered his arm, the *cortège* again passed in procession around the room. On returning, the bride invited the empress and made the tour with her. Then the twelve pages approached and took the torches again. The dance continued. The ceremony might have been monotonous but for the infinite variety and richness of the costumes and uniforms, and the liveliness of

the music. The twelve pages were quite delicious and marched with all the enthusiasm of youth.'

The German *Rheinländer* and the *Walzer* are both dances of the middle class and the city. Whether they ever were danced as folk-dances by the German peasants, we do not know. They probably originated in the mediæval guild circles and spread gradually over the country. The Waltz, as we know it to-day, originated in the eighteenth century in Germany, though the French claim that it is a development of *Volte*, which originally was an old folk-dance of Provence. The *Volte* was in vogue in France in the sixteenth century. Castil-Blaze writes that 'the waltz which we again took from the Germans in 1795 had been a French dance for four hundred years.' The German waltz originated from the widespread folk-song, '*Ach du lieber Augustin!*' which dates back to the middle of the eighteenth century. Gardel introduced it first in his ballet *La Dansomanie* in 1793 in Paris. But the real vogue for the waltz began after the Czar Alexander the First danced it at his court ball in 1816. Until the masses began to imitate the nobility it was a 'high society' dance and such it remained fully half a century, if not longer.

The waltz is written in 3/4 rhythm and in eight-bar phrases. It has a gliding step in which the movements of the knees play a conspicuous rôle. Each country developed its particular style of waltz. The Germans and French treated it as a dainty and graceful courtship play. In Scandinavia it grew more heavy and theatrical. In the English waltz the dancers walked up and down the room, occasionally breaking into the step and then pushing the partner backward along the room. The German rule was that the dancers should be able to waltz equally well in

all directions, pivoting and crossing the feet when necessary in the reverse turn but the feet should never leave the floor. Waldteufel and Johann Strauss may be considered as the master-composers of the waltz as a social dance.

VII

As elaborate as the Finnish folk music is in racial color and line, the Finns have few interesting and original folk-dances. Dr. Ilmari Krohn has hundreds of Finnish folk-dance tunes, but they reveal musical rather than choreographic vigor. A large number of graceful Finnish folk-dances are imitations of the Swedish or Norwegian style. In their own dances the figures and steps are heavy, languorous and compact as the rocky semi-arctic nature. Like the Finnish sculpture, the Finnish folk-dance has a tendency to the mysterious, grotesque and unusual line. Some of their folk-dances are as daring and unusual as the Finnish architectural forms. You find in the Finnish architecture that straight lines are broken up in the most extraordinary manner, projecting gables, turrets and windows are used to avoid the monotony of gray, expansive and flat walls. It falls into no category of known styles. Like fantastically grown rocks, it compels your attention. There is something disproportionate yet fascinating in the Finnish style and folk-dance.

The most racial of the Finnish folk-dances are not the pleasing village *Melkatusta* and other types of this kind, but the 'Devil's Dance,' *Paimensoitaja* ('Shepherd Tune'), *Hempua*, *Hailii* and *Kaakuria*. Like the Finnish *Rune*, Finnish dancing shows an unusual

tendency to the magical, the mystic and the fantastic in emotions and ideas. It is less the graceful and quick, fiery style that appeals to a Finn than heavy, rugged and compact beauty. The 'Devil's Dance' is weird, ceremonial and mystical. It is performed by a single woman inside of a ring of spectators, who are chanting to her a rhythmic and alliterative hymn of mythologic meaning. The hands are crossed on the breast and take no part of any kind in the display, while there are slight mimic changes to convey the more subtle meaning of the performance. Like the other northern races, the Finns make their dancing a function of the body and the legs. The Finns dance to the music of a harp—*kantele*—horn—*sarwi*—and to the singing voices. It is never the dancer who sings, but the spectators or special singers.

More picturesque and graceful than the Finnish are the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish folk-dances. Grieg, Svendsen, Gade, Hartmann and the modern Scandinavian composers have made successful use of the old folk-themes for their individual orchestral compositions. Though simple in step, the Scandinavian folk-dances are complicated in figure, lively and gay in manner, and rich in pantomime. They seem to have a strong predilection to square figures and sharp lines. The Swedish dancers are fond of arabesques, minuet grace and dainty poses. The Norwegian dance is more rugged and imaginary, the Danish and Swedish more refined and delicate. While the Norwegian is a naturally gifted singer, the Swede is a born dancer. There is a strong feeling in Sweden for reviving their old *Skralat*, *Vafva Vadna*, and other old national dances. The latter is a weaver dance and imitates the action of the loom. The girl, representing the movements of the shuttle, flashes back and forth through the lines of other performers,

who are imitating the stretched threads. It is a clever piece of folk-art showing the vivid and quick temperament of the race. There are quite a few such symbolic country dances in Sweden, of which the harvest dances take the first place. The *Daldans* and *Vingakersdans* are pantomimic dances of humorous character, both themes dealing with the social-sexual relations in a rather satirical way. In the latter two women are endeavoring to gain the affection of a man. The favored one seats herself a moment on the man's knee and finishes the number by waltzing with him, while the other bites her nails with vexation. In Sweden, as in France, the sexual elements play a conspicuous rôle in the folk-dance and render it sweetly graceful, seductive and sensuous by turns.

The Danes, being a race of industry and agriculture from the earliest times on, have followed the lead of Norway in ethnographic matters, but of Paris and Vienna in artistic manners. While they have developed the national art of the ballet to a high degree, their folk-dances have impressed me more by their cosmopolitan and imitative nature than by any original and racial traits they may have. There are certain plastic traits, certain soft nuances in the Danish mimicry, that speak of something racial, yet they melt in so much with the universal art that it is hard to analyze the national elements. Whether the 'Corkscrew' is a Norwegian, Danish or Swedish folk-dance, we have been unable to learn, but it is a charming piece of folk-art. In this the couples form in two lines. The top couple join hands, go down the middle and up again, and turn each other by the right arm once; then the gentleman turns the next lady, the lady the next gentleman, then each other again to the end, when the other couples kneel and clap their hands; and the first

couple, joining hands, dance up one line and down the other, the lady inside. Then follows the corkscrew: all join hands outstretched with their vis-à-vis, the leading couple thread their way in and out of the other couples, the ladies backing, taking the lead, and then the gentlemen. All hands are raised when they reach the bottom, and, passing under the archway thus formed, they give place to the next couple.

The Dutch had previously many characteristic and racial folk-dances, as their great painters have handed down to us in their numerous works, but they have mostly died out. A Dutch folk-dance, with the performers dressed in long brocaded gowns and close-fitting caps of the same material, the face framed with small roses edging the cap, makes a most quaint and charming impression. The best known of the Dutch folk-dances is the Egg Dance, which was given with eggs beneath the feet. Another very effective dance, though slightly coarse in conception, is their Sailor's Dance. The latter is danced by a couple in wooden-shoes, man and woman with their backs to each other and faces turned away. The dance has some eight figures and only at the end of each figure the dancers turn swiftly around to get a glimpse of each other, and turn back in the original position. If well executed this is an exceedingly humorous dance.

VIII

The Lithuanians had in olden times snake dances and dances somewhat related to the legendary and mystic themes of the American Indians. Even in the

folk-dances of the modern Lithuanians there are elements to be found that show relation to the ancient American tribes. An average Lithuanian folk-dance, as known and danced to-day is simple but pretty, and is either mixed with Byzantine or with Romanesque designs. But the legendary ideas still prevail, even in the picturesque wedding dances.

The Polish folk-dances, the *Polonaise*, *Mazurka*, *Krakoviak*, and *Obertass*, contribute their quota of originality. The *Krakoviak* is a circular dance with singing interspersed; lively graceful poses, soft delicate lines and gliding steps make it look like a refined salon dance of mediæval nobility. The *Polonaise* and *Mazurka* have spread as social dances in numerous variations throughout the world. Chopin used the themes of many Polish folk-dances for his individual compositions, as they are exceedingly sweet, romantic, and delicate in their melodic structure. The *Obertass* is a real gymnastic performance with occasional polka-steps and wild turns. It is danced by a couple with such velocity towards the end that the woman must hold strongly to the shoulders of her partner in order to keep from reeling off towards the spectators. Delicate, temperamental, with occasional traits of melancholy and softly graceful line, the Polish folk-dances are characteristic of the racial soul. In many respects the Poles resemble the French in racial qualities. The debonair manners of the French, their tendency toward romantic emotions, are to be noticed in the Polish national dance. The qualities give it an air of seeming refinement and make it a distinct social amusement, and nothing else.

The Bohemian, Ruthenian, Servian and Bulgarian folk-dances are each typical of their race. A tendency

of most of the Slavic folk-dances is that the two sexes should mingle as little as possible. Men and women join hands in certain figures, emphasizing the dramatic meaning of the dance, otherwise they remain separated. They rarely dance in couples as the other European races do. They make promenades, march or gallop; they leap and bound in such a manner that the woman faces the man but rarely touches him. The woman's movements are distinctly feminine, the man's masculine. The Slav feels that the mixing of the sexes, or the putting of woman on the same plane with man, is detrimental to the æsthetic emotions, particularly to the romantic feelings.

The *Romaika* and *Kolla* are both picturesque circle dances of the Southern Slavs. In the latter the man does not take the hand of the woman next to him, but passes his arm under hers to clasp the hand of her neighbor. The whole ring circles round in skipping step to the accompaniments of melancholy songs. The women are adorned with glass beads, huge gowns, artificial flowers and false jewelry of the most fantastic colors. The men wear richly embroidered bright-colored shirts and wide trousers. Sometimes a special woman dancer enters the ring and executes a dramatic pantomime, reflecting somehow a local affair. On other occasions man and woman go through a vivid pantomimic performance in the circle, while the rest circle around them singing.

The Roumanians have a strange folk-dance called the *Hora* which is performed by the youth in languishing cadence to the long drawn notes of the bagpipes. This consists of a prelude and a real dance. At first, the dancers advance to the left five steps,

stamping the ground and stopping suddenly, after which they repeat the same motions for a few times. Of this M. Lancelot writes: ‘Gradually the mandolins strike in to enliven the solemn strain, and seem desirous to hurry it, emitting two or three sonorous notes, but nothing moves the player of the bagpipes; he perseveres in his indolent rhythm. At last a challenging phrase is thrice repeated; the dancers accompany it by stamping thrice on the ground, and looking back at the girls grouped behind them. The latter hesitate; they look at each other, as if consulting together; then they join hands and form a second circle round the first. Another call, more imperious still, is sounded, they break from each other, and mingle in the round of young men.

‘At this moment the old gypsy opens his keen little eyes, showing his sharp white teeth in a sudden smile, shaking out a shower of joyous, hurried notes over the band, he expresses by means of an agitated harmony the tender thrill that must be passing through all the clasped hands. The *Hora* proper now begins. It lasts a long time, but retains throughout the character of languor that characterized its commencement. Its monotony is varied, however, by a pretty bit of pantomime. After dancing round with arms extended, the men and their partners turn and face each other in the middle of the circle they have been describing. This circle they reduce by making a few steps forward; then, when their shoulders are almost touching, they bend their heads under their uplifted arms, and look into each other’s eyes. This figure loses something of its effect from the frequency with which it is repeated; and the cold placidity with which the dancers alternately gaze at their right-hand and left-hand neighbors is disappointing, and robs the pantomime of its classic

aroma.’

IX

Of Oriental flavor are the Armenian folk-dances, which the writer saw many years ago performed by Armenian students to the music of a queer mandolin-like instrument and the rhythmic beats of the drum played by the dancer with his fingers. This drum gives a register of six or seven different tones and adds its peculiar effect to the whole. It seems that most of the Armenian dances are executed by a single dancer, either man or woman, in bent, erect, arched and twisted positions, often standing on a single spot for minutes. Though languorous and weird, they possess a grace of their own.

In no other country have the folk-dances reached such a variety of forms, such a high degree of development and an individuality so distinctly racial and rich in dramatic and imaginary poses, steps, gestures and mimic expressions as in Russia. In the Russian dances we can trace the elements of all the hundreds of ancient and modern tribes and nationalities who have been molten in one homogeneous mass of people, a world in itself. Here the Orient and Occident have found a united form for their æsthetic expressions, with no relation to those of the West-European nations. The Russian dances, like the country itself, are a mixture of contrasts and extremes: melancholy and yet gay, simple and even sweet; ghastly yet fascinating and seductive; mysterious and yet open as the prairies of its own boundless steppes; old and yet young. All these contrasts and contradictions may be found

reflected in the essentials of the Russian folk-dance. Like the semi-Oriental style of architecture, now curved and gloomy, then suddenly straight and dazzlingly brilliant, occasionally bizarre and fantastic, but strongly inclined to the romantic and the mystic forms, are the innumerable figures and steps of the Russian dances. In Russia more than in any other country the sexual diversity in the style of the steps, poses and mimic display is subjected to a most careful consideration. The woman is neither equal nor inferior to the man. She occupies her dignified position in the slightest move, by remaining more subtle, tender and passively fascinating, while the man's rôle often is extravagantly masculine, sometimes even rough. No Russian dance puts the two sexes on the same level æsthetically and dramatically. The couple dance is an unknown, or at best a rather crude, conception to a Russian.

Up to this time no one has yet made a thorough study of all the Russian folk-dances, as each province and district has its particular traditions and dances. The Volga region, having once been inhabited by Bulgarian and Tartar tribes, has a more nomadic and adventurous dance style than the dreamy peasants of Kostroma and Nijny Novgorod. The dances of the Little Russians are more joyful and humorous than those of more northern regions, but they are also less elaborate and less dramatic. The dances of the provinces of Novgorod and Pskoff possess an unusual tendency towards the legendary and towards free forms of plastic expression, as if meaning to express tales of a golden age in the past when they had a republican form of government and a democratic evolution. The dances of the Caucasian and Crimean regions are outspokenly romantic and epic, those of Siberia tragic and heroic.

Fundamentally, the Russian folk-dances can be divided into four different groups: the ballad dances, or *Chorovody*; the romantic dances of the *Kamarienskaya* type; the dramatic dances of the *Kasatchy* type; the bacchanalian dances of the *Trepak* type; and the unlimited number of humorous, gay, amusing and entertaining country dances—the so-called *Pliasovaya*—of purely local flavor. Besides these there are the historic ballad dances, such as 'Ivan the Terrible', 'Ilia Murometz,' and others. The Cossack dance, *Lesginka*, the *Kaiterma*, the *Polowetsi* dances, the *Vanka*, and others of this kind, are dances of a rather local character, though they have spread all over the country.

The oldest and most varied of Russian folk-dances are the *Chorovody*, or the ballad dances, performed only to the singing voices of the dancers themselves. This is a kind of ring dance like the old French Round. In some dances the men reach their hands to the girls, in others they touch each other with their elbows only, as the girls keep their hands on their hips, while the men cross them on their breast. The real dance is performed inside the ring, usually by a girl, who sometimes has a man partner; this dance may be pantomimic, humorous or full of wildest joy and agility. The writer has witnessed some *Chorovody* which were performed with such skill and finesse of plastic pose and mimic art as to leave many ballet celebrities far in the background. The Russian folk-dancer employs every inch of his body, his hands, legs, toes, heels, hips, shoulders, head and the mimic art so masterfully and correctly that you must often marvel his born talent and lively interest in dancing. However, in all folk-dances the women seem to play the leading rôle, the men merely supporting them with the contrasted figures.

The *Chorovody* were used by the mediæval *Boyars* in a more refined and poetic style for their social functions and the entertainment of their guests. Later they were introduced to the court and finally they were employed in the Russian ballets and operas. Ivan the Terrible was fond of *Chorovody* dances and often danced them himself, as did also other Russian rulers. The aristocratic *Chorovody*, however, grew more stately and artificial and lost their racial freshness. Catherine the Great sent her chamberlains to every province to invite the best folk-dancers to come to the court, which they did. All dances of this type are picturesque, romantic, poetic and restrained in their expression.

An entirely different dance is the *Kasatchy*, danced by a man and a woman at the same time. This is more a man's than a woman's dance. He selects his partner and proceeds to execute a series of seductive motions around her, while she demurely hangs her head, refusing for a while to be seduced by his allurements. At length she thaws and begins to sway in harmony with his manly but graceful movement. Now they bend and bow together, and swerve from side to side, the while performing a multitude of gestures depicting timidity and embarrassment, till finally from shy, half-tearful expression of love and flirting glances they proceed with gay eyes expressive of the most burning devotion. Now the dance waxes fierce and fast, in and out they circle, turn and twist, ever now and then reverting to that crouching posture, so commonly seen in the Russian folk-dances. Finally they meet in close embrace and whirl with incredible rapidity round and round, till thoroughly out of breath and dizzy from their effort, they sink exhausted on a friendly bench.

The *Kamarienskaya* is a bride's dance, in which the girl symbolizes all the imaginary bliss and happiness of her future married life. In the first part, which consists of a soft *legato*, she dances dreamily but dramatically, using conspicuously every muscle of her body and her arms to express the imagined love motions that she will perform in meeting her beloved. Thus the pantomime continues on to the blissful moment of meeting, which she performs like a whirlwind, until, unexpectedly stopping, she ends the dance with a slightly disappointed, humorous expression.

Since our space is limited, the writer must refrain from more detailed and further description of the previously mentioned types of the Russian folk-dances. He need only repeat that they surpass by far the folk-dances of all the rest of the world, in that they are so much more racial, so rich in plastic lines, and so perfect in their artistic appeal; it seems as if a remarkable genius had presided over their invention and execution. They are masterfully original from the beginning and continually furnish new ideals of choreographic beauty. They draw their inspiration from some rich fountain unknown to the Occidentals. They are too fresh, vigorous and alive to be perverse.

Thus having drawn kaleidoscopic sketches of the primitive racial choreographic impulses of a number of the civilized and barbaric races, we can come to the conclusion that in these alone are to be found the sound and virile germs of lasting individual or highly developed national art-dance. Ethnographic essentials are the next stepping-stones to a more developed future cosmic choreography, and in this the folk-dances give the most eloquent elementary lessons. As from a mute conversation we learn from

the ethnic dances in what manifold forms one and the same beauty can manifest itself to the human mind. The ethnic symbols are graphic and true to the spirit of the thing expressed; for this reason a folk-dance, no matter how coarse, how grotesque and how strange it seems, is yet sincere and intelligible to the open-hearted observer. It always impresses one as something manly and direct, sound and firm.

CHAPTER XI

THE CELEBRATED SOCIAL DANCES OF THE PAST

The *Pavane* and the *Courante*; the *Allemande* and the *Sarabande*; the *Minuet* and the *Gavotte*; the *Rigaudon* and other dances.

SINCE we have devoted a chapter to the folk-dances, it will be fitting to describe a few of the most noted dances of the nobility in order to complete our comparative treatment of such a vast subject, so little systematized and so much ignored. While the general tone of all the folk-dances is masculine, that of all the social dances seems predominantly effeminate, rather soft and delicate. Their exceedingly graceful plastic lines, shaded movements, soft forms and subtilized gestures speak of gilded ball-rooms, silk and perfume, affected manners and the artificial air of a Rococo style. It seems as if a woman's mind had worked out their embroidered figures and timid steps. They belonged to no particular nation, but to the rich class of all the world. The same *Allemande* that was danced by the French nobility was copied at the castles of the German barons, English lords, Italian and Russian counts.

The oldest and most ceremonial of the Middle Ages' social dances was the *Pavane*, the celebrated

peacock dance, in which kings and princes, lords and ladies took part, the men wearing gorgeous uniforms, the ladies flowery trains. It was distinguished by rhythmic grace, and by slow and stately measure. The dancers attempted to enshroud their very souls in majestic dignity, gracefully rounding their arms, while crossing and recrossing, keeping their heads away from each other. One big step and two small ones accompanied one bar of the music, which was sung by a chorus of hidden singers. Beginning side by side, hand in hand, with a curtsey and bow, the couple started with a *pas marché* down the floor, making four steps, the cavalier taking the lady's left hand. After making a turn with four steps, they danced backward with four steps. He took her right hand and turned with four steps. Thus it went on in four different movements. The *Pavane* was a dance for cortèges and processions, and the lady's trains were spread out like the tail of a peacock.

The next most conspicuous nobility dance was the *Courante*, which was practised for nearly three centuries at the European castles and courts. It was a great favorite of Louis XIV, and no one else danced it so well as he. It was danced at the court of Charles II and Queen Elizabeth was fond of it. The ladies danced it in short soft velvet skirt; bodice with basques and lace berthes. It had three movements and started usually with a deep curtsey, a springing step forward and back, both arms raised and each dancer turning outward. These movements occupied four double bars of the music. Handel and Bach wrote many *Courantes*, but they were too elaborate and quick, therefore they were used only by professional dancers.

Bach and Handel have also written numerous

Chaconnes, which were dances in slow triple time, of a stately character, light and graceful. In the *Chaconne* two or three people could participate. This dance was said to be of Spanish origin, though the Italians claim that one of their blind musicians composed it in the sixteenth century. Cervantes writes in 'Don Quixote' that it was a mulatto dance for negroes and negresses, imported by the French. It is composed of a springing and walking step on the toes, at the end of which the heels must be so placed that the body is firm. The rhythm is slow and well marked. The dance has seven different movements. The fourth and sixth movements are in Mazurka steps, the fifth in skating steps and the last in bourrée step. In the third movement the lady turns under her partner's arm.

A celebrated dance of more than four centuries was the *Allemande*, in which the head and arm movements played the foremost rôle. It had five movements, danced by any number of couples, placing themselves behind each other. The *Allemande* step is three *pas marchés* and the front foot raised. The lady stands in front of the gentleman and he holds her left hand with his left and her right with his right hand. For four bars they go forward and pose, repeat this four times and turn. The second movement has four steps around, after which the gentleman turns the lady with arms over head, and the lady turns the gentleman. The third movement is a polka step backward and forward and turned. In the fourth the lady takes four steps in front of the gentleman and turns. In the last they take four steps across the room, turn and pose; two steps back and pose, and repeat.

A dance of pretty music and more original design

was the *Sarabande* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which was danced as a solo by a man or a woman, although later it was danced by couples. It had a slow and stately step and consisted of four different figures. In the first figure the dancer raised the right foot and took a step forward, turned to the right and posed, and repeated to the left and the right. The second figure was a *pas bourrée* to the left and the right, with some turning in between. The third figure consisted of an accentuated hip movement, *coupé*, a pose with head movement, and a repetition to the opposite direction. The last figure consisted of springing on the left foot, stretching the right leg to the back, and bowing. This was carried on in several repetitions. The most effective *Sarabande* music was composed by Lully. For this the ladies wore a picturesque dress of cloth of gold, the sleeves and tunic in the form of gigantic oak leaves of red and gold, tipped with sequins; red shoes and stockings.

Probably the most celebrated and widespread of old social dances was the *Minuet*, which demanded much repose and dignity on the part of the dancers. It was performed by men and women, but was given also by ladies only. It began with a deep reverence on the part of the lady and a bow on the part of the man, the dancers turning towards each other at right angles to the audience, the lady with her left hand holding her dress, the elbow prettily rounded. They advanced, the lady turning around and assuming the position in which they started. This was repeated, and the dance ended with a bow and a curtsey. Then the lady held her dress in both hands, her head being turned over her right shoulder, while her partner's head was turned to the left. A favorite step was that of lifting the foot high, rising on the toes, and then

taking three little steps on tip-toes to the next bar. The *Minuet* requires much grace and deliberation, with every movement thought out and studied. The main rule is that in passing each other the partners should make a deep curtsey and bow. The fingers of the hand should be moderately open, the arms curved and graceful. The women often carried a feather fan. Louis XV was a virtuoso in the *Minuet*. The English kings used to take lessons in the dance. It is the one dance that England has looked on kindly. It created a perfect sensation in France and was in vogue until the Revolution swept it away. Many celebrated composers have written fine *Minuet* music, Lully's being probably the best. It had nine different movements. The ladies wore for the minuet a satin petticoat, bordered with a deep flounce. The bodice had a pleating round *à la veille*, which was carried down to the open front of the skirt, on either side of the bodice, and round the back, which left a plain pointed front with a rosette in the centre of the neck. The sleeves were elbow length, the hair powdered and worn very high, a ribbon tied across the back from which rose three large bows of white plumes, the shoes pointed.

A dance as distinguished as the minuet was the *Gavotte*, performed by couples in joyous, sparkling little steps. Its foundation was three steps and an *assemblé* in quadruple time, commencing on the fourth beat of the bar. It starts in a line or a circle, one couple separating themselves from the rest. It has six figures. The first figure consists of four gavottes forward, four gavottes round, four back, four around again, the dancers hand in hand, the figures always accompanied by graceful head movements, the partners turning towards each other or apart. The following three movements are nearly

the same, with slight variations. The fifth consists of four skating steps and gavotting around the partner. The sixth figure consists of gavotting forward three times, pirouetting back, raising the foot up to the heel, and advancing four times. In the *Gavotte* the partners generally kissed each other, as they did in so many other dances. In later days the cavalier presented a flower in the course of the figure instead. The *Gavotte* was a favorite dance of Louis XV, Marie Antoinette and Napoleon. Lully, Gluck and Grétry composed pretty gavottes, and it was frequently performed on the stage by Gardel and Vestris.

The *Rigaudon*, which enjoyed a great popularity at all the European castles and courts till the French Revolution, was rather intricate. In it each figure occupied eight bars and both dancers started together without taking hands. The dance consisted of seven figures, the first being a sliding step and four running steps, turning, posing and repeating with the opposite foot. The second consisted of turning to left and right alternately four times, and sliding backwards. The third figure was danced diagonally to the right with running steps, turning, posing and repeating. The fourth figure was a graceful hopping and turning, repeating, running diagonally to the right and turning with the arms out straight. The fifth was in two half turns, one turn and repetition. The sixth was three steps left with arms over the head, hopping around, turning to left and right, posing with right hand down and the left hand above the head. The seventh consisted of balancing four times on the left foot and four times on the right and posing. Like the music of so many other old social dances, that of the Rigaudon was of extremely gracious cadences, with sentimental pathos and sweet, gay melodic turns. Music combined with

dancing carried gladness and joy into the soft-shaded ball-rooms, bringing smiles and laughter to the lips of the picturesque gatherings.

Somewhat resembling the Minuet, but with quicker steps, was the celebrated French *Passepied*, with which most of the balls began, all the guests dancing around hand in hand. It originated many other old-time social dances with song. It opened with the dancers joining hands and facing each other, then setting to each other with the *pas de Basque*, bringing the first left shoulder forward and then the right, and changing their places with a waltz step. The partners cross hands, placing the arms round each other's neck and making the pirouette with eight pony steps, pawing the ground and then turning. The dance consists of ten figures, each of which demands some dramatic talent.

Other celebrated old dances were the *Galliard*, consisting of five figures, that require some pirouettes, *pas de bourrées*, *coupés*, *dessous* and springing. Similar to this was the *Tourdion*, which was more of a *glissade* movement. The *Canaries* was a queer old dance, very popular in England and Germany. It had seven figures and started with a *pas jeté*, by throwing the right foot over the left, and the left over the right. In the last movement the partners held hands vis-à-vis, turning each other without separating hands, posing vis-à-vis one bar and repeating four bars. History tells us how in former times queens and princesses often fell in love with graceful male dancers as did their husbands with the pretty women dancers. Queen Elizabeth fell in love with young Hatton, an insignificant London lawyer, whom she first met at a ball dancing the *Galliard*. Sir Perro used to say that Hatton danced into the court

by the *Galliard*. It is said that the favors which the virgin monarch extended to the young lawyer excited the jealousy of the whole court, especially that of the Earl of Leicester, who, thinking to depreciate the accomplishment of his rival, offered to introduce to Her Majesty a professional dancer whose performances were considered far more wonderful than those of Hatton. To this the royal lady exclaimed: 'Pish! I will not see your man; it is his trade!'

A languishing eye and a smiling mouth were considered indispensable accessories to a fashionable society dance. Like the prevailing style of dress and manners, the dances were too delicate and artificial to last. The high-heeled shoes, the elaborately piled-up structures of powdered hair and ornament, and the dresses with long trains were by no means favorable to virility and sincerity. Like all effeminate art, the nobility dances of the past lacked spontaneity and inspiration.



The Ball

After a painting by Auguste de Saint-Aubin

CHAPTER XII

THE CLASSIC BALLET OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Aims and tendencies of the nineteenth century —Maria Taglioni—Fanny Elssler—Carlotta Grisi and Fanny Cerito; decadence of the classic ballet.

THE end of the Napoleonic wars marks the beginning of a new era of European art, particularly of the ballet. To this period belong the great ballet masters, Taglioni, Bournoville, Didelot, and the greatest of all, Marius Petipa; the great ballet composers, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Adam, Delibes, Nuitter, Dubois, Hartmann, Gade, Tschaikowsky, and Rimsky-Korsakoff; the celebrated *ballerinas*, Taglioni, Grisi, Elssler, Genée, Teleshova, Novitzkaya, Liadova, Muravieva, Bogdanova, Sokolova and Kshesinskaya. It seems as if the evolution of the art of dancing is always stopped by political disturbances; during the middle of the past century, which was marked by revolutionary movements, in which even Wagner participated, we notice a sudden indifference to dancing ideals on the part of the public. The history of evolution seems to proceed in certain cosmic waves of public sentiment and ideals. They grow, reach their climax and die.

The foundation that the French Academy,

particularly Noverre, Vestris and Gardel, had laid for the ballet, developed during the nineteenth century into a solid and essential stage art. We find the beginning of a rivalry among the various schools, of which those of Paris, Milan, Vienna, Stockholm, Copenhagen and St. Petersburg stand in the first rank. Like music and drama, the ballet strives either towards the classic or romantic. The most conspicuous ballets of this period are *La Sylphide* by Léo Delibes, *Corsaire* by Adam, *Sakuntala* by Gautier, *La Source* by Delibes, *La Farandole* by Dubois, *Sylvia* by Delibes, *Gretna Green* by Nuitter, *Excelsior* and *Sieba* by Manxotti, *Flore et Zephire* by Didelot, *La Esmeralda* by Perrot and Pugni, *Iphigenia in Aulis* by Gluck, *Laurette* by Galcotti, *Ghiselle* by Gautier and Adam, *Abdallah* by Bournoville and Paulli, *Arkona* by Hartmann, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Snow Maiden* by Tschaikowsky, *Baba Yaga* by Balakireff, *Scheherezade* by Rimsky-Korsakoff, etc.

The main tendency of the nineteenth century ballet is to get rid of the mechanical contrivances, the monstrous etiquette and majestic solemnity and, like music, give it more coherence and better harmony with the plot. Between 1820 and 1850 it became an inseparable accompaniment to the opera to such an extent that the occupants of the gilded boxes preferred the thrill of the dancing to the music. The ballet represented at that time more than a stage filled with masses of elegant *coryphées* and a magnificent spectacle. The public interest began to centre in a few great dancers whose names were as familiar to the audiences as those of the prima donnas. The first phenomenon of this kind was the cult of Taglioni that spread with miraculous rapidity throughout the Occidental world.

I

Maria Taglioni was born at Stockholm in 1804 of an Italian father and Swedish mother and made her début in Vienna in 1822, in the ballet *Reception d'une jeune Nymphe à la Court de Terpsichore*, written by her father, M. Taglioni, who was a ballet master in the Swedish Royal Opera. Inspired by the ideas of Noverre, M. Taglioni laid a solid foundation for his daughter's training in dancing. Though she was successful in her début in Vienna, the father did not think that she was sufficiently ripe for public appearances in a larger style, so he continued to instruct the girl himself and secured for her education other celebrities of the time. Even when she appeared five years later in *Le Sicilien*, in Paris, she did not arouse any enthusiasm. It was only in *Les Bayaderes* and, above all, in *La Sylphide*, that her art attained the utmost limits of spirituality and she was hailed as one of the most ethereal appearances that the European stage had ever seen.

Taglioni appeared in Paris in *La Vestale*, *Mars et Venus*, *Le Carnaval de Venise*, and many other ballets, which marked the beginning of her career. A French critic of that time writes: 'Her talent, so instinct with simple grace and modesty, her lightness, the suppleness of her attitudes, at once voluptuous and refined, made a sensation at once. She revealed a new form of dancing, a virginal and diaphanous art, instinct with an originality all her own, in which the old traditions and time-honored rules of choreography were merged. After an appearance of a few days only on our boards, this charming mirage vanished to shine in great triumph at Munich and Stuttgart. But she came back, and an enthusiastic reception awaited her. And in the midst of these

brilliant successes, taking the hearts of the people by storm, admitted to the intimate friendship of the Queen of Wurtemberg, she remained sweet, simple and reserved.'

Besides her choreographic training, Taglioni was a highly educated girl in every other respect, and was of the most charming personality and manners. The people, and even her many rivals, loved and adored her as a great artist and great woman. Though not pretty in any sense, as so many other dancers were, she was fascinating through her distinct spiritual appeal. This same note of spirituality manifested itself in her dance. Her admirers used to say that she looked in *La Sylphide* like some supernatural being always ready to take wing and soar up in the air. Her steps were pure and innocent, as were all her gestures and mimic expressions. Even in her romantic dances she failed to suggest any symptoms of voluptuous or sensual emotions. Throughout her life she remained as poetic as she was in her art.

In London she appeared first in 1830 in Didelot's ballet *Flore et Zéphire* and made an instantaneous success. On nights when she was announced to appear the London theatre was literally besieged. Thackeray immortalized her in his 'The Newcomes,' saying, 'you can never see anything so graceful as Taglioni.' She received in London £100 a night, and insisted on handsome sums for her family, as well as £600 for her father as ballet master, £900 to her brother and sister-in-law, together with two benefit performances. She was so much the fashion of the hour that women wore Taglioni hats, gowns, and coats, and even a stage coach was called after her.

With all her charm and refinement, Taglioni was

in many respects an undeveloped girl emotionally, capricious and sentimental to her finger-tips. It is said that one evening when Perrot, her partner, happened to receive a greater amount of applause than she, she refused to continue the performance, and accused her surrounding stage people of having intrigued against her for malicious reason. She received immense sums of money, but she spent everything just as lavishly as it was received, not so much on herself as for her relatives, friends and the poor. She married Comte Gilbert des Voisins in 1832, but their married life was of short duration. There is a story that she met him some years later at a dinner at the Comte de Morny's, when he had the effrontery to ask to be introduced to Maria Taglioni. She replied that she thought she had made the gentleman's acquaintance in 1832, the year of her marriage. In 1837 she went to Russia and remained there for five years as prima *ballerina* of the Imperial Ballet.

Taglioni's freedom and style had a great influence upon the development of the ballet at that juncture. Her dress, a long tunic of white silk muslin which reached almost to her ankles and fell in graceful folds from her figure, was the first of this kind. Through this she was able to reveal the plastic lines of her body, and thus made her movements free from the artificial stiffness that had prevailed before her. She was a reformer in many ways, and in this her father, as a practical ballet-master, was of material help. It was not until Fanny Elssler appeared in 1847 that Taglioni began to lose her hold upon the public. Little by little her art grew old-fashioned to the novelty-loving audiences, as the dancing of Elssler brought a new note of more romantic nature to the stage. Actually this change was nothing but a turn of public sentiment indicative of some new

social fad. Trying to maintain her living by giving dancing lessons in various European capitals, she died in Marseilles in 1884, in great poverty, forsaken by all her previous adorers and frenzied audiences.

II

Of a very different nature were the art and personality of Fanny Elssler, the pretty Viennese girl, who in many respects followed the example of Taglioni. Emerson, who saw her dancing in Boston, exclaimed, 'that is poetry!' But Margaret Fuller, who sat next to him, replied, 'Ralph, it's religion.' Turgenieff was so impressed by her art that he wrote to Balzac: 'Her dance is the most magic novel that I have ever read. What a mystery of beauty! Her every step and gesture is a line of unwritten verse. Her lines are accentuated phrases, her poses illustrations to the intoxicating text. Her art haunts me.'

Born in Vienna in 1810, Elssler received an early and thorough musical education from her father, who was a copyist to Haydn. Her ballet training, which she received partly in Vienna, partly in Italy, was of the old order. It was the *Cachucha* that made her a favorite of the Milan and Naples audiences, but, as with Taglioni, it was *La Sylphide* that made Elssler's final reputation. Elssler saw *La Sylphide* danced by Taglioni in Munich and it electrified her so that she made it a main aim of her ambition to surpass Taglioni, which she did.

A girl of receptive mind, good education and great talent, Elssler took notice of all the critical views of her future rival, as expressed by her contemporary ballet-masters, composers and dance

critics. This enabled her to embody in her art and style the features which were less developed and most disliked by Taglioni. Taglioni was said to be poetic, but lacking in romantic warmth and dramatic sentiment. In this latter quality Elssler excelled. She made a special study of those gestures, poses and steps, which express by passionate emotions, and made appropriate use of them. The mechanical features of the dance interested her little, though occasionally she indulged in acrobatic tricks. Chorley, the English critic, writes of her: 'The exquisite management of her bust and arms set her apart from everyone whom I have ever seen before or since. Nothing in execution was too daring for her, nothing too pointed. If Mademoiselle Taglioni flew, she flashed. The one floated on the stage like a nymph, the other showered every sparkling fascination round her like a sorceress. There was more, however, of the Circe than of the Diana in her smile.'



Sylphides; a Typical Classic Ballet

A graphic description of Elssler is given by Gautier. ‘Clad in a skirt of rose-colored satin clinging closely to the hips, adorned with deep flounces of black lace, she came forward with a bold carriage of her slender body, and a flashing of diamonds on her breast. Her leg, like polished marble, gleams through the frail net of the stocking. Her small foot is at rest, only awaiting the signal of the music to start into motion. How charming she is with the large comb in her hair, the rose behind her ear, her flame-like glance, and her sparkling smile! At the extremity of her rose-dipped fingers tremble the ebony castañets. Now she darts forward; the castañets commence their sonorous clatter; with her hands she seems to shake down clusters of rhythm. How she twists! how she bends! what fire! what voluptuousness of motion! what eager zest! Her arms seem to swoon, her head droops, her body curves backward until her

white shoulders almost graze the ground. What charm of gesture! And with that hand which sweeps over the dazzle of the footlights would not any one say that she gathered all the desires and all the enthusiasm of those who watch her?'

It was a pity that such a bitter rivalry was created between Elssler and Taglioni by theatrical managers, which became a source of fierce controversy throughout Europe. We are told by the writers of that time that a veritable war of sentiments between the Taglionists and Elsslerists lasted for years. Now the one, now the other party claimed victory. Each party claimed to have the highest art in the individual style of its idolized dancer. It was a conflict between two movements rather than two artists: here the classic idealism, there the romantic realism. Elssler at the end remained the winner, but not for a long time, as the political unrest that swept Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century distracted the public attention from the ballet. After a successful tour in America, Elssler returned to Milan, when the La Scala opera, which was supported by the Austrian government, began to feel keenly the political pulse of the time. Elssler was to appear in Perrot's ballet *Faust*, when she beheld the members of the ballet wearing a medal that represented the new liberal Pope, who was strongly pro-Italian, while Elssler was an Austrian. To her it seemed a demonstration directed against her fatherland and she refused to go on the stage unless the demonstration stopped. The audience was informed of the trouble behind the scenes, and from this time on Elssler's career was finished. Vainly trying her luck in Russia and England till 1851, she realized the sentimental opposition of all the audiences to her art and retired

forever. She spent her life in comfort, as the American tour alone had netted her a sum of five hundred thousand dollars. She died in 1884 in Vienna, a few months after the death of her rival, Taglioni.

III

The star that followed Taglioni and Elssler was Carlotta Grisi, born in a village of Istria and educated in Milan by Perrot. She was a medium between the poetic Taglioni and romantic Elssler. Her favorite ballets were *La Peri* and *Ghiselle* (the libretto of the latter by Théophile Gautier and the music by Adolphe Adam). She was excellent in fairy rôles, in which she showed a marvellous conception of imaginary motions and gestures. Her fragile figure was favorable to similar rôles and in these her mimic expressions were superb. She danced in England with success, but somehow failed to arouse the enthusiasm that greeted her contemporary Fanny Cerito. Grisi married her former teacher Perrot, who composed for her many ballets.

Cerito distinguished herself in *Ondine* and *La Vivandière*, and was for a long time a favorite of the French audiences. A French critic writes of her: ‘A good many of our readers will probably remember Saint-Léon, the distinguished and popular ballet-master. Originally an eminent violinist, it was out of love for the fairy-like Cerito, whom he married, that he first gave himself up to the enthusiastic study of dancing. Mme. Cerito bewitched the public with her exquisite dancing, while Saint-Léon delighted them with his skill upon the violin and the dignity and

distinction of his compositions.'

There were several French, Italian or Austrian ballet dancers who distinguished themselves at home, but none of them succeeded in attracting much the English or American public's attention. Katty Lanner and Madame Weiss danced with some success in London, and enjoyed a high reputation in Vienna. The characteristics of all the Vienna dancers of this age were their decadent manners and their pretty, plastic poses. Vienna developed more conspicuous operetta dancers than real ballet dancers. Katty Lanner achieved a particular grace and agility in the *Le Papillon*, by Emma Livry.

Of the French and Italian ballet dancers that appeared during the second half of the nineteenth century most conspicuous are Leontine Beaugrand, Mlle. Subra, Rosetta Mauri, Mlle. Bernay, Mlle. Petipa, and Rita Sangalli. Though local critics praised one or other of these as rivals of Taglioni and Elssler, the fact is they were all either mere acrobatic imitators, decadent impressionists, or conventional figures. The ballet shrinks into a secondary position, as the vogue for opera and orchestral music occupies the foremost attention of the public. Stage dancing degenerates into shows of insignificant meaning. With our best will we can find nothing that would seem worthy of the attention of the French critic who writes of Beaugrand:

'Before long the public will learn to love this strange profile—so like a frightened bird's—and criticism will have to reckon with this aspiring talent. She has not yet put forth all her strength. It was not until she appeared in the part of *Coppélia* that she wholly revealed what was in her, and that the full extent of her grace and poetic feeling was

unfolded to the public.'

One season later the expected virtuoso vanishes from the public eye and a new aspirant takes her place. Considering one after the other, one finds little crisp and spontaneous beauty in the steps and gestures of the *ballerinas* of the last part of the past century. The umbrella-like stiff dress of the classic ballet has only a momentary semi-sensuous appeal. In the long run it becomes unæsthetic and unpractical, since it hides the natural lines of the human body.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BALLET IN SCANDINAVIA

The Danish ballet and Bournoville's reform; Lucile Grahn, Augusta Nielsen, etc.—Mrs. Elna Jörgen-Jensen; Adeline Genée; the mission of the Danish ballet.

I

THE French ballet dominated civilized Europe for centuries, as did the French fashions, manners, language, art and social traditions. The high society of every country was outspokenly French, and so were its views and entertainments. How much even Germany was in the grip of French ideals can be seen best from the efforts of her eighteenth-century writers and reformers on behalf of their own national traditions. Lessing was most bitterly fighting the French influence in German life and art. It was only natural that semi-aristocratic Sweden and Denmark felt the French sway. Stockholm introduced the ballet during the last part of the eighteenth century, but used it for the most part as an accessory of the opera. Taglioni, the father of the celebrated *ballerina*, was employed as a ballet-master in Stockholm where, in addition to his actual stage work, he was training dancers for the ballet corps. He was

succeeded by no one else than the great Didelot, who later became a director of the ballet and ballet school in Petrograd. But Sweden strictly followed the footsteps of France and Italy and never took another direction. The Swedish ballet of the nineteenth century was strictly French-Italian.

But the Danish ballet, which had been founded at the same time with the Swedish, took a different turn. The early part and middle of the nineteenth century mark a great turning point in the history of the Danish stage dance. This is wholly due to the patriotic efforts of its great reformer, Bournoville, who did not like the foreign flavor of such an important art as dancing, and, moreover, found the stiff style, artificial manners and the incoherent relation between the music and dancing too crude and outmoded for a new era. On the other hand, the method of training the dancers was lacking in system and seemed too insufficient to make any thorough artists of the young men and women who wished to make their career as dancers. Vincenzo Tomaselli Galeotti, who had been for half a century an autocratic figure and ballet-master of Denmark, emphasized either the acrobatic Italian or the stereotyped French styles. For Galeotti the Danish ballet was perfection itself, but not so for Bournoville.

Antoine Auguste Bournoville was born in 1805 in Copenhagen, where his father had been a dancer and assistant conductor under Galeotti. Already at the age of eight he danced in small parts in Copenhagen. But it was not until 1829 that he made his real début in *Gratiereness Hulding*. In 1824 he made a trip with Orloff to Paris where he saw Vestris and Gardel, whose instruction and art inspired him to do for the

Danish ballet what they had done for the French. After a tour in Austria and Italy, Bournoville settled down in Copenhagen and began to reform the stage of his native land.

Bournoville's main reformative idea was that a dancer should first of all have a perfect technique, and then be an individual and not a dead figure in a spectacular design. The technique of the Milan school was to him one-sided, striving for gymnastic effects at the expense of the musical and thematic requirements of a composition. Taglioni had just made her reputation on the foundations that Bournoville had laid for the Danish ballet. Virtuosity had been the danger of the old school. Admiration was centred exclusively in the difficulty of the execution of the steps. The *pointes* and *pirouettes* had been regarded as the highest form of accomplishment. Bournoville realized that this step, when it is abused, becomes the curse of ballet dancing. While recognizing that it was absolutely necessary for momentary use, when completing an attitude or giving a suggestion of ethereal lightness (as of the poise of a winged being alighting for an instant upon the earth) he combated the tendency to base the significance of the dance only on this. On other occasions, one quick passage across the stage, the tips of the toes scarcely brushing the dust of the carpet, the dancer may make the impression of the grace of a bird's flight. But if this trick is displayed constantly during a performance the effect is lost in the ugliness of the effort.

Bournoville was also dissatisfied with the ballet compositions and plots. He remodelled many French ballets and wrote some himself. In many things Bournoville coöperated with Pierre J. Larcher. The

most conspicuous of their works was *Valdemar*, which was first performed in 1835, with music by Froehlich. Not less successful was the *Festen i Albano*, an idyllic ballet in one act with music by Froehlich. This was first performed in 1839. A very popular ballet that Bournoville arranged to the music of Hartmann was *Olaf den Hellige*.

The most conspicuous pupil of Bournoville and the foremost of his prima *ballerinas* was Lucile Grahn, a girl of outspoken individuality, temperament and dramatic force. She was a rival of Taglioni and Elssler, not only in Denmark, but in France, England and in other European countries. Grahn's favored ballet was *La Sylphide*, though she danced superbly in the *Fiorella*, and *Brahma und Bayaderen*. The Danish critics wrote that the Copenhagen audience fairly went wild over her dancing in the *Robert af Normandie*. Grahn differed from Taglioni in her individual style, which was more romantic and lofty, and in her dramatic talent. Besides being a great dancer she was an excellent actress. The London and Petrograd audiences were particularly fond of her *divertissement* numbers, mostly written by Danish composers. She was born in 1819 and died in Munich in 1875, after having lived nineteen years of happy married life with Friedrich Young, a celebrated opera singer of that time.

Next to Lucile Grahn in the Danish ballet stands Augusta Nielsen, born in 1823 in Copenhagen. As a girl of fifteen, she danced in *Valdemar*. But her real career began with *Toreadoren*, in which she danced for the first time in 1840. Nielsen's tendency in dancing was to be natural rather than acrobatic. Her mimic and rhythmic talent surpassed by far that of Grahn, Taglioni and Elssler. But since she strove less

for gymnastic effects than her celebrated contemporaries, she failed to arouse the enthusiasm that greeted the others. She came close to the modern natural dancers, since dancing was for her an individual art like singing, in which each artist should express only the best of his inner self. Like many other Danish dancers, Nielsen was a born actress and emphasized the dramatic features as the most important ones in the ballet.

Among Danish ballet dancers the most conspicuous figures are Adolph F. Stramboe, Johann Ferdinand Hoppe, Waldemar Price and Hans Beck. They all follow the footsteps of Bournoville, whose reforms in Danish dancing are equal to those of Noverre in France, or Petipa in Russia. Bournoville's main efforts were to make dancing a serious dramatic art. In this he succeeded. The influence of the Danish ballet upon the Russian is of far-reaching extent. Didelot, having been a ballet-master in Stockholm, was inspired by Bournoville's attempts, and followed his example after becoming a ballet director in Russia. But the art of dancing has its period of youth, maturity, decay and rebirth. The Danish ballet stopped its evolution after Bournoville. It has remained what it was half a century ago. It is sound, classic, and noble in its spirit, but it lacks the fire and soul of youth.

II

The writer has a record of the young living solo dancer of the Danish Royal Ballet, Mrs. Elna Jörgen-Jensen, whose exquisite delicate plastic art in Strindberg's *Brott och Brott*, and Gabriele

d'Annunzio's *Gioconda* aroused stormy enthusiasm among Copenhagen's audiences. Haagen Falkenfleth, the celebrated ballet critic of the *Nationaltidende of Copenhagen*, writes of her; 'Mrs. Elna Jörgen-Jensen, the *prima ballerina* of the Danish Royal Ballet, entered the Copenhagen Ballet School as a child, as the result of an episode that is still little known. Her parents knew that little Elna was passionately fond of dancing, but their surprise was great when one day she disappeared from her home. It appeared that she had run after a street organ-grinder to whose screaming tune she was dancing in the middle of the street to the surprise of the occasional spectators. At the age of seven she became a pupil of the Royal Ballet School in Copenhagen, where the children are taught not only dancing and *calisthenics*, but also the general school subjects, in the same way as the dancers are educated in the Russian Imperial Ballet School in Petrograd. As a pupil she was favored with small dancing parts in certain ballets. She was excellent for little fairy rôles. In this way she received a gradual training for the stage and had already mastered her routine when she made her real début in Drigo's "Harlequin's Millions." She had personified Sylvia's child in d'Annunzio's *Gioconda* and the page in Schiller's *Don Carlos*. Her dancing was so sure, her movements so graceful and her mimicry so true to life that her reputation was instantly established; but how versatile she was became known only later.

'No one who saw her during her début in the rôle of the gay Pierrette, with frolic-humorous eyes and graceful juvenile steps, could imagine that on the next occasion she would be so easily transformed into a tragedienne in Schnitzler's and Dohnányi's "Veil of Pierrette." She practically created her rôle.

Her romantic eyes, so full of sorrow and despair, added a magic gloom to her dramatic dance, in which she stands so high above her many contemporaries. She is realistically gripping. Already at the age of nineteen she was an accomplished mute actress of the modern type, and a great solo dancer. Dohnányi, who attended the performance, told me that he had not supposed she could possibly add such a tragic fire to the rôle that he wrote for untrained theatrical dancers. Mrs. Jörgen-Jensen proved in this rôle that she had broken loose from all the traditions of the Bournoville school in which she was trained. You could not see a line of the conventional ballet style.

'Bournoville, the reformer of the Danish ballet, introduced a strong dramatic element into the national art. Yet his tendency was outspokenly romantic. In this he aimed to be classic and strictly choreographic. In many of his ballets the romantic and the realistic issues are closely interwoven. In these Mrs. Jörgen-Jensen sometimes has gone against the Bournoville principles and used her own judgment. She has figured as the principal dancer in the "Flower Festival at Genzano," *La Ventana*, "Far from Danemark," *Coppélia* and *Swanhilde*. But in "The Little Mermaid," a ballet based on Hans Andersen's fairy-tale, she is best of all. While dancing in the rôle of the Mermaid, she makes the impression of a magic creature of a different world, with grace and charms that we have never known, yet which cast a spell upon us. Mrs. Jörgen-Jensen's repertoire is large, but still larger is the range of her dramatic personifications. The Copenhagen audiences are sorry to see her so little, but the stage of our National Theatre is more adapted to the opera and drama than to the ballet.'

Perhaps the best known of the living Danish dancers is Adeline Genée, whose name has figured during the past twenty years in the ballet repertoires of all the more or less known opera houses. She has been a special favorite of the London public, where she made her début in *Monte Cristo* in November, 1897. She has shown her best in Delibes' *Coppélia*, though some critics maintain that her triumph in the *Dryad* is even greater. But what *La Sylphide* was to Taglioni, *Ghiselle* to Grisi and *Éoline* to Lucile Grahn, that is *Coppélia* to Genée. She is a true exponent of the Bournoville school of ballet, though she claims that she owes her brilliant technique to some other sources. Though she studied dancing with her uncle in Denmark, yet the method, style and technique originate from Bournoville. Max Beerbohm has given a pretty characteristic account of her appearance in *Coppélia* in London. 'No monstrous automaton is that young lady. Perfect though she be in the *haute école*, she has by some miracle preserved her own self. She was born a comedian and a comedian she remains, light as foam. A mermaid were not a more surprising creature than she—she of whom one half is that of an authentic *ballerina*, whilst the other is that of a most intelligent, most delightful human actress. A mermaid were, indeed, less marvellous in our eyes. She would not be able to diffuse any semblance of humanity into her tail. Madame Genée's intelligence seems to vibrate in her very toes. Her dancing, strictly classical though it is, is a part of her acting. And her acting, moreover, is of so fine a quality, that she makes the old ineloquent conventions of gesture tell meanings to me, and tell them so exquisitely that I quite forget my craving for words.—Taglioni in *Les Arabesques*? I suspect in my heart of hearts, she was no better than a doll. Grisi in *Ghiselle*? She may or

may not have been passable. Genée! It is a name our grandchildren will cherish, even as we cherish now the names of those bygone dancers. And alas! our grandchildren will never believe, will never be able to imagine, what Genée was.'

The writer has attended a number of Genée's performances in Europe and in America, and does not agree entirely with Mr. Beerbohm's eulogy. As already explained above, Bournoville's method was a great improvement over the French-Italian schools of dancing, in that it emphasized the dramatic issues and individual traits in the ballet, which Genée has exactly followed; but unfortunately the evolution of the Danish ballet stopped with Bournoville. The art remained in its preliminary state of development and ended with the Dresden-china steps. It is this very style that makes Genée an attractive museum figure. In this she stands unrivalled. She exhibits an art of the past, with every detail sedulously studied. You can see how mathematically exact is the position of the fingers, the attitude of the head, the lines of the arms and limbs, and so on. 'Every step has its name, every gesture belongs to its code; there is only one way and no other of executing them rightly, and that way is Madame Genée's,' writes one of her admirers. But the dance is more than an exhibition of mathematical figures. The studied smile and sorrow fail to arouse the emotions of the audience. The Dresden-china step is a fossilized thing of bygone centuries. It somehow does not belong to the stage.

The significance of the Danish ballet, and its influence upon the evolution of the art of dancing is greater than it is universally admitted. The Danes introduced the element of drama into the ballet in order to make the dancing a kind of mute acting.

They were the first to revolt against many time-worn rules of the old schools. They were the first to advocate the imitation of nature to a certain extent. Bournoville said ‘as nature moves in curves and gradations rather than by leaps and turns, dancing should take that into consideration.’ The Russian ballet was influenced through the Danish and Swedish. The Danish ballet was a stepping-stone between the academic French-Italian and ethno-dramatic Russian schools. It has accomplished a great task in the evolution of the art of dancing by making the ballet a dramatic expression on academic lines.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RUSSIAN BALLET

Nationalism of the Russian ballet; pedagogic principles of the Russian school; French and Russian schools compared—Begutcheff and Ostrowsky; history of the Russian ballet—Didelot and the Imperial ballet school; Petipa and his reforms—Tschaikowsky's 'Snow-Maiden' and other ballets; Pavlova and other famous *ballerinas*; Mordkin; Volinin, Kyasht, Lopokova.

I

THE celebrated saying of the German poet, '*Und neues Leben blüht aus den Ruinen*' applies better than anything else to the Russian ballet, which has risen out of the West European choreographic ruins. The Russian ballet marks a new era in the history of the art of dancing. The Russian ballet is a new word in the dance world. It brings the smell of trees and flowers, the songs of birds, the leaps of gazelles and lions and the very soil of nature to the stage. It breathes the spectral shadows of the trees and mountains; it begins with the simplest mushroom and ends with the most complicated hot-house plant. It emanates nature with all its uncouthness and grace. Like the Russian composers and poets, the

Russian dancers strive to echo Nature with all its majesty and mystery.

Even with the beginning of the nineteenth century the Russian ballet begins a course entirely different from that which the schools of Western Europe were preaching and teaching. Though the ballet-masters and instructors are foreigners, yet they are actuated by outward circumstances to apply their academic theories to the conditions of a different school. With the advent of a national school of music and drama, at the head of which stood Balakireff, Borodine, Seroff, Moussorgsky, Tschaikowsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff in music, and Ostrowsky, Turgenieff, Gogol and others in the drama, the Russian ballet is forced in the same channels. The Russian ballet grows gradually into a new nationalistic art, and separates itself altogether from the French-Italian aristocratic academicism. The frequent remarks of the foreign critics, suggesting that the Russian ballet was and is a direct offspring and copy of the classic French-Italian schools, are absolutely wrong. It is true that the Russians borrowed from the French the skeleton and from the Italians the mechanic contrivances, but they built up the body themselves and created something entirely different from what Western Europe knew of the ballet.

A born dancer, the Russian could never stand the prescribed poses, smiles, tears, steps and gestures, that were and are still practised outside. He is ready to undergo the most strenuous training, and follows microscopically the instructions of the teachers, in order to acquire the necessary technique; but when it comes to a performance, he will put his spontaneous ideas and impulses above the technique and act

according to his emotions and inspiration. This is a peculiarity of the Russian. He is and remains an individual. No school can put him on the same level with his fellow-students. Is not Pavlova quite different from Fokina or Karsavina?

No other nation cares so much for racial beauty as the Russian. And in this it is essentially democratic. All Russian art is based on the peasant, and not on aristocratic ideals. It expresses this by being simple, direct, spontaneous and rugged. The greatest factor in separating the Russian ballet from the western, is the Russian folk-dance. It owes everything to folk-art. No outside influence has ever been able to change the Russian æsthetic taste. In art, particularly in the ballet, the peasant ideals force themselves upon all aristocratic and bureaucratic classes. Already as a youth he sucks from the atmosphere the innumerable forms of dance expression. In his blood lives unconsciously the whole choreographic code, as his ancestors have known and practised it for centuries. The design of a peasant is the æsthetic scale of a Russian artist, particularly of a dancer. Aristocratic ideals never amounted to anything in Russia. The fact is, the nobleman follows in matters of æsthetic taste the *moujik*, but never *vice versa*. The benefit of this has been that neither the court nor foreign academicism could influence the Russian art of dancing.

Besides the racial motives, the question of scientific education has been a hobby with the Russian art pedagogues since the early part of the last century. The Russians are almost fanatic in this respect and have specialized their educational institutions to such a degree that they stand unique. The method of training the dancers in other

countries was centred mainly in training the step technique and was, so to speak, purely choreographic. The Russians took into consideration all the arts that are related to dancing, and made a rule that all pupils in the dancing schools should have at least an elementary training in human anatomy, in sculpture, drama, architecture, painting, music and in general educational subjects. To know every branch of art correspondingly well—this made it necessary that children be educated in an institute from their childhood on. Thus the education for the Russian ballet is given in the two Imperial Ballet Schools, one in Petrograd, the other in Moscow, both being connected with the dramatic departments in which children are trained for the stage. The course in the school lasts eight years, with an extra one or two years' post-graduate practice at some opera stage, after which a graduate receives his 'Free Artist' degree which places him on an equal rank with the graduates of a college, university or musical conservatory.

Marius Petipa, the director and leading spirit of the Petrograd ballet school, has, upon one occasion, said to the writer: 'We employ the French, the Italian, the Danish and the Russian instructors in order to give the best of every school and style to our pupils. We teach things that no other school would teach. For instance, our pupils must know psychology, which is supposed to be unnecessary for a dancer. But I say, no. How can a girl personify the Snow Maiden when she does not know the psychology of a fairy? It's ridiculous, you might think, as fairies are only legendary figures. But the very fact that they are imaginary makes it necessary for a girl to know how to avoid showing any human characteristics.

‘The foreign schools do not care in what steps a dancer should express such subtle emotions as jealousy, longing, bliss and sorrow. Abroad they prescribe pirouettes for joy and happiness. They prescribe acting in this, dancing in that phrase. It is not so with us. We teach the pupil to see the various human emotions in historic sculpture and painting. We show them the attitudes of various celebrated actresses in this or that emotion. Then, we go back to psychology and leave it to the artist to formulate the position that he would occupy in various emotions. So you see psychology is very important to a dancer.

‘Dancing is the cream of architecture and sculpture. We teach our future dancers to know the difference between architecture and sculpture and then between a dance and a dramatic pose, which are just as different as opera singing and concert singing. All our graduates must be accomplished dancers, actors, acrobats, architects and designers. We teach the difference between a Gothic and Byzantine line, a Moorish and Romanesque design. We have to analyze music and sculpture to their elementary parts in order to be able to show the manifold manifestations of the human soul, and the manifold forms of beauty. It is in this way that a dancer comes to know which step or gesture corresponds to the emotions of a Romanesque Italian, Gothic German or Byzantine Russian.

‘I have been assailed by our critics and composers as being too strict in demanding technique from our dancers. But tell me, please, can any talent make a man an artist without technical ability, where mathematical laws are required as in dancing and in music? Can there ever be a Rubinstein, Paderewski or Kubelik without the

acquired harmonic and melodic skill on the instrument which I call technique? Just as little chance has a man of being a great dancer if he does not possess the ability to control his body, though he be the greatest choreographic genius in the world. Art is technique plus talent. No great artist in dancing was ever produced without technique.

'Do you know what Lubke said in his immortal History of Sculpture, that applies also to a dancer? I am telling all my pupils when they leave the institution that, like sculptor in the clay, a dancer in himself must seek the "Image of God," the spark of divine life. When he fails to find this in separate lines, poses, gestures, attitudes and mimic expressions, he must search for it in the whole, and, by thoughtful study and thinking, he will certainly attain the reflex of immortal beauty—the image of deity. This I call artistic creation. In sculpture as in dancing the divine and heroic are the aims of the artistic achievements. Without this striving after the divine spark nothing is produced but lifeless figures and dead forms. A dancer, like any other artist, should aspire after spirit-breathing beauty.'



Pavlowa
a painting by John Lavery

This briefly expresses the fundamental traditions of the Russian ballet school. To a certain extent it is academic, but it has never interfered with the racial and the individual tendencies of the artists. Though there are only three large independent ballet corps in

Russia, those of Petrograd, Moscow, and Warsaw, yet nearly every one of the sixty or more provincial opera houses keeps its local ballet corps in connection with the operatic and dramatic staff. While in foreign countries ballet has been appreciated mainly as an accessory to the opera for its spectacular effects, its æsthetic appeal being regarded as not possessing a high order of merit, in Russia it is considered a great and independent art of the stage, standing on a plane with opera, both musically and dramatically. When a few years ago the Russian dancers made their appearance abroad the public was startled, as no one could imagine that any good thing could come out of Czardom. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Russian ballet is an aristocratic or autocratic institution. By no means. Like Russian drama and music the Russian ballet is a national institution and a national achievement.

In how far the Russian ballet differs from her sister institutions outside is best to be seen in such old-fashioned ballets as *Les Sylphides*, which was danced by Taglioni, and is danced by the artists of the French-Italian schools and figures in the repertoires of the Russian ballet. Another work of similar nature is the *Coppélia*. Not only are these two time-worn ballets wholly changed in their thematic and musical sense but in the very form of conception. The Russian *Sylphides* and *Coppélia* are old scenes in modern light, the French-Italian *Sylphides* and *Coppélia* are pitiable museum shows. Where a French-Italian *ballerina* would leap and whirl, a Russian acts and poses. Like the art of an actress that of a Russian *ballerina* is in the first place a personification of the character in whose rôle she is dancing. Pavlova as she depicts the incomparable fury of Glazounoff's *L'Autômne Bacchanale*, could not

by any means be a Cleopatra as personified by Astafieva. Karsavina with all her dramatic thrill and *arabesques* is a mediocrity in the rôles in which Pavlova excels. The dramatic issue is the foremost question in the Russian ballet, often to such an extent that it minimizes the musical significance. The most talented of the foreign ballet dancers do not begin to go into the dramatic details of a dance as the Russians do.

To get an idea of the Russian ballet with all its true atmosphere one must go to Russia. The performances of the Diaghileff company which foreign audiences have seen, belong to the revolutionary school, but not to the typical classic dance of Russia, which we shall discuss later. The Russian ballet dancer is free from all the stiffness, decadent artificiality, preconceived emotions, and fossilized formalities of the French-Italian ballet dancers. This freedom he owes, in the first place, to the thorough training in the school; second, to the distinctly racial traditions of the Russian drama and art; and third, to the serious critical attitude of the audiences. To say that the Russian ballet has not travelled in ideals far from those of Milan in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, as a foreign dance critic has said, is untrue. The difference between these two schools is just as real as that between the Catholic and the Protestant church: the one believes in the form, the other in the spirit.

II

How much the Russian ballet has influenced drama, opera, painting and music can be judged

from the fact that almost without an exception all the Russian operas require dancing; thus there are several dramas and orchestra works interwoven with the ballet. On the other hand the dancer has made use of themes and compositions that had been created for other purposes; for all such ballets as the *Scheherezade*, *Prince Igor*, *Baba Yaga* and many others, were written as orchestral suites, symphonic poems or parts of operas. But the choric imagination discovered in them latent music dramas adapted for dancing. We are inclined to think that the Moscow ballet, but not that of Petrograd, is a thoroughly Russian institution, since Begutcheff, who was a director of the Moscow Opera and Ballet at the time of Tschaikowsky and Ostrowsky, banished all foreign influence from that stage, more so than has ever happened in Petrograd.

In 1873 Begutcheff asked Ostrowsky, one of the foremost Russian dramatists, to write a fairy ballet for performance at the Imperial Opera in St. Petersburg, exacting that it should be free from any satirical or politically undesirable element. Begutcheff asked the dramatist to submit the scenario to him for approval. Ostrowsky was noted for his bitter sarcasm anent the Russian bureaucracy and for his idealization of the peasants. This he was told he should avoid in the ballet, 'for such would be not pleasing to the imperial family.' Ostrowsky smiled, grunting: 'God be thanked, the imperial family has no business to interfere with the imagination of an artist.' He finished his libretto without consulting Begutcheff and entitled it *Snegourotchka*—'Snow Maiden.' The director of the Petrograd ballet did not like Ostrowsky's libretto and refused to consider it. Begutcheff, however, turned the libretto over to Tschaikowsky to compose the

music and it was performed with great success in Moscow.

One of the special features of the Russian ballet is its *chorovody* character—that is, the musical accompaniment, on many occasions, is supplied by the singing of the dancers themselves. This species of vocal ballets evidently originated in the choral dances of the peasants. The Russian ballet is, in fact, an outgrowth of the folk-dance just as Russian music emanates from the folk-song. While watching the Russian ballet, you see glimpses of the racial traits. It is not like the music, however, a picture of the gloom of lonely *moujik* life, in which only here and there a beam of light breaks through the melancholy. It is a succession of brilliant pictures of the mediæval Boyars, the semi-barbaric nobility. Every part of the ballet is meant to show the rich Byzantine colors, and primitive passions as set forth in a half-civilized garb.

It is true the Russian ballet is controlled by the court and therefore is forced to be aristocratic in appearance. The composers and the ballet-masters have been strictly instructed to avoid all undesirable themes; but, strange to say, the ballet is just as much a mirror of the hospitable, good natured, naïve and emotional peasant as it is of a spoiled Boyar. It is not that all the ballet dancers are children of peasants, educated for the stage by the court, but because the Russian dramatists and composers have unconsciously put their own *moujik* souls in their creations, for, though most of the Russian composers and dramatists are descendants of the aristocracy, yet in their hearts they have remained one with the people, whose life they live in thought and feeling.

In its principles the ballet is the most aristocratic

and the oldest of all Russian arts of the stage. The unwritten history of the enchanting Russian dance would make a thrilling record of more than two centuries. The romances, tragedies, mysteries, and intrigues connected with this sealed drama have often played a decisive rôle in the affairs of the country. As the result of a romance with pretty Teleshova Griboyedoff, a famous Russian dramatist was killed in Teheran. For having dedicated his 'Eugene Onyegin' to the fascinating Istomina, prima *ballerina* of the Imperial Opera, Poushkin, the poet, lost the love of his wife and was subsequently shot in a duel. The Czar Paul fell in love with Eugeny Kolossova and in consequence was strangled at his palace in Petrograd. Before the present Czar ascended the throne he was said to have been so much in love with Mathilda Kshesinskaya that he made plans to renounce his throne and marry her.

The ballet was introduced in Russia as early as 1672. Czar Alexis Mihailowitch ordered his aid-de-camp, Colonel Van Staden, to have a troupe of Dutch comedians brought to Moscow. Van Staden made a contract with a ballet manager in Brussels, but the foreigner was frightened into giving up the venture because of a rumor that he and his troupe might eventually land in Siberia. After this a German pastor, the Rev. Johann Gregory, undertook the management of the troupe, hiring sixty-four German and Italian dancers and producing in 1673 the first ballet, 'Orpheus and Euridice,' with great success. Peter the Great was so fascinated with the ballet that he himself took part and for this purpose received lessons from the ballet-master.

The ballet of this time was, of course, Italian-French in conception and music. But the early

foreign masters soon produced a school of native instructors who gradually made use of the peculiarities of national dances. Many Russian ballets were already at this time of national color, one of them, *Baba Yaga*, having been written by the Czar himself. *Baba Yaga* is a Russian fairy tale. Like the English 'Witch on a Broomstick,' *Baba Yaga* rides through the sky on a huge mortar, propelling herself with a pestle, while her great tongue licks up the clouds as she passes. The dancers were trained in various military or municipal schools and the teaching was unsystematic in every respect.

The first impetus to a national dancing academy was given by Empress Anna Ivanovna, the sister of Peter the Great, who felt that the education of the dancers was not systematic enough, and regretted that the best dancers had to be hired from abroad. In 1735, she asked Christian Wellmann, a teacher of gymnastics in the Cadet Corps, to found a dramatic dancing school in which girls and boys could be educated for the ballet. The Italian composer Francesca Areja was employed to take care of the music, while Lande, a pupil of Noverre, was to act as ballet director. As the newly formed school could not get children of the nobility to learn dancing, Lande trained a number of poor city boys and girls free of any charge, and with them gave a performance at the palace. The Empress was so pleased with their dance that she instructed that the pupils be educated in the Imperial Dramatic Dancing School free of charge.

III

The most conspicuous figures in the development

of the early Russian ballet were Locatelli, Hilferding and Lessogoroff. To the latter's efforts are due the reforms that made the Russian school independent from French-Italian influences. But to Charles Louis Didelot is due the thorough and many sided system of training that makes the School a unique institution in Europe. He may be considered the real father of all the pedagogic technical perfection, for it was he who emphasized the importance of a systematic training in a true dramatic spirit, contending that a good ballet dancer should also be a good actress and an artist and a poet at heart. Up to his time lessons had consisted mostly of physical training, fencing and gymnastics, but he insisted that the ballet be put on the same basis as drama. Whereas the dance had been merely a spectacular part of opera he intended that it should become an independent production. This brought upon him a storm of indignation on the part of the clergy and their supporters, the quarrel becoming so intense that in 1801, as one of its effects, the Czar Paul was acclaimed a heretic and was combatted by the ecclesiastic powers until he was strangled in his palace and his son, Alexander I, ascended the throne. The young Czar was religious, but so much an admirer of the ballet that he did not interfere with the plans of Didelot and gave him a still greater authority.

It is strange how Didelot, a rather small, insignificant, pock-marked and deformed Frenchman, who had been for some time a ballet teacher in Stockholm, could play a dominating rôle during the twenty-five years that he was director of the Imperial Ballet School. The best known dancers of his school were Istomina, Teleshova and the uncle of Taglioni, who later undertook the training of Maria Taglioni. Miss Novitzkaya was a celebrated

pupil of Didelot, but her career was soon destroyed by an affair of the heart. Gedeonoff, the director who followed Didelot, fell madly in love with Novitzkaya and proposed to her, but the dancer, having given her heart to a poor composer, remained true to him and became his wife. This was the end of her art, though critics claimed her superior to Taglioni and Elssler.

By 1847 the Russian ballet had taken a leading place in Europe, but in a purely artistic sense it was still foreign in character, the librettos being built mainly on foreign themes or constructed to foreign music. With the advent of the composers Glinka, Dargomijsky, Seroff, Balakireff and Moussorgsky, it was evident that ballet faced a reform similar to that which music had undergone. The ballets of the old school had usually been divided into several acts and figures, each of which had *entrées* and strictly prescribed rules for using various gestures, steps, etc., in certain places. They, however, failed to define the relation of emotion and acting to the plot and made dancing a complicated artificial salon-plant. An uninitiated logic could hardly grasp the hieroglyphic meaning of all the queer gymnastic tricks. With the engagement of Marius Petipa, in 1849, there came a change. Although a Frenchman by birth Petipa was just such a reformer in the ballet as Michelangelo was in sculpture. More powerful than any other master, he entered the sphere of choreographic art, transforming it completely, and assigning it new limits. Petipa was the master of a new ballet, an idealist in the strictest sense of the word. He sought for a universally available expression, and often even ignored questions of racial beauty. He gave himself up for many years to an anatomical study of the dance and the human

body. By him the human form in all its majesty was valued for its own sake. To exhibit it in all conceivable attitudes and poses, to display it freely and grandly after the principles of classic beauty, was the aim of his endeavor. The weak decadent movements and the forced forms of the Paris and Milan schools were irritable to his broad views of the art of dancing. Unfettered subjectivity prevailed in his efforts, which admitted no objective realism in their absolute sway. All his method betrays an eternal struggle to introduce into dancing the most sublime ideas, the sway of idea over form. Whether a figure was natural or not interested him little, if it only expressed what was floating before his mind. Petipa infused a new life into Russian ballet. Nevertheless he could not wholly free himself from the mannerism of the time, nor could he yet find the path to perfect purity and naïveté of conception.

Petipa surrounded himself with the best dance authorities of the time. Felix Kshesinsky, Leggatt, Schirjajeff and Bekeffy became his associates in the task he had undertaken. Coöperating in harmony and inspired by the new tendency of nationalism in music and drama, they made the ballet typically national by introducing a long repertoire of national themes in the dance. With pretty Kshesinskaya, Bogdanova, Breobrashenskaya, Sokolova, Pavlova, Karsavina, Lopokova and Fokina as the *prima ballerinas* many new ballets became thrilling novelties to the Russian audiences. The ballet in the eyes of the Petipa school became a mute drama with music, and at once took a high position artistically and poetically. People grew to find the ballet far more alluring than the pessimistic drama.

What Petipa did pedagogically for the uplifting

of the Russian ballet, Vsevoloshky did scenically and industrially. Vsevoloshky made himself the spirit of the nationalistic movement by combining with the purely choreographic part the creations of the new school of painters and composers in a highly artistic manner. Rubinstein, Tschaikowsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Arensky and Glazounoff in music, Bilibin, Benois and Bakst in painting, contributed their best works to the ballet. On the other hand, while the West European ballets cared little for training the male dancers, the Russians laid a special stress on training an equal number of boys with the girls in all their ballet schools. The training of a boy is different from that of a girl in that it teaches chiefly those traits that lend virility and strength to expression. A weak masculine element deprives the ballet of its natural effect. A Pavlova, Karsavina or Fokina without a Nijinsky, Mordkin or Volinin, would be like an orchestra without the bass. How repulsive it is to see the 'boy' dancer of the English stage, who is always a girl!

IV

The most typical of the early purely Russian native ballets was the *Snegourotchka*—'The Snow Maiden'—which was first performed in 1876 in Moscow. Tschaikowsky took for his musical themes half a dozen folk-songs from Brokunin's collection, and a few from the lips of the village people near Kieff. This ballet has been of the greatest success on the Russian stage thus far. This is musically and choreographically a dramatized fairy tale. The Snow Maiden is the issue of the union of the gladsome fairy, Spring, with the grim old geni, Winter. The

father jealously guards her from the courting Sun-God, who is eager to pour upon her his scorching and destructive rays. Winter would like to keep her in the forest, but the mother, proud of her child's beauty, wants to send her into the busy world to charm its inhabitants. After a serious conflict of the parents the father yields. The girl feels the strange emotions of love and trembles, singing a thrilling melody. She wanders from village to village in search of a lover, but her numerous admirers are unable to stir her heart, because snow circulates through her veins. She realizes that she is void of real passion. Spring appears to her and endows her with the tenderness of a lily, the languor of a poppy and the desire of a rose. The Snow Maiden's heart is touched at last, but in the moment when she wishes to fall on her lover's neck a brilliant sun ray pours its Summer heat on her. She dissolves in vapor and floats into the skies.

The score is wholly Russian in mood and color. The dramatic treatment of the subject is the best that Tschaikowsky has ever done. The Snow Maiden's theme is very sad and beautiful in the last movement. The pantomime and steps are excellent, and seem to melt into one magic whole. Tschaikowsky, with his peculiar genius for evolving floating, curving dance rhythms and his remarkable gift for lyrical characterization, made 'The Snow Maiden' a great success.

Of less success was Tschaikowsky's second ballet, 'Swan Lake,' though it has been in recent years a favorite ballet with the Petrograd audiences. Like the first, it was built on a fairy tale and an old folk legend theme. It was performed in 1876. Another ballet full of imaginary episodes and pretty music is

'The Sleeping Beauty.' The finest pages of this score are found in the *Adagio misterioso*, describing the sleep of the princess. But choreographically the best part is the *Pas d'action*, in which the *prima ballerina* seems to melt into one audio-visible beauty that thrills the utmost depths of the soul. The 'Nut Cracker' has had less success than the others, yet it is a magnificent work of art. It probably lacks the feminine sentimentality that is always sure of a stage success.

To our knowledge none of Tschaikowsky's ballets has been given in America. Whether the Diaghileff company ever gave any of them in Paris and London, we have been unable to learn. The Russian ballets that the foreign audiences have thus far seen abroad, are nearly without exception musical patch-works. Neither the Rimsky-Korsakoff *Scheherezade* nor *Prince Igor* nor *Cleopatra* was ever written for dancing. The *Scheherezade*, for instance, is an orchestral suite of Rimsky-Korsakoff. He never meant it for a ballet. Of all the real ballets that the Diaghileff troupe has given only those composed by Stravinsky and a few by Tcherepnin are meant to be danced.

Among the best Russian ballet dancers of the strictly classic or, as we should say, of the Petipa school, are Kshesinskaya, Breobrashenskaya, Geltzer, Pavlova, Mordkin, Novikoff, Volinin, Kyasht and Lopokova, most of whom are known abroad. But there are quite a number of Russian *prima ballerinas*, who, for some reason or other, have not been able to display their art abroad, yet who rival the best we know. As with other artists, dancers all have their individual traits of superiority and weakness. In some dances we have seen Kshesinskaya superior to all the rest, in other rôles she is just a mediocrity. We

can imagine nothing more inspiring and beautiful than Pavlova and Mordkin in Glazounoff's *L'Autômne Bacchanale*. No Russian ballet dancers have surpassed them in this. In the same way we consider Pavlova a goddess of grace and beauty in Drigo's *Papillon* and Saint-Saëns' 'The Swan.' We measure her one of the most lyric artists of the Russian classic ballet.

Mme. Pavlova is a graduate of the Petrograd Ballet School and was for years a *prima ballerina* at the Mariensky Theatre in that city before she made a tour to Riga, Warsaw and Helsingfors. Having been received with greatest enthusiasm on her provincial tour she decided to try her luck abroad and made her London début in 1910, where she immediately had the city at her feet. It is only in recent years that Pavlova has danced in her own regular ballet, whereas before she appeared exclusively in solo dances, either with Mordkin, Novikoff or Volinin. In our judgment she has not added anything to her reputation or success by her patchy ballet, particularly in America, where the public is least impressed by pantomimic art of the kind they can see with more advantage in the moving-picture show. It is Pavlova's art that the people admire, not the ballets that are concocted for her. It must be said that the ballets recently produced by her possess little dramatic or choreographic appeal.

In questions pertaining to her dancing Pavlova has been broad and tolerant, and has listened quietly to every eulogistic or critical remark. She has not remained indifferent to the latest choreographic movements but has adapted herself to many suggestions, particularly to those of the movement of the naturalistic school of Isadora Duncan. In spite of the growing influence of the revolutionary new ballet

of the Fokine-Diaghileff group, and while keeping in view the changing taste and requirements of the public, Pavlova should, we believe, guard against too great a compromise. She surpasses in her magic swiftness, delicacy, bird-like agility, floating grace and lyric pirouettes all her living rivals. One can see that she has tuned her body to the most delicate *pianissimi* and the most powerful *forti*. But when she attempts to use her arms too conspicuously, or produce Greek poses, she is a disappointing failure. We must admit with an English critic that 'in Pavlova's dancing we are no longer aware of the conscious and painful obedience of the body to the dictates of a governing mind. It is as though the spirit itself had left its central citadel and, by some unwonted alchemy becoming dissolved in the blood and fibres of her being, had penetrated to the extremities of the limbs. Soul from body is no longer distinguishable, and which is servant to the other none can tell.'

Mordkin and Volinin stand by no means beyond the dynamic beauty of Pavlova. In their virilly graceful gestures and poses lies something heroic and strong, something beast-like in its beauty. Mordkin perhaps more than Volinin is endowed with a robust, massive and splendid physique, qualities which leave some of his less critical admirers blind to the deficiencies of his art. Both dancers have acquired most of their pliancy and manliness by a course of systematic and rigorous training which gives to their dance an unusual *abandon* and loftiness. Their dancing has a tendency to give a semblance of repose to their quickest motions. They seem to avoid the conventional whirls and pivots with intention, and to prefer the lion-like leaps and *chassées*. Their reckless swing in *L'Autômne Bacchanale* is just as much an

expression of manly vigor as Pavlova's *pirouette* and *rond de jambe* is one of feminine grace.

The ranks of the Russian ballet dancers are of a peculiar bureaucratic order, beginning with the simple *danseuse* and ending with the *prima ballerina*, which is a rank similar in the hierarchy to that of a full general. Lydia Kyasht, for instance, is a lieutenant in her rank of *première sujet*. Pavlova and Karsavina are *ballerinas*, while only Kshesinskaya and Breobrashenskaya are *prima ballerinas*. Among the Russian dancers known abroad, Lydia Kyasht and Lydia Lopokova are next to Pavlova brilliant exponents of the Russian classic or so called 'Old Ballet.' They have both impressed us as sincere and eloquent artists of their school, the one romantic, the other extremely poetic. The ethereal twists and glides of Lopokova surpass by far those of Pavlova in their peculiar fairy-like lines and poses. Kyasht appeals to us immensely on account of her absolutely classic plastic and enchanting poses, which add an exotic air to her enchanting expressions.

In introducing Pavlova, Mordkin and other more or less prominent exponents of the Russian classic ballet to America and England Max Rabinoff has been the practical spirit behind the scenes. An authority on the dance, Mr. Rabinoff had the conviction, even when the Russian dancers were yet unknown in America, that they would ultimately triumph as they did. To his persistent efforts the Russian ballet owes its success in America.

The classic Russian ballet is a pure Byzantine piece of stage art. It mirrors the bizarre glow and colors of the cathedrals, the mystic romanticism of the Kremlin walls and cupolas, the Tartar minarets, the vaulted *teremas* (Boyar houses), the lonely

steppes, the gloomy penal colonies, the luxurious palaces and twisted towers of a semi-Oriental country. Strongly replete with the character of the passing Boyar life, it is an era in itself.

CHAPTER XV

THE ERA OF DEGENERATION

Nineteenth century decadence; sensationalism —Loie Fuller and the Serpentine dance—Louise Weber, Lottie Collins and others.

DURING the last half of the nineteenth century the art of dancing reached such a low level that Max Nordau said: 'It is a fleeting pastime for women and youths, and later on its last atavistic survival will be the dancing of children.' An English writer of that time wrote aptly: 'In these days of culture, when the public mind is being trained to perceive and appreciate whatever is lovely in nature and art, when music is universally studied, when there is ample evidence of general improvement in taste and design in our streets, our buildings, on the walls and in the furniture of our homes, is it not strange that a single art, one which was in classic times deemed worthy to rank with poetry and painting—the art of dancing—has degenerated to such an extent that its practice, as frequently exhibited both in public and in private, is a positive disgrace to the age? This is no exaggerated statement. It is one which I think any competent critic is hardly likely to deny.'

The Skirt Dance, the Serpentine Dance, the High Kickers, the Nude Bayaderes were the sensations of

the day. Here Lottie Collins, there Loie Fuller, now Letti Lind, then again Connie Gilchrist, figured as the greatest dance attractions of the day. London blamed Paris, Paris blamed New York. How much the craze for such an art had cast its spell on the public of that period is best illustrated by the immense sums of money that the theatrical managers paid for their shows. The gross receipts during one season in New York of 'Humpty Dumpty,' a celebrated ballet of that time, amounted to $1,406,000. It brought in a similar sum, if not more, outside.

I

A brilliant star of the sensational school of dancing was Loie Fuller, of Chicago. She made her New York début in 'Jack Sheppard,' with a salary of seventy-five dollars a week. While rehearsing a new play, she received from an English officer a present of an extremely fine Oriental robe that floated gracefully in the air. This gave her the idea of using it for her dancing. While making some experiments before the mirror, she noticed the effects brought about by the then newly invented electric light. She tried innumerable variations of poses and all were delightful. This was the birth process of the Serpentine Dance. J. E. Crawford Flitch writes of the incident:

'The invention of the Serpentine Dance coincided with the discovery of electricity as a method of lighting the stage. Until that time gas alone had been used. Loie Fuller immediately saw the possibilities of the new scientific illumination, and with the aid of a few friends she devised a means by which the effect

of the vivid sunshine could be obtained through the use of powerful electric lights placed in front of reflectors. Then various experiments with color were tried; for the white light of electricity were substituted different shades of reds, greens, purples, yellows, blues, by the combinations of which innumerable and wonderful rainbow-like effects of color were obtained. Played upon by the multitudinous hues, the diaphanous silk gave an impression of startling originality and beauty. Coming at the time when the artistic lighting of the stage was scarcely studied at all, the riot of color created a sensation. Nothing like it had been seen before. The old-fashioned limelight, the flickering gas-jets, the smoking red and blue flames dear to the Christmas pantomime, paled before this discovery of science which apparently possessed inexhaustible possibilities of a stage illuminant.'

Loie Fuller made a sensation in America, particularly in New York and Chicago. But her success was much greater when she gave spectacular performances to the morbid Berlin, Paris and London audiences. Her début at Folies Bergères was more than a triumph. She became the rage of France. The management of the Folies Bergères engaged her for three years at a salary of one thousand dollars a week. How greatly '*La Loie*,' as she was called in Paris, impressed the French audiences is best to be seen in what one of the French critics writes of her: 'We shall not easily forget the Serpentine Dance, undulating and luminous, full of weird grace and originality, a veritable revelation! By means of a novel contrivance, the gauzy iridescent draperies in which Loie Fuller swathes herself were waved about her, now to form huge wings, now to surge in great clouds of gold, blue, or crimson, under the colored

rays of the electric light. And in the flood of this dazzling or pallid light the form of the dancer suddenly became incandescent, or moved slowly and spectrally in the diaphanous and ever-changing coloration cast upon it. The spectator never wearied of watching the transformations of these tissues of living light, which showed in successive visions the dreamy dancer, moving languidly in a chaos of figured draperies—in a rainbow of brilliant colors or a sea of vivid flames. And after having roused us to a pitch of enthusiasm by this luminous choreography, she appeared triumphant in the pantomime-ballet *Salome*, reproducing the gloomy episode of the death of John the Baptist.'

Among the dances that Loie Fuller had in her repertoire, besides the Serpentine Dance, were the Rainbow Dance, the Flower Dance, the Butterfly Dance, the Mirror Dance, and the Fire Dance. It is only natural that all her dances of this kind made necessary a vast paraphernalia of accessories and an army of assistants. The Fire Dance she performed in the centre of a darkened stage before an opening in the floor through which a powerful electric reflector threw up intensely brilliant rays. None of her dances had any classified steps, any poses, gestures of the kind employed by dancers of various other schools and different ages. The function of the limbs and arms was merely to put veils and draperies into motion.

II

Of somewhat the same class were the entertainments given by Louise Weber or 'La Goulu,'

another American girl of the type of Loie Fuller. Occasionally she exhibited some skill in her kicking scenes. It is said that she never made pretension to rhythm and grace. Her ‘art’ was a negation of every beauty. It was a frenzied delirious gymnastic. An American critic says that her legs were agitated like those of a marionette, they pawed the air, jerked out in the manner of a pump-handle, and menaced the hats of the spectators.

Lottie Collins was a favorite of the English, French and American audiences, though she was little more than a jumper of a new style. The watchword of the ballet *habitués* of this time was novelty at any price. It is extremely amusing to read a Kansas City criticism of Miss Collins’ performance in that city: ‘Lottie Collins has the stage all to herself and she bounces and dances and races all over it in the most reckless and irresponsible way, precisely as if she were a happy child so full of health and spirits that she couldn’t keep still if she wanted to. Sometimes she simply runs headlong all the way round the stage, finishing the lap with perhaps a swift whirl or two, or a whisk and kick. Sometimes she simply jumps and bounces, and sometimes she doubles up like a pen-knife with the suddenness of a springlock to emphasize the “boom.” She is invariably in motion except when she stops to chant the gibberish that passes for verses, but the wonder is that she has breath enough to sing after the first cyclonic interlude.’

Still more debased were the performances of Olga Desmond, Villiani and others, who made erotic gestures and nude dances a fad of many European capitals. The argument of these dancers was that dancing, like sculpture, is predominantly an art of

nudes. Only the naked body could show the perfect plastic lines and graceful poses. They strove to dance slow music, sonatas and symphonic poems, in order to display the effects of certain pretty poses and arabesques. They put a special stress upon the rhythm, but their interpretation was morbidly perverse.

The best figure of this decadent school of dancing was Kate Vaughan, who strove to follow the style and manners of Taglioni's dance. But the sensation and novelty-loving public of England found her art too tame and old-fashioned, so she died in poverty and broken health in South Africa. Mr. Crawford Flitch says of her: 'Although of course she never reached the perfection of her predecessor [Taglioni], it was to her careful training in the school of the ballet that she owed the ease and grace of her movements and the wonderful effect of spontaneity with which she accomplished even the most difficult steps. She danced not only with her feet, but with every limb of her frail body. She depended not merely upon the manipulation of the skirt for her effect, but upon her facility of balance and the skillful use of arms and hands. Her andante movements in particular were a glorious union of majesty and grace. It is true that she condescended at times to introduce into her dance some of those hideous steps which vulgarized the dancing of the period—in particular that known as the "high kick"; but even this unpleasant step she accomplished with a certain sense of elegance and refinement which disguised its essential ugliness and suggestion of contortion. She danced with a distinct inspiration, and upon her style was built up all that was best in the dancing of her time.'

This new dance hysteria seemed to be of an epidemic nature. The vogue for crude and sensational dances held the whole western world for nearly half a century in its iron grip. With the exception of Scandinavia and Russia, all Europe and America were affected by a decadent dance taste. Novelty was reckoned far superior to beauty. Cleverness was placed high above talent and genius. It was seemingly a prelude to a subsequent effeminacy that was to spread over Occidental art and life.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATURALISTIC SCHOOL OF DANCING

The ‘return to nature’; Isadora Duncan—Duncan’s influence: Maud Allan; Duncan’s German followers—Modern music and the dance; the Russian naturalists; Glière’s ‘Chrisis’—Pictorial nationalism: Ruth St. Denis—Modern Spanish dancers; ramifications of the naturalistic idea.

I

DURING the last part of the past and the beginning of the present century, when the outside world was ignorant of the existence of the Russian ballet, circles of more serious-minded students of art began to voice protest against the cult of skirt and fire dancers, jongleurs and kickers, and the time was ripe for any movement that would bring relief from the prevailing deterioration of such a noble art as dancing. Even the general public grew bored of acrobatic performances and as during every period of decadence ‘there were a few teachers who consistently resolved to impart to their pupils only what was good and beautiful in dancing, whose voices, feeble as they sounded, were nevertheless strong enough to carry weight and rescue their art

from the deplorable condition into which it had for the time fallen,' as a dancing critic of that time aptly writes. One of the most ardent advocates of a new classic art of dancing during this time was Mrs. Richard Hovey. In all her teaching and preaching Mrs. Hovey based the principles of the prospective style upon the plastic art of the ancient Greeks. She made a vigorous propaganda for this in New York, Boston and California. Whether directly or indirectly Miss Isadora Duncan, who had been interested in initiating a reform of human life in its least details of costume, of hygiene and of morals, felt the impulse of Mrs. Hovey's propaganda and joined the worthy movement.

The fundamental principle of Mrs. Hovey's propaganda was the return to nature. According to the theory of this new movement, dancing was declared an expression of nature. Water, wind, birds and all forces of nature are subject to a law of rhythm and gravity. Not the tricky, broken lines, spinning whirls and toe gymnastics, but soft, curved undulations of nature, are close to Mother Earth. Thus also man in his normal life and savage state, moved rather in slow curves than in quick broken lines. This, briefly, was the principal argument of the few reformers who inspired Miss Duncan. Already Noverre and Petipa had emphasized the fact that ancient Greek sculpture and Greek designs gave the best ideas of graceful lines and pleasing human forms. But the votaries of the new school explained that in a return to the natural gesture of human life Greek art was the only logical criterion. Miss Duncan in her essay, 'The Dance,' says:

'To seek in nature the fairest forms and to find the movement which expresses the soul of these

forms—this is the art of the dancer. It is from nature alone that the dancer must draw his inspirations, in the same manner as the sculptor, with whom he has so many affinities. Rodin has said: "To produce good sculpture it is not necessary to copy the works of antiquity; it is necessary first of all to regard the works of nature, and to see in those of the classics only the method by which they have interpreted nature." Rodin is right; and in my art I have by no means copied, as has been supposed, the figures of Greek vases, friezes and paintings. From them I have learned to regard nature, and when certain of my movements recall the gestures that are seen in works of art, it is only because, like them, they are drawn from the grand natural source.

'My inspiration has been drawn from trees, from waves, from clouds, from the sympathies that exist between passion and the storm, between gentleness and the soft breeze, and the like, and I always endeavor to put into my movements a little of that divine continuity which gives to the whole of nature its beauty and its life.'

Thus Miss Duncan started her career by interpreting natural qualities by means of natural movements. 'I have closely studied the figured documents of all ages and of all the great masters, but I have never seen in them any representations of human beings walking on the extremity of the toes or raising the leg higher than the head. These ugly and false positions in no way express that state of unconscious Dionysiac delirium which is necessary to the dancer. Moreover, movements, just like harmonies in music, are not invented; they are discovered,' writes Miss Duncan. To her the only mode of dancing is barefoot. According to her 'the

dancer must choose above all the movements which express the strength, the health, the grace, the nobility, the languor or the gravity of living things.' Gravity to Miss Duncan is natural and right. A ballet dancer, a Pavlova, Nijinsky and Karsavina, eager to defy the laws of gravity, is to her a freak.

Prince Serge Volkhonsky, who has been a conspicuous figure in the Russian dance reform-movement, writes of Miss Duncan's school in comparison with that of Jacques-Dalcroze: 'Her dance is a result of personal temperament, his movements are the result of music; she draws from herself, he draws from rhythm; her psychological basis is subjective; his rhythmical basis is objective; and, in order to characterize her in a few words, I may say Isadora is the dancing "ego." This subjective psychological basis of Isadora's art I find clearly emphasized by Mr. Levinsohn's words: "The images or moods (*Stimmungen*) created in our mind by the rational element—music—cannot be identical with every one, and therefore cannot be compulsory. Just in that dissimilitude of moods and uncompulsoriness of images resides the best criterion for the appreciation of Isadora Duncan as a founder of a system. Her dance is precisely not a system, cannot found what is called a 'school'; it needs another similar 'ego' to repeat her. And according to this it seems quite incomprehensible that some people should see in Miss Duncan's art 'a possibility for all of us being beautiful.' No, not at all for all of us; for not every temperament, while embodying 'images or moods' called forth by music, will necessarily create something beautiful; one cannot raise the exceptional into rule. In order to be certain of creating something beautiful, no matter whether in the moral or the æsthetical domain, it is not in ourselves that we shall

find the law, but in subjecting ourselves to another principle which lives outside of ourselves. For the plastic (choreographic), this principle is Music. It is not instinct expressing itself under the influence of music—which with every man is different, and only in few chosen natures beautiful in itself—but the rhythm of music, which in every given composition is an unchangeable element subjecting our 'ego.' This is the basis of living plastic art. And in this respect Isadora's art satisfies the double exigencies of the visible and the audible art as little as the ballet. Her arms are certainly more rhythmical than her legs, but as a whole we cannot call her rhythmical in the strict sense of the word, and this appears especially in the slow movements: her walk, so to speak, does not keep step with music; she often steps on the weak part of the bar and often between the notes. In general it is in the examples of slow tempo that the insufficiency of the principle may be observed. The slower a tempo the more she 'mimics,' and the farther, therefore, she strays from the music. If we look at the impression on the spectators we shall see that all in the paces of the quick tempos the movement must enter into closer connection with the music; in cases of very minute divisions of the bar the simple coincidence of the step with the first 'heavy' part already produces a repeated design which makes ear and eye meet in one common perception. If the representatives of that particular kind of dance were to realize this they would endeavor to introduce into slow tempos the rhythmical element instead of the mimic, which leads them out of the music and converts the dance into a sort of acting during the music, a sort of plastic melo-declamation."'

These critics have pointed out the subjective

nature of Miss Duncan's dance and her impatience of rules and formal technique. They believe that because of these two qualities of her art it cannot be repeated, except by 'another similar ego.' But as if in direct answer to these charges come Miss Duncan's pupils. They are by no means highly selected material or 'similar egos,' but each (among the more mature pupils) is a beautiful and individual dancer. To each she has transmitted her spirit; in each she has preserved the native personality. They are the best evidence thus far obtained of the truth of Miss Duncan's dictum of the 'possibility for all of us being beautiful.' Moreover we must not suppose that Miss Duncan's contempt for *formal* technique is a contempt for technical ability. She herself is a marvellously plastic and exact dancer, and she demands, ultimately, no less of her pupils. The limited range of her technique, so often complained of, is the deliberate result of her belief that the only movements proper to the dance are the *natural* movements of the human body. She stakes the success of her art upon the proposition that these movements alone are capable of the highest absolute and interpretive beauty. As to the truth of this proposition each observer must judge for himself from the results. Again, Miss Duncan does not always 'dance the music' literally, note for note, according to the theory of the Jacques-Dalcroze system. Her interpretation is frankly emotional and subjective, but it does not pretend to transcend the music.

In further justice to her efforts we should consider Isadora Duncan as much a prophet of a new movement, as a dancer of a new school. Her influence has been more far-reaching in Russia than anywhere else. She practically brought about a serious revolution among the Russian dancers, of

whom we shall speak in another chapter. She influenced the art of dancing in Germany, France, Italy and England. She was the striking contrast to all the deteriorated stage dances of the early twentieth century in America. She has given a powerful impulse to all dance reforms by counteracting the academic and time-worn views. She is the indirect motive of the Diaghileff-Fokine break with the old Russian ballet and their striving for new rules and ideas in the art of dancing. To her is due the gradual increase of refined taste and higher respect for the stage dance. Personally we have found that her dances failed to tell the phonetic story of the music. Her selection of the compositions of Gluck, Schubert, Chopin and Beethoven has not been uniformly successful, since most of them were never meant by the composer to be danced. Compositions of this kind lack the necessary choreographic episodes and often even the plastic symbols. No genius, we believe, could visualize the slow cadences and solemn images of any symphonic music of those German classics, whose works have been the choice of Miss Duncan. With a few exceptions, such as the *Moments Musicals* and some other pieces, we have never been able to grasp the meaning of the phonetoplastic images of Isadora Duncan's dances.



Duncan

II

It was only natural that Miss Duncan's laureated appearances in various European cities quickly found followers and imitators. The best known exponent of Duncan's naturalism has been Miss Maud Allan, a talented Canadian girl, whose dancing in England has made her a special favorite of the London audiences, before whom she first appeared in 1908. How favorably she was received by the English

audiences is evident from the fact that the late King Edward invited her to dance for him at Marienbad. Like Miss Duncan, Maud Allan has danced mostly barefoot, her body slightly clothed in a loose Greek drapery. The most sensational in Miss Allan's repertoire has been the 'Vision of Salome,' compiled from passages from Richard Strauss' opera, in which she has tried to give the impression of the ghastly Biblical tragedy by means of plastic pantomime and dancing. Among her artistically successful dances has been the Grieg *Peer Gynt* suite, of which the London critics speak as of 'a beautiful art of transposition.' 'The faithfulness with which her movements follow the moods of the composer is probably only fully realized by those who are musicians as well as connoisseurs of dance. Her translation of music has not seldom the rare quality of translations of being finer than the original, and there are not a few who, when they hear again, unaccompanied, the music which her dancing has ennobled, will be conscious of a sense of incompleteness and loss,' writes an English dance authority of her art.

Isadora Duncan's naturalism has probably made the most powerful direct impression upon German aspirants, first, through the school of dancing of Isadora's sister, Elisabeth, and second, through the pretended appeal to the moods by means of classic ideals, and yet requiring comparatively little technique. Assiduously as a German student will practice in order to acquire the most perfect technique for being an artist, musician, singer or architect, he lacks the painstaking persistency of a Russian, Hungarian, Bohemian or Spaniard in acquiring a thorough technique for his dance. He is inclined to interpret music by means of the most easily acquired technique, such as seemingly the

naturalistic school requires. For this very reason, Miss Duncan has been the greatest dance genius for the Germans, as that is so clearly to be seen in the excellent work of Brandenburg, *Der moderne Tanz*. This book from the beginning to the end, written in a fine poetic prose, is a eulogy of Duncan's naturalism, and an elaborate display of the minutest pretty moves of the German exponents of the movement. Among the praised geniuses of Brandenburg are the sisters Wiesenthal, who attracted widespread attention in some of Max Reinhardt's productions.

The sisters Wiesenthal, Elsa and Grete, were received with unparalleled enthusiasm at home and in consequence made a tour abroad, on which occasion one of them danced in New York. How little she impressed the New York audience, can be judged from what one of the most favorable critics wrote of her as having 'a pretty fluttering, tottering marionette manner of her own.' Our impression is that the sisters Wiesenthal proved most successful in the quaint, naïve and simple ensemble performances which they gave in Germany. They displayed some excellent *ritartandos* and a few successful *adagio* figures. One could see that their steps and arm twists were not a result of systematic studies but of spontaneous impulses, since in repetitions of the music there was no sign of a well trained art, the wing-like arms of the first phrase being arabesque-like in the repetition, etc. They showed that they possessed a poetic conception of the dance, but failed to grasp and express its intrinsic meaning. They were rather poets than dancers, rather actresses than designers in the choreographic sense. Their acting often interfered with dancing and brought about an unpleasant disharmony with the musical rhythm. They may have danced better on other occasions, but

what a number of impartial connoisseurs of the dance saw of them stamps them as talented dilettantes rather than accomplished artists of a school.

A girl who enjoyed a great reputation in Vienna, Munich and in other German cities in the first decade of this century, but of whom was heard nothing later, was Miss Gertrude Barrison, an Anglo-Viennese. Her art was more clever and more in style with the principles of the naturalistic than that of the sisters Wiesenthal. She won the ear of Austria for the new message. With a certain assurance in the conviction of her individuality, Miss Barrison treated her art with freedom and loftiness. She enforced her personality more than her art upon the spectators, and this was, to a great extent, the secret of her phenomenal success.

The best of all the German dancers of this century thus far has been Rita Sacchetto, a pretty Bavarian girl, who made her début in Munich, and was at once recognized as an artist of much talent. Though the Berlin critics did not receive her with the enthusiasm that they had shown to the Wiesenthals, she was by far the biggest artist of all. Her slighter recognition was possibly due to her lighter style of work and an unfavorable repertoire, lacking in music that was of timely importance. This withholding of recognition has always been peculiar to Berlin. Tired out by hundreds of aspiring virtuosi and artists of every description, an average Berlin critic, like one of New York, grows at the end of a season nervous in the presence of the vast majority of mediocrities and press-agented celebrities, so that he is likely to ignore or tear down the serious beginner, if her performance coincides with his ‘blue’ moods. This is

what probably happened to Miss Sacchetto. The connoisseurs and authorities of other countries who have seen her dances speak of them in highest terms as pretty and exceedingly graceful exhibitions of poetic youthful soul. What has become of Miss Sacchetto lately the writer has been unable to learn.

III

Though none of the above mentioned dancers of Germany has pretended to be a follower of Miss Duncan, yet all belong to the new movement that was brought into being by her persistent efforts. They all defy the principle of the classic ballet, they all pretend to interpret music in their 'plastic art,' as they have preferred to term the dance. Traditionally the German music has been either inclined to classic abstraction, or to strictly operatic lines. The spectacular ballet of Richard Strauss, 'The Legend of Joseph,' belongs more to pantomimic pageantries than a class of actual dance dramas, of which we shall speak in another chapter. The music of a foreign school and race is always lacking in that natural stimulating vigor that it gives to those who are absolutely at home with racial peculiarities choreographically. In this the Russians have been lately more fortunate than other nations. A great number of talented young Russian composers have written an immense amount of admirable dance music, ballets and instrumental compositions that could be danced. They have an outspoken rhythmic character, which is the first requirement of the dance. In this the recent German composers have remained behind the Russians. The compositions of Richard Strauss, Reger, Schönberg and the other

distinguished musical masters of modern Germany offer nothing that would inspire a new school of the art of dancing. In the first place they lack the instinct for rhythm, and in the second, they lack the plastic sense so essential for the dance. This circumstance has been most detrimental to those of the young German dancers who attempted to follow the naturalistic movement.

How much better than the German Duncanites have been those of Scandinavia, Finland and France in this direction is difficult to say authentically, though they have had the advantage over the Germans, of having at their disposal the works of some of the most talented young composers of dance music. Grieg, Lange-Müller, Svendsen and many others have written music with strong rhythmic and choreographic images. But superior to all the Scandinavian composers, in the modern dance music or music that could be danced, are the Finns: Sibelius, Jaernefelt, Melartin, Merikanto and Toiwo Kuula. Many of Sibelius's smaller instrumental compositions offer excellent themes and music for dancing. A few of them are real masterpieces of their kind. But the Finns have shown up to this time little interest for the modern dance movements. The Danes, Swedes and Norwegians have been more affected by the new ideas that are connected with the stage, though none of them has shown any marked achievement that would be known in wider circles. Ida Santum, a young Scandinavian girl in New York, has given evidence of some graceful plastic forms and idealized folk-dances. Thus far she has not shown anything strikingly appealing to the audiences. Aino Akté's Salome Dances are purely operatic and have no bearing upon our subject.

Among English and American girls who have followed the footsteps of Miss Duncan are Gwendoline Valentine, Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson, Beatrice Irvin, and a number of others, but the writer has been unable to gather any sufficient data for critical arguments.

Undoubtedly the most talented dancer of the naturalistic school whom we have known among the Russians is Mlle. Savinskaya of Moscow. In power of expressing depth and subtlety of dramatic emotions Savinskaya is supreme. She is an actress no less than a dancer. Her conception of naturalistic dancing is so deeply rooted in her soul and temperament that it often acts against the plastic rules and grace, often displayed by the dancers for the sake of pleasing effects. Miss Duncan herself strives to create moods by means of classic poses, but Savinskaya's ideal is to express the plastic forms of music in her art. She is romantically dramatic, more a tragedian than anything else. Her dance in the graphically fascinating ballet *Chrisis* by Reinhold Glière, in Moscow, revealed her as an artist of the first rank, and perhaps the first thoroughly trained Duncanite whose technique and dramatic talent rival with any *ballerina*, of the new school or the old.

Probably the lack of suitable music has been thus far the greatest obstacle in the way of the naturalistic dancers, though they pretend to find their ideals in the eighteenth and nineteenth century's classic compositions. No doubt some of the old music can be aptly danced, such as the light instrumental works of Grieg, Mozart, Chopin and Schumann, but the proper music has yet to be composed. The phonetic thinking of past music was involved, hazy in closed episodes and often disconnected in structural form. There is

one single theme of a poem in a whole symphony. To illustrate this plastically is a physical impossibility. Maud Allan's and Isadora Duncan's attempts to dance symphonies of Beethoven and other classic idealists have been miserable failures. Those who pretend to see in such dances any beauty and idea, are ignorant of musical and choreographic principles.

To our knowledge Reinhold Glière, the genial young Russian composer and director of the Kieff Symphony Society, is the first successful musical artist in the field of naturalistic ballets. His ballet *Chrisis*, based on an Egyptian story by Pierre Louis, is a rare masterpiece in its line.

Though built on the style of the conventional ballets, its music is meant for naturalistic interpretation and lacks all the *pirouette*, *chassée*, and other semi-acrobatic ballet music forms. Like the principles laid down by Delsarte and his followers, Glière's music 'moves with the regular rhythm, the freedom, the equipoise, of nature itself.' It has for the most part a slow ancient Egyptian measure, breathing the air of the pleasant primitive era. It suggests the even swing of the oar, the circular sweep of the sling, the rhythmic roar of the river, and all such images that existed before our boasted civilization. It gives a chance for the dancer of the naturalistic school to display pretty poses, primitive gestures and 'sound' steps. Like all Glière's compositions this is exceedingly lyric, full of charming old melodies and curved movements that occasionally call to mind Schumann, Schubert and Chopin. The ballet begins with Chrisis in the majestic valley of the Nile spinning cotton on a spinning-wheel, which she stops when a soft music, coming from a far-away temple, comes to her ears. It is the

music of the morning-prayer. She prays, dancing to the trees and the clouds. At this time Kise, another little maiden, is passing with food for her parents and *Chrisis* calls her. They dance together and spin for a while. There is in the background a sacred tree. *Chrisis* approaches it in slow dance and utters her secret wish. During this time Kise meets on the river shore a blind musician carrying a lyre. He plays a gay dance to the girls, to which they dance so exquisitely that phantom-like nymphs and fawns emerge from the river, and stop to watch. Finally a shepherd, who has been looking on from the top of the hill, becomes interested in the dance and makes friends with the girls. There ensues a passionate love scene and dramatic climax for the first act, *Chrisis* going into a convent. The second act takes place in an ancient convent, *Chrisis* as a dancing priestess. The last act takes place with *Chrisis* as a courtly lady with every luxury around her. It is a magnificent piece of work musically and choreographically, and should find widespread appeal.

We may count as belonging to the naturalistic school of dancing the exponents of idealized and imitative national dances, though they do not belong among the Duncanites. Particularly we should mention Ruth St. Denis, who is widely known through her skilled imitation and idealization of the Oriental dances. As Isadora Duncan sought by the ancient Greeks the ideal of her ‘natural’ dances, so Ruth St. Denis attempted to find choreographic beauties in the art of the East. In this she has been strikingly successful. Her Japanese dances can be considered as real gems of the Orient in which she has made the impression as if an exotic old print of the empire of the Mikado became alive by a miracle, though it was in the Indian sacred dances that she

made her reputation. This is what a dance critic writes of her:

'Clad in a dress of vivid green spangled with gold, her wrists and ankles encased in clattering silver bands, surrounded by the swirling curves of a gauze veil, the dancer passed from the first slow languorous movements into a vertiginous whirl of passionate delirium. Alluring in every gesture, for once she threw asceticism to the winds, and yet she succeeded in maintaining throughout that difficult distinction between the voluptuous and the lascivious. The mystic Dance of the Five Senses was a more artificial performance and only in one passage kindled into the passion of the Nautch. As the goddess Radha, she is dimly seen seated cross-legged behind the fretted doors of her shrine. The priests of the temple beat gongs before the idol and lay their offerings at her feet. Then the doors open, and Radha descends from her pedestal to suffer the temptation of the five senses. The fascination of each sense, suggested by a concrete object, is shown forth in the series of dances. Jewels represent the desire of the sight, of the hearing the music of bells, of the smell of the scent of flower, of the taste of wine, and the sense of touch is fired by a kiss. Her dancing was inspired by that intensity of sensuous delight which is refined to its farthest limit probably only in the women of the East. She rightly chose to illustrate the delicacy of the perceptions not by abandon but by restraint. The dance of touch, in which every bend of the arms and the body described the yearning for the unattainable, was more freely imaginative in treatment. And in the dance of taste there was one triumphant passage, when, having drained the wine-cup to the dregs, she burst into a Dionysiac Nautch, which raged ever more wildly until she fell prostrate

under the maddening influence of the good wine. Then by the expression of limbs and features showing that the gratification of the senses leads to remorse and despair, and that only in renunciation can the soul realize the attainment of peace, she returns to her shrine and the doors close upon the seated image, resigned and motionless. So she affirmed in choice and explicit gesture the creed of Buddha.'

Very strange yet effective are the dances of Ruth St. Denis in which she exhibits the marvellous twining and twisting art of her arms, which act as if they had been some ghastly snakes. Her arms possess an unusual elasticity and sinuous motion which cannot be seen better displayed by real Oriental dancers. The hands, carrying on the first and fourth finger two huge emerald rings, give the impression of gleaming serpents' eyes. Miss St. Denis is apparently a better musician than Miss Duncan, while in her poetic sense and in the sense of beauty she remains behind. However, as a musician she is excellent, and always acts in perfect rhythm with the composition. But unfortunately all her dance music is just as little Oriental as Miss Duncan's is Greek. Ruth St. Denis seemingly is ignorant of the numerous Russian Oriental compositions which would suit her art a thousand times better than the works of the Occidental classics. In justice to her efforts it must be said that she is a thorough artist in spite of the fact that she has never studied her dances in the East. Her slender tall figure and semi-Oriental expression give her the semblance of an Indian Bayadere. It has always impressed us that she minimizes her art by affected manners and an air that lacks sincerity. We believe her to have very great talent, but for some reason or other, she has failed to display it fully.

IV

The modern Spanish dances as performed by Rosario Guerrero, La Otero and La Carmencita, are in fact a perfected type of Spanish folk-dances. The Kinneys write of them as follows: ‘So gracious, so stately, so rich in light and shade is the *Sevillanas*, that it alone gives play to all the qualities needed to make a great artist. When, a few summers ago, Rosario Guerrero charmed New York with her pantomime of “The Rose and the Dagger,” it was the first two *coplas* of this movement-poem that charmed the dagger away from the bandit. The same steps glorified Carmencita in her day and Otero, now popular as a singer in the opera in Paris. All three of these goddesses read into their interpretation a powerful idea of majesty, which left it none the less seductive.’ It is clear that none but a Spaniard could perform the more or less perfected folk-dances of the country. It requires a physique with born talent and traditions to give the dance its proper fire and brutal elegance.



Maud Allan
After a painting by Otto Marcus

Havelock Ellis gives a graphic picture of the Spanish dance. ‘One of the characteristics of Spanish dancing,’ he writes, ‘lies in its accompaniments, and particularly in the fact that under proper conditions all the spectators are themselves performers. In flamenco dancing, among an audience of the people,

every one takes a part by rhythmic clapping and stamping, and by the occasional prolonged “oles” and other cries by which the dancer is encouraged or applauded. Thus the dance is not the spectacle for the amusement of a languid and passive public, as with us. It is rather the visible embodiment of an emotion in which every spectator himself takes an active and helpful part; it is, as it were, a vision evoked by the spectators themselves and upborne on the continuous waves of rhythmical sound which they generate. Thus it is that at the end of a dance an absolute silence often falls, with no sound of applause; the relation of performer and public has ceased to exist. So personal is this dancing that it may be said that an animate association with the spectators is necessary for its full manifestation. The finest Spanish dancing is at once killed or degraded by the presence of an indifferent or unsympathetic public, and that is probably why it cannot be transplanted but remains local.’

The naturalistic school of dancing is by no means an invention of Isadora Duncan, though she has been one of its most persistent preachers. The true psychological origin belongs to Delsarte, whose method of poetic plasticism inspired Mrs. Hovey to give lessons and lectures on the subject. It branched out like a tree. Every country was interested in the new idea in its own way. America, having no æsthetic traditions whatsoever, found the pioneers in Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis; Germany found hers in the sisters Wiesenthal, Miss Rita Sacchetto and others; France, in Mme. Olga Desmond; Spain, in the refined and talented folk-dancers; Russia, in the rise of a new ballet, and so on. Like a magic message, the idea filled the air and was inhaled by special minds. There was a strong argument in favor of its

development, and that argument was the spiritual yeast that set the world into a ferment. The more it was opposed and fought the more it spread and grew. The naturalistic dance has been thus far more an awakening than a mature art. As such it is apt to be crude and imperfect. There is no reason to fear that a fate like that which befell the Skirt Dance may overtake the 'classical' dancing of the naturalistic school. It has accomplished a great service in bringing the audiences to realize that the argument of natural plasticism is based on philosophical truth. Soon the ranks of those who believe that 'natural' dancing is that which requires the least technique will decrease in favor of those serious minded artists, who seek the solution in technique plus talent. 'The theory that a dancer can ignore with impunity the restrictions of technique, that she is bound to please if only she is natural and happy and allows herself to follow the momentary inspiration of the music and dances with the same gleeful spontaneity as a child dancing to a barrel-organ is a doctrine as seductive as it is fatal.' The future solution of the movement lies in perfection of the technique and in grasping the deeper depths of musical relation to the art of dancing.

'The chief value of reaction resides in its negative destructive element,' says Prince Volkhonsky. 'If, for instance, we had never seen the old ballet, with its stereotyped character, I do not think that the appearance of Isadora Duncan would have called forth such enthusiasm. In Isadora we greeted the deliverance. Yet in order to appreciate liberty we must have felt the chains. She liberated, and her followers seek to exploit that liberty.'

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEW RUSSIAN BALLET

The old ballet: arguments *pro* and *con*—The new movement: Diaghileff and Fokine; the advent of Diaghileff's company; the ballets of Diaghileff's company; 'Spectre of the Rose,' 'Cleopatra,' *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, 'Scheherezade'—Nijinsky and Karsavina—Stravinsky's ballets: 'Petrouchka,' 'The Fire-Bird,' etc.; other ballets and arrangements.

I

GORDON Craig very aptly characterized the French ballet as the most deliciously artificial impertinence that ever turned up its nose at Nature. Commenting on this Prince Volkhonsky says: 'Seldom one meets in a short definition with such an exhausting acknowledgment of the positive and negative sides of the question. How easy and pleasant it is to agree with a judgment which is penetrated with such impartiality. Who will not acknowledge that that powdered Marquise is charming, and yet who will not acknowledge that that huge pile of false hair sprinkled with powder is against Nature?' Magnificent as the old Russian ballet has been dramatically and acrobatically, yet it failed to acknowledge the artificialities of its form

and the deficiencies of its phonetic conceptions. It failed to see what Delsarte, Mrs. Hovey, Isadora Duncan and the partisans of the naturalistic school had grasped: the call of Nature. Though it banished the powdered Marquise of the French school from the stage, yet it did not banish the creed from the ballerina's toe—the unmusical acting, the spectacular leaps and pirouettes, the umbrella-like tunics, the acrobatic stunts, the fossilized forms of the dead ages. In praise of the old ballet Mr. A. Levinsohn has written in a Russian magazine of the dance: 'When a ballerina rises on the tips of her toes (*pointés*), she frees herself of a natural movement and enters a region of fantastic existence.' The principal meaning of all the ballet technique in preaching the toe-dance is to defy the laws of gravity and give the dance the semblance of a flight, or floating in the air. There is no question that a few musical phrases require such plastic, particularly in such compositions as Saint-Saëns' 'The Swan,' or Drigo's *Papillons*, which Pavlova has visualized so magnificently. But to apply the same style to express the romantic, poetic, tragic and other human emotions, to apply the toe-technique to every form of dancing, is really abnormal. Prince Volkhonsky, who has contributed so much to the Russian ballet reform, writes with striking argument and vigor: 'Movement cannot be an aim in itself; such a movement would be nonsense. What does a dancer express when he imitates a spinning-top? What does the ballerina express when with a fascinating smile she regards caressingly her own toe, as she toe-dances over the smooth floor? What does her body express, the human body—the most wonderful instrument of expression on earth—when, carried away by gymnastic enthusiasm in an acrobatic ecstasy, with

panting chest and terror in her open eyes, she crosses the stage diagonally, whirling on one toe, while with the other she executes the famous "thirty-two fouettés"?' 'Gymnastics transform themselves into fantastics,' exclaims Levinsohn; 'but I assure you, when in the circus the man-serpent, all dressed in green scales, puts his legs behind his shoulder, this is no less fantastic.' The so-called tunic (the French *tutu*)—a light short garment of pleated gauze—has, with Mr. Levinsohn, not only a physical justification from the point of view of comfort but a logical explanation, an æsthetic sanction; it 'lends to the body a seeming stability.' 'Do you catch this?' he continues. 'The perpendicularity of the human figure in our eyes is, so to speak, balanced by the horizontality of the skirt; just the principle of the spinning-top. Now, is it possible to invent a more deplorable formula for transforming man into a machine? Is it possible to give a more definite expression to the principle of eliminating one's "ego"? Is not art the expression, the manifestation, the blossoming of man? And what, finally, shall we say from the purely æsthetic point of view of that exaltation of a costume which by its umbrella-like stiffness cuts the human body into two? Shall we remain indifferent to the beauty of folds, to the obedience of the flowing veils, to the plastic injunctions of the living movement?

'The theory of mechanisation of the human body could not but lead to the panegyric of the "flat-toed" ballet slipper. The simple sad necessity of giving to the ballerina a point of support receives a philosophico-æsthetic interpretation: this slipper "generalises the contour of the foot" and "makes the impression of the movement clearer and more finished." In the name of all—I won't say of all that

is sacred—but of all that is beautiful, is it possible to say such things? You have never admired a foot; you do not know what it is—a foot that slowly rises from the ground, first with the heel, then with the sole; you do not know the beauty of supple toes; you evidently never saw the foot of Botticelli's "Pallas," the foot of Houdon's "Diana." If it is so valuable to "generalise" the contour of the foot by the flat-toed slipper, why not, then, "generalise" the contour of the hand and give to the ballerinas boxing-gloves? Art is an exteriorisation of man, a spreading of one's self outside the limits of one's ego, and here we are asked to cut, to shorten, to hide: a principle which is exactly the contrary of art. It was also a "generalisation" of the human figure when Niobe was being metamorphosed into a rock, but it remains till the end of time the expression of grief; the Greeks have not found a more eloquent myth for the eternalisation of human sorrow than the return of form into that which is not formed. They knew that all process of creation goes from the general to the particular. When the musician shapes the musical material accessible to everybody into a particular musical melody, he goes from the general to the particular. When the sculptor takes away piece by piece from the block of marble, he goes from the general to the particular. If, out of the shapeless mass of the human family, the great types could detach themselves and crystallise themselves into definite characters, it is only thanks to their particularities that they conquer and receive their universal value. The direction of the artist is from the shapeless, from the abstract, into the concrete; the process of art is a process of individualisation. It is easy to understand, therefore, the instinctive hostility which is provoked in a man who loves art, by all attempts at

"generalisation": it is the infiltration into art of that which is not art, it is that which in the course of centuries has deserved the appellation of "routine." This crust of uniformity and impersonality which spreads over art is nothing but an infiltration of the generalising principle into that which is and ought to remain the sacred domain of personality. It is the desert under whose breath fades and withers the beauty of the oasis.

'No wonder that a reaction should set in against an art which seeks its justification in such theories; the reaction against the stereotyped ballet is a direct act of logic—it is the voice of common sense: it would be impossible that a form of art should live which is in contradiction to the principle of art. When I say "live," I do not mean the right of existence; I take the word in its most real sense: to live, that is, to possess the elements of development. In the form into which it has developed the "classical" ballet lacks these elements—it cannot evolve; as Mr. Svetloff judiciously remarked, if every ballerina could execute seventy-five instead of "thirty-two fouettés," it would be a greater difficulty to overcome, it would not be art developed. Thus I repeat, when I say that such a form of art as the old ballet cannot live I am not denying its right to exist, but I am indicating the absence of elements of development, the atrophy of the principle of vitality.

'There is one point of view possible as to the "classical ballet"; it is the one form in which we see the established forms of old dances. Who will deny the charm of the minuet, of the gavotte, of the pavane? But, on the other hand, who ever will dare to say that this is the final word of plastic art? Miniature painting is a lovely art, is it not? Yet

equally wrong are those who would assert that the miniature has expressed all that painting is capable of, and those who would say that miniature is “all right, but it needs enlarging.” And when we consider the ballet from the only possible point of view, from the point of view of the crystallised dance, how offensive will appear to us “gymnastics that transform themselves into fantastics.” On the other hand, we shall not be astonished when we hear the regrets of some adherents of the old “dance” in the presence of the “Scythian invasion” on that same stage where the plastic formulas of the Latin race have blossomed; only imagine it—where the gavotte and sarabanda used to reign there now bursts out the tempest of the “Tartar hordes”!’

II

The appearance of Isadora Duncan and her pupils in Russia was truly a high explosive bomb. Her art startled the Russian dancers and public. It was the very opposite of what everybody had been accustomed to see, and what everybody imagined the dance to be. Though the limited character of her technique decreased the effect, yet the truth of her principle was what caused the greatest discussion and made the deepest impression. In the fundamentals of her dance were that freedom, individuality and relief which the Russian mind had missed in the old ballet. It was this theoretical argument that made Miss Duncan’s art such a factor in Russia. Marius Petipa had been an excellent scholar and academician in his days, but he had grown old and his views had become obsolete. His genius saw the evolution of the ballet only in the

conventional channels. Among his assistants were a group of talented young dancers and teachers, some of whom were dissatisfied with the old order, yet found themselves forced to follow the time-worn rules. One of the young students of this type was M. Fokine, a very intelligent student and gifted artist, who was particularly electrified by Miss Duncan's art. He saw the shortcomings of Miss Duncan's school and realized that here he, with his thorough understanding of the ballet and its technique, could do much that she had been unable to do.

With all the best will Fokine found himself bound to the old order of things. But it was at this very juncture that M. Diaghileff, who had been successfully editing the annual Reviews of the Imperial Ballet, laid the foundation for a new art magazine on radical principles. Having been a graduate of the Conservatory of Music of Petrograd and a connoisseur of the art of dancing, he was just the man to gather a group of radical dance and music students and artists of every description around his venture and attempt to accomplish something radically modern in all the fields of stage art. His efforts found a quick response among the various artists of the ballet, who already knew of his work and tendencies. One of them was Fokine, and with him came many of his talented pupils and friends. Like with every other new movement this needed crystallization theoretically and practically. For some reason or other Diaghileff's magazine failed. But it had already accomplished its evolutionary task: a group of artists was ready to join any leaders of revolution who would be worthy of their confidence.

The next move from the revolutionary Diaghileff

and his general Fokine was their unexpected appearance in Paris. Here they had surrounded themselves with a few genial ballet dancers of Petrograd and Moscow. The announcement of an appearance of the Russian ballet in Paris, under the management of Diaghileff and Fokine and with stars like Nijinsky, Mmes. Fokina, Karsavina and Astafieva, marks the first revolutionary move in Russian dance history. It was undoubtedly the phenomenal success that Pavlova and Mordkin had had outside of Russia, particularly in Paris and London, which actuated and encouraged the rebels. They argued, 'If Pavlova and Mordkin had such phenomenal success as solo dancers, in the old classic style, we are more sure of a success in real modern ballets.' And they proved that they had. Here is what a London critic writes of the appearance of the Diaghileff company:

'For the unknown to be successful in London it is always necessary to create what is called a boom—marvelous clothes or the lack of them; a terrifying top note; a tame lion; a Star that has been shining with unparalleled brilliancy in another city. But we were told nothing about the Russian dancers when they arrived in 1909—some half dozen of them only—and so we expected nothing. And it is to be feared that some of us found what we expected. Now, two years later, we are slowly opening our eyes.

'There is no need to describe either Karsavina or Pavlova. If there were, indeed, pen and ink would be incapable of the task, for they both typify and express the woman of all ages, and ageless.

'*** For many it was as if they understood life for the first time, had entered a chamber in the castle Existence which hitherto had been hidden from

them. They gave us thoughts, these Russian magicians, for which we have been unconsciously seeking and travailing many years. They gave us knowledge we thought to buy in a huckster's shop, steal from a bottle of wine, or find in a bloodless novel or in the crude stage play of the average theatre, bearing little or no relation to life. Now here it was, all expressed in dances men and women danced thousands of years ago: music of face and body, of muscle and brain, which stirred and sang in our hearts like wind in the trees.

'The elusive spirit of youth she (Karsavina) most eloquently expresses in *Les Sylphides*, the music by Chopin, which is described as a *Rêverie Romantique*. The sex of the dancer, instead of dominating, disappears. And so, of all the good things the Russian Dancers have given us, the Spirit of Youth of Tamara Karsavina comes first and foremost.

'The men of the Russian Ballet possess the same technical perfection, the same marvelous grace, as the women. Whether their bodies be as slim and light as Nijinsky's and Kosloff's, or as massive and muscular as Mordkin's and Tichomiroff's, makes no difference: they can be as graceful, as supple, as tender as a girl, without losing a scrap of their superb masculinity.'

Among the most conspicuous Russian dancers who followed the revolutionary call of Diaghileff and Fokine, were Vera Fokina, Tamara Karsavina, Sophie Feodorova, Seraphime Astafieva, Nijinsky, and Kosloff. The real drawing cards of the revolutionary group were Karsavina and Nijinsky, one more genial than the other, the one the very type of the Russian youthful poetic and passionate girl, the other that of masculine virility and grace. The leaping of Nijinsky

and the darting of Karsavina will remain as the most effective symbols in the mind of those who have witnessed their inspiring dances. In *Le Spectre de la Rose*, danced by Karsavina and Nijinsky, we can best compare their individualities. 'Their bodies, flower-like, representing the spirit of flowers, weave dreams with silent and graceful movements,' writes a critic. 'We are altogether removed from the world of flesh and blood to a kingdom of enchantment.' Nijinsky and Karsavina are the two talented exponents of the New Russian Ballet, in the same sense as Pavlova and Mordkin belong to the Old Ballet.

The question arises in what respect Nijinsky differs from Mordkin and Karsavina from Pavlova? If we could see illustrative performances by these four greatest figures of the two Russian schools the difference would be immediately evident, in spite of their individual traits. Where Pavlova concentrates attention on her conventional toe-dancing, Karsavina employs conspicuously the naturalistic steps and strives to display the plastic lines of her beautiful body. Where Mordkin resorts to pantomime, Nijinksy finds his expression through the movements of the dance. However, the difference between the two ballets is not so clearly cut with the men as with the women dancers. Fokine has introduced a great deal of the plastic element that has actuated the partisans of the naturalistic school. We find the acrobatic stunts of the old ballet almost lacking in the new. You will hardly see Karsavina, Fokina or Astafieva performing the leg-bending tricks of the followers of the old school. If they resort to pirouettes and leg agility, they do so in a different sense than the others.

III

A highly praised dance of Karsavina and Nijinsky is *Le Spectre de la Rose* (with music arranged from the compositions of Weber), which takes place in a summer night in old aristocratic France. The music, though old-fashioned, is soft and tender. Karsavina represents a young sentimental girl who has just returned from the ball. She is thinking of her lover, while raising to her lips a red rose which he gave her at the ball. Going through a pantomimic scene of her sentimental dreams Karsavina depicts the romantic prelude of a young girl until Nijinsky, representing her visionary lover, leaps in. 'The spirit of the garden and the song of the night have entered her bedroom, and the wind blows this rose-spirit to and fro. It is love in human shape: now he hovers above the sleeping figure, caressing: now he is dancing just in front of the window. And we dare not breathe lest by so doing the air is stirred to drive him back into the moving shapes outside. But he rises on the arms of the wind, he crouches beside the girl. She falls into his arms and the love dream of a ballroom is realized. The music of the night has entered the room, languid music like water which these two spill as they dance to and fro, until, our eyes being opened, we can see as well as hear music. The miracle is so brief that we scarcely realize it before it has gone. But they were chords and harmonies, these two spirit shapes floating on the implacable air: hands and feet, arms and legs, lips and eyes spilling and spelling each note of music. The hour has passed. Jealous dawn lays his fingers on the night.... The girl is in her chair again. The spirit of the rose hovers like love with trembling wings above her.'

A favorite ballet of the Diaghileff company is

Cléopatre, arranged by Fokine to music by Arensky, Taneieff, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Glinka, Glazounoff, and Moussorgsky. The chief characters of this ballet are Seraphime Astafieva, as Cleopatra, Sophie Feodorova, as Ta-Hor, Vera Fokina, as a Greek woman, and Nijinsky, as the favorite of Cleopatra. It has been declared the most popular of all Fokine's ballets. It describes the well-known love drama of the great Egyptian queen. The first scene is laid on the shores of the Nile. There is just visible the arch of an ancient temple and its entrance with great figures of stone. The ground on which it stands is flanked by pillars which tower towards the sky. The waters of the river gleam between these pillars. The sun is sinking into the hot desert. The first character of the dance is Ta-Hor, a priestess; the second Amoun, a warrior, her beloved. She emerges through the dark curtain of the night and meets him in the silent precincts of the temple. Music quivers from hands and feet, lips and eyes. We feel an impending danger. The silence is broken with the sudden appearance of the High Priest. Cleopatra is coming. But Ta-Hor clings to the lips of Amoun. When the Queen appears the lovers shrink back into the shadows of the temple. She is a voluptuous beauty. We see her resting, her limbs tangled in a mass of color, her eyes fixed like serpent's, staring into the hot night of the desert while she waits for what it will bring her. She is tired of the wealth the world has poured at her feet. There is but one thing that never tires her and is ever new. Her subtle limbs uncurl from the tangled colors, open like a rose at a breath of warm wind—to close again with a little shiver of ecstasy. Love is always new and beautiful. Of love she has never tired, only of lovers.

Cleopatra finally sees Amoun dancing, and falls

madly in love with him. There are many passionate and dramatic scenes. ‘Like the sea-foam, her body is tempest-tossed. Her eyes burn into his soul. The music sings songs of the desert, invocations to the Nile, hymns to the god of love. Around the royal divan of Cleopatra we see a medley of men and women, twining and grouping themselves. The music sounds like a gentle breeze, full of love and enchantment, which longs yet fears to slake its thirst. We see Egyptian dancers moving slowly and quietly. String instruments are thrumming like nightingales. We see a whole company of men and women dancing in the torchlight. The sight of the costumes pours a spell of the Nile upon us. The stars of the desert and the passionate music of string instruments, the beautiful girls and the black virile bodies of the slaves, the waves of light and the distant wall of soldiers and priests, fill the air with something tragic and black. We get a glimpse of Cleopatra and Amoun, he standing beside her couch. The high priest of the temple holds between his hands the sacred cup filled with the poisonous wine that Amoun must drink. He takes the cup firmly and looks into her eyes, and smiling he drinks. She smiles, too. At this moment Amoun drops the cup to the ground. Death lays hands upon him. His agony is brief. Cleopatra stands waiting. When he falls his fingers clutch the air. A shiver shakes the Queen’s body. Cleopatra goes out from the night passing through the vast pillars of the temple into the dawn of the desert. After her comes Ta-Hor, looking for her lover. But she finds the dead body. We see her warm brown body shiver and shrink. She would tear out her heart. A soft wind comes whispering over the desert bringing with it the red of the rising sun. It is the end of a ghastly picture.’

Impressive as *Cléopatre* is in its scenic and pantomimic vigor and tragic atmosphere, yet it is hardly a ballet in the modern sense. There is no unity of music, this being altogether a patch-work. It may sound exceedingly pretty and appropriate occasionally to the accompaniment of the mute drama, yet it is by no means dance music. This is an example of the patchy ballet music that the Diaghileff company is continually trying to employ. Musically less patchy is *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, with music by Tcherepnin and setting by Benois. But the theme is old-fashioned and over-perfumed. The story takes place in mediæval France at the castle of a certain Marquis, a magician. It is night. Winds blow, rain pours down and thunder rolls. A nobleman is to meet his sweetheart near the Marquis' castle and takes refuge from the bad weather. The Marquis places his *Pavillon d'Armide* at his disposal. In the pavilion he sees an old Gobelin tapestry representing the beautiful Armide, beneath it, a great clock supported by Love and Time. The nobleman goes to sleep and at midnight sees the figures of Love and Time step down from the clock. Armide becomes alive. The nobleman falls in love with her and Armide embraces him. This is the beginning of an animated dance. It is a fantastic scene, the old Marquis taking part in the feast. Finally Time triumphs over Love and they return to their places. It is an interesting short phantasy, a poem in pantomime.

A ballet which has created the greatest comment and discussion in its dramatic and scenic beauty is the *Scheherezade*, with music by Rimsky-Korsakoff. This is a symphonic suite of which Bakst and Fokine have manufactured a kind of pantomime-ballet. Though the music is magnificent as an orchestra

piece by itself, yet it is a perversion to employ it to accompany a queer pantomimic drama. Rimsky-Korsakoff had no idea of a Zobeide played by Karsavina, of her negro lover, danced by Nijinsky, of Schariar, the Grand Eunuch, and of the Odalisque, who are the characters of the ballet. This again is a patch-work and not a dance in its real sense. If it is a dance, it is such that only one artist or at most two could depict. According to the scenario writers it draws the story of a Sultan's harem from 'The Arabian Nights.' All the harem beauties are dancing with their lovers and slaves. Among them we find the pretty Sultana. The Sultan enters and suspects that Zobeida has betrayed him. He finds her lover. We see death and passion. It is picturesque, but the dance is only an incidental affair. *Scheherezade* without Karsavina's vivid mimicry and youthful beauty, and Nijinsky's agility, would be nothing. In the words of a Russian critic, 'Nijinsky makes us understand that a gesture is, as Blake said of a tear, an intellectual thing. His gestures, by which I do not mean the technical steps, are different in manner and in spirit from those of the traditional Italian school. With the conventional gestures of the academies, which mimic such attitudes as men are supposed naturally to adopt when they perform certain actions or experience certain emotions, he will have nothing to do. Nijinsky's gestures mimic nothing. They are not the result of a double translation of idea into words, and words into dumb show. They are the mood itself. His limbs possess a faculty of speech. Wit is expressed in his Arlequin dance as lucidly as in an epigram. His genius consists in a singular pliancy of the body to the spirit.'[C]

[C] S. Hudekoff: 'History of Dancing'

(in Russian).

If Karsavina had not joined the choreographic revolutionists her dramatic talent would have had little or no opportunity to express itself, for the exponents of the old classic ballets are strictly opposed to display of natural gestures and acting. While she now exhibits a talent equal to Pavlova's, in the old ballet she would be only half of what she is. Although her excellent dramatic sense is displayed in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, *Scheherezade* and in several of Stravinsky's ballets, still we have not had a chance yet to become enthusiastic over any of her abstract dances. This view we notice also expressed by many French and English critics. 'Of her performances at Covent Garden, all were marked by such rare technique and instructed grace that it is difficult to put any one before another; but certainly she never surpassed her achievement in *Le Spectre de la Rose*. Her dancing caught the very spirit of a maiden's revery, and nothing could have been more finely imagined than those transitions from languor into quick rushes of darting movement, which illustrate the abrupt and irrational episodes of a troubled dream. She was the very embodiment of faint desire. We felt, as it were, a breath of perfume, and were troubled in spite of ourselves. Moreover, the long partnership between the two performers seemed to have resulted in a very special and intimate harmony. For the most part they simply floated about the stage as though borne upon a common current of emotion. There was a marriage, not only between their bodily movements, but between their spirits, such as I have never noted in the union of any other dancers.'

Like the ballet *Prince Igor*, music by Borodine, scenario by Fokine, *Le Carneval*, music from Schumann, Liadoff, Glazounoff, Tcherepnine and various other sources, are nothing but dances from an opera, dances taken here and there. Neither is there any unity of theme or style in these trimmed-up panoramas. The Polovetsi dances of Borodine's opera *Prince Igor* are magnificent examples of savage Tartar art. The music is the very image of the hot and restless Mongolian temperament, the very breath of battle lust, the exaltation of victory. Fokine has taken a scene from the second act of the opera and patched a story together with some characters of the opera. The dance in the opera itself is wonderful. But in the ballet form, as arranged by Fokine, it is a mediocrity.

IV

In the repertoire of Diaghileff's company there have been, thus far, only two more or less satisfactory ballets, *Le Pavilion d'Armide*, by Benois and Tcherepnin, and *Le Spectre de la Rose* by Weber and Vaudoyer. But both might be termed choreographic sketches in one scene rather than ballets. Without Nijinsky and Karsavina even these would not be very charming. The aristocratic sentimentality and poetic pathos of the two dance pantomimes are perfectly displayed by these two most talented artists of the revolutionary group, as their miming and dancing are characterized by a certain natural softness of movement, the quality of languor and passion. But it was the music of Igor Stravinsky, a young Russian composer working in the

impressionistic style, that saved the situation of the new ballet. Stravinsky has a genius for the ballet, such as perhaps the world has never seen before. However, he seems to be greatly hampered by lack of proper conception of what constitutes the modern ballet. It is evident that he is influenced in his compositions too much by the Diaghileff-Fokine tendencies, as most of his ballets are built up in the old form of construction, though the phonetic images and spirit are new. His music is graphically vivid, as it should be, has a strong rhythm and inspiring modern spirit. It is the form of construction that he has not grasped yet fully, except in his *Petrouchka*.

This *Petrouchka*, Stravinsky's masterpiece, is a Russian burlesque taken from an old fairy-story of Harlequin in love with the Clown's wife. In this ballet the scenes are splendidly arranged by Fokine and the music is thrilling. The puppet has always exercised a curious fascination upon the human mind. The animated doll is a fantastic and yet pathetic symbol of our emotions. *Petrouchka* is the Russian counterpart of English 'Punch and Judy,' though differing in its more sentimental character. *Petrouchka* represents the character of a real puppet. Stravinsky has woven a dramatic plot around the puppet stage. 'To take us behind the scenes and show the mingled comedy and tragedy of the puppet world, was a true and dramatic inspiration' of the composer. The scenic effect of *Petrouchka* is calculated to create a melancholy feeling in the spectator with its bleak gray background and dull frigidity. It gives a striking contrast to the barbaric colors of the crowd on the stage. One has the feeling of opaque leaden skies, of snow and gay people at a fair. The costumes and scenery designed by Benois are true to Russian life and strikingly in harmony

with the dance. In every phrase of the music the composer shows himself a master of the art of writing ballet music. 'Throughout the four scenes he displays not only a nice sense of dramatic firmness, but a shrewd appreciation of character. In the treatment his humorous percept is of large assistance. In the trumpet dance by which the Blackamoor is first lured into the fair one's toils or in the slower *pas de fascination*, by which the conquest of him is completed, Stravinsky's sense of the ludicrous has turned two slender occasions to most diverting account. A piece of clever orchestration is a passage at the outset of the opening scene where the composer succeeds not only in reproducing the peculiar sounds of an old hurdy-gurdy, but weaves the opposition between two such competing instruments into a most entertaining and harmonious discord.'

As in all the other Stravinsky ballet compositions, the orchestration of *Petrouchka* is realistically true to the action and the characters of the play. It is full-blooded and modern. It breathes an air of the unsophisticated joy of a simple people who attend to their affairs regardless of conventional restrictions. Nijinsky, with his dramatic flexibility and vigor, makes the play a vivid fairy tale in actuality, or rather gives life to a dream of a fairy tale. 'That the ballet is thereby endowed with meaning, an inwardness, which it might not otherwise possess, must be accounted as a tribute to the dancer's genius,' writes an English critic.

Another splendid Stravinsky ballet performed by the Diaghileff company is *L'Oiseau de Feu*. Fokine has arranged the music successfully in this ballet. Like *Petrouchka*, it is based upon a folk-tale. The overture

of the play indicates that a fantastic story is to follow. Strange mutterings and unexpected harmonies dispose the hearer to an atmosphere of another world. The adventurous pantomime opens in a gloomy forest emanating an air of midnight mysteries. But the music glows gradually like the magic glow in the forest. One sees the spectacular Fire Bird floating downward toward the stage. Now dancing and music melt into one fascinating picture of two dimensions, to which the brilliant scenic effects add a special spiritual note. Performed by Karsavina, as the Fire Bird, the ballet is excellent.

But Stravinsky has succeeded less well in his post-impressionistic *Le Sacre du Printemps*. This consists of two tableaux of ancient pagan Russia. The first scene is the adoration of the earth; the second, the adoration of the sun. The music is less spontaneous and less graphic than that in Stravinsky's other ballets. But, all in all, Stravinsky remains the greatest drawing card and the greatest æsthetic factor in the art of the Russian ballet rebels.

A charming number in the repertoire of the Diaghileff company is Balakireff's *Thamar*. Balakireff wrote this as a symphonic poem on an Oriental theme, but Bakst has manufactured out of it a ballet. The music is very beautiful and typically Russian. The story is a thrilling tale of Caucasian life, which takes place at an ancient castle built in a gorge of romantic mountains. But because it is an artificial construction, it is less interesting musically and choreographically than the Stravinsky ballets.

The Russian new ballet has attempted to perform Claude Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faun*, and Richard Strauss' *La Légende de Joseph*. In the latter ballet a new Russian dancer, Leonide Miassine, was

introduced in the title rôle. Neither Miassine nor *La Légende de Joseph* proved great attractions. Magnificent as Strauss and Debussy are in their modern compositions otherwise, in ballet music they remain mediocrities. Their rhythm is so anæmic, their images so hazy and their episodes so disconnected that not even a Nijinsky or a Karsavina could put life into them.

In criticising the new Russian ballet of Diaghileff and Fokine, Prince Volkhonsky writes: 'Their main defect is that they develop [the dance] independently from the music; they are a design by themselves—complicated, interesting, very often pleasing to the eye, yet independent of the music. And we have already seen when we spoke of the old codas that the most unpretentious figure, even when banal, becomes inspiring when it coincides with the musical movement, and, on the contrary, the most interesting "picturesque" figure loses meaning when it develops in discord with music. Look at some dance, definite, exact, that has crystallized itself within well-established limits; you may look at it even without music. But try to watch a pantomime without music. In the first place, it will be a design without color, quite an acceptable form; in the second it will be a body without skeleton—something unacceptable.'

The Russian new ballet is an interesting proof of the far-reaching effect that the naturalistic school of dancing indirectly exercised upon the development of the art of dancing. The efforts of the reform that Fokine is attempting to achieve are admirable and show the great possibilities that the revolutionists face in the immediate future. Their whole drawback has been in their conception of the form and music. Even Stravinsky has not been able to shake himself

loose from the old pantomimic form. But sooner or later they will see the new point of view and acknowledge the mistake that every reformer is apt to make in his first step. The Russians have the technique, the music, the innate talent and the traditions for all future choreographic inspiration. The solution lies, to a great extent, in the coöperative work of their composers, writers, critics, painters, designers, teachers and dancers.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EURHYTHMICS OF JACQUES-DALCROZE

Jacques-Dalcroze and his creed; essentials of the 'Eurhythmic' system—Body-rhythm; the plastic expression of musical ideas; merits and shortcomings of the Dalcroze system—Speculation on the value of Eurhythmics to the dance.

I

WHAT apparently proves to be the elementary step in building up a new school of choreography—perhaps that which some of the younger dancers have chosen either by accident or by roundabout ways—are the Jacques-Dalcroze Rhythmic Gymnastics or 'Eurhythmics' on the order of the ancient Greeks. Thus far this style of dancing is merely in its preliminary form. Therefore it is now as difficult to draw any definite conclusion, as it was about 1905, when the Swiss composer Dalcroze, who had been since 1892 a professor of harmony at the Geneva Conservatoire, first launched the movement. However, the systematic work of instruction by Dalcroze began in 1910, when the brothers Wolf and Harald Dohrn invited him to come to Dresden, where, in the suburb of Hellerau, they built for him a

College of Rhythmic Gymnastics. From this time on the inventor of the new method began a systematic training of young men and women.

Ethel Ingham writes of the life at the college at Hellerau: ‘The day commences with the sounding of a gong at seven o’clock; the house is immediately alive, and some are off to the College for a Swedish gymnastic lesson before breakfast, others breakfast at half-past seven and have their lesson later. There is always a half hour of ordinary gymnastics to begin with. Then there will be a lesson in *Solfège*, one in Rhythmic Gymnastics, and one in Improvisation, each lasting for fifty minutes, with an interval of ten minutes between lessons.’

‘One of the most marked tendencies of the modern æsthetic theory is to break down the barriers that convention has created between the various arts,’ writes Michael T. H. Sadler of the value of Jacques-Dalcroze’s eurhythmics to art. ‘The truth is coming to be realized that the essential factor of poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture and music is really of the same quality, and that one art does not differ from another in anything but the method of its expression and the conditions connected with that method.

‘The common basis to the arts is more easily admitted than defined, but one important element in it—perhaps the only element that can be given a name—is rhythm. Rhythm of bodily movement, the dance, is the earliest form of artistic expression known. It is accompanied in nearly every case with rude music, the object being to emphasize the beat and rhythmic movement with sound. The quickness with which children respond to simple repetition of beat, translating the rhythm of the music into

movement, is merely the recurrence of historical development.

‘To speak of the rhythm of painting may seem fanciful, but I think that is only lack of familiarity. The expression is used here with no intention of metaphor. Great pictures have a very marked and real rhythm, of color, of line, of feeling. The best prose-writing has equally a distinct rhythm.

‘There was never an age in the history of art when rhythm played a more important part than it does to-day. The teaching of M. Dalcroze at Hellerau is a brilliant expression of the modern desire for rhythm in its most fundamental form—that of bodily movement. Let it be clearly understood from the first that the rhythmic training at Hellerau has an importance far deeper and more extended than is contained in its immediate artistic beauty, its excellence as a purely musical training, or its value to physical development. The beauty of the classes is amazing; the actor as well as the designer of stage-effects will come to thank M. Dalcroze for the greatest contribution to their art that any age can show. He has recreated the human body as a decorative unit. He has shown how men, women and children can group themselves and can be grouped in designs as lovely as any painting design, with the added charm of movement. He has taught the individuals their own power of gracious motion and attitude. Musically and physically the results are equally wonderful. But the training is more than a mere musical education; it is also emphatically more than gymnastics.

‘To take a joy in the beauty of the body, to train his mind to move graciously and harmoniously both in itself and in relation to those around him, finally,

to make his whole life rhythmic—such an ideal is not only possible but almost inevitable to the pupil at Hellerau. The keenness which possesses the whole College, the delight of every one in his work, their comradeship, their lack of self-consciousness, their clean sense of the beauty of natural form, promise a new and more harmonious race, almost a realization of Rousseau's ideals, and with it an era of truly artistic production.'

Dalcroze's school has emphasized that its purpose is not merely to train dancers but to educate for life generally. His theory is that all the people should be raised to feel and appreciate the intrinsic value of the rhythm, which is best proven in M. Dalcroze's own essay, *Le Rhythme*, which was published in 1909. 'Schools of Music,' he says, 'formerly frequented only by born musicians, gifted from birth with unusual powers of perception for sound and rhythm, to-day receive all who are fond of music, however little Nature may have endowed them with the necessary capacity for musical expression and realization. The number of solo players, both pianists and violinists, is constantly increasing, instrumental technique is being developed to an extraordinary degree, but everywhere, too, the question is being asked whether the quality of the instrumental players is equal to their quantity, and whether the acquirement of extraordinary technique is not joined to musical powers, if not of the first rank, at least normal.

'Of ten certified pianists of to-day, at the most one, if indeed one, is capable of recognizing one key from another, of improvising four bars with character or so as to give pleasure to the listener, of giving expression to a composition without the help

of the more or less numerous annotations with which present-day composers have to burden their work, of experiencing any feeling whatever when they listen to, or perform, the composition of another. The solo players of older days were without exception complete musicians, able to improvise and compose, artists driven irresistibly towards art by a noble thirst for æsthetic expression, whereas most young people who devote themselves nowadays to solo playing have the gifts neither of hearing nor of expression, are content to imitate the composer's expression without the power of feeling it, and have no other sensibility than that of the fingers, no other motor faculty than an automatism painfully acquired. Solo playing of the present day has specialized in a finger technique which takes no account of the faculty of mental expression. It is no longer a means, it has become an end.

'There are two physical agents by means of which we appreciate music. These two agents are the ear as regards sound, and the whole nervous system as regards rhythm. Experience has shown me that the training of these two agents cannot easily be carried out simultaneously. A child finds it difficult to appreciate at the same time a succession of notes forming a melody and the rhythm which animates them.

'Before teaching the relation which exists between sound and movement, it is wise to undertake the independent study of each of these two elements. Tone is evidently secondary, since it has not its origin and model in ourselves, whereas movement is instinctive in man and therefore primary. Therefore I begin the study of music by careful and experimental teaching of movement. This

is based in earliest childhood on the automatic exercise of marching, for marching is the natural model of time measure.

‘By means of various accentuations with the foot, I teach the different time measures. Pauses (of various length) in the marching teach the children to distinguish duration of sound; movements to time with the arms and the head preserve order in the succession of the time measures and analyze the bars and pauses.

‘Unsteady time when singing or playing, confusion in playing, inability to follow when accompanying, accentuating too roughly or with lack of precision, all these faults have their origin in the child’s muscular and nervous control, in lack of coördination between the mind which conceives, the brain which orders, the nerve which transmits and the muscle which executes. And still more, the power of phrasing and shading music with feeling depends equally upon the training of the nerve-centres, upon the coördination of the muscular system, upon rapid communication between brain and limbs—in a word, upon the health of the whole organism; and it is by trying to discover the individual cause of each musical defect, and to find a means of correcting it, that I have gradually built up my method of eurhythmics.

‘The object of the method is, in the first instance, to create by the help of rhythm a rapid and regular current of communication between brain and body; and what differentiates my physical exercises from those of present-day methods of muscular development is that each of them is conceived in the form which can most quickly establish in the brain the image of the movement studied.

‘It is a question of eliminating in every muscular movement, by the help of will, the untimely intervention of muscles unless for the movement in question, and thus developing attention, consciousness and will-power. Next must be created an automatic technique for all those muscular movements which do not need the help of the consciousness, so that the latter may be reserved for those forms of expression which are purely intelligent. Thanks to the coördination of the nerve-centres, to the formation and development of the greatest possible number of motor habits, my method assures the freest possible play to subconscious expression.

‘The first result of a thorough rhythmic training is that the pupil sees clearly in himself what he really is, and obtains from his powers all the advantage possible. * * * The education of the nervous system must be of such a nature that the suggested rhythms of a work of art induce in the individual analogous vibrations, produce a powerful reaction in him and change naturally into rhythms of expression. In simpler language the body must become capable of responding to artistic rhythms and of realizing them quite naturally without fear of exaggeration.

‘Gestures and attitudes of the body complete, animate and enliven any rhythmic music written simply and naturally without special regard to tone, and, just as in painting there exist side by side a school of the nude and a school of the landscape, so in music there may be developed, side by side, plastic music and music pure and simple. In the school of landscape painting emotion is created entirely by combinations of moving light and by the rhythms thus caused. In the school of the nude,

which pictures the many shades of expression of the human body, the artist tries to show the human soul as expressed by physical forms, enlivened by the emotions of the moment, and at the same time the characteristics suitable to the individual and the race, such as they appear through momentary physical modifications.

'At the present day plastic stage music is not interpreted at all, for dramatic singers, stage managers and conductors do not understand the relation existing between gesture and music, and the absolute ignorance regarding plastic expression which characterizes the lyric actors of our day is a real profanation of scenic musical art. Not only are singers allowed to walk and gesticulate on the stage without paying any attention to the time, but also no shade of expression, dynamic or motor, of the orchestra—crescendo, decrescendo, accelerando, ralletando—finds in their gestures adequate realization. By this I mean the kind of wholly instinctive transformation of sound movements into bodily movements such as my method teaches.'

II

This is briefly the essential part of the Jacques-Dalcroze school of Eurhythmics. The method falls into three main divisions: (1) ear training; (2) rhythmic gymnastics; and (3) improvisations. The ear method is nothing but the training of the pupil in an accurate sense of pitch and a grasp of tonality. However, the system of teaching rhythmic gymnastics is based upon two different methods: *time* and *time-values*. Time is expressed by movements of

the arms; time-values—note durations—by movements of the feet and body. A combination of these two methods is called the plastic counterpoint, in which the actual notes played are represented by movements of the arms, while the counterpoint in crotchets, quavers or semi-quavers, is given by the feet. The crotchet as the unit of note-values is expressed by means of a step. Thus for each note in the music there is one step. Notes of shorter duration than the crotchet are also expressed by steps, only they are quicker in proportion to their frequency. 'When the movements corresponding to the notes from the crotchet to the whole note of twelve beats have, with all their details, become a habit, the pupil need only make them mentally, contenting himself with one step forward. This step will have the exact length of the whole note, which will be mentally analyzed into its various elements. Although these elements are not individually performed by the body, their images and the innervations suggested by these images take the place of the movements.'

The first training of a pupil in the Dalcroze school consists of steps only. Simple music is played to which the pupils march. After the pupil has an elementary command of his legs the rhythmic training of his arms and body begins. At this stage the simple movements to indicate rhythms and notes are made a second nature of the pupil. This can be compared to the pupil's learning of the alphabet. Plastic reading consists of composing more or less definite images from the elementary rhythm-units. This is done either individually or in groups. The pupil is taught to form clear mental images of the movements corresponding to the rhythm in question and then give physical expression to those images. As a child learns to compose letters and syllables to

words and words to phrases, a Dalcroze pupil is taught to understand the elementary parts of the music and the rules of its composition and to recompose it into a lengthy series of body movements.

The main object of Dalcroze's method is to express by rhythmic movements rhythms perceived by the ear. The exactness of such expression is the main aim of the school. The body must react momentarily to the time and sound-units of the music that the ear perceives. As the wind creates waves in the sea, music is meant to create motion in the human body. Percy B. Ingham writes that characteristic exercises of this group are 'beating the same time with both arms but in canon, beating two different tempi with the arms while the feet march to one or perhaps march to yet a third time, e. g., the arms 3/4 and 4/4, the feet 5/4. There are, also, exercises in the analysis of a given time unit into various fractions simultaneously, e. g., in a 6/8 bar one arm may beat three to the bar, the other arm two, while the feet march six.'

According to Dalcroze's plastic theory the arms should express the theme in making as many movements as there are notes, while the feet should mark the counterpoint in crotchets, quavers, triplets or semi-quavers. A compound rhythm can be expressed by the arms taking one rhythm, the feet, another. This is meant to correspond to the technical exercises of orchestral music, by training the body to react to the various tones of different instruments. The general purpose, however, is and remains the development of feeling for rhythm by teaching the physical expression of body rhythms. There is no doubt that shades of crescendos and decrescendos,

fortes and pianissimos are achieved by this method, yet the question remains: how near does the Dalcroze school come to visualizing the music in all its symbolic and spiritual depths?

Music is more than rhythm; it is a subjective symbolic language of our soul and the universe. It is a mystic factor of life, human and cosmic. There is an unaccentuated language in every genial and great composition, an æsthetic image and philosophic meaning that we can grasp not by means of the intellect but mostly through the emotions, and it is in expressing this that Dalcroze's school has failed in so far. Dalcroze has aimed to express the elemental factors of the music, and in this he has succeeded. The performances given by Mr. T. Jarecki, one of the most talented of the graduates of Hellerau, are sufficient proof of the fact that the school has its shortcomings in the above-mentioned directions. He performed a Prelude by Chopin, a composition of Rachmaninoff, one by Schubert, and several numbers of other classics in a costume that looked like a bathing suit. Powerful as he was in all his rhythmic grace, he yet failed to translate the musical language of the compositions by means of bodily plasticity. Chopin's and Rachmaninoff's preludes possess distinct tonal expressions and designs of something very human and emotional that lies beyond mere rhythm. Poetry is based on the laws of rhythm, yet it is not alone the rhythm that makes a poem beautiful, but the image that it creates. Thus in the art of dance it is not only the rhythm but the æsthetic episode that concerns a dancer most of all. It is the transformation of this phonetic episode into plastic forms, the visualization of the audible beauty, that lies at the bottom of every great dance. This requires certain symbols and those lie beyond the

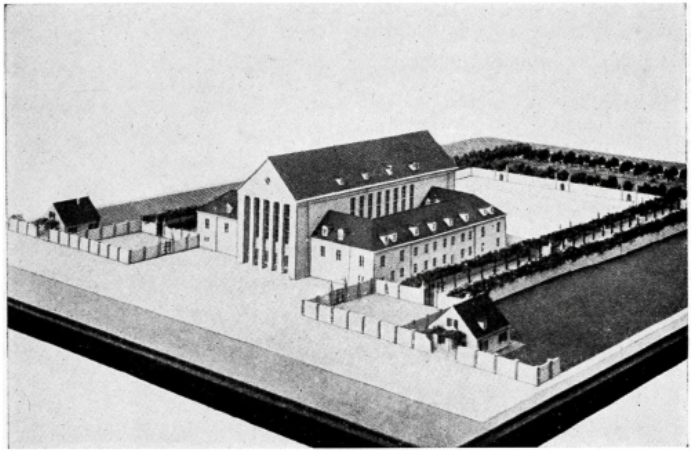
achievements of the Dalcroze graduates.

III

The great value of Dalcroze's method lies in his insistence on perfect rhythm as an elementary training upon which the coming art of dancing can be based. The various folk-dances are outspokenly rhythmic, but they contain that peculiar racial flavor which is very difficult to keep outside its proper atmosphere and race. We have found that the best Russian dancers could not give the simple folk-dances of another race with the racial perfection which a native untrained folk-dancer would have imparted to it. In the same way foreign dancers with their best efforts fail in trying to dance what a Russian dances. The national dances can be employed as valuable bases for the individual art, but that is all. They lack the cosmic element, the language of the world. An Italian understands his *Tarantella*, a Spaniard his *Fandango*, a Russian his *Trepak* best of all. The future art of dancing needs a universal element of choreographic design and it is in this that the Dalcroze school may be of immense value. It bases everything on rhythm only, which is very significant, but its aim should lie far beyond that. Rhythm is the syllable and the word, but words must be combined into phrases and phrases into paragraphs before we can read a story. It is after all the story in which the mind is interested, not the words and phrases.

We have seen in previous chapters that the foundation of the ballet lacks the firmness and soundness of a natural art. It is decadent and

altogether shaky. No genius could build anything lasting unless the foundation is firm. The aim of dancing is not acrobatic nor gymnastic effect, but plasticity. Symmetry is the chief element of architecture, rhythm that of music. If we can combine the symmetric rules with those of the rhythmic we have the basis upon which a new choreography can be built. Isadora Duncan, Fokine, Lada, Trouhanova and many others are trying to grasp the truth in their individual ways, but the elemental truth lies in Dalcroze's system. That Dalcroze has not aimed to train any stage artists is evidenced by the bathing-suit-like costume that his pupils wear, which in itself is unæsthetic and objectionable to our eye, though it may fit well for regular class-room work. It is at illusion that the stage aims, and this is not to be found in naked realism but in something else.





A Plastic Pantomime (Dalcroze Eurhythmics)

Some writers and critics seem to think that the great importance of Dalcroze's system lies in his Neo-Hellenism, in that it is so close to the ancient Greek ideas. This view is particularly widespread in Germany, the country of classic adoration. But Greek spirit and ideals cannot help but only mislead a modern man. We have our problems, so many thousand years of evolution after the Greek civilization, that differ fundamentally from those of the bygone centuries. It is not in looking backward, but in looking forward that we have to find the great cosmic ideal of beauty. Dalcroze is by no means an imitator of the Greeks, but a man of to-day. He maintains emphatically that his method of eurhythmics is meant to be a general educational subject in all the schools—an elementary rhythmic

training for life.

It is to be hoped that the Dalcroze system of training dancers will be employed as the elementary step in all the dancing schools, for only then we may hope to see the rise of a new art of dancing. Without learning the alphabet thoroughly or without knowing the most elementary rules of a science nothing could be obtained by a pupil in his later studies. Here is the elementary system in all its primitive simplicity and truth. All we need is to adapt it to the higher schools of choreography. What the Dalcroze schooling of today gives is insufficient for a stage art. But it is by far a more thorough elementary training than any ballet, naturalistic or individual school can give, as it makes a student feel the music in his body and soul before he expresses it in his plastic forms. Then again, there is a strict system, a method of gradual development of those essentials which lie at the bottom of every art dance.

In spite of the many shortcomings the Jacques-Dalcroze school can be considered as the first move towards a new stage art. It means the beginning of a new school of dancing altogether. However, it needs another reformer to begin where Dalcroze ended. Can we expect this of Fokine, Volkhonsky or some one else? Dance in its highest sense is symbolic. The symbols that it expresses should not be others than those of music. We know only that they should form images of the symmetric and rhythmic elements, but their exact nature remains either for an individual artist or a future school to determine.

CHAPTER XIX

PLASTOMIMIC CHOREOGRAPHY

The defects of the new Russian and other modern schools; the new ideals; Prince Volkhonsky's theories—Lada and choreographic symbolism—The question of appropriate music.

I

We have witnessed the various phases and changes which the art of dancing has undergone during the past centuries. The ancient Egyptians danced the movements of astral bodies, the Greeks danced the hymns of their mythology, the Romans their war songs, the Middle Ages danced the aristocratic etiquette of gilded ball-rooms, the French Ballet danced to stereotyped tunes with marionette-like manners, the Russian Ballet danced to dramatic scenarios that had musical accompaniment, the various nations danced to their simple tunes, the Duncanites to the mood-creating elements of the music, the Jacques-Dalcrozists to the rhythm of a composition only. It is inconceivable that none of the reformers, none of the new schools, danced the music itself. Those among the partisans of 'natural' or 'classic' dancing who claim to interpret the music have given us thus far supposed imitations of the

Greek, Oriental or fantastic styles of some kind, based upon hazy rhythmic mood-producing forms of a composition. We have seen only fragmentary passages here and there, single numbers of the celebrated dancers, which expressed the phonetic designs of the music in true plastic lines. Pavlova has certainly succeeded in expressing all the emotional fury of Glazounoff's *L'Autômne Bacchanale*, the grace of Drigo's *Papillons*, and Saint-Saëns' 'The Swan.' We must give all due credit to Karsavina, for her dancing of Stravinsky's *L'Oiseau de Feu*, and half a dozen others of her repertoire depict truly the very soul of the music. The child pupils of Miss Duncan dance all the ethereal grace of Schubert's *Moments Musicals*. In the same way we find in one or several dances of Mordkin, Nijinsky and Volinin, of Lopokova, Fokina and Kyasht that they have succeeded in dancing the music. We are pretty safe to say that each of the celebrated dancers of history has probably been able to translate into visible 'plasticism' only a few of the phonetic forms of one or another composition of his repertoire. And this is what we may term 'dancing the music.'

We have attended innumerable dance performances, have seen many new and old ballets, in Russia and abroad, have seen the new and ultra-modern dancers, yet we have so far seen but a microscopic fragment of what we here call 'dancing the music.' Certainly the greatest part of the repertoire of all the celebrated dancers has been the dancing of something else than the music. All the Pavlova ballets that have been given in America, all the elaborate ballets of the Russian classic school, all the ballets of the Diaghileff-Fokine group, are and remain dances to preconceived plots, dances to a style or a mood, but rarely dances of the music. We

should like to have any of the celebrated dancers show us where there is expression of the music in all the spectacular pirouettes of Pavlova, Karsavina, Nijinsky and Fokina, in their dramatic acting to a musical composition, even in the most modern ballets of Stravinsky. The dancing that they perform during the whole ballet is pantomimic acting to a certain plot, arranged to music. We are not by any means biased in making the statement, but make it with deliberation.

Dancers of various schools and ages have failed to see the point. Though Prince Volkhonsky is preaching exclusively the Jacques-Dalcroze rhythmic gymnastics as the basis of a new school of dance and therefore sees nothing more in a dance than the rhythmic expression, yet he has described aptly the defects of the Russian ballets, old and new, of the Duncanites and other modern schools of dancing. 'Their main defect is that they develop independently of the music,' he writes; 'they are a design by themselves—complicated, interesting, very often pleasing to the eye, yet independent of the music. And we have already seen when we spoke of the old *codas* that the most unpretentious figure, even when banal, becomes inspiring when it coincides with the musical movement, and, on the contrary, the most interesting picturesque figure loses meaning when it develops in discord with music. Look at some dance, definite and exact, which has crystallized itself within well-established limits; you may look at it even without music, but try to watch a pantomime without music. In the first place, it will be a design without color, quite an acceptable form; in the second, it will be a body without skeleton—something unacceptable.

‘The main fault of the leaders of the modern ballet is that they put the centre of gravity of the ballet in the plot, in the event, in the story: what in painting is called literature. Whereas the subject of the ballet is not in the plot, the subject is in the music. Any picture which is not dictated by music, any independent movement, is synonymous with abandonment of the subject, the essence; it is in the end an interruption of art, an interruption caused by a rupture between the two equivalent elements of the visuo-audible art—sound and movement. This rupture with music is all the more felt the more participants there are in the picture, and the more markedly it tends towards “realism.” Only look at them when they represent scenes of disorder; and by and by we lose the impression of “art”; we see real, not represented, disorder; and finally we are turned to the dramatic point of view, and we are called upon to admire the “acting crowd.” And if you are musical, if you live in the movement of sound, this independent visible movement cannot but appear as a sort of unasked-for interference of some intruder. The acting crowd is not admissible where a rhythmically moving crowd is required. Acting leads the artist out of music and conducts him into the plot; and the subject of ballet, I repeat, is not in the plot, it is in the music; the plot is but the pretext.

‘Only through the rhythm will the ballet come back to music and accomplish the fusion which has been destroyed by independent acting. Schopenhauer said that music is a melody to which the universe serves as a text; take away the music from the ballet —it will have nothing to say. There is quite a clear parallel here with the vocal art. The musician composes a song; he puts words to music. Imagine a singer coming out and telling us only the words; he

will be far from the fulfillment of his task; he will have accomplished but the half of it, the lesser part of it. It is the same with the ballet; the musician composes the ballet, he puts the plot to music. Imagine a dancer coming out and acting the plot alone; he will be far from the fulfillment of his task; he will have accomplished but the lesser part of it. For the ballet does not relate how the Sleeping Beauty, for instance, fell asleep and awoke (this is the business of literature, declamation and drama); the ballet relates how music tells it. Music is the only real essence in that which forms the subject of the ballet. All the remaining "reality," the real man with his real movement, is nothing but a means of expression, nothing but artistic material. It is evident how wrong, how offensive it is (for a musician) when this material of living movement embodies a new moving formula which is not implied in the music. Have you seen those "processions" of maidens, slaves, priests, etc.? Have you ever been shocked by the discord of their walk with music? Have you noticed that the pace which you see is quite different from the one you hear? Have you ever felt offended on seeing that they step between the notes and thus give you the impression of syncopes which are in no way justified by music? I am afraid you have not. Few are those who realize the importance of the accord of movement and sound, who long for its realization, and, together with Schiller, desire that "Music in its ascendant ennoblement shall become Image."

'The music we hear is the subject of the image we see. And in fact the singer sings music, the dancer dances music, and cannot dance anything else; he cannot "dance" jealousy or grief or fright, but he can and must dance the music which expresses the

feeling of jealousy, grief or fright. And when he has rendered the music he will, by the same means, have rendered its contents, and naturally the silly question will be dropped: “How is it possible that on the stage the people should dance everything, whereas in life only dances are danced, or, at the utmost, joy?” The question is strange, to be sure, yet no less strange are those who forget that the only thing they may dance is music, and think they may dance a “rôle.” The dramatic principle based upon an arbitrary division of time is directly opposed to the choreographic principle, which is wholly founded on the musical, consequently regulated, division of time. Therefore the introduction of the element of “personal feeling,”[D] of individual choice, and even more, destroys the very essence of the choreographic art, and eats away its very texture.

[D] As the Duncanites do.—Editor.

I do not speak against the working out of such; I speak against an independent working out—that is, a separate one running a course other than that in which music is the greatest essential. I remember one of the best *ballerinas* contorting herself in wild movements of anguish while the notes of the violin were dying away in one long sound of a trill. She “acted,” and there is, of course, no harm in this, but she acted according to her ideas, instead of acting according to music. It is just the same sin against art as if a singer were to execute a lyric song with bravado. Would you forgive him? Why, then, do we not forgive a singer, yet forgive a mimic, even admire his “acting”? Why is it every one understands that singing must agree with music, and so few,

almost nobody, feel the offensiveness of movement which disagrees with music? And yet how sensitive to the observation of the musico-plastic principle are those who are so indifferent to its non-observation. How much they enjoy, though unconsciously, every manifestation of that concordance! We may say with certitude that for the best moments, the moments of greatest satisfaction in the living art—that is, the musico-plastic art combining the visible with the audible—we are indebted to the simultaneous concurrence of the plastic movement with the musical; in other words, to the equality in division of space and time. In an old French treatise on the dance, published in the year 1589, the author says among other bits of advice: “It is wrong for the foot to say one thing and the instrument the other.” In its naïve conciseness this sentence represents the germ of all that has been said, perhaps with some prolixity, in these pages.

‘Space and time are the fundamental conditions of all material existence—and for that same reason the inevitable conditions of all material manifestation of man within the limits of his earthly being. If we agree that art is the highest manifestation of order in matter, and order in its essence nothing but division of space and time, we shall understand the fullness of artistic satisfaction which man must feel when both his organs of perfection, eye and ear, convey to him not only each separate enjoyment, but the enjoyment of fusion; when all his æsthetic functions are awakened in him not separately but collectively, in one unique impression: the visible rhythm penetrated by the audible, the audible realized in the visible, and both united in movement. This is the combination of the spacial order with the temporal. And when this

combination is accomplished, and still more when it is animated with expression, then no chord of human impressionability is left untouched, no category of human existence is neglected; space and time are filled with art, the whole man is but one æsthetic perception.

'And, once we have understood all that, how is it possible not to express the wish that the leaders of the art of the ballet should assimilate the principle of concordance of motion and music? Without this there is no art in movement, and all our old "pointés" and "fouettés," all those records of rapidity and difficulties are nothing but words without significance, whereas the new "choreographical" pictures are but a dramatization of movement to the sound of an accompanying music.'

II

One of the first among living dancers to realize the truth of the above-described lack of concordance between motion and music in all the ancient and new schools, and to devise, intuitively, a method of her own in expressing only the music, is Lada, a young American girl, who had been assiduously studying dancing in Europe and in Russia. She felt so keenly the discord in the ballet, in the art of Isadora Duncan, in the dances of so many modern celebrities, that she was led to draw her inspiration from the folk-dances of various European countries. Here was something simple and primitive, the simple and naïve harmonic relation between the audible, and the visible, the plastic, conception. It was the concordance of motion and music.

Lada's New York début in the late spring of 1914 was, in spite of so many unfavorable circumstances, a choreographic triumph such as few dancers have achieved under similar conditions. The New York musical and dramatic critics, though unfamiliar with subtle choreographic issues, declared her an artist of the foremost rank. Yet this girl has not had yet the chance to display the best of her art. Her art may be divided into three different categories: those based on the racial, on the dramatic and on the symbolic principles. Her Brahms' Hungarian Dance, Glinka's *Kamarienskaya*, and Schubert's *Biedermayer* are distinct ethnographic plastic panoramas; her Sibelius' *Valse Triste* is a masterpiece among her dramatic and realistic dances, while MacDowell's 'Shadow Dance,' Sibelius' 'Swan of Tuonela,' Glière's *Lada*, and Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Antar* are perfect choreographic gems of unusual symbolic breadth. In the *Valse Triste* the sad majesty, as if absorbed in infinite grief, overcomes the spectator so irresistibly that he almost forgets the morbidly beautiful music of Sibelius. On occasions, impressively executed with unsurpassed loftiness and freedom, she places before us a visionary being, though on the verge of death, in whose presence everything low falls from us, and our feelings express the same elevation that they do in genuine tragedy.

But, however excellently Lada may interpret the sentimental issues of various ethnographic compositions and how well she may portray the tragic vigor of the dramatic music, the best of her art lies in the symbolic visualization of phonetic beauties. In these she appears like a supernatural being raised above common humanity. Her rendering of Gretchaninoff's 'Bells,' which we have seen so far only in rehearsals, makes an impression as if she

were lost in sacred revery. A touch of religious feeling pervades the beautiful panorama. In other dances of similar religious character she seems floating in mid-air, unsubstantial as the moon whose pale beams pour a magic beauty over sleeping Nature—and yet so far removed. Her art is an absolute image of the music. Lada is by no means a mood creator or a believer in genial spontaneity that requires nothing but a stage and orchestra. She possesses in her simplest folk-dance-like choreographic sketches the same technical perfection, the same strenuous practice, as the most accomplished ballet dancer. This is what makes her body seem like a highly strung instrument, whose strings the slightest breath of wind can set quivering. Let us hope that she will not change her views and aspirations for the sake of managerial or timely requirements, as so many successful dancers have done. It would be a loss to the evolution of the art of dancing.

To this school of dancing belongs also Natasha Trouhanova, a fascinatingly beautiful Caucasian girl, whose appearances in Russia and Paris have attracted great attention. Being of semi-Oriental descent herself, Trouhanova's art has verged on Oriental conceptions. Russian music is rich in excellent Oriental themes; Borodine, Rubinstein, Balakireff, Ippolitoff-Ivanoff and Spendiaroff have written a large number of instrumental works of Oriental cast, which adapt themselves magnificently to dancing. Indeed, the composers of other countries have not been able to approach the Russians in the treatment of Oriental subjects. Mlle. Trouhanova has specialized in a romantic Oriental symbolism, in which she has succeeded more than any of the other living dancers. There is an enchanting, exotic

atmosphere in Trouhanova's plastic expressions, something that breathes of the Thousand and One Nights, seductive and saturated with passion, yet beautiful in every detail. Her best performances have been those which she has given in Oriental surroundings, in the atmosphere to which such expressions belong. Like Lada, Trouhanova seeks the solution of choreography in the music itself. She has been inclined to a kind of symbolism that pertains to the romantic emotions, and in this particular field she stands supreme.

III

How important Lada's illustration of the theory of concordance of motion and music is at this time of dancing evolution can be more concretely grasped by the coming generations than by an average dance-lover to-day. It is perspective that gives the true visual impression of a mountain. 'In the unison of plasticity and music, of the visible with the audible, of the spacial with the temporal, lies the guarantee of that new art which we so ardently desire and so unsuccessfully seek,' writes a celebrated dance authority. But here comes the question of music, the phonetic image that should guide the choreographic artist. Lada complains that she has a very limited choice of compositions that can be danced. The problem of proper dance music is more serious than one would think. Sibelius' *Valse Triste* is perhaps the best sample of dramatic dance music that corresponds perfectly to a dancer's requirements. MacDowell's 'Shadow Dance' is another gem of this kind. There are quite a few by other composers. The sum is slight. But the dancer can hardly blame the

composer alone, for the latter knows only the old ballet, the naturalistic school or folk-dance themes. He has never heard of any other dance music than the one which has been danced, either socially or on the stage.

Dancing to music requires short phonetic episodes with sufficient poetic, symbolic or dramatic element, and images clearly depicted in strong rhythmic measure and sufficient background for the story. The more variety of figures, the greater contrasts and the more 'chapters' in such a composition, the better for the dancer. The modern decadent, unrhythmic, vague mood music of the radical French and German schools is of little appeal and practically impossible to render in plastic forms. It is the Russian school of music, as also the works of modern Finnish composers, that have all the rich, clear and powerfully vivid magic of the north, and appeal so strongly to a dancer's imagination. Sibelius' *En Saga*, a tone-poem for full orchestra, would be the most grateful composition for this purpose had it not been written in the old symphonic form. It belongs to that baffling and unsatisfactory class of symphonic poems to which Sibelius has failed to give a clear literary basis. The music suggests the recital of some old tale in which the heroic and pathetic elements are skillfully blended. The music is vigorous and highly picturesque, but its interest would be greatly enhanced by a more definite program. Again, the same composer's 'Lemminkainen's Home-Faring' would make an excellent dance for a man dancer, had the composer rearranged it for a smaller orchestra and for dancing. It is an episode from the *Kalevala*. Sibelius' Fourth Symphony is a composition that could be danced, being based on a series of single episodes of

extremely imaginary character. But the score is written for a large symphony orchestra, therefore unpractical for dancing in a general way. Sibelius' incidental music to Adolf Paul's tragedy, 'King Christian II,' and the other to Maeterlinck's 'Pelléas and Mélisande' are large ballets rather than music that could be performed without any particular difficulties by dancers of Lada's type.

The question of appropriate music for the latest phase of the art of dancing is so serious that it requires earnest consideration. In considering the best dances of all the great dancers of all ages and schools we find that among the phonetic images the symbolic element renders itself most gratefully to plastic transformation. By its very nature dancing is the symbolic rendering of music. The more symbolic the subject of a composition the better chance it has of being transmitted into a visible language. A dancer represents in his vibrating body lines the symbolic complex of all the phonetic unities of a composition. He is, so to speak, the unset type. Music is the text that he has to print in such pictorial forms, in such symbols that our mind can grasp it. Throughout his dance, he remains a kaleidoscopic tracer of the musical designs of the composition. The plastic positions of the human body, the mimic expression of the face, the gestures and the steps, are the mediums that can suggest certain phases of emotion and feeling, certain ideas and impressions of soul and body. There is a certain tonal and pictorial 'logic,' a kind of unarticulated thinking, in music as well as in dancing. But this cannot be depicted in any other than symbolic form. Essentially both arts are composed of a succession of peculiar emotional symbolic images. Music is the vibration of the sound, dancing the vibration of the form. Both arts appeal

directly to our emotions, music more than dancing, the latter being more mixed with our intellectual processes. Dancing may be termed the translating of the absolutely subjective language into a more objective one. According to this theory all the ballets in the old form of drama, where the characters dance their rôles, is against the principle of pure art dancing. It is impossible to imagine that there is any music on the order of our conventional dramas, of so or so many characters. At the utmost there can be only two dancing figures, two characters that we could imagine in a tone-drama of this kind; but even so, the other could be only the acting, the pantomimic character, while only one dancer at a time can render the real transformation process of the musical theme.

To comply with the requirements of the above-described theory of musical dancing, the writer has composed a scenario, 'The Legend of Life,' to which Reinhold Glière is composing the music. In this ballet, or more correctly *plastomime*, which is arranged in three scenes, there is only one single dancer throughout the whole performance, and she is the symbolic image, the visualized imagination of a young monk, who is sitting in the evening before the festival of ordainment in his gloomy cell and thinking of the girl he used to love outside. Here he begins to hear the worldly music that is interrupted by the chimes and the choir of the church. The girl of whom he is thinking appears before him and dances romantic episodes—dances, so to speak, his vivid reminiscences. The monk is the realistic figure, the dancing girl the symbolic image of the music. It is a whole drama, which takes place in the monk's mind. The drama is in music, and is his love, his romantic emotion, which is often interrupted by ecclesiastic

surroundings. The second scene is the dream of the monk at night in a beautiful garden. The vision of the dancing girl. The third scene depicts him watching his own ordination in the church and the people arriving solemnly through the courtyard to witness the ceremony. Among them he sees his beloved. This scene is laid in the monastery's courtyard. The charm of the dancing girl here becomes so overwhelming to the monk that he throws off his robe and rushes to her. Here she vanishes like a phantom and the plastomime ends. This, briefly, is an attempt at the sort of literary basis upon which the author considers dance music can be constructed in concordance with the new symbolic ideals.

The above-described scenario is merely one of the innumerable dance themes that modern composers could employ in their future dance music. It is to be hoped that composers will grasp the idea and enrich musical literature with works that adapt themselves to the requirements of a new choreography.

EPILOGUE

FUTURE ASPECTS OF THE ART OF DANCE

As in the physical so in the spiritual world there prevails a kind of circulation of energies and life; growth, maturity and decline. Individuals seem nothing but the beginnings where the universes end, and *vice versa*. As a man mirrors the world in his soul, so a protoplasm mirrors the man. An invisible hand pushes a worm along the same road of evolution as it does an imperious Cæsar. One and the same feeling heart seems to beat in the breast of man that beats in the action of the constellations. Yet the hand of evolution that tends to adjust the equilibrium between the individual and the cosmic will gives by every new turn a new touch of perfection to the subjective and the objective parties. This tendency manifests itself in the history of individuals and races, and also in the history of art. The greatest genius of to-day is surpassed by another to-morrow.

The art of dancing, as it stands to-day, promises much encouragement for to-morrow. It is near the beginning of a new era—the era of the cosmic ideals. The past belongs to the aristocratic ideals, in which the Russian ballet reached the climax. The French were the founders of aristocratic choreography; the Russians transformed it into an aristocratic-dramatic art; to the Americans belongs the attempt at a democratic school.

'The chief value of reaction resides in its negative, destructive element,' says Prince Volkhonsky. 'If, for instance, we had never seen the old ballet, with its stereotype, I do not think that the appearance of Isadora Duncan would have called

forth such enthusiasm. In Isadora we greeted the deliverance.' The chief merit of Duncan lies in destroying the aristocratic foundation of the ballet, and in attempting to find a democratic expression. She meant to find the solution in ancient Greek ideas and tried to imitate them. But she forgot that she was an outspoken American individualist and grasped only the democratic principles of a young race. All she achieved was to prove that the democratic essentials are no more satisfactory in the future æsthetic evolution of the dance than were the aristocratic traditions of the bygone centuries. The question remains, where is to be found the true basis of the coming choreography?

It is strange to contemplate what different directions the development of the dance in various countries and in various ages has taken. In ancient Egypt and Greece the primitive folk-dances developed into spectacular religious ballets, in Japan they assumed the same impressionistic character as the rest of the national art, in aristocratic France the folk-dances grew to a gilded salon art, in Italy they became acrobatic shows, while in Russia they transformed themselves into spectacular racial pantomimes. In every age and country the art of dancing followed the strongest æsthetic motives of the time. If a nation worshipped nobility it danced the aristocratic ideals, if it worshipped divine ideas it danced them accordingly. The social-political democratic ideals of the New World have exercised a great influence in this direction upon the art of the Old. Though imitating aristocratic Europe, America has not failed to add an element of its own to the æsthetic standards of the former. But had America been only democratic there would be little hope left that it could attribute anything to the future beauty,

particularly to the future dance. There are, however, other elements that give encouragement to something serious and lasting, and this is the cosmic tendency in American life and art.

The chief characteristics of the American mind are to condense expressions and ideas into their shortest forms. This is most evident in the syncopated style of its music, in its language and in its architecture. Like the American 'ragtime' tune, an American skyscraper is the result of an impressionistic imagination. Both are crude in their present form, yet they speak a language of an un-ethnographic race and form the foundation of a new art. Instead of having a floating, graceful and, so to speak, a horizontal tendency like the æsthetic images of the Old World, the American beauty is dynamic, impressionistic and perpendicular. It shoots directly upwards and denies every tradition. The underlying motives of such a tendency are not democratic but cosmic. While a nationalistic art is always based on something traditional, something that belongs to the past evolution of a race, the cosmic art strives to unite the emotions of all humanity. The task of the latter is very much more difficult. It requires a universal mind to grasp and express what appeals to the whole world. It requires a Titanic genius to condense the æsthetic images so that in their shortest form they may say what the others would express in roundabout ways. This gives to beauty a dynamic vigor and makes it so much more universal than the art of any nation or age could be. But this requires the use of symbols, and tends to subjectivism. However, the symbols employed in this case are fundamentally different from those employed by the Orientals. Since the earliest ages the Orient has made use of symbols in art and religion. But the Oriental

symbols have been mystic or philosophic in their nature. The American symbols will either be purely intellectual or they will be poetic.

The future of the art of dancing belongs to America, the country of the cosmic ideals. This is evident from its evolution since Isadora Duncan's début. The Russian New Ballet (of Diaghileff's group) is the best proof that the traditional racial plasticism is being transformed into a cosmic one. Compare the steps and gestures of Karsavina and Nijinsky with those of Pavlova and Volinin. Where the former have become realistically dramatic, the latter remain acrobatically academic. There is more symbolism in Karsavina's and Nijinsky's art than in that of Pavlova and the followers of the old ballet. But the plastic symbols of Lada are far more condensed than those of Karsavina. This is what we have termed the essential of a cosmic choreography.

The tendency of every art is from the simple to the complex and then again from the complex to the simple. The greatest dancer is the one who can express the most complex musical images in the simplest plastic forms. Dancing in the future will be nothing but a transformatory process of the time-emotions in the space-emotions. 'Rhythm is in time what symmetry is in space—division into equal parts corresponding to each other,' said Schopenhauer. Arthur Symons called dancing 'thinking overheard.' 'It begins and ends before words have formed themselves, in a deeper consciousness than that of speech. * * * It can render birth and death, and it is always going over and over the eternal pantomime of love; it can be all the passions, all the languors; but it idealizes these mere acts, gracious or brutal, into more than a picture; for it is more than a beautiful

reflection, it has in it life itself, as it shadows life; and it is farther from life than a picture. Humanity, youth, beauty, playing the part of itself, and consciously, in a travesty, more natural than nature, more artificial than art: but we lose ourselves in the boundless bewilderment of its contradictions.' It follows that a neo-symbolism is the logical outcome of the future dance. Dancing will become an independent stage art and take the place of the obsolescent opera. But before it reaches that stage, composers will be compelled to realize the importance of the new choreography, and produce music that contains all the graphic designs, the plastic possibilities, the dynamic drama and, above all, that structure of sounds which gives ample possibility for symbolic plasticism and yet contains a message.

The real future dance will be expressionistic and subjective. Instead of copying life it will suggest its deepest depths and highest heights by combining the plastic symbols with the musical ones. It will not try to imitate nature but transpose it, as a painting transposes a landscape. Our mind is growing tired of the prevailing naked realism and its photographic effects. The realistic drama is gradually losing its æsthetic appeal. The aristocratic opera seems to belong to past centuries. Opera has lost its grip on the modern mind. Our æsthetic conception has reached the point where our subjective mind requires not imitation but inspiration. Instead of traditional beauties we require dynamic ones. We enjoy a suggestion of an æsthetic sensation more than an accurate description of it. This proves that the symbolic sensations will sooner or later take the upper hand, and symbolic dancing will be the watchword of the coming age.

Since, according to our theory, the future of the art of dancing belongs to America, we should take into consideration those primary elements of musical art that form the foundation of every dance. American art naturally lacks fundamentally national elements; it strives toward cosmic ideals instead. Miserable as is the syncopated form of American popular music it yet constitutes the musical *Volapük* of all the nations. This same syncopated form of expression manifests itself in American architecture and in its social dancing. The broken lines, the irregular dynamics, and the restless corners here and there that we find predominant in American architecture are nothing but a transposed form of popular music. It is evident that neither one of the arts has yet found its foundation. A New York skyscraper is a silent 'ragtime' tune, and *vice versa*. But the 'ragtime' rhythm can be modulated to the same æsthetic expressions as the skyscrapers. Unconsciously the dance follows the patterns of architecture and music. The future choreography does not necessarily need to be based upon syncopated rhythm only, but upon the various factors of the style, the method of expression and the spiritual issues.

The physical and spiritual bases of every folk-art lie in the rural life. A folk-song or a folk-dance is and remains the product of idyllic village atmosphere. It mirrors the joys and sorrows, hopes and passions of the country people. It has been molded under the blue sky, in sunshine and storm. The songs of birds and the voices of nature form its æsthetic background. A village troubadour or poet is usually its creator, and simplicity is its fundamental trait. It exalts the rural atmosphere, poetry and characteristics. The place of the birth and growth of

syncopated rhythm and broken symmetry is exclusively the city. It exalts the noise, rush and triviality, also the alertness and forces of the street. It suggests motion and intellectual fever. It leaves images of something artificial and fatal in the mind. The spirit of the country is different in every nation; but the spirit of the city is a similar one all over the world. It is in this very fact that we have to look for the logical foundation of the future choreography. It will emanate from no particular race, from no particular country, nor from any particular element of national art. It will come from the artificial city, the mother of cosmic idealism. The symbolism of the city is destined to take the place of the symbolism of the country. The New York plasticism will be also the plasticism of Paris and Petrograd.

The ethnographic and aristocratic era in the art of dancing has reached the climax of æsthetic development. We are entering the era of cosmic art. We begin it with the same primitive steps that our ancestors made so many centuries ago; only with this difference—that now we view the problem from a universal point of view while our forefathers beheld it from a nationalistic and aristocratic point of view. We are in the cosmic current of evolution and begin our circle where it was left by those who had passed the current of a certain race or class. The future dance will grasp beauty from a broader stretch and deeper depths than the greatest virtuosi of the past and present could do. The fundamental law of all spiritual as well as physical evolution is to bring about a better equilibrium between the individual and the universal powers.

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Page 110: "Albacetex" was printed that way; probably is a misprint for "Albacete".

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