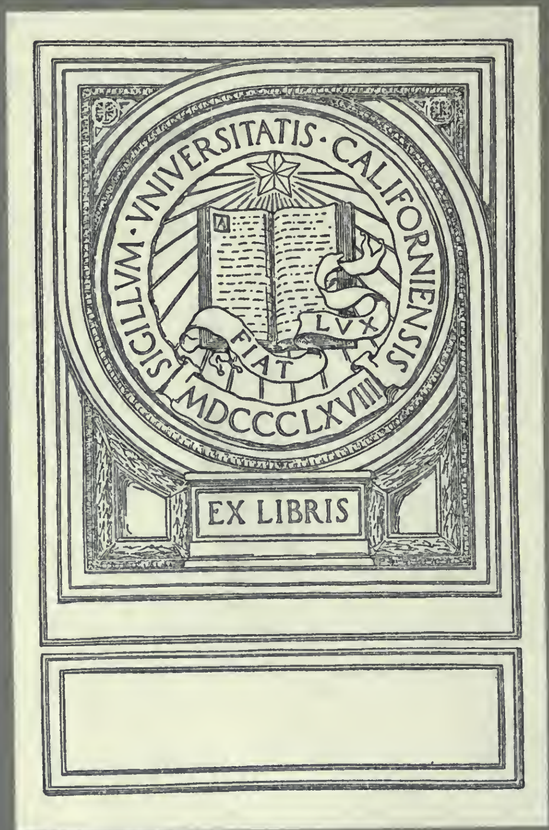
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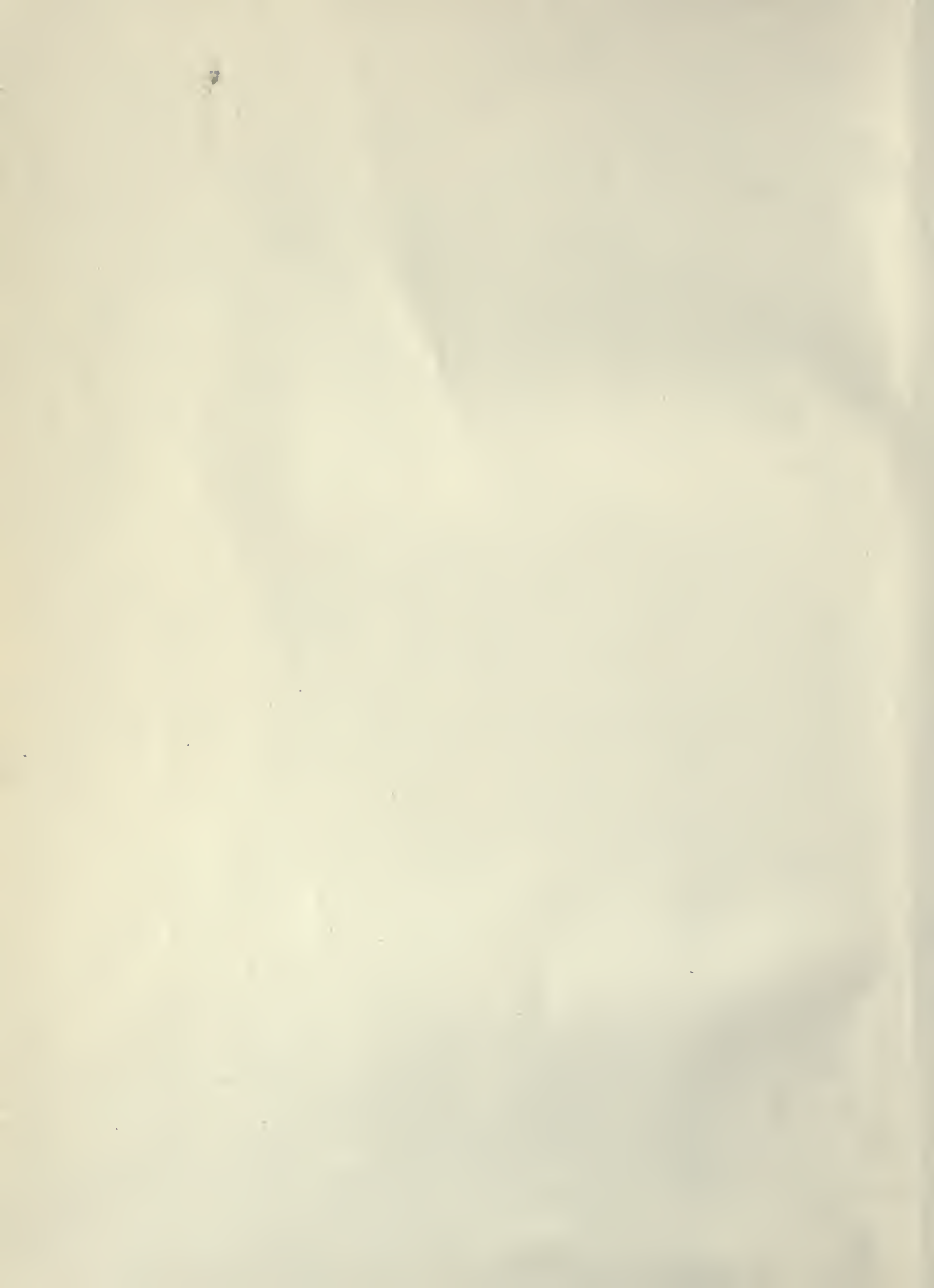

Dancing and Dancers of Today

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

ANNA PAVLOWA AND MIKAIL MORDKIN IN "THE LEGEND OF AZYIADE"

Dancing and Dancers of Today

The Modern Revival of Dancing as an Art

BY

CAROLINE AND
CHARLES H. CAFFIN

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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To

THE FRIENDS WHOSE INTEREST IN THE
EXPRESSIONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE DANCE
HAS ENCOURAGED US TO WRITE THIS BOOK

M79831

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Dancing and Dancers of Today

CHAPTER I

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INTRODUCTION

TODAY, in America, we have awakened to the consciousness that dancing may be something more than a form of social amusement in ballrooms, or of gymnastic exercise on the stage. We are taking a keen interest in the Art of the Dance.

By way of contrast the memory goes back some twenty years to the World's Fair, at Chicago. Among the special entertainments, planned for the visitors, was a certain "Congress of Dancers." Congresses, religious and otherwise, were a feature of the Fair; for the public was, or was supposed to be, in serious quest of edification and instruction. Accordingly, some genius with an advertising sense borrowed the term for this night's attraction; which was neither more nor less than a "giant aggregation" of all the various dancers who were enlivening in detail the Midway Plaisance. As a special feature, to represent the American ideal of dancing, the management had engaged a child prodigy.

One after another the groups occupied the floor of the large hall, and in each dance there was some inspiring motive. Sometimes it was only a physical impulse, uncouthly expressed, as in

the case of the Senegambians. At the other end of the scale, in the Japanese Cherry Blossom Dance, was revealed the most sensitive spiritual appreciation of beauty. Between these the range of expression seemed as varied as human emotion. There passed in review the mystic devotion or savage fierceness of the aboriginal Indian; the joy of physical well-being in the seated dances of the South Sea Islanders; the sensuous allurement and tantalising coyness of the Bedouin Arabs; the haughty coquetry, sombre aloofness or passionate abandon of the Spaniards; the mild plaintive melancholy of the Cingalese; the reckless gaiety or childish vanity of the Coon ragtime. These and many others, each with a soul of its own, expressed, sometimes beautifully, sometimes grotesquely, its own ideal—until it came to the American.

For now appeared a child, graceful, but mechanical; well trained, yet with an automaton-like precision, unspontaneous, unresponsive. In each hand she carried an American flag, and what she danced is best described as: "One, two, three, kick! One, two, three, kick," just as high as the little leg could go. Then again, "One, two, three, kick; two to the right and wave the right-hand flag; two to the left and wave the left-hand flag!"

Was the child enjoying it? Apparently not. Did she care for the flag? Well, if so, she did not show it. Was there any

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

MIKAIL MORDKIN

soul or self-expression in the dancer? None that one could discover. Yet, the spectators seemed satisfied and applauded wildly. They were not discontented with the presentation of this kind of dancing. Why? Had they found in the dance something that oneself had overlooked, or had they been unconscious of the soul in the other dances and regarded them simply as more or less graceful gymnastic exercises?

Circumstances supported the latter explanation. In other words, dancing had ceased to be an art with us and was regarded merely as a technical accomplishment. We no longer used it in response to the promptings of the emotions, but solely as a play of the muscles. The conclusion was a saddening one.

But that was nearly twenty years ago and much has happened since then. We have ceased to allow our ideas to be bound by a utilitarian standard. Beauty for the sake of beauty, no longer the cult of the few, is becoming the heritage of the many. We regard the arts no longer as exotics, only to be enjoyed at rare moments of leisure, but as a necessity of civilised life. We know that we are capable of development along other lines than only intellectual ones. So our ideas of education have changed. It no longer means only a storing of the memory, or sharpening of the ability to reason and calculate, especially the latter, but also an enhancing of the capacity to give expression to our conceptions of the beauty

of life and living. We have also learned that nothing is more conducive to this end than the training of our natural instincts.

Left to themselves, the instincts may straggle and overrun convenient restraints; suppressed they are like the amputated limb, which aches and frets the injured nerves. But trained and guided along natural, healthy lines, they become the best aids to education, because the most natural.

Of all instincts toward art, dancing is the most elemental. It calls for no material or instrument outside of the human body. It does not depend for its enjoyment upon long and arduous study, though like all arts it admits of it. The enjoyment of rhythmic movement on which it is founded, is one of the first things to which the infant responds. The beating of the waves, the swaying of the branches in the winds, the flight of the butterflies and birds, are all suggestive of its appeal. It is easy to believe that its impulse antedated even that other elemental art-instinct, the instinct of song. For surely the first time that primeval man leaped in the air, feeling the flow of life in every limb, and then gained an added pleasure in repeating his leaps in rhythmic sequence, the impulse toward the dance was born.

The impulse, born of instinct, needed further development before it became an art. To the rhythm must be added harmony and conscious balance to complete its technical form,

and fitness and unity to make it expressive of the spiritual side of man's nature. We can imagine the primitive man gradually becoming conscious of giving form to his leaps and bounds, so as to be able to reproduce them for his own delight or that of his fellows, and then using them to express his joy in life or his pride of achievement. Then other ideas, requiring other movements and actions, had to be expressed. Thus, gradually, the instinct of rhythmic movement crystallised into an art, which appealed to him as something so good and reaching so far beyond his actual experiences, that it expressed something of his aspirations toward the unknown, and became linked with his religion. For in all primitive nations the Dance at one time was a form of religious ceremonies.

This developing from instinct to art, which has taken ages to perform in the human race, can be observed in a less degree in the development of the child. More and more, educators of the present day are calling to their aid the resources and observations of psychology and using them to train the instinct that the child may develop in a natural, well-rounded way; that every faculty may be used and strengthened and made to bear its part in the perfect whole. As yet this idea is new and much study must be devoted to it before it accomplishes its full purpose; the teachers themselves have much to learn, and what is harder, much to unlearn. But it is becoming the ideal every-

where, and in nearly all schools that attempt to keep up with the times it is more or less in vogue.

Dancing naturally, therefore, as an expression of elemental instincts is capable of beneficial results, too apparent to need enumerating. But the highest of these is, doubtless, its expressional quality; the fitting of the body to the thought; the conveying, not only the idea but the quality of the idea, so that we shall comprehend the action and also the inspiration of the action, and even somehow be made conscious of the consequence of the action. This is a high quality, but it is what we expect of poetry, and in its highest form it is no mere metaphor to call dancing the poetry of motion.

It is not only in its highest and most artistic form that the dance is a source of delight. It is and always has been preeminently an art for All the People. There are and always have been Folk dances and Folk songs; but no other art, distinctly belonging to the Folk. It is unfortunate that one of the effects of partial education has been to engender a self-consciousness which has clogged the natural dance instinct, just as it has that of spontaneous song. Except among the coloured people we do not hear in this country the natural chorus-singing that may be heard in the colliery districts of Wales, and the manufacturing neighbourhoods of Yorkshire and Lancashire, where groups of artisans, returning from work, will start a

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

INCIDENT DETAIL IN THE DANCE-DRAMA OF SHÉHÉRAZADE
RUSSIAN DANCERS

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song, joining in with improvised harmony. In Germany and Scandinavia, and the Tyrol this spontaneous song is familiar, but it does not seem to bear transplanting.

And the same with the dance. The young Irish girl in America indignantly disclaims all knowledge of the old-time jigs and reels. "Me aunt Mary do be a fine one at the old country dances, but me sister Bride and me, we just dance the new country dances, two steps and all them." But, on being pressed, the colleen, two years away from the sod, admitted that she had danced jigs when she was a slip of a girl back home.

The instinct for the dance is not dead in spite of this self-consciousness, and the formality of ordinary "social" dancing cannot quite take its place. Perhaps that is the explanation of the constant outbreaks of new eccentricities in modern ball-rooms. The American instinct is still too youthful and vital to be content with the conventional dancing of "the best form" of society. So we have the outbreak of "turkey trots," "bunny hugs," "Gaby glides" and so on. It is unfortunate that it should have seemed necessary to the revival of expression in the social dance, to return to instincts so primitive as to be hardly more than brutish. But let us hope this stage of evolution will be quickly passed and the growth will be continually to something of beauty and sprituality, more worthy of our national ideals.

That this Art of the Dance is bound to develop in one form or another among us is evident on every hand. The opportunities offered in our Recreation centres and Settlement Houses for learning Folk dances or "Fancy" dances, as the term is, meet with immediate response. Nor is it only due to the natural craving of young people of different sexes to get together. Many classes, formed entirely of girls, are crowded with eager learners, whose daily toil in shop or factory, so far from deterring them from this exertion, seems to strengthen the impulse toward this expressional resource. In some of the classes, where the foreign element is strong, we hear of the mothers presenting themselves as eager aspirants, and, undiscouraged by their lack of skill, finding joy and gladness to brighten their toilsome lives.

It took some time, even after our awakening to the needs of art in life, for the dance to struggle free of the load of Puritan anathema under which it had so long been buried. As an amusement it was tolerated, as a form of gymnastic exercise it was approved of, but as late as six years ago the claim of dancing to be considered as an art was hardly considered seriously. Rumours of the revival of Greek dancing came over the sea. Such things might suit the artists of Europe, but America remained cold. Even the news that an exponent of these dances was to come to this country evoked no response except among

those who knew. Then suddenly, as so often happens, we became conscious that this new form of beauty was blossoming in our midst; shown in not only one but various forms.

Two American women, widely differing in their methods and appeal, were each expressing in a new way the old eternal truths of Beauty. We could not ignore them. Their appeal was elemental and would not be denied. At first we gasped and wondered. But, at length, we shook ourselves free of puritanic restrictions and hearkened to this new appeal and recognised it as one that answered to the cry of our own nature toward the natural which is the part of the universal and the infinite. We acknowledged it as Art; the oldest of the arts, but ever young, ever answering to the appeal of all that is young in our own being, the Art of the Dance.

Dancers differing from one another in ideal and technique, have visited us since then, and in all of them we look not only for a technique but an inner ideal of art. Mere agility will not satisfy us. The soulless achievement of the old-time ballet school is not enough. Such forms of the dance are good as far as they go, the artist ever breathes into his creations. Only this expression will make of them a Living Soul—a response to our need of Life and Desire of Living.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN OF THE DANCE

IF the length of pedigree is a mark of distinction, the Dance can claim it. It is, as we have seen, the oldest of the arts; born out of the most primitive and most natural instinct of humanity; its instinct to live and express the sense of life by movement. The Greek imagination figured this truth and also the kinship of the dance with drama, poetry and music in the myth of the Muses.

Athene, say the poets of Hellas, sprang from the brain of Zeus; in full panoply of helmet, breastplate, shield and spear, equipped to take her place in Olympus as goddess of the arts and science. Wisdom and the creative imagination were gifts of purely divine origin. But not so the sisterhood of the Muses. They were children of Zeus and Mnemosyne, whom men today call Memory, and she was of the primordial race of the Titans, the early earth-deities who had disputed the sovereignty of the Olympian Gods. While the Muses had their place in heaven, they delighted to be of earth; haunting the brooks and springs. In the movement of the water as it issued direct and fresh from the womb of nature they found their own kinship and inspira-

Photo. by White, N. Y.

LYDIA LOPOUKOWA AND MIKAIL MORDKIN

tion, and following the stream, as it meandered through flowery meadows or threaded the ferny mazes of the woods, they discovered their own joy of movement and instinctive need to express their sense of life.

The movement of water inspired to movement their own supple bodies; the murmur of the brooks invited their own gladness to become audible. Yielding to nature's impulse from without and within themselves, they learned to better nature's rhythms. Little by little the action of their twinkling limbs and swaying bodies became more controlled, the accompaniment of uttered sounds more varied and consciously modulated. Voice tuned itself to movement and movement gathered inspiration from the voice. So, out of the union of movement with the concord of sweet sounds was born the rhythmic Art of the Dance.

For by this time the instinct to express had grown into conscious expression and the expression, no longer artless as nature, had become embodied into the forms and harmonies and rhythms of Art. Then, in the possession of this mystery of expression in which all the sisters shared, each began to vary her own art to interpret her special gift of life. Euterpe, gentle maiden, wove her lyric melody and dance in unison with the tremble of leaves, the leap and slide of water, swaying of trees to the wind and nodding and smile of flowers. Erato,

listing the song of birds at mating time, and the whisper of youth and maid in the hush of the new moon, set the cadence and measure of her dance and song to the love-throbs of the human heart. Terpsichore, alert to the concord of nature's harmonies and rhythms, delighted in harvest and vintage festivals, and led the choral dance and song of thankfulness and worship. And when the choral theme gave voice and vision to the mystery of life and the pains of mortals, grave-faced Melpomene, it was, who inspired the solemn dithyramb and marshalled the slow tread and stately action of the dancers. But, when the theme was merry with quips and pranks, laughter-loving Thalia lead the rout. Meanwhile Calliope and Clio, true daughters of memory, taught men to chant the epics and tell the story of their race; Polyhymnia tuned her lyre to heavenly lays, and Urania interpreted to men the ebb and flow of the tides and the rhythmic revolutions of the planets, which we call the Science of Astronomy.

Thus Hellenic imagination, embroidering the fact with graceful fancy, pictured Dance, Music, Poetry and Drama, as sister-arts, born of a single instinct, common to humanity, that of Rhythmic Movement. Each developed in unison with all, and it was at the highest period of the Greek culture that the union of those arts was most completely harmonised. To the tone and measure of the verse were joined the vocal tones and rhythmic

gait and gestures of the actors, whose interpretation of the theme was reinforced by choral dance and song.

Nor, while the Greeks carried the union of the arts of tone and rhythm to a degree of harmony, unattained, so far as we know, by other nations, was the fact of the union peculiar to themselves. They did not invent it. It developed out of an elementary instinct which has been discovered to be common to all races at a corresponding period of their primitive state. Everywhere the dance in its rudimentary form is accompanied by tonal rhythm of voice and instrument and allied to dramatic action, while the conception of the whole is inspired by a creative imagination, striving to express itself in symbols.

The impulse of the dance-drama is the expression of emotions, the earliest of which seem to be religious; the consciousness of invisible powers, regarded as spirits of good and evil to be propitiated. The only religious consciousness possessed by the Patagonians is said to be a panic horror of evil spirits, which they seek to avert by monotonous, mumbling, senseless incantations, accompanied by a rocking to and fro of the body. It seems a straining of terms to speak of this as dance and poetry, yet it represents a germ of them, equivalent in expression to the merely embryonic character of the religious emotion.

In the more advanced stage of consciousness of good, as

well as evil, spirits, the rudiments of a religious cult make their appearance and the dance is regulated by ritual ceremonies. Travellers tell of the performance of it by certain savage tribes of Australia. The dance is usually conducted at night by torch-light; those who take part being fantastically decked with flowers and feathers, while their bodies are greased and covered with white clay. The last is supposed to be for the purpose of disguise, since the greatest secrecy is maintained regarding the ceremonies, all strangers being rigidly excluded. Among the Aleutians, who inhabit the archipelago of islands jutting from the coast of Alaska, the performers in the mystic dances cover their faces with wooden masks, carved in rude likeness of human and animal heads. Masks of a corresponding character were used by the North American Indians in their ritual dances, which further involved considerable pantomimic action. Similar features characterise the ritual dance-ceremonies of the Society of the Areoi which extends over the islands of Polynesia.

In fact, in all these cases, and there are many others, is to be found the germ of secret societies and mystic cults, which reached a high development of symbolism and beauty of ceremony in the mysteries of Isis, that originated in Egypt and spread to Greece and Italy. The Areoi especially are suggestive of the secret societies which still exist in our own civilisation. The society consisted of seven degrees of increasing

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Photo. by Notman, Boston

RUTH ST. DENIS IN HER INCENSE DANCE

privilege; the members of each being distinguished by a special kind of tattooing. "The Areoi," says Mantzius, "used to go in boats, decorated with flowers, from island to island. Everywhere they were welcomed with respectful joy and, as long as they remained, performed their dances and pantomimes which originally were of a religious character, but afterwards became historical and comical. In these ceremonies the vehement gesticulations were accompanied by a curious kind of music."

This account of the Society of Areoi might have been written of the dance-drama of the Greeks at their corresponding period of civilisation. With them the religious cult circled about the idea of the procreative force in nature, as personified in the god Dionysos. He came to be regarded as the special protector of the vineyards, which spread over the sunny hillsides and were the chief product of the soil. But the reverence paid to him had deeper root in the worship paid to the mystery of the male force in nature.

Aristophanes in his comedy, "Acharnians," describes a Dionysiac festival, celebrated by a peasant and his family. The family begins with a prayer and then walks in procession to the place where the offering is to be made. The latter is carried in a basket by the daughter, who walks in advance of a slave, bearing a phallus, the symbol of fertility. Behind him walks the peasant, chanting a song to the honour of the god and the

force which he embodies. Meanwhile, from the window of the cottage, the wife, playing the part of the audience, watches the ceremony. Aristophanes sought to raise a laugh at the poverty of the ceremony, as compared to the grandeur which the Dionysiac festival had attained in his own day. But in doing so, he shed a valuable light on the origin and primitive character of the ritual.

For, long before his own day, the single maiden had been reinforced by a number of others, acting as canephorai or basket-bearers, while the single slave had been supplanted by a band of youths, whose faces were smeared with mulberry juice, their bodies being fantastically clothed in wine-stained draperies and goat-skins. This merry rout or *comos,* enacting the part of satyrs, indulged in comic actions and flung gibes and jokes among the crowd of spectators. Meanwhile the chief victim of sacrifice, a he-goat or *tragos,* is lead by a grave band of older men, accompanying the priest, who now on behalf of the community fills the rôle that in old days was performed by the father of each family.

At length the altar is reached and the chorus of satyrs and the chorus of goat-leaders form a circle round it, on the edge of which the congregation of spectators spreads an extended fringe.

The priest ascends the platform of the altar and lifts his

voice in prayer to Dionysos; and at each mention of the sacred name, cries of "Euoi! Euoi!" resound from the goat-chorus and are shrieked by the satyr-chorus and taken up with varied expression by the throng. Nor does the priest fail to recount the story of the god's birth and bringing up; pausing at intervals, while the choruses move around the altar with symbolic gestures, chanting the dithyrambic song.

From this ritual ceremony there were but two steps to be made and the final form of the dance-drama of the Greeks was developed. One of these consisted in the change from narrative to dialogue. Instead of the priest telling the story of the god, he and the attendant priest would impersonate the various characters in turn and enact the incident. The second step was marked, when the popularity of these festivals led to their being given on other occasions than the Dionysiac feast; in which case the doings of some hero would be substituted for the worship of the god. But even in this case the dance-drama preserved a flavour of its religious origin. The altar still stood in the centre of the orchestra and from its platform the principal actors declaimed their verses, stepping down at intervals to address themselves more intimately to the chorus.

By the time a secular theme and the impersonation of it had been adopted, the goat-chorus parted from the chorus of satyrs. Henceforth, tragedy and comedy moved on to separate de-

velopment, and each had its own poets and its own traditions.

It has seemed worth while to dwell on the evolution of the Dionysiac ritual, because it illustrates so clearly what travellers have noted in all the parts of the world; namely, that the instinct of primitive man under the impulse of self-expression and of communicating his emotions to his fellows has recognised the natural alliance of Poetry, Music, Dance and Drama, as sister-arts of tone and movement.

It was the recognition of this that inspired Wagner, and today is the basis of Gordon Craig's ideas for the revival of the Art of the Theatre. He would create a reaction from the toneless, unrhythmic, unimaginative naturalism of the modern drama and method of stage-production; slough off the sophistications and conventional forms that have grown around the art, and base it once more on instinct. At first his idea was scouted as the empty vapouring of an unpractical dreamer. But the study of psychology has been spreading of late years and now it is being understood that in the modern, as well as in the primitive man, instinct is the basis of the physical and emotional life, affecting also the life of his intellect. Further, that proper development of all the faculties must start from the instinctive promptings of the individual nature; and that the desires, sensations and thoughts, resulting from them, should as far as possible be left free of rules, dogmas and con-

Photo. by White, N. Y.

ALEXIS BULGAKOW AS SHAH-RIAR AND THE ODALISQUES IN THE DANCE-DRAMA "SHÉHÉRAZADE"

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ventional restrictions, so that the individual may grow to his finest capacity of self-realisation and self-expression.

Imagine a number of actors and actresses, who have thus been allowed to reach each his or her own utmost of emotional expression; a stage director, who has himself learned to develop his imagination naturally out of his instincts, and a playwright of corresponding imagination, similarly self-grown! The last would be able, not merely to serve up a few cross-cut slices of life as the result of uninspired observation, but to create a vision of life, interpreting something of life's universal harmonies and rhythms. The stage-director on his part, through his own cultivated imagination and out of his knowledge of the expressional technique of the stage, would be able to give substance and movement to the playwright's vision. Lastly, under his inspiration, the natural self-expression of the actors and actresses would be co-ordinated into a living whole of harmonised relations, as are the units of a finely balanced orchestra.

This in brief is Gordon Craig's ideal, which has grown out of the disgust that he and others feel over the present condition of the theatre, and its jumble of occasional sense and beauty with a superabundance of foolishness, meretriciousness, vulgarity, and falseness to life.

That some progress is being made toward the fulfilment of

this ideal can be detected in the present revival of the Art of the Dance. For in it one can discover more than a glimmering of the old instinct of expression, which finds its highest realisation in the union of Poetry, Music, Dance and Drama.

But before pursuing this new phase of the Art of the Theatre, it is worth while to glance at the parts which naturalism, on the one hand, and some form of convention or symbolic method, on the other, have played in the growth of the dance-drama.

From the earliest times mimic dances have existed side by side, says Mantzius, with religious dances of symbolic significance. He is of the opinion that the latter are certainly the older. The question is not of much importance, otherwise it might be argued from the study of children that the earliest form of conscious expression is that of imitation. Amongst savages the imitation of animals has been a favourite practice. The Australian aborigines, for example, imitate with remarkable fidelity the movements and sounds of the emu and kangaroo. In time they carried the illusion further by dressing in the feathers of the one and the hide of the other. From this they passed to an organised dance-drama, in which not only these creatures were impersonated, but all the features of a hunt were performed.

Correspondingly, among the primitive nations, including the

Indian tribes of this continent, the mimicking of war has been a constant motive of the dance-drama. It has involved not only the actually naturalistic features of tracking the enemy, stealing upon him and engaging in a conflict of offence and defence, but also has been characterised by the introduction of grotesque and comic fights, which served as interludes to relieve the general seriousness. At the same time they afforded opportunity for individual inventiveness, which advanced mere imitation toward creative acting.

For even in the primitive dance-drama of savage peoples one discovers the consciousness that acting may be more than imitation. It is a consciousness rather conspicuously lacking in American audiences, habituated to the detailed naturalism or imitation, fathered by Mr. Belasco. They applaud, for example, quite extravagantly the representation on the stage of a telephone switch-board with a "hello" girl attached to it. In their naïve childishness, not a whit advanced beyond the mimetic instinct of primitive savages, they prattle about the introduction on the stage of this feature of actual life, to which in actual life they are totally indifferent, as if it represented a distinct advance in stagecraft and a new motive in drama. How the ingeniously clever Mr. Belasco must smile up his sleeve! No wonder that, when he appears in response to the vociferous applause, he strokes the pendent lock upon his forehead, while

at the back of his busy brain there hums the reflection of another stage-director: "Lord! What fools these mortals be!"

But to return to the war dance. Here is a description from Bahnson's "Anthropologie der Naturvölker" of The Korroborree, as performed by the Australian savages to celebrate peace after war. "Several tribes are wont to assemble for this festival, which is held by moonlight. The day before the appointed date the men remain concealed in the bushes, in order to decorate themselves for the festival by rubbing their skin thoroughly with grease and covering it with white clay. Towards sunset the women light a great fire and strike up a monotonous song, in which the same verse is constantly repeated; they accompany it by beating on a piece of opossum hide, stretched on their knees like a drum skin, or by knocking together two boomerangs (wooden missiles used by the Australians in war and hunting). Armed with clubs, spears and other weapons, or swinging torches, the men rush out from among the bushes. Conducted by a man who beats the time with two sticks or clubs, they begin their dance by winding and twisting their bodies, stamping on the ground, and making all kinds of gestures and grimaces. From time to time their lines dissolve into a confused crowd; small groups play a game which consists in chasing each other in a circle, running backwards and forwards till the lines close again and dancing be-

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Photo. by Mishkin Studio, N. Y.

ANNA PAVLOWA AND MIKAIL MORDKIN

gins afresh. This goes on throughout the night till the following morning."

Another peace-dance is the so-called Scalp-Dance of the American Indians; a peculiarity of which is that it is performed by women. The description is taken from Mantzius' "History of Theatrical Art." "While the medicine-men—Shamans—sing and mark the rhythm on their primitive musical instruments, the women—painted red and decorated with beads and ribbons —dance in concentric circles round the scalps, which are suspended on a pole in the centre; sometimes one of the women carries them on her shoulder. At each stroke on the drum the dancers rise on tip-toe, jump up and slide a little to the left, all the time singing in perfect rhythm with the music of the Shamans. After some minutes the women have to rest. During this pause one of them relates events of past war, especially the deeds and deaths of the fallen men; at last she exclaims: 'whose scalps do I carry on my shoulder?' At these words they all jump up again with cheers and screams of vengeance, and dancing begins afresh."

It is to be noted that this dance-drama is scarcely mimetic; but rather of a conventionalised character; the jump and slide of the woman in rhythm with the music being symbolic in expression and no doubt following a form set by the Shamans. Further, this interlude is serious, occupied with a recitation of

the deeds and deaths of the fallen warriors. Here we discover not only the germ of creative, poetical drama, but also that it parallels the evolution of Greek dance-drama, as the last passed from the celebration of a Deity, to that of heroes. It is the beginning of historical drama, which with the Indians stopped where it began, while the Greeks developed it into the heroic drama of the classic period.

Meanwhile, another source of the mimetic dance-drama of primitive nations always and everywhere has been the instinct of the man for the woman; his wooing of her and her eluding of him, with the final yielding or capture. Sometimes, even among people of little civilisation, the dance was enacted with decorum; elsewhere, with the unbridled naturalism that is usually associated with the "erotic" dance. Under either aspect it is probably the earliest form of the pas de deux, as contrasted with the choral dance.

We have spoken of the comic interludes. One frequently recurring in ancient as well as modern times is founded upon the most usual of hot-weather incidents,—the attack of an insect. The modern "Tarantella" has an ancient lineage in European dance-lore and can claim kinship with remote alien civilisations. But the insect, instead of being a poisonous spider, is often a bee. Captain Cook describes a dance of the inhabitants of the Philippines, in which with the accompaniments of choral move-

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

SCENE FROM BALLET "LE LAC DES CYGNES"

ments the dancer feigns to be pursued by one of the insects; the situation being enacted with every detail of naturalistic vraisemblance. The same motif appears in one of the favourite pantomimes of the Almees or Almahas, the professional dancing girls of the East and Egypt, who are engaged to dance and recite in private houses. In his "Correspondence d'Orient" M. Michaud describes one of these interludes. A girl has been stung by a bee and dances round and round with gestures expressive of pain, meanwhile uttering cries of "Oh! Oh! Oh! the bee!" Her companions rush to her assistance and in order to reach the pain-spot, remove her veil, her shawl and one garment after another; the disrobing being carried as far as the taste of the audience sanctions it.

Mantzius, quoting this, finds possible analogy to it in the beautiful poem-drama of the Indians—"Sakuntala." While King Dushyanta, hidden among the bushes in the garden, watches Sakuntala and her maidens, the former discovers that she is being pursued by a bee. In her fright she exclaims: "Ah! a bee! disturbed by the sprinkling of the fountain, has left the young jasmine and is trying to settle on my face." As she circles round in her flight, the King remarks: "Beautiful! there is something charming even in her terror." Then while the dance continues he comments upon the grace and beauty of the princess and apostrophises the "happy bee."

The chief point of interest in these and similar interludes and dance-dramas is the fact that they involve the union of naturalistic mimicry and conventional dance forms. In this respect they preserve the tradition of the classic Greek drama, from which the later stage departed, as drama became separated from dance. Meanwhile the latter, even as in independent stage art, has never wholly dissociated itself from mimic representation. Although many of its forms only embody the abstract sensations of joy and beauty, others have always clung to the interpretation of some theme or story. But in the ballet developed by the Italians, which was popular during the eighteenth century and early half of the succeeding century, the naturalness of the dramatic features was lost in the convention of the dance forms. The theme, such as it was, became only the vague nucleus of what was actually an exhibition of gymnastic grace and skill. It is because of a return to the older usage, founded in the hereditary tradition of the art, that the modern revival of the dance has its first claim to recognition. The forms of the dance have again been wedded to those of the dramatic expression.

In its choral and ballet features, involving supernumeraries as well as principals, and also in its depicting of a theme, the dance-drama to-day has been most highly developed by the Russians. In their case it is impregnated with the naturalism,

which is the characteristic motive also of the Russian novel and drama. In the latter arts, authors of other nations have emulated them, but the palm, not only for frankness of naturalism but also for investing it with picturesque attractiveness as well as poignancy, belongs to Russia. And the same qualities distinguish her creations of dance-drama.

Meanwhile, it is not the naturalism that constitutes the sole or even the chief merit of these creations. It is the sense of beauty which is revealed by the Russian, who makes use of every opportunity which the theme affords of artistic appeal to ear and eye and imagination. Pre-eminently he relies upon the inherent capacity of the dance-forms, in their endless variety of permutations, based on a comparatively limited number of steps and gestures. He handles his coryphees as a composer manipulates his musical theme, elaborating melodies and harmonies. First and foremost, his imagination, corresponding to the musician's, pictures his theme and its development as an organised succession of rhythmic movements, all harmoniously related, adding each its quota of significance and beauty to the ensemble. It is the sheer abstract loveliness of the whole thing that is its pre-eminent distinction and to this the note of naturalism, when it is added, forms a piquant or poignant accent.

And to the ensemble of these dance-dramas all the artistic

resources of the theatre contribute. The Russian invites the co-operation of the arts of music, architecture, painting and sculpture; and has created a new art, that of scenic lighting. The excellency of the result is not the product of a single master-mind, but of several master-minds united in perfect sympathy of co-operation. Names that it is fair to single out for special mention are those of Foukin, stage director of the "Big Theatre," Moscow, the headquarters of the Russian dance-drama; Mikail Mordkin, himself supreme artist of the dance as well as a master of unrivalled experience in choregraphic direction; Bakst, the designer of mise-en-scène and of details of costumes and accessories, possessed of an extraordinarily original and fecund imagination; and the musical composer, Rimski-Korsakow. Meanwhile the example of these artists has bred others only second to themselves, and the influence of the master-minds has filtered down to the rank and file, so that the humblest is inspired with the ardour of the artist.

It should be of interest to Americans to know that it is to an American, Isadora Duncan, that these Russian artists acknowledge their indebtedness. It was she who inspired, they will tell you, the latest development of these dance-dramas, and Miss Duncan herself is in turn largely indebted to the inspiration of Gordon Craig.

To those of us who saw these Russian dance-dramas in

Paris, where they were produced by the master minds of the Imperial Troupe, the repetition of them in this country fell somewhat short of the original in their finer subtleties of expressiveness. Yet, even so, they were an amazing revelation of what can be done under artistic impulse and co-operation. Contrasted with the shoddy patchwork that passes for a beautiful production in New York they shone as a diamond in comparison with bottle-glass. The reception, however, which they met with was lacking in enthusiasm. The public, unaccustomed to such artistry, was dazzled like a bat in the brilliance of an arc-light.

The stage, which these artists had occupied for a while, was re-absorbed into the regular Broadway routine. Had you visited the theatre you would have seen the old familiar hodgepodge of a little individual cleverness, stirred into a swamp of inanity and vulgarity. Back again had come the silly tripping, marching and counter-marching of self-conscious chorus-girls and the stale variety of "funny" jokists, male and female; art had been ousted, and in the place of a mise-en-scène, stimulating to illusions, were trumpery, painted canvases, costumes of childish invention and blaring disregard of harmonies of colour, and music utterly uninspired. A show more shameful in its tawdry stupidity one could hardly imagine, and yet it had been highly commended by some of our leaders of dramatic taste!

CHAPTER III

ISADORA DUNCAN

MAY the combination of two arts enhance, or must it detract from, the beauty of each? Is the spirit of each a thing so separate and apart that they cannot be combined without confusion? Must we listen to music with our eyes shut and look at dancing with our ears stopped? This question seems to be banal, but it was the subject of many of the criticisms which greeted Isadora Duncan's first appearance in New York. And truly it would seem that in developing their musical taste some musicians have entirely neglected all the other arts. Accordingly it is only in surroundings where everything is immobile, that they can be impressed with compositions which bear such lively names as Saraband, Mazurka, Bourrée, Gavotte, Gigue. So much does stillness seem to be their one ideal, that it is a wonder they permit the musicians to move their arms so vigorously.

So the musical pundits were shocked. It was a desecration of music to associate with it so "primitive" an art as dancing; too much, possibly, like opening a cathedral window and letting nature's freshness blow through the aisles and vaulting.

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ISADORA DUNCAN

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It ruffles the hair of the worshippers and disturbs the serene detachment of their reveries.

From their standpoint quite possibly the pundits are right. They have trained their ears at the expense of their eyes, and have accustomed their brain to respond exclusively to aural impressions.

Therefore, since the sense of sight is dormant, it does not matter that the colouring of the hall in which they hear their Music is crude, its decoration shabby and its lighting distressing to the eyes. That is quite appropriate for the proper appreciation of the highest music! But to look at a beautiful creature, so impersonal as to be neither man, woman, nor child, flitting across a background, restful to the senses, its colour only vaguely felt, in rhythmic movement accorded to the subtlest phrasing rather than the actual beat of the accent, that was intolerable. Yet what said one whom they themselves have called master: Richard Wagner?

Of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, in which, to the horror of some musical critics, Isadora Duncan dances the second, third and fourth movements, Wagner wrote as follows in his "Artwork of the Future":

"This symphony is the Apotheosis of Dance herself; it is the Dance in her highest aspect, as it were, the loftiest deed of bodily motion incorporated in an ideal mould of tone. Melody

and Harmony unite around the sturdy bones of Rhythm to firm and fleshy human shapes, which now with giant limbs, and now with soft, elastic pliance, almost before our very eyes, close up the supple teeming ranks; the while now gently, now with daring, now serious, now wanton, now pensive, and again exulting, the deathless strain sounds forth and forth, until in the whirl of delight a kiss-triumph seals the last embrace.

"And yet these happy dancers were merely shadowed forth in tones—mere sounds that imitated men! Like a second Prometheus, who fashioned men of clay (Thon), Beethoven had sought to fashion men of tone. Yet not from 'Thon' or Tone, but from both substances together, must man, the image of life-giving Zeus, be made. Were Prometheus' mouldings only offered to the eye, so were those of Beethoven only offered to the ear. But only where eye and ear confirm each other's sentience of him (Zeus) is the whole artistic man at hand."

"The whole artistic man!" or in Isadora Duncan's own words, "all that is most moral, healthful, and beautiful in art." It is to express this that she has dedicated her art. She believes in the sacredness of humanity and the sacredness of her service to it through her art, so that nothing can be too good or too holy to offer to it. All that is best of music shall accompany it, just as all that is most lovely in colouring and setting must be sought out for it; all that is most impressive in the body and

mind of the dancer must be dedicated to it. For with her the dance must grow from desire and will to dance; from sympathy with the rhythms of nature and in accordance with its laws. No need laboriously to stretch the muscles and ligaments with unnatural exercise until they become so strong that the laws of gravitation seem to be defied. Given a normal, healthy body, developed by natural impulses, harmoniously balanced and controlled, and a mind open to the influence of all that is most beautiful in life and art, then the body will be provided with that upward gravitation of spirituality which will counteract the earthly gravitation and give a lightness and poise that mere muscular training can never accomplish. Such training as will develop the symmetry and grace of the body and help it "to evolve movements in ever varying, natural, unending sequences," is her only preparation for the form of the dance. And then, to fit the form to the gladness and light of the universe and join it to the eternal rhythms of the spheres, she adds the training of the will and the spirit.

Such are the ideals of the dancer whose art we heard, before her arrival in this country, described a little vaguely sometimes as "barefoot" dancing, sometimes as "Greek" dancing. It is hardly necessary to say that neither the one nor the other is relevant in appreciating her art. Greek it is in so far as the Greeks went straight to nature for their inspiration, and

Isadora Duncan has sought the same source, and nature is the same in all times and all ages. But never is it Greek for the sake of antiquarian prejudices nor opinion!

Again and again as you watch the play of her limbs and the fluttering folds of the draperies you are reminded of this or that Greek statue or form on a vase. But this is not the result of any slavish imitation.

Being a lover of beautiful, natural form, she could not fail to be impressed by the truth and beauty of Greek art. She found in it a synthesis of the sequences of natural movements; in fact, "of the laws of nature, wherein all is the expression of unending, ever increasing evolution, wherein are no ends and no beginnings." Those are her own words, and she adds: "I might take examples of each pose and gesture in the thousands of figures we have left to us in the Greek vases and bas-reliefs; there is not one which in its movements does not presuppose another movement."

Thus it was the confirmation of her own instinct that she discovered in Greek art. She was drawn to the latter by her natural impulses, and found herself most akin to the Greek when she was most natural herself.

Accordingly, because the instinct toward the expressional use of the body is as natural to her as it was to the Greeks, Isadora Duncan is of one mind with them in believing that the

use of the nude in dancing is as sacred and sane as in the other arts. "Dancing naked upon the earth," she says, "I naturally fall into Greek positions, for Greek positions are only earth positions."

The bare limbs and the gauzy draperies, flowing free from her body, evidence her belief in the expressive power of the body, not a wish to display her body because of any particular beauty or grace of its own. It is the sacredness of the body, not the beauty of any one particular body that is her motive. And, to those who have understood the meaning of her art, it is no drawback that she herself has not the absolute perfection of proportion demanded by the Broadway show-girl. Rather it is a confirmation of her ideal, that the body naturally and simply used as a means of expression is a thing to be revered because it is "most moral, healthful and beautiful."

And no doubt that for sheer beauty and gladness of the sort that brings happy tears to the eyes and catches the breath in a sob at the throat, few things in life equal one's first experience of the dancing of Isadora Duncan. The personality of the woman is lost in the impersonality of her art. The figure becomes a symbol of abstract conception of rhythm and melody. The spirit of rhythm and melody by some miracle seem to have been made visible.

"A presence distilled from the corporeality of things, it

floats in, bringing with it the perfume of flowers, the breath of zephyrs and the ripples of the brook; the sway of pine trees on hillsides and quiver of reeds beside woodland pools; the skimming of swallows in the clear blue and the poise of the humming-bird in a garden of lilies; the gliding of fish and the dart of the firefly and the footfall of deer on dewy grass; the smile of the sunlight on merry beds of flowers and the soft tread of shadows over nameless graves; the purity of the dawn, the tremble of twilight and the sob of moonlit waves. These and a thousand other hints of the rhythm which nature weaves about the lives and deaths of men seem to permeate her dance. The movement of beauty that artists of all ages have dreamed of as penetrating the universe through all eternity, in a few moments of intense consciousness seems to be realised before one's eyes." *

For already, before the dancer makes her entrance, we are under the spell of music. The lights have been subdued and the scene is one of grey-green curtains, falling in long, simple folds from the full height of the stage. The effect is neither sombre nor gay; just a tranquil background on which the imagination may play, so that when there appears before the sweeping folds a small appealing figure, it comes as no discordant interruption to our reveries but as though the tone

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had indeed been moulded by the hands of Prometheus and its embodiment were set before our eyes. At first the steps are hesitating and wistful, as if she were feeling her way in the new world, not quite sure that the atmosphere is as full of love and gladness as her heart desires. For the natural spirit of the ethereal creature is gladness, and soon in response to the gay strains of music she swings into the lilt of gambolling limbs and flying draperies. It is the epitome of all the pure natural joy that belongs to the beginning of life; the coming of the Spring, the first buds on the trees, the tiny flowers, still hidden by last autumn's leaves; the birds, newly arrived from the south. So joyous is it, so unpremeditated, that it seems like the play of a child to whom sorrow is unknown and unbelievable, and for that reason it has the child's pathos.

Such is the beginning of her dance to Gluck's "Iphigenie en Aulide."

And, now as we may know, she greets her girl-companions. For gaiety gives place to comradeship. The hands are outstretched in friendly welcome. The eyes look forth fearlessly, frankly; and as the youthful comrades sport and play, glance meets glance and hand seeks hand. The ball is tossed high in the air, and caught with outstretched arms; while our spirits bound in sympathy. Then on the soft yielding sand the young forms throw themselves in careless abandonment of play. The

knuckle-bones are strewn before them and the half-recumbent form bends over them, the white hand and arms flashing over the sand. Eagerly or lazily, with careless grace, the incarnation of merry sportfulness, the game is played. Life is still nothing but brightness and youth has but added friendship to the joys of childhood.

But now a tender note of deeper feeling is felt. The maidens watch for the returning fleet. There is longing and even anxiety. The deeper feelings of life are awakening and pain can no longer be excluded. There has been parting and loneliness before this looked-for home-coming. The movements now are not all dancing. A lingering step sometimes. Arms stretched out in supplication and longing. The child has entered into the heritage of life, fuller, deeper and more vital. The gaze is intense, the outstretched arms vibrate with passion, the feet are winged with longing. No carelessness in the present joy, but exaltation. Spring has ripened into summer and some of the blossoms are falling and withering that the fruit may form. Spring has vanished and the rose is come. But there is gladness and beauty in the rose, even while its petals fall softly through the air and flutter to the ground as in a caress. And just as softly and caressingly the feet of the dancer press the ground, as she glides in swift expectancy to greet and exult in the coming of the long expected.

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

LYDIA LOPOUKOWA AND MIKAIL MORDKIN

They are marvellous in their subtle changes of mood, these dances of the Old Greek Story. Never mimetic in the sense of direct acting, but ever suggestive of the spirit behind. There are no steps, no pirouettes, no elevation on to the toes, no display of trained agility, nothing but natural poses, changing and melting into each other harmoniously and insensibly. They are even somewhat limited in variety, because her aim is not to multiply poses but to discover in her own body a free and natural expression of what her intelligence and spirit prompt.

Meanwhile, when she made her second tour in this country, it was evident that she had increased her range of movements; and to the knowing eye the source of them was equally clear. It was the primitive dance of the Cambodians, who had recently been appearing in Paris. They had swept the art-world with enthusiasm; at least, that portion of the art-world which is under the sway of the modern motive. The latter, on one hand, is expression. For in revolt against the long preoccupation of artists with the representation of the appearances of nature, whether academically, naturalistically, realistically or impressionally, they are aiming at a high degree of abstraction. They would paint, for example, the human figure, still-life or landscape, not for the sake of recording how either looks, but to interpret what there is in it of expressional suggestion. To the younger generation this motive comes as a novelty, but to

one man, advanced in years, it has been the consistent motive of his life's work. This man is Rodin, of whom Miss Duncan saw much during the two years preceding her second visit here; the period in which Rodin was deeply interested in the Cambodian dancers. Besides studying them for herself, she must have seen the many drawings that the sculptor made of them and enjoyed the advantage of discussing with him the character and spirit of their poses and gestures.

They have their root in a phase of civilisation, far earlier than the classic Greek, yet their naturalness has become affected by certain symbolical conventions, peculiar to themselves. They are even sophisticated; yet with a sophistication so remote from that of our own day, that it has all the allurement of the primitive.

Its form and spirit are unmistakable, though it is very difficult to describe them in words. Perhaps one approaches a suggestion of them in the assertion that they involve a certain rhythmical uncouthness. The poses and gestures are far removed from the grace of Greek art. The bodies are swayed less by intelligence than by emotion, and the latter has a touch of savagery, a suggestion of crude earth. Their movements differ from those of the Greek dancer, as we know the latter, somewhat as Han pottery differs from later Chinese porcelain.

The influence of this appeared in Miss Duncan's interpreta-

tion of the Dance of the Furies in "Orphée." Here the expression of concentrated venom and malice is carried out with an intensity and detail more dramatic, savage, earthly than in the earlier dances. The muscles harden in the face and limbs, the movements are abrupt, fierce, now bowed and now angular. The carriage of the body is stiff and inflexible, and then quivers and vibrates like a bow-string, loosed from the hand. This dance is something of a tour de force. It fascinates one by the virtuosity displayed in wedding a borrowed convention to the free expression of the dancer's own nature. It has, therefore, less of the abstract, impersonal quality which constitutes the charm of Miss Duncan's earlier work.

It is this very charm, however, which has made it impossible to secure any picture that can give an adequate idea of the exquisiteness of these dances. It has so far proved beyond the power of artists in other mediums to translate this transient elusive poetry and make it permanent and still alive.

Yet not even in the "Orphée," still less in the "Iphigenie" is there an attempt at expression of the actual facts of the tragedy. In the latter it is the pathos, that any doom of sorrow should overtake a creature so gay and bright, which is the poignant note throughout. And so in the "Orphée" dance we are conscious of sorrow overcome by beauty; and it is ever the beauty that is distilled from emotion and not the emotion itself which

is the appeal of this spiritualised art. In one dance only does she seem to attempt the expression of the actual crisis of tragedy, and this has not been seen by the general public. It is the dance to the "Liebes-Todt" of Tristan and Isolde. It shows flashes of exquisite beauty, so ethereal that they could not be held for more than a moment. But the effect was too impalpable for a general audience in a large hall. The touch of supreme anguish seemed to be evaded, just when one was led to the point of expectation. Possibly the motives of the music are worked out in too great a detail to sustain a dance. But, however that may be, the impression was rather like being aware that something was present of rarest beauty of which however we were only allowed a glimpse now and then.

It goes without saying, after all, that a spirit so sensitive as Miss Duncan's to the diverse moods of joyousness and gaiety cannot fail to respond to the deeper emotions. But perhaps one reason that our spirits respond more readily to the sprightly appeal is that, like the sunshine, it is a need of our life and there is none too much of it in our modern city life. Of pleasure or excitement there is plenty; but pure, spontaneous, natural joy comes to us so seldom that we are hungry for it. Such a gay, careless swagger, for example, as she displays in the apprentice's dance in the "Meistersinger"; such a spontaneous burst of gladness as the Schubert "Moment Musicale"; such

Photo. by Otto Sarony

RUTH ST. DENIS AS RADHA IN THE DANCE OF THE FIVE SENSES

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ecstasy of joy as the Blue Danube! One can imagine how the inhabitant of the dreary Northern winter longs for and greets the return of the Sun, and the refreshment that it brings to him, by our enjoyment of these. Our hearts dance with the gay dancing figure as it swings, so unencumbered before us, so free.

Freedom! There can be no joy without it. And here is Freedom personified, no restraints of clothing, no shoe to bind the foot. No convention that counts or orders the steps of the dance. The very rhythm of the music translated into co-ordinated phrasing rather than any restricting measured beat. For hardly ever do we find any regular stepping of the "one, two, three," order. Often the actual step is taken regardless of the measure and only co-ordinated by expression. Yet the harmony is not broken, but guided and balanced to a perfect whole.

We speak of these dances as Greek or primitive, but what could be more modern in motive than this? Are we not learning to discard rigid rules that have hardened into conventions-for-the-sake-of-convention? If it does not make for efficiency, let it go. And what is efficiency, but the utmost possible expression of human endeavour. And that is just what art must be. We do not ignore rules; but we accept the essence of the rule unreservedly, that we can break the letter while we

keep the spirit, and so Isadora Duncan can break the measure of her music, because she keeps the expression.

This is the new ideal that is recreating our systems of education, and it is an inspiring motive not only to Miss Duncan's art but of her ideals of life. To educate a certain number of children by this ideal of controlled freedom so that their bodies and minds, following healthy instincts without conventional restraints, shall develop in balanced harmony, has been an ambition very dear to her heart. The open air, freedom from constraining clothing, wholesome food, but food to be desired, and all the exercises of running and climbing and bathing that the growing child naturally craves, are the only rules imposed. For the rest she trusts to natural impulses and desires, guided by well balanced instincts. That all the children will dance because they wish to dance is her hope, but none will be trained with tasks and exercises that mean torture to unformed bones, and straining the growing muscles, in order to make dancers of them. That they will be helped to feel consciously the joys of perfect poise as the bare foot holds the ground, of the upward spring of the body, we may well believe; for all of these are parts of the human heritage of joy, which too many of us have missed, because in our day and generation teachers were more bent on curbing or irradicating natural instincts than in guiding and developing them. And it must be a source of joy

to Miss Duncan to think that her ideals, as set forth in her art, have undoubtedly had their share in convincing the modern world of the beauty and desirability of thus centering the control of moral and physical being not in authority of rules and conventions but in the rightly trained desire and will; substituting for submission to control a true sense of harmonious balance.

In some of her ideas, no doubt, Miss Duncan has run so far ahead of her age that the latter is left in doubt as to the direction of her path. Her belief in the sacredness of the use of the nude in her art, in which she has led the way for other modern dancers, proves a stumbling block to many. Of her absolute sincerity, and the purity of her ideal, there is no doubt, and she stands for it with unflinching courage.

In her own words, "Only the movements of the naked body can be perfectly beautiful. Man, arrived at the end of civilisation, will have to return to nakedness; not the unconscious nakedness of the savage, but to the conscious and acknowledged nakedness of the spiritual being." And again she declares: "The noblest art is the nude. This truth is recognised by all, and followed by painters, sculptors, and poets. Only the dancer has forgotten it, who should remember it, as the instrument of her art is the human body itself. Man's first conception of beauty is gained from the form and symmetry of the human body. The new school of the dance should be that move-

ment which is in harmony with, and which will develop, the highest form of the human body."

And again, as to her conception of the dance of the future, Miss Duncan shall speak for herself: "From what I have said you might conclude that my intention is to return to the dances of the old Greeks, or that I think that the dance of the future will be a revival of the antique dances, or even of those of the primitive tribes. No, the dance of the future will be a new movement, a consequence of the entire evolution which mankind has passed through. To return to the dances of the Greeks would be as impossible as it is unnecessary. We are not Greeks and cannot therefore dance Greek dances. But the dance of the future will have to become again a high, religious art, as it was with the Greeks. For art which is not religious is not art; it is mere merchandise.

"The dancer of the future will be one whose body and soul have grown so harmoniously together that the natural language of that soul will have become the movement of the body. The dancer will not belong to a nation but to all humanity. She will dance not in the form of nymph, nor fairy, nor coquette, but in the form of woman in its greatest and purest expression. She will realise the mission of woman's body and the holiness of all its parts. She will dance the changing life of nature, showing how each part is transformed into the other. From

all parts of her body shall shine radiant intelligence, bringing to the world the message of the thoughts and inspirations of thousands of women. She shall dance the freedom of woman. She will help womankind to a new knowledge of the possible strength and beauty of their bodies, and the relation of their bodies to the earth nature and to the children of the future.

"Oh, she is coming, the dancer of the future; the free spirit, who will inhabit the body of new women; more glorious than any woman that has yet been; more beautiful than the Egyptian, than the Greek, the early Italian, than all women of past centuries—the highest intelligence in the freest body!"

CHAPTER IV

MAUD ALLAN

TO most lovers of the dance in America Miss Maud Allan is known only by hearsay, for, although she has made an appearance in New York, it was during the dearth, artistically speaking, of the summer-season, and under circumstances not very congenial to art. She was received, in consequence, not so much as an artist as a sensational curiosity.

She has written a little story of her life, which is interesting as showing the steps by which she gradually reached the idea of becoming a dancer. Her early childhood was spent in Canada, whence her family moved to California. Here she enjoyed the liberty of country life and showed a marked aptitude for physical exercises, becoming an expert rider and swimmer. Meanwhile she exhibited sufficient talent for music to suggest the hope that she might develop into a professional pianist. She was accordingly placed in the San Francisco School of Music under the tuition of Mr. E. S. Bonelli, and began a thorough course in the practice, theory and history of music. It was during the early days of her studentship that

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MAUD ALLEN IN "MOMENTS MUSICALS"

she saw Madame Sara Bernhardt. The magic charm of the latter's acting made a deep impression on her. It revealed to her consciousness that there were other forms of expression beside musical ones. It was not so much the great artiste's voice that aroused the child's imagination, as her use of her body. It was the first inkling of what the young student came to realise later; the capabilities of the body as an instrument of emotional expression.

In time she proceeded to Germany to continue her musical studies, and it was during one of her vacations, spent in Florence, that she received the second stimulus to what was to be after all her chosen art. In the Accademia she made the acquaintance of Botticelli's "Allegory of Spring." In the fluent rhythms and intricate harmonies of that spiritualised composition she discovered analogies to the rhythms and harmonies of music. What she had hitherto experienced in her brain became visible to her eye. Music seemed to be embodied in the figures of "Primavera" and the dancing Graces. More than this, she felt *herself* in these figures; felt their movements and winding rhythms stirring in her own body. There was awakened within her the longing to be herself an instrument of emotional expression; and the desire was increased in her when she saw Botticelli's "Birth of Venus." Henceforth, while continuing her musical studies she became also an eager student of

pictures and sculpture, always with a view of learning the secret of physical, plastic expression, and this led her to the study of nature's rhythms to be seen in moving grass and dancing water, in flight of birds and swaying of trees; in the infinite examples of nature's universal rhythm.

Gradually the piano became less sufficient to her; it was the instrument of her own body that she felt a growing need to cultivate. She devoted an increasing amount of her time to physical culture; not, however, to a formal routine of exercises, but to movements expressive of a thought. The latter might be inspired by a statue, a picture, something observed in nature, or some imagined experience; whatever it was the movements of the body were attuned to the expression of the emotions, thus mentally conceived. In her own words—"A woman who seeks grace of movement is best served when she strives to harmonise motion with inspiration, be it that of music, the graceful figure of some statue or picture that imagination has endowed with moving life, or memory of some nature picture, a wind-rippled wheatfield, or the dance of autumnal forest leaves." And she adds: "With such things as these for inspiration and stimulus, time does not count."

To appreciate the fulness of meaning in this remark, one must be young or still have the memory of youth, and must have known such desire of self-expression, and the joy of culti-

vating it. It is to find oneself in a new and brighter world, treading the mountain-tops of aspiration, breathing the upper air of spiritual exaltation; the body seeming to be glorified by the spirit which possesses it, and the spirit in turn to be enriched by union with the physical elation. It was the wedding of body and spirit in an inseparable union to promote the fullest harmony of existence which was the basis of Delsarte's philosophy and system of expression. It finds its ultimate aim in Ruskin's admonition—"Fix, then, this in your mind, that your art is to be the praise of something you love. As soon as the Artist forgets his function of praise in that of imitation, his art is lost."

In 1901 Miss Allan spent the summer months in Weimer, studying the piano with Busoni. In the autumn of the same year she was again in Berlin, where she had the privilege of meeting Marcel Remy, who later composed the music for her "Vision of Salome." Of this Belgian composer, who was also a savant and a Greek scholar, she made a confidant. He entered with warm sympathy into her desire and ambition, and encouraged her by speaking of the unending possibilities open to anyone who would try to learn the old Hellenic spirit of the dance, and thus recreate a lost art. Under his inspiration she began to study the poses and dresses represented in the examples of Greek art. He would come to her study, and, sitting

at the piano, play some piece from Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, or Schumann, or at other times improvise while she practised herself in interpreting the music. Finally, she made her début in dancing at the Theatre Hall of the Royal Conservatoire of Music, in Vienna, to the accompaniment, partly of orchestra, partly of grand piano. This was in 1903. Since then she has appeared in many German cities, toured Switzerland, Austria and Hungary, and performed in Paris. In March, 1908, she made her first appearance in London at the Palace Theatre.

As one of the first of the modern dancers who have endeavoured, not to imitate the manner of the Greek dance, but to emulate its spirit, Miss Allan has had to bear her share of criticism. Much of it was based on the notion that the distinguishing feature of the dances was the fact that they were performed with bare feet, and in scanty draperies, which revealed the nudity of the limbs. Some of them, it is true, involved these features; but, on the other hand, such a one as "the Dance Sacred and Profane" was accompanied by voluminous draperies, while, in "Chopin's Funeral March" the figure was completely shrouded. The motive, in fact, has nothing to do with the quantity or character of the costume; the latter being purely incidental to the artist's conception of her theme and to the expression of it. And as this came to be realised general criticism evaporated. It took, however, a particular shape in

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MAUD ALLEN IN HER "DANCE OF SALOMÉ"

opposition to her rendering of "The Vision of Salome." Some who applauded her other dances recoiled from this one, either because it interpreted a page of history that was recorded in the Bible or because the theme itself was felt to be revolting.

This is no place to enter into a discussion, *pro* or *con,* of these objections; but, in view of them, it is interesting to recall the artist's own explanation of her conception of the theme. Briefly, she pictures Salome as an innocent girl of fourteen, brought up in the seclusion of the children's quarter of the palace. She has no knowledge that the luxury with which she is surrounded was part of the marriage dowry of her aunt, whom Herod had put away that he might marry the girl's mother, Herodias. Only one harsh note had disturbed the peace of her life. A whisper had run through the halls, repeated by slave to slave, that this luxury had been denounced and the vengeance of Almighty God invoked upon her mother by "one crying in the wilderness." Yet the continuity of her quiet life goes on. Suddenly she is summoned to the presence of the Tetrarch and is bidden to dance before the "lords, high captains and chief estates of Galilee." She has often danced to please her father and mother in old days and the playmates of her present life, but she falters at appearing before this high assembly. But, gathering heart from the rude, plaintive cadence of the music, she springs into the great hall. Blind

to the circle of inflamed eyes, she sees only Herod and her mother, and for them and them alone weaves her most ingenious witcheries of dance, and, as the music dies in a whirl of passion, falls panting in obeisance before the throne.

She hears the Tetrarch's voice, "Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt and I will give it thee." Dazed, frightened by she knows not what, she takes refuge in her mother's bosom. "What shall I ask?" she whispers, and the mother answers, "The head of John the Baptist."

It is brought in, terror and horror seize the child, she flees to the terrace garden, but the horror pursues her, for there is blood upon her hands. The sight turns her for a moment to stone, then brings back the whole ghastly scene, as in a vision.

She is dancing again, as in a dream, and once more tastes the joy of her triumph. Suddenly from out the distance comes a wail of distress and the head of John the Baptist rises before her, she has a wild desire to take it in her hands. Ecstasy mingles with dread, she lays it on the floor and dances round it in a mad whirl of childish joy, until exhaustion breaks the spell and she falls to the ground.

She awakens; the ordeal she has gone through has changed the child into a woman. For a moment she is conscious of superior power, then of a power superior to her own. Her first impulse, to conquer it, is followed by another. She longs

to be conquered, craving the spiritual guidance of the man whose head is before her. But the lips are silent, and in her agony for help she presses her own upon them. In their cold touch she realises the strange grandeur of a power higher than she has ever dreamed of. She begs and prays for mercy. A vision of the joy of Salvation hovers before her. She stretches out her trembling arms, but the vision disappears. Her anguish overpowers her and she falls, still grasping with her hands for her lost Redemption. She pays the atonement of her mother's sin.

CHAPTER V

RUTH ST. DENIS

A VAST gloomy temple is revealed, spotted here and there with flickering lights, Indian ornament and pillars encrusted with gold, dulled by centuries of time and incense smoke. Strange figures, supporting the dome roof, and on the ground, wrapt in meditation, the squatting bronzed forms of almost nude devotees; their white turbans and loin-cloths catching a gleam of the faint light which pierces the fretted door of the shrine. An atmosphere of mystery and devotion, belonging to another civilisation and another age. Then wailing music, as the worshippers, offering their gifts, prostrate themselves before the shrine.

Presently through the incense smoke we are conscious that the doors are opened and the impassive form of the goddess, wrapt in contemplation, is revealed.

The music becomes more poignant, fresh spires of smoke wreathe up before her. Her limbs become animate. Or is it the flickering of the lights? No, slowly the throb of life creeps into the face. The eyes half open; the head is slightly raised; the bosom heaves; the head turns slowly. Rhada has awakened

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

RUTH ST. DENIS IN HER TEMPLE DANCE

from her long repose and gazes curiously at her worshippers.

Then, slowly slipping from her throne, she pauses to enjoy the pulsations of life, the warm breath of the air and the luxury of the moment. By degrees, as her dazzled worshippers bend their heads, she tastes the joys and sensations with which she has endowed mortals, and glides into the Dance of the Five Senses.

Sight is awakened by the sheen and hues of the jewels which bedeck her body, and reflect the quivering lights; Hearing, by the little silver bells that tinkle, as she bends to catch their varied detonations, her whole body alert to note their differences; Smell, by the garlands of flowers, in which she wreathes herself, drawing them luxuriously around her, crushing them against her shimmering flesh as though all parts of her would partake of their fragrance; Touch, by a satin-petalled lotus, laid in turn to her cheek, her arm, her lips; while the smooth ripple of muscles under her glossy skin responds with shivers of sensitive sympathy to the caressing pressure of her foot upon the ground. Every nerve is sensitive and in turn conveys the message. Then, most human of all, Taste.

She drinks, and for one brief moment the goddess is intoxicated with human sensation and, flinging away the bowl, abandons herself to the passion of life. In time the spell is over and she sinks to the ground. Then, slowly gathering the

self-control of ages, she rises, steps past the prostrate worshippers and the glowing flames of the sacrificial fires back to the aloofness and solitude of her godhead. Her limbs are folded; the hands rest upon the knees; animation dies down—down, till again there is only stillness, a supreme patience. The lights flicker out, the gates of the shrine are closed. The atmosphere of mystery and devotion are far removed from a Broadway vaudeville stage. Yet it was on the latter that was first exhibited to New York this Dance of the Five Senses by Ruth St. Denis.

It was a strong impulse that prompted this woman, American born and bred, to saturate herself with the spirit and mystery of the Orient and translate them with such faithfulness to our Occidental imaginations. She was already a trained dancer, before the interpretive idea of dancing took possession of her mind. Accordingly, when later she came in touch with the mysticism of the Orient, she was fired with desire to express its symbolism in dances, founded on the mysteries of those ancient temples. She studied with East Indian natives, not only the forms of the dances, but the sombre, yet gorgeous, colouring that is a feature of the decoration of their rock-hewn temples. Such was the bias of her temperament, that it was no effort to her to put aside her Caucasian point of view and absorb with all reverence that of the Orient. Thus she evolved with the

help of her Oriental teachers these dances which express in a manner not too exotic for our grasp, the passionless rhapsody of a mystical sensuousness.

No wonder that managers, amazed and confused, held back at first from opening their doors to this new aspirant; such thorough abandon to rapture which was devoid of sexual appeal—cold and clear as crystal—was utterly beyond their ken. It held no allure for the ordinary habitué of the Great White Way. So one by one they shook their heads, and bowed her out of their offices, until at last a manager, more far-seeing than the rest, offered her a "turn" in the ordinary vaudeville programme.

Only her deep faith in the reality of her chosen field of art, which had urged her to pursue and perfect it in the face of every obstacle, could have persuaded her that it would triumph even over the incongruous surroundings, and capture an audience which, having witnessed the trick bicycle-rider, would presently yell with delight at the black-face comedians. Every penny that Miss St. Denis could raise was invested in giving the trial venture a suitable setting. Everything depended on its first reception. If ever faith might falter this would be the time. But Ruth St. Denis had faith in herself, her art and her public—and it was justified.

Not that the vaudeville audience, as a whole, comprehended

her aspirations. At first there was a distinct gasp of amazement; wonderment whether to disapprove of the audacity or to resent the lofty aloofness of the conception. But in each audience were a few who responded unreservedly to the beauty of the appeal and went out and told others of the rare vision they had seen. These, in turn, spread the good news until the manager was surprised to find at each performance a stream of people of a type not usually seen at a vaudeville performance, who came just before "Rhada's" appearance and hurried away as soon as her curtain fell, and who came again and yet again. Truly the people who came and saw and were conquered were a cause of some surprise to others than the manager.

The American public is very prudish. Yet here, a beautiful body was displayed with no casings to interrupt the play of light on the bronze skin or hide the play of muscles of the lithe limbs. But the crystal purity of the dancer's intent seemed to have reflected itself in the minds of her audience and banished every thought of prejudice.

Her growth out of the uncongenial soil of American conditions and the form it took is perhaps to be explained by her parentage. In her the strain of Celt is mingled with that of the Puritan. Through the latter she has inherited that visionary trait which often has exhibited itself in transcendentalism, and this in her case has been warmed and humanised by the

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Photo. by Otto Sarony

RUTH ST. DENIS AS RADHA. TEMPLE DANCES

Celtic imagination. Her art is to her a veritable religion. Nor is this to be understood in a metaphorical sense; but as a literal fact. One cannot be long in her company without realising it, nor fail to miss the influence it has had upon both her career and her art. It has given her a faith which removes mountains, makes nought of difficulties, and compels achievement. After she had surmounted the obstacles which stood in the way of her first appearance in this country, she felt within her the call to proceed to Europe for further study and a larger field of sympathy. The call had the solemn authority of a divine intimation. She had received it and was bound to heed it. We saw her before she sailed, and, though she was going among strangers, ill-supplied with funds and scarcely better equipped with introductions, she told us that she had no fear. "God had put it into her mind to go and the outcome was in His hands." Her faith was justified. Her dances were warmly received abroad and nowhere more so than in Munich, the leading artists of that delightfully artistic community extending to her and her art the warmest appreciation. The year following her visit to the city, they were still talking of her with unstinted enthusiasm. Since then, during a visit to the Pacific coast, she has had the opportunity of studying Oriental mysticism from the angle of the Japanese imagination.

All symbolism of worship comes under her study, and she

penetrates to the inner core of its meaning. For example, the subtle moods, always dreamy and vague, of her Incense Dance, which is hardly more than a series of poses, portrays the mental exaltation, the upward wind of the spirit which is true worship.

The flimsy draperies, the dull lustre of the vessels, and the absence of any very definite or decisive movement—all are suggestive of reverie rather than ecstasy, of the preparation rather than of the consummation. The dancer herself ceases to have a personality. She is but an emanation, a shadow only a little more substantial than the smoke spirals which curl upward from the vessels before her. So vague, so impalpable, is this figure that it is almost impossible to identify it with the vivid, self-concentrated creature that glides so insouciantly onto the stage at another time in the Cobra Dance.

Here, cruel and heartless, with long lazy limbs, carelessly lounging in undulating grace, and long lazy eyes, half closed with drooping lids, she is still, intense and vital. Then, the long, rounded arms begin to glide and writhe and coil, as the cobra-like hands curve and flatten and raise themselves. Are they hands or serpents' heads? What follows then? Surely the coils of the cobra body. And above them the face. Still, intense, but full of vibrant concentration. The whole body is changed, one feels the strength and sinuousness in every part,

yet it is smooth, rounded, unhurried. Technique and command of muscles? Yes, to be sure; but above that a deep, informing spirit, which has absorbed the snake motive and is infusing it into every part of the body.

It is this ability to intellectualise sensation and then discover a means of interpreting it, which characterises all Miss St. Denis' impersonations. Study again the action of the dance of the "Touch" in the Dance of the Five Senses; how apart from the touch of the flower in the hand, the foot caresses the ground and the feeling is expressed through the leg; how the extended hand seems to feel the air and the whole surface of the body appears to be sensitive and palpitating with expression. How in the dance of "Taste," the pleasure and ecstasy run through the shoulders and neck and down to the firmly planted feet. It is emotion raised to an abstract power. It is not some one person's sense of taste; but the sense of Taste. And so through all these dances until the goddess goes back into her shrine and life and animation fade from her face. The limbs lose their elasticity as the whole figure settles back into placidity, the Nirvana of the Buddhist.

The art of Ruth St. Denis was peculiarly fitted to make the first serious assault on the American appreciation, because it has that appeal to the intellect, that literary quality, which is the one to which our training and ideals have made us more

susceptible. We all knew, or thought we knew, something about Temple dances. But we did not know enough to take them too literally. Our knowledge was highly fraught with indistinctness, so that the appeal through our intellects to our imagination was very happy. The motive was never too subtle or intangible but that we might gather something which we would translate into our own language. For the writer there was something else than emotional adjectives; for the painter and photographer, direct inspiration; for the musician, rhythmic harmonies of movement which suggested music. For each of us something that we could understand.

Thus it arrested the attention of the public, as a merely esthetic appeal might not have done at that time, and forced them to take the art of Ruth St. Denis seriously. And this is just what they had never done before with the art of Dancing. Pretty, amusing, even charming it might have been; but never before had they met in the dance this high seriousness of purpose, which compelled a like seriousness of consideration. And so, this first appearance was really a matter of much significance and had its effect in the consideration shown to other dancers who have followed through succeeding years.

That it was not only the novelty of the appeal which had won our approbation was indicated, as has been noted, by the verdict of Europe. The Temple Dances were greeted there as a truly

Photo. by White, N. Y.

RUTH ST. DENIS IN THE DANCE OF THE FIVE SENSES, OF THE TEMPLE DANCES

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worth-while contribution to the sum of the beauty. Meanwhile, other dancers became assured that a people who would produce such an artist would not be irresponsive to the appeal of the Dance. Accordingly, the door was opened, and since then every season brings its quotum of dancers.

The sleeping goddess has awakened; but unlike the Rhada of the Shrine has remained to gladden the eyes of her votaries in many various manifestations. From each we catch fresh inspiration of Beauty and Joy and gain with each a little more of the power to draw an impersonal and abstract delight. We are becoming votaries of the Dance; not only of the Dancer.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVOLUTION OF THE BALLET

THE art of the Ballet is an evolution from the same source as that of the drama. Both have come to us in their present form through the pageants and mystery plays of the Middle Ages. Both have their counterpart in the earliest games played by children of all countries, in which song and rhythmic ordered movement and pantomime gestures form a large part.

The culture of the Renaissance caused a demand for something less crude than the miracle and mystery plays of the Middle Ages, and the masque, with its combination of music, poetry and dancing became the diversion of the upper classes. Toward the close of the fifteenth century we find the dance occupying by far the largest share of the attention and these dance-dramas, performed on occasions of state by the flower of the young nobility, under the name of ballets, developed into events of great magnificence. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they were truly the sport of kings. Produced at court functions with great lavishness of setting and costume, they were participated in by the royal

family and members of the court, kings themselves not disdaining to appear in them. They were almost always of an allegorical or mythological character, Virtue conquering Vice; Spring overcoming Winter, and so forth; and were interspersed with singing and dialogue. Sometimes these masques were combined with balls in which the actors performed quadrilles. Later, an explanatory recitation took the part of the masque, the quadrille was expanded and thus the drama-dance as in Greek time became seriously considered as an art of expression. The dancers at first were usually amateurs and it became customary for them to wear masks, representing the character they performed. So deeply rooted was this practice, that when Gardel appeared without one in 1772 it caused much sensation.

One of the earliest and most memorable records of ballet is the tragic Ballet des Ardents. Given by the Duchesse de Berri, at Paris, early in the fifteenth century, it was less of a ballet as we at present understand the word than a masquerade ball. The story is well known. Charles VI and some of his companions came to the ball disguised as savages, in costumes largely consisting of tow, and chained together. As they danced among the ladies, challenging them to guess their identity, the king's brother, the Duke of Orleans, snatched up a torch, holding it among them, the better to examine them. In a minute the tow, which was held together by pitch, was in

flames. The unhappy savages chained together could not escape. Four were burnt to death, one saved himself by breaking his chain and jumping into a tub of water, and the king was saved by his aunt, the Duchesse de Berri, who threw her mantle around him. But the shock he then received caused his mind to give way and he never thoroughly regained his reason.

In spite of this tragic mishap the taste for ballet became more pronounced during the two succeeding centuries, both in France and Italy. We find in 1489 a splendid fête given in honour of the Duke of Milan and his bride, Isabelle of Aragon. It was a mixture of masque ballet and banquet, each course of the latter being served by mythological characters ingeniously related to it, who performed dances expressive of their parts. Thus, the cloth was set by Jason and the argonauts, bearing the golden fleece. A roasted calf was contributed by Mercury. Diana and her nymphs bore in venison, Hebe served the nectar, Tritons were laden with fish, and so forth. Music and dancing were introduced into this gorgeous pageant, which ended with an allegorical masque.

The patronage of the ballet was not confined to courts and nobles; the dignitaries of the church also gave them the benefit of their attention and even composed ballets and had them performed. A ballet is mentioned as being given by the council of Trent in honour of Charles the Fifth. In all probability it

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

RUTH ST. DENIS IN THE NAUTCH DANCE

was something more in the nature of a ball. Cardinals and bishops took part in it, and it was opened by Cardinal Ercole of Mantua. In Portugal the church organised a ballet on the occasion of the beatification of St. Ignatius Loyola. It represented the siege of Troy and was enacted with the aid of much scenery and an enormous mechanical horse, which moved in the procession from the Church of Notre Dame de Loretta to the Place St. Roch where scenery was set up to represent the city of Troy, which fell at the approach of the horse, while the Greeks performed marshalled dances amid a blaze of fireworks. The following day the pageant represented the arrival of Ambassadors from the four corners of the earth. The various personages were conveyed in mimic brigantines, propelled in some manner through the streets; each company, dressed to represent the inhabitants of one of the four continents, descended at the appointed spot and performed a ballet.

In England we find Queen Elizabeth entertaining the Grand Prior of France and the Connêtable de Montmorency with a ballet danced by ladies of the court representing the Parables of the Ten Virgins.

Under Catherine de Medici the ballet became a regular function of the court, and a master of court ballet was appointed, an Italian named Baltasarini, who was called in France Beaujoyeux. He organised fêtes and ballets on a gorgeous

scale, inventing mechanical contrivances to enhance their splendour. He also introduced trained horses into his ballet, and taught the ladies and gentlemen of the court to perform intricate evolutions while riding them. The ballet of Circe, one of his most famous productions, lasted six hours, the Queen Louise Vaudemont taking the part of prima ballerina, King Henry III playing an important part.

These combined pageant ballets through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continued to be enacted with great magnificence, the dancers still being ladies and gentlemen of the court, though occasionally professional musicians were pressed into service, not only to provide the music but to add to the magnificence of the spectacle by filling places in the scenery that must have been somewhat uncomfortable if not hazardous. Thus, Menestrier, in describing a ballet performed in the Salle des Bourbons in 1615 on the occasion of the marriage of Madame with the King of Spain, mentions: "Thirty genii (being the chamber and chapel musicians of the King) suspended in the air, heralded the coming of Minerva, the Queen of Spain; Minerva danced to five separate tunes and several figures to each tune. And in the sixth tune all voices and lutes and violins joined. Then Minerva and her nymphs all danced together."

The title of "Le Roi Soleil," by which Louis XIV was

pleased to be known, was given him at his appearance in that character in a ballet called "Night." In the reign of this monarch we find the general public were allowed to witness these spectacles, which hitherto had been produced solely for the court. The opera now superseded the masque, while the ballet became more and more identified with it, often introduced arbitrarily, without connection with the structure of the play.

In 1661 the Royal Academy of Dancing was founded and we find professional dancers gradually taking possession of the ballet, though for many years Louis XIV continued to appear, dancing sometimes with the professional dancers. Usually he impersonated gods and heroes but occasionally essayed a comic character. And, while princes were the performers, the composers and inventors were also the greatest of their age; Molière and Corneille being included among them.

In the courts of Italy and Spain these ballets were equally popular and magnificent and it was at this period that the Czar Fiedolwitz Romanoff of Russia, wishing to introduce into his court some of the culture of the Renaissance, sent to Italy for sixty artists, expecting to receive painters. When they arrived, he discovered that half of them were dancers. But he was broadminded enough to believe that art might declare itself in more manifestations than one, and bade them show what they could do. He established the Imperial ballet and school of

dancing, which from that time kept alive in Russia the true spirit of the art of the ballet.

In the eighteenth century we find one Noverre, ballet master of the courts of France, Stuttgart and St. Petersburgh, who revived the art of pantomime and allied it to the dance. Hitherto the action had been interpolated between dances, but now we find the two blended and the ballet takes on a new life. He flung aside the outworn conventions and looked to nature for his inspiration. "A ballet," he said, "is a picture, or rather a series of pictures, connected by the action which forms the subject of the ballet. A picture is an imitation of nature; but a good ballet is nature itself, ennobled by all the charms of art." He reformed the costuming of the ballets, which until then had been entirely conventional. The ballet of the Horatii had formerly been costumed in hooped skirts and padded coats of cloth of silver or gold, with the hair in powdered rolls. In this reform he had immediate successors. Gardel and the Vestris family succeeded also in substituting for the old display of suppleness and dexterity a real portrayal of character and emotion. Under their guidance appeared many dancers, men as well as women, whose names survive to this day, while their supremacy as artists was acknowledged by the greatest minds of their own time.

After the French Revolution dancing as an art seems to have

Photo. by White, N. Y.

SCENE FROM THE BALLET "THE LEGEND OF AZYIADE"

declined, though we find individual names of great artists scattered through the first half of the nineteenth century, such as Augusta Vestris, a descendant of the famous family of that name, Grisi, Cerito, Fanny Elssler and Taglioni. On the enthusiasm evoked in England by this last-named dancer, we find an amusing comment in the letter of Jane Welsh Carlyle: "I saw a very curious sight the other night," she writes, "the only one I have been to for a long while, viz., some thousands of the grandest and most cultivated people in England all gazing in ecstasy, and applauding to death, over a woman, not even pretty, balancing herself on the extreme point of one great toe, and stretching the other foot high into the air,—much higher than decency ever dreamt of. It was Taglioni, our chief dancer at the opera; and this is her chief feat, repeated over and over to weariness,—at least to my weariness. But the Duchesses were flinging bouquets at her feet; and not a man (except Carlyle) who did not seem to feel disposed to fling himself. I counted twenty-five bouquets! But what of that? The Empress of all the Russias once, in a fit of enthusiasm, flung her diamond bracelet at the feet of this same Taglioni. 'Virtue is its own reward' (in this world)? Dancing is and singing and some other things still more frivolous; but for Virtue? it may be strongly doubted (as Edinburgh people say to everything one tells them)."

It was such absence of ability to appreciate the appeal to beauty that brought about the downfall of dancing and the general decline of art in England through the mid-Victorian period. Beauty and expression being languages not understood, the promoters of dancing supplied the public with exhibitions of skill and suppleness that were unmistakable and required no appreciation of that Puritan bugbear, Beauty. Throughout all Europe there appears to have been a corresponding decline in the art of dancing. Even in Russia, where the native temperament had kept the art alive, notwithstanding the conventionalities imported from France into the Imperial ballet school, the vitality seems to have languished. In other countries it lingered under the guise of gorgeous spectacle, but even in these dancing played an ever decreasing part. Ten years ago it seemed hardly an exaggeration to say that the ballet was dead.

But that was not the case. It had been allowed to get out of touch with the spirit of the times and therefore ceased either to inspire or to be inspired by modern thought. It was the old story of trying to live by a wornout tradition. Because the ballet had flourished in the eighteenth century and had then, like painting, concerned itself with courtly pastorals, satin clad nymphs and brocaded shepherds, the ballet sought to keep its vitality by preserving these threadbare vanities.

It was the pitiful attempt of the aged belle to keep her court around her by continuing to wear the finery of her youth, which in reality only shows up mercilessly the incompatibility of the faded cheeks and the frivolity of array. No wonder that the people of the nineteenth century, enamoured of the vital facts of life, had scant respect for these ballets. They were become but pale abstractions; their anemic stories, mere skeletons on which to hang the trickery of agile posturings and sophisticated allurements.

CHAPTER VII

CLASSICAL BALLET

IN developing its wonderful pantomime-ballets, the reincarnation of the old "ballet d'action," the Russian School of Choregraphy has not entirely neglected that essentially choregraphic form of the ballet which either tells no story or interprets a theme in the purely conventional language of the dance. In this "Classical" ballet free use is made of all the recognised technicalities of ballet dancing,—the pirouettes, the toe-dancing, the entrechats, or any other formality of the dancing school.

In form it does not differ from the old Italian style; but its use is kept entirely for such dances as do not call for the realistic setting of the dance-drama; such, for example, as the famous "Coppelia" or the modern romantic dream, "Les Sylphides," or the fairy fantasy of the "Lac des Cygnes." In nearly all of them the women wear the conventional ballet dress, short, full-skirted, with silk fleshings and satin shoes, while the dress of the men is usually formal. But in spite of this conventionality the spiritual quality of the dances is not lost. That is to say, these Russian artists are more intent on

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

LYDIA LOPOUKOWA AND ALEXANDER VOLININE IN THE BALLET "LES SYLPHIDES." RUSSIAN DANCERS

interpreting the meaning and spirit of their theme than in portraying the obvious shell of fact. And one of the causes of the abstract quality of these dancers is their absolute aloofness. Never do they seem to be dancing to the audience. The dancers remain behind the frame of the proscenium without betraying any consciousness of the world without. Those who can remember the satisfied simper of the old-time Italian ballerina will know how impossible it was to associate her with any world other than that of footlights and canvas scenery. She was no creature of the woods, expressing her own joy in nature, but a sophisticated woman of the world, calling our attention to the number of times that she could cross her feet during one bound in the air.

It was La Carmago, a dancer of the eighteenth century, who invented this particular exercise and whose love of conquering difficulties made the number of "entrechats" that she could cut an object of much importance. But even in that age of artificialities such tricks did not appeal to the more artistic of the audience. "I have even seen," says Baron, one of the writers of that period, "a dancer cross sixteen times, but do not suppose that I admire such gymnastics, or your pirouettes either."

Such conscious exhibitions of skill are necessarily destructive of art and it was this that destroyed ballet-dancing in Italy and France after its period of greatness during the seven-

teenth and eighteenth centuries. Technique without the counterbalance of artistic comprehension has temporarily overwhelmed other arts at other times, and it needs strong personality and definite consciousness of the artistic significance of the medium to keep technique where it belongs. This has been the great work of the directors of the Russian school of ballet.

By the time their novices are allowed to make their dêbut their technical ability is supposed to be an assured thing, so that the director does not concern himself with it but concentrates all his attention on the expression. It is characteristic of their pupils, that they seem to be creatures not ruled by the physical laws which govern ordinary men and women. They perform marvels of graceful agility; but with so little apparent effort that they seem less concerned with the execution of them than in expressing the music of which they are the embodiment. And this, of course, means perfect technique, a training that has made their art a second nature, a medium that they can command with as little conscious effort as is used in walking across the room.

Years of training are needed to accomplish it. Begun in childhood, it lasts for ten years at least. But when it is finished, it leaves the dancer equipped with such flexibility of technique that its control is a matter to which his attention need

never be drawn. His or her whole soul can be given to artistic expression, even while feats of extraordinary difficulty are being performed. Consequently we do not find ourselves concerned with the agility but with the expressiveness of the motion. A pirouette may be executed to a marvel, but what we are most conscious of is the quintessence of languor or of coquetry, or rapturous abandonment, or the numberless other phases of sentiment, it can be made to express with a subtle force more vital than words.

Accordingly the technical pirouettes and toe-dancing become not an end in themselves but a means to an end, and only hint with a refinement and exquisiteness of suggestion at what more naturalistic action would express more obviously. When these conventional motions are performed with the daintiness and grace of a Katrina Geltzer, we succumb to their expression of supreme beauty and recognise the intellectualised quality of their esthetic charm. And in these purely imaginative ballets-operas, such as "The Lac des Cygnes," the traditional ballet-movements are perfectly in accord with the symbolism by which the story is set forth. As Theodore Banville says, "Every step is equivalent to an image in a poem." For here we are in the realm of fairy-tale, though the story has been invested with human pathos. The recital of facts in this ballet always takes second place to the dance-movements, which are

among the most significant of those shown by the Russian artists.

Tschaikowsky has invested this ballet with the fire and poetry of his music, which ever breathes a vague melancholy that penetrates even the gayest moment.

Three of the greatest of the directors of the Russian ballet worked to perfect the representation of "Le Lac des Cygnes," one of them being Mikail Mordkin, who made his début in it in Russia.

Enchanted lakes, full of mystery and melancholy, metamorphosed maidens, gloomy forests, the brave, but ill-fated prince—these and other features of the story are familiar to folk lore of all the world, but are spiritualised in this instance by the poetic wizardry of art.

At first we see the young prince gaily disporting himself in the company of his followers. These are his last days as a bachelor. Tomorrow he must choose a bride. He calls in his retainers and surrounds himself with the peasantry, while mirth and gay dances pass the hours away. The evening shades draw in, but the joyous spirits are still ready for more activity. With lighted torches the whole party of men bound off to a midnight hunt, vying with each other in feats of skill and daring, full of lusty and joyous life.

Then we are transported to the mysterious shores of the

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MLLE. KATARINA GELTZER OF THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL BALLET

enchanted lake. It lies deep in a forest of grey-green trees. The moonlight faintly pierces their foliage and presently white, softly-massed forms gradually stir into life, as the swan-maidens wake and glide from group to group, shaking out their fluffy garments like the arched wings of the swan and curving their arms, as slim and white as its neck. It is marvellous, the suggestion that is given of swans, especially when the forms are massed into fluttering groups. There is no actual imitation, no false wings, but just the smooth gliding motions, the curves of wrist and fingers, the undulating forms; the imagination is stimulated to fill out the rest.

Into this scene of enchantment burst the young prince and his companions, still boisterous in their gaiety. But they are transfixed to behold not the swans they pursue as quarry but beautiful maidens, who shrink from their turbulent approach. It is now the huntsmen's turn to be abashed. For these radiant beings seem to reproach the young men's temerity in venturing to disturb them. His companions would persuade the prince to withdraw; but the beauty and charm of the chief of these lovely maidens has entirely bewitched him and he remains with her. She tells him her sad lot, which grants to her only the hours of darkness in her own form, and turns her during the day into a swan. She is in the power of a wicked enchanter, and nothing can break the spell but the absolute fidelity of the

first love of a brave knight. This the prince pledges her. She shall come to his castle on the morrow and before his mother and all the assembled company he will declare her his bride. She sees her deliverance at hand. Alternately she hopes and fears, abandons herself to the caresses of her lover or shrinks in dread of some cruel fate that may intervene.

It is in a scene like this that one feels that the conventionalised ballet, with its super-refinement of gestures and motion—quite unreal as natural expression—can sometimes suggest the glamour and unsubstantiality of fairy-lore in a manner that no other art can do. True, these are not real people, but they are creatures of that same imagination which has peopled the folk-lore of all ages with giants, fairies, witches, enchanted maidens and princes. It is not what children call "really true," but it responds to an instinctive desire, which is universal, for the combination of the natural and the imaginary. So the enchanted maiden, turning slowly in a pirouette, exquisitely expressive of reluctant yet complete surrender, drops finally into the arms of the prince, while we are conquered by the same glamour which enthralled us when we first heard such tales in our childhood.

But these young lovers are not destined to "live happy ever after." The magician who has the maiden in his power will not permit her to appear at the castle, save in the shape of the

Photo. by White, N. Y.

GROUP FROM THE BALLET "LE LAC DES CYGNES"

swan, and cunningly substitutes for her at the ball his own wicked daughter. This part in the ballet is danced by the same dancer who appears as the ill-fated swan-maiden and a subtle sinisterness in every motion and expression is the only clue we get of the difference between the two. For she, too, must be captivating; only for charm she must substitute allure, for maidenly reticence a conscious coquetry. As she weaves her spells around the prince, the music tells us of the poor swan circling round the castle in the dark outside. And, while he plights his troth to the false-hearted enchantress, the fluttering of the white wings and the piteous cry from out in the night reveal to him that he has been tricked. He has been false to his first vow, and the swan will never regain her maiden form. Broken-hearted she returns to the lake and the prince follows in remorseful haste. There is, however, no hope for them but to join their fates in death. So, in the lake beside which they first met and loved, the unhappy lovers are united for ever.

Such is the story, unreal yet full of reality, and such is its setting forth. Removed from naturalism, but full of the artistic significance which translates and illuminates it into a language perfectly understandable by Slav or Saxon, Greek or Gaul.

But, even this slender thread of narrative is not necessary.

As the melody in music, so the story in the dance may be simply a suggestion, appearing and disappearing and haunting the background of harmonious rhythm, now seemingly lost entirely, now hinted in an underlying harmony. It is not a definite wrought-out form but a subtle thread of idea, vaguely felt rather than obviously detailed. And as the melody is not one you can whistle, so the story is not one that you can tell.

The ballet, "Les Sylphides," represents the highest achievement in this purely abstract form of dance. Simply a phantasy of abstract beauty, called in the programme "Romantic Reverie," around which one could weave one's own dreams of poetry. The scene was as formal and unrealistic as the dance; a grove of clipped yews; grey-green in the faint light, with a suggestion of grey ruins of architecture; the light somewhat subdued most of the time, though shining lustily in some of the more bravura dances. The dancers are in the formal ballet costume, not flitting in naturalistic freedom, but dancing in formulated steps over the green of the ground. They lend themselves, however, in a wonderful manner by their sheer impersonality to "reverie." They are not human beings nor fauns nor dryads, but emanations of the moonbeams and the ancient trees and ruins of the spot. If you will, they are but the spirits of the forces of the elements which have floated

around that spot for centuries and now, taking form, sport in bodily presence so that for once mortals may look on those under whose sway they dwell.

They hover now in groups, forming and reforming in massed loveliness; so light and airy that they seem to be borne on the breeze around the solid, gnarled stems of the trees. Now they cluster on the ground; now disperse in wisps of misty whiteness, as though a breath of wind had blown on them. Nothing more airy and unreal could be imagined to have life and form.

As they flitted in the half light, they somehow called to mind that strange, unreal exotic, the night-blooming cereus. Its white, waxen flowers bloom once in ten years and then but for a single night, as though their purity and elegance were too exquisite for the work-a-day world, but belonged to the world of spirits and fairy folk who may assume mortal shape only during the hours of darkness. Even the shape of the blossom, almost luminous in its whiteness, is not unlike the buoyant skirt of the dancer, while the formality of the shrub on which it blooms might suggest the setting of this romantic dream. One would hardly wish for detailed descriptions of these dances any more than one would wish to pick and wear the blossom. They are all phantasies that reveal themselves for a little while and then are gone, leaving a vague sense of yearning and the memory of a lovely dream.

CHAPTER VIII

ADELINE GENÉE

THE first years of the present century showed little promise of the brilliance of the present renaissance of the Art of the Dance. Those graceful waltzers, Kate Vaughan, Letty Lind, and Sylvia Grey had left no successors in their dainty bon-bonniere art. The skirt and serpentine dances became less and less a matter of dancing and more and more one of clever manipulation of mechanical contrivances. Not that the artistic possibilities of the combination of these floating fabrics and coloured lights has yet been fully utilised. But the thing lacking was the actual dance spirit that would use the contrivances only as a means of additional expression. So, too, with the wonderful flying ballets. Since they required of the performers little save ability to maintain a graceful pose, as they were moved through the air by means of ingenious mechanism of wires, they can hardly be considered as dances of expression.

More expressive, but even less commendable, were the whirls of high kicks and limb-contorting stunts that did duty for dancing in most of the stage ballets of the period. Like all ex-

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Photo. by Otto Sarony, N. Y.

ADELINE GENÉE IN THE SILVER STAR

positions of skill this form of dance easily degenerated into a mere personal matter of agility and ingenuity. The appeal of the performer was, "Look at me, I can kick higher and faster than anyone you ever saw before;" the dancer looked out to the audience to make sure that they were looking at her. The atmosphere, thus created, is deadly to dignity and false to art. It is permeated with the essence of sophistication and reeks of the limelight and rouge-pot and all other disillusionment that art should make us forget.

Into this artificial patchouli-scented atmosphere there floated one day a bright sunbeam, wafting with it an air sweet and fresh and cool as the dawn on a dewy meadow. It was as though a window had been opened in an overheated conservatory, and in the refreshing breath of the pure morning air the poor withering plants lifted up their heads and bloomed once more.

It was Mademoiselle Adeline Genée who, through the fragrance of her presence, first in England, then in America, assured us that the ballet was not, after all, a dead thing, that the conventional technique under the control of an artist might still be made to yield sincere and vital expression.

A Dane by nationality, born in Jutland, this little lady made her first appearance in Copenhagen as a child-prodigy at the age of nine. Continuing her studies under her uncle, a famous ballet master, and his wife, a Hungarian dancer, Mlle. Genêe

appeared again with ripened talent at the Royal Opera House of Copenhagen and at those also of Munich and Berlin. Then she went to London and for thirteen years was identified with the Empire Music Hall.

There, as when she later appeared here, the environment in which she found herself was not on the plane of the Royal Opera Houses, hitherto the scenes of her triumphs. Her audiences were, as a rule, not looking for art, but for amusement, and had not even learned to expect art from a dancer. Undismayed, she set herself, therefore, to restore the Cinderella of the Muses to her rightful sphere.

And for this she was royally equipped. She had, to begin with, a technique which was flawless. The most difficult exercise she performs with the insouciance of a frolicking child. Added to this is the charm of purity and fragrance which one associates with childhood, combined with that artistic sincerity which makes her appeal impersonal and abstract.

It was the appreciation of this lovely child-spirit in her that caused Arthur Symonds, that poet-critic of English drama, to send to Mlle. Genée a basket of penny china toys, and with them some nonsense verses entitled "Homage of the Penny Dolls to the Illustrious Lady Adeline Genée." They read as follows:

"We are penny Dolls; we bring
To fair Genée welcoming.
Venice made us of her earth,
We are but of humble birth,
We can crow and grunt and sing
For fair Genée's welcoming."

It is true that there is nothing profound in her art; but do we chide the little brook, brawling over its rocks and murmuring amid its mosses, because it is not the ocean? Are there not infinite delight and variety in its windings and hurryings and cool still pools and splashing little waterfalls? So, in the exquisite miniatures which Mlle. Genée discloses there is a charm none the less genuine because its range is not boundless nor its depth overwhelming.

With these resources, in spite of the handicap of unworthy surroundings, Mlle. Genée came and conquered. Soon the public was asking: "Is it necessary that the dancer's art shall be displayed amidst vulgarities and inanities? Does it not belong to the realm of beauty?" The little lady by her own sincerity and fragrant sweetness had made some of her public think. She achieved this marvel by being true to her art and her own ideal, continuing to give of her best and not stooping to a lower standard. So, though her art is of the most joyous, dainty, gossamer texture, it proved to have in it some of the

gallant spirit of the Fairy Prince, who could right the wrongs of the neglected Cinderella of the arts.

But the conditions of her appearance, especially in New York, were a rather significant commentary on the ways of our purveyors of public entertainment. For here was a public which, as subsequent events proved, possessed a latent taste for the artistic rendering of the dance, and here also an artist most capable of giving it to them. But the purveyors, by trying to attract a public which had neither taste nor discernment, succeeded in repelling some of those who were most ready to greet the dancer with real appreciation.

But the banalities and vulgarities of her surroundings never touched Mlle. Genée's art. Above it all, she shone, clear and bright, no more contaminated than is the moon by the gutter which its silver beams illumine.

Her dancing is a revival of the classical style, and again and again we are reminded as we watch her of the old prints of Taglioni. The very style of her dress, worn usually a little longer than the modern French ballet skirt, gives her something of the elegance and demureness of the Victorian period. Her technique is of the French School, accomplishing with perfect grace and precision all the conventionalities of toe-dancing, pirouetting, balancing and the rest. But through all runs a sprightly elfishness and gaiety which infuses life and originality

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Photo. by Otto Sarony, N. Y.

ADELINE GENÉE IN HER HUNTING DANCE

into everything she does. The purity and innocence of her face, with its soft cluster of yellow hair pushed back to each side of the rather high forehead, and the candid, friendly eyes, the lithe, straight limbs, the arching smile of her mouth all help in the impression of fresh and happy sanity.

Of all her dances the one most characteristically her own is the Hunting Dance. Clad in full riding paraphernalia, habit, hat, boots, high stock and hunting crop, she bounds down an incline with a beautiful forward leap of the body that is full of suggestion of the buoyant hurrying onward motion of the eager horseman. For her hunt is the fox hunt, not the pursuit of game. And how certainly one feels the action of a spirited highly-bred horse—the trot, the gallop, the canter! All are suggested rather than mimicked, and there, too, is the rider seated on a side saddle, swaying lightly to the rise and fall of her mount. There is something in the restive patter of the feet, something in the toss of the neat little head, and the light but firm poise of the hands which tells you all that is necessary to start the imagination picturing horse and rider both. It does not need the dogs, handsome though they be in their spotting of colour, to give you the whole "field" on a bright morning at the beginning of a good run. And at the close of the dance, when she stands whip uplifted and the smile of triumph lighting her piquant face, one shares the exhilaration

that has ever made the hunt a bond, knitting together all lovers of the horse, be they high or low, since woods gave place to open country.

Nor is her gaiety at all lacking in dignity. In the Empire Dance, the dainty poise of her head, the firm supple straightness of figure, the arch of the wrist all confirm a suggestion of gracious courtliness, as of one who has dropped the reserve of formality, yet clings to certain inherent stateliness of breeding, even in her gaiety.

Mlle. Genée was seen in one drama-dance during her visit to this country. It was more in the nature of a French "ballet d'action" than that of the naturalistic dramas depicted by the Russians. Its theme is a repetition of the often-told story of a dryad, loving a mortal who swears to be true to her and her alone. The tryst at which his love is to be proved is forgotten by him and he comes to the spot accompanied by a new love. The dryad returns to imprisonment in her tree, while the faithless swain remains ignorant of her fate. The poignancy of this rendering of the story lies in the innocent soullessness of it and in a wistful longing for the deeper things of life. The actual note of anguish is hardly touched; but there is pathos in the appealing figure, light and fragile as a snowflake, which melts at contact with the rough human world. The spectacle of outstretched arms and slowly retreating figure, posed with hardly

a touch of the toe on the ground, is exquisitely ethereal and lovely.

Indeed it has well been said of Genée that she merits the words of Paul St. Victor, written of another dancer: "Her movements might inspire a designer of fine and dainty ornament. All she does is exquisite, minute and delicate as lace-work."

Her latest appearance has been at the London Coliseum in a ballet which has not yet been seen in America. It is a dance-drama entitled "La Camargo," being based on an episode in the career of that famous queen of the ballet, who captivated the vagrant heart of the fifteenth Louis, was extolled in verse by Voltaire and painted by Lancret. Established in one of the apartments of Versailles, she is discovered trying on a new dancing costume. A bouquet is handed to her, accompanied with a note, couched in terms of insolent gallantry. While she is smarting from the affront, an old friend of her early life enters in distress. Her son, a playmate of La Camargo's girlhood, now one of the king's guards, has been arrested for striking his officer; death is the penalty. Will La Camargo intercede for him with the king? It was a scandalous remark affecting her reputation which had angered the youth, and the traducer, it transpires, was no other than the writer of the insulting note. La Camargo accepts the opportunity of

humbling him. The king enters, she dances for him, and in the thrill of his pleasure claims the pardon as a reward. He cannot condone the insubordination; she dances again, and yet again, putting forth all her skill in the invention of fresh steps and combinations. The king, though fascinated, remains obdurate; it is only when he has been shown the note that he grants the pardon. La Camargo is revenged and the youth goes free. But the sight of him has recalled the memories of her youth, and she sighs for the freedom of the country life and realises that, notwithstanding all her triumphs, she is a lonely, loveless prisoner in a gilded cage.

No theme could be fitter as a medium for the display of Genée's particular qualities. Her art is a product of the tradition which La Camargo herself did so much to establish; moreover the little modern artiste's charm consists largely in its mingling of a studied precocity of style with a spirit so fragrantly natural. If, then, this new ballet, as a production, is somewhat disappointing, the fault is scarcely hers. It is to be attributed rather to the spirit and method exhibited by the author, producer and designer, Mr. C. Wilhelm. He represents the Teutonic spirit and method as contrasted with those of the modern Russians, and it is for this reason that it has seemed worth while to allude to this particular production.

The difference can be summed up in two words, the Teutonic,

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Photo. by Otto Sarony, N. Y.

ADELINE GENÉE IN HER EMPIRE DANCE

as represented here, is based on mimicry; the Russian, on interpretation. When, for example, Genée urges the king to sign the pardon, she has been instructed or encouraged to wriggle her wrist in the air, as if she were writing. This is but a sample of innumerable little futile mimicries employed to tell the story to the audience, who thereby are treated as if they had but little intelligence and no imagination. Many of us are disposed to hurl back the affront across the footlights and assert that it is a lack of intelligence and imagination which characterises the production. The effect, indeed, upon the student and lover of the modern dance-drama was one of dissatisfaction, as with something uninspired and rather commonplace, and this, notwithstanding the charm of Genée, whose art seemed robbed of much of its freshness and originality by contact with such ill-considered and unimpressive matter-of-factness.

The point is worth enforcing, for there seems to be little doubt that the dance-drama is destined for a better fate than to be a fad which will shortly be superseded by some other "latest thing." It is so firmly rooted in the past that its future is assured, and is so much a product of human instincts that its hold upon the popular imagination will increase. Accordingly, it is well to note that there is a higher and a lower form of the art. The latter is illustrated in the example we

have been considering, which, notwithstanding its elaboration and refinements, is fundamentally akin to primitive dance-dramas in its reliance upon the mimetic instinct: the rudimentary faculty of imitating and the rudimentary delight of reorganising imitation.

On the other hand, the higher gift is the faculty of interpretation, while the higher capacity of appreciation is concerned chiefly with expression. The art which involves these qualities is creative—it is born of and appeals to the imagination.

Now it is in this direction that the Russians have advanced the dance-drama. They have lifted it into line with the modern developments in the sister arts of painting, sculpture, music and literature. Even when their dance-drama is most naturalistic, it is more than that. It is not satisfied only to represent certain facts, it also invests them with suggestions that stimulate the imagination to abstract enjoyment. In pursuit of this higher purpose the Russians have evolved a new language of choregraphic expression. It has a vocabulary, idioms and a style of its own, properly belonging to it, because derived from the genius of its own art of dancing. It does not exclude the mimetic element, but has absorbed it into the more abstract and conventionalised language of the purely dance form. Meanwhile, the conventionalisation through the infu-

sion of the mimetic is saved from being merely formal.

The language has thus become an elastic medium of expression, a living language. The artist who has learned its vocabulary and idioms can use it as a musician does his medium. He can play upon the endless permutations which the vocabulary and idioms involve, and create his melodies and harmonies of movement in response to the creation of his own imagination. His body thus becomes an instrument of living and inexhaustibly varied expression. He depicts the theme of the dance, but with a wealth of beautiful suggestion that raises one's imagination to high levels of abstract enjoyment. We revel in the sheer beauty of this labyrinth of moving harmonies and rhythms, controlled by and interpreting the dancer's intellectualised conception of the theme. For cultivated intelligence and taste, as well as perfection of bodily technique, are prerequisites of this new language of choregraphic expression.

By the time that we have fallen under the spell of this rich and varied art-form, the mainly mimetic form, with its scanty fringe of conventionalised steps and gestures, seems very threadbare and unsatisfying.

CHAPTER IX

THE RUSSIAN DANCE-DRAMA

THE Russian Imperial School of Ballet, since its foundation in the seventeenth century, has been second to none in Europe. In spite of its share in the general decline of the nineteenth century, it has always stood for something vital in its own country. Its artists have regarded it seriously as the expression of a form of drama,—as distinctly so as poetry or essay are forms of literature.

The Imperial School of Ballet in Russia has not been content to train dancers and then throw them on their own resources to make a living as best they can. It has always maintained a troupe of dancers, selected from the best of the pupils, whose position made it possible for them to devote themselves not to the exploitation of themselves but the development of their art. They are allowed to dance only during the best years of their life, while their bodies have the suppleness and beauty of youth, after which they receive a pension and are obliged to retire. But to cease to dance does not mean to cease to promote the efficiency of this branch of the drama, and we find dancers becoming directors and inventors of the dance-drama.

Photo. by White, N. Y.

DANCE DRAMA OF "CLEOPATRA." ARRIVAL OF CLEOPATRA AT THE SHRINE
THE RUSSIAN DANCERS

The reason for the decadence shown in the nineteenth century seems to have been the same in Russia as in other countries. The French vogue for exhibition of technical ability destroyed the natural artistic expression of the dancers.

The directorship of the ballet had been entrusted to Frenchmen and other foreign dancers whose strict idea of a classical conventionality had no relation to Russian ideals or their other expressional forms in literature, painting or drama.

Gradually, however, that passionate interest in life, tinged with Oriental fatalism and luxurious imagination which is felt so strongly in the other forms of Russian expression, began to find its way into the ballet. The wonderful revival of the national ideal in music lent inspiration to the awakening of the dance. Look over the names of the composers whose music is used in the Russian ballets: Borodine, Stravinski, Glazounow, Tschaikowski, Rimski-Korsakow. Their work is universal in its significance but notably Russian in both expression and appeal. What wonder that they aroused the artistic spirit of the dancers, who proceeded to shake themselves free of the fetters of conventionalism, and express themselves according to the abounding temperament of their own country.

And truly no one can see these dance-dramas of the new Russian movement without realising that a new form has been imparted to this art. Here is realism not content with giving

us the mere fact, but expressing the significance of the fact so forcefully that it is enhanced fifty-fold. No longer is it personal and peculiar to the individual, but universal and typical of the elemental forces from which it proceeds. Is it the enamoured Amoun who aspires to the possession of the disdainful Queen? We see the infatuation of the moth for the destroying flame, universal, elemental. Is it the persistent opposition of his rejected love, Ta-hor, who would save him from his doom and free him from the fatal enchantment? We see the futile fight against waning passion that makes tragedies all the world over. Characteristically Russian, but universal also, and told in the universal language of dance with the enchantment of music whose ardour of expression is characteristically Russian. It is no wonder that these ballets have stirred the artistic world. Not the principals only but every dancer in them is a trained artist; not in technical achievement alone, though that is an important factor, but in the art of expression. In the smallest detail of what might seem like a mere chorus part, there must be nothing perfunctory, no single gesture made merely for the sake of uniformity. Each must have an inspiring motive. Brains must move as well as muscles. And the gesture must be thought out so that it conveys in the most poignant manner possible the conclusion at which the brain has arrived. It is not the naturalistic gesture, but the inter-

pretive, that is sought. But it must be given with the inner conviction that shall make it seem natural. In this way the Russians have created a new choregraphic language.

The scenery is planned with the same expressional idea: no absolute imitation of any individual scene, but something that will best express the character of the environment of the drama enacted. The costumes, too, must enhance the emotional expression of the wearers and the general character of the scene, and are never either merely charming groupings of colour nor authentic copies of actual garments of any period or country. Thus, this basic idea of expression spurs on the workers in every detail of the production and the art of the director of the ballet must harmonise these and give to each its just proportion of prominence. For example, in the dance-drama of Cleopatra, while Ta-hor tries to turn Amoun from his growing infatuation for Cleopatra, there are times when the figure of the Queen must be merely a baleful shadow on the outskirts of the drama of these two lovers and again a time when a glance, flashed from her compelling eyes, destroys in a moment the fabric of Ta-hor's painfully laid defence. But Cleopatra must make no movement. Stretched on her couch, she appears coldly indifferent to these mere underlings, even while she destroys them with her witchery.

There are cruelty and bloodthirstiness in these Oriental

dramas of the Russians, the outcome of their fatalistic tendencies; but the horror has never the brutal hideousness of the Grand Guignol or of the modern Japanese naturalistic drama. The slaughter of the faithless wives in the "Shéhérazade" is a thing of horror and terror and fierce revenge, but it is not sickening or revolting. It is even beautiful in a lurid way, and the solitary figure of the vengeful Schah-riar, wiping his scimitar, as he gazes at the dead body of his last favourite wife, has pathos and dignity as well as remorselessness. For the poise and rhythm of the dance have in themselves expressional powers that make gross realism unnecessary and embody the necessary narrative in suggested outlines, which while they both enhance and elude the actual fact, never lose sight of the informing spirit of them. Nor are the subtle differences of spirit unexpressed. In the two dramas, both representing tyranny and cruelty of Oriental despotism, the "Shéhérazade" and the "Cleopatra," what a differenece there is in the temperament of each! In the "Shéhérazade"—profusion, luxury, hot passions, warmth, light, love; a scene, curtained, cushioned, draped, with closed doors and heavy scented atmosphere; the gestures and poses, full of voluptuous abandonment, the figures of the sultanas, like exotic orchids, sensuous, fragile, intoxicating.

But in "Cleopatra" there is austerity and refinement of

Photo. by White, N. Y.

DANCE DRAMA "SHÉHÉRAZADE." SHAH-RIAR'S REVENGE
THE RUSSIAN DANCERS

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sensuousness: bare walls, stone floors, the air blowing cool from the desert, even the couch of the Queen straight and hard. The colours are faint and cold with much black introduced, so that the general effect is less that of colour than of lights and darks. The gestures are straight and tense; the Queen concentrated, enigmatic, absorbing remorselessly all that approaches her of life and joy, and in exchange bequeathing death.

It is no wonder that when a company of artists, trained in this school of Russian dance-dramas, inspired by the music of the vivid school of Russian composers, came to Paris, they electrified that city with their new form of art. Here was drama raised to an abstract power; but retaining its warm fervent touch upon vigorous pulsating life. It was more abstract than pantomime, more alive than dance. It admitted of the wildest frenzy of rhapsody, but remained impersonal and objective. It could be marble, cold and remote, or throbbing with human feeling. It was a series of pictures for the painter, statues for the sculptor, stories for the romancer, psychology for the scientist and a Thing of Beauty for every eye. No wonder Paris took it to her heart and loved it.

It was due to the enterprise of Miss Gertrude Hoffman that these ballets were brought to this country. Herself a trained dancer, she could not fail to be impressed with the mar-

vellous technique. But while she had the artist vision to appreciate the appeal of their beauty, she had also the American enterprise and courage to bring them to her native country. It was a colossal undertaking and not without its hazard. If the appreciation of our public had been a "sure thing," it would not have been left to her to bring them. But managers felt dubious of such a venture, with something so unusual and so expensive. But, undismayed, Miss Hoffman worked unceasingly for two years, studying under one of their professors, the while, to realise her ambition. At the end of that time with the help of Mr. Morris Gest, she brought over the entire company, scenery, costumes, and placed before the New York public the result of her endeavour. As the result of her study she was able to appear with them, identifying herself with the spirit and method of their work and showing an increase in the depth of her own artistic powers that put her in the front rank of artists.

Let us examine these dramas, so full of the exuberance and the fatalism of the Orient and the philosophic melancholy of the Russian.

The scene of "Cleopatra" is an Egyptian temple, built with solidly planted permanence that marks the architecture of Egypt. The walls are massive, with straight square-cut openings to deep embrasures, in which the shadows lie grey and

opalescent. A few straight-branched tamarisk trees, vague greyish-green in line, soften the corners and throw black patterning of their shadows on the dull-toned masonry. But overhead the ceiling cloth is a mass of black and gold, barred and spotted with richly sombre ornament. It is the abode, not of luxury but of mystery and austerity, presupposing dark recesses beyond, long galleries of solid stone, and hidden chambers. If we examine the actual detail, we are impressed by the suggestiveness of the lighting which leaves dark shadows in the corners and in the openings of the doorways and illumines the modellings of the wall embrasures. The priests and attendants slide silent and impassive from place to place, intent on the mysteries of their calling. The place is hushed and removed from the turmoil of things—shut in by the stretches of the desert and its own imperishable walls.

But even these barriers have not shut out human passions. Gliding in and out in busy preparation are the fair young priestesses. They make ready for the arrival of the Queen of Egypt who comes to spend a night at the shrine in fulfilment of a vow. But it is not the expectation of her coming that makes the young priestess Ta-hor look with longing and expectation toward the great doorway. She waits for the young Arab-chief, Amoun, her lover. And before long her hopes are rewarded; Amoun, young, supple, strong, bounds into the

hall and clasps her in his arms. He has been hunting, and even now his bow is in his hand and the quiver of arrows slung over his shoulder. He is stript of all but a loin cloth, that he may run with fleetness equal to his prey.

The young priestess masks her love that she may once more have the joy of having him woo it. She darts from him, eluding his outspread arm and holds him off with outstretched hands. But she is a creature too friendly and frank for long resistance and presently melts into his arms in mutual rapture.

He describes to her his chase, the boldness of his arrow shots, the pursuit of the quarry. Then again they give themselves up to bliss. The entrance of the high priest, clad in his leopard skin, seems to interrupt their gladness. Will he tear them apart? He seems to hesitate and then leaves them that he may consult the oracle of the shrine. The lovers remain, anxious and fearful. What will be their fate? Can they resign themselves to parting, or shall they cling together come weal come woe? Their gestures alternate between hesitating renunciation and passionate defiance: but soon the priest returns. The oracles are favourable. He will bless their union at the appointed time, and the lovers are made happy.

But now the doors are flung open. There enters the train of the Queen. First come her guards, swart Ethiopians, armed with spears; then rank after rank of slaves, dancers,

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

MARIA BALDINA AS TA-HOR IN THE DANCE-DRAMA "CLEOPATRA"

musicians, Greeks and fan bearers; lastly, her personal attendants, grouped closely round a black, sarcophagus-like litter which is borne on the shoulders of four stalwart negroes. In it, hidden from all curious eyes, is the august person of the Mighty Queen.

The bearers place the litter on the ground, and the maidens help their mistress to alight. Lifted from her resting place, she is placed on a pedestal in the middle of the hall; swathed in wrappings from head to foot, shrouded like the mummies of her ancestors. Is it some escape from death which she has come to celebrate, or does she make atonement for some sin, that she comes in grave clothes? Her maidens loose the wrappages, and circling round her, free her from their sheath and reveal her in all the glory of her beauty and witchery. Languorously she stretches her newly freed limbs, moving in sinuous undulations; the only curving figure in that mass of straight and angular poses. And, as she moves, her eyes fall on Amoun who, unperceived till now, fascinated, has watched the ceremony.

Well is she called the Serpent of the Nile. She has struck with her baleful poison straight to the young chief's heart, and henceforth he loses remembrance of all else but her. With Ta-hor's kisses warm on his lips he is instantly possessed of a mad infatuation for the queenly enchantress. Ta-hor watches

him and vainly tries to draw him away, to intercept his passage to the Queen; while the attendants drive him back, as they wait on their mistress's pleasure. The Queen is not unconscious of the shaft she has planted, but disdains to show any sign of interest and wearily stretches herself prone on the long straight couch. With head resting on her hands, she gazes before her with inscrutable eyes that seem to look far beyond the present scene, while her dancers, Greeks, Jews, and Egyptians, seek to beguile the time with their art. Again and again the love-crazed Amoun tries to fling himself at her feet, but is intercepted by Ta-hor, who wages the unequal fight against this new mad passion. It is the age-old hopeless struggle, foredoomed to defeat, to rekindle the quenched ashes of a burnt out flame.

Desperate, at last, Amoun remembers his skill as a hunter. He will wing an arrow with the tale of his love and shoot it at his enchantress even though it is his own life and that of his former love that must pay the penalty. He seizes a parchment and writing on it his mad avowal, wraps it round the shaft and shoots it to the feet of the Queen. At last her interest is aroused though she is still calm and deliberate. Who has had boldness thus to invade her aloofness? As her slaves with fierce gestures seize the desperate man, she, smilingly, reads the parchment. At least it is something new to relieve

the monotony of the evening. She bids them bring him to her. She gazes long and dispassionately at him. He is good to look upon, young, ardent, beautiful of form. How best shall he be made to gratify her caprices? Shall she order her slaves to torture him to death and watch those supple limbs contort in agony? His eyes burn with passion and adoration. Fearlessly he proclaims his love for her. His tongue is winning. She pauses before uttering her relentless sentence. Death? Yes, but first she will enjoy a new pleasure, more weird, more macabre than any she has tasted before. She will give herself for this one night to the ardent embraces of this impassioned youth, but for it he shall pay a price fitting the condescension.

The flame of the fire which has attracted him shall burn him up utterly. And that night for him shall know no morrow. He must die at dawn. Her embracing arms must be his last bond to life. As they unclasp, his earthly ties are to dissolve. He shall enjoy the one mad night, but never the memory of it. She bends forward and whispers the condition in his ear. Unhesitating, Amoun flings himself at her feet, willing, nay even radiantly happy to accept her terms. Ta-hor makes one more desperate appeal, even crying to the Queen for mercy, but Amoun thrusts her aside and she is dragged from the royal presence, while Amoun is drawn into the encircling

snare of the beautiful, slim, white arms of his enchantress.

Then begins a scene of voluptuous revelry. Mad dancers surge around the couch on which Cleopatra and Amoun recline. Love, delirious passion, is in the air. Faster and faster whirl the dancers in mad, intoxicating measures. Exhausted, they fling themselves to the floor for brief respite. Then on again. Truly a tragic dance of the hours, which fly as fast as the feet of the dancers. While Ta-hor, crouching in her corner, counts by heart-throbs the moments slipping by.

Suddenly breaks the sound of trumpets. The day is dawning; the price must be paid. With still deliberate movements and inscrutable, sombre eyes, the Queen calls for the poison cup. The fangs of the Serpent are bared; unrelenting she strikes them into her victim. She even smiles as she hands him the cup and watches him unflinchingly fulfil his pledge. No movement or contortion of his death agony is lost on her. Chin on hand, the smile still playing round her lips, and with no softening of pity in her eyes, she sees him die. Then slowly, deliberately, she rises from her couch and with one glance over her shoulder at the body, still beautiful in death, goes to meet her new lover, Marc Antony.

But her triumph ends there. After all she shall not be the last to hold this poor victim of her fascination in her arms. She may leave him, but the faithful Ta-hor has recovered him

Photo. by White, N. Y.

THEODORE KOSLOFF AS AMOUN IN THE DANCE-DRAMA "CLEOPATRA"
RUSSIAN DANCERS

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never to be parted. Casting herself on the ground beside him, she tries frantically to revive him. In vain; life has fled. But bending over the pale lips, she drinks their poison, as her heart has already fed on the poison of his faithlessness. He is hers once more. One glance of passionate triumph toward her departed enemy and she falls lifeless on the body of her lover.

Such is the story, forceful, grim, sensuous, cruel, as the stern impassive figures of the old Egyptian tombs. It is charged with burning passion that does not warm and glow but sears and blinds with livid flame; filled, too, with sombre fatalism, which stoops not to mourn or pity but accepts unquestioningly, without even resignation. One tender ray, however, pierces the gloom, as a sunbeam, straying through a chink in the temple's solid masonry, might fall for a moment on the face of one of the Colossi, or as a lotus might bloom for a day on the dark waters of a shaded pool. It is the faithful love of the priestess Ta-hor; faithful in spite of her lover's faithlessness; willing to sacrifice herself, if she may save him. It is the one note of human truth and unselfishness in the lurid tragedy of loveless passion.

Miss Hoffman's impersonation of the sphinx-like Queen was a confirmation of the idea that the dancer's art can reveal the psychology even of a complex character. For here was a creature of exquisite beauty, but with cruelty and sensuousness

betrayed in every movement. And yet not even consciously cruel. It was not the wilful caprice of the coquette, but the more deadly, passive cruelty of the sphinx. She was joying in her own beauty and its power, but accepting them and their baleful consequences with a fatalism that admitted of neither joy nor pity. Every sleek and sinuous movement is replete with that sinister charm which is seen in Aubrey Beardsley's drawings of "evil ladyes." The gestures of the long, slim arms, the angle of the wrist and the droop of the strong, slender hands, all are expressive of nervous quiescence, of unshrinking firmness and of the ability to bide her time. It is an image not soon effaced from the memory and a characterisation so vivid and clear-cut, that no spoken word could have made it more convincing.

How different from the chiselled clearness of the Cleopatra is the impression of the "Shéhérazade!" Here all is glowing warmth and dusky scented atmosphere, voluminous draperies, sweeping in silken folds to the floor, drowsy colourings of reds and golds; purples and golden brown, heaped dishes of luxurious fruits and exotic flowers. Jewels glow in slumbrous splendour on the satin smooth skin of voluptuous arms and bosoms. Indolent forms of women of the harem are strewn on soft cushions or move with languid grace of careless ease. The chattering cries and shrill laughter of girls confuse the ear as

they play their childish pranks, and half fearfully, half boldly defy the stolid eunuchs who guard their seclusion.

Firm and immobile in their midst stands the tall figure of the Schah-riar, with pale face and blue-black beard. He gazes hauntingly from one to the other of the beautiful forms for one that he can trust implicitly; as though his soul were lonely even in this turmoil of caressing arms, and the soft wooing glances of houris as lovely as those of paradise.

And slinking through the midst with the envious snarl of a hungry wolf is the ominous form of the Schah-riar's unhappy brother. These seductive forms and appealing smiles are as pricks to the raw wound in his bosom. He despises his brother's fancied security. He himself has been betrayed, so all caresses are traitorous. Fool! to allow these shallow blandishments to blind him. His own eyes are opened, wide, staring, unsleeping. They smart and ache with the longing for one moment's forgetfulness of the horrible abyss into which they once have looked. His brother's eyes must open, too!

Silently, he moves among them, seeking for the potion that shall open those blind eyes so that they, too, shall sleep no more. And he finds it. One word in the ear of Schah-riar and there flickers over the latter's pale grave face a look of cold, fierce passion, charged with dismay and hatred. But only for a moment. Among all these swaying forms of beauty he

stands again firm, immobile, his glance following one, the loveliest of them all. And now they cluster round him, pressing against him, circling round him, their faces raised to his. Then he is alone with that lovely one, Zobeide, and at the touch of her arms he forgets the poison with which his eyes have been anointed. As yet the scales have not fallen from them so that they do not penetrate beyond the lovely frame which conceals her heart. Why look deeper when the outside is so fair? She winds herself around him like the vine around the oak. It is an ecstasy to feel that her frailty needs his strength. The warders shall look to her well. She is his own; his absolute possession. Nothing shall rob him of her beauty and enchantment. Banish these fears, unworthy of a superior intelligence! Why need he fear? She will die without the light of his presence. See her droop and languish at the thought of his departure. Well! put her to the test if you will. He is secure. And if not—!

The doors close and the women are left alone, shut into that warm and scented room where the cool air of the hills may never blow, where the light from the swinging lamps sheds a rosy lustre unlike the pure clear light of day. On their luxurious pillows the sultanas stretch themselves once more. How shall they pass the time away? The dancing of the slave girls? The clownings of the buffoons? Of these they are al-

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

GERTRUDE HOFFMAN AS "ZOBEIDE" AND ALEXIS BULGAKOW AS "SHAH-RIAR" IN THE DANCE-DRAMA "SHÉHÉRAZADE"

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ready weary. There is a wilder frolic. The old, half-foolish eunuch cannot withstand their blandishments. Reluctantly, fearfully, he does their bidding. First the huge bronze doors fly open and in rushes, with a swirl of resounding vigour, a group of bronzed Arabs. Now the silver doors are opened and silver-clad youths join the others, bringing with them a breeze of outer air, stimulating and enlivening. Tumultuously they fling themselves into the throng of mischievous daring girls. But one door remains locked and Zobeide herself is wheedling for the key of it. Unable to resist her the now thoroughly demoralised warder relinquishes his key, and through the golden door bounds a handsome young Arab clad in golden garments, comely, vigorous, conquering.

And then begins a wild saturnalia of love and feasting and revelry. Whirling in mad rushes round the hall, the Arabs seize the scampering girls, who now yield and now repulse them, then struggle wildly in their arms to relax suddenly in an abandon of sensuousness. All is a confused fantasie of darting forms and swirling draperies; strong grasping arms and lightly leaping legs; a kaleidoscope of colour, vigour and allurement. In the midst Zobeide and her Arab lover are lost in a dream of love which lifts them from the whirling mass around into a paradise of throbbing, fervent rapture.

So wild is the madness of the revel that no one hears the

approach of intruders. But in their midst is standing once more the immobile form with its pale face of Schah-riar. And joined with the swirling throng are figures, dire, and awful, silently doing their dread work. They are the King's guards who, obeying his orders and mingling with the revellers, are mercilessly cutting them down, men and women alike. The wild whirl has grown wilder, but even as a form bounds into the air it crumples and turns and falls, a limp, distorted mass. The scimitar of the Nubian guard has done its deadly work. The wretched women fly, terror-stricken, from place to place only to be cut down as they run, on stair or floor, in pairs, in masses; their bodies strewn as they fall; here piled, one upon another in confusion, here lying alone in a pitiful huddle. And still the pale face and immobile form of the Schah-riar, standing in their midst.

From a pile of bodies creeps the miserable Zobeide to the feet of the man, once her adoring lover. She clings to his knees and implores him to spare her. Her glorious head lies low on the ground, as she grovels abject in her terror. Can he see her thus without some touch of pity? Surely she could not face him now if she were wholly guilty? His white face softens for one minute. But instantly at his side is the gaunt wolf form of his brother. With his foot, disdainfully, he turns over one of the inert forms on the ground. It is Zobeide's

lover. With a cry she raises her head from the dust. The beautiful neck is thrown back, so white and firm. From behind creeps the executioner with a bow string. The Schahriar's stern pale face has hardened again. Zobeide knows there is no escape. She seizes a knife from the floor, rises to her knees and plunges it deep. Amid the carnage towers the immobile form of the pale-faced Schah-riar. His eyes are opened.

In Zobeide, as in Cleopatra, Miss Hoffman gives an impersonation of haunting beauty. She does not dance, but her mimetic movements are rhythmic, undulating and caressing, in perfect accord with the music but not measured to its beat. The final moments of terrified intensity touch a note of tragedy, rarely reached on our modern stage.

In these dance-dramas one thing that strikes the careful observer is the intense earnestness of every individual performer from the greatest to the least. It is a thing so little seen among our native actors that it needs to be studied. We have plenty of conscientious, careful actors who carry out every instruction of the stage managers and can be trusted to "get everything over." But this earnestness of the artist, living in his art, seemingly unconscious of the audience, not working for its appreciation only, but primarily for the sake of perfecting a work of art, is a thing so new to us that we hardly know how to grasp it. For audiences need training as well as per-

formers, and the Russian dancers are too new as yet for us to realise fully the beauty of their art.

Their perfect technique and dramatic fire have so astonished us, that for the most part we have not had time to study the details of their art. Their innate sense of rhythm, which can correlate a seemingly unregulated rush and swirl of movement; the minutely studied psychology of the various gestures and poses; the artistic accord of technique and emotion—all these things, which every amateur of music studies at the opera as a matter of course, we have not yet learned to treat seriously in the Art of the Dance.

There is nothing that the American public needs more to-day, to cultivate their artistic appreciation of drama, opera, and the dance itself, than just such a School of Dancing as has been developed by these Russians.

It would enhance the taste for Beauty, that beauty which, in so many of our productions, despite their lavishness, is so wofully lacking. It would show that it is not numbers, but the harmony of numbers that counts; not lavishness of detail, but co-ordination of detail that makes for drama. We might even learn that it is not the costliness of stage decoration, but subtle sense of fitness, that makes for atmosphere; that a well placed stencilling will sometimes suggest the character of a scene as convincingly as an imported crystal chandelier. The

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

LYDIA LOPOUKOWA IN THE DANCE-DRAMA "SHÉHÉRAZADE"
RUSSIAN DANCERS

production of such a school would so accustom our eyes to beauty that we would not longer tolerate ugliness, and so train us to an ideal perfection of harmony that we should rebel at the hotch-potch too often served up to us.

CHAPTER X

MIKAIL MORDKIN

IN 1910 Mikail Mordkin and Anna Pavlowa made their appearance with the ballet of the Metropolitan Opera House, and New York woke up to realise that what we had regarded languidly as a rather effete manifestation of musical tradition was something real and vital. To begin with, the technique of these artists was beyond anything ever seen in this country. Their airy flights and exquisite pirouettes were not only exhibitions of extraordinary skill, but a language of eloquent expression in harmony with the theme or motive of the dance. Added to this was the fact that both of the dancers were distinguished by a grace and beauty of person and form. No large lumpy muscles nor hard wooden-looking limbs, but youthful supple figures such as one would wish to believe that all young people possess!

The man had to conquer in his audience a certain hesitancy and suspicion. A male dancer, unless his performance were eccentric, was quite alien to the American idea of his sex. But to the surprise of his audience there was nothing effeminate or petty in Mordkin's art. His movements had the free swing

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Photo. by Mishkin Studio, N. Y.

ANNA PAVLOWA AND MIKAIL MORDKIN IN A "BACCHANALE"

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and restrained power of an athlete. Here was a man who while he looked as if he could take care of himself in most circumstances in which a man might be placed, could yet "stick a rose in his hair without looking like a fool," to quote the half-grudging praise bestowed on him by a college boy. The reason of his triumph over suspicion and prejudice is simple enough. For this was no mere exhibition of a handsome young man in elegant and airy garments, pirouetting and posturing to obtain admiration. If it had been only that, no amount of skill or agility or beauty of person could have saved him from some degree of contempt from the average American. But here was a man who had penetrated into the meaning of things, whose intellect was working to express ideas, while his body was trained to be the instrument of expression through which to express them. So, if he stuck a rose in his hair, it was not with the object of exciting admiration for his personal appearance but to signify the joy of life in all beautiful things, and the desire to appropriate and use all that nature bestows for our delight. Nor is it only the joyous beauties of life that belong to this form of the dance.

There is beauty in shadow as well as in light, and the grim tragedies of life have their poetry which can be translated into dance as well as into words and music. More than that, the shadows are needed to enhance the light and keep the true

harmony of art. That Mikail Mordkin has the poet's mind as well as the dancer's body is shown by his appreciation of these rules of art and his application of them to his arrangements of the ballet stories. For it is not only as a dancer that he has distinguished himself. As an arranger and director of these complicated ballets he has proved himself a wizard of dance craft. For Mikail Mordkin seems to have absorbed all that even that great school of art, the Russian Imperial School of Ballet, could impart and given himself heart and soul to developing and augmenting the possibilities of the expressional power of the Dance. The early training which in his case started at the age of nine, is severe, and includes much more than merely physical exercise. Besides these, every student must study music thoroughly, for without a good understanding of music it is hopeless for them to expect to enter into the subtleties of expression to which music is the clue, and which are ever the goal of the directors of the Russian ballet. The student also must master history, geography and literature, all with a view to developing his knowledge and understanding of the characteristics he is called upon to portray.

And seriousness, with which not only Mikail Mordkin but all these artists of the Russian School of Ballet regard their art and devote to it constant study of everything intellectual and artistic that may refine upon or enlarge the possibilities, is the

life spirit which gives it energy and constant growth and vitality. Without such seriousness no art can live, no art can grow, for growth is a necessity of life.

So from being a dancer and one of the greatest of dancers we find Mordkin grow to be also the director and arranger of these dance-dramas. And so highly is he thought of in this branch of his art that the great Bourgault-Ducondray chose him to be his successor in the production of his ballet, "The Arabian Nights." The musician had spent ten years in Asia preparing this ballet and studying Oriental music, but found himself unable to finish the production on account of fatal illness. Four days after resigning the fruits of his labour to Mikail Mordkin he died and the responsibility of the production fell on the young man's shoulders; and ever since the work of producing has been a recognised part of his career, giving wider scope to the poetic instinct that has always been a characteristic of his art.

Especially does he seem to be drawn to such stories as admit of a mingling of the grave with the gay and in the ballets of his arrangement there will usually be found some moment of poignant appeal, not merely of passion but of emotions more complex and subtle. He is not satisfied with the merely pretty and obvious, but needs the touch of poetry and romance.

In illustration of this take his arrangement of Delibes' ballet

of "Coppelia." The story, well known to opera-goers, is of the aged Doctor Coppelius, maker of mechanical toys, whose masterpiece is a life-sized doll, which he has devoted himself to making as nearly human as possible. So well has he succeeded that Franz, simple lad of the Hungarian village, has seen it through the window and fallen madly in love with it. Meanwhile Swanhilda, a beautiful maiden, sighs for him in vain and becomes filled with bitterness against the supplanter. A fête takes place in the village and in the prevailing license of mirth Swanhilda and a bevy of her companions invade the shop of Doctor Coppelius, while students and villagers are amusing themselves at the doctor's expense. Through the window Franz catches sight of the moving forms of the girls and, thinking it a favourable opportunity to visit the object of his infatuation, mounts a ladder to enter by a window. But the doctor unexpectedly returns, drags the ladder from under him and while he is still prostrated carries him into the laboratory with the determination that he will carry out a long meditated experiment and transfuse the vitality of the young man into the doll. As he enters the laboratory the invading girls make their exit and escape as best they can, but Swanhilda unceremoniously gets rid of the doll, and, taking its place, impersonates it with great success.

To his delight the doctor finds the doll responsive to his

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

MIKAIL MORDKIN

experiments. Its cheeks glow with animation, its arms and neck are warm with the throb of life. He is transported with joy at his apparent success. But at the height of his triumph Franz recovers consciousness and at first mistakes Swanhilda for his mysterious enchantress. Later, discovering her identity and the hallucination under which he has laboured, he transfers to her his affection, and the two fly together, leaving the doctor disillusioned. In the original the story ends here.

But that was to make of the little poem merely the recital of a practical joke, which did not accord with the artistic spirit of Mikail Mordkin. That the lovers should be light-hearted and joyous was natural and fitting, but he could not find that it accorded with the true spirit of life to make the disappointed experimenter merely a butt and a dupe. Instead, he lent to this figure a certain intensity, sinister, and devoted; so that discovering the hollowness of his short-lived triumph and the disappointment of his long cherished ambition, he is broken-hearted and falls lifeless on the floor, as the lovers carelessly flit to their happiness. Is it too poignant an end for so merry a little interlude? The Italian temperament might say "yes." But the touch of melancholy is characteristically Russian and is to be found in nearly every phase of their art. We might even say it is characteristic of life, in which we ever find that we can-

not take the rose and leave the thorns. In any case, it lifts the whole poem on to a higher plane of dignity by showing respect to human strivings and ambitions, however fantastic their embodiment.

But it is the deeper humanity of this point of view, this seeing in art an embodiment of life instead of the manifestation of mechanical puppets, which holds our interest in these Russian dancers. Added to that is their marvellous command of physical expression. Eyes, lips, gestures, pose, all seem to be under absolute control from the intellectual centres. Look at the picture of Mikail Mordkin and Lydia Lopoukowa in Greek Pastoral costume.

Here are a man and woman, highly trained and educated, necessarily sophisticated by their contact with the world and connection with court life, conscious that the eyes of numberless people are on them. But what do we see? A boy and girl in the Arcadia of first love; alone, in the Lovely Land of Heart's Desire, with no words to express the new strange emotions surging up in them. Tongue-tied, abstracted, they smile vaguely from pure gladness; minds unreasoning, eyes unseeing, they are not even conscious of passion; they are innocent, foolish, happy.

And all this is art; but the deeper, truer kind of art which consists of possessing one's self with the soul of the fact and

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

LYDIA LOPOUKOWA AND MIKAIL MORDKIN

steeping one's spirit in it, until the spirit penetrates not only the mental but the whole physical being.

The appeal, however, is not by any means always in a minor key. The Bow and Arrow Dance and the Indian Dance, not that there is much of the Indian in it, are as full of gay vigour as a breath from the mountain tops or the first nip of early autumn frost on a fine October morning. To see Mordkin in these dances is to feel the blood sing in one's veins! No task seems too great to be attempted. He bounds across the stage in two great strides; four walls can surely never hold him; he belongs to God's out-of-doors; all the free fleeting things of nature are his brother's. Not only is there suppleness but strength and solidity of form. His foot grips the ground as the root of an oak tree; the grip of his hands, the tension of his arms are like the knotted form of its branches; full of strength. The swing and ease with which he whirls his partner high in the air are full of the mastery and vigour of a frame, alive in every part. But form has not been sacrificed to muscle. In every part of the body there is symmetry and proportion. Whatever exercise has been needed to develop this flexibility has not been allowed to interfere with development of the whole as an expression of the mind. Much of the dancing is performed with feet and legs bare, and we see a foot unspoiled by cramping shoes, toes lying flat and supple, such as scientists

tell us we are in danger of losing as a race. In fact, although the long training may be specialised, the development is evidently working with, not against, nature.

The part of this training, however, on which Mordkin himself lays most stress is not the purely physical one. It is the training of the mind to grasp first, the meaning of the emotions portrayed; then their effect on the person feeling them; the effect on his carriage and his movements, on the tensity or laxity of his muscles, the exciting or depressing of his nerves; then, after all, is the study of how to convey all this to the audience. Too much responsibility must not be given to the facial expression; every part of the body must tell the story in its own way.

Mordkin tells of himself, in an article written, if memory serves, for the Sunday Magazine, that it took him one year's study to learn to express, by his body in movement, the simple emotion of hate. He tells how his master worked with him taking as a theme the words, "You have done me a grievous wrong, therefore I hate you." First, together, they analysed the emotion of hatred, finding that as it is directly opposed to love, so all its effects on the body will be the opposite to those of love. Whereas love makes the body quick and light, hatred makes it heavy and slow. Love inclines the body towards the object loved; hatred, though not inclining it away from the

one hated, which would imply some fear, holds it erect and tense. After mastering the meaning of the emotion and its effect on the body it must be translated into movements, rhythmic and harmonious. For this emotion is to be danced, not acted, and the dancer must know thoroughly this dance language so that he can translate fluently and easily.

For perfect appreciation of his translation of course it is somewhat necessary that his audience should know at least the rudiments of the language in which the dancer is expressing himself. The lack of that knowledge in England and this country was a good deal of a surprise to Mikail Mordkin, brought up, as he was, in a country where it has always been one of the accepted arts of expression, and is as thoroughly understood as the musical rendering of the opera is here. For just as naturalistic speaking in the opera gives place to the song, and action and expression must conform to the music, so in the dance, naturalistic movement is replaced by rhythmic, harmonised movement and the expression must be co-ordinated with these and the music. In the opera we look for all this, but to expect it in dancing was a new idea. The story is told that Mordkin was present in this country at a vaudeville show where one of the performers burlesqued the "new idea of Russian dancing." The comedian made a few eccentric steps, then explained to his audience that those steps signified that he

was a girl whose lover was sick in Pittsburgh and he was going by train to see him and would have to change from the local to the express. Mordkin saw the humour of the situation and laughed heartily, but said that he had learnt by it how much a general audience did not know about the art of dancing.

If he returns to this country next season he may find out something else, and that is how quickly the American audiences can learn when once their minds are awakened and their interest thoroughly aroused.

CHAPTER XI

ANNA PAVLOWA

IF some airy spirit of nature, captured by a kind-hearted poet, who had trained its ear to mortal music and its heart by recitation of stories of pathos and romance, should be allowed freely to interpret its own conception of human life it might evolve such an art as Pavlowa's. The earth has no claim upon her. She does not even need it as a resting place for her feet. She can just as readily float in the air or swim through the waters. So in interpreting the things of the earth she is quite detached in her point of view, a lyric embodiment of the soul of facts far more than an impersonator of the facts themselves. Her dancing bears towards drama the same relation that the song of a bird bears towards the song of the human voice. The bird's song may be the rapturous carol of the lark or the throbbing pathos of the nightingale, either of which will thrill the hearers to the very core, though it has not the personal capacity to experience these emotions with which the human voice thrills us. And thus it is with Pavlowa. She has the bewitching capacity of expressing, to an exquisite degree, a whole range of human emotion without suggesting that she herself has any personal share in them.

For one thing, her technical achievement is a thing so wonderful as to place her beyond the physical laws that govern the movements of ordinary mortals. And in everything she does is an exquisiteness of dainty grace which gives it poetic distinction. Yet with it is an air of wildness, of wilfulness and mischievous joy. Never do we feel any of the lassitude of the overtrained or the sophistication of the over-perfected. It is the spontaneous ebullition of the airy spirit with no consciousness that there is such a thing as technique. Those wonderful poses which she maintains, when raised in the arms of her companion dancer, are the absolute expression of blended art and nature. And in all she seems to be filled to the finger tips with the sheer joy of the moment; not an inch of her but is fully and consciously alive.

Moreover the training in the Imperial Ballet School has included a thorough knowledge of music. This, with the Russians, is considered a most necessary part of the dancer's equipment, since it is ever from the music that she must seek inspiration. Even in the dance-drama it is not the story only that must be interpreted, but every subtle mood and shade of the music must be duly revealed. So the long twelve years' study which the Imperial School demands trains not body only but mind and taste. The pupils study the geography, history and civilisation of various countries; their literature and art and

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ANNA PAVLOWA IN A "BACCHANALE"

everything that will help to develop the sympathetic understanding of different phases of human life. Accordingly the dancers who have come to us from this school have been no empty-headed attitudinisers, but earnest, studious artists devoting their lives to what they claim to be the most beautiful of the arts.

In allowing to these artists liberty to break the continuity of their twenty-year contract, the Imperial Ballet School has indeed made a great contribution to the world of art. And in sending Pavlowa they sent of their best. For even with this wonderful training it is only the rare genius that has the creative ability and fire which mark her achievement. In Russia her name holds high rank among the great artists of the Dance.

It is well nigh impossible in words to give any picture of the spirituelle beauty that pervades her art. The varying moods flash and melt into each other in endless procession. Now shrinking in timid dread, now mischievously teasing, dark eyes full of tantalising elfishness; now haughtily disdainful, head held high, the tips of the toe hardly deigning to touch the ground; now archly bashful, arms upraised, eyelids lowered, yet one quick glance beneath them darting a challenge. For she dances with eyes and smiles, flash of the teeth, curve of the neck; every part of her in accord and doing its share in the expression of the sentiment, while her beautiful mobile features

change with the changing moods like the surface of water under the play of the sunshine and wind.

How slumbrously dusky are her eyes as she sits sullenly and aloof before her captors in the drama of "Arabian Nights," every limb tense with outraged pride and hatred. The royal maiden has been captured by warrior hordes who have brought her, rolled in a rug of rare weave, as a surprise to their lord. How full of dignity and appeal is her movement toward the Schah Rahman, with chained hands outstretched, and beseeching eyes. How consciously beguiling is each pose as she lures him to a fancied security, all the while watching him with stealthy malice and long slow glances that wait the fulfilment of her purpose. How the seeming radiance will die away from her face and limbs and body as she turns to ply him with wine with which she counts on overwhelming his vigilance. See her as she sits before him, every limb infused with inviting witchery, a smile too consciously sweet illuminating her face, while the eyes are those of a startled fawn, watching, ever watching. And when her end is accomplished and the ravished Schah-Rahman hangs helpless over the arm of his throne, how her whole form shrinks in fearful horror, as, clinging to her faithful slave, with dilated eyes fixed on her victim, she gropes for the door which leads to liberty.

And all this with that wonderful aloofness which presents so

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Photo. by Mishkin Studio, N. Y.

ANNA PAVLOWA

much more of the spirit of the fact than the fact itself! If you are looking for simple pantomime acting, you may not appreciate Pavlowa. But when acting has been removed to this abstract plane and you learn this new art language there opens before you a whole world of beauty and expression. For it is a mistake to think that, because Pavlowa is a creature of exquisite beauty, the sight of that beauty is the whole of what there is to be enjoyed in her performance. There is, indeed, so much of sheer physical beauty that it is not to be wondered at if it suffices with some of her audience. But in truth she has so much to give, if one only looks a little deeper, that it will repay even that unwonted exertion which an ordinary theatre audience seems usually to grudge—the exercise of its mentality. Her art is an expression of exquisitely intellectualised sensations.

For this language of abstract emotion, which is occupying so much of the attention of our art world today, is set forth in Pavlowa's art in a manner so attractive that even the most devoted lover of the naturalistic school is forced to admire it. The sheer beauty of Pavlowa's appeal cannot but fascinate and ultimately persuade him that there are things in art which are real and true, even if they do not represent cross-sections of daily happenings. And this all the more, because the last thing one could ever suspect in her would be a didactic purpose

or a mission, even a mission to enforce the love of beauty.

As one watches the exquisite harmony of her movements, the varying expressions of her body, now so full of fire, now so languid or caressing, it is impossible not to be convinced that this is life. Here are the emotions which make life worth while and are above the mechanical routine that is the least part of living, though it occupies so much of our time and energy. Here in this exquisite creature is compact the pure flame of all these emotions. She has not experienced them but the spirit of them has inspired her. It is our own experience that is reflected by her—purged of all actualities and made abstract and impersonal.

Her own words express her ideal: "It is the soul, the face that should lead the dance. The body is subservient. You must forget what you have learned to do with the body. Ah! but you must first learn it!"

It is an old story that the face is the mirror of the soul. But in the case of too many artists, choregraphic and dramatic, the mirror reveals a vacuous monotony; betrays, in fact, the lifelessness of the soul. It is here that Pavlowa takes rank with the very few great modern artists of expression. Her soul has been quickened by study and reflection, until it is capable of a wide range of imagined experiences, among which it flits with the spontaneous freedom of a butterfly in a garden, radiant

with variety of flowers. Meanwhile every mood of emotion takes instant reflection in the sensitive expressions of her face, while every nerve throughout her body spontaneously directs the muscles to an *obligato* of interpretative movement. Every passage of the latter is instinct with a virtuosity which the habit of practice has made second nature, so that, while there is not a gesture, however slight, without its charm of technique, they pass one into the other with the fluency of life. Their marvellous perfection of detail does but contribute to the finer expressiveness of the whole creation. And, what a variety of modes!

Watch her, for example, as Columbine, beset with the amourous rivalry of Harlequin and Gilles. The dance is a "Pas de Trois," arranged by M. Legatt, to the music of Drigo; a piece as dainty in allurement and baffling in its lace-like complexities as a web of gossamer jewelled with dew. The music exhales the very soul of virginal coquetry and Pavlowa renders it momentarily incarnate to the eye; not as a bird caught and imprisoned, but as a living energy, modulated with infinite variations of shifting light and shade. She is the very spirit of young femininity, awakened to a consciousness of her own attractiveness, dawning to the sense of her own power, glorying in both and toying with her new sensations. She palpitates to the wooing of each of her lovers, as the strings of an Eolian harp

to the breathings of the wind. To the agile blandishments of Harlequin, she vibrates with movements, now supple as waving reeds, now swift as a swallow's flight. She darts toward his outstretched arms, poises a moment and dips her yielding form to his embrace; then a moment later has flashed from his grasp, leaving only the trail of a smile behind her.

Now the slow antics of the love-lorn Gilles attract her. She plays around him with the lingering evanescence of sheet-lightning in a summer sky. His uncouthness awakes a strain of tenderness amid her volatile sensations. She would be kind, she pats his chin, she pities him and lays her cheek for an instant to his lips. Harlequin is aflame, he threatens his friend. Columbine averts their quarrel. She distracts them from themselves in renewed devotion to herself. She plays to each in turn, dispensing favours—a touch of fingers, a smile, a roguish glance, the rare rapture of a wingèd kiss. Gradually she is aware of the mystery of her own power and is swayed with the fascination of exerting it. She leads her would-be captors captive; lifts each in turn to expectant bliss and drops him to depths of disappointment. She plays one against the other; with a glance can raise a storm of rivalry and with a smile allay it. Finally through her own veins the magic of her own witchery runs like wine; she is raptured with her own allurement, elate with triumph. Swifter and swifter grows the pace;

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ANNA PAVLOWA

more and more bewildering the rhythm of her movements, while, as her hands float upon the air, they seem to hold invisible strings that guide the antics of her lovers. They are puppets beneath the sway of her resistless charm. She is youth and mirth and mischief; more, she is Désirée, the incarnation of Youth's dream of love and loveliness; aye and more, she is the mystery, rendered visible, of Life's eternal Elusiveness.

She has vanished in a laugh; to reappear, as the spirit of the Waltz. The music is Chopin's and the lowered light makes the scene rather felt than visible. She floats into view, in company with Mozdkine or, it may be, with Novikoff. The forms of the two dancers seem to be incorporeal; the spiritual embodiment of the music's abstractions; the palpable essence of the abstract passion and poignancy of rhythm. All that has ever captured one's rarefied imagination of the soul of poetry as expressed in the melodious movement of the dance, purged of any physical distraction, seems to be realised and made more consumedly perfect in this inspired interpretation. All that one has ever dreamed in youth of the stainless loveliness of life, the tenderness, the fragrance and delicious elation of the purity of spiritual love, blossoms anew in the memory.

Now, the music changes! The subtle spell of Chopin passes into a Valse Caprice by Rubinstein. In the sparkle of light

the atmosphere quivers with a delicately fluid devilry. It is pungent with scarcely perceptible suggestions of the revel of the senses. The dancers become transmitters of exquisite sensations. Their bodies still preserve their incorporeality; they are still personifications, touching the physical apprehension with infinite surprises, but ever with a purely abstract stimulus. Under the sway of the music, interpreted by this marvellous language of choregraphic art, the imagination, purified of all alloy, leaps into vivid life; glides upon floorless spaces, turns and poises in mid-air, and languishes weightless in the arms of ether. It is the ecstasy of the senses, rarefied and heightened by the magic of the artist.

But the music changes to Glazounow's "Automne Bacchanale." We are transported into the old, young world of primitive instincts and desires. The solitude of a forest dell is interrupted by the appearance of a nymph and faun. Gaily holding hands and trailing a veil above their laughing faces, they are wafted in fleet-footed as a breeze, and eddy round and round. Their forms are buoyant with the untroubled joy of life; their limbs free in nature's artless wantonness. It is enough for them to be alive and every movement tells their gladness. Then, suddenly, an instinct stirs. The young female thing breaks away from her play-fellow. He pursues her; they dodge and twist in flight, he has caught her and again she has

escaped his grasp. For a while it is but children's play; then gradually the mystery of life envelops them. She becomes more coy and timid; he, more persistent and eager. Nature prompts her to innocent wiles and him to hotter pursuit; until little by little he turns to hunter and she becomes the hunted. She flies in terror of herself and him. When he catches her, she pants, round-eyed, like a rabbit in the grasp of a young hound. For as yet he has only the instinct of the chase and lets his prey elude him. She escapes with a shriek, the sound of which stirs him with delicious frenzy. And now the dance becomes a whirl of sheer mad beauty set to the ever-quickening pulse-beats of the two young hearts; till nature's victory is won and the nymph, drained of all power to resist the call of instinct, swoons at the feet of her love.

Bravo, Pavlowa! Once again, as in all your dances, you have proved yourself the artist who creates; who snatches us from the world of every day into a world of your own imagining, permeated with the beauty that transcends time and place; the beauty of the universal.

CHAPTER XII

RITA SACCHETTO

THE art of Rita Sacchetto is marked by qualities distinctly her own, and so full of the spirit of the age that her contribution to the art of dancing is unique and vital.

That dancing is the art which unites the sister arts of music, poetry, painting and sculpture has been convincingly demonstrated by other artists. But into this noble group Miss Sacchetto has introduced one more element, that of philosophy. The word is used in its simple meaning to signify the "love of wisdom," as extended to "speculation on the nature of things, existence, freedom and truth." For all through her dancing we find an exposition of one theme, the upward evolution of the Soul of Woman; the craving for Beauty and Life and Purity of Ideal. This idea is somewhere present in every dance. Her art, therefore, involves an aristrocratic aloofness, a sort of loneliness of soul, which is the heritage of the proud spirit that holds its head high and fights its own battles; accepts its own defeat and asks no pity, but hides its cares behind a smile and faces the world anew.

Photo. by Franz Grainer, Munich

RITA SACCHETTO IN THE CRINOLINE DANCE

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To express all this in the form of dance, without words, needs strong intellectual grasp of the mental characteristics of her subject and extraordinary sensitiveness of expression in gesture, carriage, movement and pose. Her art does not call for the wonderful technical execution of specialised exercise, but for the absolute response of every part of the body to the most subtle shades of meaning. Its intellectuality is never thrust on us but is clothed in a garment of plastic beauty, which of itself is a joy and satisfaction to witness. But a dainty elegance and a high bred deliberateness (if one may associate such a word with the airy movement of the dance) characterise her personality, betokening a thoughtful rather than an impulsive nature.

See her in her presentation of the Crinoline Dance to the accompaniment of the elusive, tripping music of Gillet's "Loin du Bal." She is very girlish and dainty, in the spotless purity of her elegant white frock, hooped and ruffled according to the fashion worn by the Empress Eugénie, whom, by the way, she resembles more than a little. Of the daintiest white, it maintains, in spite of its voluminousness, the purity and simplicity and freshness of a summer morning and choicely befits the virginal charm of girlhood.

She sits alone, dreaming of the pleasures of the ball, a slim young girl looking out into life, her eyes misty with recollec-

tion of her little triumphs and the anticipation of the mysteries of life opening before her. Very tender and sweet she is, with just a dash of innocent coquetry and a youthful vanity, the unalienable right of dawning womanhood, which loves her pretty clothes, the floating sash and touches of jewellery. She moves about the room with tripping feet. In her mind she goes through a little comedy of caprice, played with a suitor who asks most humbly for her hand in the dance. She bestows it with outward graciousness and calm but a little inward flutter of anticipation. Is it he who presented the roses with which she has been toying and which with a little caress are laid aside as again she dances? This time it is a few waltzing steps, her eyes now raised in simulated haughtiness, then dropping shyly. She is very new to this game of hearts, this little girl who is playing her hand alone, guided by her mother-wit. Her heart is the stake and it may be that to lose it is the best way to win, so paradoxical are the rules of the game. But she will not give in without a struggle.

If he thinks the prize worth while, he must play the game to the end. Ah, now he has made a false play! She starts from him, head held high, lips curled in dignified scorn, form held erect and prim and eyes flashing beneath lowered lashes. No! she will not look at him! Her head is averted, figure drawn back; the dainty foot stamps with an engaging petulance. The

roses are brushed aside; one is crushed and its petals fall to the ground. Is this really to be the end?

Watch, and read the message of the relaxing form, then a softening of the face, not too suddenly. She knows her worth, and forgiveness must be sued for very humbly. She and she alone can keep the exalted position in which love has placed her. If she relent too easily, she knows by instinct that a little of the hedge of sanctity, with which love has fenced her around, will be broken and can never be repaired. Her heart is warring against herself; she knows she must capitulate, but not too soon. She even glories in her power to cloud all the world in shadow or brighten it with a smile; to play the part of destiny and hold in her little hand the life of a man! She cannot resist the enjoyment of playing on those heart strings a little longer. She must assure herself that they sound true. A little mischievous smile dimples the corners of the lips, the pose of the body has a suggestion of archness. She is dancing now, with just a shade of reserve, but more of teasing piquancy. But her nature is too sweet to torture him for long and she is too unpractised in coquetry to hide the truth. The steps become lighter and freer and more rapturous. Ah! the black cloud has dispersed and she floats in the clear blue of joy, a buoyant, billowy mass of rippling white, radiant with happiness. Eyes dance, the skirt sways, the little feet beneath it

seem hardly to touch the ground, but all with a gracious queenliness that will command homage as well as longing and a crystal clear purity and simplicity which will call forth devotion and reverence.

In some ways it is a simple little dance, calling for no marvels of technique. But in its absolute daintiness, aloofness and fragrant purity it is as exquisite a work of art as one of Vermeer's pictures of Dutch interiors, lit with a cool light streaming in through the open window. In neither is there anything dramatic or grandiose; but both exhibit a simplicity and sensitiveness of refinement and exquisiteness of craftsmanship that raise them to a high plane of artistic achievement.

Very different is the character of the dance which interprets the wild strains of Chopin's "Tarantella." It is a little drama in itself. We see the peasant girl, lively and carefree, until she feels the piercing sting of the poisonous bite. She starts, confused, astounded. What is it? Her movements hitherto have been easy, vigorous; but suddenly she feels a chilly horror stealing through her body. The limbs congeal, the face blanches, the very lips seem white as the horrible suspicion creeps over her. Then with feverish hands she seeks to assure herself of the dread truth. Ah! her forebodings were too true! It is there, the death-bringer! She wrenches herself away from it, and gazes fascinated. She knows the poison is

working its way through her blood. She looks wildly around as though seeking help. Yet she knows there is but one remedy, that no one can save her but herself alone. She must dance, rapidly, frantically, until the violence of her activity shall free her from the taint. No one may aid her; she is facing death, terrified, distraught, and alone.

She summons all her courage and begins with steps that falter at first but gradually become more wild and energetic. Backward and forward her body sways, faster and faster; it is a race with death and terror spurs her on. Her eyes are wild; her hair streams loose; the steps begin to lag, the vigour of her movement slackens. But, no! she dare not stop yet. With a heart-breaking sob she starts again. Faster, faster! She is not dancing now, but running with short pattering steps this way and that. Blind with misery and fatigue, she gropes and stumbles but saves herself for a time. It is too hard, too cruel. The fear that clutches at her heart clogs her footsteps and they drag heavily. Then a false step and again she stumbles and this time falls in a pitiful heap, exhausted, all but lifeless. For a moment she lies there, beaten. But the horror is driving her again. She drags herself by force, now to a sitting posture, then to her feet. She will fight to the bitter end in her lonely struggle against the unseen foe. She is staggering now. Her feet drag; her form bends like a broken

lily; her hands are outstretched, groping, warding off that terrible something which is lying in wait to clutch her. She is mad with the agony of it, but still mechanically drags her body, turning and stumbling, the life ebbing down, down. It is torture, but she does not stop, because the poor numbed brain holds but the one idea—to dance and dance and dance. Slower, in more and more broken rhythm, she sways and totters; then, shattered and exhausted, without even consciousness left to will a continuance of the ordeal, falls. The wild wailing music is hushed into silence.

This dance of the "Tarantella" is just as full of fire as the other was of winsomeness. But through both we have a peep into the true Woman-Soul, as it touches the realities of life, whether fraught with joy or terror. For it is not alone the agonised struggle of one peasant girl to save herself from the poison of a spider that Rita Sacchetto interprets, but the struggle of the Woman-Soul against insidious evil which would destroy it. It is the Woman-Soul fighting, in spite of despair; preferring to die in the struggle rather than tamely submit to a ruthless fate.

And so in all Sacchetto's dances the theme is ever the struggle toward a fuller life, a higher ideal. Simmonetta, stricken with death even as she attains the ideal of vernal beauty, in her dance with maidens is determined through all her sufferings

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Photo. by Franz Grainer, Munich

RITA SACCHETTO IN HER SPANISH DANCE

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to die beautifully. Djamileh, the Hindoo Slave, strives, in spite of her bonds, to win from her lord recognition of herself, her individuality, and is driven to desperation when he refuses to regard her otherwise than as a slave.

One performance was given in New York of Sacchetto's ambitious psychic study which she calls a "dance symphonie," "The Intellectual Awakening of Woman," danced to the music of the Peer Gynt Suite of Grieg with the assistance of about thirty dancers. Its motive is the development of the idea of Walt Whitman's "Woman of the Future." From the dark ages of suppression and submission, in spite of discouragement and opposition, the Woman-Soul pushes upward like a growing plant toward the light. Through materialism, sex-slavery, and convention at the cost of sacrifice it ever strives to achieve its special mission, the awakening and strengthening of the world.

"Her shape arises.
She, less guarded than ever, yet more guarded than ever,
The gross and soiled she moves among do not make her gross and soiled,
She knows the thoughts as she passes—nothing is concealed from her,
She is none the less considerate or friendly therefore,
She is the best beloved—it is without exception—she has no reason to fear and she does not fear,
Oaths, quarrels, hiccuped songs, proposals, smutty expressions, are idle to her as she passes,

She is silent—she is possessed of herself—they do not offend her,
She receives them as the laws of nature receives them—she is strong—
She too is a law of nature—there is no law stronger than she is."
(Walt Whitman's Chants Democratic: No. 2.)

Although this inspiring ideal is never absent from Rita Sacchetto's work, it must not be thought that the idea is insisted upon in every individual dance. Into the "Caprice Espagnol," for example, she throws herself with the merriest abandon, to the accompaniment of castanets, which she plays with much vivacity and fulness of tone. Indeed, when she appeared in Madrid her use of this characteristically Spanish device evoked much applause and she was declared to have surpassed any castanet player of that city.

Again, the little "Pierrot and Butterfly Dance" is full of innocent drollery. The mad dashes with which Pierrot attempts to catch the fluttering white object and his puzzled disappointment at his continued failure are spirited and piquant. If there is a little philosophy in the remorse which overcomes him, when at last he captures his prey and the gossamer wings are crushed by his hasty snatching, it is of the semi-humorous brand, not too serious for even the gayest audience.

For Rita Sacchetto inherits from her father the vivacity of the Italian and the artistic spirit of the Venetian, while her

talent for music she received from her mother, who was the daughter of an Austrian composer. She has lived in Munich the greater part of her life. Her training for the technical side of her art was received from the ballet master of the Court Theatre and her début was made in the Kunstler Haus, the artist's theatre. In this city of many arts, where some of the most successful efforts have been made toward the combination of the arts of architecture, painting, drama, music and dancing, Miss Sacchetto holds an honoured position. Her genius, not only in performing but in composing and producing her dances, has won the admiration of all art-lovers, and during his lifetime the painter, Lenbach, showed great interest in her work. Her costumes and mise-en-scènes are studied with minutest detail and she has a wonderful talent for reproducing the atmosphere and style of the works of painters whose pictures she interprets in her dances. Velasquez, Botticelli, Greuze and Rossetti are some whose works have inspired her. In costume, colouring and in the character of all her movements and poses she carries out the distinguishing style of these masters, not only as exhibited in the particular picture that has inspired her, but throughout their works generally.

The colouring and movement, for example, of the "Spanish Dance" have the rich blacks and bold patterning of the paintings of Velasquez and catch again and again a movement or

pose which suggest his canvases. Nor need an art-lover consult a programme to discover the suggestion of Botticelli in "Simmonetta's dance" or the colouring, poses and gestures, characteristic of Rossetti, in the "Death Scene." Sacchetto has visited the great cities of Europe, everywhere greeted with the warmest admiration. Her art is recognised as so individual and original, that it fears no rivalry even with the most accomplished of her fellow artists.

It was Loie Fuller who brought her to America in 1909 to open up to us one more field of achievement in the forgotten art. For, though the motive of the two dancers is widely different, the spirit of the American woman felt a kinship with the other's ideal. Sacchetto, indeed, gifted in her heritage and fortunate in her opportunities of developing and refining her natural genius, has acquired a broadness of outlook which has given her art on its serious side an appeal that overflows the distinctions of racial characteristics and embraces a Universal Ideal of Womanhood.

CHAPTER XIII

COURT DANCES

WITH the present reawakening of the dance instinct, which is shown, not only in the interest taken in the art of professional dancers, but also in the effort to make fuller use of the dance in adding beauty and joy to the lives of the people, there seems to be every hope that there will be also a revival of the beauties of the old court dances. That they will appear in their old stateliness and formality is not likely, as in no way would that be expressive of the spirit of our age. The appeal which they will make to the modern world is that of sheer beauty and grace and opportunity of self-expression. And, in order to achieve the last-named quality it may be necessary to sacrifice some of the stateliness and allow greater freedom and simplicity; for every age must use its art medium in its own way or its art will lack vitality. If we are indeed a race innately vulgar and mindless, we shall produce nothing higher than bunny hugs and turkey trots; but if there is in us some aspirations to beauty and grace, we will inevitably turn to something which shall embody these aspirations.

The heyday of the stately and elaborate court dances was found in the Court of France during the seventeenth century. We have already noticed the elaborate ballets arranged for and danced by the kings and princes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In these as in the state balls the courtiers must bear a part with elegance and grace and much gorgeous apparel. And indeed these court dances, with their slow, carefully balanced steps, were no easy affairs to master. On our modern stage we often see what purports to be a court minuet, but very seldom do see the original "Little steps" from which the dance derived its name. These call for absolute balance on one foot as the other is moved in a slow circle from back to front, without, of course, raising the point of the toe from the ground. Even the easier form, in which the balance is maintained for only half the period, is a task too exacting for the ordinary dancer of modern ballrooms. The difficult steps became much modified at a later period, in fact the simple gavotte step took the place of the intricate minuet, and the dance itself was altered to meet the demands of an age where elegance and daintiness had taken the place of the gorgeous magnificence of the "Roi Soleil."

But amid the grandeur and state of the Salons of Versailles where the dancers were the kings and queens and princes of blood, with powerful nobles and ambassadors from distant

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"A PAVANE" ARRANGED BY MURRAY ANDERSON

lands and princely dignitaries of the Church, all clad in the richness and splendour of robes embroidered in gold and silver, of laces and jewels, these courtly dances were the natural and fitting expression of an ideal of luxurious magnificence. They were the expression of the aristocratic spirit that made of the dancers a people removed and above the common herd, to be worked for and admired and obeyed without question: their stately actions were just what the common ordinary mortal would expect of their dignity and exalted position; and therefore they were the fitting art of expression of their time.

What could better exhibit the opulence of the gorgeous velvets and satins, with their arabesques of gold and silver and their couching of pearls or studding of precious jewels, than the sweeping circles in which the trains or cloaks of the dancers were held in the "Pavane." Well is it called the Pavane or Peacock, for its slow deliberate pacing and the manipulation of the splendid fabrics of cloak and train form its principal object. Surely at those balls of state none would dare to take a part in a Pavane whose garments were not of the most sumptuous description. But being assured of this, with what a loftiness of demeanour would these exalted beings tread their measure, lifting their trains with dainty jewelled fingers, cocking their cloaks with their swords in arrogant superiority, with

sweeping courtesies, elaborate and prolonged, and salutes to the tips of fair fingers, as the plumed hat flourished from the head to the floor, and then was laid across the heart of its gallant wearer.

For to all these court dances belong the wonderful bows and curtseys and kissing of hands, themselves matters to be studied and learned by careful practice and increased or modified to suit the degree of the partner and the desire to make a favourable impression. Not a little of diplomacy and politics were put into these ceremonial dances when the fate of a nation might hang on the manipulation of a fan or the shape of a silk clad leg. More than once has the choice of a future queen been decided at the court ball and grave ambassadors have laid deep schemes for alliances, have checked and counter-checked, while they balanced and bowed and curtseyed with exquisite precision, as though that was the sole thought in their minds. Did any of them, I wonder, in these long, elaborate curtseys, excel the supple, liquid grace with which not so very long ago Ellen Terry used to slip slowly, almost imperceptibly down, melting, it almost seemed, to an exquisite gesture full of expression and variety till her lovely head sometimes nearly touched her knee; then gradually rising, with no apparent effort, till the slim form was once again erect and lissome? To have seen her perform one of these grand curtseys was to

know once and for all that stiff formality was not a necessary quality of the courtly dance.

All balls were not affairs of state and these gorgeous courtiers were very human and needed expressions of joy and merriment as much as any other human being. Sometimes they must relax and, in our American parlance, "have a good time." So we find the dances of that period by no means lacking in simpler, gayer measures in which all could take part.

So, to provide enjoyment of a livelier sort, the entertainment would include a "Gaillarde." This was a much more merry affair, though still one of the "Basse Dances," as contrasted with the dance "Baladine," or high dance. This distinction was something of the same sort as the difference in the Spanish dances between the "Danzas" and the "Bayle." The Spanish Bayle and the old French Baladine are lively and vivacious, danced with gestures of arms, heads and bodies and the foot well lifted; while the "Basse Dance" and Danzas are slow and gliding, the foot being never lifted from the floor.

The Gaillarde was not unlike our modern dances, however, in one respect and that is, it refused to be circumscribed in its expression. Though it was originally a Basse Dance it gradually lost its solemn characteristics and became very lively and the name of one old Gaillarde, "Baisons-nous ma Belle," suggests that the delights of the kissing dances of the people were

not entirely unknown to the court. So, after all, the lace ruffles and long curls of the gallants and the stiff brocades and heavily jewelled trains of the ladies did not mean that they were less human than the young people of our own day. And while they performed the pantomimic dances such as the "Courante," which called for pretty displays of coquetry from the ladies and ardent suing from the gentlemen, there was just as much zest in the game of flirtation as was ever put into a modern cotillon figure.

Not formality, then, but grace and elegance expressed the prevailing mood of these dances. The Minuet was often replaced by the gayer and simpler "Gavotte," at one time a Folk dance but adopted by the court; and even hoop skirts and patches and wigs and swords did not prevent the "Allemand" being a gay and lively affair. But it was capable of much beauty and ingenuity in the variety of its poses, though the partners must hold each other by both hands throughout. The steps were not complicated, as in the Minuet, so that the dancers' whole attention could be focussed on the joy of the moment and its expression in pose and gesture.

Later came the vogue of the "Saraband." Coming from Spain it was full of fire and vivacity and became so popular in France and England as almost to displace the Minuet. It was usually accompanied by the music of guitars, sometimes

played by the dancer, and gave ample opportunity for the display of beautiful and skilful dancing.

Nor does this complete the list, for we have not even spoken of court dances of Spain, Italy, Russia, Hungary, and all the other nations of Europe. And to all of these we are the natural heirs. It seems more than a little strange that we turn away from our rich inheritance and busy ourselves with the shells and glass beads of primitive savages. It is true that the coin of our inheritance is, in some cases, antique and obsolete, but its value is not the less, even if it must be reminted for our use. If necessary we can put on it the stamp and image of our own modern currency and its value will surely be greater than that of the barbarous tokens which we have acquired with such childish pride.

The court dances, shown on the professional stage, have usually been introduced in "powder" plays for the sake of imparting something of the old stateliness to the atmosphere of the play. Consequently, the gayer side of the old time social dancing has been somewhat forgotten. For the exaggerated courtliness of these dances modern dress seems out of place and modern manners certainly would be somewhat strained. But we have had an opportunity of seeing a revival of some of these old time dances where the livelier Gavotte has replaced the Minuet and even that has been quick-

ened up to a vivacious pace more in accordance with the tempo of the twentieth century. These dances which have been exhibited by Mr. Murray-Anderson and Miss Crawford are full of a charming mingling of old time elegance and modern vivacity. Sometimes the old and the new are placed side by side so that we can compare them and learn that we may, if we will, retain the charm of the one without abandoning the free swing and exhilaration of the other.

For, arrayed in beautiful costumes not noticeably out of date even if a little original for our conventionally dressed countrymen, these dancers begin a stately dance to the dignified music of the "Boccherini Minuet." No item is omitted of the formal bow and sweeping curtsey, the fluttering fan and flourish of the hat. But the music changes; a lively modern dance tune, with a suggestion of the national rag-time, supplants the formal rhythmic measure of the tune of the bygone day, as indeed it has done only too thoroughly.

Shall we lose our graceful dances? Will they, too, "turkey trot" with the uncouth crowd? For one moment they are dismayed. This is the "younger generation knocking at the door" with a vengeance. Shall they withstand it, attempt by force to stop the outrage? Or shall they withdraw their dignified presence from the scene of such unworthy revels and leave the grotesque dancers to their own devices? Or shall they just

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GAVOTTE IN MODERN COSTUME BY MARGARET CRAWFORD AND MURRAY ANDERSON

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drop down to the standard of these less idealistic merry-makers and join in the scramble? For a while they seem in doubt. But then their courage and ideals triumph, and boldly changing their step to the changed time, but not altering the form or gracefulness of their movement, they continue their dance, substituting gaiety for dignity and vivacity for deliberation. It is not too difficult for the ordinary lover of dancing, this elegant movement; it is not too solemn for the merriest party and it is not too conspicuous for this self-conscious age. So let us take heart of grace and hope that the time is not far distant when we shall see a revival of dances along these lines.

Mr. Murray-Anderson and Miss Crawford are both of Scottish origin and have studied these dances from sheer love of their dignified beauty. They find them congenial to their temperamental expression and believe there is a scope for modern expression to be found, if not in the minuet, at least in one or other of the Court Dances. Miss Crawford has a special genius for discovering and working out forgotten forms of the dance and imparting to them life and motion. Not only that, but inheriting from her father a strong inventive faculty she has contrived some novel mechanical devices which promise to enhance the effectiveness of her art.

In England and Vienna some very charming court dances have been exhibited by the three Wiesenthal sisters. But only

one of the sisters came to America, so they have not been seen yet in this country. Their costumes were beautiful combinations of colours and the whole picture suggested a group of Dresden china figures. One of the sisters assumed masculine attire, while the others, in large hoop skirts and powdered hair, combined with her to make a picture of dainty elegance and delicate precision.

For the modern allure of these graceful dances is not in the formal stateliness of the old "Minuet de la Cour" so much as in the gracious, gentle gaiety of the simpler dances. In them we find the flavour of the refinement of spacious parlours furnished in the choice simplicity of Hepplewhite and Sheraton, fragrant with the scent of rose leaves and lavender. Brass candle sconces hold the wax candles; two or three choice bits of porcelain are placed about the room; choice prints on the delicately tinted walls, with their white woodwork; a bowl of roses rests on a table, spread with delicate white napery and exquisite china and glass; nothing lavish nor profuse but everything well ordered and fitting, designed for true recreation and enjoyment with no sacrifice of good breeding or good taste. In our modern homes we try to obtain some such atmosphere. In many of the handsomer houses of New York are rooms noble enough to be the setting for the stateliest Minuet de la Cour, and in the majority there is the attempt

to combine modern comfort and convenience with the dignity and refinement of good taste. The attempt is usually successful; for we adapt ourselves quickly to beautiful surroundings. The day of barbaric splendour has passed, and a cultured taste has demanded a cultured environment.

It is therefore inevitable that our social dancing must, in time, as we realise that it, too, is an art and a phase of self-expression, reach a plane worthy of our culture and intelligence. Time was when the beauty of the waltz satisfied us, but we need something new, and so far our gropings for it have led only to crude results. But, as every people get the art that they deserve, we may be sure that something will evolve which is beautiful and characteristic and satisfying to our desire for expression.

CHAPTER XIV

GRETE WIESENTHAL

THE music is throbbing with the wild yearning strains of Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsodie." The curtains part and we gaze at a setting of blank creamy white hangings. There is no suggestion of sumptuousness in their fabric or sweep of majesty in their folds. They appear plain, simple, rather restricted and unexpressive. And here creeps out with halting, timid gesture, a slight wistful-eyed child, dressed in the simple, useful garments of a little peasant. Did the white blankness of the curtains symbolise the life and experience of this little maiden? Are all her history, her affections, her hopes even, still to be written on the blank walls of her life? As yet she knows not what she feels. She has not awakened to consciousness of her share of the heart beats of the throbbing music. She has lived only in the routine of eating and sleeping and dressing and washing with the daily tasks necessary to keep the body alive; but she herself has never awakened and looked out on the world to know herself part of it. She is truly a simple, untaught child.

Her short pleated skirt is made of dark homespun and the white sleeves of her bodice are plain and unadorned: her long

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

GRETE WIESENTHAL IN LISZT'S HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

dark hair is braided and tied with ribbons. Sandals are on her feet but her legs are bare. Her face is grave and wondering and she peers around with curiosity. But the world is bright, there seems nothing here to harm. She stretches out her arms and her body sways a little in a gesture of well being and content, the head goes back and the lips part. She has escaped from the monotony of indoor life and daily tasks and here she is alone in the big world. Shall she not enjoy it?

Against the rhythmic beat of the melody are those yearning vague phrases, those beatings of the wings of the soul for flight, upward, upward! And in her heart something responds. Slowly she raises herself erect, lifting her body and taking a few bounding steps, with arms outstretched, enjoying the unwonted freedom but still uncertain of what wonders or terrors may lurk in this lonely world. Her long braid falls across her hand. Half curiously she holds it, looking at it and its gay ribbons. Its soft, warm touch, and glossy brightness are part of the general well being and she smiles as she runs with steps still faltering, but with uncertainty, not fear. She does not actively wish for anything but just lets her delicious sense of careless freedom flow all through her body. Back and forth, with swaying, lilting steps she strays. Ah! it is good to feel the rhythmic sway of limbs and body.

Now she turns with more conscious vigour, the steps are

more bounding as she lifts herself lightly, filled with the desire to soar and soar, ever higher and higher. Like the skylark seeking the blue, not flying direct to any precise place but just penetrating, seeking, the upper air. But now that desire is born in her being, it must grow and knit her more and more closely to the heart of nature. New emotions stir her every minute and the vague sense of well being blooms into deep-felt joy, and joy is only half felt if there is not a touch of pain, so apprehension quivers through the figure which wavers as a reed in the wind. Ah, life is truly making itself felt!

The music takes on a more definite melody. The emotions only hinted at before call and cry aloud instead of whispering and sighing. There is joy and laughter and light and love to be grasped at and held close, then given out again, warmed and nourished by the contact. Or there are hate and fear and gloomy places to be fled from and struggled with even though their grip is hurting the heart. All these are life and she too will live!

Oh, yes! But not yet, little girl! All these shall be written on the white walls of your life, but not yet. You have come to this place apart and looked for a moment into the future but you are still only the little, untried girl with the long, soft shining braids and fluttering ribbons. But you have felt

the throb and call of life, you have tuned your feet to the rhythmic pulse of the core of the universe, you have whirled around in the thrill of passion, so though the music goes back to the first vague plodding measure, and your own steps retard and grow less sure, as you come back from the vision to the normal round of life there is still something different in their movement. Now it is a languor, a conscious waiting, in the smile is the memory as well as an expectation, and the fluttering little sigh which troubles the breath tells that a step has been taken in life's journey which can never be retraced!

A few weeks ago while visiting a family living in the suburbs, during the evening a gramaphone was brought out onto the lawn to amuse the young children of our hosts. Presently the notes of our Hungarian Rhapsodie filled the air. The rhythmic beat of the first part is certainly not more suggestive of dancing than any other of the airs that had already been played, and up to now none of the children had been dancing. But at about the fourth bar of the Hungarian Rhapsodie the youngest daughter of our hosts, a slim, serious-faced, brown-eyed child of about four years, unprompted by any of the company, slipped down from the lap of her mother and poised herself for a moment on her toes; then, with no consciousness of the surrounding company, but simply in response to some sensation that the music aroused in her, with arms outstretched,

she began to take long slow, swaying steps, rhythmic but not actually timed to the beat of the music. She had never done it before, it was a wholly spontaneous response to the inspiration of the music; she has had no training in dancing except such as is given by the usual kindergarten teaching, in which, of course, the rhythmic sense is developed. But in her little, light, unformed figure and faltering steps, rapt eyes and outstretched arms, one felt again that awakening in this tiny creature of the call of life, of emotion, of expression, of art. It was a picture not soon to be forgotten, this graceful little elfin figure, with short brown linen dress and bare legs and sandalled feet, gliding over the dusky lawn, her serious intent face and golden head drooping slightly over one shoulder, her lips slightly parted in expectation, her big brown eyes veiled, withdrawn from the surroundings, intent on some inner emotion the music had aroused. Is it hidden in this Rhapsodie, this call of life, to evoke this response in sensitive souls, or was this a coincidence?

In England and Vienna Fräulein Grete Wiesenthal made her appearance in company with two sisters. Together they danced the old court dances with a daintiness and charm that won for them universal admiration. Her two sisters did not accompany her to this country, and the peculiar delicacy of her appeal was rather lost in the surroundings of the Winter Gar-

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

GRETE WIESENTHAL IN LISZT'S HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

den. She seems to belong to out-of-doors. The glare of the footlights is not consistent with something wild and timid in her nature. She is more akin to those graceful little antelopes who stand and gaze at you for a moment as long as you remain absolutely still, but, if you try to approach them, have turned and bounded away beyond your sight before you have taken one step.

Fräulein Wiesenthal's second dance was to the music of Strauss's "Blue Danube." It was of great interest to see how her conception of this familiar theme differed from that of Isadora Duncan. For, whereas the latter was a glad joyous creature with moods of pensive melancholy, the Viennese dancer suggested an eerie, shrinking sprite, sporting in the shallows of the water, hiding in their depths, carried along sometimes in a mad rush, then drawing back, veiled in her hair, watching, fascinated, the wild whirl of water. But all the time she is half fearful, half wondering, a creature of reserve and shyness; appealing in its sensitiveness, naïve in its curiosity; yielding herself to rather than taking part in the impetuous course of the stream and finally plunging, sinking deep into its uttermost heart, head bowed to the ground, and flowing, rippling hair falling and obscuring face, neck and arms.

The charm of Grete Wiesenthal's dancing lies, not in the technical equipment, for of that her stock does not seem to be

very great, or in any profundity of emotional expression, but in a delicate sensitiveness of nuance, suggesting rather than expressing the reserves and veilings of the mysteries of nature. It does not sweep you away with any voluptuous intoxication, but is cooling, fragrant and soothing.

But it is not cold or insipid; it suggests depths and varieties of emotional possibility not yet developed and jealously guarded from irreverent display. She touches the emotions more than moves them, like the light sweep of the harp strings after the variety and complexity of the orchestra. Let us hope we may see her again, and not only herself but her two sisters with whom she appeared in London. She has her own individual note in the chord of expression.

CHAPTER XV

ECCENTRIC DANCING

IT is impossible to write about dancing in America without some reference to the various phases of eccentric dancing of which there is such an abundance. Although variations in form and style of these dances succeed each other with kaleidoscopic mutability there has occurred no renaissance of eccentric dancing, because the vogue for it has never declined. Its ideals of expression, as far as they go, are sincere, full of vitality and spontaneity, and of wide appeal.

"Eccentric Dancing" covers too wide an area to claim for it, as a whole, a purely American origin; but there are phases of it which have originated in this country and have taken a strong hold on the imagination of the public, strongly influencing the popular conception of the qualities and technique expected in exhibitions of dancing of all kinds. Of these qualities those most in request have been agility, inventiveness and a humorous rather than serious intention.

The most notable of the American dances are derived from the negro of the old slave days, the buck and wing, cakewalks and rag-times. In all these there is the curious mix-

ture of careless gaiety and ultra self-consciousness, the freakish vivacity with solemnity of self-importance, the true sense of humour with a frank appeal for approbation. These characteristics were borrowed in the early days of minstrel shows, and made popular by the very accomplished comedians and dancers which those shows include; who, by their cleverness and artistry, created the demand for these qualities which has become inherent in the public taste.

That the demand is there is shown by the fact that in nearly every vaudeville programme will be found one or more exhibitions of these phases of dancing. And very neat and agile work it is too, and in a general way expressive of its own peculiar characteristics. There is no attempt at beauty and grace, and with some of the buck and wing dancers immobility of face is a point of pride. But that does not prevent a strongly humorous suggestion in the loose-jointed, careless flingings and twistings of the rapidly moving legs and feet as they turn and twinkle at seemingly impossible angles.

To those who know the country well the name "buck and wing" dances will suggest the stevedores and roustabouts along the Mississippi River. There you see it in its glory, danced on the levees or between decks of the river steamers, by husky, wiry negroes, who thus fill in the time between handling the freights. Usually two will dance, vying with each other in

Photo. by White, N. Y.

INCIDENT DETAIL IN THE DANCE-DRAMA OF SHÉHÉRAZADE
RUSSIAN DANCERS

originality, agility and endurance, while their comrades lie around, marking the time with clapping hands and stamping feet, cheering them on to increased efforts. In method it is not altogether unlike the "step dancing" of the English factory towns, but entirely different in spirit and with the added quaintness of the rag-time, which gives it an elusive quality far more inspiriting than the monotonous beat of the step dance.

There is not much of the native, primitive buck-and-wing dancing to be seen on our stage at present, but there are many fine dancers who use its motive in their dancing acts, and its influence appears in nearly all of the modern eccentric dancing of American origin.

The cake-walk may include many forms of dancing and into it may be infused all the expression of which the dancers are capable, for at its best it is a mixture of pantomime and dance which is akin to ballet. It is true that the fact that each couple dances not only independently of, but even in rivalry with the others, prevents any effects of ensemble between the different groups, nevertheless each individual couple will present a delightful variety of comedy interludes.

Anyone who has seen a "cake-walk" performed between two good negro dancers does not need to be reminded of its fascination. It is a comedy lifted from the child-age of humanity, notwithstanding that it is costumed in a travesty of modern

fashion. Its naturalness is entirely unabashed, because so unconsciously instinctive; it is crude without being uncouth; indeed, replete with a certain rude finesse, and although brushed in broadly, is relieved by an arabesque of light and shade. It has its subtleties, however unsuitable such a term may seem for a thing so naïve; but its subtleties represent the quiver and variety of natural instincts. Shall one compare them to the trembling diversity of the web of sunlight and shadow, which the foliage of a forest tree, swinging in the breeze, weaves upon the ground beneath it? The breadth of nature's passion stirs the limbs of the dancers to rhythmic movements which have the charm of apparent unpremeditation. And correspondingly natural and instinctive is the coquetry which colours the movements of both the dancers.

Watch them for a moment. The man approaches, preposterously ornate. A black swallow-tailed coat is buttoned over a white waistcoat; his striped trousers are creased to a knife's edge; his feet are encased in varnished shoes, and his huge paws in lavender kid gloves, while a silk hat is set jauntily on his head, and a flower, as big as a lettuce, embellishes his buttonhole. He grins with immense satisfaction at the amazing dash he cuts; but this extravagance of sartorial equipment does not disguise the primitive child-man beneath it. The very touch of his foot suggests his descent from endless generations of

bare-footed ancestry, while every movement of the body and limbs inside the sheath of tailoring proclaims his heritage of nakedness, sensitive at every pore to the varying contact of the atmosphere. As he propels his chest, squares his elbows and points his fingers, meanwhile advancing with deliberate strut, one may be reminded for an instant of the muscovy drake. But the impulse to smile and the incongruity of the costume are alike forgotten in the fascination of the man's movements as he becomes conscious of the lady's presence. With a tread that feels the floor his supple body glides in sinuous gyrations, interrupted now and again by a start and a quiver through all his limbs. Now he has caught the lady's eye and fixes her attention. His gestures become more expansive; the action more emphatic; the steps and combinations of movement more difficult and intricate. The lady begins to echo his attentions in actions of her own. She outstrips the glories of Solomon in the lavish gaudiness of her raiment, but it does not obscure the natural grace of her figure; pliant as a young willow wand, winding as vines, as elastic in its convolutions as a tendril. With demure, deprecating twists of neck and shoulders, and furtive glances, ignoring and challenging by turns, she eyes her partner, as though impartially waiting for him to prove himself. His tall wiry form, held between whiles erect and stately, seems every now and then to disin-

tegrate into a spasm of rapid twirlings of loosened joints. Wrists, fingers, hips, knees, ankles, each seems hinged independently and liable at any moment to revolve on its own account. To these outbursts the lady responds with steps no less rapid though somewhat less disjointed; edging away with averted head, but eyes still darting challenges. With finesse worthy of a French woman, a subtle twitch of her petticoat reveals, apparently unconsciously, a momentary glimpse of shoe and stocking, while only a bashful droop of the head and eyes direct attention to the action. And then, when her continued indifference to his most exuberant flourishes has discouraged her energetic young partner, with the same apparent unconcern the little lace handkerchief was dropped on the floor. And oh! what a start of astonishment as, picking it up in one whirling action, her partner presented it to her in another! And oh! the variety and elaborateness of the curtsey of gratitude! and the bows of overwhelmed acknowledgment, up and down the whole length of the stage they extended. And of course after that there could be no pretence, on the lady's part, of ignoring his presence, but, by an exaggeration of politeness, he must be made to feel his position. And the man! As is the way of the primitive male, he must show off at first and exhibit himself in all his glory, and show what a fine fellow he is. His twirlings are diversified by leaps and

bounds and triumphant stampings. But the lady's admiration soon flags. It is not enough to admire him. She wants adulation and devotion for herself, but she must not make the open undisguised bid for them that he does. She must tame this self-confident creature until it is of her, not of himself, that his mind is full. Very indifferently and gradually she moves from him, her whole attention evidently concentrated on the correct arch of her toe as she places it on the ground. Pretty soon it dawns on the arrogantly prancing male creature that he is not creating the impression that he expects. And now it is his turn to become embarrassed and bashful and he approaches her with lingering, dragging step. But impish humour forbids him to be too humble in his approach and for a time they play the game of self-absorbed indifference, each really jealously watching the other.

Presently, after a longer spell of self-absorption, they collide. And now breaks out a little storm of fury on the part of the lady. She is really offended and tosses her head and stamps her foot and flirts her skirt away from his contaminating touch; while he gives himself up heart and soul to placating the offended divinity. Round and round her he circles as she constantly averts her head, until at last he intercepts a glance less haughty than at first. The depths of his humiliation would be abject if it were not for the mischievous twinkle of

his eye, which just waits to catch the answering gleam of hers to seize her outstretched hand and whirl her off into a madcap dance of reconciliation and triumph: which ends the little comedietta.

As written, there is little to distinguish it from the little Harlequin or Pierrot and Columbine episodes in which both French and Italian ballets used to abound. But in the actual performance of it there is the elusive syncopation which is apparent in the dancing as well as in the music and the ever present element of the grotesque which is fooling even in its little comedies. There are none of the airy sentimentalities with which the Italian ballets would be filled. There will be a certain tricky impishness even in the lady's part; gestures of shoulder and arm which are entirely grotesque, caricature rather than comedy. But that is the native genius of the negro brought in touch with our civilisation. For these qualities do not belong in the same degree to the aboriginal African, though the syncopated music and the love of agile dancing are his, native and irrepressible.

But by no means all the eccentric dances owe their origin to the negro dances. Many of them are exhibitions of spontaneous individuality quite impossible to classify and full of vital energy.

Not even an electric spark could excel the vivaciousness of

Photo. by White, N. Y.

THEODORE KOSLOFF AS FAVORITE ARAB OF ZOBEIDE IN THE DANCE-DRAMA "SHÉHÉRAZADE"

the best of these eccentric dancers. What a marvellous whirl of energy is Bessie Clayton. Her suppleness and absolute control of muscle and the lightning speed of her movements leave one gasping. She is here, there and everywhere, and always buoyant, light-hearted, inconsequential and full of that restless, tireless, nervous energy that animates so much of American life.

For the mixture of the humorous and grotesque it is impossible to imagine anything that could surpass Montgomery and Stone. Not only are the physical contortions of which both, and especially Stone, are masters, subjects of constant astonishment and a refutation of all theories of anatomy, but everything is done with a deftness and artistic touch which raises it far above mere eccentric contortion. They have invented and perfected a language of quaint caricature which is as complete as that of any pantomimist and whose vocabulary is constantly growing. Their demonstration of expressive power without the aid of words, given in "The Wizard of Oz," as the Scarecrow and the Tinman, are unforgettable.

It is interesting to surmise what might have been done by these and other artists of undoubted equipment if they had been encouraged to develop the significant side of their art. I do not believe that even the lovers of the comical would have been the losers. For instance, in the performance of "The Wizard

of Oz" there was a subtlety of suggestion in their work, a display of human feeling, a tenderness for the child spirit that was more significant and of deeper appeal than anything in which they have subsequently appeared. And yet they were no less humorous and certainly their seriousness was not oppressive. But if they had developed that subtle expressiveness of the real emotions which belong to every man, however much he may disguise them by laughter or keen worldliness, would they not have evolved something of more exquisite and at the same time quite as general appeal, than caricature? It should be just as full of humour as their present work and not less true to the American genius.

An eccentric of undeniable humour is Mr. Al Leech, whose specialty is to portray a pathetic helplessness and lack of control of all his limbs, executing thereby manœuvres almost incredibly complicated and unfailingly mirth-provoking. His comic pantomime dancing with Miss Nellie Lynch reveals brilliant technique on the part of both executants. One of them will suddenly, in the midst of a brilliantly executed "pas seul," seem to flounder and only save himself or be saved by the other from headlong destruction by a series of counterbalancings which seem of superhuman execution. The skill of the evolutions is carefully hidden behind a veil of bewildered clumsiness; but the labour and devotion required to achieve

such a technique is worthy of admiration and respect. There is absolute lack of artistic intention in these performances, and it would seem as if that in itself appeals to an average audience. The aim is to amuse, purely and simply, and the many performers who adopt this form of entertainment labour hard to achieve their aim and are content if they succeed.

A very neat and effective piece of work is done by Moon and Morris, in a dance in which, pressed closely together, they duplicate each other's work with such precision of feeling that they seem like one person endowed with double quota of limbs, heads and torsos. They differ in size and build, but that only makes the unity of feeling more uncanny, so thoroughly do they convey the impression of being controlled by one brain centre which directs these varying forms.

The "Texas Tommy" dancers are perhaps more acrobatic than eccentric. Their evolutions require that absolute precision and dexterity of movement, that sureness of eye and exact sense of timing, that are needed in trapeze performances and acrobatic displays. There is, however, a certain wild, nervous verve, an exuberance of energy and vitality in their wonderful *tours de forces* that suggests the purely physical well-being of hardy bodies with muscles all taut, clear eye and cool head, of the folks who live out of doors, who eat with good appe-

tite, sleep the moment their head touches whatever may happen to be the pillow, waken alert and vigorous, work with a zest, be it for two hours or twenty, and play with the same zest when work is done. Such men and women look death in the face without wincing, accept reverses without whimpering, and share their good fortunes with their comrades. Their play is likely to be as tense as their work, but it can appreciate dexterity and precision of method and enjoy the sense of mastery that the superior possession of these qualities enhances.

It is the sureness of his mastery of the use of his lasso that enables the Texas cowboy to sit his pony unconcernedly before the onrush of a wild steer with blood in its eye. He is conscious that at just the right moment he can throw the lasso over hoof or horns, and guide his pony to just the required angle to withstand the jerk which shall land his quarry on the ground. His judgment must be quick and cool, his eye sure, his hand steady, his knowledge of the amount of energy to put into his throw unerring, his sense of time to throw and time to brace himself for the pull faultless. His grasp must be firm and his hand strong, but he must know too how to make it gentle and soothing. And all these points come out in the romping gaiety of these Texas dancers. The whirl which spins his partner toward the footlights with such momentum that without aid she must assuredly fly across them, must be nicely adjusted so

that in neither force nor direction shall she escape the restraining grasp of his hand outstretched just at the right moment to arrest her. His own weight must be braced to counterbalance hers, for here is no soft earth into which he can dig the high heel of his boot to gain a purchase. Poise and gentleness of handling must regulate the seemingly fierce toss of his partner, first in air, then toward the ground, otherwise she would be battered to pieces across the outstretched leg over which he bends her before restoring her to normal balance. And the girl must yield herself entirely to the controlling energy of her companion, for an unpremeditated movement or a divergence of action would be disastrous. Grit, cool-headedness and controlled energy, these are the forces that are called into play and that make the performance exhilarating. In its essential naïveté and suggestion of wholesome and careless horseplay it presents a marked contrast to the grim "throw-back" to savagery displayed in those dances originating in Paris which depict the psychology of the "Apache" of the slums of that city. They have been seen in this country usually in the cabarets.

This dance of the underworld is neither comedy nor farce; but starkest melodrama. Nor is it an expression of natural instincts; but rather of instincts distorted and polluted by long divorce from nature. It reeks of the fetid atmosphere of crowded slums from which the wholesomeness of nature's sun-

shine has long been excluded. Its emotions have nothing of the healthy colouring of natural instincts; they are the products of perverted instincts. But the expression of the dance is strangely forcible, and presents an epitome of the miasma which exhales from the crowding together of human beings without the restraining influence of social conventions. In the case of the man, it represents that most odious result of decadence —contempt of the female; in the latter's case, its horrible counterpart—the abject submission of the female to the male's savagery.

And the forms of this dance are inevitably the complete contradiction of natural movements and rhythms. Their savagery has no suggestion of the breezy spaciousness and freedom of the natural savage life. Every movement is constrained; every gesture stiff, angular and confined, as if bred from constant jostling with other bodies in a crowded narrowness. Corresponding to the crampness of the movements is the lack of fluency and continuity in their combinations, the *tempo* of the dance is jerky; with intervals of sluggishness and bursts of delirious speed; a very denial of rhythm, every movement seeming to be the result of a sudden impulse that disdains control.

Let us picture the scene; it is a small cabaret with marble-topped tables extending down the length of it on each side, so

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Photo. by Mishkin Studio, N. Y.

ANNA PAVLOWA AND MIKAIL MORDKIN IN A "BACCHANALE"

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as to leave a promenade in the centre. The dim light of a few gas-jets is further obscured by the smoke of cigarettes; the atmosphere hangs like a pall of heaviness. The young men and women, seated at the tables, seem to feel its weight. There is little conversation, still less laughter; they sit for the most part moodily beside their glasses of beer or sirop. Here and there a table is occupied by a youth and girl; but generally the girls keep to themselves, while the youths foregather apart. A rattle-boned piano is labouring with a waltz. It stirs no response from the company.

Slowly, however, a young man pulls himself up from the seat. He wears a drab suit, the jacket buttoned tight across his narrow chest, a neckcloth, fastened in a knot, and a cloth cap, close down on one side of his head. He stands with one foot slightly advanced, arms hanging down and shoulders lifted to the prominent ears. His thin face is pallid and expressionless. He saunters down the promenade between the tables. Each foot is advanced with the deliberation of a cat's and lingers on its tread, and as each advances its side of the body swings slowly forward; so that the stealthiness of the movement winds its way up to the shoulders. Only the head with its apathetic mask remains rigid. The company eyes him listlessly.

Suddenly, his body droops into a slightly crouching pose, as

if it were about to spring; the muscles of his face grow tense; the eyes become alert, his gaze sweeps the row of tables and, shifting over, sweeps the other. It halts and fixes itself upon the face of one of the girls. She feels the sway of it, and seems to be divided between compliance and repulsion. But she cannot resist it, rises sullenly and, as if she were being dragged, lagging upon each step, approaches the man. She is near him, and he grips her wrist, swings her body against his, spins round and round with her and flings her far from him. At the touch of his fierceness she appears to be both afraid and fascinated; and waits motionless, watching. From his end of the floor he advances, and she from hers; he retires and she retires, her steps and the swaying of her body reproducing his. He seems to be asserting the irresistibleness of his attraction over her and she to be gradually acknowledging it. The fear is slipping from her, the fascination grows. Her face loses its sullenness; becomes animated with a wistful pleasure. The man's apathy in turn relaxes; his expression warms to condescension, almost kindly. Her pleasure kindles; her eyes follow his movements with admiration; she smiles in invitation. He draws her to him, lays his arm with almost a caress around her waist, shelters her body with his own, and guides it through the steps and revolutions of the waltz. Meanwhile, her lithe figure bends and turns to his slightest suggestion; she looks up

into his eyes and he feels on his face the warm breath issuing from her parted lips.

Suddenly, as though it stung him, he sets his hand on her throat and forces her head back. He holds it so a moment, as if he grasped a snake; then hurls her from him. He will be master; not even the allure of the female shall sap the mastery of the male. She crouches, panting, submissive to and fascinated by his strength, tingling too with pride that she can rouse it. He watches her with cold, concentrated stare, as if he would pierce her through and through with the consciousness that she is only a plaything to his hand. She has risen to her feet, humility and pleading in her eyes; slides towards him with faltering steps; halts, drops her gaze and bows submissive at his feet. He is appeased and raises her; again embraces her with his arm and resumes the waltz. He will make her feel that the prerogative to woo is his. He holds her in a grip of steel; so that each body vibrates to the least movement of the other. The intricacy of the steps increases, the sway of the bodies becomes more sinuous, the pace grows, while the girl, yielding herself to the delirium of surrender, leans back upon the man's arms with eyes closed.

Suddenly, again, he hurls her from him, still retaining hold of her wrist, so that they stand at the extremity of straightened arms; he cold and rigid, she quivering with excitement. A

moment so, and he has wrenched her back into his arms and again spins her round in the fury of the waltz. Again he hurls her from him, and again with increasing violence drags her back into the dance. Again and still again. Then he varies his ferocity by dashing her to the floor and fiercely pulling her back onto her feet; throws her this way and that, interrupting the passion of the dance with the evidence of his mastery and her impotence; while as she hangs limp in his grasp, bent, broken, crushed, the helpless sport of her own desire and his imperious will, her absolute submission goads his passionate fury, until the dance quickens to a mad *accelerando;* then, on an instant, stops. The man has forced the girl's body across his thigh, thrust her head back with one hand and with the other makes a motion as if to cut her throat.

No! it is not a pleasant melodrama; but one of weird and fearful fascination.

In one short chapter there can be no attempt to review all that is being done in the various forms of eccentric dancing at the present time, or to call to mind the names of all who are doing admirable work. The few already mentioned here have been chosen rather as being typical of the different lines of work which are finding favour and evoking such response from the public as to make them seem to be the expression of some phase of general sentiment. But of one thing there seems to be no

doubt, and that is that the dance is looked to at the present time with an increasing expectation. A general recognition is abroad that there is more in it than mere display of pretty figures and agility. As yet there is a large public which does not quite know what it is that they may expect from the revival of artistic dancing. They have been somewhat misled by the various "Salomes" to think that there must be an element of the morbid in it. But even so, people are awakened to the fact that there are qualities to be looked for which appeal to some innate sense higher than mere appreciation of agility or admiration of prettiness. They are finding that there is a power in the subtle imagery of the dance that speaks to the imagination more delicately and more vividly than any literal portrayal of facts can do: that there is no human emotion, grave or gay, beyond the powers of this imagery to portray: and that the mere mechanism of dancing, robbed of this emotional appeal, is a dead thing which may, by its skill, evoke surprise but cannot continue to hold the interest or add to our joy of living.

CHAPTER XVI

FOLK DANCING

ONE of the beneficial results of the reawakening of the art spirit in dancing is that it has enforced the consciousness that dancing is not only a beautiful art to be enjoyed by the few, but is the natural heritage of all the people and especially of the young. It is true that all arts should belong to the whole race and happily this fact is becoming recognised by our educators. But dancing, the simplest, most spontaneous and at the same time the most complex and all embracing of the arts, is not only a privilege to which young people are entitled but it is a need of their nature. In our crowded modern cities, where the dwellings of the people are cramped and restricted, the absolute need of this outlet is keenly felt and it is one of the most hopeful signs of our modern consciousness of the rights of youth that there is a growing endeavour to meet this need in a sane and safe way.

School-boards, settlements, open-air playgrounds, every agency in fact that is working for the betterment of living conditions, recognise this need and the response to their effort is immediate. Nor is it only the young people who seek to take

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Photo. by Jessie Tarbox Beals

CHILDREN OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DANCING ITALIAN TARANTELLA AT ANNUAL FÊTE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC LEAGUE

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advantage of the opportunity thus offered. It is almost pathetic to see the older women, sometimes mothers of families, who present themselves as candidates for these classes. They are nearly all foreign born and usually belong to races more vivacious in their self-expression than the Anglo-Saxon. Possibly some of them remember the dances of their own country but are too self-conscious to speak of them. Anyway the desire for this form of self-expression is natural to them and, happily, the day is past when the puritan ascendency is allowed to bar it out. There is even hope that the old-time reproach, that the emigrant to this Land of Hope forgets how to sing and dance, will be obliterated. In time the betterment of conditions in this new country may be shown not only in the form of a savings-bank book but in the happy sound of singing voices and the glad dances of the young people throughout the land.

So here, in this young and vigorous civilisation, we are inviting the children to express their sense of joy and wellbeing, in the world-old way in which, with differences only of form and manner, their forebears have been expressing themselves all down the ages.

The children are gathering together on the green lawn of Central Park. The trees have just robed themselves in their freshest, gayest mantles. The horse-chestnut's white or pink

spires point upward like candles on a Christmas tree. The dogwood blossoms cluster white and cool. Rhododendrons blush and glow in their gorgeous colourings. Beneath the feet is the springy emerald turf, overhead the cloudless sapphire sky. Winter is past and Spring has decorated the great out-of-doors to be our playhouse for the Summer.

The children come in groups and companies in white robes, bright ribbons, some with chaplets of flowers on their heads. They form into groups, and, what is more natural and inevitable, they dance and sing. Here are little kings and queens to be crowned and sceptred with solemn ceremonies. Oh, yes, we are good republicans, democrats or even socialists; but we will not refuse homage to these symbols of the sovereignty of Youth and Spring and Merriment. Look at them! Do the bright eyes and quick eager gestures of the little queen remind us of ancient Celtic Limousin where, on the "Coudert des Maiades" at Merlines, under the leafy beechtree her ancestress was crowned "Regina Avrilloza" and sang the "Calenda Maia" or Welcome to Spring?

Or perhaps the blond-haired, sturdy boy, her partner, is lineal descendant of some bold Robin Hood, who played a valiant part in the old Morris dances on the English village green. Maybe the grandsire was one of the champions of the dance, who, bells on knees, and short staff in hand, footed it

smartly, with steps and flourishes, a match for any man for fifty parishes around. For there was much rivalry in these quaint dances among the men of different villages, both in skill and costume. No man, therefore, appeared at the dance "unmorriced"; his women folk would see to it that he was equipped with feather or posy in hat, garters trimmed with many little bells and streamers of long ribbons attached to the arms. Note, by the way, the London East-Sider of to-day, the "Arry," as he is called, going out for an excursion or picnic on his Whitsun bank-holiday. In his exuberant joyfulness he decorates his hat with a feather, made of cut paper of fanciful hues. Is this the poor remnant of his "Morris" bravery?

Every village evidently arranged and invented its own Morris and was proud of its special features. On one occasion we find a record of a Morris danced entirely by old men, for originally the Morris was exclusively a man's dance, one of the group being disguised as a woman and called Maid Marion. The youngest of these village ancients on this occasion was eighty-five years old and the oldest was over a hundred and five!

There is a stained glass window in Betley, Staffordshire, of a period not later than Edward IV, which represents Morris dancers, in bells and streamers, showing that the dance was an established tradition even in that day. And one of the original

actors of Shakespeare's plays, one Kemp, the creator of the parts of Dogberry in "Much Ado About Nothing," and Peter in "Romeo and Juliet," performed a Morris from London to Norwich, a distance of 114 miles. This was called the "Nine Days Wonder."

The name "Morris" dance implies its origin, for it signifies Moorish. It was brought to England from Spain or some country near it. Anyway, the dance is found in Portugal, Vendôme and the Basque Provinces. The figures differ a little from the English, especially in the use of the swords in place of the short stick which the English dancer holds and which doubtless was formerly a knife or dagger. These swords, crossed on the ground, are substituted for the long clay pipes, around which the English dancers performed a lively step skilled to avoid touching them with their feet or in any way jarring or breaking them. In the Morrises of all countries songs are introduced.

The Morris dance has never entirely died out in England. It has survived in remote villages and in the annals of the old people. The present writer has seen in one of the coal mining towns of Durham a party of Morris dancers, who had come in from a neighbouring village, dancing through the principal streets of the town. A special study of these dances has been made by Miss Mary Neal, of England, who introduced them to

this country with the aid of Miss Florence Warren. She has discovered many a quaint tradition and humorous old song, hidden away in the memory of some old grandfather, who has imparted to her its mysteries to be handed on to gladden another generation.

For we must come back to our children at Central Park. Here are a group, gaily winding the ribbons around a May-pole. Bright streamers that can be plaited by skilful intertwining into all sorts of gay devices. How many of these are here by right of inheritance? The descendants of the Briton, of course, for even in the early Colonial days of this country they brought their May-poles to the land across the seas, and danced around them until the stern Puritan frowned them down. And the black-eyed, sturdy Italian peasant has a right to the dance which her ancestors danced from the time of ancient Rome; and so has the happy faced little German whose heart goes out to a May-fest by the most natural of inherited instincts; yes, and this slim, black-eyed, straight-featured little Greek. Ah! she has the best right of all. For centuries and centuries ago her forebears greeted the coming of the Spring with joyous dances. Moreover, the triumph of Theseus over the Minotaur, whose labyrinth he penetrated fearlessly with the clue furnished by Ariadne, was celebrated by maidens who, holding in their hands cords or streamers, wound them around a central figure in in-

tricate patterns; surely, the prototype of the May-pole dance. So the gay ribbons in the hands of the children, gathered together in Central Park, the future citizens of this vigorous, young nation, stretch back through the ages, uniting them to us with a joyous bond, expressive of the instinct of happiness that has kept alive the love of art and beauty to bloom and brighten our lives today.

But there are other dances just as ancient. See that group of tiny tots, hardly more than babies, with linked hands circling round a little central figure. They do not know it, but they are dancing the oldest form of organised dance, the Round or Rondo. They are singing as they dance a simple little couplet, with many repetitions; is it a Branle of ancient Auvergne? One little one stands in the middle and from thence chooses and salutes a partner to the singing of its companions. It is the "Wedding Round" danced in mediæval Europe which was so beloved that in 1574 a bequest was made by a painter which endowed annually two young couples from the proceeds of his fortune, on the condition that on their wedding day they danced the Wedding Round about his grave. The Wedding Round authorised the kissing of the selected partner and is the original of the old English game of "kiss-in-the-ring." Indeed, in the freer manner of those old times, kissing formed a part of many of the old Folk dances, especially the "Branles," or, as they were

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Photo. by White, N. Y.

ADELINE GENÉE IN HER BUTTERFLY DANCE

called in Old England, "Brawls," and there was a certain little flourish of the pipes or fiddle which was the recognised signal to thus "Salute your partner."

As the mothers and grandmothers watch our tiny dancers, circling in the round, do any of them think of those Midsummer Nights, when in a far-off country the bonfires were lighted outside of the towns and villages at night, and hand in hand the dancers wound around them? How many hundreds of years those bonfires have flared and flickered as the moving forms silhouetted against them, now for one minute showing brightly illuminated, now lost in the shadows. There was a time, doubtless, that it was a rite, sacred to some Fire God, full of mysterious portent. Through mediæval Europe it still is "St. John's Eve," but the more ancient faith peopled the dark shadows of the woods and mountains with spirits, whose earthly sway was of more than ordinary power on this fateful night, and who were somehow appeased or subdued by the blazing fire and dancing forms. All through Europe we find the custom extending back to the remotest times, rich in folk lore and tradition, differing slightly according to locality but with the main idea unchanged. And here in the new country the superstitions must be abandoned, but the circling figures shall still remind us of the past and when Midsummer day is here we will seek some woody spot and watch the darting fireflies,

weaving their glowing rounds, combining both fire and dancer in their own tiny entity.

The Round or Rondo in all its forms has been appropriated by the smallest of our dancers. The kindergarten has taken it as the natural primitive expression of the race and uses the instinct for the enjoyment and development of these budding natures. Some of the dancers advance and retreat in circle, singing the while, as in the Sardinian Round and the Douro-douro dance of the Arabs. So that even those of the little dancers of Central Park whose features betray their Oriental origin are not intruders in these dances.

Now as we watch the dancers we see two lines facing each other, performing figures and weaving up and down the line. This is the old "Country Dance," or "Contre-Danse" in its more stately name. For it was popular in France and England not only among the peasant folk but in the court and social functions and found its way even into ballets. Let us look for the blond-haired, straight-limbed Scandinavians in this dance. For the swing of it is in their blood and even the most recently arrived may have seen it in their own native land. Watch the firm robust sway of it. It is a game and dance combined. Not unlike it is the Bourrée of Auvergne, with its stamp of sabots to the tune of that truly out-of-door music maker, the bagpipes. Its tones may be droning and monoto-

nous at times but when it does kindle into fervour what a delirious abandon it can express! France, Spain, Italy, as well as Scotland have echoed its keening or thrilled with the passion of its skirl.

For it is not unworthy of note that much of the liveliest of the Folk dancing has grown up to the tune of the bagpipes. The Scottish reels, Highland flings and so forth can hardly be surpassed for vigour and spirit and contradict the motion of solemnity or "dourness" with which some people have been inclined to invest the character of the Scot. Indeed there is no sight more inspiriting than four stalwart Highlanders in their tartans, such as may occasionally be seen in the camps of Highland regiments, dancing a fling, accompanied by sharp cries, the snapping of fingers and the world-without-end droning of the pipes and the wild skirl of the chanters with which the players urge the dancers on to further efforts. The short fluttering kilt, the twinkling of white spats and parti-coloured hose, the light deftness with which intricate movements are made and the vigour and the whirl of the powerful forms; especially when the dance is out of doors, lighted by flaming torches, flickering, high in the hands of other kilted giants; the splashes of light throwing the scene into bold relief amidst the gloom of shadowy trees, present a picture, vivid, stirring and unforgettable. But though bagpipes may be lacking for the chil-

dren's dances we still have the Scottish reels and Highland flings and dances from other lands where the bagpipes wake the echoes of the hills. For here are Czardas, Mazurkas, Tarentellas, Farandoles, Skoals Syvsprings, and many more, representative of every nation in Europe, the symbol of the joy and merriment that have kept the hearts of their ancestors warm and hopeful through the long centuries. And not only the joy; for in many of the countries of the old world even the griefs and bereavements were commemorated by a dance, so truly was the dance the art expression of their lives. And in this connection there is a pathetically quaint little song which accompanies a dance belonging to old French Flanders, which was wont to be used by her companions at the funeral of a young girl. The following translation is found in Mrs. Lilly Grove's History of the Dance:

Up in Heaven they dance to-day,
Alleluia.
The young maidens dance and play.
They sing as they dancing go.
Benedicamus Domino.
Alleluia, Alleluia.
'Tis for Rosalie they sing
Alleluia.

> She has done with sorrowing,
> So we dance and sing we so.
> Benedicamus Domino.
> Alleluia, Alleluia.

Such sentiment allied to dancing shows how far it was from being simply a social exercise. It was indeed the art of expression of the simple, unlearned folk; and realising this the training of our school children in the dance takes on a new significance. Far more than literature or painting or even music does it make the first general appeal for beauty to those whose lives have had too little contact with the beautiful. It needs no explanation, it speaks for itself. For we are so constituted that while we are executing beautiful and graceful movements our minds turn subconsciously to the gentle and sweeter channels. Watch the faces of the children as they dance and see how they refine and sweeten. I do not remember ever to have seen a coarse or vulgar expression on any face of the hundreds who danced. It is truly a powerful lever that is being used, and the only pity is that its use cannot continue even after school days are over.

The teaching of dancing in the Public Schools of New York City was originally started by the Girls' Athletic League in 1905. A similar organisation for boys had been in operation since 1903 under the leadership of Dr. Luther Gulick. The

problem confronting the organisation for girls was a difficult one. There are very few open-air playgrounds accessible to the school children of lower New York so that all recreations provided must be thoroughly organised so as to admit of their being enjoyed in a restricted space. It was recognised that the problem of athletics for girls must be solved in an entirely different manner from that for boys; that many sports and exercises useful and invigorating for boys are injurious and unsuited to girls. For this reason Miss Elizabeth Burchenal, the Secretary of the Girls' Athletic League, early in the evolutionary stages of the League, asked for replies from a number of the highest authorities in physical education, physicians and educators, to a set of questions as to the comparative value of various forms of exercise for girls. The result was that of the exercises considered "especially beneficial and suitable," dancing heads the list. Of the "best loved, most commonly practised and with greatest primitive appeal" the unanimity of the answers in favour of dancing was remarkable.

Of its recognition, then, as healthful and beneficial there was no doubt. But even so, it seems probable that only few of the pioneers of this great movement realised the wonderful outlet that they were opening to the children on the expressional side. Miss Burchenal herself knew it and has always worked to promote its highest efficiency on the expressional side, as well as

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Photo. by Jessie Tarbox Beals

AN INTERPRETATION OF STRAUSS' "VOICES OF SPRING," ARRANGED BY MISS BEEGLE FOR THE CHILDREN'S SYMPHONY CONCERT

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fostering the traditions of the countries from whence the Folk Dances were derived. But these qualities and their benefit to children whose home lives offer them few if any occasions for self-expression in the direction of beauty, has been a surprise to many. And that it has been appreciated is shown by the fact that the work of teaching has frequently been done voluntarily for the sake of the pleasure that the dancing brings not to the pupils only but to the teachers themselves.

The work of the Athletic League was recognised by the Board of Education and made part of the Public School system in 1909. To New York, therefore, belongs the honour of having been the pioneer in the introduction of dancing into the system of public education. In doing so they formally admitted the rights of the children to this their natural inheritance and established the value of the dance as the elementary approach to all arts. For it is certain that it will be easier to appeal for a sense of form, rhythm, harmony and balance to a child who has felt something of all of these laws in her own person than to one to whom these are but words.

Very wisely, the Athletic League discourages anything in the nature of a display of these little dancers. They dance for themselves, not for an audience. Even on their fête days in the parks no attempt is made to induce the public to attend. But there is ever an attendant throng of parents and friends

whose eager faces show the delight which has been added to their lives by the recognition of this impulse toward life and beauty. And with what a tone of pride will one of the spectators say, "Yes, I know that dance, I danced it when I was a girl, way back in the Old Country." And the children find that after all what is beautiful in the Old Country is worthy to survive amidst all the modern improvements of the New.

Many cities have followed the example of New York in adding dancing to their systems of public education, and throughout the land much good work is being done in private institutions for its study and perfection. Not only Folk Dancing but many other of the beautiful forms of the art, especially natural and Greek dancing, are taken up by our schools and colleges, much of it being done in the open air. Of course the same long arduous study is not expected from these students as is given by those who intend to devote their lives to the highest exposition of the art, but enough training is given to develop the flow of feeling through the body until it becomes a natural instrument of expression for the imaginative and spiritual forces.

It is this recognition of dancing among people of all sorts as a means of cultivating a sense of beauty as well as an expression of the joy of life, quite as much as the presence among us of the great artists, that makes for the present Renaissance

of the Dance. The vital motives of the great dancers are no longer set forth in a dead language to uncomprehending ears, but, because of the experience of the audience in the art, they evoke a response that is understanding and give increased pleasure.

So we find the Dance coming to be once more a part of the life of the community, the natural expression of joyousness. True we have not yet invested our days of ceremony with any ritual of dance, as in ancient days. But it would no longer seem to us unnatural or childish to celebrate our national anniversaries, our school or college fêtes, our individual commemorations with appropriate dances. And if the form of these dances should crystallise we may yet develop even these ritual dances. For so the cycle turns round and round as the world progresses.

The Dance Spirit is awakening, not as a passing fad of the moment, but as a vigorous, vital element of our modern life.

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