

ARE WE TO REVIVE THE MOST GRACEFUL ART?



The Ballet as it Should Be Again Growing in Favor

The Butterfly Dance of Mlle. Valentine Petit.



Beginning at an Early Age.



O'Fazhanova, A Modern Favorite.



Adeline Genée, A London Favorite Just Arrived in America.



Chasles, Graceful in Dress and Posture.

miration and the critical faculty which we, in our time, must sedulously cultivate if we would be worthy of our half-forgotten inheritance of appreciation and if we would be qualified to rival the audiences who are happy in sitting in judgment on her abroad.

Or a Valentine Petit, auburn haired, warm lipped and alluring of eye, may come to us in all the splendid modeling of her ivory arms and shoulders, wearing the brilliant habiliment of the butterfly, the rainbow tints flashing from stage to stage, as though Nature, in some exuberantly generous mood, had vouchsafed to mankind a gigantic, dazzling species of lepidoptera to fascinate the eye and sate the spirit with an incarnation of the adorable myth of Psyche.

Queens of the ballet today, in the light of this unforeseen development of interest in their art, are as many, as beautiful and, perhaps, as skilful as those of the past, for, where an art loses in one aspect with the flight of time, it usually gains in another. The grace and picturesqueness of Trauhanova, Chasles, Mariquita, Rosa Mori and Zambelli now bid fair to rival the precision and finish of Cerito, La Guimard, Des Mastins, La Camargo, Salle, Rosati and Carlotta Griis.

before it in the way of forming acquaintance with all the interesting and romantic stages attending the development of a school of art still foreign to our experience.

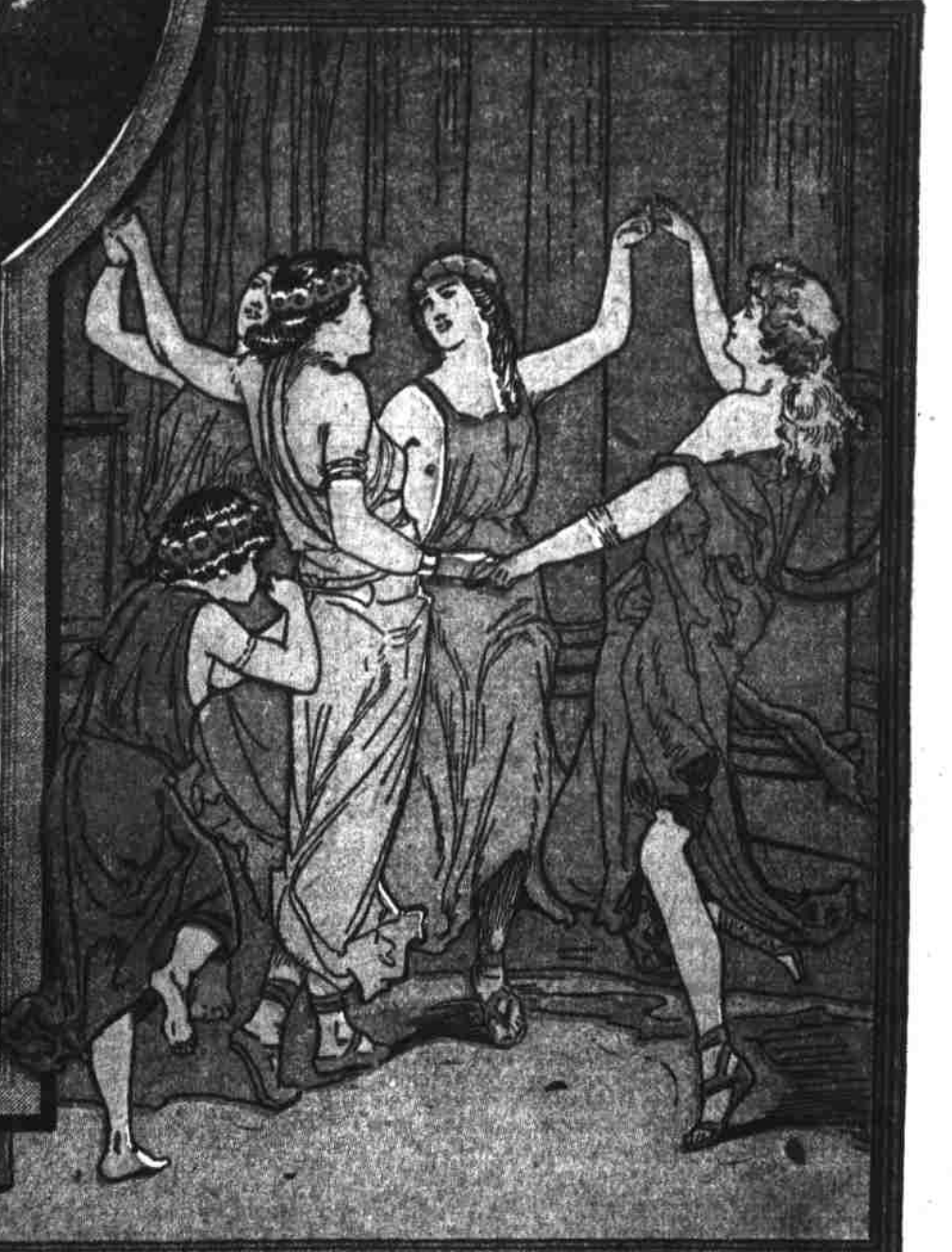
To Americans, ballet dancing is an accomplishment which any girl of aptitude expects to "pick up" at an age even as late as 20 years. In Europe it is a profession which is studied at old and highly organized schools by candidates who begin with the beginning of their teens.

Yet our dancers are born to all the best endowments of every nation whose beauties have trod the boards. The physical health of the English dancer is theirs, as are the cleverness of the French, the smooth grace of the Italian, the fire of the Spanish and the sensuous elegance of the Austrian.

Only the wealth and the seal of fashionable indorsement, that have made grand opera in America a thing against which all Europe burns with consuming jealousy, are needed to enable us to surpass the Old World.

But it is not the rich or the well-to-do only who are the probable contributors to the revival. The interest in dancing is pre-eminently the affair of the whole people, if one universal evidence can be relied upon. It is that one which has long been most obvious and, therefore, most generally overlooked.

Those who are men and women now can recall the scene when the organ-grinder or the German band came into their street twenty years ago. And they can recall, as well, the awkward hip-hopping they and their playmates did to the alluring airs, in the fond imagination of a dance.



A Dance of Old Donpeit. From the Painting by Cozzani.

AMERICA this season appears to be on the eve of a revival of the most graceful of the arts—dancing.

That most picturesque phase of dancing, the pure form of the ballet—not the frenzied capers of the comic opera chorus bearing the name—is receiving more attention in the United States this year than it has since the days of Fannie Ellsler, when cities went wild over one woman's supple swaying. Adeline Genée, with others who have leaped suddenly into a whirl of popular interest and admiration, holds the center of the stage as a novelty with the modern exposition of an art as old as the human race.

In Europe, Topsy Sinden, Genée's successor in the London Empire ballet, evokes salvos of applause that bear witness more to the enthusiasm for the art of the ballet itself than for the dancing of the premiere. In Paris and other great cities of the Continent, ballerine are flashing suddenly into fame and demonstrating that the revival is world wide, as though some beautiful creature of the senses and the mind, having slept for half a century, were awakened by a swift enchantment, to rejoice men's eyes anew.

WE LOVE dancing, although we have not really danced, as the highest form of the art is expressed, for, lo! these many years.

Every little while some elegant causeur finds material for half a dozen pages of tender sadness in deploring the dulness of the New England village, now that the big ballrooms of the countryside inns are closed and the joyous, jovial rout of dancers has passed as a feature of the national life—the fashionable cotillon not being considered as expressing in its true form the poetry of motion.

The dirges, however, are not entirely true. While the most graceful art has been permitted to languish, a love for it has remained, and the merry revels of former years have not been lost sight of entirely because of the fashionable modernization of dancing. One need only go to the clubs and the socials of any American city to see how well the masses of the people love dancing. The antique stock joke about the summer hotel full of girls pining for a waltz with an Adam who is absent from their Eden is taken out and dusted off and refurbished up season after season, just because of the love of dancing in American hearts.

And, too, because dancing is one of the most primitive forms of expression known to humanity. The need for it is as imperative as the instinctive need for song, almost as essential as the need for speech.

When, a number of years ago, the negroes, responding to that inner impulse, which was felt more strongly by them than by their super-refined neighbors, evolved the cakewalk and carried it to the heights of grotesque posturing and extravagant antic, the comic humor of it fascinated the American sense of the funny.

But the universal popularity of the cakewalk was far from being due to the national love of humor. The art of the dance, appreciably neglected, needed only that fresh excuse for renaissance; boys and girls, men and women seized upon it with an avidity wholly natural, wholly instinctive.

We always swing to extremes. It was the fantastic cakewalk yesterday; it is the formal, almost classic ballet today. And of all dancing, in the wonderfully wide range of the entrancing art, none is more studiously scientific, more impressively picturesque, than the delicate, fine skill of the premiere danseuse.

The stage, centered in the effulgence of its brilliant lights, serves now as the cynosure of the public gaze; and the background of every large city in the land is filled with votaries quite as sincere, and quite as appreciative of the pleasure of the dance, as any ballet leader who ever pirouetted on two toes.

For the present, and for a long time to

come, we are sealed and delivered over to admiration of la Genée, the beautiful blond Dane, whose professional ethics hark back to the best traditions of her art, where the dancer is also the mime and aims to give every posture, every movement, every figure that she executes a meaning which the spectators can interpret intellectually, while their grace, their lightness, their picturesqueness constitute so many visual delights.

Our grandfathers rejoiced in similar allegiance to the deities of the dance. La Fontaine created ballet dancing in France in the days—and the nights—of Louis XIV. Her reward was the hand, the fortune and the title of the marquis de Saint-Genies.

Another famous ballerina of the seventeenth century was the famous Florence, whose son became archbishop of Cambrai.

The name of Taglioni, who made of ballet dancing the art as it is known today, is still one to conjure with; in their old age, men whose memory of their youth preserved the vision of Taglioni in her glory were sure of audiences rapt in marvel of the tale, as though they were the surviving witnesses of a miracle that had come to pass.

Fannie Ellsler, who made new traditions in her art and informed her dancing with a quality of passion which achieved the impossible—a wedding of the brilliant but cold ballet to the seductive, swaying charm of the ancient dances of Artemis, in Greece—is almost a treasure of

modern times, for all that she passed from the stage she adorned so many years ago. A Prussian banker won her, while her sister, Theresa, married the brother of the Prussian king.

If the revival come, if the story of our grandfathers is repeated in this generation as it has been repeated in every generation since the birth among primitive men of the undying art of the dance, the ballet in all its magnificent scope may be revived, with phase upon phase wafted across the seas in all the beauty in which they are still enjoyed by peoples who maintain schools for the art's perpetuation.

A Chasles, unfailingly elegant in pose, imitatively graceful in whatever drapery she assumes, will bring us the fruits of her long apprenticeship. A Trauhanova will challenge ad-

In every art what is most needed to carry it to its highest level is the encouragement of patronage. To every other art America has extended the helping hand in a manner munificent rather than merely generous. If it be the turn of the ballet now, the whole world will share in the benefits.

And it seems, assuredly, that those who have the means to become patrons of the ballet, in the practical fashion of American audiences, who pay full prices for their amusements, are prepared to do their full part.

This country, if the ballet divertimento should ever become an institution as national as grand opera is, has some delightful years

How different today! The first strain of music—"east side, west side, all around the town"—hales forth a troupe of tiny coryphees whose every step and turn is the poetry of motion. The whole childish world of America seems suddenly to have been born to an inheritance of the most graceful art, while in the public schools of New York the pupils are already expert in the dances of various nations.

Here—and there, in schoolhouse and on stage, among the young and the mature, the human need for the oldest and the most beautiful of the arts is finding a national expression.

Shall we revive it, fully—now!