

## THROUGH A MONOCLE

### THE DANCERS OF SPAIN.

ONE of the ambitions of every tourist in Spain is to see the characteristic Andalusian dances. It is the more insistent because the guide-books discourage it. They tell you that the places where such dancing is to be seen are not fit for ladies and of doubtful safety for men; and they add—what is far more deterring with most—that the performances are not characteristically native at all but are got up for tourists. This the tourist fresh from Paris is quite ready to believe; for most of the things which give the French capital a bad name are run purely for the delectation of foreigners, Parisians seldom or never going near them. It is, by the way, a great pity that the average American tourist will get and magnify this view of Paris; for it is a false view and tends to obscure the real truth that Paris is a magnetic centre for the inspiration of much that is best in the world. Paris should be known to us as the city of Sorbonne, of learning and scientific discovery, of vivid literature, of masterly drama, of the finest modern school of art; and not as the capital of lechery. If the tourist would see Paris on its gay night side, let him attend a student ball in the Latin Quarter where he will possibly be the only tourist, or let him find companions among the youth of the city and see what they make of life in their bright Bohemia. It may not be exactly Torontoesque; but it will not be vulgar nor baldly vicious nor anything like the horrible things to which the guides on the Boulevards take credulous and shame-faced strangers.

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HOWEVER, we were talking of Spain. There the search is for Andalusian dancing. In Madrid, I was told that it was not to be seen except amidst very low surroundings. In Granada, there are gipsies who will get up dances for you at a moment's notice; but it is the gotten up thing that you distrust. At Seville, I had a very approachable and reliable landlord; and I consulted him on the subject. He said that if we did not mind finding ourselves mingling with anything but an aristocratic audience he could tell us where we could go and be perfectly safe while seeing the actual dances of the people, danced for the people in one of their own cafes. A party composed of eight people from this continent, including three Canadians, accepted the suggestion. We were three ladies and five gentlemen; and after a walk of fifteen minutes we arrived at the entrance to the indicated cafe.

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IT was a fairly large hall, the floor filled with tables for four each and packed to the limit of its accommodation. About it ran a gallery divided off into boxes; and this, too, seemed full. A stage stood at one end. We wormed our way slowly upstairs in search of an empty box; but they all appeared to be occupied. The place was, in fact, packed with an entirely native audience. We were the only foreigners there, and as we had not thought of coming until two minutes before we started, they could not possibly have expected us. This, then, was the real thing. Finally a man in charge of one of

the boxes made room for four or five of us, and we in the end inherited the other seats as their occupants left. One of them was a gaily-dressed girl who subsequently turned out to be one of the dancers. The dancing is very different from our conception of the art either on the stage or in the drawing-room. It is largely a matter of the arms. The dress usually falls quite to the floor and is practically never raised. But there is much graceful swaying of the body, intricate weaving of the arms and snapping of the fingers. The eyebrows dance; the lips are kept in motion; the whole face changes like a landscape under rapidly passing sunshine and shadow. Sometimes the castanets clash with marvellous music; and a seated ring of dancers awaiting their turn encourage those on the stage with cries and the jingle of tambourines. Perhaps a man sits in the centre of the ring and plays lightly on a guitar.

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BEFORE and after their "turns" the dancers came up into the gallery and were occasionally welcomed by their friends in the boxes. But all was very orderly, nothing more exciting happening than the ordering of a drink and the opportunity to examine their wonderful shawls at closer range. At one time while a funny male quartette were operating on the stage, a couple of feminine faces appeared at what seemed a window of the "green room," looking out upon the hall. One of them was very lovely in profile, and our party admired it exceedingly. Presently she looked up our way, and a reckless young husband from Iowa—partly to tease his wife—beckoned to her to come up. The invitation was no sooner offered than accepted; and both girls disappeared from their window—apparently to come. Immediately our middle-aged and decidedly non-sporty crowd was in a flutter. What should we do with them when they came? We had quite a time to discuss it before they arrived, for they apparently stayed to "prink" considerably before venturing into tourist society. We decided that the young husband must offer the girls a drink at all events, and determined to leave the rest to fate.

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PRESENTLY one of them appeared at the opening into the box—gorgeous in a dancing costume I dare not venture to describe, not for moral reasons but because of millinery ignorance. She was arrayed for an American rather than an Andalusian dance; and her arms, neck and face were artistically done to a rosy whiteness. She looked to be about eighteen or twenty, though she subsequently insisted that she was no more than sixteen. She took the seat we offered calmly, and smilingly awaited developments. Now the only member of the party who could pretend to any Spanish was a lady; and so she had to do all the talking. One of the awkward males would suggest a complimentary question, when the lady would explain it laboriously to the fair dancer who strove earnestly to understand it, and then made a belated acknowledgment to the "Senor" who had originated it. It was not a very furious way of "carrying on." Of course, the husband who was to blame for it all proposed the drink when she first came. When she understood that she was to order what she liked, she told the "garcon" what she wanted; and we waited to see what it would be. Something bold, bad and dashing, without doubt. A glass of whiskey perhaps, or an Andalusian substitute for it. Presently it came; and what do you suppose it was? I could give you ten guesses, and you would never hit it. It was a bottle of milk. Her companion came along soon, and she, too, took milk. One of the party asked if they would have a cigarette. No, they never smoked. I began to feel as if I were attending a meeting of the W. C. T. U. They both stayed with us, however, a good hour until their turn came to dance.

THE MONOCLE MAN.



The Toronto Park Commissioner has flooded a series of flats for free skating rinks which before the January thaw were much enjoyed by many people.