

mas. The cold of winter and associations of the season are apt to infuse a troublesome activity into the lower limbs of many a Christian family, and when this disposition asserts itself at night, and in mixed society, it has a most inconvenient tendency to take the shape of the forbidden exercise. Sometimes there is an attempt to evade the danger by the substitution of Christmas games; and romping of the most pronounced kind is occasionally winked at, in the hope of its proving a popular substitute. But usually these compromises are a failure; dancing somehow crops up just where it is least expected, and the only way of preserving appearances is to exaggerate the youthfulness of the parties into which it forces its way. Mothers and aunts will suddenly assume, for this night only, an antique and almost rustic air, and speak as if their whole object in going into society were to "see the young people enjoy themselves." When there are children in the family, the entertainment may be supposed, by a pious fiction, to be given only for their amusement; and we know of one instance in which a nephew and niece, who were pretty much regarded as grown up all the rest of the year, regularly returned to a state of infancy about Christmas, in order to play the part of host and hostess at a so-called children's party.

To all who are thus troubled in mind we recommend a remarkable little tract we have lately met with, entitled *Dancing a Delightful and Scriptural Pleasure*. Hitherto, it appears, all the advocates of this pastime have been in the wrong. They have only argued in favour of the lawfulness of dancing, whereas they ought rather to have enlarged upon the obligation of it. They have thought it enough to say that it is a perfectly innocent amusement, instead of claiming for it, as they might have done, the merit of leading the mind by the shortest possible route to the contemplation of future bliss. As to the first of these points, we really do not see how any one who accepts the Bible, in its literal signification, as the sole rule of life, can stand up against the writer's conclusion, fortified by an array of texts, that dancing "was used by the Jews of both sexes, young and old; and that, though some may flatter away these passages, as others trifle away other parts of the Bible, yet to say that we have no clear Scriptural warrant for that elegant and gladsome adaptation of motion which we call dancing is only to ignore or evade the plain word of God." As to the objection that "the dancing spoken of in the Bible was totally different from ours," that is easily disposed of. It is true "we do not know what was the precise style of the dancing of the Jews," but we are not to make the mistake of supposing that it was "always a solemn movement." Indeed, from the expressions, "Danced with all his might," and "Dances of them that make merry," it is rather to be inferred that it had quite a contrary character. The writer is further disposed to think that it was a movement "extemporaneously invented by each person." The only example of this kind which we can recall in our own times was the importation of "the Cure" into the ball-room, some few years back; and, considering the graceful and almost ethereal character of that singularly refined innovation, we are quite pained to find that the writer does not propose to substitute extemporaneously invented movements for the "set figures and steps which are alone suited to our climate." We should naturally expect that an exercise thus expressly enjoined in Scripture would have the most valuable moral results; and we are not surprised, therefore, to learn that "it is one advantage of this kind of social gathering that conversation, which is so great an occasion of evil in one form or another whenever we meet together, does not constitute the basis of the pleasure in the case of a dance." * * * *

Thus far dancing has been regarded only as a matter of precept and discipline; we have still to view the ball-room in its more engaging character as a foretaste of a blissful eternity. And at this point we can imagine that some at least of our readers will feel a flutter of quickened curiosity as to which of the multifarious accessories of a party, from the entrance of the "angel of blushing eighteen" to the "exit not perfectly straight" of the last attendant, is most relied upon by our author to realize his desirable anticipation. If the reader in question is a young lady, we cannot doubt that the answer which we are in a position to give will prove of the most satisfactory description. It is "the sight of the white-robed forms of earthly loveliness on these occasions" which is especially calculated to "raise the thoughts from this world to the land of perfect purity, joy, and beauty, where there are pleasures for evermore." Yes, in a prosaic and material age there has been found a writer bold enough to despise the ignorant and scoffing criticisms of a masculine press, and to proclaim that, "for many years past, the full evening dress of young ladies has been in accordance with a rational, elegant, and Christian taste," and "has tended only to give an angelic appearance to earthly, yet lovely, forms." * * * But there is discrimination even in his enthusiasm. It is not every style of dress which thus lifts the thoughts heavenward, and we can distinguish three several stages in the spiritual progress. Even in the sacred precincts of the ball-room there are those who are "of the earth earthy." These are they who are encumbered with such "unnatural, heavy-looking, and ugly appendages" as "large crinolines, boots, shoes with coloured bows or rosettes, or heels." Next comes the middle state of those who content themselves with a "most inexpensive

style of dress, as, for instance, a white book-muslin, and kid shoes," and who may indulge in the modest consciousness of being "pretty, becoming, and suitable." But the full burst of enthusiastic reverence is reserved for "the white wreath of flowers, the full white robe of thin texture, and the sandalled foot, with its white silk stocking, and plain white satin shoe." This—this alone—is the "attire which might seem worthy of an inhabitant of some purer and brighter world." It may be, perhaps, that the keenness of our spiritual insight has been dimmed by earthly contact, but we must confess that we are unable wholly to appreciate these degrees of beatification in clothing. There is a certain preliminary difficulty in discerning angels in evening dresses, but, when once this is got over, it seems as easy to picture them in the stately amplitude of a circumambient crinoline, and the coquettish self-assertion of a high-heeled boot, as in the abundant drapery of a flowing tarlatan, and the attractive simplicity of a satin slipper. We will close with a quotation from a choral hymn which the tract provides for use in the ball-room, and the musical direction thereto appended:—

Assembled here, a festive throng,
Let care and gloom depart,
And holy love, and peace, and joy
Pervade each grateful heart.

Then let us dance with gladsome mind
On these our festive days,
With proper mien, and heart attuned
To thankfulness and praise.

Music and dancing, when so used,
Glad feelings will express—
Pleasure, and praise, and Christian joy,
And social happiness.

Dance, dance with joy, ye virgin band
Arrayed in spotless white,
And youths, and blooming childhood's forms,
A beauteous, lovely sight.

methinks there stand a guardian host,
Unseen by mortal eyes,
Who thus direct the happy throng
To bliss that never dies:

"Let this your pleasure lead the mind
To joys beyond the sky,
And earthly beauty raise the thoughts
To fairer scenes on high."

The music of the "Olga Waltz, No. 1" may be used for this song, by taking the first part of the tune for the first and second verses, and the second part of the tune for the third verse, and as a symphony after the third verse; and then taking the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses in the same way.

Local and other Items.

CONSISTENCY.—The *Express* lays claim to consistency, and quotes in proof, an article which it published in 1858. We must concede that on one point the consistency of this paper is undeniable. It seems to have twaddled about Union then, as it does now. Here is an example of the 1858 style:—

"When we survey the exhaustless fisheries on the Banks of Newfoundland, the thought flashes across the mind in these days of Commercial disaster, that the Bank of England and the Bank of France may fail, but the Banks of Newfoundland will never fail to furnish ample employment to thousands of hardy fishermen, to give to the nation to whom they belong a great nursery for seamen—to rear a hardy race inured to the perils of the sea—to form the nucleus of a navy that in time might cause the flag of the Union to be respected throughout the world."

Few people in their senses would call Newfoundlanders a very wealthy nation, and still fewer would place more confidence in Codfish than in the Bank of England.

OPINIONS CHANGE.—The *Unionist* is very fond of quoting the opinions of Mr. Howe and others, expressed many years ago. Such quotations, as we once before remarked, should not have much weight. As the old opinions of many eminent men are being routed up from the grave, we also for once in a way will follow the example set us by the Halifax Press. We quote from an English paper.

The following sketches of the personal appearance of the rebel leaders (of 1848) are curious, and some of them not over complimentary to some of the individuals described. * * *

* * * Thomas D'Arcy McGee, connected with the *Nation* newspaper, 23 years of age, five feet three inches in height, black hair, dark face, delicate, pale, thin man; dresses generally in black shooting coat, plaid trousers, light vest.

What would be said of us now if we were to accuse the Champion of Federation—the honored guest of Halifax—of Fenianism?

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