

And yet, when they arrived at the Hall of Terpsichore, these unspeakable varlets, their charioteers, vexed their souls with importunate clamours for remuneration. Truly the Philistines were upon them and they were in the hands of the spoiler.

Needless to say they stood and delivered; that was the only deliverance that had appeared possible.

Small consolation has it that the Doctor, exhuming a fossil joke, stigmatized the path we had just traversed as the *VIA DOLLAROSA*.

Yet soon was it found that there was balm in Gilead and presently were their own trials forgotten in the complacent satisfaction of hearing of the woes which had visited some of their ill-fated companions.

These latter, (all gentlemen fortunately,) in childlike reliance upon the capabilities of the town hotels, had brought all their evening paraphernalia in valises to dress for the ball in Elithiopolis itself; and throughout the voyage, had not altogether refrained from turning up the nose of contempt at those less particular, though more provident ones who had arrayed themselves in their purple and fine linen before starting.

But now poetic justice meted out to these gallants their recompense and reward. A cold reception awaited them at the hotels, already filled twice over; and *miserabile dictu!* They were relegated to the commercial travellers' sample room, as a dressing apartment. And not only so, but a sickening report spread among those at the ball, that to some of the lordliest of them all, even this accommodation was denied; and that a corner of the kitchen, curtained off by blankets hung on a clothes-horse, formed the scene of their uneasy and apprehensive toilet.

But may the memory of all such scenes perish and be forgotten, and the place thereof know it no more forever. In process of time the little band was re-united in the tastefully decorated ball-room, where a motley scene was presented. As has already been mentioned, this was a Calico Ball; and consequently the wildest varieties in costumes were exhibited. The ordinary evening attire brushed the jersey and knicker-bockers of the gondolier, and the neat morning costume of many of the ladies contrasted not unfavorably with the elaborate ball-dress. Notwithstanding the heat of the night, the room was cool; the floor left nothing to be desired, and the music was by no means bad.

Indeed the doctor, after the maddening delirium of a galop with Minnehaha, was heard quoting from *L'Allegro* something about—"Such strains as would have won the ear of Pluto," and so on—to which the more critical Minnehaha made answer that while that might possibly be, yet her researches had never given her grounds to believe that Pluto was a good judge of music.

The ladies were considerably more numerous than the gentlemen, and consequently, in addition to other decorations, the walls were dressed with bunches of wall-flowers, and as was to be expected from the nature of the ball, the elect rubbed shoulders with those whose names never appear in *Saturday Night*.

To those whom age or infirmity prevented from joining in personally in what the late lamented A Ward calls the "messy dance," the style of saltation adopted by many, must have presented an unfailing source of interest. Men and women alike "played such fatastic tricks before high heaven" as might well make the angels either weep or laugh. Especially did that interesting relic of the ancient Scythian sports, which goes by the name of the polka, in their hands, or rather under their feet, become a lively reproduction of what we may suppose it to have been in the primitive ages of unsophisticated enthusiasm.

The glorious and immortal waltz, too, degenerated with them, into the embryotic stage of its growth which the professor says was undoubtedly indicated by Horace in the familiar lines,—

"Gaudet invisam perpulisse fossor  
Ter fede terram."

But such vagaries did but add to the zest of those who, on a perfect floor, and in time with good music, were realizing the poetry of motion; an enjoyment to which, in view of the speedy approach of supper-time, were now added the sustaining pleasures of hope. We are all familiar with the cutting gibe of Mr Micawber; who, on his spouse assuring him that their son Wilkins, "meant well"; responded that he had no doubt that he meant particularly well, but that he had never known him to carry out his meaning in any direction whatsoever.

It would be harsh to apply this remark to those who provided supper at this ball. The intentions of its concoctors doubtless did them honor, and to some extent they were fulfilled. The supper was certainly bountiful, and was largely taken advantage of. Indeed it was rumored that Lalage had been seen to go to supper three times, on each occasion with a different gentleman. Yet the general effect was not good. One was forcibly reminded of the beautiful and feeling words of the bard,—

"There curious tart and heavy bun,  
Lay in dyspeptic symphony."

Indeed, to judge from the groans of sleeping victims on the way home, we might not inaptly continue to quote from the same poet:

"Few, few digest, where many eat,  
The nightmare shall wind up their feet,  
Each biscuit box beneath the seat  
Shall seem a yawning sepulchre."

Yet it cannot be denied that this supper was a vast improvement on a collation served at a ball in the same town some years before; when, as the horrid legend runs, the fowl and game at supper were supplemented with the delicate addition of potatoes.

After supper dancing was pursued with redoubled fury. The floor was now a little clearer, and the glowing,—indeed one might almost say—perspiring hours were chased by feet flying in most approved fashion. The last dance on the programme, a galop, was one not to be forgotten. There was the usual rush of previously quiescent couples to dance the last dance; the music began at a moderate rate, then gradually increased in speed till it became fast and furious and finally stopped short in the midst of an absolutely frantic whirl.

There was a general gasp, alike of sorrow and relief, and everywhere the dancers, quite *hors de combat*, subsided into a state of exhaustion as limp as their own collars.

Then followed the usual crush at the door, the customary *mêlée* in dressing rooms, the gradual collecting of one's personal effects, the reunion of the male and female elements of the party, and the arrangement of these elements into appropriate combinations; and soon

"The lights were fled, the garlands dead,"

and all but the caretaker departed.

The pilgrim band whose wanderings are the subject of this narration soon found themselves again in their ark of refuge, the Argo, where they proceeded to survey each other

"By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,  
And the lantern dimly burning."

Dire were the ravages which a few hours had inflicted on these revellers. The Epicure especially, who brought up the rear, with his head sunk into his collar, his hair dishevelled, his moustache drooping, and his eye-glass awry, excited general commiseration.

"If thou be'st he—but oh! how fallen! how changed!"

was the apostrophe in which She-who-must-be-obeyed voiced the general sentiment of the company, many of whom, by the way, were now betaking them to the cabin, to snatch if possible an hour of troubled slumber. No "flowery beds of ease" awaited them, but pitilessly hard seats, against the discomfort of which the noses of the slumberers soon set up a ferocious protest.

But the more romantic of the party again resorted to stem or stern, whence they might gaze on the quiet water,