

suro next day to be lodged in the prisons of La Force, the Madelonnettes, or Saint Lazare, which was only a station on the road to the Place de la Revolution and the guillotine. Refractory dancers were treated in the most off-hand manner. One day the Parisians were celebrating the victory of Fleurus with dances on the site of the Bastille: a quadrille had been formed, in which there was a partner short. One of the Masters of the Ceremonies addressed a young man who stood looking on in the crowd, and requested him to act as *vis-d-vis*.

"I cannot dance," was the answer.

"That is to say you won't."

"I tell you I can't."

"That is nonsense, you can dance well enough if you like."

"I can do nothing of the kind."

"Then you must be a cursed aristocrat who despises the amusements of the people, and is vexed at our victories. You must follow me at once to the *Section* (a kind of police court), and I shall know who you are."

With these words he took hold of the young man, and with the assistance of the rabble, dragged him to the *Section*, where, unless his antecedents were of the very best, in a republican point of view, they no doubt made very short work of him.

But after the fall of Robespierre, and the changes connected with that event, there was again a violent reaction. Balls were organized in every part of Paris; everywhere the joyous sound of the cornet, the fiddle, and the clarinet, invited those who had survived the Reign of Terror to join in the "mazy dance," and they willingly answered the call. The splendid garden of M. Boutin, a *fermier général* who had been guillotined for selling damp tobacco, was opened to the public under the name of Torville, and this was the first public ball. Next a similar establishment was got up in the Champs Elysees. It was called the gardens of Marbeuf, and probably few of the dancers remembered that the delightful spots in which they were tripping it "on the light fantastic toe," had cost the life of their owner, the Marchioness of Marbeuf, who had been guillotined for no other crime but that she refused to metamorphose her beautiful gardens into potato-fields for the benefit of the "sovereign people."

Innumerable other public balls were opened one after the other. There was one in the Elysée National, the palace which the present Emperor of France occupied before 1853, whilst he was still President of the Republic. There were Ranelagh and Vauxhall, so named in imitation of our famous London resorts, and there were Frascati, and the Pavillon d'Hanovre, which two last ones were patronised by those members of the upper classes who still remained in Paris and had escaped the guillotine. Then there was the Prado, where also "mewing concerts" (*concerts miauliques*) were given.

These concerts were a cruelty worthy of that horrible period. A score of cats were placed in a row on a kind of piano, their bodies were in a box from which their heads alone projected. Each of the touches of the instrument corresponded with the tail of one of the cats, and when the touch was struck, a sharp blade penetrated into that tail, and of course the cat uttered a cry. Although the voices had been selected with due regard to the different notes of the scale, yet there was no control over the expression of their anger and pain, nor of its duration, so that this ingenious and novel instrument did not prove a success.

Another public ball was actually instituted in the ancient cemetery of Saint Sulpice. The gate to it was adorned with a pink transparency, on which were written the words, "*Bal des Zephyrs*;" but that same gate also bore the emblems of the former destination of the place. There were still distinctly visible on it, carved in stone, a skull with bat's wings, a pair of crossbones, and an empty hour-glass, and underneath it in large letters:—

HIC REQUIESCANT BEATAM SPEM EXPECTANTES.

The tombstones had not even been removed, and the amorous couples sat on the monuments,

not "smiling at grief," but at their own giddy raptures. This certainly was a dance of death with a vengeance, and the contrast was more striking than any of the sombre creations of the old painters. Yet the enormity actually continued, until the time of the consulate, when Napoleon ordered it to be closed.

The garden belonging to the ancient convent of the Carmelite nuns was also transformed into a dancing place, which, from the quantity of lime-trees growing in these grounds, was called *le Bal Champêtre des Tilleuls*. The orchestra was placed against a little door, through which scarcely two years before the unfortunate nuns had been brought forth one after the other, to be executed, and the stone steps still bore indelible traces of the stains of blood. But the summer of 1794 was magnificent, the sky was cloudless, and the sun shone bright, and when in the evening the pale moon rose in the sky, and peeped over the dark lime-trees, when the orchestrasent forth its merry strains, and gauze and muslins, ribbons and fair tresses fluttered in the evening air, nobody thought of the "pensive nuns" who whilom wandered under the shade of those same trees,—

Devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train.

In fact, the *Dansomania* had taken hold of all classes of society, and the majority of those *bals champêtres* were a complete success.

One of the sequels of the events of the ninth of Thermidor, was that the goods of all those who had been guillotined, which had been confiscated by the Convention, were restored to the surviving heirs. Even the arrears which the nation had received since the time of the confiscation were paid back. This unexpected stroke of good fortune turned the heads of those to whose share it fell. After having lived for a length of time in utter poverty, the heirs of those who had been executed all at once found themselves opulent, and, naturally enough, not a few excesses were committed. This event just happened when the rage for dancing was at its greatest paroxysm. It was natural, therefore, that dancing should occupy a prominent place in the round of amusements in which those newly enriched people indulged.

But as the persons thus favoured by fortune mostly belonged to the highest aristocracy of Paris, they refused to dance with the profane vulgar, nor did they even condescend to dance like them. They wished to organise a dancing club, something after the style of Almack's, to which the vulgar could not be admitted. To make nobility and rank openly the title of admittance would have been unsafe in those times, but they made another rule by which the same object was obtained. The majority of the persons who had been guillotined were nobles and people of rank, and consequently they determined that nobody could become a subscriber unless he had lost his father, mother, brother, or sister, or at least an uncle or an aunt, by the guillotine. Hence this dancing club obtained the name of the Ball of the Victims.

These balls were held during the winter of 1794 on the first floor of the Hôtel de Richelieu. The dancers were all to be dressed in the deepest mourning, the hangings were entirely black, and black crape was attached to the instruments of the band, to the chandeliers, and to the furniture. Not satisfied with these indecent jokes, they also invented a bow *à la victime*. This consisted in a motion of the head which imitated that of the person who, lying under the guillotine, bends his neck in order to pass his head through the hole above which the fatal knife is suspended. And these unparalleled acts of levity were actually perpetrated by the children and relatives of those who had died that fearful death.

The Terrorists, however, were determined not to yield in heartless sportiveness to the Victims, so they instituted a rival ball, called the Ball of the Executioners, which was held on the second floor of the same hotel, and to which no member was admitted that could not prove his active share in the deeds of the Reign of Terror.

The dancers were all dressed in red, the hangings were red, and red silk ribbons were attached to the instruments of the band, to the chandeliers, and to the furniture. Perhaps it may be imagined that when the members of the opposite balls encountered, blood flowed. Quite the contrary took place, however; their bows were low and formal, and compliments were exchanged in the loftiest style of revolutionary fraternity.

As there were at the Ball of the Victims numerous younger sons and daughters who, thanks to the guillotine, had become heads of families; as the company was entirely composed of people who in a few days had arrived from poverty and danger to opulence and security, so the ball, notwithstanding its funereal appearance, was exceedingly gay.

One incident, almost equally ludicrous and horrible, which occurred at this ball, is related by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his Memoirs. During the Reign of Terror, if the person intended for the guillotine was not to be found, some prisoner whose name was similar in sound, or who was related to him, was sacrificed in his place, and then the name of the proscribed was erased from the fatal list, and his death published. This was the case with two sisters; both had evaded their persecutors; but the names of both were on the list of the guillotined, and each, therefore, considered herself the only one saved. Their screams of horror and astonishment when they met at this ball may be imagined. However, when they were convinced that neither was a ghost, they embraced, and each congratulated the other on her happy preservation. While they were thus fondly locked in each other's arms, a Master of the Ceremonies approached them. As the death of the *other* was the title on which *each* had received her ticket of admission, he addressed the elder sister, and informed her that now her title to admission was faulty, unless she could name some other relation who had perished during the Reign of Terror. The lady hesitated for a moment, and then answered, "she was sorry to say she did not think she could." The same question being put to the younger sister, she also replied in the negative.

"Then, mesdames," said he of the ceremonies, "it is my painful duty to inform you that you are no longer members of this ball."

The two ladies stared in silent astonishment and chagrin.

"It is delightful to have found a sister," at last cried the elder, taking her younger sister by the hand; "but it is a sad thing to lose one's right of admission to these balls."

One other benefit of the reaction which followed the events of Thermidor was the resurrection of the toilet; for in the dark days of the Terror, to be properly dressed was equivalent to wearing a royalist badge. But after the fall of Robespierre the ladies strove with each other to make up for lost time, and by profuse indulgence to forget the horrible times when they were deprived of silks, satins, velvets, and jewellery. Hence luxury became most extravagant. But good taste did not preside over the choice of the garments. It became the fashion to appear at the balls, at the theatres, and even in the streets, dressed,—or shall we say undressed?—according to ancient Greek and Roman patterns, and she who nearest approached to the toilet of the *Venus de' Medici* was reckoned to display most taste. These fashions originated in a great measure at the Balls of the Victims, and for those ghastly meetings every part of female attire was generally curtailed a few inches more of its already too scanty proportions.

Not only were these Greek and Roman dresses introduced by this club, but also a style of head-dress, which continued for more than twenty years after; this fashion was called *à la Titus*. Some of the members, not considering the bow *à la victime* sufficiently expressive, introduced an article into the rules of the club that nobody should be admitted whose hair was not cut close to the neck, in the same manner as the executioner cuts that of the victims when he prepares them for the guillotine. This *coiffure* was at once adopted by all the members, and, as may