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Historic Illustrations of Dancing from 3300 B.C. to 1911 A.D.

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THE DANCE

\_Historic Illustrations of Dancing

from 3300 B.C. to 1911 A.D.\_

BY

AN ANTIQUARY

LONDON

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Respectfully dedicated

to Dr. Eleanor Maxwell.

1911

PREFACE.

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This sketch of the iconography of the dance does not pretend to be a

history of the subject, except in the most elementary way. It may be

taken as a summary of the history of posture; a complete dance cannot

be easily rendered in illustration.

The text is of the most elementary description; to go into the subject

thoroughly would involve years and volumes. The descriptions of the

various historic dances or music are enormous subjects; two authors

alone have given 800 dances in four volumes.[Footnote: Thompson's

complete collection of 200 country dances performed at Court, Bath,

Tunbridge, and all public assemblies, with proper figures and

directions to each set for the violin, German flute, and hautboy, 8s.

6d. Printed for Charles and Samuel Thompson, St. Paul's Churchyard,

London, where may be had the yearly dances and minuets. Four volumes,

each 200 dances. 1770-1773.]

It would have been interesting if some idea of the orchesography of

the Egyptians and Greeks could have been given; this art of describing

dances much in the manner that music is written is lost, and the

attempts to revive it have been ineffective. The increasing speed of

the action since the days of Lulli would now render it almost

impossible.

It is hoped that this work may be of some use as illustrating the

costume, position and accessories of the dance in various periods to

those producing entertainments.

To the reader desirous of thoroughly studying the subject a

bibliography is given at the end.

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[Illustration: Fig. 1.--Dancing to the clapping of bands. Egyptian,

from the tomb of Ur-ari-en-Ptah, 6th Dynasty, about 3300 B.C. (British

Museum.)]

\* \* \* \* \*

Historic Illustrations of Dancing.

CHAPTER I.

EGYPTIAN, ASSYRIAN, HEBREW AND PHOENICIAN DANCING.

In this work it is not necessary to worry the reader with speculations

as to the origin of dancing. There are other authorities easily

accessible who have written upon this theme.

Dancing is probably one of the oldest arts. As soon as man was man he

without doubt began to gesticulate with face, body, and limbs. How

long it took to develop bodily gesticulation into an art no one can

guess--perhaps a millennium.

In writing of dancing, one will therefore include those gesticulations

or movements of the body suggesting an idea, whether it be the slow

movement of marching, or the rapid gallop, even some of the movements

that we commonly call acrobatic. It is not intended here to include

the more sensual movements of the East and the debased antique.

Generally the antique dances were connected with a religious ritual

conceived to be acceptable to the Gods. This connection between

dancing and religious rites was common up to the 16th century. It

still continues in some countries.

In some of the earliest designs which have come down to us the dancers

moved, as stars, hand in hand round an altar, or person, representing

the sun; either in a slow or stately method, or with rapid trained

gestures, according to the ritual performed.

Dancing, music and poetry were inseparable. Dancing is the poetry of

motion, and its connection with music, as the poetry of sound, occurs

at all times. In our own day musical themes are marked by forms

originally dance times, as waltz time, gavotte time, minuet time, etc.

[Illustration: Fig. 2.--Greek figures in a solemn dance. From a vase

at Berlin.]

Amongst the earliest representations that are comprehensible, we have

certain Egyptian paintings, and some of these exhibit postures that

evidently had even then a settled meaning, and were a phrase in the

sentences of the art. Not only were they settled at such an early

period (B.C. 3000, fig. 1) but they appear to have been accepted and

handed down to succeeding generations (fig. 2), and what is remarkable

in some countries, even to our own times. The accompanying

illustrations from Egypt and Greece exhibit what was evidently a

traditional attitude. The hand-in-hand dance is another of these.

The earliest accompaniments to dancing appear to have been the

clapping of hands, the pipes,[Footnote: Egyptian music appears to

have been of a complicated character and the double pipe or flutes

were probably reeded, as with our clarionet. The left pipe had few

stops and served as a sort of hautboy; the right had many stops and

was higher. The single pipe, (a) "The recorder" in the British Museum,

is a treble of 10-1/2 in. and is pentaphonic, like the Scotch scale;

the tenor (b) is 8-3/4 in. long and its present pitch--[Illustration:

a] [Illustration: b] the guitar, the tambourine, the castanets, the

cymbals, the tambour, and sometimes in the street, the drum.

The following account of Egyptian dancing is from Sir Gardiner

Wilkinson's "Ancient Egypt" [Footnote: Vol. i., p. 503-8.]:--

"The dance consisted mostly of a succession of figures, in which the

performers endeavoured to exhibit a great variety of gesture. Men and

women danced at the same time, or in separate parties, but the latter

were generally preferred for their superior grace and elegance. Some

danced to slow airs, adapted to the style of their movement; the

attitudes they assumed frequently partook of a grace not unworthy of

the Greeks; and some credit is due to the skill of the artist who

represented the subject, which excites additional interest from its

being in one of the oldest tombs of Thebes (B.C. 1450, Amenophis II.).

Others preferred a lively step, regulated by an appropriate tune; and

men sometimes danced with great spirit, bounding from the ground,

more in the manner of Europeans than of Eastern people. On these

occasions the music was not always composed of many instruments, and

here we find only the cylindrical maces and a woman snapping her

fingers in the time, in lieu of cymbals or castanets.

"Graceful attitudes and gesticulations were the general style of their

dance, but, as in all other countries, the taste of the performance

varied according to the rank of the person by whom they were employed,

or their own skill, and the dance at the house of a priest differed

from that among the uncouth peasantry, etc.

"It was not customary for the upper orders of Egyptians to indulge in

this amusement, either in public or private assemblies, and none

appear to have practised it but the lower ranks of society, and those

who gained their livelihood by attending festive meetings.

"Fearing lest it should corrupt the manners of a people naturally

lively and fond of gaiety, and deeming it neither a necessary part of

education nor becoming a person of sober habits, the Egyptians forbade

those of the higher classes to learn it as an amusement.

"Many of these postures resembled those of the modern ballet, and the

pirouette delighted an Egyptian party 3,500 years ago.

"The dresses of the females were light and of the finest texture, a

loose flowing robe reaching to the ankles, sometimes with a girdle.

"In later times, it appears more transparent and folded in narrow

pleats.[Footnote: There is a picture of an Egyptian gauffering machine

in Wilkinson, vol. i., p. 185.] Some danced in pairs, holding each

other's hand; others went through a succession of steps alone, both

men and women; sometimes a man performed a solo to the sound of music

or the clapping of hands.

"A favourite figure dance was universally adopted throughout the

country, in which two partners, who were usually men, advanced toward

each other, or stood face to face upon one leg, and having performed a

series of movements, retired again in opposite directions, continuing

to hold by one hand and concluding by turning each other round (see

fig. 3). That the attitude was very common is proved by its having

been adopted by the hieroglyphic (fig. 4) as the mode of describing

'dance.'"

[Illustration: Fig. 3.--The hieroglyphics describe the dance.]

[Illustration: Fig. 4.--Egyptian hieroglyphic for "dance."]

Many of the positions of the dance illustrated in Gardner Wilkinson

are used at the present day.

The ASSYRIANS probably danced as much as the other nations, but

amongst the many monuments that have been discovered there is little

dancing shown, and they were evidently more proud of their campaigns

and their hunting than of their dancing. A stern and strong people,

although they undoubtedly had this amusement, we know little about it.

Of the Phoenicians, their neighbours, we have some illustrations of

their dance, which was apparently of a serious nature, judging by the

examples which we possess, such as that (fig. 5) from Cyprus

representing three figures in hooded cowls dancing around a piper. It

is a dance around a centre, as is also (fig. 6) that from Idalium in

Cyprus. The latter is engraved around a bronze bowl and is evidently a

planet and sun dance before a goddess, in a temple; the sun being the

central object around which they dance, accompanied by the double

pipes, the harp, and tabour. The Egyptian origin of the devotion is

apparent in the details, especially in the lotus-smelling goddess

(marked A on fig. 6) who holds the flower in the manner shown in an

Egyptian painting in the British Museum (fig. 7).

[Illustration: Fig. 5.--Cyprian limestone group of Phoenician dancers,

about 6-1/2 in. high. There is a somewhat similar group, also from

Cyprus, in the British Museum. The dress, a hooded cowl, appears to be

of great antiquity.]

From the Phoenicians we have illustrated examples, but no record,

whereas from their neighbours the Hebrews we have ample records in the

Scriptures, but no illustrations. It is, however, most probable that

the dance with them had the traditional character of the nations

around them or who had held them captive, and the Philistine dance

(fig. 6) may have been of the same kind as that around the golden calf

(Apis) of the desert (Exodus xxxii. v. 19).

[Illustration: Fig. 6.--Phoenician patera, from Idalium, showing a

religious ritual dance before a goddess in a temple round a sun

emblem.]

When they passed the Red Sea, Miriam and the maidens danced in chorus

with singing and the beating of the timbrel (tambour). (Exodus xv. v.

1.)

[Illustration: Fig. 7.--Female figure smelling a lotus. From a

painting in the British Museum.]

King David not only danced before the ark (2 Samuel vi. v. 16), but

mentions dancing in the 149th and 150th Psalm. Certain historians also

tell us that they had dancing in their ritual of the seasons. Their

dancing seems to have been associated with joy, as we read of "a time

to mourn and a time to dance"; we find (Eccles. iii. v. 4) they had

also the pipes: "We have piped to you and you have not danced"

(Matthew xi. v. 17). These dances were evidently executed by the

peoples themselves, and not by public performers.

[Illustration: Fig. 8.--Dance of Bacchantes, painted by the ceramic

painter, Hieron. (British Museum,)]

CHAPTER II.

DANCING WITH THE GREEKS.

With the Greeks, dancing certainly was primarily part of a religious

rite; with music it formed the lyric art. The term, however, with them

included all those actions of the body and limbs, and all expressions

and actions of the features and head which suggest ideas; marching,

acrobatic performances, and mimetic action all came into the term.

According to the historians, the Greeks attributed dancing to their

deities: Homer makes Apollo \_orchestes\_, or the dancer; and amongst

the early dances is that in his honour called the \_Hyporchema\_. Their

dances may be divided into sections somewhat thus: (1) those of a

religious species, (2) those of a gymnastic nature, (3) those of a

mimetic character, (4) those of the theatre, such as the chorus, (5)

those partly social, partly religious dances, such as the hymeneal,

and (6) chamber dances.

Grown up men and women did not dance together, but the youth of both

sexes joined in the \_Horm[)o]s\_ or chain dance and the

\_G[)e]r[)a]n[)o]s\_, or crane (see fig. 11).

[Illustration: Fig. 9.--Dancing Bacchante. From a vase in the British

Museum.]

[Illustration: Fig. 10.--Greek terra cotta dancing girl, about 350

B.C. (British Museum.)]

According to some authorities, one of the most primitive of the first

class, attributed to Phrygian origin, was the \_Aloenes\_, danced to the

Phrygian flute by the priests of Cybele in honour of her daughter

Ceres. The dances ultimately celebrated in her cult were numerous:

such as the \_Anthema\_, the \_Bookolos\_, the \_Epicredros\_, and many

others, some rustic for labourers, others of shepherds, etc. Every

locality seems to have had a dance of its own. Dances in honour of

Venus were common, she was the patroness of proper and decent dancing;

on the contrary, those in honour of Dionysius or Bacchus degenerated

into revelry and obscenity. The \_Epilenios\_ danced when the grapes

were pressed, and imitated the gathering and pressing. The

\_Anteisterios\_ danced when the wine was vatted (figs. 8, 9, 10), and

the \_Bahilicos\_, danced to the sistrus, cymbals, and tambour, often

degenerated into orgies.

[Illustration: Fig. 11.--The G[)e]r[)a]n[)o]s from

a vase in the Museo Borbonico, Naples.]

[Illustration: Fig. 12.--Panathenaeac dance, about

the 4th century B.C.]

[Illustration: Fig. 13.--A military dance, supposed

to be the \_Corybantum\_. From a Greek bas-relief in the Vatican

Museum.]

The \_G[)e]r[)a]n[)o]s\_, originally from Delos, is said to have been

originated by Theseus in memory of his escape from the labyrinth of

Crete (fig. 12). It was a hand-in-hand dance alternately of males and

females. The dance was led by the representative of Theseus playing

the lyre.

[Illustration: Fig. 14.--Greek dancer with castanets. (British

Museum.) See also Castanet dance by Myron, fig. 63a.]

Of the second class, the gymnastic, the most important were military

dances, the invention of which was attributed to Minerva; of these the

\_Corybantum\_ was the most remarkable. It was of Phrygian origin and of

a mixed religious, military, and mimetic character; the performers

were armed, and bounded about, springing and clashing their arms and

shields to imitate the Corybantes endeavouring to stifle the cries of

the infant Zeus, in Crete. The Pyrrhic (fig. 13), a war dance of Doric

origin, was a rapid dance to the double flute, and made to resemble

an action in battle; the \_Hoplites\_ of Homer is thought to have been

of this kind. The Dorians were very partial to this dance and

considered their success in battle due to the celerity and training of

the dance. In subsequent periods it was imitated by female dancers and

as a \_pas seul\_. It was also performed in the Panathenaea by Ephebi at

the expense of the Choragus, but this was probably only a mimetic

performance and not warlike.

[Illustration: Fig. 15.--Cymbals (about 4 in.) and double flute.

(British Museum.)]

There were many other heroic military dances in honour of Hercules,

Theseus, etc.

The chorus, composed of singers and dancers, formed part of the drama,

which included the recitation of some poetic composition, and included

gesticulative and mimetic action as well as dancing and singing. The

Dorians were especially fond of this; their poetry was generally

choral, and the Doric forms were preserved by the Athenians in the

choral compositions of their drama.

The tragic dance, \_Emmelia\_, was solemn; whilst that in comedy,

\_Cordax\_, was frivolous, and the \_siccinis\_, or dance of Satyrs, was

often obscene. They danced to the music of the pipes, the tambour, the

harp, castanets, cymbals, etc. (figs. 14, 15, 16).

[Illustration: Fig. 16.--Greek dancers. From a vase in the Hamilton

Collection.] [Illustration: Fig. 17.--Bacchanalian dancer. Vase from

Nocera, Museum, Naples.]

In the rites of Dionysius the chorus was fifty and the cithara was

used instead of the flute. From the time of Sophocles it was fifteen,

and always had a professed trainer. The choric question is, however, a

subject in itself, and cannot be fairly dealt with here. The social

dances, and those in honour of the seasons, fire and water, were

numerous and generally local; whilst the chamber dances, professional

dancing, the throwing of the \_Kotabos\_, and such-like, must be left to

the reader's further study of the authors mentioned in the

bibliography at the end of the work.

[Illustration: Fig. 18.--Greek dancers and tumblers.]

It may astonish the reader to know that the funambulist or rope-dancer

was very expert with the Greeks, as also was the acrobat between

knives and swords. Animals were also taught to dance on ropes, even

elephants.

The important religious and other dances were not generally composed

of professionals. The greatest men were not above showing their

sentiments by dancing. Sophocles danced after Salamis, and Epaminondas

was an expert dancer. There were dancers of all grades, from the

distinguished to the moderate. Distinguished persons even married into

excellent positions, if they did not already occupy them by birth.

Philip of Macedon married Larissa, a dancer, and the dancer

Aristodemus was ambassador to his Court. These dancers must not be

confounded with those hired to dance at feasts, etc. (figs. 9, 14 and

18). [Illustration: Fig. 19.--Etruscan bronze dancer with eyes of

diamonds, found at Verona. Now in the British Museum.]

CHAPTER III.

ETRUSCAN-SOUTH ITALIAN, ROMAN DANCING, ETC.

One of the most important nations of antiquity was the Etruscan,

inhabiting, according to some authorities, a dominion from Lombardy to

the Alps, and from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic.

Etruria gave a dynasty to Rome in Servius Tullius, who originally was

Masterna, an Etruscan.

[Illustration: Fig. 20.--Etruscan dancer. From a painting in the

Grotta dei Vasi dipinti--Corneto.]

It is, however, with the dancing that we are dealing. There is little

doubt that they were dancers in every sense; there are many ancient

sepulchres in Etruria, with dancing painted on their walls. Other

description than that of the pictures we do not possess, for as yet

the language is a dead letter. There is no doubt, as Gerhardt

[Footnote: "Ann. Institut.": 1831, p. 321.] suggests, that they

considered dancing as one of the emblems of joy in a future state,

and that the dead were received with dancing and music in their new

home. They danced to the music of the pipes, the lyre, the castanets

of wood, steel, or brass, as is shown in the illustrations taken from

the monuments.

[Illustration: Fig. 21.--Etruscan dancing and performances. From

paintings in the Grotta della Scimia Corneto, about 500 B.C.]

That the Phoenicians and Greeks had at certain times immense influence

on the Etruscans is evident from their relics which we possess (fig.

20).

A characteristic illustration of the dancer is from a painting in the

tomb of the \_Vasi dipinti\_, Corneto, which, according to Mr. Dennis,

[Footnote: "Etruria," vol. i., p. 380.] belongs to the archaic period,

and is perhaps as early as 600 B.C. It exhibits a stronger Greek

influence than some of the paintings. Fig. 21, showing a military

dance to pipes, with other sports, comes from the \_Grotta della

Scimia\_, also at Corneto; these show a more purely Etruscan character.

[Illustration: Fig. 22.--Etruscan Dancing. From the Grotta del

Triclinio.--Corneto.]

The pretty dancing scene from the \_Grotta del Triclinio\_ at Corneto

is taken from a full-sized copy in the British Museum, and is of the

greatest interest. It is considered to be of the Greco-Etruscan

period, and later than the previous examples (fig. 22).

There is a peculiarity in the attitude of the hands, and of the

fingers being kept flat and close together; it is not a little curious

that the modern Japanese dance, as exhibited by Mme. Sadi Yacca, has

this peculiarity, whether the result of ancient tradition or of modern

revival, the writer cannot say.

Almost as interesting as the Etruscan are the illustrations of dancing

found in the painted tombs of the Campagna and Southern Italy, once

part of "Magna Grecia"; the figure of a funeral dance, with the double

pipe accompaniments, from a painted tomb near Albanella (fig. 23) may

be as late as 300 B.C., and those in figs. 24, 25 from a tomb near

Capua are probably of about the same period. These Samnite dances

appear essentially different from the Etruscan; although both Greek

and Etruscan influence are very evident, they are more solemn and

stately. This may, however, arise from a different national custom.

That the Etruscan, Sabellian, Oscan, Samnite, and other national

dances of the country had some influence on the art in Rome is highly

probable, but the paucity of early Roman examples renders the evidence

difficult.

[Illustration: Fig. 23.--Funeral dance in the obsequies of a female.

From a painted tomb near Albanella.]

Rome as a conquering imperial power represented nearly the whole world

of its day, and its dances accordingly were most numerous. Amongst the

illustrations already given we have many that were preserved in Rome.

In the beginning of its existence as a power only religious dances

were practised, and many of these were of Etruscan origin, such as the

Lupercalia, the Ambarvalia, &c. In the former the dancers were

demi-nude, and probably originally shepherds; the latter was a serious

dancing procession through fields and villages. [Illustration: Fig.

24.--Funeral dance. From Capua.]

A great dance of a severe kind was executed by the Salii, priests of

Mars, an ecclesiastical corporation of twelve chosen patricians. In

their procession and dance, on March 1, and succeeding days, carrying

the Ancilia, they sang songs and hymns, and afterwards retired to a

great banquet in the Temple of Mars. That the practice was originally

Etruscan may be gathered from the circumstance that on a gem showing

the armed priests carrying the shields there are Etruscan letters.

There were also an order of female Salii. Another military dance was

the \_Saltatio bellicrepa\_, said to have been instituted by Romulus in

commemoration of the Rape of the Sabines. The Pyrrhic dance (fig. 13)

was also introduced into Rome by Julius Caesar, and was danced by the

children of the leading men of Asia and Bithynia.

As, however, the State increased in power by conquest, it absorbed

with other countries other habits, and the art degenerated often, like

that of Greece and Etruria, into a vehicle for orgies, when they

brought to Rome with their Asiatic captives even more licentious

practices and dances.

[Illustration: Fig. 25.--Funeral dance from the same tomb.]

As Rome, which never rose to the intellectual and imaginative state of

Greece in her best period, represented wealth, commerce, and conquest,

in a greater degree, so were her arts, and with these the lyric. In

her best state her nobles danced, Appius Claudius excelled, and

Sallust tells us that Sempronia "psaltere saltare elegantius"; so that

in those days ladies played and danced, but no Roman citizen danced

except in the religious dances. They carried mimetic dances to a very

perfect character in the time of Augustus under the term of \_Musica

muta\_. After the second Punic war, as Greek habits made their way into

Italy, it became a fashion for the young to learn to dance. The

education in dancing and gesture were important in the actor, as masks

prevented any display of feature. The position of the actor was never

recognized professionally, and was considered \_infamia\_. But the

change came, which caused Cicero to say "no one danced when sober."

Eventually the performers of lower class occupied the dancing

platform, and Herculaneum and Pompeii have shown us the results.

[Illustration: Fig. 26.--Bacchante leading the Dionysian bull to the

altar. Bas-relief in the Vatican.]

In the theatre the method of the Roman chorus differed from that of

the Greeks. In the latter the orchestra or place for the dancing and

chorus was about 12 ft. below the stage, with steps to ascend when

these were required; in the former the chorus was not used in comedy,

and having no orchestra was in tragedies placed upon the stage. The

getting together of the chorus was a public service, or liturgia, and

in the early days of Grecian prosperity was provided by the choregus.

Tiberius by a decree abolished the Saturnalia, and exiled the dancing

teachers, but the many acts of the Senate to secure a better standard

were useless against the foreign inhabitants of the Empire accustomed

to sensuality and licence.

[Illustration: Fig. 27--Bacchante. From a fresco, Pompeii, 1st century

B.C.]

[Illustration: Fig. 28.--Dancer. From a fresco in the Baths of

Constantine, 4th century A.D.]

Perhaps the encouragement of the more brutal combats of the Coliseum

did something to suppress the more delicate arts, but historians have

told us, and it is common knowledge, what became of the great Empire,

and the lyric with other arts were destroyed by licentious

preferences.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "EARLY ENGLISH" AND "MEDIAEVAL" DANCE TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

The last illustration from the Baths of Constantine brought us into

the Christian era, although that example was not of Christian

sentiment or art. It is possible that the dance of Salome with its

diabolical reward may have prejudiced the Apostolic era, for we find

no example of dancing, as exhibiting joy, in Christian Art of that

period. The dance before Herod is historical proof that the higher

classes of Hebrews danced for amusement.

As soon, however, as Christianity became enthroned, and a settled

society, we read of religious dances as exhibiting joy, even in the

churches. Tertullian tells us that they danced to the singing of hymns

and canticles. These dances were solemn and graceful to the old tones;

and continued, notwithstanding many prohibitions such as those of Pope

Zacharias (a Syrian) in A.D. 744. The dancing at Easter in the

Cathedral at Paris was prohibited by Archbishop Odo in the 12th

century, but notwithstanding the antagonism of the Fathers, the dances

were only partially suppressed.

They were common on religious festivals in Spain and Portugal up to

the seventeenth century and in some localities continue even to our

own time. When S. Charles Borromeo was canonized in 1610, the

Portuguese, who had him as patron, made a procession of four chariots

of dancers; one to Renown, another to the City of Milan, one to

represent Portugal and a fourth to represent the Church. In Seville at

certain periods, and in the Balearic Isles, they still dance in

religious ceremonies.

We know that religious dancing has continually been performed as an

accessory to prayer, and is still so used by the Mahommedans, the

American Indians and the Bedos of India, who dance into an ecstasy.

[Illustration: Fig. 29.--Gleemen's dance, 9th century. From Cleopatra,

Cotton MS. C. viii., British Museum.]

It is probable that this sort of mania marked the dancing in Europe

which was suppressed by Pope and Bishop. This \_choreomania\_ marked a

Flemish sect in 1374 who danced in honour of St. John, and it was so

furious that the disease called St. Vitus' dance takes its name from

this performance.

Christmas carols were originally choric. The performers danced and

sang in a circle.

The illustration (fig. 43) of a dance of angels and religious shows us

that Fra Angelico thought the practice joyful; this dance is almost a

counterpart of that amongst the Greeks (fig. 11). The other dance, by

Sandro Botticelli (fig. 44), is taken from his celebrated "Nativity"

in the National Gallery. Although we have records of performances in

churches, no illustrations of an early date have come to the knowledge

of the writer. [Illustration: Fig. 30.--Dancing to horn and pipe.

From an Anglo-Saxon MS.]

That the original inhabitants of Britain danced--that the Picts,

Danes, Saxons and Romans danced may be taken for granted, but there

seems little doubt that our earliest illustrations of dancing were of

the Roman tradition. We find the attitude, the instruments and the

clapping of hands, all of the same undoubted classic character.

Tacitus informs us that the Teutonic youths danced, with swords and

spears, and Olaus Magnus that the Goths, &c., had military dances:

still the military dances in English MSS. (figs. 31, 32) seem more

like those of a Pyrrhic character, which Julius Caesar, the conqueror

of England, introduced into Rome. The illustration (fig. 29) of what

is probably a Saxon gleemen's dance shows us the kind of amusement

they afforded and how they followed classic usages.

[Illustration: Fig. 31.--Anglo-Saxon sword dance. From the MS.

Cleopatra, C. viii., British Museum.] The gleemen were reciters,

singers and dancers; and the lower orders were tumblers,

sleight-of-hand men and general entertainers. What may have been the

origin of our hornpipe is illustrated in fig. 30, where the figures

dance to the sound of the horn in much the same attitudes as in the

modern hornpipe, with a curious resemblance to the position in some

Muscovite dances.

[Illustration: Fig. 32.--Sword dance to bagpipes, 14th century. From 2

B vii., Royal MS., British Museum.]

The Norman minstrel, successor of the gleeman, used the double-pipe,

the harp, the viol, trumpets, the horn and a small flat drum, and it

is not unlikely that from Sicily and their South Italian possessions

the Normans introduced classic ideas.

Piers the Plowman used words of Norman extraction for them, as he

speaks of their "Saylen and Sauté."

The minstrel and harpist does not appear to have danced very much, but

to have left this to the joculator, and dancing and tumbling and even

acrobatic women and dancers appear to have become common before the

time of Chaucer's "Tomblesteres."

[Illustration: Fig. 33.--Herodias tumbling. From a MS. end of 13th

century (Addl. 18,719, f. 253b), British Museum.]

That this tumbling and dancing was common in the thirteenth century is

shown by the illustration from the sculpture at Rouen Cathedral (fig.

34), the illustrations from a MS. in the British Museum (fig. 33) of

Herodias tumbling and of a design in glass in Lincoln, and other

instances at Ely; Idsworth Church, Hants; Poncé, France, and

elsewhere. It is suggested that the camp followers of the Crusaders

brought back certain dances and amongst these some of an acrobatic

nature, and many that were reprehensible, which brought down the anger

of the Clergy.

[Illustration: Fig. 34.--A tumbler, as caryatid. Rouen Cathedral, 13th

century.]

In the fourteenth century, from a celebrated MS. (2 B. vii.) in the

British Museum and other cognate sources we get a fair insight of the

amusement afforded by these dancers and joculators. In the

illustration (fig. 35) we get A and C tumblers, male and female; D, a

woman and bear dance; and E, a dance of fools to the organ and

bagpipe. It will be observed that they have bells on their caps, and

it must have required much skill and practice to sound their various

toned bells to the music as they danced. This dance of fools may have

suggested or became eventually merged into the "Morris Dance" (fig.

50) of which some account with other illustrations of "Comic Dances"

will be given hereafter. The man dancing and playing the pipes with a

woman on his shoulder (fig. 36), the stilt dancer with a curious

instrument (C), and the woman jumping through a hoop, give us other

illustrations of fourteenth century amusements.

[Illustration: Fig. 35.--14th century dancers. A and C are tumblers;

B, tumbling and balancing to the tambour; D, a woman dancing around a

whipped bear; E, jesters dancing.]

[Illustration: Fig. 36.--A, man dancing and playing pipes, carrying a

woman; B, jumping through a hoop; C, a stilt dance. 14th century.]

CHAPTER V.

SOCIETY DANCING FROM THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

[Illustration: Fig. 37.--Italian dance. From an engraving, end of 15th

century, attributed to Baccio Baldini.]

Concerning the dance as a means of social intercourse, it does not

appear to have been formulated as an accomplishment until late in the

thirteenth century, and at a later date was cultivated as a means of

teaching what we call deportment, until it became almost a necessity

with the classes, as is shown by the literature of that period. The

various social dances, such as the Volte, the Jig and the Galliard,

although in early periods, not so numerous, required a certain

training and agility. These, however, soon became complicated with

many social and local variations, the characteristics of which are a

study in themselves. The dances (figs. 37 and 38) in a field of

sports, from an Italian engraving of the fifteenth century, show us

nothing new; indeed, with different costumes it is very like what we

have from Egypt (fig. 3), only a different phase of the action, and

the attitude of this old dance is repeated even to our own time.

[Illustration: Fig. 38.--Italian dancing, the end of the 15th

century.]

In the Chamber dance by Martin Zasinger (fig. 39), of the fifteenth

century, no figures are in action, but we see an arrangement of the

guests and musicians, from which it is evident that the Chamber dance

as a social function had progressed and that the "Bal paré," etc.,

was here in embryo.

The flute and viol are evidently opening the function and the trumpets

and other portions of the orchestra on the other side waiting to come

in.

[Illustration: Fig. 39.--Chamber dance, 15th century. From a drawing

by Martin Zasinger.]

The stately out-door function, in a pleasure garden, from the "Roman

de la Rose" (fig. 40) illustrates but one portion of the feature of a

dance, another of which is described in Chaucer's translation:

"They threw y fere

Ther mouthes so that through their play

It seemed as they kyste alway."

Fancy dress and comic dances have handed down the same characteristics

almost to our own time. The Wildeman costume dance (fig. 41) is

interesting in many respects, it not only shows us the dance, but the

costume and general method of the Chamber.

[Illustration: Fig. 40.--Dancing in a "pleasure garden," end of the

15th century. French, from the "Roman de la Rose," in the British

Museum.]

The fifteenth century comic dancers in a \_fête champétre\_ (fig. 42)

and those of the seventeenth century by Callot (fig. 52) are good

examples of this entertainment--in the background of the latter a

minuet seems to be in progress. The Morris dance (fig. 50) shows us

the development that had taken place since the fourteenth century.

[Illustration: Fig. 41.--Fancy dress dance of Wildemen of the 15th

century. From MS. 4379 Harl, British Museum.]

[Illustration: Fig. 42.--Comic dance to pipe and tabor, end of 15th

century. From pen drawing in the Mediaeval House Book in the Castle of

Wolfegg, by the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet.]

[Illustration: Fig. 43.--A dance of Angels and Saints at the entrance

to Heaven. Fra Angelico.]

[Illustration: Fig. 44.--Dancing angels. From a "Nativity" by Sandro

Botticelli \_circa\_ 1500 A.D.] [Illustration: Fig. 45.--Albert Dürer,

1514 A.D.]

[Illustration: Fig. 46.--Albert Dürer.]

Allusion has already been made to the beautiful paintings of

Botticelli and Fra Angelico, which tell us of Italian choral dances of

their period; these do not belong to social functions, but are

certainly illustrative of the custom of their day. Albert Dürer (figs.

45, 46) has given us illustrations of the field dances of his period,

but both these dances and those drawn by Sebald Beham (fig. 47) are

coarse, and contrast unfavourably with the Italian, although the

action is vigorous and robust.

[Illustration: Fig. 47.--Scenes from dances. German, dated 1546, by

Hans Sebald Beham.] The military dance of Dames and Knights of

Armour, by Hans Burgkmair, on the other hand, appears stately and

dignified (fig. 48). This may illustrate the difference between

chamber and garden or field dancing.

[Illustration: Fig. 48.--A torchlight military dance of the early 16th

century. From a picture by Hans Burgkmair.]

At the end of the sixteenth century we get a work on dancing which

shows us completely its position as a social art in that day. It is

the "Orchésographie" of Thoinot Arbeau (Jean Tabouret, Canon of

Langres, in 1588), from which comes the illustration of the

"Galliarde" (fig. 49) and to which I would refer the reader for all

the information he desires concerning this period. In this work much

stress is laid on the value of learning to dance from many points of

view--development of strength, manner, habits and courtesy, etc. Alas!

we know now that all these external habits can be acquired and leave

the "natural man" beneath. [Illustration: Fig. 49.--\_La Galliarde\_.

From the "Orchésographie" of Thoinot Arbeau (Jean Tabourot), Langres,

1588.]

Desirable, therefore, as good manners and such like are, they do not

fulfil all the requirements that the worthy Canon wished to be

involved by them.

[Footnote: The advice which he gives is valuable

from its bearing on the customs of the 16th century. It even has great

historical value, indicating the influence dancing has had on good

manners. That the history of dancing is the history of manners may be

too much insisted upon. For these reasons we insert these little known

passages. The first has reference to the right way of proceeding at a

ball.

"Having entered the place where the company is gathered for the

dance, choose a good young lady (honneste damoiselle) and raising

your hat or bonnet with your right hand you will conduct her to

the ball with your left. She, wise and well trained, will tender

her left and rise to follow you. Then in the sight of all you

conduct her to the end of the room, and you will request the

players of instruments to strike up a 'basse danse'; because

otherwise through inadvertance they might strike up some other

kind of dance. And when they commence to play you must commence

to dance. And be careful, that they understand, in your asking

for a 'basse danse,' you desire a regular and usual one.

Nevertheless, if the air of one song on which the 'basse danse'

is formed pleases you more than another you can give the

beginning of the strain to them."

"\_Capriol\_:--If the lady refuses, I shall feel very ashamed.

"\_Arbeau\_:--A well-trained lady never refuses him who so honours

her as to lead her to the dance.

"\_Capriol\_:--I think so too, but in the meantime the shame of the

refusal remains with me.

"\_Arbeau\_:--If you feel sure of another lady's graciousness, take

her and leave aside this graceless one, asking her to excuse you

for having been importunate; nevertheless, there are those who

would not bear it so patiently. But it is better to speak thus

than with bitterness, because in so doing you acquire a

reputation for being gentle and humane, and to her will fall the

character of a 'glorieuse' unworthy of the attention paid her."

"When the instrument player has ceased" continues our good Canon

"make a deep bow by way of taking leave of the young lady and

conduct her gently to the place whence you took her, whilst

thanking her for the honour she has done you." Another extract is

not wanting in flavour: "Hold the head and body straight, have a

countenance of assurance, spit and cough little, and if necessity

compels you, turn your face the other side and use a beautiful

white handkerchief. Talk graciously, in gentle and honest speech,

neither letting your hands hang as if dead or too full of

gesticulation. Be dressed cleanly and neatly 'avec la chausse

bien tirée et Pescarpin propre.'

"And bear in mind these particulars."

]

We have have seen from the fourteenth century (figs. 35 C, 36 A, 46)

how common the bagpipe was in out-of-door dances; in the illustrations

from Dürer (fig. 46) and in fig. 53 from Holtzer it has developed, and

has two accessory pipes, besides that played by the mouth, and the

player is accompanied by a sort of clarionet. This also appears to be

the only accompaniment of the Trio (fig. 58). [Illustration: Fig.

50.--Morris dancers. From a window that was in the possession of

George Tollett, Esq., Birtley, Staffordshire, 16th century.]

[Illustration: Fig. 51.--Court dance. From a drawing by Callot, 1635

A.D.]

In the sixteenth century certain Spanish dances were introduced into

France, such as la Pavane, which was accompanied by hautboys and

sackbuts.

[Illustration: Fig. 52.--Comic dancers. By Callot, from the act

entitled "Balli di Sfessama," 1609 A.D.]

[Illustration: Fig. 53.--Country dance. From a drawing by John

Evangelist Holtzer, 17th century.]

[Illustration: Fig. 54.--A ball-room dance, \_Le Bal Paré\_, of the 18th

century. From August de l'Aubin.]

[Illustration: Fig. 55.--A dance in the 18th century. From a painting

by Hogarth.]

There were, however, various other dances of a number too

considerable to describe here, also introduced. The dance of the

eighteenth century from Derby ware (fig. 59) seems to be but a

continuation in action of those of the sixteenth century, as

out-of-door performances.

[Illustration: Fig. 56.--Caricature of a dancing master. Hogarth.]

We have now arrived at the modern style of ball, so beloved by many of

the French Monarchs. Henry IV. and Napoleon were fond of giving these

in grand style, and in some sort of grand style they persist even as a

great social function to our own time. The Court balls of Louis XIII.

and XIV. at Versailles were really gorgeous ballets, and their

grandeur was astonishing; this custom was continued under the

succeeding monarchs. An illustration of one in the eighteenth century

by August de l'Aubin (fig. 54) sufficiently shows their character.

There is nothing new in the postures illustrated, which may have

originated thousands of years ago. As illustrating the popular ball of

the period, the design by Hogarth (fig. 55) is an excellent contrast.

The \_contredanse\_ represented was originally the old country dance

exported to France and returned with certain arrangements added. This

is a topic we need not pursue farther, as almost every reader knows

what social dancing now is.

[Illustration: Fig. 57.--Spring dancing away from winter. From a

drawing by Watteau.]

[Illustration: Fig. 58.--The Misses Gunning dancing. End of the 18th

century, from a print by Bunbury, engraved by Bartolozzi.]

[Illustration: Fig. 59.--Dancing. Close of the 18th century. From

Derby ware.]

[Illustration: Fig. 60.--Spanish dance in the Hall of Saragoza, 19th

century.]

CHAPTER VI.

THE MODERN THEATRE DANCE.

Although the theatrical ballet dance is comparatively modern, the

elements of its formation are of the greatest antiquity; the chorus of

dancers and the performances of the men in the Egyptian chapters

represent without much doubt public dancing performances. We get

singing, dancing, mimicry and pantomime in the early stages of Greek

art, and the development of the dance rhythm in music is equally

ancient.

The Alexandrine Pantomime, introduced into Rome about 30 B.C. by

Bathillus and Pylades, appears to have been an entertainment

approaching the ballet.

In the middle ages there were the mysteries and "masks"; the latter

were frequent in England, and are introduced by Shakespere in "Henry

VIII."

In Italy there appears to have been a kind of ballet in the 14th

century, and from Italy, under the influence of Catharine de' Medici,

came the ballet. Balthasar di Beaujoyeulx produced the first recorded

ballet in France, in the Italian style, in 1582. This was, however,

essentially a Court ballet.

The theatre ballet apparently arose out of these Court ballets. Henry

III. and Henry IV., the latter especially, were very fond of these

entertainments, and many Italians were brought to France to assist in

them. Pompeo Diabono, a Savoyard, was brought to Paris in 1554 to

regulate the Court ballets. At a later date came Rinuccini, the poet,

a Florentine, as was probably Caccini, the musician. They had composed

and produced the little operetta of "Daphne," which had been performed

in Florence in 1597. Under these last-mentioned masters the ballet in

France took somewhat of its present form. This passion for Court

ballets continued under Louis XIII. and Louis XIV.

[Illustration: Fig. 61.--Mlle. de Camargo. After a painting by

Lancret, about 1740 A.D.]

Louis XIII. as a youth danced in one of the ballets at St. Germain, it

is said at the desire of Richelieu, who was an expert in spectacle. It

appears that he was encouraged in these amusements to remedy fits of

melancholy.

Louis XIV., at seven, danced in a masquerade, and afterwards not only

danced in the ballet of "Cassandra," in 1651, but did all he could to

raise the condition of the dance and encourage dancing and music. His

influence, combined with that of Cardinal Richelieu, raised the

ballet from gross and trivial styles to a dignity worthy of music,

poetry and dancing. His uncle, Gaston of Orleans, still patronized the

grosser style, but it became eclipsed by the better. Lulli composed

music to the words of Molière and other celebrities; amongst notable

works then produced was the "Andromeda" of Corneille, a tragedy, with

hymns and dances, executed in 1650, at the Petit Bourbon.

[Illustration: Fig. 62.--Pauline Duvernay at Covent Garden,

1833-1838.]

The foundation of the theatrical ballet was, however, at the

instigation of Mazarin, to prevent a lowering of tone in the

establishment of the \_Académie de Danse\_ under thirteen Academicians

in 1661. This appears to have been merged into the \_Académie Royale de

Musique et de Danse\_ in 1669, which provided a proper training for

débutants, under MM. Perrin and Cambert, whilst Beauchamp, the master

of the Court ballets, had charge of the dancing. The first

opera-ballet, the "Pomona" of Perrin and Cambert, was produced in

1671. To this succeeded many works of Lulli, to whom is attributed the

increased speed in dance music and dancing, that of the Court ballets

having been slow and stately.

[Illustration: Fig. 63.--Mlle. Fanny Ellsler. From a lithograph by A.

Lacaucbie.]

The great production of the period appears to have been the "Triumph

of Love" in 1681, with twenty scenes and seven hundred performers;

amongst these were many of the nobility, and some excellent

\_ballerine\_, such as Pesaut, Carré, Leclerc, and Lafontaine.

A detailed history of the ballet is, however, impossible here, and we

must proceed to touch only on salient points. It passed from the

Court to the theatre about 1680 and had two characteristics, one with

feminine dancers, the other without.

[Illustration: Fig. 63a.--Dancing satyr playing castanets, by Myron,

in the Vatican Museum. The action is entirely suggestive of that of

Fanny Ellsler, and might be evidence of the antiquity of the Spanish

tradition.]

It is not a little curious that wearing the mask, a revival of the

antique, was practised in some of these ballets. The history of the

opera-ballet of those days gives to us many celebrated names of

musicians, such as Destouches, who gave new "verve" to ballet music,

and Rameau. Jean Georges Noverre abolished the singing and established

the five-act ballet on its own footing in 1776. In this it appears he

had partly the advice of Garrick, whom he met in London. The names of

the celebrated dancers are numerous, such as Pécourt, Blaudy (who

taught Mlle. Camargo), Laval, Vestris, Germain, Prevost, Lafontaine,

and Camargo (fig. 61), of the 18th century; Taglioni, Grisi, Duvernay,

Cerito, Ellsler, etc., of the 19th century, to those of our own day. A

fair notice of all of these would be a work in itself.

[Illustration: Fig. 64.--Mlle. Taglioni. From a lithograph of the

period.]

The introduction of the ballet into England was as late as 1734, when

the French dancers, Mlle. Sallé, the rival of Mlle. Camargo, and Mlle.

de Subligny made a great success at Covent Garden in "Ariadne and

Galatea," and Mlle. Salle danced in her own choregraphic invention of

"Pygmalion," since which time it has been popular in England, when

those of the first class can be obtained. There are, however, some

interesting and romantic circumstances connected with the ballet in

London in the last century, which it will not be out of place to

record here. Amongst the dancers of the last century of considerable

celebrity were two already mentioned, Mlles. Duvernay (fig. 62) and

Taglioni (fig. 64), whose names are recorded in the classic verse of

"Ingoldsby."

"Malibran's dead, Duvernay's fled;

Taglioni has not yet arrived in her stead."

[Illustration: Fig. 65.--\_Pas de Trois\_ by Mlles. Ferraris, Taglioni,

and Carlotta Grisi.]

Mlle. Duvernay was a Parisian, and commenced her study under Barrez,

but subsequently was under Vestris and Taglioni, the father of the

celebrity mentioned in the verse.

[Illustration: Fig. 66.--Mlle. Adeline Genée, 1906. Photo, Ellis and

Walery.]

Duran hangs over the mantelpiece of the refectory of the presbytery.

[Illustration: Fig. 67.--Mlle. Anna Pavlova, 1910. From a photo by

Foulsham and Banfield.]

Having made a great Parisian reputation, she came to London in 1833,

and from that date until 1837 held the town, when she married Mr.

Stephens Lyne Stephens, M.P., a gentleman of considerable wealth, but

was left a childless widow in 1861, and retired to her estate at

Lyneford Hall, Norfolk, living in retirement and spending her time in

good works. She is said to have spent £100,000 in charities and

churches, and that at Cambridge, dedicated to the English martyrs, was

founded, completed, and endowed by her. She led a blameless and

worthy life, and died in 1894. Her portrait by Mlle. Taglioni (fig.

64), her co-celebrity, married Count Gilbert de Voisins, a French

nobleman, in 1847, and with her marriage came an ample fortune;

unfortunately the bulk of this fortune was lost in the Franco-German

war. With the courage of her character the Countess returned to London

and gave lessons in dancing, etc., in which she was sufficiently

successful to obtain a fair living. She died in 1884 at 80 years of

age. Of the other celebrities of the period--Carlotta Grisi, Ferraris

(fig. 65), and Fanny Ellsler (fig. 63)--some illustrations are given;

besides these were Fanny Cerito, Lucile Grahn, a Dane, and some others

of lesser notoriety performing in London at this great period of the

ballet.

[Illustration: Fig. 68.--Mlle. Sophie Fédorova.]

The recent encouragement of the classic ballet has introduced us to

some exquisite dancers: amongst these are Mlle. Adeline Genée (fig.

66) and Mlle. Anna Pavlova (fig. 67); the latter, with M. Mordkin and

a corps of splendid dancers, are from Russia, from whence also comes

the important troupe now at the Alhambra with Mlle. Geltzer and other

excellent dancers. The celebrated company at Covent Garden, and Lydia

Kyasht at the Empire, are also Russian. It is not surprising that we

get excellent dancing from Russia; the school formed by Peter the

Great about 1698 has been under State patronage ever since.

Notices of all the important dancers from Italy, Spain, Paris, or

elsewhere, performing in England in recent years, would occupy

considerable space, and the reader can easily obtain information

concerning them elsewhere.

That the technique and speed of the classic dance has considerably

increased is historically certain, and we must hope that this speed

will not sacrifice graceful movement. Moreover, technique alone will

not make the complete fine-artist: some invention is involved.

Unfortunately, some modern attempts at invention seem crude and

sensational, whilst lacking the exquisite technique desirable in all

exhibitions of finished art.

Before concluding it is almost imperative to say something about the

naked foot dancers, followers of Isidora Duncan. Some critics and a

certain public have welcomed them; but is it not "sham antique"? It

does not remind one of the really classic. Moreover, the naked foot

should be of antique beauty, which in most of these cases it is not.

Advertisements tell us that these dance are interpretations of classic

music--Chopin, Weber, Brahms, etc.; they are not really

interpretations, but distractions! We can hardly imagine that these

composers intended their work for actual dancing. One can listen and

be entranced; one sees the dancer's "interpretations" or

"translations" and the music is degraded to a series of sham classic

postures.

The idea that running about the stage in diaphanous costumes, with

conventional mimicry and arm action, is classic or beautiful is a

mistake; the term aesthetic may cover, but not redeem it. There is not

even the art of the ordinary ballet-dancer discernible in these

proceedings.

On another plane are such as the ballets in "Don Giovanni" and

"Faust." Mozart and Gounod wrote these with a full knowledge of the

method of interpretation and the persons who had been trained for

that purpose--the performers fit the music and it fits them. This

opera-ballet is also more in accordance with tradition before the

time of Noverre.

Neither do the "popular" and curious exhibitions of Loie Fuller strike

one as having a classic character, or future, of any consideration,

pretty as they may be.

The operetta or musical comedy has given us some excellent art,

especially at the end of the 19th century, when Sylvia Gray, Kate

Vaughan, Letty Lind, Topsy Sinden, and others of like \_métier\_ gave us

skirt and drapery dancing.

This introduces us to the question of costume. That commonly used by

the \_prima ballerina\_ is certainly not graceful; it was apparently

introduced about 1830, presumably to show the action and finished

method of the lower extremities. If Fanny Ellsler and Duvernay could

excel without this ugly contrivance, why is it necessary for others?

At the same time it is better than indifferent imitations of the

Greek, or a return to the debased characteristics of Pompeiian art, in

which the effect of the classic and fine character of the material are

rendered in a sort of transparent muslin.

With these notices the author's object in this sketch is completed. Of

the \_bal-masqué\_ garden dances, public balls and such-like, he has no

intention to treat; they are not classic dancing nor "art," with the

exception perhaps of the Scottish reels. Nor is he interested in the

dancing of savage tribes, nor in that of the East, although some few

illustrations are given to illustrate traditions: for example, the use

of the pipe and tabor in Patagonia, the dancer from Japan, winged,

like that in the "Roman de la Rose" (fig. 40), and the religious dance

of Tibet, showing the survival of the religious dance in some

countries. In Mrs. Groves' book on dancing there is an excellent

chapter on the Ritual dance as now practised, to which the reader can

refer.

[Illustration: Fig. 69.--Japanese Court Dance.] [Illustration: Fig.

70.--Indian dancing-girl.]

[Illustration: Fig. 71.--Patagonian dancers to fife and tabor.]

[Illustration: Fig. 72.--Tibetan religious dancing procession, 1908

A.D.]

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