

Christian



Visitor.

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Religious and General Intelligence.

BAILEY & DAY, Proprietors.

“BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.”—ST. PAUL.

{Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

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THE "STILL SMALL VOICE."

BY WM. SHEPARDSON.

A still small voice is whispering
In accents soft and mild,
It comes upon the zephyr's wing
That fans the forest wild.
It comes upon the evening breeze,
Its plaintive notes I hear,
Low murmur through the waving trees—
It whispers, God is near.

It comes not in the whirlwind's roar,
Nor in the ocean gale,
When angry billows lash the shore,
And loud the tempests wail.
But when night's silvery shades around
The slumbering waters brood,
There comes a soft and solemn sound,
It whispers, God is near.

It comes not in the thunder-tones
When fiery lightnings glow,
When fierce convulsive nature groans
The requiem of her woe.
But gently, when the moon's pale light
Comes streaming from above,
Sweet as the hum of angels' flight,
It whispers, "God is love."

O sinner, hear the "still small voice,"
That comes from Calvary,
That makes the wounded heart rejoice,
It whispers now to thee,
O listen to the pleading strain
Of Jesus' dying love,
It bids thee seek a Saviour slain,
And dwell with God above.

Hints to a young lady on Dancing.

FRIEND TO YOUNG LADIES.

My Young Friend,—

Unless you are unlike most of your age and sex, you have a desire to go to a dancing school, and to become an accomplished dancer. Have you ever analyzed the *motive* which prompts this desire? Is it that you may the better prepare for heaven? Is it that you may live a more pure, holy, benevolent life, and thus do more good in the world? Is it that you may be more intellectual, intelligent, refined? Is it that you may be better prepared to perform the responsible duties of future life—to be a source of richer blessing to your husband and children? Do you expect, by learning to dance, to benefit either your head or heart, or conscience, or purse, or health? to secure any real good, either to yourself or to your fellow beings? There can be no doubt as to the answer. Is not the plain truth this? You wish to attend the dancing school, and to become an accomplished dancer, to gratify vanity. You think you shall thus appear better, possess more attractions, engage more interest, and vie with other young ladies in the same chase of vanity. Would you be willing to have such motives weighed in the balances of eternity? Nay, in the sober and just balances of time? A few words, then, upon learning to dance; first, as related to this world; secondly, as related to the future.

I. As related to this world.

1. It will not benefit your health. Dancing has been falsely called a healthful exercise. Taking as a whole, and as it actually exists, it is not. It brings on diseases of the heart, lungs, spine, nervous system and head, in ten instances, where it benefits in one. It always tends to a premature old age, often produces immediate illness, and not unfrequently sudden death. Few things can be worse for health than the dissipation of the ball-room.

2. It will not enrich your purse. Few children count the cost of dancing. It is the most expensive of all amusements. A single dress for the ball-room often costs what would educate a young lady, at one of our best schools, for a year. Then think of the sums spent upon physicians, in consequence of the colds, coughs, spinal diseases, &c., which date their origin in the exposures and excesses of the ball room. If the sums spent for dancing were devoted to education and the purposes of benevolence, what a happy exchange! Few parents can really afford to educate and furnish their daughters for the ball room; and those who can afford it, can certainly find a better use for their money.

3. It will not improve your manners. The manners acquired in the dancing halls frequently have an air of ease and grace, but it is as frequently spoiled, by an air of affectation. All true manners are, like dress, simple; they attract no attention. Now the manners acquired at dancing schools usually do attract attention. The rolling, twitching, swinging gait; the flourish and airs of entering and leaving a room; the artificial modes of address, and display of fine limbs and figures, cannot have escaped the observer's eye, as constituting no small item of the acquisitions brought from the dancing school. All that is beautiful in walking erect and gracefully; in entering and leaving, and, what is more important, in being present in a room of intelligent and genteel company,—in short, all that is implied in the most refined and accomplished manners, may be learned without going to the dancing school. It is a great mistake to suppose that learning to dance will learn you to walk well. On the contrary, good dancers are usually bad walkers.

4. It will not improve your intellect. What mental faculty will it improve? Will it enable you to reason and think better? Will it elevate and refine your imagination and taste? Will it correct and strengthen your judgment? No, no. Will it then add to your mental furniture? Will it open to you the riches of ancient and modern languages? Will it teach you to solve the problems of mathematics? Will it teach you philosophy, history, botany, geology? Will it teach you to write the English language with elegance and ease, and furnish you with something worth writing? Are not the most fascinating and fascinating dancers usually the most unintellectual ladies?

5. It will not make you more refined. True refinement implies a pure and chaste mind. Dancing has a tendency to defile it. Facts have long since proved, that in all ages and countries the tendency of dancing has been in that direction. The mode of dress, of moving, approaching, embracing, &c. &c., witnessed, on the floor of the ball room, is enough to convince any intelligent observer, of both the origin and tendency of the amusement. It came from heathenism,—to heathenism it tends. It is in its nature essentially vulgar, and no pruning and dressing can make it truly refined or refining. No considerate lady, in her thoughtful moments, conceives that there can be any true refinement in standing up before a man, in a dress suited to expose her form and person, in allowing him to put his arm around her, and in thus beating around with him to the exciting sound of music. It would require but a slight stroke of the pen to make it appear both ludicrous and shameful, especially as sometimes witnessed in the waltz and polka. Refinement!

6. It will not increase your happiness. That there is pleasure in dancing, I do not deny. So there is pleasure in many other indulgences, which yet give more pain than pleasure. The envies, jealousies, rivalries, are not among the least of the tormentors, that attend and follow the ball room. The wasting anxieties that precede, and the cruel disappointments that follow, the exhaustion, languor, ennui, saying nothing of the stings of remorse and painful consciousness of misimproved time and strength, are set off in sad contrast to the few moments of feverish pleasure. Dancing is one of the fascinations, whose pleasures are of course unnatural, and are sought after, as those of gambling and intoxication, with a greediness entirely disproportionate to their intrinsic worth. Some of the unhappiest creatures I have known, have been ladies devoted to the dissipations of the ball room; and certainly some of the happiest I ever knew, had never learned to dance.

That dancing will make you a more affectionate, dutiful, useful daughter and sister; a more devoted, faithful, contented wife; a more self-sacrificing, benevolent, successful mother and guardian of your future household, you will not presume.

If, then, learning to dance does not promise to benefit your health, nor purse, nor manners, nor intellect, nor add to your refinement and happiness, nor yet to make you more useful, we may well interrogate, Why, even in a worldly view, should you wish to do it? There is enough to be learned, and more than you will ever learn, that would give you real and lasting advantage in all these particulars.

II. As related to the world to come.

Can you seriously think that dancing will make you a better Christian? Will it make you love the Bible, and prayer, and the house of God more? Will it make you more humble,

spiritual, heavenly? Will it make you more self-sacrificing and benevolent? Will it make you hunger and thirst after righteousness with a more keen relish? Will it give you a better conscience? Will it make you feel more deeply for the poor heathen?—not surely because they have not the blessings of dancing; for dancing is their very element, alike in their religion and their pleasures, and they dance probably five times more and better than you can ever expect to. Will it make your dying pillow softer? Will it give you a more welcome entrance into heaven, or shed the beams of a brighter immortality on your soul?

Do you seriously think that dancing ever led one soul to heaven? Has it not sent millions to perdition? How impossible to wed dancing, with the religion of a bleeding, dying Saviour! How awful, how blasphemous the union, which some would fain consummate! Go, sinner; go, redeemed immortal! go to weeping, agonizing Gethsemane; go to bloody Calvary, and return and tell me the religion of Jesus is a dancing religion! Who does not know, that the moment dancing begins, Jesus, prayer, religion, heaven departs? Who does not know, that the meeting of inquiry after the salvation of the soul, and the ball room, are as incongruous as light and darkness, as heaven and hell? And who does not know, that if you learn to dance, you will of course wish to go where you can display your skill,—you will wish to attend balls,—and if you attend balls, you will reject all means for your moral renovation, and will probably lose your soul! Dear, youth, you are in a dying world. The hour of sinful mirth is short; the day of retribution is at hand. *Wo to them that put far away the evil day, that chant to the sound of the viol.*—[Young Lady's Friend.

Comforting the Disconsolate.

Certain it is, that as nothing can better do it, so there is nothing greater, for which God made our tongues, next to reciting his praises, than to minister comfort to a weary soul. And what greater measure can we have, than that we should bring joy to our brother, who with his dreary eyes looks to heaven and round about, and cannot find so much rest as to lay his eyelids close together—than that thy tongue should be tuned with heavenly accents, and make the weary soul to listen for light and ease, and when he perceives that there is such a thing in the world, and in the order of things, as comfort and joy, to begin to break out from the prison of sorrows at the door of sighs and tears, and by little and little melt into showers and refreshment? This is glory to the voice, and employment fit for the brightest angel. But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creation will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer. So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter; he breaks from the despair of the grave, and the fetters and chains of sorrow; he blesses God, and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; for to be miserable is death, but nothing is life but to be comforted; and God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing, and comforted, and thankful persons.—Bishop Taylor.