

# The Dancing-Master, A Satyr

Anon

## Preface

The transcription of this anonymous poem is based on the copy in the British Library, 164.1.47. It was printed in London in 1722 and sold at a price of 'Four-Pence'.

In *The Life and Works of John Weaver* Richard Ralph suggests that Geary, Graham, Tyrril, Weaver and Carey were five of the seven dancing masters being satirised. Does any reader have a solution to offer for S---rs and L---l?

## The Poem

Of all the Plagues with which poor *England's* curst,  
Or ever was, the *Dancing Tribe's* the worst.  
The *Lice* and *Frogs* that punish'd *Egypt's* Pride,  
Devouring *Locusts*, and the *Bloody Tide*;  
The dreadful Pestilence that *Athens* swept,  
And of her glorious Sons that City stript;  
E'en barb'rous *Nero* ne'er inflicted more,  
Or martyr'd Saints worse Punishments deplore;  
Not *Jesuits* Malice join'd with Priestly Zeal,  
Was e'er so dang'rous to a Commonweal;  
Not *France* has suffer'd, from infectious Steams,  
Or *Britain* more from vile pernicious Schemes,  
Than we of this unhappy Iron Age,  
From the low Runnings of th' Ungodly Stage.  
From thence are whipt the Manners-making Crew,  
To lead the Town a Dance entirely new.  
Strange as it is, their Crime was Impudence,  
For want of Shame declares a want of Sense;  
Their Education's vile, and so's their Birth,  
And they the Dregs and Scum of all the Earth.

In a dark Cellar first the Brat is born,  
Of Father, Mother, and of Help forlorn;  
'Tis spew'd into the World, the Parish Nurse  
Fosters it up, and makes it ten times worse:  
Small Beer and Cabbage is the Infant's Food,  
And Nurses Milk by *Royal Bob* made good;  
The Rickets past, and Galligaskins on,  
Strait is the little Urchin's Course begun.  
His pretty Parts he shews ten thousand Ways,  
That tell the Fortune of his future Days.  
Quickly he knows the Arts to rise and thrive,  
To file and sink, and through your Pockets dive.  
Tir'd of the Beadle's Lash and beating Hemp,  
Puts off the Filcher, and assumes the Pimp.  
Old fribbling Letchers past their youthful Lust,  
Their Vigour lost, still leaves a tasteless Gust;  
Old Bawds of standing Gravity and Fame,  
Staunch in their Trade, and Lovers of the Game;  
Rakes of all sorts, and Whores of every Size  
He serves by Turns with each their Merchandize.  
And now he learns to Bully, Dance and Fence,  
Thus he acquires a stock of Impudence.  
Next on the Stage his active Parts he shews,  
And Vice in all its horrid Shapes pursues.  
The Piece thus finish'd, furnishes the Town  
A *Dancing-Master* —— of no small Renown.

Others from Boggs, and Fenns, and *High-lands* come,  
And on their Heels and Impudence presume.  
Ign'rant of Nature, they would give her Law,  
And Lines and Marks, to circumscribe her, draw.  
Large is their Boast, and mighty their Pretence,  
To mend your Manners, and direct your Sense. }  
To know the World they'll teach your hopeful Son, }  
But thro' a Course of Lewdness Lead him on,  
Til by the P--x, and Whores and Bites he is undone.  
Your Daughters, taught by Virtue's strictest Rules,  
Curse the Remembrance of their Dancing-Schools.  
Lost to their Friends, they mourn the Loss of Fame,  
The Loss of Honour, Innocence and Shame.  
Abandon'd to the World, they range for Bread,  
Turn Prostitutes, are p--x'd, and quickly dead.

From *France* arrive, with fluttering Airs and Hopes,  
Others, who'll teach you how to dance on Ropes,  
Fly in the Air, or stand upon your Head;  
And can you, Ladies, e'er be better bred?

*Satyr* be bold, and lash this cursed Herd,  
Recount their Worthies, and their Acts record.  
Strip off their Peacock Finery, deface  
Their borrow'd Grandeur and affected Grace,  
Draw them at length, and in their proper Shapes,  
Monkeys, Baboons, and horrid grinning Apes.  
Strong be thy Colours, lasting by thy Paint,  
Fade not the one, nor be the other faint;  
The Picture finish'd, ugly will appear,  
As thy sweet self, and ten times uglier.

From *Irish Bog*, see Master *G*——y trot,  
His Art and Movement he from thence has got.  
So prim, so nice, so featly gay, is seen  
The moving Statue, and the bright Machine.  
The Leg, so strait, most regularly plac'd,  
With Head reclin'd, sets off the taper Waist.  
Quaint is his Language, and his speech precise,  
In courteous Phrase it falls —— not over-wise.  
Affected Humour solid Dulness veils,  
And wisely thus inward Man conceals.  
Observe him dancing to a various Tune,  
The light Pretender you'll discover soon.  
In vain the sounding Violin directs  
A Measure nimble, easy, unperplex'd:  
Measure nor Time the blund'ring Blockhead keeps,  
Yet through the Dance with wondrous Ease he trips.  
Thus *Salmon's* Drummer briskly beats his Tune }  
So long as working Wheels within can run, }  
Ceas'd be the Wheels, and soon the Hero's done.

But see the next, a Fop in Scarlet Hue,  
Struts forth in Velvet, for your nearer view:  
The dangling Fringe bedecks the Waistcoat fine,  
And spangling Gemms the pretty Fingers bind.  
And thus equipt, moves thro' his jabb'ring Flock  
Like Puppet Hero, or a Dunghill Cock.

Big with the Honours, and the Homage paid  
 By Fiddlers, Children, and by *Mol* his Maid;  
 Flutters along the Floor with antick Gait,  
 Fond to be seen, and wou'd be something Great.  
 From *Scotish Kings* his Pedigree will show,  
 And boast of Blood a thousand Years ago.  
 From *High* to *Lower Lands* at length he hopt,  
 Upon the *English Stage* at last he dropt.  
 There the vile Insect ev'ry Night was seen,  
 A *Scaramouch*, or wrig'ling *Harlequin*.  
 A Master now, and of no common Rate:  
 Behold the Turns of his revolving Fate!  
 Now he can teach the Movement of the Feet,  
 To kiss, salute, all *A-la-mode Visite*.  
 Learn'd in the Languages of ancient Times,  
 Of good old Prose, or in more modern Rhimes;  
 The *Greek* and *Latin* Authors are his Friends,  
 And always ready at his Finger's ends,  
 Their name's no more. — — —  
 Proud of himself, the Fop assumes an Air,  
 With Men of Merit, Merit durst compare.  
 His Merit! known to ev'ry Whore in Town,  
 And is indeed peculiarly his own.  
*Tom G—m* is the vain, conceited Elf,  
 Well known to all the World, except himself.

See! at long Distance swagg'ring *T—l's* Mien,  
 Swol'n with fat Ale, and red with *Holland's* Gin.  
 Belches and Oaths promiscuously fly,  
 Grate ev'ry Ear, set ev'ry Face awry;  
 The Men asham'd, the Ladies fly the Room,  
 Faint with the Vapours of his strong Perfume.  
 Not but Friend *T—l's* a Companion too,  
 And with his Equals notably will shew,  
 How well he can become the Porter's Crew. }  
 The full-mouth'd Oath comes ratt'ling thro' his Throat,  
 Curses he coins at home, and gets by Rote.  
 Lodg'd in the upper Regions of the House,  
 Contemptuously looks down on mortal us.  
 A settled Fog o'er-shadows all his Room,  
 He gropes for Bed amidst a horrid Gloom.  
 A lighted Tube, ('tis something strange and new,)  
 Serves for his Candle, Fire, and Supper too.  
 Full Pots, now empty, straggling round are seen  
 Like Guns dismounted on a Ravelin.  
 His paper'd Windows, and his tatter'd Bed,  
 Such Mother *Wyb—n*, living never had;  
 Vermin and Bugs below the Satyr's Note,  
 And Furniture not worth a *Harry's* Groat, }  
 Bespeak the Rake-hell, Bully, and the filthy Sot, }  
 First Pens and other Implements to write,  
 Next Pumps and Files exposed are to Sight; }  
 From here you learn to Scribble, Dance, and Fight. }

There's Bully *S—rs*, tho' diminutive  
 In sense, and Person, yet makes shift to live.  
 His Stock of Heels and Understanding's small,  
 But in Assurance over-tops them all.  
 A Master too he is, or wou'd be thought,  
 From Top to Toe, without a single Fault.  
 'Tis true indeed, for he is of a Piece  
 View him from Bottom to his graceless Phiz,  
 If thro' the whole you shou'd one Beauty find;  
 A Maracle! by nature not design'd,  
 Abroad a Coxcomb, and at Home a Fool,  
 Fit for no Use, no, not a *Dancing-School*.  
 To all his Scholars he's a standing Jest,  
 And thro' the Town a Noodle is confest.

*W—r* has Understanding, Parts and Sense,  
 And knows right well to gather up the Pence,  
 To hook Subscribers in, and Lectures read,  
 And on anatomized Bodies feed.  
 Three Guineas is his Price, nor bates an Ace,  
 And you must set your Hand or be an Ass.  
 But, Sir I cannot apprehend your Drift.  
 "No matter, read, and you will make a shift.  
 But, with your Leave, your Book will very soon,  
 At any Shop, be sold for half a Crown:  
 "And are my Labours of so small Esteem?  
 "My Works but Riddles, or my Life a Dream?  
 "Or have my indefatigable Pains  
 "Been but to raise your Credit and your Gains?  
 "Has not the Stage from me receiv'd Applause,  
 "And all the World decided in my Cause?  
 "Are these the Thanks for all my gen'rous Love?  
 "Are these the Principles on which you move?  
 "Have I long labour'd in this painful Birth,  
 "To be the trodden Lumber of the Earth?  
 "O my poor Children? my unhappy Wife?  
 "You tasteless Comforts of my hateful Life!  
 "What Friends, abandon'd Wretches, will you seek?  
 "Hard is the Parish 'lowance, Eighteen Pence a Week.  
 "But, Gentlemen, I've done;" I scorn to beg:  
 So made a gentle Bow, and then a Leg.  
 Sat himself down, yet kept a heedful Look,  
 And soon, with Pleasure, saw them Thunder-struck:  
 Give me the Pen, says one, shall it be said  
 That so much Pains and Learnings are unpaid;  
 In haste another strait supplies his Place,  
 With nimble Fingers, and a pitying Face.  
 Some skewer'd out their Marks, and some their Names,  
 Some to raise his, but most their mutual Fames.  
 The Numbers full, the Yellows tumble in:  
 So bright a Harvest *W—r* ne'er had seen;  
 Happy if not a Tavern cou'd be found,  
 Or Bawdy-house in fifty Miles around.  
 But him, as others, Stars malignant rule,  
 And make the Man of Sense a wretched Fool.  
 Tho' always rubbing off, still runs a Score,  
 Tho' always getting, he is always poor.  
*W—r* be wise, a while behold the *Ant*:  
 See her industrious Care for future Want.  
 View there, on yonder Honey-suckle Tree,  
 The wond'rous Pains of that laborious Bee.  
 For Winter she that luscious store provides,  
 And in her Caverns all her Treasures hides.  
 When Winter comes, she lives at home in Peace;  
 Wantons in Luxury, and sleeps at ease.

Subscription is the modest Way they take,  
 To cram their Purses, and your Pockets rake;  
 For ev'ry Charge they'll tax you half a Crown,  
 So much they'll tax you, ev'ry Mother's Son.  
 They'll buy you Candles, and your Fire find  
 Amazing friendly! how exceeding kind!  
 For ev'ry Pound in your behalf is spent,  
 Hundreds on Hundreds they will make *per Cent*.  
 Ladies, the Boards are hard, they'll hurt your Feet,  
 I've got a green Cloath, ev'ry way compleat.  
 Full good eight Pounds it cost, I must confess;  
 And what is that, 'tis but your Crowns a piece.  
 In ev'ry Entrance there is still the same,  
 And thus he merrily runs on his Game.  
 This Master *C—y* will make you know;  
 If you refuse, expect a stormy Brow.  
 An *Irish Skip* kennel he lately was,

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And now a haughty supercilious Ass.  
“Ladies, behold that shining Mirroure there,  
“That Looking-Glass is my peculiar Care.  
“Beauty’s fair Image there you may unfold,  
“And each a *Venus* in her self behold.  
“To give it, Ladies, I cannot afford,  
“Therefore your Money, I am at a Word.  
*Chloe* at that, with Indignation glows,  
And ev’ry beauty in her Anger shows.  
Sir, I contemn your Project, and your Glass,  
Tho’ I’m a Woman, I am not an Ass:  
Impose on whom you will, I dare refuse,  
And at your Peril, your ill Manners use.  
To Dance is all my Business here with you,  
For that I’ll pay, whatever is your Due.  
But *C--y*, impatient of Replies,  
Knit his dark Brow, and furious were his Eyes;  
Choak’d with his Passion, long in Durance pent,  
At last, in splutt’ring Nonsense gave it vent.  
But such his Language, such his Manners were,  
Such was his Treatment of the blooming Fair,  
That the good *Satyr* blushes to deride,  
What ev’n his *Irish* Modesty shou’d hide.

Next faggot *L--l* claims a gentle Note,  
Tho’ ridicul’d, he must not be forgot.  
The Joyners Business was his Father’s Trade,  
A Joyner too the Booby shou’d be made;  
But other Thoughts fill’d his capacious Crown,  
And turn’d his Intellects quite upside down.  
Have I not Parts, says he? these Parts I’ll scan,  
For surely I may be a Gentleman.  
Strait he assumes his fulsome awkward Airs,  
And Merit with the first of Quality compares;  
Tucks Bilbo to his Side, and cocks his Hat,  
Then lac’d his Cloaths, for there is much in that.  
What if he’s splay-footed and ungenteel,  
That’s Nature’s Fault, and sore against his Will.  
So stiffens up his Face, displays his Arms,  
And to a *Dancing-Master* strait transforms.

Good Heav’n! that such a wretched worth-less Crew,  
Shou’d lead the Town with Nonsense, Noise and Shew.  
Blast them, kind Heav’n, and drive them from the World,  
And let thy angry Thunderbolt be hurl’d  
Right down upon them; save us from the worst  
Of Punishments that ever Nation curst.  
Their Insolence, Profaneness, and their Crimes,  
Too big for just Description, or for Rhimes,  
Call loud for Vengeance, Vengeance may they feel,  
In the unfathomable Depth of *H--ll*.

F I N I S