Strand
Nov. 1910

"Dancing," says Miss Maud Allan, "is not, as some seem to think, merely a matter of acrobatics. How shall I define it? Well, dancing is the spontaneous expression of the spiritual state. In olden days it was associated with religion. Children and primitive people have at all times found expression for their feelings and moods in movement. And dancing, as it seems to me, is as deserving of respect as music. For what difference, after all, is there between music and dancing? Music is movement, for it is vibration. So is dancing.

"In modern times we have ceased to be natural. Our mothers have taught us to sit up straight, as we have to do in school, and to hide instead of to express our emotions. We have come to use our words and faces to conceal our thoughts and to deceive. And we have dignified our deceit with the fine-sounding name of diplomacy.

"Nature is best. Take a little child and give it a kitten to play with. Instinctively the child will break into something like the pretty movements of the animal to express its joy or playfulness. And what could be more beautiful, more graceful, than the soft movements of little animals like cats.

"But by dancing I do not mean what is commonly known as ballet-dancing. That seems to me the degeneration of a lovely art. I admit that there is sometimes grace even in that sort of thing. Only, Nature never intended us to move about on the tips of our toes, like the barrerinas of grand opera. That kind of dancing is a defiance of the law of gravitation. It means that, in order to balance herself against Nature, the dancer must stiffen and distort the muscles in the upper part of her body. And she must endure agony with a smile upon her face. To give pleasure you must conceal effort."

Miss Allan is fully responsive to the rhythm of the music, and embodies a wonderful harmony of physical movement of the virginal type. The form of her dancing and its movement is plastic and sculptural in effect. There is in Miss Allan the suggestion of the sinister, the uncanny, and of complexities and subtleties. Even to her stage "settings"—an arc of dull hangings—one feels this when she emerges to the accompaniment of weird music. One feels it still more in the strange serpentine creature that whirls and writhes herself to exhaustion to the accompaniment of the Gnome dance from Grieg's "Peer Gynt" music. Again, when she is accompanied by Chopin's Funeral March one sees a figure that might have inspired in a De Quincey the impressioned prose of another lady of crêpe.

Maud Allan is much less subtle than Ruth St. Denis, but she is more musical. But she is less musical and care-free than Irene Sanden and Gertrud Van Axen. However, she comes very near to being the personification of bodily rhythm. Miss Allan calls into play her eyes and her fingers, which add much to the expressiveness and feeling of her dancing. This is particularly noticeable in her Arabian dance. But Miss Allan's best dancing, that which really is the highest form of dancing, is to be seen in her Reed-pipe dance, which is like the whistling wind, and takes us back to our "hop-skip-and-jump" days; and in Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." It was her "Vision of Salome" that made Maud Allan famous; but, as she says:—

"If people would only understand! My 'Salome' dance is not a reproduction of the dance given before Herod, but is the 'vision' of Salome after it is all over—a retrospection."

As to barefoot dancing, Maud Allan says:—

"I dance with my shoes and stockings off. My imitators take off their shoes and stockings and dance."

"Speak for yourself, Maud" None knows my feelings or nor shall

Strand
Nov. 1910

"Dancing," says Miss Maud Allan, "is not, as some seem to think, merely a matter of acrobatics. How shall I define it? Well, dancing is the spontaneous expression of the spiritual state. In olden days it was associated with religion. Children and primitive people have at all times found expression for their feelings and moods in movement. And dancing, as it seems to me, is as deserving of respect as music. For what difference, after all, is there between music and dancing? Music is movement, for it is vibration. So is dancing.

"In modern times we have ceased to be natural. Our mothers have taught us to sit up straight, as we have to do in school, and to hide instead of to express our emotions. We have come to use our words and faces to conceal our thoughts and to deceive. And we have dignified our deceit with the fine-sounding name of diplomacy.

"Nature is best. Take a little child and give it a kitten to play with. Instinctively the child will break into something like the pretty movements of the animal to express its joy or playfulness. And what could be more beautiful, more graceful, than the soft movements of little animals like cats.

"But by dancing I do not mean what is commonly known as ballet-dancing. That seems to me the degeneration of a lovely art. I admit that there is sometimes grace even in that sort of thing. Only, Nature never intended us to move about on the tips of our toes, like the barrerinas of grand opera. That kind of dancing is a defiance of the law of gravitation. It means that, in order to balance herself against Nature, the dancer must stiffen and distort the muscles in the upper part of her body. And she must endure agony with a smile upon her face. To give pleasure you must conceal effort."

Miss Allan is fully responsive to the rhythm of the music, and embodies a wonderful harmony of physical movement of the virginal type. The form of her dancing and its movement is plastic and sculptural in effect. There is in Miss Allan the suggestion of the sinister, the uncanny, and of complexities and subtleties. Even to her stage "settings"—an arc of dull hangings—one feels this when she emerges to the accompaniment of weird music. One feels it still more in the strange serpentine creature that whirls and writhes herself to exhaustion to the accompaniment of the Gnome dance from Grieg's "Peer Gynt" music. Again, when she is accompanied by Chopin's Funeral March one sees a figure that might have inspired in a De Quincey the impressioned prose of another lady of crêpe.

Maud Allan is much less subtle than Ruth St. Denis, but she is more musical. But she is less musical and care-free than Irene Sanden and Gertrud Van Axen. However, she comes very near to being the personification of bodily rhythm. Miss Allan calls into play her eyes and her fingers, which add much to the expressiveness and feeling of her dancing. This is particularly noticeable in her Arabian dance. But Miss Allan's best dancing, that which really is the highest form of dancing, is to be seen in her Reed-pipe dance, which is like the whistling wind, and takes us back to our "hop-skip-and-jump" days; and in Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." It was her "Vision of Salome" that made Maud Allan famous; but, as she says:—

"If people would only understand! My 'Salome' dance is not a reproduction of the dance given before Herod, but is the 'vision' of Salome after it is all over—a retrospection."

As to barefoot dancing, Maud Allan says:—

"I dance with my shoes and stockings off. My imitators take off their shoes and stockings and dance."

"Speak for yourself, Maud" None knows my feelings somewhere else"

Miss Maud Allen.

In her wonderful interpretation of Debussy's dances, sacred and profane, Maud Allan has achieved the greatest success, having returned once more to the home of her first trimphs, the Palace Theatre. She gave a matinee of the new dances of her repertoire and met with a reception that can only be spoken of as "ecstatic;" indeed, it would not be too much to say that Maud Allan has returned from her visit to America a far finer and more matured artist than she was when she first visited our shores a year or two ago. She has gained in subtlenes, in emotional expression, and—if it were possible—in grace. Her art is now worthy to be compared with that of Isadora Duncan. Can praise go further? Perhaps the most popular item of her new repertoire is Schubert's "Moment Musicale," but the one which raised the greatest amount of curiosity was the "Danses Sacre et Profane," by Claude Debussy. Miss Allan's success is enormous and thoroughly well deserved.