

Sedgwick, Catharine M. "The Ballet: An American Lady's View of the Opera." By Miss Sedgwick. *New-Yorker*, 14 August 1841, pp. 341.

THE BALLET—AN AMERICAN LADY'S OPINION OF THE OPERA.—We had the ballet "La Gitana," after the singing and Taglioni. No praise of her grace is exaggerated.—There is music in every movement of her arms; and if she would restrict herself within the limits of decency, there could not be a more exquisite spectacle of its kind than her dancing. I would give in to the ravings of her admirers and allow that her grace is God's beautiful gift, and that fitting it is it should be so used. But could not this grace be equally demonstrated with a skirt a few inches longer and rather less transparent? To my crude notions her positions are often disgusting; and when she raised her leg to a right angle with her body, I could have exclaimed, as Carlyle did, "Merciful Heaven! where will it end?" Familiarity must dull the sense to these bad parts of the exhibition; for Mrs. ----- quoted a French woman, who said, of Taglioni, "One must be virtuous to dance like that." I should rather have said differently. And I would divide the world, not as our witty friend ----- does, into men, women, and Mary Wolstonecrafts, but into men, women, and ballet-dancers. For surely a woman must have forgotten the instincts of her sex before she can dance even as Taglioni does. I am not apt as you know my dear C., to run a tilt against public amusements; but I hold this to be an execrable one; and if my voice could have any influence, I would pray every modest woman and modest man, --for why should this virtue be graduated by a different scale for the different sexes? --every modest man and woman then, in our land to discountenance its advancement there. If we have not yet the perfections of a matured civilization, God save us from the corruptions that prelude and intimate its decline! \* \* \*

Miss Sedgwick's New Work.