

**THE BAL  
MASQUÉ!**

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The Bal Masqué! by Count Chicard

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**COUNT CHICARD**

**THE BAL  
MASQUÉ!**





**"What a galaxy of beauty greets the eye; the triumph of Nature over Art is complete; you do not pause to admire the rich materials of which the robe is made—your homage is paid to the form it covers."**

THE  
**WALMASQUE!**



**COUNT CHICARD.**

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PEOPLE who talk about "stage plays" and "play-actors," invariably condemn a *Bal Masqué*. Had they been alone in their infatuation, they might have done so still; but there are others even of enlightened views who sneer at this



kind of amusement as a "modern invention," "foreign introduction," "humbug," &c.

To combat the erroneous ideas emanating from such sweeping prejudices, we wrote this book—prejudices by which the public is led away, as children are frightened by the reflected devils of a magic lantern, that the slightest examination would prove to be "airy nothings." That the *Bal Masqué* is a modern invention, we grant; we also allow it to be foreign; but we deny, *in toto*, that it is humbug. In the time of Cheops the Pyramids themselves were disgustingly modern; yet they have got the better of it now, and if people will be such ardent admirers of those huge riddles of antiquity, that were always so full of death, they might at least abstain from abusing the *Bal Masqué*, which on the contrary is so full of life. Of course we do not attempt to argue the point

with those rabid Archæologists who prefer a shrivelled up mummy to the loveliest beauty that ever graced Almacks.

As to the *Bal Masqué* being a foreign introduction, does not the bee take honey from exotic as well indigenous petals, and shall Man yield to a little insect in wisdom? Our annals are but a mighty ball-room, in which foreign introductions are continually taking place under the eye of that indefatigable M. C.—Old Father Time. Have we not the introduction of the Saxons and the Normans—(these parties by the way introduced themselves); and further, the introduction of Tea and Tulips; of Princes Consort and Pines; of Guano and Gutta Serena; of Paletôts and Potatoes; of German Tailors and Sherry Cobblers; of Cachemeres and Cocoa-nuts; of Ether and Ethiopians; of Polkas and Promenade Concerts;

of Hair Powder and Gun-cotton! besides a host of others far too numerous for us to mention; we shall, therefore, immediately proceed in our work, holding, that, as a thin rind is the sign of a good orange, a short Preface is that of a good book.

