

PLAYFORD, JOHN.—The English Dancing Master: or, Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to each Dance. Oblong quarto.

THOMAS HARPER for JOHN PLAYFORD. LONDON. 1651.
Mr. J. F. R. Stainer.

(See facsimile on the opposite page.) Illustration by Hollar on title-page.

This book is said to be Playford's first *musical* publication: it was entered at Stationers' Hall, November 7, 1650. At all events this is not only the first English work on the subject of dancing, but the first general collection of the popular dance and ballad tunes of England.

The Preface to 'The English Dancing Master' is of sufficient interest to be quoted in full:

To the Ingenious Reader.

The Art of Dancing called by the Ancient Greeks *Orchestice*, and *Orchestis*, is a commendable and rare Quality fit for yong Gentlemen, if opportunely and civilly used. And *Plato*, that Famous Philosopher, thought it meet, that yong Ingenious Children be taught to dance. It is a quality that has been formerly honoured in the Courts of Princes, when performed by the most Noble *Heroes* of the Times! The Gentlemen of the Innes of Court, whose sweet and ayry Activity has crowned their Grand Solemnities with Admiration to all Spectators. This Art has been Anciently handled by *Athenæus*, *Julius Pollux*, *Cælius Rhodiginus*, and others, and much commend it to be Excellent for Recreation, after more serious Studies, making the body active and strong, gracefull in deportment, and a quality very much beseeming a Gentleman. Yet all this should not have been an Incitement to me for publication of this Worke (knowing these Times and the Nature of it do not agree), But that there was a false and surreptitious Copy at the Printing Presse, which if it had been published, would have been a disparagement to the quality and the Professors thereof, and a hinderance to the Learner: Therefore for prevention of all which, having an Excellent Copy by me, and the assistance of a knowing Friend; I have ventured to put forth this ensuing Worke to the view, and gentle censure of all ingenious Gentlemen lovers of this Quallity; not doubting but their goodnes will pardon what may be amisse, and accept of the honest Intention of him that is a faithfull honourer of your Virtues, and

Your servant to command

J. P.