

women, and those unmarried. He says, that no person above the lowest rank was ever seized with this malady, nor is there an instance of its causing death. The length of the dance, and the patient's power of bearing such excessive fatigue in the canicular season, prove nothing; because every day at that time of the year, peasants may be seen dancing with equal spirits and perseverance, though they do not pretend to be seized with the tarantism.

The illness may, therefore, be attributed to hysterics, excessive heat, stoppage of perspiration, and other effects of sleeping out of doors in a hot summer air, which is always extremely dangerous, if not mortal, in most parts of Italy. Violent exercise may have been found to be a certain cure for this disorder, and continued by tradition, though the date and circumstances of this discovery have long been buried in oblivion; a natural passion for dancing, imitation, custom of the country, and a desire of raising contributions upon the spectators, are probably the real motives, that inspire the tarantati. Before Serao's experiments, the tarantula had been proved to be harmless, from trials made in 1693 by Clarizio, and in 1740 at Lucera, by other naturalists.

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