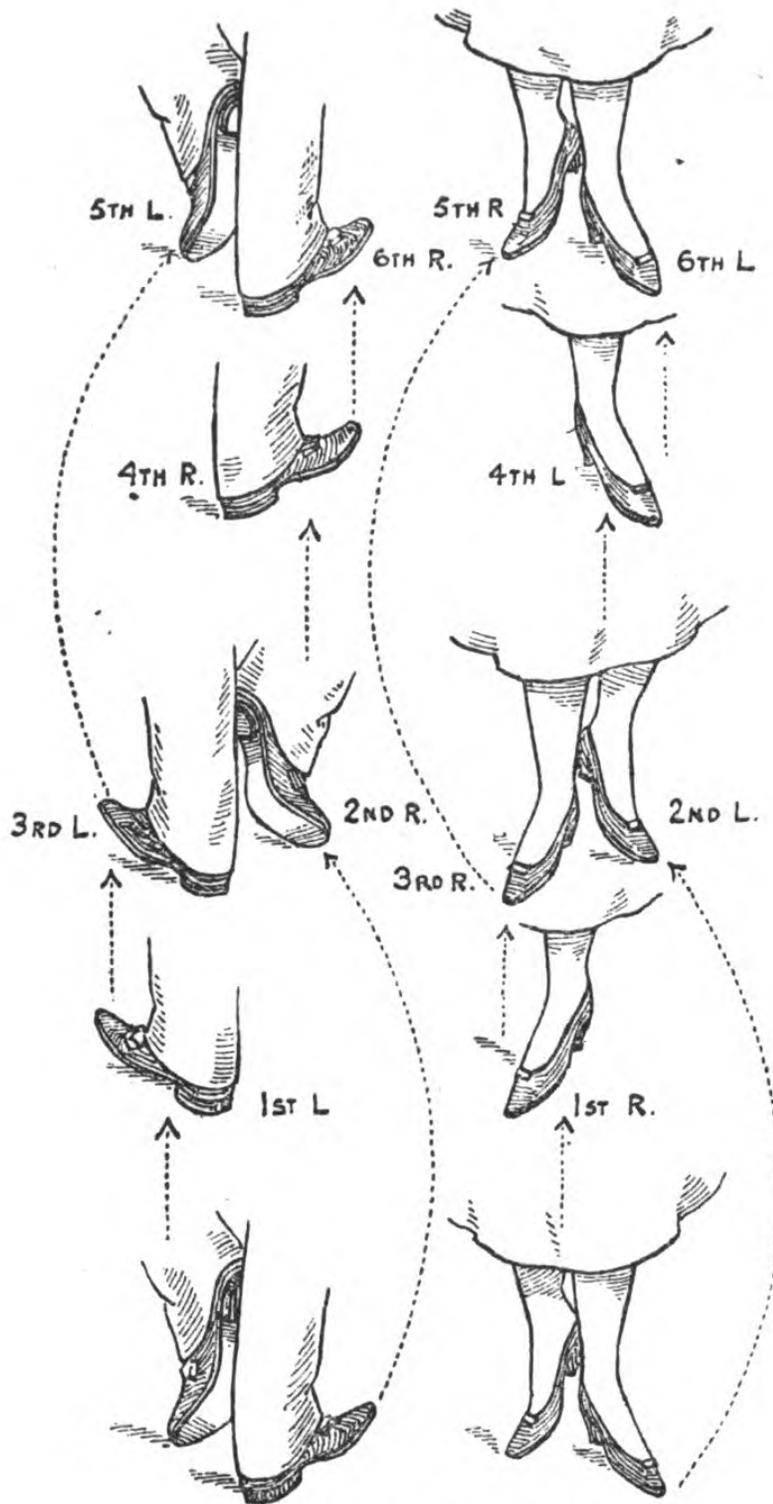


ALL ABOUT THE BOSTON

RECTILINEAL STEPS



POSITION IN STARTING

NOTE. THE FEET IN THEIR PASSAGE OVER THE FLOOR DESCRIBE HOGARTH'S "LINE OF BEAUTY."

All About the Boston

A Critical and Practical Treatise
on Modern Waltz Variations

3547

By

Edward Scott

Author of "Dancing as It Should Be," "Dancing" in the
All England Series, "Dancing in all Ages," etc.



London

George Routledge & Sons, Limited

New York : E. P. Dutton & Co.

1913.

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1973 ✓

BY THE SAME AUTHOR AND PUBLISHERS

DANCING AS IT SHOULD BE

Crown 8vo, cloth, **1s.**

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FOREWORD

A CASUAL glance through the following pages might suggest that the writer was pleading as *advocatus diaboli*, but more careful perusal will show that such is not the case.

The work is simply a modest attempt to restore something like order into the practice of ball-room dancing. As regards the so-called "Boston" I would separate the dross from the gold, and, while retaining all that is best, eliminate whatever is vulgar and degrading in its practice. I uphold the genuine gliding waltz, the only modern dance that makes direct appeal to the æsthetic perceptions. All permissible variations of movement are herein described, but mere freakish innovations are discouraged.

The better-class teachers of dancing who love their art, and deplore the invasion

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of decadent exotic antics, will, I doubt not, welcome this little book, and approve its purpose if not its style. They will know that what information it contains is at least reliable. They will not condemn it for outspokenness; they will read, as it were, between the lines, and understand. But teachers of another class, who thrive on credulity, who lure pupils by misleading announcements, and do not scruple to promulgate objectionable dances—modified it may be—even among children, will naturally resent any effort, however humble, to enlighten the public and improve the tone of social dancing.

I should be glad to receive *bonâ fide* opinions on the subject.

EDWARD SCOTT.

ROCHESTER HOUSE,
HOLLAND ROAD, HOVE.

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A LITTLE CANDOUR

A GREAT deal of that confusion of ideas which has until quite recently existed with regard to present day dancing, had its origin in the fact that people did not at first realise that the steps of the genuine rhythmic waltz could be taken in any conceivable direction across the floor. Their ideas of the waltz were associated only with the idea of turning round and round. Consequently, for want of a better term, they proceeded to designate every kind of rectilinear movement they chanced to see danced to waltz music, by the very inapposite title "Boston."

The word is herein adopted not by any

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means with approval, but simply because it has been so widely used.

The kind of movement at present known as the “Boston” is like the little girl of whom we are told :

*When she was good she was very good indeed,
But when she was bad she was horrid !*

For instance, what could be better than the long, graceful, gliding “Boston” sometimes exhibited by really good waltzers ?

And what could be worse than some of those vulgar freakish practices to which the term “Boston” is also, perhaps wrongly, applied ?

There would seem to be three kinds of so-called “Boston”—the graceful, the ungraceful and, I regret to add, the disgraceful.

Needless to say, our practical illustrations will be only of the first mentioned.

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Freak dances of any kind are in the nature of things ephemeral, while the rules of art are enduring. As the kind of information to be gleaned from this book is in conformity with these rules, it will be of equal service ten years hence, even though the *term* "Boston," as applied to dancing, should again have fallen into disuse.

It is of course advisable, in studying any art, to take lessons of a good teacher. This little book will at least place you in a better position to judge if you are being properly taught or merely humbugged.

It may seem paradoxical, but if I were not myself a teacher of the art of dancing, and wished to learn a really good form of "Boston," I would go by preference to some teacher who did not announce to impart it.

Because it may be assumed that *bona*

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fide teachers of dancing know, and are able to impart, any dances that are worth learning. Consequently they do not need to proclaim what particular ones they can teach, or display a list of supposititiously *new* dances in advertisements, like wares in a shop window.

Teachers who advertise their terms clearly seek to attract pupils rather by the modesty of their fees than the excellence of their instruction. The best teachers, of course, rely mainly on recommendation.

It is true that teachers of high standing will sometimes announce standard or classical dances like the waltz or minuet, but dance teachers who specify the "one step," *as if it were something to be proud of*, appear to have a nice sense of their own qualifications; for they let the public know that they can at least impart a movement

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of so primitive a nature that, as Mr. Gerald du Maurier rightly says, it needs not to be learnt at all.

I wonder if there are any teachers of music, even among the smallest fry of the profession, who could bring themselves to announce that they were prepared to impart the "one note" to their pupils, or variations on "Ragtime Tommy"?

There are, we know, people who, when playing the piano, appear to think that anything will do for a bass; but is there a single teacher of music, however lowly, who would encourage such an idea, or would allow his or her pupils to wilfully defy the laws of harmony?

So with genuine teachers of the art of dancing, who are something more than mere dance teachers. It is not their province to impart every crazy deformity of movement that finds its way into the

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ball-room, or every decadent practice introduced by vicious or bad dancers. They try rather to prevent their pupils from falling into like errors of style and taste.

But while the more cultured teachers, to their honour be it said, are strenuously striving to improve the tone of social dancing, and are consistently teaching only the *best of what should be done*, other teachers of a more venal type are content to drag their art through the mire by persistently promulgating the worst of what *is* but *should not be done*.

There are also teachers who when they have, as they think, exhausted the possibilities of a movement in its simple and most genuine form, begin torturing it through the multiplication table, first doubling, then tripling it, and so on. Then they "drop one," "drop two," "drop three," etc. Silly as all this may appear,

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such things are or were actually advertised.

Of course if this is the kind of thing you wish to acquire, these are the very teachers to whom you should apply. You can be fooled to the top of your bent. You are in the right hands. But if you wish to acquire a really good style of doing the so-called "Boston," or any other dance, you are more likely to get it in a single lesson from a genuine teacher of the art than in a dozen from the mere dance teacher.

There are, in fact, not a few teachers of whom the more lessons you take, the worse will your style become.

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WHAT IS THE "BOSTON"?

THERE are dancers who declare that the "Boston" is something altogether distinct and different from the waltz.

And after observing the kind of movement which such dancers exhibit as the "Boston," one is inclined to admit the truth of their assertion.

But, again, after witnessing the same dancers' version of the waltz, one is forced to the conclusion that it is equally remote from the genuine thing.

The fact is, all movements employed in dancing the "Boston" *are, or should be, analogous to those employed in genuine waltzing.*

For if the "Boston" were really something distinct from the waltz, it would have no legitimate *raison d'être*—no right

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to intrude itself into waltz music. If a different dance, clearly it should have music of its own, and a separate place on the programme.

It must be admitted that the “Boston” as it is danced by really good waltzers—I don’t, of course, mean “hoppy” waltzers—is something quite different from the kind of “Boston” that is practised *faute de mieux* by people who cannot waltz.

The former may be extremely graceful, even beautiful; the latter is invariably either vapid or grotesque.

This little book is more particularly addressed to reasonable people and lovers of the beautiful. Therefore I start by postulating that the waltz and the so-called “Boston” are analogous in rhythm, form, and muscular action. They diverge only as regards the track and relative positions of the dancers.

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GROTESQUE SO-CALLED “ BOSTONS ”

IN an appeal which I wrote against the exploitation of certain indelicate styles of dancing in the modern ball-room,¹ I pointed out that the term “ Boston ” was “ often a mere euphemism for incapacity of performance.”

This very obvious remark, apart from the main question of degenerate practices, with which we are not here concerned, seemed to arouse a spirit of resentment in the breasts of certain “ Bostoners,” who immediately started to defend what they were apparently unable to define.

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, Feb. 3, 1913, leader page.

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As an ancient writer observed: "It is of no use discussing a subject unless men are agreed as to the meaning of the terms they employ."

What I wrote in the *Telegraph* was not an expression of opinion as regards the so-called "Boston"; it was a simple statement of fact, as must have been evident to any ball-room frequenter at that time, whose attention was not entirely engrossed with his own dancing.

It seems to me that any intelligent "Bostoner," who is also a capable performer, must, however regretfully, admit that the term is often employed as a euphemism for incapacity.

Are not all manner of absurd and diametrically opposite kinds of movement, from mere walking to and fro, with a half turn at angles, to rushing frantically and aimlessly about, to the inconvenience

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and annoyance of other dancers, done under the general name of “Boston”?

At least this is the kind of thing that was frequently called “Bostoning” when I wrote my protest.

I am willing to admit, however, that the term waltz is also employed to cover all kinds of incompetency.

But, as I recently pointed out in an article on the subject, whereas the word “waltz” conveys a definite expression of movement, the word “Boston” has no Terpsichorean significance whatever.

It is merely the name of a town.

Therefore one cannot rationally aver that any particular movement is or is not the *correct* “Boston.” But it is both reasonable and consistent to maintain that this or that particular form of so-called “Boston” is good, bad, or merely silly, according to the recognised principles of

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gracefulness, the dynamics of dancing, or the exercise of *common sense*.

Possibly if the last named quality were allowed a little wider scope in the modern ball-room, many salutary changes would be effected.

It is my intention to describe at length only the graceful and artistic kinds of "Boston," to which the more definite and descriptive terms Rectilinear and Diagonal Waltzing might advantageously be given.

Before proceeding to explain practically the more correct movements, I will, however, briefly allude to certain practices which have somehow come to be connected or confused with the "Boston," mainly through the instrumentality of bad dancers, and indeed I may also add of bad teachers.

And these I give you, in the words of Junius, "not as an example to imitate, but as a warning to deter."

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First, there is the simple walking or creeping to and fro at angles, with a half turn at the corners, so to speak. The diagonal figure, when executed with the *proper waltz step* and *rhythm*, is not open to objection, but when done with a kind of "one step," and accompanied by a squirming action of the body it is simply grotesque.

This is the kind of so-called "Boston" that is generally exhibited by people who are too indolent to learn to dance properly, and may well be designated THE LAZY BOSTON.

Again, there are people whose interpretation of the "Boston" consists of so many bars of "two step" or *chassé à trois pas*, and a little run, necessitated by the fact that the *chassé* movement brings their feet into the wrong position for resuming the turn.

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This movement, because it commends itself to so many who have failed to acquire the true feeling of the waltz, because it is necessarily done contrary to the genuine rhythm of the music, and is pre-eminently the "Boston" of bad dancers, should be known as **THE DUFFERS' BOSTON**.

The kind of "Boston" in which the couples rush about the room at various angles, darting hither and thither, crossing the track of other dancers, and making themselves an unmitigated nuisance, may consistently be described as **THE ROWDY BOSTON**.

All these are forms of "Boston" that should be avoided by well-bred people, especially the last mentioned, as its practice shows want of consideration for the rights of others.

THE GRACEFUL BOSTON will come under consideration in another section, as being

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the only kind likely to endure, or worth taking seriously. Nothing would be gained by describing movements that only excite ridicule and contempt.

But as a specimen of the "multiplication Bostons," to which I have already alluded, let us take the so-called "DOUBLE BOSTON," of which a description was given not so very long since in the *Royal Magazine* by a teacher who claimed to have introduced it, and at the same time was frank enough to admit that it was a "freak dance." "The Double Boston," he says, "consists of three steps, with one step to the bar, so that the complete movement takes three bars of music."

That is all I need quote. It is sufficient. Three steps to three bars! Every waltz melody is composed of sixteen bars, sometimes elaborated to thirty-two, but generally merely repeated, the odd bars—one,

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three, five, &c.—being more strongly accented than the even ones. This being so, to dance a continuous movement complete in three bars, to ordinary waltz music, is an *absolute impossibility*. You cannot divide sixteen by three without a remainder. Besides, each recurring dance movement would take a different accent, the steps would come all out of accord with the musical phrases, and no one, unless totally deaf, could endure such a thing. It may be that the writer himself did the movement in *two* bars instead of three, but was not sufficiently acquainted with the principles of musical rhythm to perceive it. Only a like assumption can make this “Double Boston” even intelligible. As it stands, according to the description given, it is *simply impracticable*.

Of course if you went to another teacher for the “Double Boston,” he or she would

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show you something quite different. In fact, if you went to a dozen, the probability is they would *all* show you something different; so you would have twelve "Double Bostons" to go on with, and when you went to a dance you might find none of them of the slightest service.

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ORIGIN OF THE "BOSTON"

It is almost impossible to arrive at any really satisfactory conclusion about the origin of a dance or movement which presents such varied aspects, and admits of such conflicting interpretations.

One teacher claims that "the 'Boston' is danced—as all dances should be—strictly in time with the music"; while another is willing to admit that it is "danced against time," and Mr. William Boosey says "a 'Boston' in which the steps are against the rhythm of the music is an affectation."

Some of the letter-writers in the *Daily Telegraph* who—apparently without much sense of humour—expatiated on the beau-

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ties of their own particular "Boston" under the heading "Decadent Dancing," a title which I had chosen to express my views on another phase of the subject, seem to have had very different ideas concerning the object of their admiration. One section evidently had in mind a swift running movement—something lively and exhilarating, while another pictured something slow and dignified—"Since the days of the minuet no more elegant, graceful, and scientific dance has invaded our ball-rooms."

Now if such conflicting opinions obtain with regard to the present-day "Boston," what are we to say respecting its past history?

Mr. Hayden Coffin, while admitting that "experience latterly in ball-rooms inclined one to side very much with Mr. Scott," pointed out that between twenty-

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five and thirty years ago “Boston” was the name given to reversing while dancing the original Viennese waltz.

Mr. Henri Zay wrote: “I have danced the ‘Boston’ for twenty years (I am an American), and say emphatically that there is no set figure that can be called the ‘Boston.’ It is a series of steps or figures—such as the ordinary waltz-step, the ‘dip’ the ‘run,’ the ‘reverse,’ etc.” He pointed out that the charm of the “Boston” consists in the fact that the movements are taken *ad libitum*, and not in any prescribed order.

Now let us turn to Mr. B. Gilbert’s American work on Round Dancing, published in 1890, and we find the “Boston” thus described under the heading *Waltz*.

“Step backward with left foot—1; rise on the toe of left—2; descend upon the heel—3; one measure.

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“Step forward with right—1 ; rise on right toe—2 ; descend upon the heel—3 ; one measure.

“Counterpart for lady.

“The turn is made by changing the angles of the steps and pivoting upon the foot at the rise.”

What could be simpler? Clearly the “Boston” as danced in 1890 was no other than our old friend the slide and a twist, or what was once known as the Kensington Crawl, a movement which has done yeoman service for tired or lazy men-waltzers ever since the waltz has been in vogue, a movement still popular, and always likely to remain so. It is introduced in what some people call the *double* “Boston”—Heaven knows why!—at the present time.

What was called the “Boston Dip” was only the slide and twist movement with a very pronounced bend of the knee,

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which, it is scarcely necessary to say, did not add to its beauty.

About twenty years ago I happened to be in Paris, and observed that the teachers there were imparting a very elongated three-step movement in turning, with the feet almost parallel, which they called the "Boston."

Ten years since the Parisian teachers were again teaching what they called the "Boston" in much the same form as it is danced to-day, but the partners danced facing each other instead of to the side.

The fact is, the "Boston" is a recurring thing. It disappears, and is lost sight of for a time, then it comes round again like a comet—not Halley's, but a short-period one, Encke's, for instance. The term has been usually applied to some passing innovation or extravagance in waltzing, and if it falls out of use now, it would

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be safe to predict that it will crop up again in something less than a decade. For some inexplicable reason, the word "Boston" possesses a marvellous power of attraction. It has been applied, as we have seen, to all kinds of movements—good, bad, and indifferent.

As I have already pointed out, the word "Boston" has no Terpsichorean significance, and perhaps for this very reason it is such a favourite among both dancers and teachers; because, you see, in a sense, *anything* may be taught or danced as a "Boston," and no one can assert positively that it is not a "Boston," even if it appears more like an inspiration from Kumassi.

At the present time the term "Boston" is applied to the kind of movement that in its best and most graceful form would be far more consistently described as Rectilinear or Diagonal waltzing.

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STEPS OF THE "BOSTON"

THE steps of the "Boston," *as exhibited by its best and most graceful exponents*, and as taught by the best teachers of dancing, are all based upon the rectilinear steps of the genuine gliding Viennese waltz, which, it should be understood, is a very different thing from that fatiguing, inelegant "hoppy" movement often practised by bad dancers and taught *faute de mieux* by teachers who are themselves unacquainted with the true scientific principles of waltzing.

Whether the partners dance directly facing, looking over each other's shoulders, or side by side in the American style, one looking forward, and the other backward,

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or sideways, facing the same direction, or diagonally in a zigzag track, *the steps should always be taken in the manner here shown*. If the steps are taken otherwise, the symmetry of the curves described by the feet in their passage over the floor¹ is destroyed, the movement becomes æsthetically imperfect, and, for scientific reasons, to be explained as we proceed, the dancing entails more effort and is less pleasurable.

STEPS OF THE "BOSTON"

Let us assume that the partners are standing side by side, as shown in Plate, the gentleman facing the direction of movement, the lady dancing backward.

FORWARD FOR THE GENTLEMAN, OR *vice versa*

Starting from the position shown, left foot in front, toe only on the floor.

¹ Hogarth's "Line of Beauty." See Plate.

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One :—Slide the left slowly forward, and *in finishing* the glide let the heel descend, the left leg then taking the entire balance and weight of the body.

Two :—Let the right *toe* skim very lightly over the floor, describing *an arc* in its passage, until it is a little in advance of the left or supporting foot.

Three :—Without removing the balance from the left leg, by a slight flexion and muscular contraction, draw the left foot close to the right heel, which must still be raised, so that the foot is free to immediately resume the step.

Four :—Slide the right foot slowly forward, and *in finishing* the glide let it rest boldly on the floor, transferring the entire weight of the body to the right leg.

Five :—Let the left toe skim very lightly over the floor to a point *in advance* of the right foot, describing *an arc* in its passage.

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Six :—Without shifting the balance of the body, draw the right foot up to the heel of the left by a slight flexion and contraction of the muscles above the knee of the right limb.

REARWARD FOR THE LADY, OR *vice versa*

Starting from the position shown, right foot behind, toe only resting on the floor :

One :—Slide the right foot slowly backward, and, *in finishing* the movement, allow it to rest on the floor taking the entire weight of the body.

Two :—Let the left toe skim very lightly over the floor in describing an arc, till it reaches a point a little behind the left.

Three :—Without change of balance, by a slight flexion of the limb, and sudden contraction of the muscles above the knee, draw the right heel close up to the left foot, *on which no weight must be resting.*

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Four:—Slide the left foot slowly backward, and, *in finishing* the glide, transfer the balance absolutely to the left leg.

Five:—Allow the right toe to skim *very lightly* over the floor, describing an arc in its course, until it reaches a point beyond the left foot.

Six:—By a flexion and muscular contraction draw the left heel close up to the right foot, which must be kept free to resume the gliding movement.

N.B.—The rhythm of these steps must, in all cases, be dactylic, the stress or accent being placed on the first, which should be as long, as regards duration of time, as the other two together.

I have here described the steps of the “Boston” as if the feet were to be placed consciously in the required positions; but when waltzing is *really perfect*, whether in rotary or rectilinear movement, the action

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of the limbs becomes *almost entirely automatic*. If this were a scientific treatise, I could easily explain how by the proper adjustment of the centre of gravity, combined with correct muscular action in the limbs, and co-ordinate movements of the upper body, waltzing in any direction may be accomplished with scarcely an effort.

Few dancers, however, attain this proficiency, because teachers do not usually study the anatomical and scientific aspects of their art, without some knowledge of which it is impossible to impart anything like *really perfect* waltzing.

Although the scope of this brochure will not admit of elaborate explanations, I will presently give a few useful hints under "Dynamics of the Boston."

Note well that if the foot in the second or curved step *does not pass beyond the*

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foot with which the first slide was taken, whether in going forward or backward, the movement is merely what is technically known as a *chassé à trois pas*, or “two step”—note the apparent contradiction of terms—and is not waltzing at all. No matter what those who practise and those who teach such a movement may elect to call it, whether “Boston,” “Chicago,” or “Philadelphia,” it is altogether *wrong* when employed in connection with the waltz. It is, as it were, the very antithesis of the correct waltz movement, quite out of accord with its rhythm, and is never danced to waltz music except by hopelessly bad waltzers.

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ON CHANGING THE FIGURE

ASSUMING that you have mastered the rectilinear steps already described, and can execute them with a certain degree of facility, you have now to learn how to resume the ordinary waltz movement without break of time or change of muscular action.

The art of changing from rectilinear to rotary movement, or *vice versa*, quite smoothly, without breaking the continuity of action, without hiatus, as it were, seems to present an almost insuperable difficulty to many dancers, yet it is very simple if you know the correct *modus operandi*.

The rule is as follows :

In changing from the forward step to

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the ordinary rotary waltz, *begin turning to the right* when on the *right foot*.

If you would change from the forward step to the *reverse* waltz, *begin turning to the left* when on the *left foot*.

In changing from the rearward step to the ordinary rotary waltz, *begin turning to the right* when on the *left foot*.

If you would change from the rearward step to the *reverse* waltz, *begin turning to the left* when on the *right foot*.

In changing from the rotary waltz to the rectilinear movement, after making the forward or rearward glide, as the case may be, special care must be taken that the foot describing the arc, or second step, passes beyond the one with which the slide has been taken.

If the shoulders at this particular juncture are thrown a little forward, the limb, if released, will automatically swing into the

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required position by the action of gravitation; but if you throw your shoulders back and bend your knees, you will have to place your foot in its proper position by a conscious muscular effort. I may also mention incidentally that the practice of throwing the shoulders back and bending the knees forward, is one greatly to be deprecated from an artistic standpoint.

STEPS FOR RESUMING THE ROTARY WALTZ

The manner of changing from the rectilinear to the rotary movement is as follows:

If going forward—

One:—Slide the right foot slowly forward, carrying the weight of the body in finishing; but twist it a little more outward.

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Two:—Let the left skim lightly over the floor to a point well beyond the left, turning the toe a little inward, and bringing the shoulders round.

Three:—By a muscular contraction slide the right foot a little further, simultaneously twisting it round, so that you are in the right position to commence the ordinary waltz with your left foot.

In going backward—*One*: Slide the left foot backward, transferring the balance of the body thereto in finishing, and turning the toe a little inward to the right.

Two:—Let the right foot skim lightly round, with the toe turned *well out*, till it has passed beyond the left, and see that your shoulders turn also.

Three:—By a slight flexion of the limb and sudden muscular contraction, draw the left foot as it were from under you without transferring the balance to the

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right limb, and in doing so, twist the left foot round so that you are in a position to begin the ordinary waltz.

N.B.—When the man goes backward, and the lady forward—as they should sometimes for the sake of variety—the man's steps will be as the lady's here shown, and *vice versa*.

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THE ZIGZAG "BOSTON" OR DIAGONAL WALTZING

THE simple forward and rearward movement already described, may be taken in a diagonal or zigzag direction.

If a couple would do this without turning at all, they have only to dance two bars in a direction towards the centre of the room at an angle of forty-five degrees to the wall; then, scarcely moving their shoulders, back towards the wall at right angles to the line they have just taken, which will, of course, be still forty-five degrees to the wall, only in the opposite direction.

But this is a very primitive kind of movement, and soon becomes monotonous.

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A better and more artistic method of Diagonal Waltzing is as follows :

Facing your partner, as in the rotary movement, each looking over the other's shoulder :

First bar :—Three steps of the ordinary waltz, turning sufficiently for the man to face the centre of the room.

Second bar :—Forward movement for the man, and rearward for the lady, at an angle of forty-five degrees from the wall.

Third bar :—Continue the forward movement in turning the reverse way.

Fourth bar :—Rearward movement for the man, and forward for the lady.

For the next four bars reverse this movement, thus :

First bar :—Three steps of the ordinary waltz, turning a little the reverse way.

Second bar :—Rearward movement for the man, and forward for the lady, going

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back towards the wall at an angle of forty-five degrees.

Third bar:—Continue rearward movement for the man, and forward for the lady, in turning the ordinary way—*i.e.* to the right.

Fourth bar:—Forward movement for the man, and rearward for the lady.

There are, of course, many possible ways of executing a zigzag movement, but you must be prepared to resume the ordinary waltz, or other figure, at any juncture. It is, indeed, better not to try this movement in a ball-room unless you are an expert waltzer, or you may easily become a nuisance to other dancers.

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VARIATIONS OF THE "BOSTON" OR ORNAMENTAL WALTZING

It is easy to see that practically unlimited combinations of movement may be formed on the basis here given, without in any way violating the true principles of waltzing, and without making oneself ridiculous or objectionable by the exploitation of freakish and decadent practices.

It is not necessary to adhere slavishly to any set form or figure, but, *experto crede*, you will generally find it better to change the movement at the cadences and half cadences.

In rectilineal movement, four bars forward and four bars rotary is a convenient order. Next time it might be four bars

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backward and four bars round ; then, say, four bars diagonally repeated *ad lib.*, two from and two towards the centre of the room.

If, however, you would dance the diagonal movement last described, with semi-rotary movements, it will require eight bars to each figure. But remember that this sequence is liable to interruption at any juncture, and should never be persisted in to the inconvenience of other dancers.

A very beautiful and artistic figure may be formed by waltzing side by side, each partner looking in the same direction and doing the step, as it were, sideways. In this you must be very careful not to break the true dactylic waltz rhythm, or the result will be hopeless failure. The toes must be *turned well out*, or the effort will appear grotesque rather than grace-

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ful. Only *very* expert waltzers should attempt this variation. When really well done, it is, perhaps, the most artistic of any.

As a matter of fact, a *perfect* waltzer can acquire any conceivable form of "Boston" in a few minutes—provided, of course, that it is arranged in conformity with the rules of dancing. But let me assure you that a *really* perfect waltzer is *rara avis in terris*.

It often astonishes me how some mediocre dancers, men especially, manage to acquire a spurious reputation for being good waltzers. I can only suppose that since no one can look over his own head, having no experience of anything better, they begin to imagine their own waltzing to be good. Then, having deluded themselves, they eventually succeed in impressing the fiction upon their partners, who are

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content to take them at their own valuation.

Herbert Spencer in his *Study of Sociology* tells us how “often mere assertion, with emphasis and signs of confidence on the part of the utterer, will produce a fixed conviction where there is no evidence, and even in spite of adverse evidence.”

It can only be on this principle that these waltzers' reputation is attained. I have watched many men, and danced with many girls whose waltzing I have been previously assured is “perfect”; yet, according to my standard of perfection, they have proved the merest tyros, who have not even acquired the *correct feeling* of the waltz—the reciprocal feeling about which there can be no possible mistake when once it is acquired.

As I have already pointed out, there is no set order of dancing the figures of

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the "Boston," though some teachers, for obvious reasons, may try to convince you that there is. Of course partners who dance frequently together may arrange between themselves a special "Boston," and delight to show off the offspring of their fancy to admiring spectators, but that kind of thing is of no general service.

If you dance at all, you want to be able to dance with anyone to whom you may be introduced, and this you can only do satisfactorily by learning and obeying the rules of art.

The skilled male dancer knows how to indicate to his partner by the muscular action of his right arm whatever direction he wishes her to take, and whatever kind of movement he wishes her to do. Assuming that she is a good waltzer there should be no difficulty about this. The reverse is indicated by a change from flexor to

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extensor action, the triceps and deltoids being vigorously brought into play, and so on.

But of course in a hand-book like this, I cannot enter at length into anatomical details. If I were teaching you personally, I would make the whole thing so clear that you would see at once what was required, and wonder why you had experienced so much difficulty.

Do not accuse me of having failed to describe sufficient "Bostons," because from the instructions given it is easy to *make up* any number.

A lady professor from Boston, Mass., tells me she discovered that the teachers in New York arranged their own "Bostons." I wonder if anyone has made a similar discovery nearer home?

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DYNAMICS OF THE "BOSTON"

THERE are many facts unknown to, or disregarded by the generality of dancers, and seldom explained or even considered by teachers, which if once grasped would greatly facilitate the movements of even the most experienced waltzers.

I said just now that the change from the rectilinear to the rotary movement, without hiatus or break of rhythm, presents a difficulty which many dancers find it hard and some impossible to overcome. This is partly owing to the resumption of centrifugal action, which of course is absent when the course is rectilinear or angular.

But the difficulty experienced in changing satisfactorily from the rotary waltz to

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the forward movement is still greater because the correct rhythm is at this juncture so easily broken.

And for this reason :

Although the figure described in rotation is elliptical rather than circular—the centre being of course a shifting centre, alternately nearer to one and the other partner—we may take it approximately that the diameter of the figure described would be something like a third of the circumference.

Now it follows that directly the partners begin to waltz in a straight line, taking six steps to two bars of the music, they travel during those two bars only about a third of the distance that they travelled during the two preceding bars while they were turning; *yet their steps must occupy the same duration of time.*

Consequently, in order not to break the rhythm they must be longer in taking

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these steps, moving *apparently at a much slower rate*.

Herein we have a solution to the whole question of dancing "out of time," or against the rhythm of the music.

Some dancers of the so-called "Boston" do this, as already hinted, simply because *they can't help it*, never having been taught to waltz properly; but others who do the long, gliding, graceful movement so much admired, have either been taught or have spontaneously acquired the true feeling and rhythmic action of the genuine waltz.

Again a waltzer or "Bostoner"—I like to consider the terms as synonymous—should remember that he or she can only *continue to slide* either foot so long as the centre of gravity remains over the other or stationary foot.

Thus, considering that the rhythm of the *movement*, though not necessarily of the

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music, is *always dactylic*, it follows that the transfer of balance does not take place till the *second* interval of the bar.

This being so, and seeing that we are *more readily conscious of the change of balance than of the initial slide*, it follows that when the dancers are *really* in *perfect* time with the music, they are always *apparently* half a bar behind.

And when they are doing what is not very aptly called the "half-time," or counting *two bars as one*, they are apparently a whole bar behind, the said bar being occupied with the long graceful slide, while the balance is sustained by the supporting, non-moving foot.

I am assuming throughout this brochure that you have some acquaintance with the rules of dancing, and are more or less proficient in ordinary waltzing, as explained

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fully in my works, *Dancing as It Should Be*,¹ or *Dancing*, in Bell's "All England" series. If this is so, you ought to be aware that much of that grace and ease of movement which distinguishes *really* good waltzers depends upon the freedom with which the *os femoris* rotates in the cotyloid cavity of the hip bone. This freedom of action can only be attained by the practice of what are technically known as *battements*.

Even without this practice, your waltzing may, it is true, pass muster in the ball-room, but it will not be really *perfect*.

All the same, you are likely to acquire a better and easier style of waltzing in a single lesson from a teacher who understands the true anatomical and scientific principles of waltzing, than you will from

¹ George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.

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dozens of lessons if taken from ordinary dance teachers who show you only the *steps*.

I cannot impress upon you too strongly that the steps of the waltz itself, and consequently all variations to which the general term "Boston" has been applied, must always be danced in *dactyls*. There are, I know, some teachers who will tell you to take three even steps to a bar, thus making the rhythm like the *molossus* of Greek music. That, of course, shows their ignorance of the true nature of the waltz, and if you follow their instructions, your waltzing will always appear like the waltzing of a beginner.

You are not likely to dwell too long upon the first step at any time, but in rectilinear movement you must appear to dwell on it longer than ever for reasons already explained.

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Do not bend your knees in waltzing, whether the movement be rotary or rectilinear. Nothing looks more undignified, as you may see by the first illustration of the "Boston" which appeared in *Punch*. A slight, but almost imperceptible flexion of the limb is of course required at a certain juncture, as already explained, but anything in the nature of a "dip" should be avoided by dancers who do not wish to look ridiculous. A lady teacher writing from Boston, Mass., tells me that "because Russ B. Walker once, many years ago, lived in this city, and taught the 'Boston Dip,' now teachers here are teaching the 'Dip Boston,' and there are," she says, "even more possibilities for vulgar ungraceful movements in this form than in any other."

As a matter of fact, to bend the knees

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forward, without turning the *femur* outward in its socket, is a practice contrary to the rules of dancing; moreover, it is a practice as indicative of weakness in a man as it is in a horse.

The real exhilarating physical pleasure of the waltz, apart from æsthetic considerations, is produced largely by centrifugal action, which sends a slight excess of blood to the brain. If the girl draws to the right and the man *gives* to the right instead of *resisting* by muscular contraction, as he should, he runs a risk of falling in that direction, and also defeats his purpose by destroying the beneficial effects of the centrifugal force.

In *perfect* automatic waltzing a man brings his partner round mainly by the adjustment of his centre of gravity, thus *utilising his weight* to accomplish his

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purpose without undue muscular exertion. In ordinary *imperfect* waltzing he drags or pushes her round solely by muscular effort.

Which style, think you, is the better?

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SELF-EXPRESSION

IT has been urged by apologists for a certain kind of dancing that has obtruded itself conspicuously in the modern ball-room since the restraining influence of the chaperon has been relaxed or removed, that "it affords scope for self-expression."

It may; but let us see of what kind.

Dancing in its highest form, as defined by the present writer, "is the art of expressing gracefully and intelligibly by movement and gesture, every emotion and sentiment of which the mind is capable, and every incident possible to human life."¹

That, of course, applies to dramatic

¹ *Dancing in all Ages*, p. 6.

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dancing of a very high order, like the famous pantomimic dancing of the Ancient Romans; but I venture to think that even social dancing, apart from the question of amusement, may, and indeed should express some distinct idea.

For instance, the minuet, queen of the old-time ball-room, was not, as it is often misrepresented on the modern stage, a senseless farrago of bowing, curtsying and giving hands. It was a dignified, but not affected dance, in which the dancers for the most part moved *quite separately*, executing, in passing and re-passing each other, a figure formed like the last letter of the alphabet.

Such, briefly, was the *real* minuet; but simple as it may appear, the dance required considerable technical skill, and much grace of pose and movement for its successful performance. The sex ele-

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ment entered into the minuet *only in its noblest form*. Remember that. It was a dance self-expressive in the highest degree, its true esoteric significance being chivalrous devotion of the brave and strong for the beautiful and tender.

But as Edmund Burke long ago observed: "The age of chivalry is gone."

Still, let us take the queen of the modern ball-room, the beautiful Viennese Waltz, adding thereto, if you please, the best, but the *best only* of its "Boston" variations.

What can the dance be said to typify?

Why this: If not courtesy, respect, and chivalrous devotion *in excelsis*, like the old-time minuet, it may at least express watchful, tender care, and manly protection.

The male waltzer who knows his art will guide a partner through the intricacies

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of a crowded ball-room even as he would guide her safely through the tortuous path of life. And he is mindful that she receives no hurt. If collisions seem inevitable through the fault of others, he will shield her with his person and himself receive the impact. The lady for the time being has placed herself under his protection, as it were, and he will not betray her confidence. He knows when to urge her onward, when to restrain her footsteps, when to turn her aside from even a faintly expressed purpose that he deems fraught with danger. And in waltzing, as in matrimony, we see the disastrous consequences which sometimes follow when each attempts to take the lead.

But there, we need not push the analogy further.

It has been already stated that the

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significance of dancing (except in cases of horror and fright, with which we are not here concerned) should always be expressed *gracefully*. And, as all people given to reflection are aware, perceptions of that somewhat elusive quality known as gracefulness, largely depend on our ideas of congruity or fitness.

Now, as an example of this, let us take the domestic cat, which, it must be conceded, is one of the most graceful of animals. The exceptional sinuosity of his vertebral column allows him perfect freedom of movement. Yes, the cat is unquestionably graceful. But when men creep about in the ball-room “with a peculiar cat-like tread”—as taught by certain exponents of the “one step”—and when they incidentally illustrate other feline peculiarities, however much they may bend and squirm in all directions, after

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the manner of their model, their dancing is neither graceful nor pleasing, because we instinctively feel that the style of the tom-cat is altogether incongruous in a ball-room.

Yet it might be argued that these dancers express themselves.

Well, perhaps. They know their own proclivities best.

Again, as I pointed out in the *Daily Telegraph*, a style of dancing which might consistently be tolerated and even admired among negroes and semi-barbaric races, may easily become vulgar and disgusting when exhibited in an English ball-room. Yet it might also be conceded that the men who introduce exotic and unseemly antics, and the girls who encourage them to do so, are only practising the art of "self-expression."

We will hope, however, that such is

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not the case. It is better to think that these things are done rather from ignorance of their true origin, than from deliberate intention to degrade the dance.

But teachers of dancing do know, or ought to know their origin and purport.

If they understand the symbolism of their art, they should be ashamed to impart such dances even in modified form.

If they don't understand it, they are not qualified to be teachers.

No self-respecting teacher ought to impart or permit any pronounced hip movement in social dancing, *nor ought such a thing to be tolerated in any British ball-room.*

The art of Dancing has passed through strange vicissitudes.

In ancient times its leaders were the Olympian gods.

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In later days its leaders were kings and princes.

But in recent years it has been led by the coster, the cowboy, and the nigger!

Facilis descensus Averno.

Where is the modern Hercules who will divert the purifying stream of genuine art to cleanse the Augean ball-room from its accumulated load of rubbish?

In conclusion let me assure my brother and sister teachers of the higher class that not one word in this little book is intended as a serious reflection against them. Some, through the exigencies of business competition, may have yielded to temptation, and thoughtlessly promulgated what in their inmost conscience they know to be unworthy the traditions of their art. But they can mend their ways. Only let each of us exert his or her influence in the

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right direction, and we may achieve wonders. Individuals, however earnest, can do but little. We should one and all combine in friendly spirit to elevate the practice of social dancing in this country, and purge it from all that is *unmanly*, *unmaidenly*, *unworthy of British traditions*.

THE END

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

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