

## **The country dance book ... by Cecil J. Sharp.**

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Sharp

Country Dance Book

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THE  
COUNTRY DANCE BOOK

PART V

CONTAINING  
THE RUNNING SET

COLLECTED IN KENTUCKY, U. S. A.  
AND DESCRIBED

BY  
CECIL J. SHARP  
AND  
MAUD KARPELES

LONDON: NOVELLO AND COMPANY, LTD.

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TO  
THE PINE MOUNTAIN  
SETTLEMENT SCHOOL

**1352526**



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## INTRODUCTION

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In the course of our travels in the Southern Appalachian Mountains in search of traditional songs and ballads, we had often heard of a dance, called the Running Set, but, as our informants had invariably led us to believe that it was a rough, uncouth dance, remarkable only as an exhibition of agility and physical endurance, we had made no special effort to see it. When at last we did see it performed at one of the social gatherings at the Pine Mountain Settlement School it made a profound impression upon us. We realized at once that we had stumbled upon a most interesting form of the English Country-dance which, so far as we knew, had not been hitherto recorded, and a dance, moreover, of great æsthetic value. On that occasion, the dance was sprung unexpectedly upon us by Miss Ethel de Long, and, being quite unprepared, we were unable to make any attempt to note it.

Shortly afterwards we again saw the Running Set at Hindman (Knott Co., Ky.) at an evening party especially arranged in our honour by Mr. Burnham Combs. On that occasion, however, the executants, being unaccustomed to dance together, differed so widely in their individual movements that although we were able to add very considerably to our knowledge we could do no more than make a few notes of a general character.

A few weeks later we saw the dance on two different occasions at Hyden (Leslie Co., Ky.). The first of these was organized for our benefit by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Asher and was held at Mr. Westcott's house under the most favourable conditions. The executants were picked dancers, there were no onlookers to disturb us, and we were

able to note the dance with all its intricacies at our leisure, and afterwards to clear up doubtful technical points by reference to Mr. Lewis.

The second time we saw the Running Set at Hyden was at a "frolic," the sequel to a "bean-stringing," given by Mr. Lee Morgan. The guests assembled by twos and threes in the afternoon from four o'clock onwards and, on arrival, were set to work to string the beans which lay in heaps upon the floor of every room. This preliminary task occupied some hours, and it was nine o'clock before preparations for the dance were made and the "frolic" proper began. One of us took part in the first Set that was "run" that evening—the dancing continued well into the small hours—and gained thereby a practical and first-hand acquaintance with the dance which we have since found invaluable.

In the following month Mr. Sewell Williams explained to us the way in which the Running Set was danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.), and from him we gathered some additional figures as well as several variants of those that we had already seen and noted (see Appendix, A and B).

The version of the dance described in the following pages is that which we noted at Hyden, although in our general instructions, concerning style, etc., we have drawn very largely upon what we observed at Pine Mountain, where the dance was executed more perfectly and with greater finish than elsewhere.

The only kind of dancing other than the Running Set that we have as yet seen in the mountains is a species of step- or clog-dance, locally known as the hoe-down. We happen to know, however, that many forms of the Country-dance—*e. g.*, Square-eights and Longways dances—still survive in the Appalachians and other parts of America, and these we hope eventually to investigate and, perhaps, to publish in a second edition of this volume.

Apart from its innate beauty and its many artistic

qualities, the Running Set is especially interesting in that it represents one particular phase in the development of the Country-dance of which, hitherto, nothing has been known. It is, in a sense, a new discovery. A few words concerning the history of the Country-dance and of our sources of information regarding it will make this clear.

The English Country-dance is the lineal descendant of the May-day Round, a pagan quasi-religious ceremonial of which the May-pole dance is, perhaps, the most typical example. Except for a few stray references to the Country-dance in early literature nothing is known of its history prior to 1650, in which year the first book on the subject, Playford's *English Dancing Master*, was published. This modest little book, containing the description of 104 dances, won so great a popularity that, under the modified title of *The Dancing Master*, it ran through eighteen editions, the last of which, dated 1728, contained upwards of seven hundred dances. A critical examination of these successive editions shows that the dance degenerated very rapidly during the period covered by them, and the large number of dance-manuals subsequently issued by Walsh, Thompson, Waylett, and others furthermore proves that this decline continued during the two following centuries until, at the beginning of the present century, the only dances that remained were those—chiefly of the Longways variety—that were still being danced by the peasantry in remote country districts of England and Scotland.

Now the Running Set in its structure (with one partial exception to which reference will presently be made) and in many other important particulars differs materially from any other known form of the Country-dance. It is built on much larger lines than any other of which we have cognizance. The Promenade movements, which bind the figures together and give continuity to the dance, occur nowhere else; while The Wild Goose-chase, The California Show Basket, and Wind up the Ball Yarn are figures which hitherto have only been found in children's singing-

games. Moreover, the forceful, emotional character of the dance; the absence from it of all the courtesy movements, *i. e.*, the Set, the Side, the Honour, and the Arms; the speed with which the evolutions are executed, and the unconventional way in which the dancers comport themselves—all tend sharply to differentiate the Running Set from the Playford dances and all other known forms of the English Country-dance.

From these considerations we are led to infer that the Running Set represents a stage in the development of the Country-dance earlier than that of the dances in *The English Dancing Master*—at any rate in the form in which they are there recorded.

The fact, for instance, that the movements of courtesy, which occur in almost every one of the Playford dances, are conspicuously absent from the Running Set is of itself the strongest testimony in favour of the priority of the latter. For it is extremely unlikely that these movements, which were obviously due to the influence of the drawing-room and reflect the formal manners and conventional habits of the upper ranks of an organized society, could have found their way into the dance many years before 1650. Indeed, it might be maintained, that it was the intrusion of these and similar movements into the Country-dance which initiated and ultimately led to its decline.

The only dance in *The English Dancing Master* which, in its construction, bears any resemblance to the Running Set is Up Tails All (1st ed., 1650; *The Country Dance Book*, Part iii). This is a "Round for as many as will" and consists of an Introduction and three Parts. Each Part contains a fresh figure, which is led successively by each couple in turn, as in the Running Set; but there is no general movement, corresponding to the Promenade, between the repetitions of the figure or between the Parts. As Up Tails All is the only Round of its kind in *The Dancing Master* it is fair to infer that it represents a late and—in comparison with the Running Set—a corrupt example of an

earlier and almost extinct type, rather than the forerunner of a fresh development.

The three figures, hitherto known only in children's singing games, of which mention has already been made, are one and all derived from ancient pagan ceremonials.

The California Show Basket is an adaptation to the dance of a children's singing-game, Draw a pail of water, which is a dramatic representation of several incidents connected with the ceremony of well-worship. The only one of these ritual acts which survives in the dance-figure is the passing first of the women under the arms of the men and then of the men under the arms of the women, in imitation of the creeping of the devotee under the sacred bush, which was frequently found by the side of the holy well (see Alice B. Gomme's *Traditional Games of England, etc.*, i, p. 100; ii, p. 503).

Wind up the Ball Yarn is a variant of one of the "winding up games" such as The Eller Tree, or Wind up the Bush Faggot. Games of this type originated in the custom of encircling a tree or other sacred object as an act of worship, the connection of the worshippers, by means of linked hands, with the central object, being intended to communicate life and action to it (*Traditional Games of England, etc.* i, p. 119; ii, pp. 384, 510).

The Wild Goose-chase is one of the many serpentine movements—e. g., the Hey in its many forms—which are so often found in dances of religious or magical significance (cf. the movement in Morris Off in *The Morris Book*, 1st ed.). Lady Gomme (*Traditional Games of England, etc.*, ii, p. 511) cites an Irish custom recorded by Lady Wilde in which young men and maidens with clasped hands described curves very similar to those in the dance figure.

Wind up the Ball Yarn, it is interesting to record, has been appropriated and used very effectively by the Russians in one of their ballets.

The ring-movement around a central dancer in The Bird

in the Cage and Tucker is not unlike one of the figures in the Scottish Eightsome-Reel (itself a Nature dance) and is probably derived from some sacrificial ceremony. The dancer within the ring may be the victim about to be seized and sacrificed as in several of the Sword-dances (*cf.* The Grenoside Sword-dance) and in the Morris Dance, Brighton Camp (*The Morris Book*, iii, p. 55).

The fact that these indubitably ancient figures are incorporated as organic movements in the Running Set and (with the exception of Tucker and The Bird in the Cage) occur in no other recorded dance, still further strengthens the claim that the Kentucky dance belongs to a stage in the development of the Country-dance earlier than that of any dance known to us.

If this contention be conceded we have next to enquire how and at what period the Running Set found its way to America. Now the fact that the dance could not have reached America before 1650 (unless it came over with the Pilgrim Fathers in the *Mayflower*!) does not in reality conflict with our hypothesis, although at first sight it may seem to do so. For, bearing in mind the physical difficulties of communication between one part of the country and another in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is extremely improbable that the successive developments of the Country-dance proceeded uniformly at one and the same time in every part of England.

Now *The English Dancing Master* was published in London and addressed primarily, if not exclusively, to Londoners, or at most to those resident in the Southern and Midland counties of England. In what form, however, the Country-dance existed at that period in other parts of England, we have no means of knowing, although, as the civilization in the North has always lagged behind that of the South, we may assume that it was of a less advanced type. It may be, therefore,—indeed, it is extremely probable—that dances of the same species as the Running Set were, in the middle of the seventeenth

century and for many years later—*i. e.*, for some while after they had been discarded or superseded in the South—still being danced in the Northern counties of England and the Scottish Lowlands, the very districts from which the forefathers of the present Southern Appalachians originally emigrated.

Although, then, we may be unable to ascribe to the Running Set a definite date, we may with some assurance claim:—that it is the sole survival of a type of Country-dance which, in order of development, preceded the Playford dance; that it flourished in other parts of England and Scotland a long while after it had fallen into desuetude in the South; and that some time in the eighteenth century it was brought by emigrants from the Border counties to America where it has since been traditionally preserved.

This explanation at any rate accords with, and follows logically from, the facts so far as they are at present known. Further investigations, however, in the Southern Highlands and in other parts of America may, perhaps, lead to the discovery of more examples of this particular type of Country-dance, and it may then become necessary to modify the theory above enunciated.

It is interesting to note that the dancers who were “men” and “women” in Playford’s book have become “ladies” and “gentlemen” in the Running Set (see Appendix C) which, by the way, is also the title given to them in the eighteenth-century dance-books. The “Promenade,” too, is, I take it, also an eighteenth-century expression. This adoption of an eighteenth-century nomenclature in the description of a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century dance is at first sight a little disconcerting, but it really proves no more than that the jargon of the dance travelled more quickly to the North of England than the dance movements themselves, a fact for which we have every reason to be thankful.

It is not easy to give a satisfactory derivation of Do-Si, or Do-si-do, the name by which one of the most charac-



teristic movements of the Running Set is universally known in the mountains. The obvious explanation is that it is a corruption of the French dos-à-dos, but, if this be so, it is, of course, a misnomer because the Do-si-do of the Running Set is quite a different evolution from that which is ordinarily understood by the Back-to-back. The French derivation may, nevertheless, be the correct one, for it is quite in accordance with the habit of the mountaineer to call things by their wrong names, *e. g.*, Laurel for Rhododendron; Ivy for Laurel; Vine for Ivy; Biscuit for Scone, etc.

When the last book of English folk-dances was published—now some years ago—it looked as if the available material were at last exhausted, and that our knowledge of existing traditional dances had practically reached its limit. That further and most valuable material actually existed at that time in a country several thousand miles away from England, patiently awaiting the call of the collector, certainly did not occur to me, nor, I am sure, to any of my friends or collaborators. And even when, later on, I had penetrated into the Southern Appalachians and found the old Puritan dislike, fear, and distrust of dancing expressed in almost every log-cabin I entered, the possibility seemed more remote than ever. My surprise, then, can be imagined when, without warning, the Running Set was presented to me, under conditions, too, which immensely heightened its effect. It was danced, one evening after dark, on the porch of one of the largest houses of the Pine Mountain School, with only one dim lantern to light up the scene. But the moon streamed fitfully in lighting up the mountain peaks in the background and, casting its mysterious light over the proceedings, seemed to exaggerate the wildness and the break-neck speed of the dancers as they whirled through the mazes of the dance. There was no music, only the stampings and clappings of the onlookers, but when one of the emotional crises of the dance was reached—and this happened several times during

the performance—the air seemed literally to pulsate with the rhythm of the “patters” and the tramp of the dancers’ feet, while, over and above it all, penetrating through the din, floated the even, falsetto tones of the Caller, calmly and unexcitedly reciting his directions.

The scene was one which I shall not readily forget and, in the impression which it made upon me, it recalled to my mind the occasion when I first saw the Handsworth Sword-dance, a dance, with which in a curious, subtle sort of way, the Running Set has a close affinity.

Whether the dancers and others to whom this book is addressed will agree with the high estimate of the æsthetic qualities of the Running Set that I have myself formed remains to be seen, but I shall be very surprised if within a few months of its publication, the members of the English Folk Dance Society here and in England are not dancing it merrily in every one of the Society’s Branches and Centres.

The dance has already been publicly performed in New York and Boston and on both occasions won the approbation, certainly of the performers and, I think, also of the spectators. A new dance, especially one so characteristic as the Running Set and so unlike any other folk-dance, was sure to strike different people in different ways. Of the many criticisms that have been expressed in my hearing, two stand out over and above the rest and seem worthy of record. The first of these was the comment of an on-looker, a school-teacher:—“Yes, it is a beautiful dance, but terribly difficult. And what’s the use of it anyway? You couldn’t teach it!” The other was a remark breathlessly made by one of the executants at the conclusion of a performance:—“That’s what I call a lovely dance! You needn’t bother yourself about style, or anything. You have only to forget everything and let yourself go!”

C. J. S.

HOTEL ALGONQUIN,  
NEW YORK,  
Christmas, 1917.

## THE STEPS

The normal step used in the Running Set is a swift, short, and exceedingly smooth Country-dance running-step, the spring from foot to foot, though never omitted, being so slight as to be scarcely noticeable. The step, indeed, is so smooth that the dancers, as we saw them, seemed at times to be moving, or gliding, on wheels. When the tempo of the dance is at its fastest, the step becomes almost indistinguishable from that of the Rapper Sword-dance.

There are no skipping or slipping-steps although, especially in the Promenades, the dancers often improvise step-variations of their own, *e. g.* kick up their heels, drag their feet lazily on the floor, or do a hoe-down step or two, *i. e.*, a heel-and-toe, shuffle, or clog-dance step.

## THE MUSIC

At Hyden the accompanying music was played on the fiddle; at Hindman on the fiddle and banjo. At Pine Mountain there was no music at all.

Throughout the dance the onlookers and the performers also, when not actually dancing, should enforce the rhythm of the music by "patting," *i.e.*, alternately stamping and clapping. "Patting" is done in various ways, but the usual method is to stamp with the right foot on the strong accent and clap the hands on the weak one, the executant throwing his head back, inclining his body to the left and emphasizing the movements of feet and hands so that the rhythm may be seen as well as heard. In  $\frac{6}{8}$  time the hands are usually clapped on the third and sixth quavers, but the "patter" will often strike his thighs, right hand on right thigh on the second and fifth quavers, and left hand on left thigh on the third and sixth, stamping, of course, on the first and fourth quavers.

As an accompaniment to the dance, the "patting" is almost as effective as the music; so effective, indeed, that at Pine Mountain, where the dancers were wholly dependent upon it, the absence of instrumental music was scarcely felt.

The fiddler and the banjo-player each have an assistant, a "beater," who, sitting at right-angles to the instrumentalist, "beats" the strings between the bridge and the player's left hand with two pencil-like, wooden sticks. These sticks being flexible, strike all the strings simultaneously and this produces a rhythmical, drone effect which if the "beater" is deft in his movements and skilfully varies his rhythms, adds depth to the tune and gives material aid to the dancers.

The tunes should be jig-tunes, not Country-dance airs, which are too suave and lack the insistent beat characteristic of the Running Set. The tunes we heard at Hindman, Hyden, and elsewhere were not very good ones, far inferior, for instance, to those of the English peasant-fiddlers; though the players in Kentucky generally managed, notwithstanding the melodic poverty of the tunes, to play them with such force and abandonment that they made excellent accompaniment to the dance.

It seems possible to find other airs which, while equally satisfying the requirements of the dance, shall be superior to the Kentucky tunes in melodic interest. An attempt in this direction has been made in the collection of airs (*Country Dance Tunes*, Set 9) published in connection with this volume.

As in many of the Sword-dances, the music controls the steps only and not the evolutions which may begin, or end, at any part of a musical phrase. It is desirable, however, that the dance-phrases should, whenever possible, be brought into coincidence with those of the music and, with the exercise of a little ingenuity on the part of the dancers, this can often be done, e.g., in the two eight-step movements in the Grand Promenade. Some of the Figures, such as "The California Show Basket," or "Going down Town," can be danced throughout phrase by phrase with the music as accurately as in a Country-dance.

In the Running Set the instrumentalist is just an accompanist and no more. The dancers set the tempo, varying it from moment to moment at their pleasure, and these variations it is the duty of the player to follow as though he were accompanying a song.

The tunes given in the music volume may be played in any order that the accompanist pleases, and changed as often as he may elect.

## THE CALLER

It is customary for one of the company, not necessarily one of the dancers, to "call" the dance as it proceeds, that is, to name the figures and describe them, movement by movement, and thus to do for the dancers what the prompter at the opera does for the singers. Normally, the "caller" recites certain prescribed verbal phrases, a mixture of prose and doggerel rhyme that in the course of time has become stereotyped (see Appendix C, p. 48). He does not always, however, restrict himself exclusively to the use of these, but will sometimes improvise remarks of his own, after the manner of the chantey-man, and crack jokes, chaff the dancers, and so forth. Mr. Taylor, who "called" the dance at Pine Mountain and was himself the leader of the dance, gave out his directions in a high, falsetto monotone which was very effective. Whether or not this is the traditional method of "calling" we have not been able to discover.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

In its general effect, in the continuous movement, the periodic recurrence of circular evolutions, the short, quick step of the dancers, and, above all, in its tense, restrained emotion, the Running Set resembles the Sword-dance rather than the Country-dance with which, nevertheless, for technical and historical considerations, it must logically be classified.

The outstanding characteristic of the Running Set is the swift, lightning speed with which the figures are negotiated. Indeed, at first sight it may appear as though the dancers were wholly absorbed in the execution of the figures in the shortest possible time, regardless of manner or style. The half-turns in the Promenade, for instance, are done most perfunctorily, and never with straight arms as in the Country-dance; sometimes, indeed, the hands of the dancers will scarcely touch one another, or the man will place his hands on the shoulders or upper arms of his partner. But this apparent negation of style is quite illusory, as the critical observer will discern, and as the dancer will soon find out for himself. For, paradoxical as it may seem, it is precisely in its style—or lack of style—in the unconventional way in which the figures and evolutions are executed, that the character and, it may be added, the extraordinary charm of this unique dance lie.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that despite the break-neck speed and the rush of it, the dance must in its every movement be performed smoothly, quietly, almost nonchalantly; in the hands of unskilled dancers it may easily degenerate into a disorderly romp.

The technical equipment needed by the dancer in

the Running Set is not to be acquired without trouble and practice. He must have a highly developed sense of direction—a step at a wrong angle may, as in the Sword-dance, throw a whole movement out of gear; great agility, combined with consummate neatness, a keen intelligence, and an instinct for thinking ahead, that is, realizing what is coming and preparing for it.

The body should be held erect, motionless, with every limb loose and relaxed, and inclined in the direction of motion, as in skating. The arms, when not actively engaged, should hang loosely by the sides, swinging naturally this way or that in rhythm with the motion of the body. This reposeful carriage, together with the swift, gliding movement already described, gave to the dancers, as we saw them at Pine Mountain, an impersonal, detached appearance, as though they were moving in a dream or under hypnotic influence.

Finally, it must never for one moment be forgotten that the Running Set is, first and last, a team-dance, and that individual proficiency will not of itself suffice without close co-operation on the part of the dancers in the co-ordination and timing of their movements.

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## TECHNICAL TERMS AND SYMBOLS

In the following description of movements, figures, etc., it will be necessary to make use of certain technical terms and symbols. These will now be defined.

○ = man.

□ = woman.

The area enclosed by the dancers is known as the *Set*, or the *General Set*.

In movements in which two couples only are engaged, the terms *contrary man* and *contrary woman* are used to denote the man or woman other than the partner.



In ring-formation, *contrary* or *contrary partner* is the woman on the left of the man, or the man on the right of the woman.

To *cross hands* the man takes the right and left hands of the woman with, respectively, his right and left hands, the right hands being above the left.

To *pass by the right* is to pass right shoulder to right shoulder; *by the left*, left shoulder to left shoulder.

When two dancers meet and pass each other they should always, unless otherwise directed, pass by the right.

To make a quarter-turn is to turn through  $90^{\circ}$ .

To make a half-turn is to turn through  $180^{\circ}$ .

To make a three-quarter turn is to turn through  $270^{\circ}$ .

To make a whole-turn is to make a complete revolution.

The terms *clockwise* and *counter-clockwise* are self-explanatory and refer to circular movements.

To *cast off* is to turn outward and dance outside the Set, or outside the area enclosed for the moment by the dancers.

To *cast back* is to make a half-turn outward and move in the opposite direction.

To *lead* or *move* is to dance forwards.

To *fall back* is to dance backwards.

The *double* is three steps, forward or backward, followed by "feet-together."

To *arm with the right*, or *arm-right*, two dancers link right arms and swing once round, clockwise.

To *arm with the left*, or *arm-left*, two dancers link left arms and swing once round, counter-clockwise.

To *turn*, two dancers face, join both hands, and swing once round, clockwise.

*Hands-three, hands-four, etc.* Three or more dancers, as directed, join hands, dance round in a ring, clockwise, and make one complete circuit.

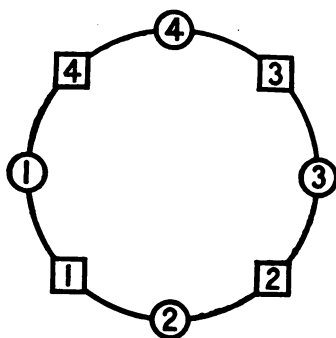
*Right-hands-across, or left-hands-across.* Two couples face. The two men and the two women, joining right or left hands, as directed, dance round, clockwise, holding

their hands close together, chin-high, and facing in the direction of motion.

### CONSTRUCTION

The Running Set is most effective when the number of dancers is limited to four couples, although, if certain Figures be omitted, that number may be exceeded.

The performers stand in a circle, thus:—



The construction of the dance is very similar to that of the Rapper Sword-dance. It consists of an Introduction, followed by an indefinite number of Parts, each of which contains its own distinctive Figure, preceded by the Grand Promenade, a circular movement in which all the dancers take part. Except in two cases (Figs. 10 and 13) the special Figure which distinguishes each Part is executed four times, led successively by each of the four couples, the Little Promenade (a shortened form of the Grand Promenade) being interposed before each repetition.

The division of the dance into Parts and Figures is quite arbitrary and is done merely for the sake of convenience and clearness. No pause, however, is made

between the Parts, nor between the successive repetitions of the Figures, the dance being one continuous movement from beginning to end.

### GENERAL FIGURES

Before entering upon a technical description of the several movements and Figures in their proper order, it will be as well, perhaps, first to explain certain evolutions which continually recur in the course of the dance. There are three of these:—the Grand Promenade, the Little Promenade, and the Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

#### THE GRAND PROMENADE

Men turn their partners half-way round (four steps), turn their contraries (*i.e.*, the women on their left) half-way round (four steps), rejoin their partners, cross hands (right over left) and all move round the circle eight steps counter-clockwise, men on the inside (*i.e.*, on the left of their partners).

*It will be found that in making the two half-turns each dancer describes a complete circle clockwise.*

Without releasing hands, all reverse their direction, the men making a half-turn clockwise, the women a half-turn counter-clockwise, and move round the circle eight steps clockwise, the men being on the inside (*i.e.*, on the right of their partners).

Men turn their partners half-way round (four steps), turn their contraries half-way round (four steps), rejoin their partners, cross hands and dance round the circle with them, counter-clockwise, to places.

#### THE LITTLE PROMENADE

Men turn their partners half-way round (four steps), turn their contraries half-way round (four steps), rejoin their partners, cross hands and move once round, the circle with them,

counter-clockwise, to places, men on the inside (*i.e.*, on the left of their partners).

#### DO-SI-DO-AND-PROMENADE-HOME

Two couples face. Men turn their partners half-way round with left hands, pass each other by the right (moving sideways, right shoulders forward, and back-to-back), turn their contraries half-way round with right hands and return to places, passing each other by the left (back-to-back, left shoulders forward). This movement, which is known as the Do-si-do, or the Do-si, is then repeated.

At the conclusion of the repetition, men turn their partners once round with left hands, cross hands with them and dance round a small circle, counter-clockwise, each couple breaking off and proceeding to its original station.

*The half-turns in the Do-si-do must be executed at great speed and with bent arms, each performer describing as small a circle as possible. In crossing over between the turns the men should arch their backs and pass as closely to each other as they can.*

# THE DANCE

## THE INTRODUCTION

All take hands and dance round twelve steps, clockwise, each man raising his right hand (and with it his partner's left hand) above his head, and inclining his body slightly to his left. Releasing hands, men turn their partners half-way round, turn their contraries half-way round, rejoin their partners, cross hands and dance round with them counter-clockwise to places.

First and third couples hands-four.

First and third couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

Second and fourth couples hands-four.

Second and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

### FIGURE 1

#### HANDS-FOUR

First and second couples hands-four.

First and third couples hands-four.

First and fourth couples hands-four.

First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

### FIGURE 2

#### HANDS-THREE

First man, moving toward the centre, turns his partner with the left hand.

First man goes hands-three with the second couple.  
First man turns his partner with the left hand.  
First man goes hands-three with the third couple;  
while first woman does the same with the second couple.  
First man turns his partner with the left hand.  
First man goes hands-three with the fourth couple;  
while first woman does the same with the third couple.  
First man turns his partner with the left hand.  
First and fourth couples hands-four.  
First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

## FIGURE 3

## SHOOT THE OWL

First man, moving toward the centre, turns his partner with the left hand.

First man goes hands-three with the second couple half-way round and, facing centre, "pops under" the arch made by the second couple, second man and second woman resuming their proper places.

First man turns his partner with the left hand.

First man goes hands-three with the third couple and "pops under" as before; while first woman does the same with the second couple.

First man turns his partner with the left hand.

First man goes hands-three with the fourth couple, "popping under" as before; while the first woman does the same with the third couple.

First man turns his partner with the left hand.

First and fourth couple hands-four.

First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

## FIGURE 4

## CHASE THE SQUIRREL

First man and first woman, joining inside hands, move (the man behind the woman) between second man and

second woman, turn to their left and pass, counter-clockwise, round the second woman; while the second woman moves forward four steps and falls back four steps to her place.

Breaking away from her partner, first woman passes between second man and second woman, and moves round a small circle, clockwise, the second man following her round to his place; while the first man executes a *pas seul*.

First man and first woman turn.

First man and first woman go hands-four with the second couple.

The first couple repeats all these movements with the third couple.

The first couple does the same with the fourth couple.

The first and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

#### FIGURE 5

#### THE WILD GOOSE-CHASE

First man, taking his partner's left hand in his right and leading her behind him, passes between second man and second woman, turns to his left and moves, counter-clockwise, round second woman.

First man, still leading his partner behind him, moves in front of, and a step or two beyond, second man, casts back, making a half-turn to his right, passes between second man and second woman, turns to his right, clockwise, round second man, and then goes hands-four with the second couple; while the second man, as the first couple passes by him, breaks away, moves clockwise round his partner to his place, timing his movement so that he shall reach his station just as the four-ring is being formed.

Releasing his left hand, first man breaks away from second woman and, followed by his partner and the second couple, passes between third man and third woman and

repeats the same movements with the third couple that he had previously done with the second (the third man doing as the second man did), concluding with hands-six with the third couple.

Releasing his left hand, first man breaks away from third woman and, followed by his partner, second and third couples, passes between fourth man and fourth woman and once again repeats the same movements, concluding with hands-eight with the fourth couple.

Upon the conclusion of the hands-eight, the first man, releasing his left hand, breaks away from the fourth woman, casts back, making a half-turn to his left, and, leading the other seven dancers behind him, moves round in a circle (back to centre), counter-clockwise to his place.

First man casts back, making a half-turn to his right, and leads the other dancers round in a circle (faces to centre), clockwise, to places.

*During the performance of this Figure each dancer must be careful to follow exactly in the track of the dancer in front.*

#### FIGURE 6

#### BOX THE GNAT

First man turns his partner half-way round with the right hand and once round with the left hand.

First man turns right and left in like manner with second woman; while his partner does the same with second man.

First man turns his partner half-way round with the right hand and once round with the left hand.

First man turns right and left in like manner with third woman; while his partner does the same with third man.

First man turns his partner half-way round with the right hand and once round with the left hand.



First man turns right and left in like manner with fourth woman; while his partner does the same with fourth man.

First and fourth couples hands-four.

First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

FIGURE 7

GOING DOWN TOWN

The first couple, facing the opposite (*i.e.*, the third) couple, moves forward four steps.

The first couple falls back four steps to places; while the third couple moves forward four steps.

The third couple falls back four steps to places; while the first couple moves forward and passes between third man and third woman.

First man casts off to his left behind the fourth couple to his place; while first woman casts off to her right behind the second couple to her place.

All the men turn their partners half-way round, turn their contraries half-way round and, staying with their contraries, cross hands and dance once round with them counter-clockwise.

The above movements are now repeated three times, first man and fourth woman facing third man and second woman in the first repetition; first man and third woman facing third man and first woman in the second; and first man and second woman facing third man and fourth woman in the third. The men are now in their own places.

FIGURE 8

BIRD IN THE CAGE

First man leads his partner forward toward second couple and goes hands-three with second couple round her.

First man, breaking with second woman, goes hands-five with second and third couples round his partner.

First man, breaking with third woman, goes hands-seven with second, third, and fourth couples round his partner, and then, immediately the ring is formed, changes places with his partner, stands in the centre facing his station and executes a *pas seul* while the others dance round him to places.

*The first woman should edge toward the centre as the successive rings are formed around her, so that when the seven-ring is made she shall be in the centre of the Set.*

## FIGURE 9

## TREAT 'EM ALL RIGHT

First man turns his partner once round with the left hand, and then turns second woman in like manner.

First man turns his partner with the left hand and then third woman in like manner.

First man turns his partner with the left hand and then fourth woman in like manner.

First man turns his partner with the left hand, then fourth woman with the left hand, third woman with the right hand, second woman with the left hand and, finally, his partner with the right hand.

## FIGURE 10

## RIGHTS AND LEFTS

Circular-hey,\* handing, once round, partners facing.

The circular-hey is then repeated, the dancers, instead of handing alternately with right and left, arming once round alternately with right and left arms.

\* See *The Country Dance Book*, Part IV., p. 22.

This latter evolution is known as The Lock Chain Swing.

## FIGURE 11

## THE CALIFORNIA SHOW BASKET\*

First and second couples hands-across once round clockwise, men joining both hands, and women joining both hands, the men's hands being above the women's.

The men, raising their hands over the heads of the women and lowering them to waist-level, enclose the women and all four go once round clockwise.

The women lift their hands over the heads of the men and rest them on the men's shoulders; while the men raise their hands to the level of the women's necks. In this position all move round once clockwise.

First man turns second woman into her place; while first woman turns second man into his place.

The first couple repeats these movements with the third couple.

The first couple repeats these movements with the fourth couple.

*It is suggested that the second circuit (i.e., when the men are enclosing the women) should be executed counter-clockwise.*

## FIGURE 12

## FIGURE EIGHT

The first couple join inside hands and move toward the second couple.

First woman, passing in front of her partner, moves counter-clockwise round second woman; while first man moves clockwise round second man.

First man turns his partner with the right hand.

\* Sometimes called The Old Shuck Basket.

Passing in front of his partner, first man moves counter-clockwise round second woman; while first woman moves clockwise round second man.

First man turns his partner with the left hand.

First and second couples hands-four.

The first couple repeats the same movements with the third couple.

The first couple repeats the same movement with the fourth couple.

First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

FIGURE 13

#### LADIES IN THE CENTRE

Men turn their partners three-quarters round and place them back-to-back in the centre of the Set.

The men dance once-and-a-quarter round the women, counter-clockwise, and then turn the women opposite to them, *i.e.*, the women standing on the left of their partners.

The men again dance once-and-a-quarter round the women, counter-clockwise, and then turn each the woman next on the left, cross hands, and dance once round with her counter-clockwise.

The men turn the women they have just danced with and place them back-to-back in the centre of the Set.

The men dance once-and-a-quarter round the women, counter-clockwise, and turn each the woman on the left of the one they have just turned into the centre.

The men dance once-and-a-quarter round the women, counter-clockwise, and then turn their partners, this turn initiating the Grand Promenade, which begins the following Part.

*This Figure is sometimes repeated, the women putting the men into the centre, etc.*

C

FIGURE 14

## WIND UP THE BALL YARN\*

All join inside hands except first man and fourth woman. Fourth man and fourth woman make an arch.

First man, followed by his partner, second and third couples, passes under the arch, turns to his right and moves round in a circle clockwise. As the third woman passes under the arch, the fourth man turns on his axis three-quarters round, clockwise, and places his right hand over his left shoulder. The fourth man is now said to be "locked."

Fourth man and third woman now make an arch under which the first man passes, followed by his partner, second couple, and third man, turning to his right as before. This locks the third woman.

This circular movement is repeated until the first woman is locked.

Fourth woman places her right hand over her left shoulder; while first man makes a whole turn clockwise; places his right hand over his left shoulder and clasps the fourth woman's right hand with his left.

All dance round, clockwise, to places.

*The path which the first man traces after passing under each arch should be as nearly as possible a circle.*

*The dancers, as they are locked, should move in toward the centre, so that when the first man links up with the fourth woman the eight dancers may be in a circle.*

## UNWIND THE BALL YARN

At the conclusion of the last repetition of the preceding Figure (led by fourth man), the dancers may, if they please, unwind themselves, as follows:—

\* Sometimes known as Killiecrankie or The Grapevine Twist, or Winding up the Maple Leaf.

Fourth man, releasing his left hand, raises his right arm, unwinds himself by making a whole turn clockwise, then passes under an arch made by fourth woman and first man, turns to his right, and moves round in a circle, clockwise, as in the preceding movement, unlocking fourth woman.

Fourth man, followed by his partner, passes under an arch made by first man and first woman, turns to his right as before and unlocks first man.

These movements are repeated until all the dancers are unlocked.

Hands-eight to places.

---

### TUCKER

At the conclusion of the Running Set it is customary to dance Tucker, a variant of the well-known children's singing game, The Jolly Miller, as follows:

A fifth man joins the dancers and stands in the centre of the Set. He is called Tucker.

Hands-eight once round.

Men turn their partners half-way round, their contraries half-way round, move forward, rejoin their partners, cross hands with them and dance round counter-clockwise. During the turning movements—*i.e.*, when the dancers are for the moment disengaged—Tucker endeavours to dispossess one of the men of his partner and capture her for himself. If he is successful, the man, whose partner has been stolen, takes his place in the centre and becomes Tucker in the next round.

While the dancers are circling round him, Tucker should dance a hoe-down, or perform any fancy steps that he pleases.

# NOTATION

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As already explained, the order in which the Figures are performed is determined by the Caller. In this Notation the Figures are presented in the order in which they happened to be danced at Hyden.

## INTRODUCTION (p. 26)

### PART I

Grand Promenade (p. 26).

Fig. 1, HANDS-FOUR (p. 26), led by first couple.

Little Promenade (p. 26).

Fig. 1, led by second couple.\*

Little Promenade.

Fig. 1, led by third couple.\*

Little Promenade.

Fig. 1, led by fourth couple.\*

### PART 2

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 2, HANDS-THREE (p. 26), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 2, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 2, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 2, led by fourth couple.

\* In this, and in all similar cases, it must be understood that the leading couple always begins the Figure by engaging the next couple on the right, that is, moving round counter-clockwise.

## PART 3

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 3, SHOOT THE OWL (p. 27), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 3, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 3, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 3, led by fourth couple.

## PART 4

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 4, CHASE THE SQUIRREL (p. 27), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 4, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 4, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 4, led by fourth couple.

## PART 5

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 5, THE WILD GOOSE-CHASE (p. 28), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 5, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 5, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 5, led by fourth couple.



## PART 6

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 6, **BOX THE GNAT** (p. 29), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 6, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 6, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 6, led by fourth couple.

## PART 7

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 7, **GOING DOWN TOWN** (p. 30), led by first couple.

Fig. 7, led by second couple.

Fig. 7, led by third couple.

Fig. 7, led by fourth couple.

*The construction of this Figure being somewhat irregular, the Little Promenade, which ordinarily separates the repetitions of the Figure, is incorporated in the Figure itself and does not, therefore, appear in the above Notation. The concluding movement of the last repetition of the Figure, led by fourth man, becomes the initial movement of the Grand Promenade which begins the next Part.*

## PART 8

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 8, **BIRD IN THE CAGE** (p. 30), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 8, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 8, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 8, led by fourth couple.

## PART 9

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 9, TREAT 'EM ALL RIGHT (p. 31), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 9, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 9, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 9, led by fourth couple.

## PART 10

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 10, RIGHTS AND LEFTS (p. 31).

## PART 11

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 11, THE CALIFORNIA SHOW BASKET (p. 32), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 11, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 11, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 11, led by fourth couple.

## PART 12

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 12, FIGURE EIGHT (p. 32), led by first couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 12, led by second couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 12, led by third couple.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 12, led by fourth couple.

## PART 13

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 13, LADIES IN THE CENTRE (p. 33).

## PART 14

Grand Promenade.

Fig. 14, WIND UP THE BALL YARN (p. 34), led by first man.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 14, led by second man.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 14, led by third man.

Little Promenade.

Fig. 14, led by fourth man.

UNWIND THE BALL YARN (p. 34).

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TUCKER (p. 35)

## APPENDIX A.

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### ADDITIONAL FIGURES

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#### FIGURE 15

#### THE WALTZ-SWING

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

First man, moving toward the centre, turns his partner with the left hand.

First man goes hands-three with the second couple.

First man turns his partner with the left hand.

First man goes hands-three with the third couple; while first woman does the same with the second couple.

The three-rings continue revolving, while the rings themselves move round each other, each ring making one complete circuit clockwise.

First man turns his partner with the left hand.

First man goes hands-three with the fourth couple; while first woman goes hands-three with the third couple.

The three-rings continue to revolve while the rings themselves move round each other, clockwise, each ring making one complete circuit.

First and fourth couples hands-four.

First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

## FIGURE 16

## CUTTING OFF THREE, TWO, AND ONE

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

The first couple moves forward four steps toward the third couple and falls back four steps to places.

First man and first woman again move forward, pass between third man and third woman ("cutting off three") and cast off to places, the man to his left behind the fourth couple, the woman to her right behind the second couple.

All partners turn.

The first couple moves forward and back toward the third couple as before.

First man passes between third woman and fourth man; while first woman passes between second woman and third man ("cutting off two"); whereupon, both cast off to places, the first man to his left, the first woman to her right.

All partners turn.

The first couple moves forward and back toward the third couple as before.

First man passes between fourth man and fourth woman; while first woman passes between second man and second woman ("cutting off one"); whereupon, both cast off to places, first man to his left, first woman to her right.

All partners turn.

## FIGURE 17

## HANDS-ACROSS

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

All partners turn.

First and second couples right-hands-across (eight steps).

First and second couples left-hands-across (eight steps).

First and second couples Do-si-do.

All partners turn.

First and third couples right- and left-hands-across and Do-si-do, as before.

All partners turn.

First and fourth couples right- and left-hands-across, as before.

First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

## APPENDIX B.

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### VARIANTS

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#### THE GRAND PROMENADE

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

Hands-eight, once round, clockwise to places.

Men turn their partners half-way round with the right hand, turn their contraries half-way round with the left hand, rejoin their partners, cross hands and dance round with them, counter-clockwise, to places.

This is the only Promenade used at Quicksand and is performed between the repetitions of the Figures as well as at the beginning of each Part.

#### THE INTRODUCTION

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

Grand Promenade (Quicksand variant; see above).

First and third couples move forward a double and fall back a double to places.

First and third couples move forward eight steps, cross over, and change places, opposites passing by the right.

First and third couples move forward a double, fall back a double, and cross over to places.

Second and fourth couples move forward a double, fall back a double, cross over, and change places.

Second and fourth couples move forward a double, fall back a double, and cross over to places.

## FIGURE 5

## THE WILD GOOSE-CHASE

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

This is danced in the same way as the Hyden variant given in the text with the following additional movements:

- (1) First man turns his partner at the beginning, *i.e.*, before leading her between second man and second woman.
- (2) After the hands-four, which concludes the movement between first and second couples, these two couples do the Do-si-do.
- (3) After the hands-six, which concludes the movement between first, second, and third couples, first, second, and third men turn their partners and then turn their contraries, as in the Promenade, before they engage the fourth couple.

## FIGURE 6

## BOX THE GNAT

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

First man and first woman arm-right and face second couple.

First man arms-left with second woman; while first woman arms-left with second man.

First man arms-right with his partner.



First man arms-left with third woman; while first woman arms-left with third man.

First man arms-right with his partner.

First man arms-left with fourth woman; while first woman arms-left with fourth man.

*As danced at Hindman (Knott Co., Ky.).*

This is the same as the Hyden version given in the text, except that in the left-hand turn the man turns completely round on his own axis, clockwise.

#### FIGURE 8

#### BIRD IN THE CAGE

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

First man turns his partner and swings her toward second man and second woman.

First man goes hands-three with the second couple round first woman.

First man changes places with first woman, who goes hands-three with second couple round him.

First man turns his partner.

First and second couples Do-si-do.

First man goes hands-five with second and third couples round first woman.

First woman changes places with her partner and goes hands-five with second and third couples round him.

First man turns his partner.

First man goes hands-seven with second, third, and fourth couples round first woman.

First woman changes places with her partner and goes hands-seven with second, third, and fourth couples round him.

First man turns his partner.

## FIGURE 17

## HANDS-ACROSS

*As danced at Hyden (Leslie Co., Ky.) and explained by Miss Dickson.*

First and second couples right-hands-across.

First and second couples left-hands-across.

First man turns second woman; while second man turns first woman.

First and second couples hands-four.

First and third couples do likewise.

First and fourth couples do likewise.

First and fourth couples Do-si-do-and-promenade-home.

## METHOD OF PROGRESSION

*As danced at Quicksand (Breathitt Co., Ky.) and explained by Mr. Sewell Williams.*

In those Figures in which the leading couple engages the other couples in turn, it was customary, when the leading couple was dancing with the last couple, for the other two couples simultaneously to perform the same movements.

Again, in those Figures which begin with the leading man turning his partner, it was usual for the other three men to turn their partners also.

These variants, Mr. Sewell explained, were performed only when the Set consisted of experienced dancers who were accustomed to dance together.

## APPENDIX C.

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### DIRECTIONS USED BY THE "CALLER" AT PINE MOUNTAIN (HARLAN CO., KY.)

---

Join hands, circle left.

Home swing, one and all.

First gent, swing off four.

Last four, Ladies, Do-si,

Gents, low g,

Swing 'em right,

Swing 'em left,

Keep 'em when you find 'em

And don't turn 'em loose,

Come your partner, promenade.

Home swing,

Balance eight and keep 'em straight.

Partners on the left and swing three,

Partners follow, three by six.

Ladies Do-si,

Home swing,

Balance eight.

Partner on the left and shoot the owl,

Partner follow,

Do-si, ladies, etc.,

Home swing and balance eight.

Lady round the lady and the gent also,

Lady round the gent and the gent don't go,

Swing her around,  
Four on the square over here,  
Do-si, ladies, etc.,  
Home swing and balance eight.

Bird in the cage and three hands round,  
Bird in the cage and five hands round, etc.,  
Bird hops out and crow hops in.  
Everybody swing,  
Balance eight.

First couple lead out and box those gnats,  
Cheat 'em if you can,  
Four on the corner, etc.

First gent lead out and chase the squirrel,  
Break to the left and round the lady,  
Back to the right and round the gent,  
Four on this square over here,  
Ladies Do-si.

Home swing,  
Promenade inside the ring,  
Swing your partner,  
Cast off three,  
Swing your partner,  
Cast off two, etc.,  
Everybody swing, balance eight.

Ladies in the centre and back-to-back,  
While the gents go galloping round,  
Come your partners, swing,  
Pass your partners once,  
Pass your partners twice,  
Pass your partners three,  
Come your partner, promenade,  
Home swing,  
Gents in the centre, etc.

D

California show-basket.

Ladies in the centre and right-hands-across half-way round,

Left-hands-across and back.

Ladies join hands (on inside circle),

Gents join hands outside,

Come your partner, lock circles.

Circle left (locked) to home,

Home swing, one and all,

Balance eight, everybody swing.

Join hands, circle left.

First gent lead out a wild goose-chase,

Break to the left and round the lady,

Break to the right around the gent,

Four hands up and going again,

Break to the left, etc.,

Six hands up and going again, etc..

Eight hands up and going again, circle left,

Break to the left in a wild goose-chase,

Break to the right and going again,

Come your places, home swing.

Balance eight;

Join hands, circle left.

Killiecrankie is my song,

I sing and dance it all along.

From my elbow to my wrist

Heavy turn and double twist.

How much further can I go

From my elbow to my toe?

Sheepskin, a sharpskin,

Forty twenty yaller girls

Dancing on sheepskin.

First gent goes under arm of fourth,

Gent circle and then under third, etc.,

until all are unlocked,

Circle left and either unwind or home swing,  
Balance eight.

Tucker.

Tucker dance,

Circle left, everybody swing,

Give old Tucker one more show,

Let's quit,

or

Promenade your partner to her seat

And choose your partner for the next Set.

### Through the Back door.

man casts off to his left followed by woman they go behind couple on their right. woman goes thro' back door first & leads round behind couple again. This time man goes thro' back door and leads round behind couple again.

Third time woman again goes thro' back door.

Man swings contrary woman while woman swings " man.

Hands put one round to left and " " back again to places.

### Ocean waves.

man & woman with hands crossed go in between couple on their right & back again & then cross over by right and go right round same couple to same place. while the couple vinted reverses these movements man & woman swing & then hands down.







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