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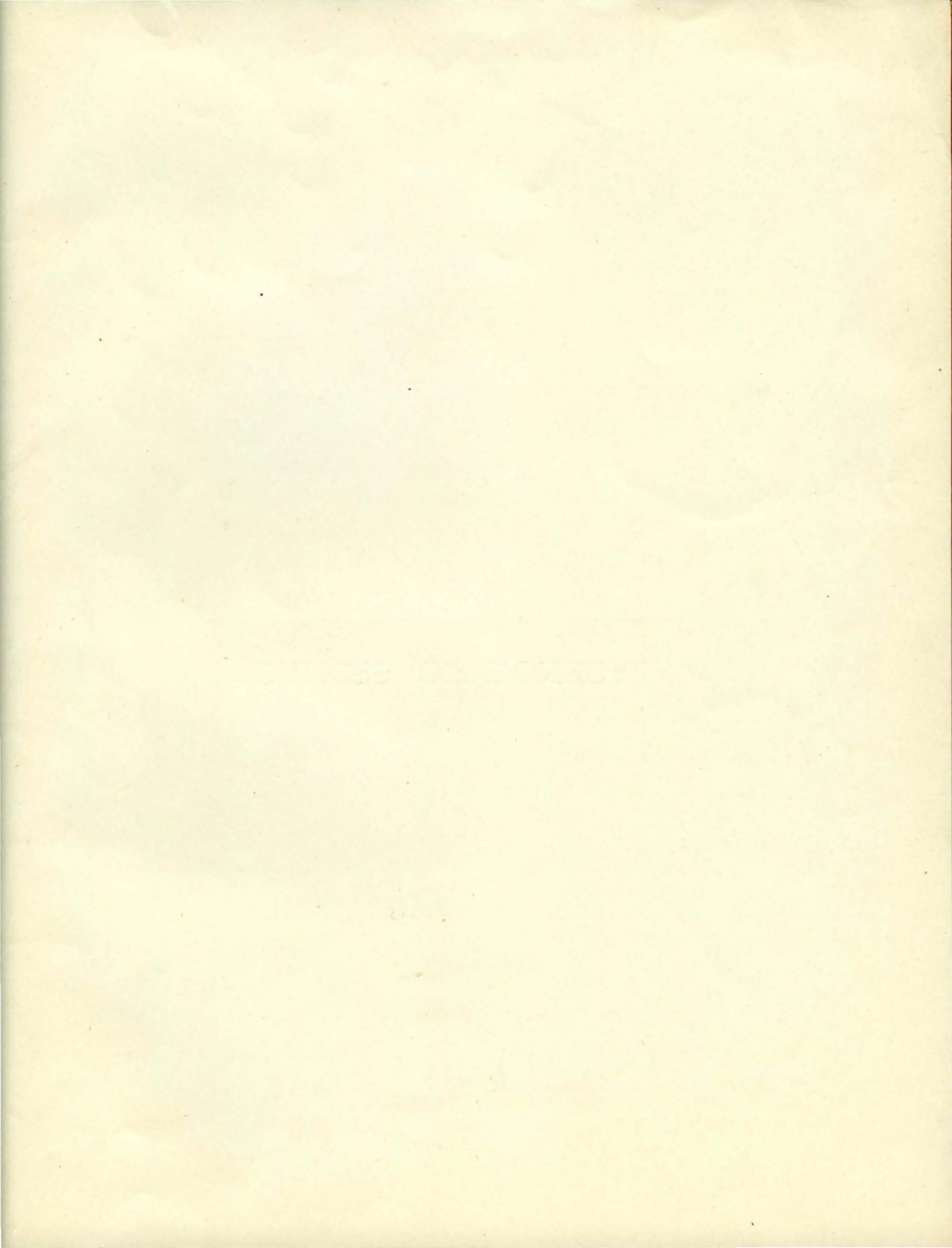
# DANCES OF DONEGAL

Collected by  
GRACE ORPEN





DANCES OF DONEGAL





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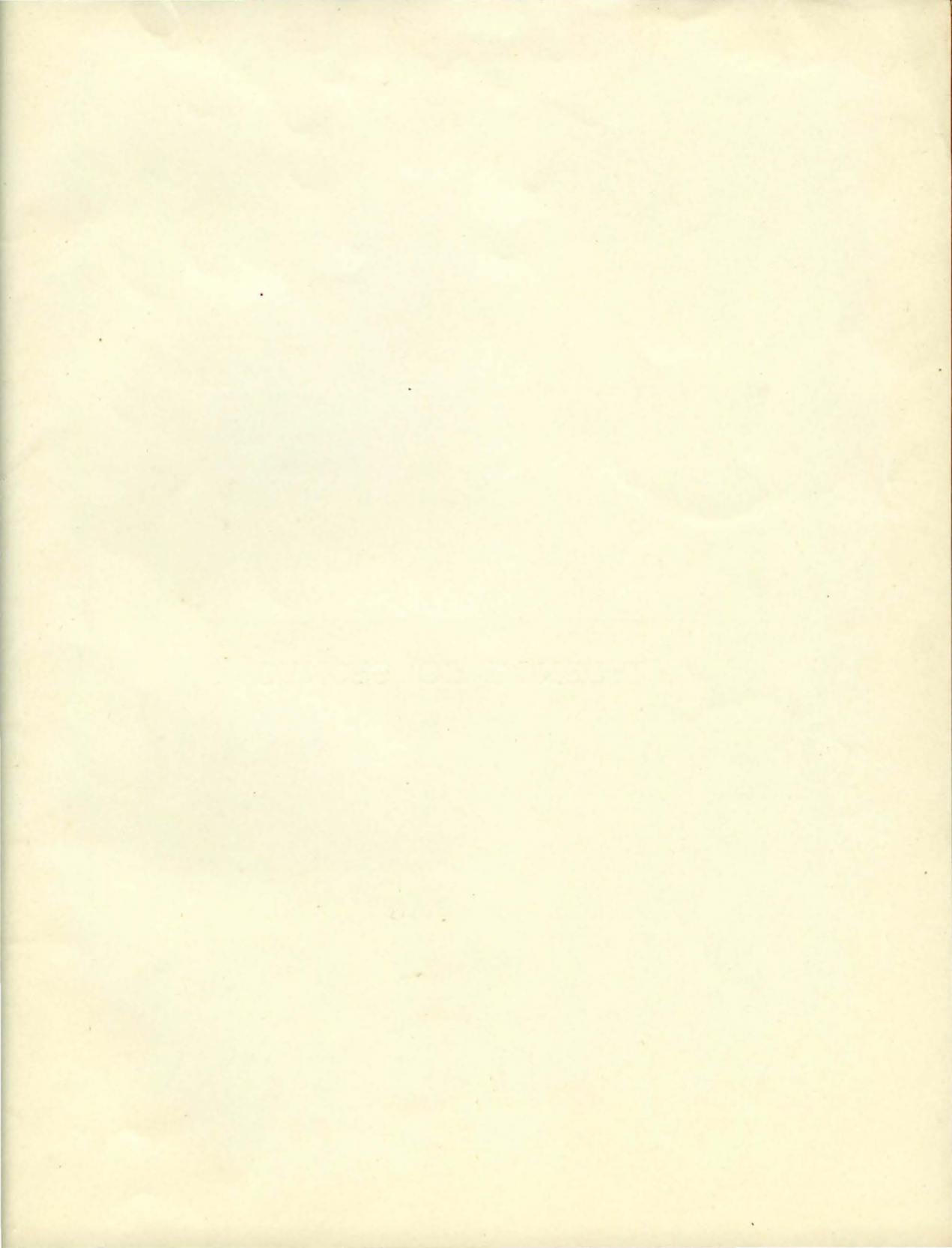
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## FOREWORD

THESE dances have been collected from the peasants in Donegal, and are all Set or Couple Dances, employing only a few simple steps. The complicated Solo Jigs have purposely been omitted as no two dancers agree as to the correct order and performance of the steps.

The Donegal peasants dance on the stone floors of their cottage kitchens in their thick boots, and the characteristic stamps and beats which mark the rhythm should be imitated. An effort has been made to preserve the dances in their simplicity; only dances still performed have been included in this collection. The style is simple and the footwork should not be stressed. The aim should be rather correct figure formation than a precise execution of steps.

The dances have been handed down from one generation to another, and as is always the case, words used in explanation have come to have a different form through inaccuracies in pronunciation.

For example, the "Strasperry" Reel is obviously a corruption of "Strathspey," the "Polky" was once a "Polka," while the "Petticoat Swish" must have been given its name when long petticoats were a feature of the women's costume.

The tunes for "Shoe the Donkey," the "Corn Rigs," and one or two others have been taken down by ear from a musician in Donegal. He in turn has been handed them down from another generation, so that tunes similar to these may be found under different names in other parts of the country with slight variations. Irish Jig and Reel tunes are numberless, and though in this collection one tune only has been allotted to each dance, other tunes can be substituted or added to avoid monotony.

A violin or a concertina is the musical instrument most commonly employed, but for convenience the music in this book has been arranged for the piano. The musician decides the length of the dance—for all can be repeated as many times as desired, or the leader of the Set claps to indicate that the dance is over.

The tunes are arranged in two phrases of eight bars marked for convenience in the music as A and B. Each phrase unless otherwise stated, is played twice through. Every new step must begin with a new phrase of the music, but it is not necessary for each repeat of the whole dance to begin with the A music.

## THE STEPS

Throughout the dances, unless otherwise directed, if the dancers move forwards, backwards, or round in a ring, either a lilting walking step or a change of step is used; the men generally the former and the women the latter. This rule if strictly applied would make the dances very monotonous, so many variations may be introduced and dancers as they gain in proficiency may introduce extra steps and beats as they wish.

Individual steps are explained as they occur in the dances. Unless otherwise directed, the right foot begins.

## THE FIGURES

The dances have been divided into :

- (a) Set Dances for a definite number.
- (b) Set Dances for any number.
- (c) Couple Dances.

In the diagrams the women are described by squares and the men by circles. The course of the figure and the direction are shown by a dotted line and arrowhead.

When hands are joined they are held at shoulder level with the elbows bent. A few fundamental figures which occur in the dances are described here and referred to later by name only.

### *Advance and Retire.*

Two couples or two lines of dancers stand facing each other with hands joined. They advance to meet each other with four steps and retire backwards in the same manner. This occupies four bars of music and is always repeated.

### *Ring to Right and Left.*

The dancers join hands and turning to the right move round for eight steps, turn without dropping hands and repeat to the left.

### *Lead Round.*

Partners join inside hands, i.e. the man takes the girl's left hand in his right, and lead round in a ring to the right for eight steps. They drop hands, turn and lead home with the other hand. The woman is on the outer side all the time.

### *Follow Round.*

The dancers follow each other round in a ring to the right for eight steps, the man following his own partner. They turn and follow back to place. Dancers must face the middle as they change direction.

### *Dance in Place.*

At the beginning of each dance and between most of the figures the dancers stand and mark the rhythm of the music for two or four bars as directed.

### *The Swing.*

This figure is characteristic of the Donegal dances and requires practice. Partners face each other, the woman places her hands on her partner's shoulders while the man places his hands on her hips. The right feet are placed close to each other and take the weight. In this position the couple swing by pushing off with the left feet at first slowly and then with increasing speed then gradually decreasing as the music finishes. A swing occupies eight bars of music, occasionally double or half the time is given. Dancers should keep both feet close to each other and avoid too boisterous a movement.

### *Hands About.*

The leader of the set or the musician calls "Hands about" to finish the dance. All the dancers join in a ring, with their hands resting on each other's shoulders. In this position they travel round to the left as in the "Swing."

# THE FAIRY REEL

*Tune : FAIRY DANCE.*

1 2 3 4 9 10

5 6 7 8 11 12 13 14 15 16

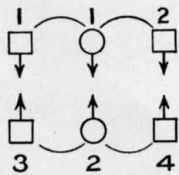


FIG. I

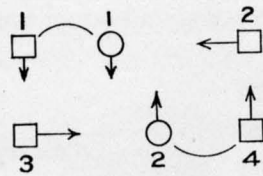


FIG. II



# THE FAIRY REEL

*Six Dancers : 2 Men and 4 Women.*

STEPS	BARS
The dancers stand as Fig. 1, facing across the set.	
They stand still for the first four bars of music, then join hands and dance in place for four bars.	8
1 Advance and retire. Repeat.	8
2 The three dancers on either side join hands. Ring to right and left.	8
3 Men advance to meet, while 1st and 2nd women face each other and cross over to opposite side, passing right shoulders, while 3rd and 4th women do the same.	2
Men retire while women dance in place facing each other.	2
Men retire while 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th women cross over back to place passing right shoulders.	2
Men advance while women dance in place facing across the set.	2
4 1st man and 1st woman join inside hands, while 2nd man and 4th woman do the same. 2nd and 3rd women turn to their right, Fig. 2.	
All advance and dance in place.	4
2nd and 3rd women retire and dance in place while couples turn, advance and dance in place.	4
Repeat the figure, the 1st man dancing with the 2nd woman and the 2nd man with the 3rd woman.	8
5 1st man turns 2nd woman, while 2nd man turns 3rd woman, linking left arms.	2
1st man turns 1st woman while 2nd man turns 4th woman linking right arms.	2
Repeat.	4
Repeat whole dance ending with "Hands About" in two rings.	

# SIX HANDED DUKE

*Tune : ST. PATRICK'S DAY.*

**A**

1 2 3 4 5

**B**

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16

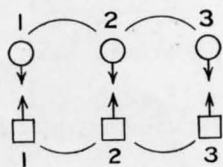


FIG. I

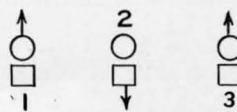


FIG. II

# SIX HANDED DUKE

*Six Dancers : 3 Men and 3 Women.*

STEPS	BARS
Introduction as in Fairy Reel.	8
1 Advance and retire. Repeat.	8
2 Dance in place.	4
Dancers advance and cross over to opposite side of set, the men raising their arms to form arches, the women passing under the arches, 1st and 2nd women together, 3rd woman alone.	4
Repeat, 1st woman alone, 2nd and 3rd women together.	8
3 Partners join both hands and all dance in a figure of eight through the set as follows : (Fig. 2).	
1st and 2nd couples change places, 1st man moving backward first, then forward, 2nd man moving forward first then backward.	
1st and 3rd couples change, 1st man moving forward first, then backward, 3rd man moving backward first then forward.	
2nd and 3rd couples change, 2nd man moving backward first then forward, 3rd man moving forward first then backward.	
Continue until all are back in their original places.	
Dance in place to complete the music.	16
4 " DUKES "	
Partners hold both hands.	
1st couple raise both arms to form an arch, 2nd couple move under arch to top of set.	
All dance in place.	
3rd couple raise arms to form an arch, 1st couple move under arch to bottom of set (2 bars).	
All dance in place (2 bars).	
Continue, the couple standing in the middle of the set moving alternately to the top and bottom until all are back in their original places.	
Dance in place to complete music.	32
5 1st man and 1st woman join right hands while 2nd and 3rd men and 2nd and 3rd women do the same.	
Dance in a chain twice round the set.	16
Repeat whole dance.	

# THE IRISH REEL

A

1 2 3 4 5

B

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16



# THE IRISH REEL

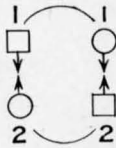


FIG. I

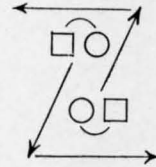


FIG. II

*Four Dancers : 2 Men and 2 Women*

STEPS	BARS
Introduction ending turned to the right, inner hand joined with partner.	8
1 Lead round to left and back to right.	8
2 Partners join both hands and turn each other, ending in opposite place moving to the left.	2
Dance in place.	2
Repeat moving to the right.	2
Dance in place.	2
3 Follow round to left and back to right.	8
4 Hold partner in waltz grip and all dance four slipping steps obliquely in direction of man's left shoulder, then four slipping steps across opposite side of set, men's left shoulder still leading. Fig. 2.	4
Partners swing, working back to original places and completing the triangle.	4
5 "Men's Chain."	
Men link right arms and turn each other, then link left arms with own partner and turn her.	
Repeat.	8
6 Women cross over to each other's places, passing right shoulders.	
Men cross over, passing right shoulders.	
Repeat.	8
Repeat whole dance.	

# A TRIP TO THE COTTAGE

*Tune : THE QUAKER'S WIFE*

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The first system (measures 1-5) is marked 'A' and features a melody in the treble staff and a bass line of chords in the bass staff. The second system (measures 6-10) is marked 'B' and continues the melody and bass line. The third system (measures 11-16) concludes the piece. The bass line consists of a series of chords, some of which are marked with a '1' or '2' indicating a first or second ending. The melody is a simple, folk-like tune.

1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16

# A TRIP TO THE COTTAGE

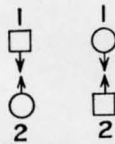


FIG. 1

## *Four Dancers : 2 Men and 2 Women*

STEPS		BARS
	Introduction.	8
1	Advance and retire. Repeat.	8
2	"Women's Chain." Women link right arms and turn each other, then link left arms with own partner and turn him.	
	Repeat.	8
3	"Men's Chain."	8
4	Partners swing.	8
5	Partners join inside hands. All advance and cross over to opposite side of dance, 1st couple passing under an arch made by 2nd couple.	4
	Dance in place.	4
	Repeat back to place, 2nd couple passing under arch.	4
	Dance in place.	4
6	Partners swing.	8

# "STRASPERRY" REEL

Tune : MISS McCLOUD

The musical score for "STRASPERRY" REEL is presented in two systems, A and B. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The score consists of 16 measures, numbered 1 through 16. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score is divided into two systems, A and B. System A contains measures 1-5, and System B contains measures 6-10. The score continues with measures 11-16.

System A (Measures 1-5):

Measure 1: Treble clef, D4, F#4, A4, B4. Bass clef, D3, F#3, A3, B3.

Measure 2: Treble clef, B4, A4, G4, F#4. Bass clef, A3, G3, F#3, E3.

Measure 3: Treble clef, E4, D4, C4, B3. Bass clef, D3, C3, B2, A2.

Measure 4: Treble clef, B3, A3, G3, F#3. Bass clef, G2, F#2, E2, D2.

Measure 5: Treble clef, D4, F#4, A4, B4. Bass clef, D3, F#3, A3, B3.

System B (Measures 6-10):

Measure 6: Treble clef, B4, A4, G4, F#4. Bass clef, A3, G3, F#3, E3.

Measure 7: Treble clef, E4, D4, C4, B3. Bass clef, D3, C3, B2, A2.

Measure 8: Treble clef, B3, A3, G3, F#3. Bass clef, G2, F#2, E2, D2.

Measure 9: Treble clef, D4, F#4, A4, B4. Bass clef, D3, F#3, A3, B3.

Measure 10: Treble clef, B4, A4, G4, F#4. Bass clef, A3, G3, F#3, E3.

Measures 11-16:

Measure 11: Treble clef, E4, D4, C4, B3. Bass clef, D3, C3, B2, A2.

Measure 12: Treble clef, B3, A3, G3, F#3. Bass clef, G2, F#2, E2, D2.

Measure 13: Treble clef, D4, F#4, A4, B4. Bass clef, D3, F#3, A3, B3.

Measure 14: Treble clef, B4, A4, G4, F#4. Bass clef, A3, G3, F#3, E3.

Measure 15: Treble clef, E4, D4, C4, B3. Bass clef, D3, C3, B2, A2.

Measure 16: Treble clef, B3, A3, G3, F#3. Bass clef, G2, F#2, E2, D2.



# “STRASPERRY” REEL

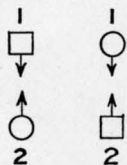


FIG. I

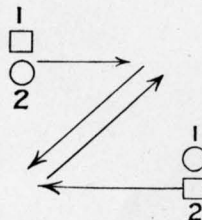


FIG. II

*Four Dancers : 2 Men and 2 Women.*

STEPS		BARS
	Introduction, ending with partner's facing each other.	8
1	Cross over with partner passing left shoulders.	2
	Dance in place.	2
	Cross back to place passing right shoulders.	2
	Dance in place.	2
2	Cross over to opposite side of set, women passing through the middle.	
	Dance in place.	
	Cross back to place in the same manner.	
	Dance in place.	8
3	Follow round to left and back to right.	8
4	1st man goes over to 2nd woman, while 2nd man goes over to 1st woman. They join in waltz grip and all dance four slipping steps in direction of man's right shoulder, then turn and dance four slipping steps obliquely across set in direction of man's left shoulder.	
	Swing back to original positions completing the triangle. Fig. 2.	8
5	Partners link left arms and turn once.	4
	Dance in place.	4
6	Women cross over, passing right shoulders.	
	Men cross over passing right shoulders.	2
	All dance in place.	2
	Repeat.	4
	Repeat whole dance.	

# THE IRISH NATIONAL OR "PETTICOAT SWISH"

*Tune : SMASH THE WINDOWS.*

The musical score is written for piano in 6/8 time, featuring a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The piece is divided into two main sections, A and B. Section A consists of measures 1 through 5. Section B begins at measure 6 and includes a repeat sign at measure 8, followed by measures 9 through 16. The melody is primarily in the treble staff, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Measure numbers 1 through 16 are printed below the corresponding measures in the bass staff.

**A**

1 2 3 4 5

**B**

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16

# THE IRISH NATIONAL

## OR

## “PETTICOAT SWISH”

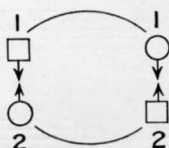


FIG. I

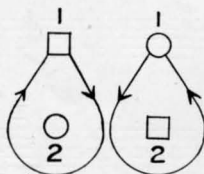


FIG. II

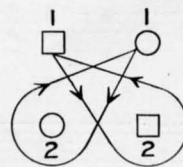


FIG. III

*Four Dancers : 2 Men and 2 Women.*

STEPS

BARS

Introduction.

8

1 Advance and retire. Repeat.

8

2 “Passing Through.”

1st man and 1st woman advance through the opposite couple and retire backwards to place. Fig. 2.

4

1st man advances round 2nd man, while 1st woman advances round 2nd woman and retire backward to place. The woman passes through in front of the man. Fig. 3.

4

2nd couple repeat the step.

8

This step should be kept smooth and continuous, all using a gliding walking step and keeping close to each other. The couple not passing through moving slightly to let the others pass, so keeping the movement continuous.

3 Partners swing.

8

4 As Strasperry Reel step 3.

8

5 As Strasperry Reel step 4.

8

6 As Strasperry Reel step 5.

8

7 As Strasperry Reel step 6.

8

Repeat whole dance.

# THE WAVES OF TORY

Tune : A HUNDRED PIPERS.

I. A

1 2 3 4 5

B

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16

II. A

1 2 3 4 5

B

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16



# THE WAVES OF TORY

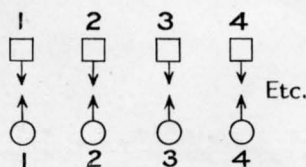


FIG. 1

*Longways for any equal number of couples.*

## Tune I.

STEPS		BARS
	The dancers stand as in Fig. 1. Introduction as in Fairy Reel.	8
1	Advance and retire. Repeat.	8
2	Advance and cross over to opposite side of set, partners passing right shoulders, men raising their arms to form arches. Dance in place.	8
3	Advance and retire. Repeat.	8
4	Advance and cross back to own side of set, passing right shoulders as before.	8
5	Hands across, joining in groups of four.	8
6	Dancers turn so that the 1st couple are the leaders. They "cast off," i.e. turn away from their partners and follow their leaders to the bottom of the set. Partners join hands and advance up the middle. Repeat.	32
7	1st couple followed by the other dancers lead to the left down to the bottom of the set and up the middle to place.	16
8	"Waves." Tune II.	

1st couple face the bottom of the set and raise their arms; 2nd couple pass under the arch to the top of the set while 1st couple pass downward to meet 3rd couple. They pass under an archway made by the 3rd couple and so on alternately over and under until they reach the bottom of the set. On reaching the bottom or top of the set, dancers turn and continue back again passing under first when moving up the set and over first when moving down.

This step is continued until each couple have travelled the length of the set twice.

All dance in place until last couple have returned.

48

The amount of music taken to dance this and the two preceding steps will depend on the number of couples dancing.

# SIX HANDED REEL

*Tune : PADDY WHACK.*



*Any number of couples in a ring.*

STEPS	BARS
Introduction, holding hands in a ring.	8
1 Ring to right and left.	8
This step is only repeated to finish the dance.	
2 Men turn women on their left with right arms, then turn their own partner with left arms, ending holding inside hands with partner facing ready to lead round the set, the woman on the outside.	4
Lead round to right.	4
Lead back to left, the men taking the women who stand on their left at the beginning of the dance, i.e. 1st man takes 2nd woman, etc.	4
Men turn women on their left with both hands.	2
Partners swing.	10
The 2nd step is repeated as many times as desired.	



# THE "PIN" DANCE

Tune : THE YOUNG MAY MOON.

## STEPS

## BARs

This dance is in the form of a game.

Any number of couples in a ring with one extra man, the "Pin," who stands in the middle.

Introduction as in Six Handed Reel.

8

1 Ring to right and left.

8

2 Men turn the women on their left with right arms.

Partners swing.

8

3 Women drop out of the dance while men join hands in a ring. They dance round the "Pin" keeping time with the music with individual steps or dance ring to right and left.

During this step the music stops and each man, including the "Pin" secures a partner, the extra man becoming the "Pin."

# SHOE THE DONKEY



## STEPS

## BARS

Partners hold in waltz grip and stand so that man's left and woman's right shoulders are in the line of direction.

A. Described for the woman, the man starts with the opposite foot.

Hop on left foot, raising right foot slightly.

Step on right foot in line of direction.

Step on left foot bringing feet together (3 beats).

Repeat this twice more, then step forward on right foot, change direction by turning body and step on left foot with a stamp.

Repeat in the other direction, then repeat whole step once more.

16

B. Hop on left foot.

Step forward on right foot.

Step on left foot closing feet up.

Step forward on right foot then change direction and step on left foot with a stamp.

Repeat with the other foot.

This is repeated for the whole of B music played twice through, and the dancers travel round the room as they turn.

16

# MILITARY TWO-STEP

*Tune : TOP OF CORK ROAD.*

STEPS

BARS

Partners stand holding inside hands and begin with the inner foot.

Advance forward three steps, stamping on the 1st beat and lifting the outer leg forward with a straight knee on the 2nd beat of the 2nd bar.

Retire backward four steps, stamping on the 4th step.

4

Partners drop hands and step away from each other on to outer feet, close up inner feet and step again on outer feet.

Repeat towards partner.

The 2nd and 3rd steps are in double time, the stamp is on the 1st beat.

Partners turn about, the man to his left and the woman to her right with four steps, ending holding in waltz grip, with man's left shoulder leading.

4

Step forward, man on left foot, woman on right foot.

Step on other foot, closing feet together. Repeat.

Change direction and repeat with the other foot leading.

4

Turn partner with the same step in double time.

4



# THE HIGHLAND

*Tune : THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME.*

## STEPS

## BARS

Partners stand as for "Shoe the Donkey."

Two slipping steps in line of direction.

1

Two slipping steps back to place.

1

Four slipping steps in line of direction.

2

Repeat going the other way first.

4

Turn partner as in Military Two Step.

4

Partners swing.

4

# THE BARN DANCE

Tune : PADDY McGINTY.

## STEPS

## BARS

The A part of this dance can be varied in many ways.

Partners stand as for "Shoe the Donkey."

A. Described for the women.

Stamp twice with the right foot then step to the right, close left foot up and step to the right again.

2

Repeat to the left.

2

Repeat.

4

B. Barn Dance with partner in waltz grip.

8

Variations of A :

1. Stamp with a straight knee, then with foot close to other heel.

2. Tap foot to toe and heel.

3. Mark rhythm twice by twisting foot with heel raised, etc.

# THE CORN RIGS

*Tune : GREEN GROW THE RUSHES, O.*

The musical score is written for piano in C major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It is divided into two systems, A and B. System A contains measures 1 through 8, and System B contains measures 9 through 16. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes in the melody, with a steady bass accompaniment of chords and single notes.

STEPS

BARS

Partners stand facing each other with hands held crossed, elbows straight.

The man starts with his left foot, the woman with her right.

A. Described for the woman.

Step to the right with the right foot. Step on left foot closing feet up, step on right foot, then hop on right foot, swinging left foot across with a flick of the foot.

Repeat in the other direction.

Swing right foot behind left, step on it and hop with left leg raised forward. Swing left foot behind right, step on it and hop with right foot raised. Repeat. 4

Repeat. 4

B. Hold partner in waltz grip and polka round. 8

# BERLIN POLKY

*Tune : OFF SHE GOES.*

The musical score is written for piano accompaniment in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of staves. The first system, labeled 'A', contains measures 1 through 5. The second system, labeled 'B', contains measures 6 through 10. The third system contains measures 11 through 16. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand, with block chords and moving bass lines in the left hand.

STEPS

BARS

Partners stand as for Corn Rigs, the man starts with his left foot, the woman with her right.

A. Described for the woman.

One polka step to the right beginning with the right foot, then swing the left leg through with a straight knee, hopping twice on the right foot.

2

Repeat in the other direction.

2

Repeat.

4

B. Hold partner in waltz grip and polka round for B music.

8

