

No. 118

Health, Recreation, Education

# FOLK DANCING

ILLUSTRATING THE EDUCATIONAL, CIVIC, AND MORAL  
VALUE OF FOLK DANCING

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## Part I.—Folk and National Dances

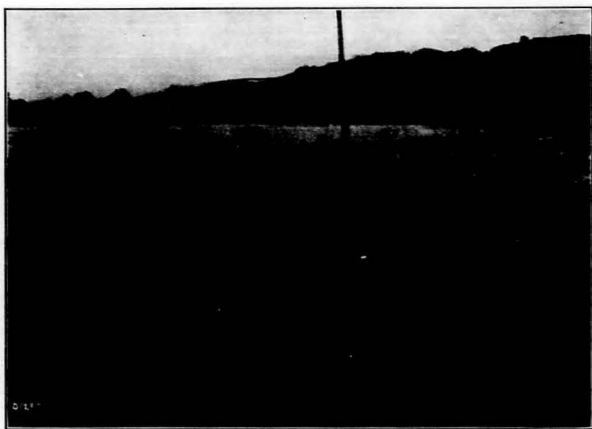
In connection with the Playground Congress of 1908, an exhibition of folk and national dances was given in Van Cortlandt Park, New York. The program, which included dances from eleven nations, was in two parts, one being presented by children, the other by adults. This division was necessary because many of the children came from a long distance, and hence it was desirable for them to complete their part of the program early, so as to enable them to reach their homes at an early hour.

The children who took part were selected from playgrounds in the neighborhoods of the various foreign colonies, and gave the folk dances of these various nationalities. The older groups were made up largely of citizens of foreign birth who cherish their native customs and were glad, by thus presenting their dances, to aid in their preservation.

The children's part of the program consisted of folk dances, that presented by the adults of national dances. This distinction between folk and national dances is similar to the distinction between folk music and the various national anthems. Each great people has its characteristic folk music. These characteristics are more fully worked out and presented in more adequate form in the national anthems, which represent the same *motifs* as the folk music elaborated by the genius of trained artists. It is difficult to trace the origin of folk music and still more difficult to trace that of folk dancing, since music has been the subject of far more scholarly study than dancing; but we know in a general way that these folk dances have grown up gradually, not only embodying in themselves racial characteristics of movement, but representing in symbolic form race ideas, just as does the folk music. Like folk music again, these folk dances vary in detail with each group that employs them, while the national dances, like the national anthems, are more uniform as well as more elaborate.

While it is true that the significance of the exhibition did not lie in the special symbolism or the historic origin of any dance, still it is interesting to note some of these meanings.

The two Italian dances presented, the Tarantella by the adults and the Saltarella by the children, well illustrate the vivacity and grace of the Italian people. The Tarantella is said to have originated as a method employed by the peasants of Italy to expel from the system the poison of the tarantula's bite. It is probable, of course, that this is purely symbolic, for the dance expresses the spirit of joyousness in the extreme. The story, however, is that a high degree of perspiration would inevitably result from the very great exertions of this dance and that the poison



THE TARANTELLA (ITALIAN) AT VAN CORTLANDT PARK, NEW YORK.

from the bite of the tarantula would be excreted with this perspiration. This does not account at all for the special form which the dance takes. The Saltarella probably had its origin in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, having been then one of the most popular dances of the Roman court.

The Hungarian national dance, known as the Czardas or Czardash or Zardas, includes the assembling of the peasants to dance and also to sing. It is thus really a song and a dance. It expresses the passionate intensity of the Hungarian people, the

gesticulations and attitudes all being combined so as to advance from a slow measured tempo to the most rapid passages, which they call the "Fris."

The Tyrolienne takes its name from the Austrian province in which it was first known. It is performed by both boys and girls with the characteristic "jodler" and "landler" of the country youth. This dance is performed on practically all public occasions.

The Manchegas is one of the favorite Spanish folk dances, sprightly in form and motion, but lacking the finish and complete art form of the national dance, the Cachucha.



THE BABORAK (BOHEMIAN) BY A GROUP OF PLAYGROUND GIRLS,  
SECOND PLAYGROUND CONGRESS.

The Minuet is known in modern times more because of the music that was composed to accompany the dance than because of our acquaintance with the dance itself. It had its origin in France, probably about 1650.

The Polish dance, Mazur, was named from the people who inhabit the province of Mazovia. It is the beloved dance of the Polish people, but it is also practised in all parts of Europe, even finding its way into the most aristocratic circles of Paris. It is, however, essentially a dance of the people.

The Cracoviak derives its name from the principal city of Galizia, Cracow, and is the national dance of the Polish people.

The Russian dances are so many of them characterized by

large movements of the body, such as complete flexion of the knees, the holding of the back erect, and then a springing into the air, that they are said to represent the spirit of the Russian people, which, while it soars to heaven, secures for itself power and vitality from the earth.

The Scottish Reel exhibits contrasts in essential respects to the dances of other peoples. The movements are more "definite" in a gymnastic sense. Economy of movement is everywhere evident. The contrast between the Scottish Reel and any one of the great Russian or Spanish dances gives an insight into race psychology that is not revealed in any other way. The carefully regulated joy of the Scottish, their caninness, their consideration of each step before taking it, are in evident and extreme contrast to the abandon of the Russian, on the one hand, while, on the other, the vigor and definiteness of movement of their dance contrast clearly with the dances of such people as the Spaniards—the Cachucha, for instance.

But the interest and beauty of the dances were not the really important thing about the exhibition. Its real significance lay in the fact that it represented a hitherto unrecognized contribution to American life and spirit from the nations of the old world. We have recognized the economic contributions of these various peoples; we have not recognized the fact that they have an aesthetic contribution for us also. Yet America needs and greatly needs just this contribution.

In the first place, these old folk dances have a unique educational value. To explain this, it will be necessary to consider briefly their origin and development.

The development of folk dancing as an art form may be easily paralleled with the development of design, although in the development of design we have a far larger amount of historic material available from which to construct the story. Of course, design—like every other form of art—has arisen in many different ways. The following, however, appears to be one of the most definitely established origins.

When, in moments of leisure, the early man began decorating his baskets and pieces of pottery with figures illustrating events in the chase, in hunting, or in fighting, he found that he had a very different problem than when he had the wide expanse of the cliff or cave upon which to put his figures, since the space available for the design on the basket or piece of pottery was both

## RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

Division of Recreation

400 Metropolitan Tower, New York City

To the Editor:

The press matter below is presented in three columns, each being a distinct part of the whole story, making possible combinations of three different lengths. You will substantially aid the cause of wholesome recreation for young people by giving it as much space as possible.

LEE F. HANMER,

Associate Director

Released after 12 o'clock midnight, April 3, 1912

## SOCIAL CENTERS INSTEAD OF DANCE HALLS

SAGE FOUNDATION PROMOTES USE OF SCHOOLHOUSES FOR DANCING

BY MEANS OF PHOTOPLAY

The social center in the public school is brought forward as an antidote to the dance-hall over the saloon by the Russell Sage Foundation in a motion picture drama which has just been produced upon its initiative and with its co-operation. "Charlie's Reform" is the name of this new Edison photoplay and its first exhibition in the "movies" will occur tomorrow.

The astounding facts brought to light by the Chicago Vice Commission together with the epidemic of "tough" dances this winter have created a tremendous interest in the subject of young people's amusements. Already nearly two score of cities have organized opportunities for winter evening recreation in some of their public school houses. But social workers are now beginning to realize that it is the natural desire for companionship with the opposite sex which the dance-hall meets and for which provision is not usually made in the school recreation center. The social center depicted in this new photoplay makes it possible for young men and women to meet under wholesome conditions and it is this privilege which brings about "Charlie's Reform" from a career of idleness and carousing.

The announcement of the new film has attracted a widespread interest from social workers throughout the country. Over one hundred organizations, mostly national in scope, are aiding in the distribution of the announcements concerning it. These include the extension departments of twenty state universities, forty-three playground associations and commissions, the social service departments of four religious denominations, three national civic associations and other influential bodies of persons who are engaged in promoting temperance, better morals and improved social conditions generally.

The drama is based upon the following plot. Charlie, an athletic young bookkeeper and the mainstay of a widowed mother, is calling upon a sweet, womanly girl by whom his affections have been strongly aroused. The continued interruptions from the small brother and two mischievous sisters make private conversation impossible. His patience finally became exhausted and when Helen's parents refuse to allow her to go out with him he leaves in high dudgeon. On the street Charlie encounters an acquaintance who invites him to a dance-hall. In a desperate mood he accepts, and at this resort takes his first steps in a downward career. His intemperance soon results in the loss of his position and he becomes a loafer at the corner saloon.

Meanwhile one of Helen's former teachers has persuaded the old folks to allow the girl to attend a new schoolhouse social center. At one of the weekly dancing parties she meets a young man who, subsequently, escorts her to various doings at the center. On one of these occasions Charlie's companions draw his notice to the couple as they pass the saloon window. The sight of a probable rival stirs up a jealous rage and, despite all efforts to hold him, he sets out in a half-drunken pursuit and thus comes to the social center.

The doorkeeper, alarmed by his sinister appearance, attempts to prevent his entrance. After a brief struggle Charlie pushes him aside and rushes from one room to another in search of his sweetheart. He finally discovers her in the kindergarten dancing with a girl. He begins to upbraid her when the director enters followed by a policeman. Helen explains matters to the director and to Charlie's astonishment he is cordially welcomed to the center. Learning that he is an athlete and out of work, the director engages him as an assistant in the gymnasium. Charlie's habits change and he is taken back by his old employer, to the great happiness of his mother and of Helen, whom he now regularly escorts to the social center doings.

The plot of the drama was devised by Clarence Arthur Perry, a writer and investigator connected with the Division of Recreation of the Russell Sage Foundation. Commenting upon the purpose of the film Mr. Perry said:

"Each year in Chicago nearly one thousand girls are wiped out of existence by a life of shame. A large number of them first came into contact with the influences which brought about their ruin at the vicious dance-hall or amusement park. Most of them had gone to these places to satisfy a perfectly normal and natural desire,—the desire for human companionship. If they had been daughters of the rich this need would have been met by balls and social affairs arranged by their mothers and fathers. But being the daughters of the poor their heart-needs were left to the dance-hall proprietors to exploit, to trade upon and to debauch.

"It isn't poverty mainly, but the lack of room, social skill and physical energy that prevents parents from giving their young people adequate social opportunities.

"These three things can be supplied by the municipality just as easily and just as legitimately as protection from fires, burglars and contagious diseases. Put movable seats and desks into the schoolhouses and every classroom in the city can be used as a dancing parlor for some group of congenial people. Many buildings already have auditoriums, gymnasiums and kindergarten rooms—now empty most nights of the year—which could be utilized for social gatherings. Private schools give their pupils a social training—why shouldn't the public schools do the same thing?

"When employees of the school board develop the dances and form the hall-room manners of our young people it won't be possible for mercenary amusement purveyors to awaken them to sexual precocity through the 'turkey trot' or to start them in a life of prostitution through the 'bunny-hug.'

"By adding a few specially trained leaders in recreation and social affairs to our educational corps every schoolhouse in the land can be turned into a center of neighborhood life without harm to the school property or materially increasing the burden upon the taxpayers."

limited and definite. Accordingly, there gradually arose the use of symbolic figures to represent series of events. And thus the necessity of compressing the story into a definite space was a limitation which gradually converted every representation of an occasion into an art product having a symbolic form.

It is believed that many of the folk dances arose in the same way. These dances told the story of the sowing of grain in the spring, of the reaping of the harvest, of the pursuit of the enemy; in fact, any or all of the chief events of human experience were told not merely in words, but by means of gesture and bodily expression. And the necessity of compressing events that covered long periods of time into the short periods that were available for the telling of the story, did for the narrative dance exactly what the space limitation did for the design—it compelled the use of symbolic gestures to represent groups of activities and sets of feelings.

These stories, told both by movements of the body and by word of mouth, were repeated by the peasants of the various countries through the countless ages of man's early history until they gradually developed coherency and uniformity, the most effective form of presentation being, of course, the surviving form, as in the case of folk music. Each folk dance represents, then, in symbolic form, a long history of human activity.

This is what gives these dances their value from the educational point of view. The effect of bodily states upon mental states has long been recognized; the saying, "A sound mind in a sound body" was old when quoted by Juvenal. It is only within the past few years, however, that the study of neurology has advanced to a point where it can give a fairly coherent account of the way in which bodily movements of the folk dance type aid toward wholesome thinking.

Thinking, we are told, is developed by means of action, not just action in general, but those particular activities that have been useful in the preservation of the race. Thus physical training has been gradually modified to emphasize not merely all possible combinations of bodily movement, but those neurological combinations upon which intelligence rests. This particular kind of physical training may have been one of the reasons for the success of that education which we believe to have been one of the main factors in producing the most brilliant epoch in the world's history, the golden age of Greece. Dancing was then re-

garded as one of the fundamentals of education. It was not merely or mainly that the body was trained for strength, for agility, for flexibility, and for endurance by these dances, but that the neurological basis for wholesome thinking was thereby laid—that neurological basis upon which rests the practical co-operation of body and mind in those combinations by which man's success has been won.

This also gives us the reason why the old dances have a significance from the point of view of education that other dances—dances that have been devised simply to gratify the impulse toward beautiful and rhythmical movement—have not. Such dances do not represent, as do the folk dances, racially old neurological coördinations.

It is not enough that people should think wholesomely and efficiently; it is equally important that their feeling shall be wholesome and normal, and the folk dances give to the individual the race inheritance upon which wholesome feeling, as well as wholesome thinking, rests, affording in a large degree an opportunity for the expression of those feelings of joy, of triumph, and of vigor which are the heritage of the ages.

It is not by chance that both children and adults take part in these old dances with a joy and an enthusiasm that they never bring to exercise that is undertaken simply for the sake of the benefit to be derived from it. Exercise for the sake of exercise—the manipulation of weights, the lonely walk for purposes of health—ignores entirely this old racial setting of feeling and expression. We need, then, these old dances fully as much because they give the individual avenues for the wholesome expression of feeling, as because they constitute in themselves excellent physiological exercise.

It is possible by means of gymnastic exercise to develop all the muscles of the body, to secure all the physiological benefit that can be derived from the old folk dances. But there is the same difference between the performance of muscular movement for the mere sake of exercise and that dancing which expresses an idea, a set of feelings, a social whole, as there is between incoherent shouting which exercises the vocal cords and the lungs and the intelligent speaking or singing which portrays and develops the soul itself.

Apart from their educational value, however, these dances have for America a social value that cannot be overestimated. It is



not enough to say of them that they are a sort of safety-valve, that they are of moral value in that they afford an opportunity for the innocent expenditure of joyous energy. They are more than that. They constitute, we believe, a positive moral force, a social agency, having had in the past and destined to have in the future a great function in welding into a unified whole those whose conditions and occupations are exceedingly diverse.

We are, here in America, in a unique sense a cosmopolitan people. The following figures indicate the percentage of population of foreign parentage in some of our leading cities:

Boston.....	71.1
Chicago.....	77.2
Cleveland.....	75.4
Milwaukee.....	82.7
New York.....	76.6
San Francisco.....	70.4

We have welcomed the influx of the peoples of the world who have come to us to carry the burden of our work. We have failed to recognize or to help them retain those national and racial customs that are necessary to a wholesome people. The immigrant has been made to feel that his past was not wanted; and the smart young American of the second generation, knowing nothing of the traditions of the country from which his parents came, has been rather inclined to look down upon their national customs. This is very largely our fault. We have failed to see that the maintenance of habits and traditions of joy and happiness are no less important for normal life than are habits of thrift and wholesome work.

One of the most eagerly sought for enjoyments of those who visit the old countries is to watch the people on their holidays, holidays that are marked by the national dances, which are the most common form of art available to all the people. Here in America we have the same human feelings demanding expression, the same occasions demanding adequate celebration, but no form of social habits that enables us to give suitable expression to them.

Our poverty in this direction is indicated by the behavior of our people when they come together for some special occasion, as, for example, in New York City, after a state or national election. There are fireworks perhaps; but for most of us there is nothing to do but to parade the streets in a hopeless tangle and chaos of

people. The few holidays that we have are celebrated in ways that not only largely fail to accomplish the objects for which they were set aside, but that are sometimes in themselves a positive evil, as in the case of the Fourth of July. We have failed to appreciate the significance of the fête or festival. It is not enough to set aside a day of thanksgiving, and to provide ourselves with turkeys and mince pies as emblems of the occasion; we all need to acquire the festival spirit and to learn methods of celebration that shall express in adequate symbolic form the immediate occasion.

It is our hope that such exhibitions as this at Van Cortlandt Park, in which the various elements of our cosmopolitan population are brought together as such, each exhibiting to the others and to us those characteristic national dances which have grown up during the course of ages, will serve as a nucleus around which may develop anew, here in America, the power of celebrating together.

During the past few years, indeed, several most important steps have been taken. For example, at Springfield, Massachusetts, the Fourth of July, Independence Day, was celebrated by the city as such. A strong committee developed a plan that gave opportunity for the participation and self-revelation of all the various elements of the city. Great processions marched, including the children from the public schools, representatives in costume of practically all the national groups in the city, each showing in some dramatic form either its own ancestral history, or some special contribution that its nation had made to the world or to American life. Athletic games held in various parts of the city gave an opportunity for the expression of the city's feeling such as the mere exhibition of fireworks or the discharge of firearms has never given. Each nationality felt that its own contribution to the city was recognized, that it "belonged." Rowdyism was at a discount.

In Chicago a great play festival has been held, in which large groups from the various peoples of that city came together, each giving its dances, expressing its relation to its own past, while uniting with the other citizens in civic unity. The time will surely come when each city will have developed its own celebrations—when those holidays which belong to all in common shall have acquired art forms that adequately express their spirit.

The need of developing a new country has taught us the neces-

sity of work: We have yet to learn the place of play and recreation—not as individuals, but as social units, for we do not live as individuals, but as parts of a social whole. It is not entertainment that is the primary aim, although that, too, has its place. Sitting in a hall and seeing represented on a stage stirring, humorous, or tragic scenes, is all very well in its way, but it does not meet the need of community action, a need that we all possess. It is not by chance that the peoples of the world have developed their dances and their other means of celebrating occasions. These activities, these folk dances and games, in which large numbers partake, afford one of the few avenues that exist for the expression of mass feeling. The spirit of unity has been developed as much by these exhibitions of common feeling as it has by participation in a common work. The fact that large numbers of individuals are co-workers in some industry may instil a kind of unity or sympathy among them, but their getting together on an occasion of freedom and expressing their joy in a dance that symbolizes the occasion, operates far more effectively in bringing about this consciousness of the whole.

We in America need such methods of celebration, for we are built of the same stuff as the other peoples of the world.

The foregoing discussion will, I hope, answer the question that is so often and so justly asked: What place have these folk dances and games in the playground movement? Folk dances and games are neither for the poor nor for the rich as such. They are needed as much by those who have already won economic success as by those who are on the borderland and still struggling for it. They are needed as much by those who live under the relatively isolated conditions of rural communities as by those in the congested districts of our American cities. They have a bearing on the moral, the emotional side of life as well as on the physical side; and it is from the moral and emotional standpoint rather than from the physical that these folk dances are valuable.

The nations of the world have succeeded or failed not merely or mainly because of economic reasons. Moral and æsthetic considerations have been of equal importance. The recognition of the national dances of the various peoples not only helps the child of the stranger to understand sympathetically his own ancestral setting, but helps him also to express himself in his own relation to the new world. So our playgrounds, while they have need of gymnastic exercises, have also need of the folk dances and games.

PART II

**The Use of Folk Dancing in a Public  
School System, as Shown by its Use  
by the Girls' Branch of the Pub-  
lic Schools Athletic League of  
New York City**

## PART II.—THE USE OF FOLK DANCING IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, AS SHOWN BY ITS USE BY THE GIRLS' BRANCH OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC LEAGUE OF NEW YORK CITY

The history of the movement for dancing in the public schools of New York City is as simple as it is short. In 1905 an organization was formed for the purpose of providing for the school girls of New York what the Public Schools Athletic League was already providing for one hundred thousand boys—interesting and helpful recreation that would have a real part in their lives outside of school hours.

A great many of the school buildings had gymnasiums and playgrounds that were doing nobody any good outside of school hours. Here was the opportunity, if only the right form of organization, the right kind of alliance with the educational system of the city could be secured. Such an alliance had already been secured by the Public Schools Athletic League; so instead of starting a new organization, a Girls' Branch of the League was formed. Under provisions of control and regulation, the school board granted it the privilege of utilizing the splendid new gymnasium equipment.

The next question was one of method—how to get the best results out of the opportunity. Experience has demonstrated again and again that a hundred children cannot be turned loose on a tiny city playground or on the floor of a gymnasium with any assurance that all will be benefited by it. The benefit is never equally distributed. The stronger and bigger children will inevitably take possession, monopolizing the floor space for their games and athletic "stunts," while the shy, more retiring, less developed children will stand uneasily about the edges looking on or playing some quiet, inactive game in a corner. Yet these are the very children who most need the exercise.

Organized play of some sort, play under control, is the only possible solution; for organized play is freer than free play. In organized play, where every child is a unit in a larger, mutually responsible, mutually responsive whole, all reach a higher and



*Courtesy of Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League, N. Y. C.*

**FOLK DANCING ON A ROOF PLAYGROUND.**

more significant stage of individual freedom than is possible on the unorganized, free-for-all playground.

The problem to be worked out, then, was to find the form of organized play that would bring the greatest amount of good to each child. Careful tests have proved that it could not be found in gymnastics. There one has the element of control, but it is not play. Gymnastics have their place and an important one in the routine of the school day, but gymnastic exercises are primarily for the body. Play is for the whole child—for his heart, mind, and imagination, as well as for his arms, legs, and chest.

When the proposal was made to take up dancing in the schools as an exercise for girls, three things were said in its favor, and all were worth considering. The first was that, in the limited space of the gymnasium, the roof playground, or the school basement, a larger number of children could be handled at once in a dance than in any other way. The second was that in a given space there is more real all-around physical exercise in dancing than in gymnastics or any team game. And the last was that in the few instances where it had already been tried elsewhere, the children had been enthusiastic about it. That was a strong argument, for it must never be forgotten that the object of the undertaking was primarily to develop the play spirit. Anything perfunctory would, therefore, defeat its own ends.

When it came to the question of selecting the dances to be used, it was evident at once that comparatively few would fulfil the required conditions. There was, first, the condition of space. A great many of the folk dances had to be rejected because a large amount of space was required for their performance.

Again, a large number of the dances were not practicable because of the fact that relatively few persons could dance them at a time. The Virginia Reel, for instance, was not adapted for use because most of the people in it are standing still most of the time. The city is just as rigid with regard to the use of time as it is with regard to the use of space. Hence the dances that have been selected are those in which most of the members of the group are participating actively most of the time.

The third consideration was that the dances should be desirable physiologically. Some of the Russian dances, for example, are too severe. They tax the hearts of young people too much. They should be danced only by adults and those who have had special training. Other dances are physiologically undesirable

because they do not involve large body movements to any material extent; that is, they do not quicken the circulation and the respiration. So every dance had to be scrutinized for its possibilities in the way of wholesome general exercise.

Fourthly, a great many dances had to be rejected because of their complexity. We wanted dances simple enough to be taught rapidly and to be performed well, so that the children would enjoy them. It is not enjoyable to do a thing very badly. Of course, the dancing done in the upper grades and in the high schools may be more complicated than that done by the little children. But none of the dances should involve really complicated movements.

Fifth, it was necessary that these dances should be moral. Dances differ from nearly all other forms of physical exercise in that they have within themselves an emotional content. The history of the folk dance is a history of representation; and there is one large theme all treatment of which has to be omitted in our folk dances. That is the love theme. Occasionally it is possible to use some of the courtship dances, but the great group of Eastern dances, in which the body itself is moved, have to be cut out entirely, because the Eastern conception of morals does not fit in with our conception, nor have we the same ideas as to what is suitable in public. No dances are physiologically better than these Eastern dances, but they are absolutely out of the question for us.

Obviously, then, most of the folk dances were unavailable. But a precious percentage of them—five per cent., perhaps—did meet all these requirements, were dances in which large numbers could dance in a small space, in which the children could all dance at once, in which the exercise was excellent from the physiological standpoint, which were simple, moral, and which the children would enjoy.

These dances were then tried with the girls, together with athletics and relays and things of that sort, and so far there has been no comparison between the popularity of these two forms of exercise.

The question naturally arises: How can this work be carried out so as to avoid the objection of those who object to dancing itself? You may recall that in Rochester, a few years ago, the clergy of the city—I think I am correct in this—met together and sent a communication to the board of education asking that all



dancing be cut out of the schools. After an extensive investigation, the board of education replied to them that dancing was a valuable part of education. But the question should never have come up. It is most unfortunate when two groups of people in the community, both of whom have the welfare of the community at heart, come into conflict. I do not think that the question needs to be raised for this reason: The things that such people as these Rochester clergymen object to are genuinely objectionable in the main. We all object to the sort of thing that is reported as going on in the dance halls; we don't want our girls to get into that kind of an atmosphere, into that kind of relation with boys which is the really objectionable thing to those who object to dancing as such. But dancing, as I use the term, means only little groups of girls skipping around in a circle, "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush," or any one of those dancing games. There can be no objection to that kind of dancing, and it need not and should not be confused with any other kind. If by dancing people are going to understand exclusively the round dance, I do not regard it as dodging or deceiving to term this other kind of dancing "rhythmical exercise" or "fancy steps." I discussed this at a meeting of the superintendents of schools of New England and we went over the ground most carefully. I asked whether they thought that I had met the question in an absolutely fair way, and they thought I had.

I expected that when dancing was introduced into the schools of New York City we should at least be attacked through the press, but so far as I know, there has not been a single newspaper letter attacking this folk dancing. That seems to me most extraordinary in view of the fact that these dances are taught to a greater or less extent in practically all the public high schools in the city, and that we have here all races, all religions, all convictions and shades of opinion. And the reason why we have been so successful in avoiding criticism is that we have avoided the social dance. I do not mean now to take any position against social dancing, but under present conditions, while the wholesome element of the community feels as it does about such things, it would be very foolish and disastrous to the cause to begin with the most difficult side of it, that side concerning which there is the most question. The thing to do is to begin with the sort of thing to which there can be no objection, and we have done that, with our little groups of girls going through these old folk dances, these rhythmical exercises.



*Courtesy of Harper & Brothers, and Girls' Branch, P. S. A. L., N. Y. C.*  
"FIFTEEN ACRES OF DANCING GIRLS."

The following platform was formulated and adopted by the founders of the Girls' Branch:

"In the development of the good which we see in physical exercise for girls, including folk dancing and athletics, we recognize that there are certain real dangers, and our problem is to secure the good results without fostering the evil possibilities. We believe that the danger may be avoided, at least in a great measure, by the following steps:

"1. By having the folk dancing for school and social purposes only. It does not seem to us wise to cultivate in the girls the idea that they can make money by exhibiting their dancing. We do think that the exhibition of the folk dancing at the schools, at the parents' meetings, at meetings to which the friends of the girls are invited, at school functions, is not only desirable, but useful; but we feel very strongly that when such exhibitions form part of pay entertainments, the idea of the stage is introduced and becomes sufficiently prominent to make us see that it would be better to eliminate these dances entirely than to cultivate this idea."

Certain principals had said that if it was right for boys to charge admission for their athletic competitions, it was right for girls to charge admission for their dancing; and that if they did not do so, there would be no way to pay for the suits and athletic equipment that the Girls' Branch wanted. But public athletic contests for boys do not involve any such danger as would public dancing by girls. It is a different problem entirely. The boy who can beat all the other boys by a foot in a running high jump is not exposed to the same kind of temptation that is likely to face the girl who can dance beautifully. There are many dance halls in the city that would be glad to get girls who can do these folk dances well, and the girls could easily learn to do them very well indeed in the public schools, so that the public schools might become feeders to the dance halls. That would be a vicious thing. To have the dancing regarded by the children as a part of their school life is wholesome and safe, but to put the dancing on a cash basis is dangerous.

"2. By having the work of such a nature that it can be done in large classes, for the exhibition of one or of even a few girls in special work, leans in the same direction toward the stage. We feel strongly that the trend of our work should not be toward this idea.

"3. In the folk dances, the use of the national costumes of the countries from which the dances are taken adds greatly to their beauty, but we believe that it would be better that such costumes should not be used. If paid for by the girls themselves, they would tend to introduce social distinctions between those who could afford them and those who could not, which would be unfortunate; if paid for by the teachers, they would make a further demand upon their resources, which we believe would be equally unfortunate and which is far from our wish. The chief artistic element in the use of costumes is that of unity, giving to all the members of a class that impression of homogeneity which is one of the basal principles of art. This can be accomplished by the use of some simple decoration, such as a uniform colored ribbon in the hair, a sash, a scarf, or the like, which might be of cheese-cloth or some other inexpensive material, so as not to be a burden to any girl.

"4. The use of the costumes also tends to make the folk dance more of an exhibition than what it really is—a form of physical exercise. Wherever possible, it is desirable that the girls wear bloomers and suitable shoes which allow greater freedom in exercising."

For all those who have interested themselves in the new movement it has been a revelation. The school teachers who first volunteered to give up an hour a week of their precious time to learning folk dances and to teaching them to squads of children, did so because they thought that it would be a good thing for the girls. Many of them have since declared that the dancing hour is the hour in the week to which they themselves look forward most eagerly, that it has done them more good and means more to them than anything else they have undertaken.

So far the scheme has been formally adopted in New York only for girls. Whether, under present conditions, equally good results could be obtained in classes for boys is not altogether clear, though some of the more vigorous horn-pipes and flings have been tried with boys with great success. But there is the right moment for the beginning of any new movement. At present the School Board of New York have a highly organized system of athletic games which is bringing splendid results, both for those who are naturally athletic and for those who would be

inclined to keep altogether on the outside, if left to themselves. An innovation may not be desirable at the present time.

Neither is it yet certain just what dances will prove best suited to our American conditions. Some of the spirited and characteristic dances of Sweden and Russia have so far seemed to make the greatest appeal to the children. Great care is always taken to have the accompanying music appropriate and distinctive, for the music and the dance are organically related.

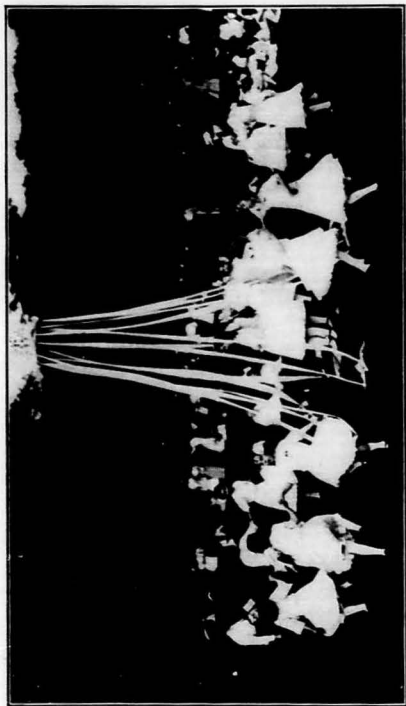
Adaptations and changes there must of course be. The dances are intended to meet the needs of American children; they must relate themselves to American conditions, and much of their value would be lost through too strict an adherence to the traditional letter of the performance.

There is every reason for believing that a country in which the children are given a chance to develop their natural instinct for rhythmical and harmonious activity will have a national life far richer and more beautiful than a nation in which the main emphasis in education is laid upon bare intellectual training for purposes of "practical success."

The following dances are used and approved by the League:

#### FOLK DANCES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

<i>Bohemian:</i>	<i>English:</i>
Strasak.	Sailors' Hornpipe.
Komarno.	Minuet (slow time).
	May Pole Dance.
<i>Danish:</i>	Ribbon Dance.
Ace of Diamonds.	Morris Dances.
Crested Hen.	Laudnum Bunches.
Little Man in a Fix.	Shepherd's Hey.
Shoemakers' Dance.	Bobbing Joe, Etc.
Norwegian Mountain March.	
<i>Russian:</i>	<i>Italian:</i>
Comarinskaia.	Tarantella.
The Crane.	
<i>Scotch:</i>	<i>Swedish:</i>
Reel of Four.	Frykksdalspolska.
Highland Fling.	Klappdans.
Shean Trews.	Carrousel.
	I See You.
<i>Irish:</i>	Fjallnaspolska.
Jig.	Reap the Flax.
Lilt.	Oxdansen.
	Ma's Little Pigs.
<i>German:</i>	Tailor's Dance.
Baby Polka.	Washing the Clothes.
	To-day's the First of May.
<i>Hungarian:</i>	Christmas Time.
Csardas.	Trollen.
Hungarian Solo.	Chain Dance.
Baborak.	Gustaf's Skoal.
Csebogar.	Our Little Girls.



*Courtesy of Girls' Branch, P. S. A. L., N. Y. C.*

THE MAYPOLE DANCE.

## FOLK DANCES FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

<i>English:</i>	<i>Italian:</i>
Ribbon Dance.	Tarantella.
Minuet (slow time).	<i>Russian:</i>
May Pole Dance.	Komarinskaia.
Morris Dances.	<i>Scotch:</i>
Sailors' Hornpipe.	Reel of Four.
	Highland Fling.
	Shean Trews.
<i>Irish:</i>	<i>Swedish:</i>
Jig.	Frykksdalspolka.
Lilt.	Fjällnaspolska.
Rincee Fadde.	Oxdansen.
	Reap the Flax.
<i>Hungarian:</i>	Weaving Dance.
Csardas.	
Hungarian Solo.	

This folk dancing is taught to the girls in the elementary schools after school hours by the regular class teachers. These teachers are given instruction in these dances. The teachers pay for their instruction by giving the time to the children. Upward of fifty thousand children are regularly engaged in this after-school dancing. Full information on this topic can be secured from the handbook referred to in the bibliography. The organization is effective and seems to fit the conditions in New York City, but were the work to be started anew, it is certain that a simpler plan would be found equally effective.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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COMPILED BY E. BURCHENAL, CHAIRMAN, PLAYGROUND  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, 1 MADISON AVENUE, NEW  
YORK CITY.

Contains Selected List of Folk Dances. Dances suitable for Grass Playgrounds; for Playgrounds with Dirt Surface; for Indoor Playgrounds. Dances Suitable for Small Children; for Larger Boys; for Larger Girls; for Adults. Dances of Various Occupations; Dances Suitable for Special Occasions, telling where description or music, or both, may be found; also a very exhaustive bibliography of books on Folk Dancing.

2. CHILDREN'S SINGING GAMES. Mari R. Hofer. Published  
by A. Flanagan Company, 266 Wabash Ave., Chicago,  
Ill. Price, 50 cents.

Contains, among others, music and descriptions of:  
Oats, Peas, Beans  
Mow, Mow the Oats

3. FOLK DANCE BOOK, THE. C. Ward Crampton. Published by A. S. Barnes & Company, 11 East 24th Street, New York City. Price, \$1.50.

Contains, among others, music and description of:

German Hopping Dance	Stuyvesant Dance
Irish Lilt	Trollen

4. FOLK DANCE MUSIC. Elizabeth Burchenal and C. Ward Crampton. Published by G. Schirmer, 3 East 43d Street, New York City. Price: Paper, \$1.50; cloth, \$2.00.

Contains seventy-six folk dance melodies. Among others, the most popular are the following folk dances:

Comarinskaia  
Irish Jig  
Komarno  
Strasak  
Tarantella

5. FOLK DANCES. Elizabeth Burchenal. Published by G. Schirmer, 3 East 43d St., New York City. Price, \$1.50.

Contains dance music, descriptions and illustrations of twenty-five of the folk dances introduced by the author in the Public Schools Athletic League of New York City. Among others are:

Comarinskaia  
Csardas  
Irish Jig  
Ma's Little Pigs  
Scottish Reel and Fling  
Strasak  
Tarantella

6. FOLK DANCES AND GAMES. Caroline Crawford. Published by A. S. Barnes & Co., 11 E. 24th St., New York City. Price, \$1.50.

Contains, among others, music and descriptions of:

Bounding Heart  
Finnish Harvest Dance  
French Vintage Dance  
Gustaf's Skoal  
Highland Schottische



7. GUILD OF PLAY BOOKS OF FESTIVAL AND DANCE. G. T. Kimmins. Published by J. Curwen & Sons, 24 Berners St., W., London, England. Price, 5 shillings each.

Contain music and descriptions of old English dances arranged by Mrs. M. H. Woolnoth, and dance at Bermondsey Settlement in London, by the Children of the Guild of Play. Among other charming dances are the following:

Christmas Dance  
Maypole Dance  
Minuet  
Spring Flower Dance  
Welsh Dance

8. MORRIS BOOKS, THE. Cecil J. Sharp and H. C. MacIlwaine. Published by Novello & Co., 21 E. 17th St., New York City. Price, \$1.25 each.

Contain very clear and definite descriptions of twelve of the best Morris dances in England. Among them are:

Bean Setting  
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Laudnum Bunches

9. MORRIS DANCE TUNES (two sets to each Morris Book). Cecil J. Sharp and H. C. MacIlwaine. Published by Novello & Co., 21 E. 17th St., New York City. Price, \$1.00 each.

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11. OLD SWEDISH FOLK DANCES. A translation by Nils Bergquist, of the Hand Book of "The Friends of Swedish Folk Dances." Published by A. S. Barnes & Co., 11 East 24th St., New York City. Price, \$1.50.

Contains, among others, descriptions of:

Clap Dance  
Oxdans  
Varsouvienne  
Weaving Dance

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Contains, among others, music and descriptions of:

Carrousel

Christmas Time

To-day Is the First of May

I See You

Peter Magnus

Ritsh, Ratsh