

Some Additional Figures for Set-Running

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SOME ADDITIONAL FIGURES FOR SET-RUNNING

THE figures described below are taken from various sources and from regions as far apart as the Province of Ontario and the State of Alabama. Their inclusion in the dance which we call Running Set requires some explanation, for, with the exception of the figures collected in Kentucky and Northern Alabama, some doubt might be raised as to their relationship with this dance.

In discussing the matter we should first of all remind ourselves that actually there is no specific dance called the Running Set, the term being a generic one which is used to indicate a certain type of dance rather than an individual dance.

In the Appalachian Mountains the people talk of 'running a set', and the equivalent verbal noun is 'set running', but it is doubtful whether the term 'Running Set', which Cecil Sharp adopted for the sake of convenience, is ever used by them.

It is very probable that the word 'set' implies a 'set of figures', in the way that it is customary to speak of a 'set of Quadrilles'. For the dance is a composite affair and consists, as is well known, of a variety of figures which are welded together by means of certain stock movements, such as the Promenades. The choice of figures and the order of their performance is not stereotyped, but is determined by the will of the Caller, who selects them from a fairly extensive repertory.

The figures noted in Connecticut and Ontario are selected from figures of the Square Dance, which, in some form or other, is distributed over a wide portion of the North American continent, including Newfoundland. This dance-form bears a close resemblance to the Running Set of the Appalachian Mountains, and there is undoubtedly a connexion between them.

In construction, the Square Dance is similar to that of the Running Set. There is usually some form of introduction, and then the distinctive figure is led by each couple in turn. Sometimes, but not always, a stock figure such as Promenade is interpolated between the Rounds of the figure. A definite pause is usually made at the end of each figure.

The disposition of the dancers is usually as in the Running Set, i.e. they are numbered counter-clockwise, but at Stratford, Ct., the 2nd couple stood at the bottom facing 1st couple, and the 3rd and 4th couples stood on the right and left side, respectively, the figures being led by the dancers in their numerical order.¹

¹ In the notation given below the normal system of numbering has been adhered to.

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The Introduction consisted of the following figures, performed first by the top and bottom couples and then by the side couples:

Right and Left (Circular-hey for two couples).

Sachet—a corruption of chassée (partners engage waltz fashion and slip forward and back).

Ladies' Chain (women change, giving right hands and turn contraries left, cross back with right hands, and turn partners with left).

Sachet.

All four couples balance (i.e. swing) their partners, and promenade round to places.

At the end of each figure the dancers went Hands-all to the centre and back and once again to the centre, saluting (i.e. bowing to the centre).

At Monterey, Mass., and West Avon, Ct., the introductory and intermediate movements were usually Swing Partners and Promenade, but sometimes in between the Rounds of the figure the Grand Chain was substituted for these movements.

At Lakefield, Ont., the dancing started with an Introduction consisting of the following figures:

Hands-eight counter-clockwise.

Release contrary partners' hands and back to places, women walking slightly ahead of partners, men keeping right hands held up.

Partners swing in position.

Partners promenade round to places, still swinging.

Grand Chain (turn contrary partners with left hands once round and then circular-hey, handing, partners giving right hands).

Tops and Bottoms Right-and-Left (i.e. corners cross, women left and men right, and return to places in same way).

Tops and Bottoms Ladies' Chain.

All swing and promenade round.

Side Couples Right-and-Left, and Ladies' Chain.

Grand Chain.

All Swing and promenade round.

The Introduction (and Finale) of the distinctive figures was usually Grand Chain, followed by Swing and promenade round; and Swing and promenade round was usually interpolated between the Rounds of each figure.

The distinctive figures of the Square Dance vary considerably in character. Some of them are variations of Quadrille or Cotillion figures; whilst others, such as are noted below, are of a less conventional type—although even some of these figures have a connexion with Quadrille figures, e.g. Ladies Change Sides, which closely resembles the Trenise.

The greatest difference in the two dance-forms—if, indeed, we are justified in regarding them as different forms—lies, however, not so much in the figures, for many of them are common both to the Running Set and the Square Dance, but in the style and character of the dance-execution.

The Square Dance, wherever I have seen it, is almost entirely lacking in that quality of swiftness which is such an essential characteristic of the Running Set (see *The Country Dance Book*,

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Part V, p. 20). The step is devoid of spring and consists of a shuffling or gliding walking-step, or a chassée step. In every respect the style of dancing is more sophisticated, and this is particularly noticeable in the method of turning. Whereas in the Running Set the turns are made by the taking of hands, in the Square Dance partners engage waltz fashion; and instead of performing a single revolution, they continue to embrace and pivot round each other for a considerable period of time. So that the turn from being a mere incident in the performance of a figure becomes often the most important part of the figure. The normal step used for turning is a pivot-step, but often waltz steps are introduced, and at times even 'Jazz' steps. I was, however, told by a few of the old people that this method of turning was modern and that the old way was to take hands.

The difference in style is easily accounted for by the difference in the character and environment of the dancers. The Set-runners of the Appalachian Mountains have been living for many generations in their mountain fastnesses with but little contact with the outside world, whereas the dancers of New England and the Eastern Provinces of Canada, although living in rural surroundings, have been influenced by modern 'civilization', and this has had its effect on the dances. There has, moreover, been a great increase in their popularity during the last few years, and this has still further subjected them to sophisticating influences. The dances are now performed not only in remote settlements, but in the public dance-halls of small country towns, such as Stratford, Ct., and Lakefield, Ont. The usual custom is to organize an 'old-fashioned' dance once a week. It should here be mentioned that the term 'Square Dance' has come to be applied generically to any form of old-fashioned dance, whether it be actually of Square or Longways formation, to distinguish it from the modern dance, which is called a Round Dance. Sometimes nothing but 'Square' Dances are performed at these weekly functions, but the usual custom is to do alternately a 'Round' and a 'Square' Dance.

The Square Dance (using the term in its specific sense) is frequently spoken of as a Quadrille, and many French ball-room terms are applied to the figures of the dance, such as Allemande, Chassée, &c.

This nomenclature, together with the fact that a certain number of Quadrille figures are included, might lead us to suppose that the Square Dance is a development of the Quadrille, or of the Cotillion. The latter dance, which was brought to England from France about the year 1770, was the forerunner of the Quadrille, which actually is but a modified form of Cotillion.

Assuming that this theory of the origin of the Square Dance is correct, can we ascribe the same origin to the Running Set of the Appalachian Mountains, and if not, how can we account for the finding of identical figures in the two dances?

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Cecil Sharp, in the Introduction to *The Country Dance Book*, Part V, puts forward the theory that the Running Set is a survival of a type of Country Dance which in order of development preceded the Playford dance, 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. He foresees, however, the possible necessity of modifying this view if further investigations in other parts of America lead to the discovery of more examples of this particular type of dance.

The evidence that we have at present before us does not, however, seem sufficient to justify the modification of Cecil Sharp's views.

There is just a possibility that the Cotillion might have been brought out at the end of the eighteenth century by English settlers to the Appalachian Mountains, but the Running Set bears so little resemblance to the Cotillion as described in the early nineteenth-century dance-books, both as regards the majority of its figures and its general character, that it is hard to believe that this dance-form could have been developed from the Cotillion in so short a period as a century and a quarter, or thereabouts.

A possible solution of the problem is to retain Cecil Sharp's views with regard to the origin of the Running Set and to regard the Square Dance, not as a pure development of the Quadrille, but as a hybrid, which contains elements both of an old form of Country Dance and of the later Quadrille and Cotillion.

A great deal of further research is, however, necessary before any theories as to origins can be authoritatively substantiated, and it is hoped that scholars may turn their attention to this subject, for a thorough examination of the traditional European dance-forms extant in America would probably throw valuable light on the general history of the English Country Dance.

The figures given below have been selected because—whatever their origin may be—they lend themselves to the general style and character of the Running Set, and their inclusion will not therefore disturb the artistic unity of the dance.

It is hoped that they will give variety and add to the enjoyment of Set-running.

THE OUTSIDE DOOR

(Collected by MISS D. F. BOLLES and MISS A. W. CHRISTENSEN at Wooton, Leslie Co., Kentucky.)

Caller's Rhyme:

Lady falls through and takes the lead,
Gent falls through and takes the lead,
Lady falls through the outside door,
Pick up your partner and couple up four,
Round to the left, round to the right,
Swing your opposite and promenade your own.

1st man, followed by his partner, taking inside hands, proceeds to circle counter-clockwise round 2nd couple. When behind 2nd

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couple they release hands, and 1st woman, instead of following her partner round 2nd woman, breaks away and passes between 2nd man and 2nd woman, thus getting ahead of her partner. The 1st woman, followed by her partner (not taking hands), continues to move counter-clockwise round 2nd couple, but 1st man, when he gets behind 2nd couple, ceases to follow his partner, and, passing between 2nd man and 2nd woman, again gets ahead of his partner. 1st man, followed by his partner, continues moving counter-clockwise round 2nd couple, and the 1st woman again breaks away and passes between 2nd man and 2nd woman.

1st and 2nd couples hands-four eight steps clockwise and eight steps counter-clockwise. Contrary partners turn.

So on to each couple in turn.

At Wooton it was not usual to perform the Do-si-do at the end of the last repetition of the figure, but its inclusion can be made optional.

FIGURE 8 (second version)

(Collected by MISS D. BOLLES at the Pine Mountain School, Harlan Co., Kentucky.)

1st and 2nd couples dance as in the opening figure of 'The Wild Goose Chase' (see *The Country Dance Book*, Part V, p. 28), except that 2nd man remains stationary until the performance of hands-four. After hands-four, 2nd man and 2nd woman remain in their places, whilst 1st couple proceeds to 3rd couple, and so on.

WAVES OF THE SEA

(Collected by MR. RICHARD CHASE in N. Alabama.)

Caller's Rhyme:

Waves of the ocean,
Waves of the sea,
Wave that pretty girl
Back to me.

1st couple faces 2nd couple. 1st man crosses hands with his partner and leads her forward in between 2nd man and 2nd woman. 1st man and 1st woman, without releasing hands, make a half-turn towards each other and lead back. 1st man casts off to his right and goes clockwise round 2nd couple into 1st woman's place; whilst 1st woman casts off to her left and goes counter-clockwise round 2nd couple into 1st man's place. 1st man and 1st woman take hands and change places.

Meanwhile, 2nd man and 2nd woman move forward, passing outside 1st couple, and each make a circle (the man clockwise and the woman counter-clockwise) into their partners' places. 2nd man leads his partner forward with crossed hands, passing in between 1st man and 1st woman. Without releasing hands they make a half-turn towards each other and lead back. 2nd man and 2nd woman turn each other half-way round and change places.

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1st and 2nd couples hands-four once round.

The timing of this figure, as seen by Mr. Chase, was very irregular, and it is advised that it should not be too much stereotyped in performance. The figure can probably be most conveniently performed in 16 bars, taking approximately 6 bars for the leading forward and back (making a slow half-turn), 6 bars for the cast-round movement, and 4 bars for the hands-four.

Sometimes partners turn each other whilst they are leading forward and back with crossed hands.

GRAPE VINE SWING

(Collected by MR. RICHARD CHASE in *N. Alabama.*)

1st and 2nd couples hands-four to places.

1st man and 2nd woman release hands and 1st man, continuing to move round in a clockwise direction, goes under an arch made by 1st woman and 2nd man. Meanwhile 2nd woman moves round in a counter-clockwise direction, 2nd man following her. 2nd man and 2nd woman then make an arch under which 1st man passes, followed by his partner, whilst 2nd woman continues to move round in a counter-clockwise direction.

Hands-four to places.¹ Pick up 3rd couple and hands-six to places.

1st man and 3rd woman release hands, and first man, continuing in a counter-clockwise direction, leads the dancers under successive arches made by 1st woman and 2nd man, 2nd man and 2nd woman, 2nd woman and 3rd man, and, finally, 3rd man and 3rd woman. Throughout this movement 3rd woman is moving round in counter-clockwise circles, followed by all the dancers who are situated on the right-hand side of the arch.

Hands-six to places.¹ Pick up 4th couple and hands-eight.

1st man and 4th woman release hands, and 1st man passes under successive arches as before, whilst 4th woman leads the dancers round in counter-clockwise circles.

Hands-eight.¹

All forward a double to the centre and back twice. (This usually takes the place of the Promenades.)

The above figure will be clearer if it is realized that the head of the string of dancers (i.e. the leader) is making continuous circles in a clockwise direction, passing under successive arches; whilst the tail of the string of dancers is continuously moving round in counter-clockwise circles. The dancer, who with right hand forms part of the arch, will act as a pivot; whilst the dancer, whose left hand is occupied with forming the arch, will always be moving round in a counter-clockwise direction.

COUPLE UP AND DO-SI

(Collected by MR. RICHARD CHASE in *N. Alabama.*)

1st and 2nd couples hands-four, do-si-do, and promenade home.

Hands-four and pick up 3rd couple.

Hands-six, the three couples do-si-do and promenade home.

Hands-six and pick up 4th couple.

¹ See note at end of next figure, i.e. 'Couple Up and Do-si.'

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Hands-eight, the four couples do-si-do and promenade home.

Hands-eight. All forward a double to the centre and back, twice.

The do-si-do with three and four couples is performed as in the do-si-do for two couples, each man turning his partner with left hand and contrary partner (i.e. the woman standing on his left when dancers are in ring-formation) with right hand. It should, however, be realized that as no couple has a vis-à-vis, the man's track does not cross that of another man whilst he is passing from one woman to another. As in the do-si-do for two couples, the women should make their turns on the spot.

Note.—This figure when seen by Mr. Chase in N. Alabama was not performed as a separate figure, but was incorporated in the Grape Vine Swing, the do-si-do for two couples being interpolated between hands-four and hands-six, the do-si-do for three couples between hands-six and hands-eight, and the do-si-do for four couples being danced after the hands-eight which follows the last arch movement.

It has been the custom for the Society's dancers to separate the two figures, and this method may, perhaps, be considered an improvement.

HALF-CHAIN

(*Noted by MR. RICHARD CHASE in Ohio.*)

Men turn their partners with left hands and their contraries with right. Circular-hey, handing, four changes, giving left hands to partners. Partners make a whole turn with left hands and, reversing their directions, dancers hey back to places.

This figure is also performed omitting the two preliminary turns and starting with the hey.

This figure takes the place of the Promenade.

DUCK FOR OYSTERS

(*Noted by M. KARPELES at Stratford, Ct., October, 1927.*)

Caller's Rhyme:

Duck for oysters, duck for clams,
Duck for your home in a happy land.

1st and 2nd couples hands-four. Without releasing hands, 1st couple passes under arch made by 2nd couple, and then falls back to the hands-four position. 2nd couple passes forward and back under arch made by 1st couple. 1st couple pops under arch made by 2nd couple and, breaking away, passes on to 3rd couple. And so on.

LADIES CHANGE SIDES

(*Noted by M. KARPELES at Stratford, Ct., October 1927.*)

1st couple faces 2nd couple.

1st man leads his partner forward a double towards 2nd couple and back a double. 1st couple goes forward a double again. 1st man falls back a double, while 1st woman stands on the left of 2nd man.

2nd man leads his partner and 1st woman forward a double

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towards 1st man and back a double. 2nd man leads the two women forward a double again, and, releasing hands, 2nd man falls back a double to his place, whilst the two women stand on either side of 1st man, all three facing second man.

1st man leads the two women forward a double and back. 1st and 2nd couples hands-four. 1st and 2nd men turn their partners. And so on.

As performed at Stratford the 1st couple did the figure with the opposite couple only.

OCEAN WAVE

(Noted by M. KARPELES at Lakefield, Ontario, July, 1929.)

Caller's Rhyme:

First couple lead up to the right
And circle half,
Dip and dive in the ocean wave,
Inside under and outside over,
Dip and dive, you dance so well,
Do it some more and dip right through
To your opposite two,
And circle a half, &c.

1st couple hands-four half-way round with 2nd couple, finishing with 1st and 2nd couples facing each other, 2nd couple being between 1st and 4th couples. In this position the three couples do a form of hey (similar to that in Grimstock, Part 2, see *The Country Dance Book*, Part II, p. 88). 1st man and 1st woman make an arch with inside hands and pass outside and over 2nd couple, and then in between third man and third woman, and under the arch made by them. On completing the first half of the hey, 1st man turns his partner half-way round with one hand and changes places with her, and then 1st man and 1st woman complete the hey on their wrong sides, passing over and under. They then change back on to their own sides, and do one more change of the hey, passing over the 2nd couple.

The 2nd and 4th couples perform the hey as initiated by the 1st couple, each couple always passing under from the middle place, and over from either of the end places, partners always turning each other half-way round on reaching either the top or the bottom of the hey.

1st and 3rd couples hands-four half-way round. 1st and 3rd couples change places, 1st woman passing under arch made by 3rd couple, whilst 1st man passes 3rd woman by the right.

1st and 4th couples hands-four half-way round. 1st, 4th and 2nd couples hey as before, 1st couple starting by passing over 4th couple.

The hey should not be extended beyond the area of the set, and in order that the movement may be a continuous one the half-turn at either end of the hey should not be hurried.

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POLKA SWING

(Noted by M. KARPELES at Lakefield, Ontario, July, 1929.)

Caller's Rhyme:

First couple go forward and back,
Lady to the right and gent to the left,
Three and three and six in a polky swing.
Lady lead on and the gent follow up.
Three and three and six in a polky swing.
Lady lead on, &c.
Three and three, &c.
Lady holds fast and gent follows up,
And four and four on the corners all
Take a polky swing.

1st couple goes forward a double and back.

1st woman goes hands-three with 2nd couple, whilst the 1st man goes hands-three with 4th couple. The rings of three, whilst revolving clockwise, themselves move round each other (as in the Waltz-Swing, *The Country Dance Book*, Part V, p. 41), making one complete circuit, counter-clockwise.

1st woman hands-three with 3rd couple, whilst 1st man hands-three with 2nd couple, and again the two rings move round each other counter-clockwise.

1st woman hands-three with 4th couple, whilst 1st man hands-three with 3rd couple, and the two rings move round each other as before.

1st man joins his partner, and they go hands-four with 4th couple, whilst 2nd and 3rd couples go hands-four, the two rings of four making a complete counter-clockwise circle round each other.

THREE IN A LINE

(Noted by M. KARPELES at Lakefield, Ontario, July, 1929.)

Caller's Rhyme:

First couple lead up to the right
And circle four,
Gent leave the lady,
Go on to the next and circle three,
Gent takes the lady on to the next
And circle three.
Gent leaves the lady and circles home,
Three in a line go forward and back,
Right hand up and left lady under,
Three in a line, &c.

1st couple hands-four with 2nd couple. 1st woman stays on the left-hand side of 2nd man, whilst 1st man passes on to 3rd couple.

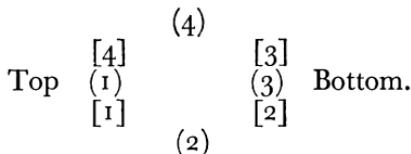
1st man hands-three with 3rd couple. 1st man and 3rd woman hands-four with 4th couple, leaving 3rd woman on left of 4th man.

1st man returns to his place, so that the formation of the dancers is as follows:

Top	(1)	[4]	(4)	[3]	(3)	Bottom.
		[1]	(2)	[2]		

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The lines of three take hands and go forward a double and back. 2nd and 4th men raise their hands and, without releasing hands, the 1st and 2nd woman move forward in front of 2nd man and change places with each other, the 2nd woman passing under the arch made by 2nd man and 2nd woman; meanwhile 3rd and 4th woman change places, the 3rd woman passing under the arch made by 4th man and 4th woman. The women then change back, and stand on either side of the 1st and 3rd men, thus:



The lines of three go forward a double and back. Women change places as before.

The line-figures are then repeated.

CUT THE FIGURE 8

(Noted by M. KARPELES at Monterey, Mass., and West Avon, Ct., August 1929.)

1st woman gives right hand to 3rd man and changes places with him. She then changes back, giving him left hand. 1st woman retains 3rd man's hand and gives right hand to her partner, whilst 3rd man gives right hand to his partner. The four dancers are thus in line, facing alternate ways. 1st man, followed by the others, makes a figure-8, dancing counter-clockwise round the 2nd couple and clockwise round the 4th couple.

FIRST LADY SWINGS SECOND GENT

(Noted by M. KARPELES as above.)

1st woman turns 2nd man with right hand and her partner with left, and then stands in the centre, whilst the rest of the dancers go hands-seven round her.

1st man turns 2nd woman with right hand and his partner with left, and the 1st couple stays in the centre, whilst the rest of the dancers go hands-six round them.

THE SILENT COUPLE

(Noted by M. KARPELES as above.)

1st man and 1st woman separate and move round the outside of the set (the man clockwise and the woman counter-clockwise). They make a whole turn when they meet behind the 3rd couple and then continue moving round in the same direction, turning each other once-and-a-half round when they meet in the top place.

1st and 3rd couples go forward a double and back and change places (improper), 1st couple passing between 3rd man and 3rd woman.

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1st man and 1st woman (now in 3rd couple's place) separate and go half-way round on the outside of the set, returning to their own places. 1st man turns 1st woman, whilst 3rd man and 3rd woman move down the middle of the set, returning to their own places. 1st and 3rd couples hands-four once round.

1st woman stands between 2nd man and 2nd woman, whilst 1st man stands between 4th man and 4th woman, taking hands, and forming lines of three, thus:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & [4] & (1) & (4) & & & \\ \text{Top} & & & & [3] & & \text{Bottom.} \\ & & & & (3) & & \\ & (2) & [1] & [2] & & & \end{array}$$

The two lines of three move forward a double and back.

The 3rd couple (i.e. the 'silent couple') separate and go round outside the set, as the 1st couple did at the beginning of the figure. 3rd man then stands on the right of 2nd woman, whilst 3rd woman stands on the right of 4th man, thus forming lines of four.

The lines of four go forward a double and back. Partners turn, 1st couple regaining its position by passing between 2nd man and 4th woman. (This will form the initial turn of the Promenade.)

LEAD YOUR PARTNER TO THE RIGHT

(Noted by M. KARPELES as above.)

1st man leads his partner towards 2nd couple. Contrary partners turn. 1st woman stays with 2nd man (standing on his right), whilst 1st man leads 2nd woman to 3rd couple. Contrary partners turn (i.e. 1st man turns 3rd woman, whilst 3rd man turns 2nd woman). 2nd woman stays with 3rd man, whilst 1st man leads 3rd woman to 4th couple. 1st man turns 4th woman, whilst 4th man turns 3rd woman (i.e. contraries turn).

VARIANTS

HANDS-ACROSS

(Noted by Miss D. BOLLES at Wootton, Leslie Co., Ky.)

1st and 2nd couples right-hands-across, and left-hands-across. Contrary partners turn each other twice round. 1st couple turn. Hands-four once round.

WIND UP THE BALL YARN

(Noted by Miss EVELYN WELLS at Pine Mountain, Harlan Co., Ky.)

As in *The Country Dance Book*, Part V, p. 34, but at the conclusion of the figure, dancers, moving backwards, dance round counter-clockwise.

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CHASE THE SQUIRREL

(Noted by M. K. at Pine Mountain, Harlan Co., Ky.)

As in *The Country Dance Book*, Part V, p. 27, but after 1st woman has passed round 2nd man they turn each other. Then hands-four.

SHOOT THE OWL, or POP GOES THE WEASEL

(Noted by M. K. at Stratford, Ct.)

As in *The Country Dance Book*, Part V, p. 27, but the final hands-four is made half-way round (instead of the whole way), and then 1st man and 1st woman pop simultaneously under the arch made by 4th couple. Partners will have to change places before performing Do-si-do.

FIGURE 8 AND HANDS-ACROSS

(Noted by M. K. at Stratford, Ct.)

1st man and 1st woman go the Figure 8 round 2nd couple. 1st and 2nd couples right-hands-across and left-hands-across.

MAUD KARPELES.