

Tripping Feet

By CLAUDIA MAY FERRIN
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ALZENA STOKES was proud of her record as a dancer. Light of foot and apt in rhythm, she was sought as a partner by many whose social rating set the pace of the countryside. Among these were the Norths, a family boasting three young people, with easy money to keep the trio moving forward.

It was a privilege unusual to dance with Willard North. He was a splendid fellow on his feet, presumably because so much leisure and hilarity since boyhood had given him little else to think about. Alzena experienced a thrill of delight every time he requested a number.

The outstanding difficulty was of a peculiar nature. There were more women than men in that locality, three to one. If a half-dozen young fellows from a near-by village chanced to drive across country to one of the parties, the anxieties of the hostess were lightened ten-fold. Some of the girls were sufficiently accommodating to dance two by two; but the love-lorn pined, and the lonely ones lost interest, so that often the quota was not present.

"Do you know," began Willard one day, when Alzena accosted him with an invitation, "do you know just how much you girls hamper the success of these parties you attempt to have? Why, in the cities there are professional entertainers, men and women who are supposed to be better dancers than any guest of the evening. Or some who can do trick steps or fancy turns, such as the amateur couldn't dream out in a week. You ought to try a few steps by yourself, for instance."

"I — do — something — un—usual?" The young lady could not find words for her sense of amazement. "Why, I'd be chased off the premises." Then a moment's thinking helped to a solution. "I know one who might do all that—and not be criticized."

"The chaps will flock in from three or four villages—see if they don't. Now, learn all you can from this young lady. Don't be so shy of criticism."

Alzena decided to lose no time. She had met the dancer at an affair at one of the near-by towns, where she visited often. She was sure her friend could find Minna Merlin—in time, possibly, for the coming social. A letter brought the promise to try; Alzena began to plan. She sent word to the musicians to be prepared in an especial manner. She awaited the mails, and as impatiently hoped for a word with Willard North. Secretly, she wished the response by mail to be first.

The hostess next on the list was one of the thrifty sort. She offered to clear her "summer kitchen"—an out-of-date, worked-over cottage that once had been the farm-house, displaced now by a more pretentious dwelling alongside. Two large rooms made up the ground floor, with similar arrangements above—two to serve as dressing-rooms. Alzena was sure there would be plenty of space for some very good dancing and for the games of the evening. She sent word in every direction, inviting her friends—and their friends—to witness this new venture.

It was easy to see that Willard North was pleased. So were the chaps he brought with him. Minna Merlin danced, almost every number, with a few display-bits of an original type. The maidens of the community were fired with jealousy, declaring every one, that she could do just as well, with a little practice. Alzena watched the steps, too. Every youth present stood ready to bow low to the stranger, therefore it was worth while to take notice. Finally Alzena and Minna tripped at a few stunts they had practiced during the days of anxious planning. It was proved that Alzena's reputation as a neighborhood favorite had not been dimmed.

But the innovation led to a near-

catastrophe, after all. Willard North became intensely interested, urging another party, charity or social, or a weekly appropriation of the town dance-hall. He went across country to Minna Merlin's native burg; he wished to know the lady better. Alzena Stokes realized she had started something that might not end soon.

Miss Stokes, however, kept practicing carefully the steps and stunts that Minna had taught her. The idea had accomplished the purpose intended; the young people flocked together eagerly enough, at the next call. The girls smiled the brighter—and oftener; the chaps seemed just as happy. Yet, when Willard brought Minna, there began a buzz of whispers that led more and more to a definite pairing off.

Alzena stood alone, as a consequence. She had lost Willard North as a dance partner, merely by attempting to please him. Twice within the four or five hours of hilarity, it chanced, he sought her for a waltz or a two-step.

Never mind the trouble you've started," He returned her jokes with abandon. "I shall do my best to bring different fellows every time, in the hope that you, too, may become lost—like Miss Merlin."

Milk to be Tested

The State Department of Agriculture's new bacteriology laboratory is starting an inclusive program to determine the bacterial counts on Oregon dairy products, Director S. T. White announced this week.

Examination of Grade A milk from distributors throughout the state is well under way, he said. Exploratory tests are also being made on bacterial counts of ice cream mixes for the purpose of establishing standards for the product.

Under the program now outlined, district representatives of the state department of agriculture will pick up samples of milk from Grade A dairies all over the state. All dairies will be covered at least four times a year.

Marjory aged six, called from the bath room where she was getting ready for her, "Mother do I have to brush the tooth the dentist is going to pull tomorrow?"

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