The Castle Polka

Modern Dance Exponents Demonstrate Steps of Own Origin in Seventh Article in Series on Dancing as an Art.

1. To Commence, We Assume the Usual Dancing Position For Both to go Forward.
2. The Second Figure, I Swing in Front of Mrs. Castle and We Continue the Same Step Facing Each Other.
3. When Mrs. Castle Hops on the One Foot the Heel of the Other Comes Up a Trifle.
4. A Graceful Position Taken Before Beginning the Polka, Or as It Ends.

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BY MR. VERNON CASTLE.

BEFORE I explain the polka it might be well to tell why I think it should be revived and modernized—not to take the place of the other dances so popular now, but to add variety to all dance programmes. We have at present a leaning toward things old-fashioned. This is most noticeable in the quaintness of the fashionable woman's attire. In fact my wife is wearing at parties the dress you see in these photographs.

Possibly the most important excuse for a revival and modernization of the polka is because it is easy to learn and so enjoyable to dance. In the polka you hop rather than slide, which is exactly opposite to the usual steps in our present-day dances. This hop, if not exaggerated, is most graceful. The counting for this dance is 1-2-3 hop. You do the hop after the third step, that is, if you start this way: left, right, left, hop, the hop comes on the left foot. If this is clear to you it is safe to take up the dance itself, which I will explain by imagining myself the instructor and you my partner and pupil. If you happen to be a man you must put yourself in my place and study my description in that way.

In reading old descriptions of the polka dances, we run across sentences which so accurately describe the beauty of this dance that they may be quoted here to add to our description of the steps.

"The gentleman should hold the lady neither too near nor distant—too near would violate propriety and grace—too distant would be difficult. The polka, which found its way into our balls under the auspices of fashion has had an assured success.

"By its soft and graceful movements, the nature of its steps, which yield so readily to all the caprices of the waltzer—by the character of its airs for the part inspired by such happy musical feeling it is certain to preserve its rank in our balls, providing as it does for our waltzers an indispensable repose amid the fever of the waltz."

To commence, we assume the usual dancing position for both to go forward. I start on my left foot and you on your right (this will be better understood from our first photograph). Now we start dancing the polka step in this position, going forward around the room. This is the first figure, which (while we are learning) we will do eight times.

For the second figure I swing in front of you and we continue the same steps, facing each other, turning the while as in the two-step (second photo). You must be very careful not to hop until after the third step, and also, when you do hop on the one foot the heel of the other should come up, as Mrs. Castle's foot is in the third photograph. This step we will also do eight times.

The third figure is very simple and very pretty. I release my right hand, which is around your waist, and we bow to each other. The time for this bow is eight beats—four to make the bow and four to straighten up again. After that we commence the polka step again. I start on my left foot and you on your right foot, as before.

The fourth and last figure is not quite so simple. While we are facing each other doing the ordinary polka step, we change hands, that is, I take your right in my right and your left in my left, your right hand being behind your back. Now to make the change, I do two ordinary walking steps and you turn a little, so that you (keeping on with the polka step) are at my side instead of facing me. After the two walking steps we go into the polka again and in the position seen in the fifth photograph. This is all there is to the polka, and to get back again to the first figure, all I do is to take two more walking steps and take the original hand position.

Whoever pretends to dance the polka without sufficient previous study will infallibly exhibit himself, if not ridiculous, at least awkward, and serve as a contrast to those who have given it the attention it requires.

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PENROD BY BOOTH TARKINGTON

(Continued From Page 3.)

rived about half the guests had either been initiated into the mysteries by Fanchon or were learning by imitation; and the education of the other half was resumed with the dancing, when the attendant ladies, unconscious of what was happening, withdrew into the house for tea.

"That orchestra's a dead one," Fanchon remarked to Penrod. "We ought to liven them up a little."

She approached the musicians.

"Don't you know," she asked the leader, the 'Slingo Sligo Slide?'"

The leader giggled, nodded, rapped with his bow upon his violin, and Penrod, following Fanchon back upon the dancing-floor, blindly brushed with his elbow a solitary little figure standing aloof on the lawn, at the edge of the platform.

It was Marjorie.

In no mood to approve of anything introduced by Fanchon, she had scornfully refused, from the first, to dance the new "step," and, because of its bonfire popularity, found herself neglected in a society where she had reigned as beauty and belle. Faithless Penrod, dazed by the sweeping Fanchon, had utterly forgotten the amber curls; he had not once asked Marjorie to dance. All afternoon the light of indignation had been growing brighter in her eyes, though Maurice Levy's defection to the lady from New York had not fanned this flame. From the moment Fanchon had whispered familiarly in Penrod's ear, and Penrod had blushed, Marjorie had been occupied exclusively with resentment against that guilty pair. It seemed to her that Penrod had no right to allow a strange girl to whisper in his ear, that his blushing, when the strange girl did it, was atrocious, and that the strange girl, herself, ought to be arrested.

Forgotten by the merrymakers, Marjorie stood alone upon the lawn, clenching her small fists, watching the new dance at its high tide and hating it with a hatred that made every inch of her tremble. And, perhaps because jealousy is a great awakener of the virtues, she had a perception of something in it worse than lack of dignity—something vaguely but outrageously reprehensible. Finally, when Penrod brushed by her, touched her with his elbow and did not even see her, Marjorie's state of mind (not unmingled with emotion) became dangerous. In fact, a trained nurse, chancing to observe her at this juncture, would probably have taken her home and sent for a doctor to give her something quieting. Marjorie was on the verge of hysterics.

She saw Fanchon and Penrod assume the double embrace required by the dance; the "Slingo Sligo Slide" burst from the orchestra like the lunatic shriek of a gin-maddened nigger, and all the little couples began to bob and dip and wiggle.

Marjorie could bear no more. She made a scene. She sprang upon the platform and stamped her foot.

"Penrod Schofield!" she shouted, "you behave yourself!"

This remarkable girl took Penrod by the ear. By his ear she swung him away from Fanchon and faced him toward the lawn.

"You march straight out of here!" she shouted. Penrod marched.

He was stunned, obeyed automatically without question, and had very little realization of what was happening to him. Altogether, and without reason, he was in precisely the condition of an elderly spouse detected in flagrant misbehavior. Marjorie, similarly, was in precisely the condition of the party who detects such misbehavior. It may be added that she had acted with a promptness, a decision and a disregard of social consequences, all to be commended to the attention of ladies in like predicament.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" she raged, when they reached the lawn. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"What for?" he inquired helplessly.

"You be quiet!"

"But what'd I do, Marjorie? I haven't done anything to you," he pleaded. "I haven't even seen you, all aftern——"

"You be quiet!" she cried, tears filling her eyes. "Keep still, you ugly boy! Shut up!"

She slapped him.

He should have understood from this how much she cared for him. But he rubbed his cheek and declared ruefully:

"I'll never speak to you again!"

"You will, too!" she sobbed passionately.

"I will not!"

He turned to leave her, but paused.

His mother, his sister Margaret and their grown-up friends had finished their tea and were approaching from the house. Other parents and guardians were with them, coming for their children: there were carriages and automobiles waiting in the street, but the "Slingo Slide" went on, regardless.

The group of grown-up people hesitated and came to a halt, gazing at the pavilion.

"What are they doing?" gasped Mrs. Williams, blushing deeply. "What is it? What is it?"

"What is it?" echoed Mrs. Gelbraith, in a frightened whisper. "What——"

"They're tangoing!" cried Margaret Schofield, "or bunny-hugging or grizzly-bearing, or——"

"They're only turkey-trotting," said Mr. Robert Williams.

With fearful outcries, the mothers, aunts and sisters rushed upon the pavilion.

IV.

"Of course it was dreadful," said Mrs. Schofield, an hour later, rendering her lord an account of the day, "but it was every bit the fault of that one extraordinary child. And of all the quiet, demure little things—that is, I mean, when she first came. We all spoke of how exquisite she seemed—so well trained, so finished! Eleven years old! I never saw anything like her in my life!"

"I suppose it's the New Child," her husband grunted.

"And to think of her saying there ought to have been champagne in the lemonade!"

"Probably she'd forgotten to bring her pocket-flask," he suggested.

"But aren't you proud of Penrod?" cried the mother. "It was just as I told you: he was standing clear outside the pavilion."

"I never thought to see the day. And Penrod was the only boy not doing it, the only one to refuse? All the others were——"

"Every one!" she returned triumphantly. "Even Georgie Bassett!"

"Well," said Mr. Schofield, patting her on the shoulder, "I guess we can hold up our heads at last."

V.

Penrod was out in the yard, staring at the empty marquee. The sun was on the horizon line, and a western window of the house blazed in gold unbearable to the eye. His day was nearly over. He sighed and took from the inside pocket of his new jacket the sling-shot Aunt Sarah Crim had given him that morning.

He snapped the rubbers absently. They held fast, and his next impulse was entirely irresistible. He found a shapely stone, fitted it to the leather, and drew back the ancient catapult for a shot. A sparrow hopped upon a branch between him and the house, and he aimed at the sparrow, but the reflection from the dazzling window struck in his eyes as he loosed the leather.

He missed the sparrow, but not the window. There was a loud crash, and, to his horror, he caught a glimpse of his father, stricken in mid-shaving, ducking a shower of broken glass, glittering razor flourishing wildly.

Penrod stood petrified, a broken sling in his hand. He could hear his parent's booming descent of the back stairs, instant and furious: and, then, red hot above white lather, Mr. Schofield burst out of the kitchen door and hurtled forth upon his son.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, shaking Penrod by the shoulder. "Ten minutes ago, for the very first time in our lives, your mother and I were saying we were proud of you, and here you go and throw a rock at me through the window when I'm shaving for dinner!"

"I didn't!" Penrod quavered. "I was shooting at a sparrow, and the sun got in my eyes, and the sling broke—"

"What sling?"

"This'n."

"Where'd you get that devilish thing! Don't you know I've forbidden you a thousand times—"

"It ain't mine," said Penrod. "It's yours."

"What?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy, meekly. "Aunt Sarah Crim gave it to me this morning and told me to give it back to you. She said she took it away from you 35 years ago. You killed her hen, she said. She told me some more to tell you, but I've forgotten."

"Oh!" said Mr. Schofield.

He took the broken sling in his hand, looked at it long and thoughtfully; then he looked longer and quite as thoughtfully at Penrod. Then he turned away and started back toward the house.

"I'm sorry, papa," said Penrod.

Mr. Schofield coughed, and, as he reached the door, called back, but without turning his head.

"Never mind, little boy. A broken window isn't much harm."

When he had gone in, Penrod wandered down the yard to the back fence, climbed upon it, and sat in reverie there.

A slight figure appeared, likewise upon a fence, beyond two neighboring yards.

"Yay, Penrod!" called Comrade Sam Williams.

"Yay!" returned Penrod mechanically.

"I caught Billy Blue Hill," shouted Sam, describing retribution in a manner prefectly clear to his friend. "You were mighty lucky to get out of it."

"I know that."

"You wouldn't of if it hadn't been for Marjorie."

"Well, don't I know that?" Penrod shouted, with heat.

"Well, so long!" called Sam, dropping from his fence, and the friendly voice came then, more faintly. "Many happy returns of the day, Penrod!"

And now a plaintive little whine sounded from below his feet, and looking down, he saw that Duke, his wistful, little, scraggly dog, sat in the grass gazing seekingly up at him. The last shaft of sunshine of that day fell graciously and like a blessing upon the boy sitting on the fence. Years afterward a quiet sunset would recall to him, sometimes, the gentle evening of his twelfth birthday and bring him the picture of his boy-self sitting in rosy light upon the fence, gazing pensively down upon his wistful, scraggly little dog, Duke. But something else, surpassing, he would remember of that hour, for, in the side street close by, a pink skirt flickered from behind a shade tree to the shelter of the fence. There was a gleam of amber curls, and Penrod started as something like a tiny white wing fluttered by his head, and there came to his ears the sound of a light laugh and of light footsteps departing, the laughter tremulous, the footsteps fleet.

In the grass, between Duke's forepaws, there lay a white note, folded in the shape of a cocked hat, and the sun sent forth a final amazing glory as Penrod opened it and read, "Your my bow."

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Next week's "Penrod" story is called "Rupe Collins."

Sketches From Life, by Temple.

"How'd That Get Up Here?" — "It's a Boy!" — Caught With the Goods! —