

HOW to DANCE the NEW STEPS



Count Four of the Most Important Steps in the Maxixe and One that Has Caused All the Talk.

BY ELSIE JANIS.

(Copyright, 1913, By Elsie Janis.)

My lesson this week is on the Brazilian maxixe. The first thing to do is to learn to pronounce this dance before you dance it. In Paris last summer it was beginning to be very popular, but only with the expert dancers. The public at large was doing as I advise—finding out the real name of the "darn thing." Some say Brazilian machiche, pronounced "masheesh"; but the real Parisienne says "maxixe Bresilienne."

I saw all of the best of the maxixe dancers, and while at Deauville met one of the very best, whom I had seen in Paris—Louis Bayo (pronounced Byo). His dancing partner had not yet arrived from Paris, and he was rather maxixeless without her, so some of our party wagered that I could not get up and dance the Bresilienne with him, never having tried it before. So up I dashed. It was in the afternoon, before the dancing time, and we had it all to ourselves.

I must say that I never enjoyed a dance more. Bayo is a most wonderful leader, and any one could dance with him. All those successful teachers have a very unusual idea for teaching dancing. I wish some one would start it over here. Bayo, for instance, has a very nice house, and there at 5 o'clock he is at home. He has good music, and it is a sort of tango club. People pay so much (having been invited to do so) to go in, and then instead of giving regular lessons Bayo dances with all the women.

They go there every afternoon, have a cup of tea, and perfect their tango by dancing with one of the best dancers in Paris. At the same time they take a partner with them, who watches Bayo's style, and soon this couple are taking tango prizes. Quite simple; and, incidentally, Bayo is not starving to death for all are delighted to be invited to pay over their hard earned cash.

Acrobatic But Graceful.

The Bresilienne maxixe never will rival the tango, one-step, or waltz, in my opinion; it is too acrobatic. To dance it you are really working quite hard. You start off like they used to in the old fashioned two-step, taking two steps each way, but on the heels, with the toes turned up. It sounds comic, but is really a very graceful dance.

The man's cheek rests against the girl's—but don't get excited; it is only for a moment. As they turn from side to side their heads turn also, so that on the second two steps they are practically looking back over their shoulders. They do this step about four times each way; then they change positions to this extent: the girl places her left arm behind her, meeting the man's left around her waist. The girl's right hand goes up over her head, as in an old fashioned minuet, and the man's right hand meets it up there, holding it by the very tips of the fingers; and they do the same two steps each way about four times. Then, retaining that position, they go eight steps to the right, as if they were doing an old fashioned polka, and eight steps back, turning their faces to the left over their shoulders, changing feet at the end of the first eight and making a slight pause to do so.

At the finish of the eight steps coming back to the left, the man retains his hold upon the girl's hands, but she turns in his hands so that her back is to him. Still holding his hand, she pulls his left arm about her waist (after you know the dance it is not necessary to pull the hand there) and places her left hand on top of it to hold



Second Position - Two to the Right Looking over Shoulders.

First Position Maxixe - Two to the Left.

Third Position: Changing the Hands Eight Steps Straight Ahead in this Position then Pause Turn Quickly And Eight the Other Way, Retaining the Same Hold.

it there (also unnecessary after practice). His right arm goes right out straight and hers rests right on top of it, so that they are now in one of the most graceful positions in any dance. This change of position is very pretty and wants to be done quickly.

Like London Bridge.

Now, having accomplished the change of grip, you start off around the room like a couple of kids, taking the same two steps on each side about eight times; or if you like this step, which is lots of fun, do it as long as you like—it is quite decent.

The next step is a little difficult, but I will endeavor to simplify it as much as possible and at the same time keep the grace in it. After you have done that last step until you've had enough, give the partner warning that the next step is due, and then go twice each way with the same two steps; and while you are doing these steps keep on holding hands (that should be simple) and with the same "grip" lift the arms right above the head, like a couple of kids playing "London bridge."

It is not as easy as it sounds, for remember you keep

dancing all the time—one, two, right; one, two, left, etc. Now comes the big show. When you succeed in looking like "London bridge was falling down," only you don't leave any room for people to pass between and say which they choose, diamonds or rubies (then was the childhood days!), you break suddenly and go back to the original position. Do the first step four times, and

now comes it—the step that they are already proclaiming as indecent, and I, who have a mother who is very fussy about how her angel child dances, have danced many times without feeling indecent. I may have looked it, but think I would have been stopped by said lady mother.

Well, anyway, this step can be very vulgar, but not if done this way: The man and girl stand about half a foot apart; the hands in the same position as originally. The man steps forward on the left foot (count one), kicks right foot out in front of him (count three), and kicks out with left foot (count four).

It might be called the rocking-step, because in motion it looks as if the couple were rocking to and fro. Now the woman steps down on her right foot as the man steps on his left, throws her left leg out behind her, then tilting forward on the left and throwing the right out behind.

Music New to Us.

These are the five variations of the Bresilienne maxixe. I feel sure that you are wondering what sort of music this weird dance is done to. And there lies the real reason why this dance will not, at least for a few years,

be very popular in America. The music is different from anything we have over here. I don't know anything that sounds like it at all. It is very foreign. If you heard it played you would stop and listen. Last summer at Narragansett Pier I gave the music for one of the best maxixes to the Casino orchestra, and though no one knew what it was there were about five requests a day for it. It is extremely thrilling.

"Amapa" is the name of the most popular maxixe in Paris today. It cannot be purchased in America yet, but with all the people returning from Europe and many bringing music home it will not be long until we will have it. I may get very generous and give my orchestration of it. In the meantime any one who really wants it can write to the publisher in Paris and have it inside of three weeks. Write to Edouard Salabert, 22 Rue Chauchat, Paris, and ask for "The Vrai Maxixe Bresilienne Amapa." It is about one of the most attractive bits of music I have ever heard.

Dance Suited to Afternoon Gown.

Until we import tunes I must suggest some substitute. The best I can think of at the moment would be the "Maurice Tango," played half again as fast as it is written, or "Tres Montreux," played about half as fast as it is written. Either one will do. That seems baffling, but try it. You see, after all, the maxixe is very like the old two-step, only over there they put a Spanish bass (not fish) to it that makes it grand!

I can imagine that some people are wondering why I had dancing pictures taken in an afternoon costume and hat, but there is a bit of romance connected with the "reason why" (not by Mrs. Glyn). It is the duplicate of a gown that I got in Paris and learned to dance the maxixe in. Every afternoon a crowd of us would go to one of those tea-dansants and dance until nearly dinner-time. Every one wore this type of dress, and found them wonderful for the tango and maxixe, so I thought it would be just as well to keep in the atmosphere of the tea-dansant.

In starting the maxixe and in all the steps remember that instead of putting your toes on the floor you put your heel down. This does not hold good in the fourth step, where the girl's back is to the man and they go around the room. In this step you start off with the heel on the ground, and then, of course, to cover space and get around the room, you must go on your entire foot. In the fifth step it is also unnecessary to feature the heel movement; in fact, the pointing of the toe in the kicks is very essential, and one of the prettiest parts of the step is when the man leans back and the girl forward—they both must point their toes.

Lots of Fun Learning It.

If this dance ever becomes popular it will afford a great many chances for "getting even." Instead of as we do now when hated rivals pass, coyly extending the foot and tripping them, we will be able to get in front of them and, while executing a perfectly legitimate step, kick them gently but firmly in the chest. I may add that when this dance comes into its own the skirt of today will have to be slit up the back and a goody portion of accordion plaiting inserted therein. For any woman who attempts to maxixe in a smart, up to date, "trip as you enter" skirt had better practice how to fall into a graceful heap at home before going to a dance. Isn't it awful the way the man gets the best of it—no, I am not a suffragot—always? Skirts may come, and skirts may go, but trousers go on forever—at least I hope they will keep on "going on" forever.

The next on the program will be the hesitation waltz, a most wonderful dance, which is stepping right along as a rival to the one-step.