



THE FOURSOME REEL



26

AND OTHER DANCES



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PREFACE

This little booklet is the outcome of my eighteen months quest in search of the Foursome Reel as danced up and down the country. It appeared to me that there are almost as many different setting steps for the Strathspey part of the dance as there are dancers, and I originally intended to collect them all, over a long period, and arrange them in some kind of order, in a thick volume, for the benefit of those interested enough. As it turned out, most of the original setting steps I collected were spurious or simply compounded of snatches of regular Highland steps; and though many of them are recognised as Foursome setting steps, a great number of them were just created by the dancers on the spur of the moment. It was this haphazard way in which steps appear and disappear that deci-

ded me to change the whole work. I bought up every available book on the subject and checked all my notes with what had been written before me. In this way I traced all but the 'Heel and Point' step, the 'Peddling' step, the second 'Ladies' step, the 'Crab-walk', and the second of the 'Other Reel' setting steps. Of these the second 'Ladies' step is simply a combination of the 'Highland' and 'Common' Schottische setting steps followed by four step hops.

The two Country Dances at the end of this book are in, just because some time last year I was lucky enough to have paper and pencil at the right time and place. Neither dance, as far as I know, has ever been published, or even listed before, and only one of them is really well-known in Edinburgh and Mid-Lothian, though scarcely anywhere else.

I am indebted to Mr. Robert Ferguson, Honorary Secretary of the London Branch of the Scottish Country Dance Society, for going through most of the manuscript, making some ruthless deletions, valuable additions, and useful suggestions. However, Mr. Ferguson has not seen my short history of the Reel,

the foot positions, the lists on the back, nor any of the illustrations. Neither has he seen the final version. I hereby apologise for the inevitable slip that almost invariably appears, somewhere, un-noticed, in most first editions.

Finally, I should like to thank the many dancers who gave me some of their time; the friend who made the cover design; my mother who made the foot chart; and the publisher who nagged me into drawing the handful of wee men and women scattered here and there in the book, as well as the musical script which I produced in the small hours one Monday.

Now that I have put into book-form some of the knowledge and experience of Mr. Ferguson and many other experts, I think I shall buy me a kilt, sporran, and all the rest of it and see if I can't learn a step or two from my book.

J. A. B.