

## SOME ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH FOLK- DANCES SURVIVING AMONGST CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S singing-games, which in their folk-lore aspect have been comprehensively studied by Lady Gomme in her scholarly work *Traditional Games*, are, as she points out, in many cases referable to remote custom. It is not my purpose here to trespass upon the ground she has made her own. I confine myself to a few examples which can be shown with more or less certainty to have served as the rustic diversions of grown-up people. They are dances rather than games and they retain a 'folk' character. But, whatever their origin in early custom may have been, the surviving traces of them belong to the social stage of their evolution.

The examples about to be considered are:

1. Hinkum Booby (or Looby)—a lubber or grotesque dance of Tudor times.
2. Curcuddie—a Scottish troll-dance.
3. Babbity Bowster—an early rustic form of the Cushion Dance.
4. (a) Push the Business On } Old round jigs or country  
(b) A Wee, Wee Kettle } dances.

1. HINKUM BOOBY is nowadays best known as 'Looby Loo', or some similar name, but 'Hinkum Booby' is almost certainly a corruption of 'Hankin Boby' or 'Hannikin Booby'. As far as I know, the earliest reference to this dance which has been discovered is *temp.* Henry VIII. The name may be traced in the following forms:

Hankin Boby (1537),  
Hankin Booby (1596),  
Hankin bovy,<sup>1</sup>  
Hannykin Booby (1652),

and in modern times we find the following variations:

- (a) *Booby*: Hinkum Booby (Chambers's *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*).
- (b) *Looney*: Auntie Loomie  
Santi-Maloney<sup>2</sup>  
Antimacassar

<sup>1</sup> Skelton in *Ware the Hawke*:  
With troll cytrace and trovy [? hunting terms]  
They ranged *hankin bovy*  
My church all about.

<sup>2</sup> This was the supposed name of a version in which the children sang 'Can you dance Santimaloney?' but which may as well have been 'dance Antimaloney'—and have acquired a superfluous 'S' in its name—as in the case of a version of 'When Joan's Ale was New', sung by fishermen as 'John's Sail was New' when I noted it on the Lancashire coast.

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(c) *Looby*: Looby loo  
 Lubin  
 Looby light  
 Hallaby looby loo  
 Hullabaloo ballee  
 Ho for looby loo  
 Here we go looby

(d) *Phoebe*: Phoebe  
 (Cannot you dance the Phoebe?  
 Don't you see what pains I take?  
 Don't you see how my shoulders shake?  
 Cannot you dance the Phoebe?)

All these versions, except two very degenerate forms, 'Auntie Loomie' and 'Antimacassar', belong, as far back as the method of dancing can be traced, to a ring-dance in which the dancers perform in concert various grotesque antics, thrusting in turn—with a different action for each time the tune is sung—their hands, feet, ears, noses, heads, backs, into the circle, shaking their various members, limbs, or bodies, and then wheeling round separately before the circular movement of the dance is resumed. It seems to have been originally a clown's or clownish dance, as most of its names still suggest. Hankin or Hannikin used to be a common name for a clown in England. The form '(S)Antimaloney' suggests both 'antick' and 'looney'; and as to 'booby' and 'looby' Lady Gomme quotes the old forfeit penance:

Here I lie,  
 The length of a looby,  
 The breadth of a booby,  
 And three-fourths of a jackass

which implies that 'looby' as well as 'booby' means a stupid fellow or clown. (Boswell records Dr. Johnson as using in conversation the word 'looby', evidently in the sense of a simpleton.)

There is evidence that 'Hannikin booby' was an amusing or ridiculous performance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though details are not available of its steps and gestures. Chappell quotes from Broome's *Jovial Crew*, 1652: 'Our father is so pensive that he makes us even sick of his sadness, that were wont to "See my gossip's cock to-day", mould cocklebread, dance Clutterdepouch and Hannykin booby, bind barrels or do anything before him and he would laugh at us.' 'Clutterdepouch' may perhaps have been the step formerly known in Cumberland dancing as 'Leather-the-patch' (which I have been unable to recover). And there seems little doubt that 'Hannykin booby' is represented by the 'Hinkum Booby' of Chambers's *Popular Rhymes*.<sup>1</sup> Chambers

<sup>1</sup> At Christmas, 1622-3, after the performance of a masque at Whitehall, according to Sir H. Herbert's account, 'the Prince did lead the measures with the French Ambassador's wife', and 'the measures, braules, corrantos, and galliards being ended, the masquers with the ladies did daunce two countrey dances, namely, *The Soldiers' Marche* and *Huff Hamukin*'. [Chappell believes this

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states that this children's game-dance was sung to the tune of 'Lilliburlero', but only the first four bars of 'Lilliburlero' will fit it, and it seems possible that he was misled by a similarity in the opening bars, and that it was in his time (eighty or ninety years ago) still sung in Scotland to a traditional version of the old tune 'Half-Hannikin'—which it would fit with but little adaptation, as I shall show. The tune 'Hanskin', which occurs in *Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book* and also in *The Dancing Master*, may also be connected with this dance.

'Half Hannikin' is printed in the first edition of Playford's *Dancing Master*, 1650, and later issues, and Playford was a Scot, as will be remembered. It is a somewhat puzzling title. The name Hannikin (little Hans) appears to be of Dutch or Flemish origin, like Lambekyn (little Lambert) and various other Christian names ending in 'kin'. Thinking that our correspondent and contributor, Dr. Elise Van der ven-ten Bensel, might be able to identify 'Half Hannikin' as a tune of Dutch origin, I wrote to her to make inquiry. She told me in her reply that in Van Duyse's collection of old Dutch songs and dances (*Het oude Nederlandsche Lied*, Antwerp, 1908) there are four different songs about Hansken or Hanselijn or Hanneken. The first part of the tune of one of them, *Klaaglied van een Jongman, genaemt Hansken van Antwerpen* (Complaint of a youth named Hansken, &c.), is not unlike 'Half Hannikin', though the rest of the tune is quite different.

*Hansken van Antwerpen*

From *Het Oude Nederlandsche Lied*, i, p. 550.

First part of the tune.



This tune, says my informant, has always been very popular in the Low Countries (it is also a church hymn), and she suggests the possibility that the first and simpler half of the tune only might have been taken to England, thus accounting for the 'Half' of the title—this of course only being a 'guess'. 'Half Hannikin' is set in the *Dancing Master* to a common type of longways dance, but one would not expect in a 'dancing master's' collection to find directions for performing any sort of booby dance, even though the tune had been derived from such. It is here given, and it will be seen that the 'Hinkum Booby' words, as I have already said, would fit it with but slight accommodation on the part of the tune, and is a misreading of the MS. for 'Half Hannikin'—which seems very probable.] Evidently, whatever 'Half Hannikin' was it was not a court-dance, and if it may be identified with 'Hinkum Booby' the French lady must have found it very diverting to watch.

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that the rhythm quietens down after the double-bar, just where in 'Hinkum Booby' the dancer would pause, putting his 'right hand in, left hand out'—the tripping movement of the melody being resumed where the dancer would wheel round with 'Hinkum booby, round about'.

*Halfe Hannikin*

Playford's *Dancing Master*, 1650.

[Fal de ral la . . . fal de ral la . . . Hink - um boo - by,  
 round . . a - bout. Right hands in, Left hands out,  
 Hink - um boo - by, round . . a - bout. Fal de ral, &c.]

Chambers's first verse is conjecturally placed under the tune. He describes the dance thus: With the first line the dancers, in a circle with clasped hands, move a little sideways and back again, beating time (which is slow) with their feet. At the second line each claps his hand (*sic*) and wheels grotesquely round while singing. At the third, the action is suited to the word, still beating the time. Repeat the wheeling action as before to 'Hinkum booby, round about'. For the other verses there follow L. hands in, R. hands out; L. and R. feet in turn; heads and backs similarly; 'A' feet in and nae feet out', sitting down with the feet stretched into the ring, but springing up again promptly for the wheel round; 'Shake hands a'; and finally 'Goodnight a', the boys bowing and the girls curtsying with exaggerated formality.

'Looby' or 'Lubin loo' seems to be a later offshoot of this, to a different tune. The meaning of 'looby' has already been noticed. One suspects that 'Lubin' was introduced about the time of 'My mother bids me bind my hair' as a more elegant substitute for 'looby', and that 'Here we dance Lubin' may have been an attempt to restore 'Hallaby looby loo' to sense. As I used to see 'Lubin' danced—and it used to be a favourite amusement in my childhood at children's parties in Scottish circles—it was quite a pretty and amusing dance, devoid of the clownishness which might have characterized it amongst older and more self-conscious folk. W. W. Newell observed the same drawing-room *versus* street versions in America. He gives a polite version beginning 'Put your right elbow in' and says that 'sixty years ago' it was danced

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deliberately and decorously, with slow rhythmical motion, but had become a romp under the name 'Ugly Mug'. I give the tune as I knew it and sang it. It is obviously founded on an old nine-eight country-dance tune.<sup>1</sup> The dancers only stopped circling round to perform the actions in each verse and 'turn themselves about'. But in one version I have come across the actions were cumulative—which would probably lead to laughter and collapse in the end.

*Lubin*

Noted by A. G. Gilchrist.

As danced in the 'seventies in Manchester.

*Gaily, but with the rhythm well marked.*



1. Here we dance Lu - bin, Lu - bin, Here we dance Lu - bin light;



Here we dance Lu - bin, Lu - bin, ev - er - y Sat - ur - day night.



Put your right hand *in*, . . . Put your right hand *out*, . . .



Shake it a lit - tle and shake it a lit - tle, and then turn round a - bout.

Then follow 'left hand', 'right foot', 'left foot', 'right ear' (grasped by finger and thumb), 'left ear', 'noses', *ad lib.*

The Grayrigg version was similar though the tune differed:

*Looby, Looby, Light*

Noted by A. G. Gilchrist.

As danced at Grayrigg, Westmorland.



1. Loo - by, loo - by, light, up - on a Sat - ur - day night;



Take your right foot *in*, Take your right foot *out*;



Shake your right foot a lit - tle, And turn your - self a - bout.

But amongst children playing in the streets of Scottish towns and

<sup>1</sup> English tunes set to this dance are 'Here's a health to jolly Bacchus' and 'Hurrah for the Duke of York'.

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villages the dance has degenerated into a wild rush round with clasped hands, and at the end of the tune a vigorous kick into the circle to a high-pitched ejaculation 'Teuch!' (guttural 'ch') or 'Ch!'

*Hallabiloo*

Noted by A. G. Gilchrist.

As played at Loanhead, Midlothian.

Hal-la-bi loo-by loo, . . . Hal-la-bi loo-by light; . . .

Hal-la-bi loo-by loo . . . Up-on a Sat-ur-day night— Ch!

One is tempted to inquire whether 'Hallabi looby loo' has any connexion with, or may indicate the source of, 'hullabaloo'<sup>1</sup> or 'hallibaloo' (there are various dialect or colloquial forms) in the same way that 'hunsup'—which was originally the 'hunt's-up' tune of arousal played at the door in the small hours of Christmas morning by a fiddler accompanied by a somewhat roisterous company of well-wishers—came to mean in Cumberland and Westmorland simply a disturbance, or a row that somebody was kicking up—'a bonny hunsup, faith!' The Scottish 'Looby' tune was also used for another wild ring-game with a shout at the end:

Hey, Jock, my cuddie,  
My cuddie over the dyke!  
And if you touch my cuddie,  
My cuddie will give you a bite! *Hooch, aye!*

Other versions of 'Looby' will be found in Lady Gomme's *Traditional Games*, Walter Crane's *Baby's Bouquet*, Miss Mason's *Nursery Rhymes*, F. Kidson's *Eighty Singing Games*, Kerr's *Guild of Play*, &c. But I think that Chambers's 'Hinkum Booby' probably represents the oldest form of this 'antic' or 'clown' dance now recoverable.

2. CURCUDDIE. THE TROLL DANCE. I have ventured to call 'Curcuddie' a troll dance because of the Shetland legend connected with it. It is now a hopping game or dance on the 'hunkers', i.e. in a crouching position, with the arms akimbo. The verse which belongs to it is given by Chambers thus:

Will ye gang to the lea, Curcuddie,  
And join your plack wi' me, Curcuddie?  
I lookit aboot and I saw naebody,  
But linkit awa' my lane, Curcuddie.

The dancers sang the verse and danced independently, throwing out their feet and jumping sideways while striving to keep their balance.

<sup>1</sup> The *N.E.D.* dates 'Hullabaloo' as meaning an uproar only from the eighteenth century, and suggests that it is a reduplication of 'Hullo'.

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Jamieson derives 'Curcuddie' from 'curr', to sit on the haunches, adding a suggestion that 'cuddie' is from Teutonic *kudde*, a flock. But in the Shetland Isles, where it seems to have been considered an imitation of a troll's uncouth dance, a different and less dull explanation is forthcoming. Trolls or trows in traditional belief haunted those fairy knolls in northern Scotland which are known in some cases at least to have concealed the early underground dwellings or 'earth-houses' popularly called 'Picts' houses' in Scotland. When I was in Caithness, many years ago, I had an opportunity of visiting a 'pech's hoose' on the shore of Loch Watten, and as far as I could penetrate the local belief a 'pech' was just another name for a fairy. Now as regards the 'Curcuddie' dance, the old Shetland folk had a tradition that somebody once saw 'a scrae [crowd] of "henkies"' [trolls] dancing round a fairy knowe.<sup>1</sup> Amongst the dancers was a trow-wife (fairy woman) who failed to obtain a partner. She was heard to console herself thus:

'Hey!' co' [quo'] Cuttie and 'Ho!' co' Cuttie,  
'An' wha'll dance wi' me?' co' Cuttie.  
Shö loked aboot an' saw naebody,  
Sae 'I'll henk awa' mysel'!' co' Cuttie.

(A cuttie is a short stumpy person—cf. a cutty-pipe and a cutty-stool—and to henk is to limp or halt in the gait, hence the name 'henkies' given to trows, who were said to limp as they danced.) This is a pleasing, if not authentic, explanation of the origin of the dance. Edmondston's *Glossary of the Shetland and Orkney Dialect* gives 'Heykokutty'—a ludicrous dance performed by persons squatting on their hookers [haunches] to the tune of 'Hey-quo'-Cutty'. The tune has apparently been lost. A verse printed by Buchan in his *Ballads of the North* (see his note to 'Cuttie's Wedding') perhaps contains an allusion to the dance and may have been a rhyme sung to it. Here again Cuttie or Cuddie is a woman:

There was an auld wife, they ca'd her Cuddie,  
And a' body said she wou'd gang to the wuddie [gallows],  
But yet she die't wi' a better commend,  
For she danc'd hersell deid at her ain hous end.

The diversion seems to be a form of the frog-dance or kibby-dance, and something very like it is depicted upon Greek vases.

<sup>1</sup> In Shetland, Dr. Jakobsen says, there are several spots named after trolls, for instance Truylhoolen, which means the troll-knoll, and a few other knolls known by the name of Henkisknowe. According to old legends connected with these knolls, trolls used to dance there at night 'hinking' a limping as they danced. There is a similar tradition about Lunkhool in North Yell, where the trolls 'lunked' (limped) as they danced. (Note the 'linkit' of Chambers's version.) Again, the place called Haltadans in Fetlar means the lame or limping dance. On Haltadans are three concentric rings of stones, and two higher ones in the middle. The old tradition is that the rings are petrified dancing trolls, with the fiddler and his wife in the centre, and that they were turned to stone because they continued dancing till the sun rose on them. All the above names are O.N. survivals in Shetland. 'Henk' and 'lunk' are not Scottish dialect.

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A somewhat similar game of little girls in Scotland is known as 'Cockie breeky'—in which they draw the back edge of their frocks forward between their knees to form 'breeks', and dance or hop about singing—apparently to the 'Bee bo babbity' tune—

Wha learned you to dance  
Cocky breeky, cocky breeky?  
Wha learned you to dance  
Cocky breeky brawly?

and so forth. Warrack's *Scots Dialect Dictionary* gives various forms of 'Curcuddie', e.g. 'cuddie, curcuddoch, curcudyoch', &c., and also 'Cutty-hunker-dance—an old burlesque dance performed by mendicants'—which seems to have been of the same nature. He glosses 'curcuddoch, curcudyoch', &c., as to sit close together in a friendly manner, or to whisper or talk together intimately. (To 'curr' = to cower or crouch.) But this does not seem to me to throw much light upon the name of the sport, in which the dancers are separate and independent, and do not crouch together at all. On the face of it, 'cutty' seems to provide the simplest explanation—a short or shortened performer crouching or 'curring' on his hunkers while he dances, whether the name 'Curcuddie' itself be a shortened form of 'Hey-co'-Cuttie' or the latter merely a folk-solution of a puzzle by an appropriate legend built out of familiar and acceptable material.

These notes are all I have been able to collect in reference to the 'Curcuddie' dance, but they serve to show that it was at one time more than a childish amusement; and they may perhaps provide some data for further investigations by the folklorist. It would be interesting to discover whether the dance came into the Shetland Islands from Norway—to which kingdom the Shetlands belonged till the end of the fourteenth century, having been peopled by Norwegians for at least five hundred years. The dancing trolls of Grieg's music suggest that in Norway also these little creatures were not supposed to be light on their feet.

3. **BABBITY BOWSTER.** This dance-game, whose name is a corruption of 'Bab—i.e. bob or dance—at (or to) the bolster', is an interesting relic amongst children's singing-games of a primitive form of the Cushion Dance (Joan Sanderson) in Playford's *Dancing Master* collection. It used to be the last dance at a wedding festivity, before the newly married couple retired, in which the bride's pillow or 'bolster' figured in what we should now consider a rather unseemly way. In its early form a young man of the company began the dance with the bolster as his partner, and after dancing about with it for a while laid it before one of the girls in the room, inviting her to kneel upon it and exchange a kiss. The girl next took the bolster, and having danced with it laid it at the feet of one of the men, and so on until all had had their turn and been brought into the dance. (This accords pretty nearly with the directions given in the *Dancing Master*.) In later times



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a cushion or handkerchief was substituted for the pillow, the verses still being sung. (Various versions of the dance will be found in Lady Gomme's *Traditional Games*, under 'Cushion Dance'.) According to one way of performing the dance, the girls stood in a row opposite the boys, one of whom chose a girl either by catching her round the neck with a handkerchief or spreading it on the ground at her feet. The kiss was generally not obtained without a struggle or pursuit, and the line 'Who gave you the keys to keep?' in 'Babbity Bowster' may have referred to the locking of the door, as was sometimes done to prevent the more bashful maidens from slipping out.

In the outdoor singing-game, 'Bee bo babbity', the circle or row and song remain, also the choosing, the spreading of the handkerchief, and the kiss, but by this time it is a game of little girls. When the pair kneel to kiss, the chooser sometimes sings:

I wadna kiss a laddie O, a laddie O, a laddie O,  
I wadna kiss a laddie O,  
I'll kiss a bonnie wee lassie!

But if boys are admitted to the charmed circle, this declaration may be reversed.

The form of this dance that towards the close of the eighteenth century formed the conclusion (like an English 'Sir Roger' or 'John Peel') of Scottish balls was known as 'Bumpkin Brawly' or 'The Old Country Bumpkin'—evidently being already regarded as an old-fashioned or rustic romp—though what its exact form was by then I have not discovered ('Babbity Bowster brawly' is turned into 'Babbity bounce the ballie' in one of the children's game-form versions). In Johnson's *Museum* a variant of the tune is attached to a song, 'The Cooper o' Cuddie', which has what looks like an old dancing-chorus:

We'll hide the cooper behind the door,  
Behind the door, behind the door;  
We'll hide the cooper behind the door  
And cover him under a mawn [basket] O.

The three forms of 'Bab at the Bowster' here printed represent a period of about three centuries (Playford's tune for the Cushion Dance is quite different). The lute copy, as transcribed, is in common time (I have given it the *Alla Breve* signature it seems to require), but may have been performed in something approaching  $\frac{6}{8}$ , as it does not fit the natural rhythm of the words very well. The second version is what one might call a ballroom copy. It is given with bald and thin harmonies in Niel Gow's *Repository*, 1799.<sup>1</sup>

The third form is the traditional tune as sung and danced by little girls in Scottish towns and villages. The 'Babbity Bowster' form of this dance distinctly belongs to Scotland. (For other

<sup>1</sup> Niel Gow was a noted Scottish musician—a famous fiddler and composer of dance music, especially reels and strathspeys. His 'Fairy Dance' reel sometimes accompanies the evolutions of North Country sword-dancers.

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versions and a 'Nuts in May' tune to the dance see Lady Gomme's  
*Traditional Games, Kerr's Guild of Play, &c.*)

*Who Learned you to Dance*

(A Lute Copy)

From the Skene MS. (c. 1610-1630).

Musical notation for 'Who Learned you to Dance' in G major, 4/4 time. The first line shows the melody with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second line continues the melody with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piece ends with a double bar line and '&c.'.

*The Old Country Bumpkin*

From Neil Gow's Complete Repository, 1799.

Musical notation for 'The Old Country Bumpkin' in G major, 6/8 time. The first line shows the melody with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second line continues the melody with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piece ends with a double bar line and '&c.'.

[Wha learn'd you to dance, you to dance, you to dance,

Wha learn'd you to dance a Coun-try Bump-kin braw - ly?] &c.

*Babbity Bowster*

Noted by A. G. Gilchrist.

A version from Loanhead, Midlothian.

*Allegro.*

Musical notation for 'Babbity Bowster' in G major, 6/8 time. The first line shows the melody with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second line continues the melody with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piece ends with a double bar line.

1 Bee bo, Bab - bi - ty, Bab - bi - ty, Bab - bi - ty,  
2 Kneel down, kiss the ground, kiss the ground, kiss the ground,

Bee bo, Bab - bi - ty, Bab - bi - ty Bow - ster bar - ley.  
Kneel down, kiss the ground, Bab - bi - ty Bow - ster bar - ley.  
(Or Kiss a bon - nie wee las - sie.)

Chambers's version (without tune) runs:

1. Wha learned you to dance  
Babbity bowster, babbity bowster?  
Wha learned you to dance  
Babbity bowster brawly?
2. My minnie learned me to dance, &c.
3. Wha ga'e you the keys to keep? &c.
4. My minnie ga'e me the keys to keep, &c.

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A feature of these really old country-dances was their independence of an instrument. The dancers on occasion—perhaps generally—sang the music themselves, though the words they used were often nonsensical, as in the Gaelic *port-a-beul* (literally 'mouth-music'). In Argyllshire a form of 'Babbity Bowster' was known as *Ruidhil nam Pog* ('The Kissing Reel'), and was sung to a *port-a-beul* which, translated, runs:

The black crows have my pocket-handkerchief [*thrice*]  
And all that is nice the black crows have.<sup>1</sup>

The tune was a variant of 'The White Cockade'. The dance opened in the way already described, a young man dancing round the room with a white handkerchief, but there are several versions of 'The Kissing Reel'. Sometimes the young man throws the handkerchief over the girl's head, and generally after a struggle kisses her under it. The girl then takes the handkerchief and following the man round the room chooses in turn a young man at whom she generally throws the handkerchief and runs off, to be pursued and caught as before. When all the company are 'on the floor' they finish with a reel. One old fellow describing the dance to Dr. Maclagan said 'A nis's a rithist sgreach iad, 's phog iad le cheile' ('Now and again they screeched and kissed each other'). This dance generally concludes the evening, like the Cushion Dance. Lady Gomme considers that 'Drop the Handkerchief' or 'Kiss in the Ring' is the last tuneless relic of the Cushion or Handkerchief Dance. There is also a marching or enlisting game (post-Jacobite, apparently), in which a hat worn by the first player with a white handkerchief tied round it is used to crown the chosen partner, serving for all the company in turn. There are American variants of this in Newell's *Games and Songs of American Children*. In Ireland the dance went to the 'White Cockade' tune, the words sung being:

Will you 'list and come with me, fair maid, [*thrice*]  
And folly the lad with the white cockade?

The chosen one, when crowned with the hat, puts his or her arm round the chooser, and goes round those still seated, singing as before. See 'Larry McFarland's Wake' in Carleton's *Traits of the Irish Peasantry*.

Apropos the *port-a-beul*, a note may here be appended on the vanished Scottish art of 'deedling' for dancing—the substitute for a fiddler which in bygone days was the result in remote villages of 'an absolute poverty of musical resources'. In the course of evolution, says Bertram Smith in an article in the *Manchester Guardian* (18 April 1908), the 'deedling' of a tune by the dancers themselves was found to bring confusion of both time and melody, so the duty of giving vocal support to the dance came to be

<sup>1</sup> The reel of Gillie-Callum (the well-known sword-dance) has a curious and interesting 'port'.

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assigned to a single man whose personal gifts best fitted him for the post, and who was called 'a deedler' because he vocalized the tune to the syllables 'deedle-deedle-deedle dee'. The 'deedler', says this writer, threw his whole body as well as a powerful voice into his performance. 'With a look of unshaken gravity, but with his whole soul, he plies his art, and all his resources are brought into play, as he calls forth rhythm from the motion of his head, a jaunty expression from his bobbing knees, and emphasis from his swinging arms. At last with a final "Dee-dee-dee" *fortissimo rallentando* the dance is over and willing hands press upon him the foaming draught he has earned so well. . . . The deedler has served his generation and disappeared from amongst us. He made possible many a night of merriment and geniality, and that at great cost of physical effort.'

This old practice of deedling for dancing was carried out to America, where it seems to have been known as 'lilting'.<sup>1</sup> Mary Wilkins, in one of her New England stories, *Madelon*, describes the custom. The fiddler had failed the dancers and the young girl Madelon's services were enlisted. 'The ball swung on and on, and Madelon up in the musicians' gallery sang the old country dances in the dissyllabic fashion termed lilting.' Unfortunately the syllables which she sang are not specified, so one can only guess that they must have been 'deedle dee', 'doodle doo', 'lalla la', or some similar vocables. Another form of 'deedle' is 'doodle'. Wright's *Dialect Dictionary* quotes this usage of the word. The late Frank Kidson, in the *American Musical Quarterly*, vol. iii, No. 1, January 1917, made the suggestion that 'Yankee Doodle' was originally a dance-tune, eminently suitable for the flute or fife, and that the 'doodle' belonged to an early chorus sung (and perhaps danced) to it.

Yankee doodle, keep it up,  
Yankee doodle dandy,  
Mind the music and the step  
And with the girls be handy.

The earliest appearance of the tune in print was, says Mr. Kidson, in the first volume of Aird's *Selection of Scottish, English, Irish, and Foreign Airs for the Fife, Violin, and German Flute*, c. 1775-6, and he suggests that the name meant the American Doodle or Tootle—that is, a wordless air tooted on the flute or doodled by the dancers. The 'diddle-diddle' of our nursery rhymes may also originally have been part of the vocalization of a tune by dancers:

Lavender's blue, *diddle diddle*,  
Lavender's green,  
When I am king, *diddle, diddle*,  
You shall be queen.

<sup>1</sup> The practice of singing as an accompaniment to the dance is still kept up in Newfoundland, where it is described as 'chin music'.—M.K.

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4 (a) PUSH THE BUSINESS ON (Old Round Jig).

*Push the Business on*

Noted by A. G. Gilchrist.

Girls' Orphanage, Southport, c. 1900.

I'll buy a horse and steal a gig, And all the world shall have a jig, And

I'll do all that ev - er I can To push the busi - ness on;

To push the busi - ness on; And I'll do all that  
 [Stopping to clap hands thrice] [Dance resumed]

ev - er I can To push the busi - ness on. D.C.

\* As sometimes repeated.

This dance varies in performance, and its original form is not quite certain, but according to my notes of the Southport version it began by the ring of children tripping round with clasped hands to the left for four bars up to the word 'jig'. Then the circle divided into pairs, and the partners walked round in couples, still to the left, for the next four bars, when they stopped, and faced each other, clapping their hands thrice as shown. The dance to the left was resumed, but during these last four bars the man of each couple walked backwards facing his partner, and with the end of the tune handed or swung her over to his left. He now had a new partner on his right with whom the dance was repeated *Da capo*. The passing on of the girl at the end of each round continued until he had regained his own original partner. This circulation, in opposite directions, of each couple seems to be the integral part of the dance, and may explain the title. At Grayrigg, where the tune was similar, the partner was simply turned during the last four bars, but not passed on to the left—the proper form of the dance having apparently been forgotten; but a Scotch version in Kerr's *Guild of Play* (to another variant of the tune) exhibits a good form:

After the first clapping of hands, each couple turn their backs to each other, and facing the new girl or boy now opposite clap hands again. Then during the last four bars the new girl-partner is swung round and left on the boy's right side. And so *Da capo*. The chief difference here is that the girl progresses round the

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circle against, instead of with, the clock. From the word 'jig' one may suppose that this dance-game is a survival of the old circular jig, danced hand-in-hand in a circle by alternate men and women. Here again the dancers can provide their own music in the verse they sing.

For other versions of 'Push the business on' see Lady Gomme's *Traditional Games* (words only) and Frank Kidson's *Eighty Singing Games*, to a variant of the above tune. His version was, I believe, obtained from Dr. J. C. Bridge of Chester, and the verses following the usual one are, I think, his own addition.

4 (b) A WEE WEE KETTLE. A somewhat similar round-dance, with this title, was noted at Grayrigg.

*A Wee, Wee Kettle*

Noted by A. G. Gilchrist.

Danced at Grayrigg, Westmorland, 1903.



A wee, wee ket-tle and a wee, wee pan, A wee, wee wo-man and a



wee, wee man; You'll boil the ket-tle and I'll boil the pan, A



wee, wee wo-man and a wee, wee man.

The ring of children, joining hands, dance round clockwise, with a polka or morris step, singing the tune and words once through. Then, dividing into pairs, they turn sideways to face their partners, and stand while they repeat tune and words, clapping their hands at the points 'A', during the first half of the tune, turning their partners during the second. Repeat *D.C.* The tune is a simplified form of the air of the well-known Lancers figure (the fifth), stated on one of the earliest copies of the 'Original Lancers' to have been composed by Yaniewicz.<sup>1</sup> It is also used for the singing-game 'See what a pretty little girl I've got'.

It may be noticed that at Grayrigg the little girls did a dancing step instead of merely shuffling round in a circle, as is so often the case in game-songs. And this is interesting in view of the fact that

<sup>1</sup> Yaniewicz or Janiewicz was a Polish violinist, composer, and orchestral conductor who came to England in 1792 and settled in Liverpool, afterwards removing to Edinburgh, where he died in 1848. He had a music-selling and publishing business and issued sheet music, including his own arrangements and compositions.

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in former times Cumberland, Westmorland, and Northern Lancashire were noted for their village dancing-schools. The dancing-master, with his fiddle, would settle in a village for three months at a time, and the lads and lasses went to dancing-school daily during this period, perfecting themselves in solo as well as social dances. An old Westmorland statesman described this custom to me at Grayrigg. The school was generally held in a barn, and a pupil, after learning some of his or her steps, would go into a corner to practise them till ready for more. Then at the old-fashioned country balls and assemblies there was a wonderful display of dancing agility. (A few years ago, a wedding-party in Liverpool was overcome with astonishment and admiration at the solo step-dancing performed by a Westmorland man amongst the guests. They had never seen anything as good upon the stage, they declared.)

An old rhyme of places in the neighbourhood of Lancaster commemorates the dancing-schools of the small village of Overton, on the Lune estuary:

Torrisholme and Poulton are good places for the poor,  
And as for Little Heysham it stands upon the shore;  
There 's [name forgotten] and Middleton for grips, [ditches]  
There 's Overton for dancing-schools, and Sunderland for ships.

The rhyme must go back well into the eighteenth century, long before Poulton was renamed Morecambe, and when ships still lay before the tiny village of Sunderland, once the port of Lancaster.

ANNE G. GILCHRIST.