

Boston Fancy

(An improper, progressive, longways formation for as many as will)

Original Notation: *The Ball-Room Manual of Contra Dances and Social Cotillions*, 1863, Belfast, Maine

First couple balance to the second and turn – down the centre, back, cast off - ladies chain – for half promenade, half right and left.

Set-up:

Form a line of as many couples as wish to participate (form several lines, if necessary, as space dictates); dancers face the head of the hall, ladies on the gentlemen's RIGHT hands. First couple, third couple, fifth couple, etc. down the set, salute and change places, then face down the set, towards the couple below. In this manner, small subsets of two couples each have been created, within the long line.

The odd-numbered couples (1,3,5,7, etc.) have their backs to the HEAD OF THE HALL and are facing down the set; they are the ACTIVE couples. The ACTIVE couples will progress down the set, dancing with new inactive couples, until the end of the line is reached and there are no more inactive couples with whom to dance. At this point, the ACTIVE couple waits out one playing of the dance (64 counts) and during this time 1. Turns around to face into the set; 2. Makes sure the lady is on the gentleman's right hand; and 3. Magically becomes INACTIVE. They will re-enter the set by dancing with the ACTIVE couple coming towards them and continue to progress up the set as INACTIVES.

The even-numbered couples (2,4,6,8, etc.) have their chests to the HEAD OF THE HALL and are facing up the set; they are INACTIVE couples. The INACTIVE couples will imitate the movements of the active couples, as described above, except they will progress up the set and magically become ACTIVE couples, after waiting out a turn, dancing with the INACTIVE couple coming towards them and then continuing to progress down the hall, as ACTIVES.

The Dance:

Active Couples: Balance' your vis-à-vis (forward 1-2-3, back 1-2-3). Active couple: Left Two Hand Turn your partner. (Hint: if you start the balance' forward, on the left foot and backward on the right foot, the left foot is raised and ready to step out to the left for the two hand turn.) During this figure, the INACTIVE couples stand still and admire the activities. (16 Counts of Music: A section).

Active Couples: face down the hall and walk down the center of the set (if necessary, INACTIVES part slightly, to give the ACTIVES more space). Turn single (this places the woman on the gentleman's left hand) and walk up the hall, in the center of the set, traveling no farther than the INACTIVE couple they were dancing with. Grasp inside hands with your vis-a-vie (ACTIVE gentleman's right hand to INACTIVE Lady's left hand; ACTIVE Lady's left hand to INACTIVE gentleman's right hand) and ACTIVE couples cast out of the set, below the INACTIVE couple. (At the finish of this figure 1. Partners are looking across the set at each other, 2. The ladies are to the right of their vis-à-vis.) (16 counts of music, A section).

Ladies Chain across the set and back (ladies pass across by right hands, give left hands to their partners, executing a left hand turn; ladies pass across by right hands, give left hands to their vis-à-vis, executing a left hand turn. During the figure, the gentlemen REMAIN on their side of the set. All dancers finish where they started). (16 counts of music, B section)

With their vis-à-vis, both couples promenade across the set, gentlemen passing left shoulders, and turn to face into the set. (Hint: end the Ladies Chain so that, as a couple, you are shoulder to shoulder, facing across the set, but KEEP HOLDING your vis-à-vis' left hand, after completing the Chain; gentlemen, place your right arm over the ladies' left arm and grasp her right hand. The gentlemen's left elbow will be bent and the ladies' right elbow will be bent. You are now in the skater's position and can advance across the set). Half Right and Left, back across the set, as follows: right hand to your partner and pull past one another across the set, left hand to your vis-à-vis and pull past one another, up and down the set. At this point, the ACTIVES should be facing down the set, looking at a new INACTIVE couple and the INACTIVES should be facing up the set, looking at a new ACTIVE couple. Everyone has progressed. (16 counts of music: B section)

Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

Notes by Robin BC Bancroft, 2000