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# A PLAIE FOR MERRIE MAY TYME

BY  
JOHNSTON GROSVENOR

MARCH BROTHERS, Publishers  
208, 210, 212 Wright Avenue  
LEBANON, O.

King of ye Revels

Queen of ye Year

King of ye revels





# A Plaie *for* Merrie May Tyme

Wherein *ye* Scholars go a-masking

BY

JOHNSTON GROSVENOR

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MARCH BROTHERS, *Publishers*  
208, 210, 212 Wright Ave., Lebanon, Ohio

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## FOLKS OF YE FROLIC

GIRLES be		RUSTICS be
<i>Rose</i>	red	<i>Cockscomb</i>
<i>Marigold</i>	orange	<i>King of ye Revels</i>
<i>Black-eyed-Susan</i>	yellow	<i>Dandelion</i>
<i>Queen of ye May</i>	green	<i>Jack-in-ye-pulpit</i>
<i>Ragged Lady</i>	blue	<i>Ragged Robin</i>
<i>Pansy</i>	purple	<i>Johnny-jump-up</i>
<i>Violet</i>	violet	<i>Sweet William</i>

There be fiddlers also

\$0.<sup>25</sup>/<sub>1</sub>

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no. 1.

## PREFACE

Youth and Happiness—hand in hand! Springtime called to them. They answered with music and motion and laughter.

The May-pole game expressed to the English all the delights of the early summer. Played out of doors, it was, perhaps, the most popular folk dance of the seventeenth century. And it took as many forms as there were villages to play it.

This adaptation of the game uses a light and graceful folk dance step of a sort to interest twelve year old children and to develop their muscles and their sense of rhythm normally.

The music of "Come Lasses and Lads" was so beloved and so much sung that it had become classical even before it was published in the Westminster Drollery in 1672. The other tunes are quite as old.

Happy-go-lucky rhymes were often made up by the players on the inspiration of the moment. Doggerel forms were favorite ones and parodies were numerous.

The lines here used can be made a study in composition by literature classes; for the choice of words and their form of spelling is a correct presentation of

## PREFACE

our Mother Tongue as seventeenth century English people spoke it.

In dancing and costumes, in music and verse, the play is intended to be an easy recreation lesson in history, literature and gymnastics.

JOHNSTON GROSVENOR.

# A Plaie *for* Merrie May Tyme

Wherein *ye* Scholars go a-masking

## YE PROPER DUDS

Each lass goes deckt in a bright sash, each lad in a baldric of a colour to match a mask painted like unto a flower. The King and Queen are bedight with crowns; his of orange, hers of green; they wear no masks. Jack-in-ye-pulpit hath a hood of brown perked upon his head; a green calyx collar encircleth his neck, extending upward. Robin and his lady flaunt beggar's fringes. Johnny becometh the village cut-up; jester's bells bedeck his wrists and ankles. Ye fiddlers be garlanded with blossoms.

## MUSICK

Any olde tune is liked for marching and gamboling and upon stringed instruments oft fitly helps the jargonning. Pianos may also thump *ye* rhythm.

## FIXINGS FOR YE GAME

There do be stoutly set up a Maypole with two ribands of each rainbow colour.

## SCENE: YE VILLAGE GREEN

Whilst *ye* friendly folk do be a-coming to see *ye* game, *ye* fiddlers play "Janet's Jacket" as oft as pleases them. At time to begin *ye* play they hie away.

Enter a Person who is not in ye play and who speaketh a

## FOREWORD

A long time ago, many of our great, great, great, very great grandfathers and mothers lived in old England. They were much like us and yet a little different. So, too, their clothes were of another style and their manners of another sort. Even their words have changed in coming down to us. But their hearts were so close akin to our hearts that when spring days came, they felt exactly as we do now. They wanted to lay aside humdrum work and have a frolic. With our thoughts, which are the great, great, great, very great grandchildren of their thoughts, we can imagine that we see them today. [*Trumpet blows without.*] Look with all your eyes! For here they come! [*Trumpet blows without.*] [*Exit Person.*]

[*Enter JACK-IN-YE-PULPIT, blowing a trumpet.*]

JACK. Hark, kind people all!  
 Pretend when I call  
 Ye are back in ye grandsire days.  
 In those good olde tymes,  
 With songs of queer rimes,  
 They played as ye'll see us play. [*Sounds fanfare.*]

[*Enter YE FIDDLERS a-playing, "Come, Lasses and Lads."* They lead a train a-jigging behind them and



*a-singing with all their might, both FIDDLERS and train. There be the KING and QUEEN with many masks upon their arms a-hanging and girles and rustics two by two.]*

ALL. "Come, lasses and lads,  
Get leave of your dads,  
'Away to the Maypole hie—  
For ev'ry faire  
Has a sweetheart there  
And the fiddlers standing by ;"  
Now William has his Vi'let  
And Cockscomb has his Rose.

So dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it on your  
toes.

Oh, dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it he who  
knows.

So dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and  
down.

Oh, dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'.

QUEEN. For one blithesome day,  
I be Queen of ye May  
In ye King of ye Revels' hands.  
And my subjects true,  
Must eft-soons do  
Such games as ye King commands.

*[All raise their voices on the tune and repeat both ye doggerel and ye chorus.]*

KING. Come, rustic and mayde,  
 Do not be afraid  
     To join in the revels high.  
 Each choose him a flower  
 To wear for an hour;  
     And dance as the moments fly.

[FIDDLERS *strike up ye tune and play ye measures, "Oh, dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and down," as ROBIN advances step-hopping to it. He approacheth the QUEEN.*]

ROBIN. [*Pulleth his forelock and scrapes his foot.*]  
 I be called Robin.

QUEEN. A Ragged Robin! [*He kneeleth to her. She masks him.*]

ROBIN. [*Rising.*] I'll skip to my fluttering rags.

[FIDDLERS *strike up ye tune again and play ye measures. "Oh, dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'" as LADY advances step-hopping to it. She approacheth the KING.*]

LADY. [*A-picking up her skirts to bob in curtsy fashion.*] I be a Lady.

KING. Poor Ragged Lady! [*She kneeleth to him. He masks her.*]

LADY. [*Rising.*] I'll dance in my tattered tags.

ROBIN. [*Step-hopping toward LADY.*] Oh, wilt thou with me dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and down? [*Bows to her.*]

LADY. [*Bobbing to ROBIN. Step-hops to meet him.*] Oh, thankee! Yea, I'll dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'!

[*As they meet they raise aloft their right hands and join them.*]

[*FIDDLERS play ye measures of ye chorus. All ye folks a-singing it foot it merrily toward the pole and back again whilst ROBIN and his LADY seek out and gather up ye ribands blue.*]

[*FIDDLERS alone repeat ye measures as WILLIAM in tyme advances step-hopping to it. He approacheth the QUEEN. He bows.*]

WILLIAM. My name is William.

QUEEN. Dearest Sweet William! [*He kneeleth to her. She masks him.*]

WILLIAM. [*Rising.*] And would I that might I play.

[*FIDDLERS repeat ye measures as VIOLET in tyme advances step-hopping to it. She approacheth the KING.*]

VIOLET. [*Curtsyng.*] I am a Vi'let.

KING. Modest, pale Vi'let. [*She kneeleth to him. He masks her.*]

VIOLET. [*Rising.*] To trip it I shrink away.

WILLIAM. [*Bashfully step-hopping toward VIOLET.*] Oh, wilt thou with me dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and down?

VIOLET. [*Finger in mouth, step-hopping timidly toward WILLIAM.*] Oh, thankee, yea, I'll dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'!

[*As they meet they raise aloft their right hands and join them.*]

[*FIDDLERS play ye measures of ye chorus. All ye folks a-singing it foot it merrily toward the pole and back again whilst WILLIAM and his VIOLET seek out and gather up ye ribands violet.*]

[*FIDDLERS alone repeat the measures as COCKSCOMB advances step-hopping to it. He approacheth the QUEEN.*]

COCKSCOMB. [*Bows.*] Yclad as a beau—

QUEEN. Most COCKSCOMBS are so! [*He kneeleth to her gallantly. She masks him.*]

COCKSCOMB. [*Rising.*] I do love a pretty girl!

[*FIDDLERS repeat ye measures as ROSE in tyme advances step-hopping to it. She approacheth the KING.*]

ROSE. [*Shaking her curls coquettishly.*] Mayhap, then, a Rose—

KING. A beauteous Rose— [*She kneeleth to him. He masks her.*]

ROSE. [*Rising.*] Away by his side should whirl.

COCKSCOMB. [*Ogling with his glass and step-hopping toward ROSE.*] Oh, wilt thou with me dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and down?

ROSE. [*Saucily step-hopping toward COCKSCOMB.*] Oh, thankee, yea, I'll dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'.

[*As they meet they raise aloft their right hands and join them.*]

[*FIDDLERS play ye measures of ye chorus. All ye folks a-singing it, foot it merrily toward the pole and back again, whilst COCKSCOMB and his ROSE seek out and gather up ye ribands red.*]

[*FIDDLERS alone repeat ye measures as DANDELION advances step-hopping to it. He approacheth the QUEEN.*]

DANDELION. [*Bows.*] I be a Lion. -

QUEEN. A dandy Lion! [*He kneeleth to her. She masks him.*]

DANDELION. [*Rising.*] Some girl who is bold give me.

[*FIDDLERS repeat ye measures as SUSAN advances step-hopping to it. She approacheth the KING.*]

SUSAN. [*Bows with proper pride.*] Susan, the black-eyed—

KING. Brave and black-eyed— [*She kneeleth to him. He masks her.*]

SUSAN. [*Rising.*] Is willing to dance with thee.

DANDELION. [*With braggart air step-hopping toward SUSAN.*] Oh, wilt thou with me dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and down?

SUSAN. [*Haughtily step-hopping toward DANDELION.*] Oh, thankee, yea, I'll dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'.

[*As they meet they raise aloft their right hands and join them.*]

[*FIDDLERS play ye measures of ye chorus. All ye folks a-singing it foot it merrily toward the pole and back again, whilst DANDELION and his SUSAN seek out and gather up ye ribands yellow.*]

[*FIDDLERS alone repeat ye measures as JOHNNY-JUMP-UP advances step-hopping to it. He approacheth the QUEEN.*]

JOHNNY. [*Cavorting and cracking his heels.*] I'm only Johnny.

QUEEN. Up-jumping-Johnny! [*He kneeleth to her. She masks him.*]

JOHNNY. [*Rising and grimacing.*] Hey! For the reel and rout!

[*FIDDLERS repeat ye measures as PANSY advances step-hopping to it. She approacheth the KING.*]

PANSY. [*Laughing through her fingers.*] I'm just a Pansy.

KING. Quaint, joyous Pansy! [*She kneeleth to him. He masks her.*]

PANSY. [*Rising.*] I'll dance if they coax me out.

JOHNNY. [*Step-hopping toward PANSY, says in pantomime.*] Oh, wilt thou with me dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and down?

PANSY. [*Step-hopping toward JOHNNY, says in pantomime.*] Oh, thankee, yea, I'll dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'.

[*FIDDLERS stand still and stare. FOLKS without music and without vocal sound sing vigorously in pantomime as they foot it, noisily patting their feet, to the time of JOHNNY'S bells as he and his PANSY seek and gather up ye ribands purple.*]

[*Then FIDDLERS alone repeat as before ye measures of ye chorus as MARIGOLD, step-hopping, advances. She approacheth the KING.*]

KING. Thou'rt Mary, I'm told.

MARIGOLD. Yea, I'm Mari-gold. [*She kneeleth to him. He masks her. She rises.*] And I curtsy to the King.

JACK. [*Bows.*] And thou, pretty Queen—

QUEEN. With Jack-'-pulpit, green— [*Nods graciously.*]

KING *and* JACK. [*To* MARIGOLD *and* QUEEN.] Oh, wilt thou with me dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it up and down?

QUEEN *and* MARIGOLD. [*To* JACK *and* KING.] Oh, thankee, yea, I'll dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it all aroun'.

[FIDDLERS *play as before, folks sing and dance as before, whilst* KING *and* MARIGOLD *and* QUEEN *and* JACK *seek and gather up ye ribands orange and ye ribands green.*]

[*Now ye* FIDDLERS *fine, beckoning one another glad-somely, change their stand and change their tune. They strike up right lively and saw away on "Girles and Boys, Come Out to Play."*]

[*Then to this curious and different musick, all the Flowers, featly and in unison, chain in and out, and up and down in ye May pole dance, weaving their colours as they step; tripping it as long as they do please.*]

ROSE. When breath is a' gone,  
 And steps are a' done,  
 Do we bob [*all bob*] for ye plaie is o'er.  
 On some other year,  
 If ye will come here,  
 We may wind ye same pole once more.

[FIDDLERS *briskly begin "Come, Lasses and Lads," and to that same olde tune they sing and dance away.*]



ALL. Come, lasses and lads,  
Take leave of your dads,  
Away from the maypole hie—  
For ev'ry faire,  
Found a sweetheart there—  
And the fiddlers standing by.  
The Queen has had a May Day,  
The King has found more gold;  
So dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it as ye're  
told.  
So dance it, step it, dance it, step it, dance it 'til ye're  
olde!

[*Exit all in full chorus and lively action.*]

#### NOTES ON COSTUMES

The simplest way to produce a picturesque effect in this play is to have the boys' parts taken by girls. They may wear their gymnasium suits of dark bloomers and jerseys, black stockings and tennis shoes, part their hair on one side, comb it plainly and tuck it up underneath just below the ears, to look like seventeenth century "crops." A touch of black grease paint or burnt cork will mark each swain a mustache; add a goatee to the King's countenance and an elfin perk to Jack's eyebrows.

The girls wear gymnasium shoes, white stockings, white skirts and white middies; their hair is parted in the middle and hangs free.

All the accessories can be bought for a song at any toy shop. The players will delight in making their own things.

Sashes, baldrics and the coverings for the maypole ribbons may be of rainbow crepe paper. The masks of drawing paper should be cut out to resemble the shapes of the flowers named, painted boldly with water colors, and held in place with elastic ribbon fitted to the wearer. An inch square of muslin pasted on the under side edges will prevent the elastic from tearing out. For comfort the eyeholes should be large. Masks should fit to rest above the nose so they will not interfere with the singing voices.

An extreme of patches and torn stockings and clothes should show in Robin's and Lady's costumes. Cockscomb may carry a monocle and use it. For Johnny, musical bells are charming; but even one small tea bell can be used with good effect.

Each flower should be encouraged to individualize a manner toward the King and Queen so as to suggest a marked personality.

#### NOTES ON STAGE SETTING

Out of doors is the place to play. In bad weather under a roof will do. The larger the stage, the taller the pole can be. The taller the pole the longer the ribbons can be. And the longer the ribbons, the merrier the dance and the better the dramatic effect!

At first, the ribbons hang straight down the pole and lay upon the ground spread out in fan shape. Each

player's place is at the end of her ribbon. She takes her place there upon entrance. At each repetition of the chorus, she step-hops between the ribbons toward the pole and back again. After she has made her speech to the King or Queen, she comes back to place and picks up her ribbon end for the first time. She does not drop it through the entire maypole dance.

Each player should so lengthen or shorten her steps that she may go from her place to the King or Queen and back again in the eight measures required. The ribbons of the Queen and King, of Jack and Mari-gold are at the front of the stage nearest the audience.

Each should kneel to face the audience while being masked.

A cornet behind the scenes to do Jack's trumpeting for him, if he can not play one himself, will give the whole play a lively air.

#### NOTES ON ADAPTATION

A gourd fiddle and homemade zitterns may be used in place of violins. Any old tunes may be substituted for those mentioned if they are animated and will make the final chorus full and vivid.

As the play reads, the parts can be taken by children from twelve to fourteen years. For those of ten, the recurring lines, "Oh, wilt thou?" and "Oh, thankee," should not be spoken, nor should the business of character suggestion be attempted.

## NOTES ON DANCING

When this old earth was so young that no one thought of trying to act grown up, some happy soul invented the step-hop to express his joy in living. It is so simple that any cheerful creature can learn it in a few minutes. Thus:

To six-eight time, step the left foot forward on count one; then raise the right knee forward and hop with the left foot on count two; step the right foot forward on count three; raise the left knee forward and hop with the right foot on count four; step the left foot forward on count five; raise the right knee forward and hop with the left foot on count six; step the right foot forward on count seven; raise the left knee forward and hop with the right foot on count eight.

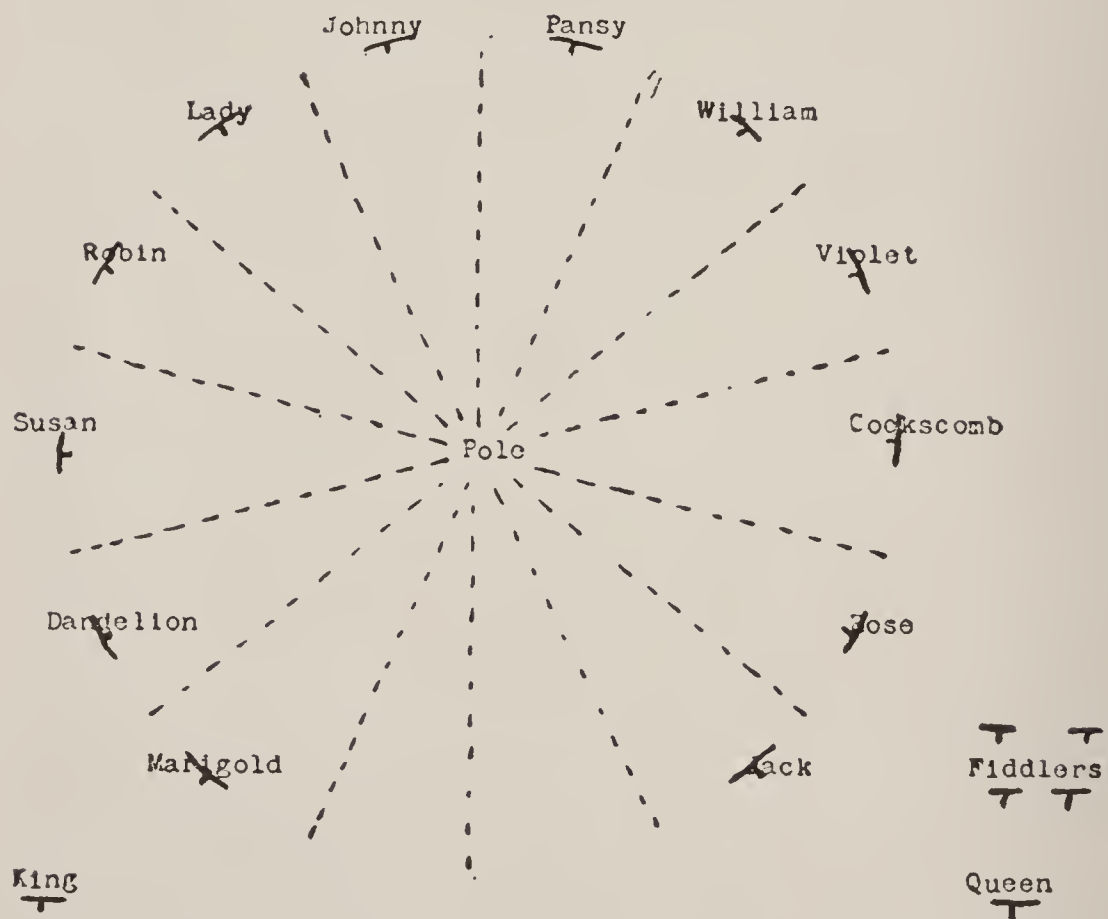
To go backward, step the left foot backward on count one; raise the right knee and hop with the left foot on count two; step the right foot backward on count three; raise the left knee forward and hop with the right foot on count four; step the left foot backward on count five; raise the right knee forward and hop with left foot on count six; step the right foot backward on count seven; raise the left knee forward and hop with the right foot on count eight. Mark the time gayly with the head and hands. And presto! The thing is done.

For the maypole dance, the players should advance toward the pole in eight measures and retreat in eight

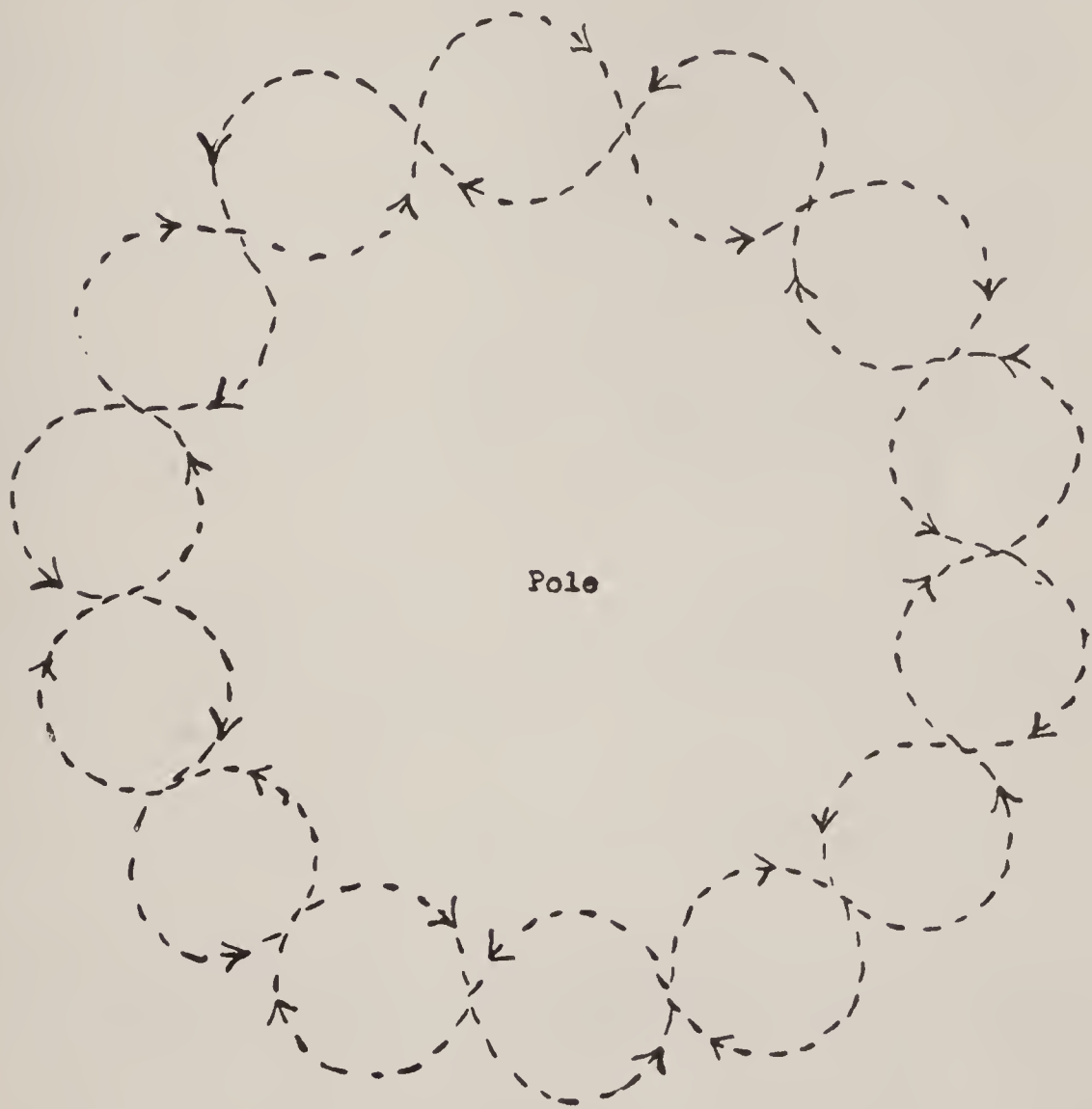
measures. Each player touches her right hand, in which she holds her ribbon, against the beribboned right hand of her flower-partner. They face each other. At the beginning of a measure they pass one another, each going to the left. Each then reaches forward and with her left hand touches the left hand of the person she meets, passing her on the right and going under that person's outstretched ribbon. Then she reaches forward with her right hand, touches the right hand of the person she meets and throws her ribbon over that person's head as she passes her on the left. Then she reaches forward with her left hand again. This continues round the circle of the may-pole. Always she uses one hand and then the other—goes under one ribbon and throws one ribbon over some one else—alternately. Half way round each time she will meet her flower-partner. This weaving must be done without mistake. It is the primitive figure called sometimes "grand right and left." It continues round and round the pole until the pattern is woven down the pole and the ends of the ribbons have become too low and too short to dance under.

Then the players stand and mark time for eight measures, when they begin and with the same step and same motions unwind the ribbons. This also must be done without mistake. For an encore the pole can be wound the second time, but not unwound, and left standing with the design upon it.

The time of presentation will last through one school recreation period—about thirty-five minutes.

**STAGE SETTING**

**DIAGRAM OF THE MAYPOLE DANCE**



# COME LASSES AND LADS.

Come lasses and lads get leave of your dads, And a-

way to ye May-pole hie;.... For ev-'ry

faire has a sweetheart there, And the fiddlers stand-ing

by..... For Will-iam has his Vi'-let, And



Cockscomb has his Rose; So dance it, step it,

dance it, step it, Dance it he who knows.

COME LASSES AND LADS.

*2nd Violin.*

JANET'S JACKET IS TORN.

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some rests.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some rests.

The third system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some rests.

JANET'S JACKET IS TORN.

*2nd Violin.*

The first system of the 2nd Violin part consists of a single staff in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

The second system of the 2nd Violin part consists of a single staff in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

The third system of the 2nd Violin part consists of a single staff in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of two flats. It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

GIRLES AND BOYS COME OUT TO PLAY.

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a time signature of 6/8. It contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic accompaniment with chords and some eighth notes.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The upper staff features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The lower staff provides a steady accompaniment with chords and eighth notes.

The third system concludes the piece. The upper staff has a melodic line that ends with a final note. The lower staff provides a final accompaniment with chords and eighth notes, ending with a double bar line.

GIRLES AND BOYS COME OUT TO PLAY.

*2nd Violin.*

The first system of the 2nd Violin part is written on a single treble clef staff. It features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, starting with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 6/8.

The second system continues the melodic line for the 2nd Violin part, consisting of eighth and quarter notes.

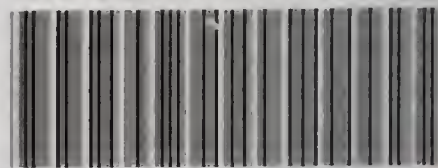
The third system concludes the 2nd Violin part with a melodic line of eighth and quarter notes, ending with a double bar line.











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