

# **FOLK DANCES AND GAMES**

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Folk Dances and Games by Caroline Crawford

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**CAROLINE CRAWFORD**

**FOLK DANCES  
AND GAMES**





Arthur S. Elliot

I SENT A LETTER TO MY LOVE

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# FOLK DANCES AND GAMES

BY  
CAROLINE CRAWFORD  
TEACHERS COLLEGE, NEW YORK CITY



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NEW YORK  
A. S. BARNES & COMPANY

1908  
x.

#### PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

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Professor Frederick Peterson of Columbia University, well known as a nerve specialist writes: "The dance seems to fulfill every requisite of an ideal exercise — the practical use of all the muscles, the acme of pleasurable emotion, and the satisfaction of the esthetic sense."

This is true of the folk dances. They are the ideal *natural* form of exercise. Moreover, they are simple, pretty and enjoyable and give body control as nothing else does.

The need of the many good things derived from this form of physical exercise has existed for many years. With the recognition of the need, there has come a demand for an authoritative hand-book prepared with particular reference to the schools. There has been no such book in existence in the English language. The present book was prepared to supply that need.

Miss Crawford, the author, has made a special study of folk dancing for many years. She taught the subject to teachers at Chicago University and now has charge of the same work at Teachers College in Columbia University. Her students have gone out to summer schools to spread the good work. All this has intensified the call for such a book as this, which the publishers issue in the hope that it will serve to enrich the lives of the children whose welfare and happiness were kept in mind in the preparation of it.





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## MEANING OF THE DANCE.

Only a few years ago the dance was used in the gymnasium simply as a means of exercise. Beyond this it was not seen to have any place in the school. But as soon as the dance was studied in primitive life, and its function and relation to the other factors of life were discovered, it was seen to have a significance far beyond its first use in the school.

To appreciate the meaning of the dance, it is necessary to understand the part that gesture, as a language, has played in the development of the race. Until very recent times we thought of the alphabet as the starting point for language, and did not look for an earlier mode of expression. Now we realize that there is another language, made up of imitative movements, which precedes verbal speech. Man communicated with his fellow beings long before he chose certain arbitrary words as signs of his actions. These more elemental signs are what interest us when we attempt to understand the dance, for the dance is but the expression of a mood; or a story told through the medium of pantomimic action.

This expression in pantomime is as varied as man's interests and actions. Many dances are dramas representing common occurrences of daily life. The love plays, the stories and characterizations of animals, the occupations, games, and even the gay joyful moods which are engendered by a happy gathering on the village green, are subjects found again and again in the dances of the folk.

We find in the war dance the excited telling of the advance toward the enemy, the struggle with, and the conquest over him. Whether this be the pyrrhic dance of the ancient Greeks, or the sword dance seen in recent times in Scandinavia, matters little. The form may vary, but the plot remains the same. Among the Indians such a dance is a part of the religious ceremony which is performed before the battle, to insure the success of the enterprise. The English Morris is a descendant of this type of dance. The triumphant battle march is closely associated with the earlier war dance. There is a story in Brittany of two armies that were marching toward each other prepared for battle. As they approached, both armies were singing King Arthur's battle march. The two peoples had been separated for seven hundred years, but they were yet brothers.

The forms of the love dances are as varied as the love songs of our times. Some tell the story of successful pursuit and capture, others are pathetic pantomimes representing the misfortune of unrequited love. In southern Europe not a few of the most beautiful dances represent the whole gamut of emotional expression in the love story. "The Little Cloth" is very closely allied to the more highly developed love pantomime. The waltz, in its several forms, is the dance expression of this type.

The religious dance was often the dramatization of the life or work of the god. The procession to the sacrificial altar is most solemn and reverent. The stately old pavan has the same melody as one of our most impressive church processions of to-day. Undoubtedly many of the old dances which to us express simply a joyous or a solemn mood were originally a part of the ritual of these earlier religions.