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Title: The Fascinating Boston

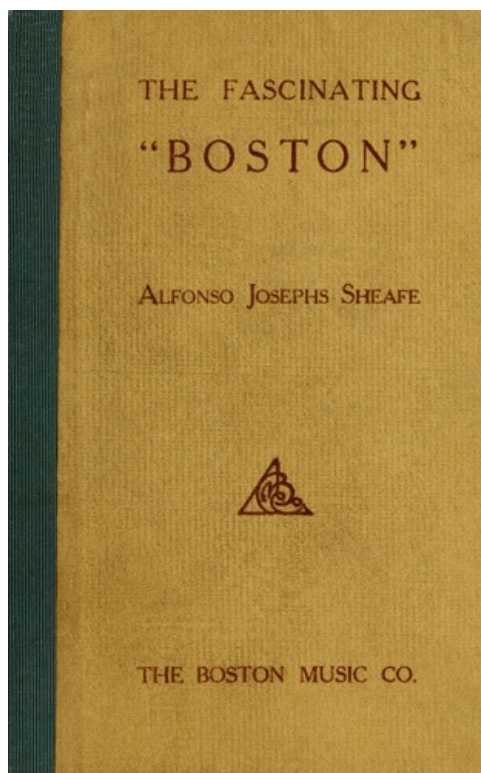
Author: Alfonso Josephs Sheafe

Release date: September 15, 2011 [EBook #37443]  
Most recently updated: January 8, 2021

Language: English

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# THE FASCINATING BOSTON

How to Dance and How to Teach the  
Popular New Social Favorite

*By*

ALFONSO JOSEPHS SHEAFE

Master of Dancing

*Translator and Editor of  
Zorn's Grammar of the Art of Dancing*



Boston, Mass.

THE BOSTON MUSIC COMPANY  
New York: G. Schirmer, Incorporated

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## THE FASCINATING BOSTON

[1]

### FOREWORD

**S**INCE the introduction of the waltz, more than a hundred years ago, it has held the first place in the esteem of dancers throughout the civilized world. There has appeared, however, a new claimant for the place—one that possesses all the qualities that go to make a social favorite, and has the additional advantages of greater ease of execution, and wider possibilities of adaptation.

This is the BOSTON—not, as many persons suppose, a new creation nor indeed is it a novelty even to the American public, for it was introduced here more than a generation ago; but the great popularity of the Two-Step, which had just then come into vogue, and was fast gaining favor under the influence of such brilliant compositions as the quick-step marches by Sousa, operated against its immediate acceptance.

[2]

One of the reasons why the Boston should prove today a more attractive dance than any other, is the fact that now there are more captivating airs written for this particular form of dance than for any other, and as the Two-Step, in its time, found its most powerful ally in the music to which it was adapted, the Boston has today the persuasive intercession of such languorous and haunting melodies as "Love's Awakening" and "On the Wings of Dream," by Danglas; Sinibaldi's "Thrill," and others.

General taste has gradually found out the superior charm of the Boston; the pendulum of public favor has again swung in the direction of skilful dancing.

The recent revival of the Waltz in its proper form, has brought with it a larger appreciation of the more worthy and graceful social dances, and the entire world now recognizes the wonderful beauty of the Boston, and has welcomed it as a real competitor.

[3]

The Boston is not a Waltz, yet it is the perfection of it. It is one of those paradoxical things which, while it is impossible to be classified, contains all that is to be found in almost any other dance. Even the persons who have so long and so loyally clung to other forms of dancing, and have abated none in their zeal for their favorites, have been unconsciously, and perhaps unwillingly, charmed by the seductiveness of the Boston, until they now freely declare the new dance to be the superior of the Waltz. Therefore it is safe to say that the Boston will, eventually, supersede the Waltz altogether.

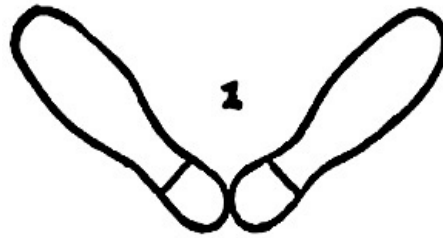
We demand a dance which combines ease of execution with attractive movement. That is just what the Boston does, and perhaps more. It is so simple in construction that, when acquired, it becomes natural, and its perfect adaptability assures it lasting popularity.

[4]

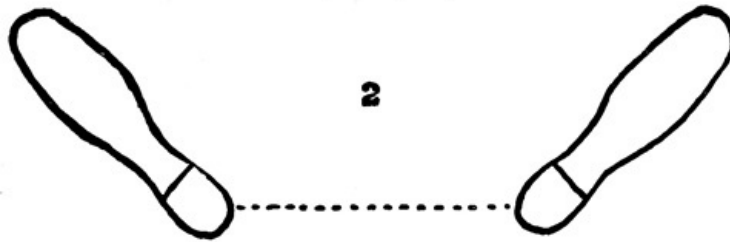
Owing to the urgent request of many of his pupils and colleagues, the author has undertaken this little book in the hope that it will meet the requirements of both teachers and students, and help to assure the proper appreciation of what is in reality the most delightful and artistic social dance since the Minuet.

In order that the reader may the more readily understand the descriptions given in this book, we will explain the five fundamental positions upon which the art of dancing rests.

In the 1st position, the feet are together, heel against heel.

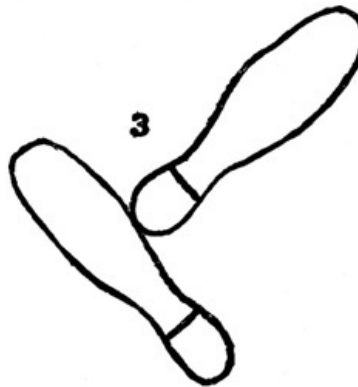


In the 2nd position, the heels are separated sidewise, and on the same line.

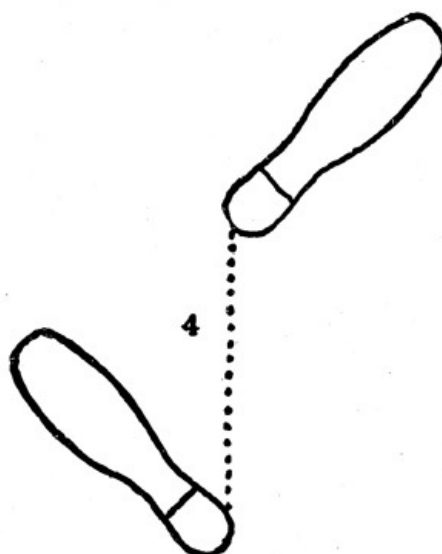


In the 3rd position, the heel of one foot touches the middle of the other.

[6]

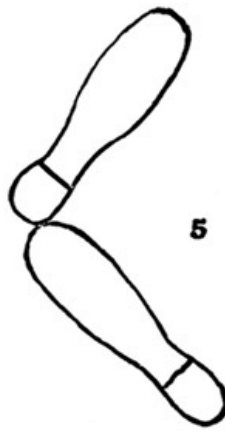


In the 4th position, the feet are separated as in walking, either directly forward or directly backward.



In the 5th position, the heel of one foot touches the point of the other.

[7]



In all these positions the feet must be turned outward to form not less than a right angle.

## THE POSITIONS OF THE PARTNERS

[8]

Much, if not all, of the adverse criticism of the Boston which has been offered by educators, parents and other responsible objectors, has been directed at the relative positions of the partners. This is, in fact, no more than the general rule as regards the Social Round Dance, with the possible exception that the positions have been sometimes distorted by attempts to copy the freer forms of dancing that have been presented upon the stage.

The Round Dance demands that a certain fixed grouping of the partners be maintained in order that the rotation around a common moving centre may be accomplished, and it is here that the most serious problem is to be found.

The dancing profession long ago undertook to settle upon arbitrary groupings satisfactory to the needs of the dancers, and conforming to all the requirements of propriety and hygienic exercise. [9]



Acting upon this basis, the reputable teachers of dancing throughout the world have adopted and promulgated three fundamental groupings for the Round Dance which are so constructed as to provide the greatest ease of execution and freedom of action. They are known as the Waltz Position, the Open Position, and the Side Position of the Waltz. All round dances are executed in one or another of these groupings, which are not only accepted by all good teachers, but, with the exception of certain minor and unimportant variations, rigidly adhered to in all their work.

In the Waltz Position the partners stand facing one another, with shoulders parallel, and looking over one another's right shoulder. Special attention must be paid to the parallel position of the shoulders, in order to fit the individual movements of the partners along the line of direction. [10]

The gentleman places his right hand lightly upon the lady's back, at a point about half-way across, between the waist-line and the shoulder-blades. The fingers are so rounded as to permit the free circulation of air between the palm of the hand and the lady's back, and should not be spread.

The lady places her left hand lightly upon the gentleman's arm, allowing her fore-arm to rest gently upon his arm. The partners stand at an easy distance from one another, inclining toward the common centre very slightly. The free hands are lightly joined at the side. This is merely to provide occupation for the disengaged arms, and the gentleman holds the tip of the lady's hand lightly in the bended fingers of his own. Guiding is accomplished by the gentleman through a slight lifting of his right elbow.



### THE OPEN POSITION

[11]

The Open Position needs no explanation, and can be readily understood from the illustration facing page 8.

### THE SIDE POSITION OF THE WALTZ

The side position of the Waltz differs from the Waltz Position only in the fact that the partners stand side by side and with the engaged arms more widely extended. The free arms are held as in the [frontispiece](#). In the actual rotation this position naturally resolves itself into the regular Waltz Position.

[12]

### THE STEP OF THE BOSTON

The preparatory step of the Boston differs materially from that of any other Social Dance. There is *only one position* of the feet in the Boston—the 4th. That is to say, the feet are separated one from the other as in walking.

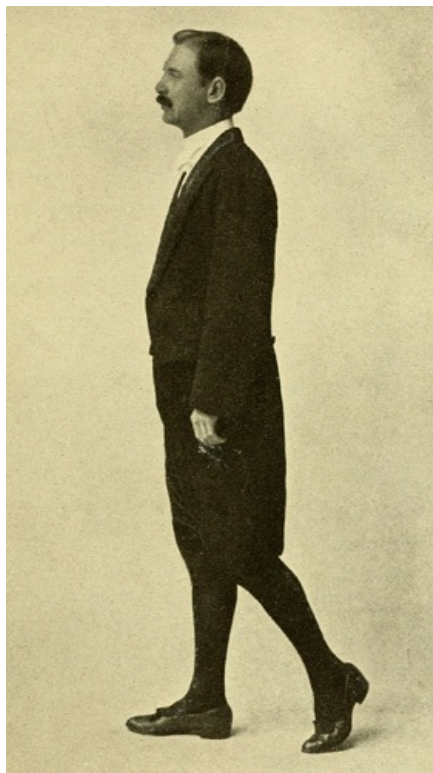
On the first count of the measure the whole leg swings freely, and as a unit, from the hip, and the foot is put down practically flat upon the floor, where it immediately receives the entire weight of the body *perpendicularly*. The weight is held entirely upon this foot during the remainder of the measure, whether it be in  $\frac{3}{4}$  or  $\frac{2}{4}$  time.

The following preparatory exercises must be practiced forward and backward until the movements become natural, before proceeding.

In going backward, the foot must be carried to the rear as far as possible, and the weight must always be perpendicular to the supporting foot. [13]

These movements are identical with walking, and except the particular care which must be bestowed upon the placing of the foot on the first count of the measure, they require no special degree of attention.

On the second count the free leg swings forward until the knee has become entirely straightened, and is held, suspended, during the third count of the measure. This should be practiced, first with the weight resting upon the entire sole of the supporting foot, and then, when this has been perfectly accomplished, the same exercise may be supplemented by raising the heel (of the supporting foot) on the second count and lowering it on the third count. *Great care must be taken not to divide the weight.*



When the foregoing exercises have been so fully mastered as to become, in a sense, muscular habits, we may, with safety, add the next feature. This consists in touching the floor with the point of the free foot, at a point as far forward or backward as can be done without dividing the weight, on the second count of the measure. Thus, we have accomplished, as it were, an interrupted, or, at least, an arrested step, and this is the true essence of the Boston.

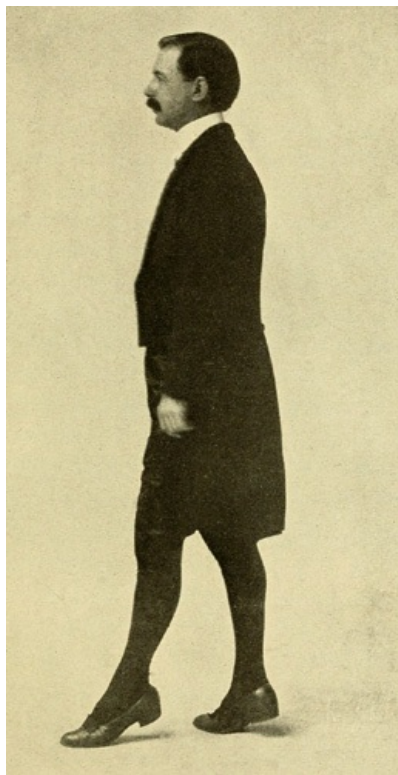
Too great care cannot be expended upon this phase of the step, and it must be practiced over and over again, both forward and backward, until the movement has become second nature. All this must precede any attempt to turn.

The turning of the Boston is simplicity itself, but it is, nevertheless, the one point in the instruction which is most bothersome to learners. The turn is executed upon the ball of *the supporting foot*, and consists in twisting half round without lifting either foot from the ground. In this, the weight is held altogether upon the supporting foot, and there is no crossing. [15]

In carrying the foot forward for the second movement, the knees must pass close to one another, and care must be taken that *the entire half turn comes upon the last count of the measure*.

To sum up:—

Starting with the weight upon the left foot, step forward, placing the entire weight upon the right foot, as in the illustration facing page 14 (count 1); swing left leg quickly forward, straightening the left knee and raising the right heel, and touch the floor with the extended left foot as in the illustration facing page 16, but without placing any weight upon that foot (count 2); execute a half-turn to the left, backward, upon the ball of the supporting (right) foot, at the same time lowering the right heel, and finish as in the illustration opposite page 18 (count 3). One measure. [16]



Starting again, this time with the weight wholly upon the right foot, and with the left leg extended backward, and the point of the left foot lightly touching the floor, step backward, throwing the weight entirely upon the left foot which sinks to a position flat upon the floor, as shown in the illustration facing page 21, (count 4); carry the right foot quickly backward, and touch with the point as far back as possible upon the line of direction without dividing the weight, at the same time raising the left heel as in the illustration facing page 22, (count 5); and complete the rotation by executing a half-turn to the right, forward, upon the ball of the left foot, simultaneously lowering the left heel, and finishing as in the illustration facing page 24, (count 6).

## THE REVERSE

[17]

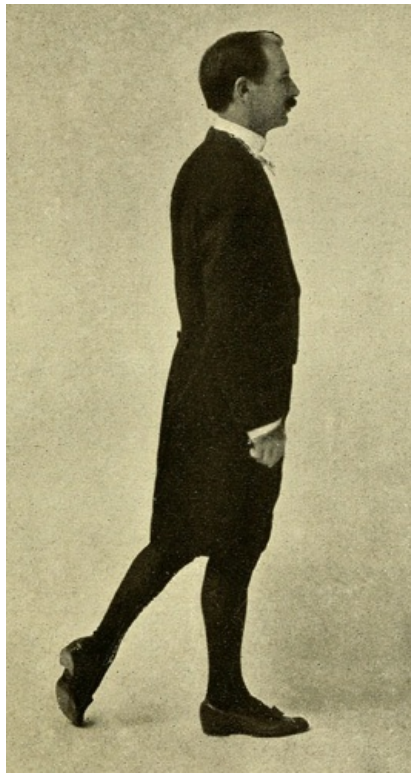
The reverse of the step should be acquired at the same time as the rotation to the right, and it is, therefore, of great importance to alternate from the right to the left rotation from the beginning of the turning exercise. The reverse itself, that is to say, the act of alternating is effected in a single measure without turning (see preparatory exercise, page 13) which may be taken backward by the gentleman and forward by the lady, whenever they have completed a whole turn.

The mechanism of the reverse turn is exactly the same as that of the turn to the right, except that it is accomplished with the other foot, and in the opposite direction.

There is no better or more efficacious exercise to perfect the Boston, than that which is made up of one complete turn to the right, a measure to reverse, and a complete turn to the left. This should be practised until one has entirely mastered the motion and rhythm of the dance. The writer has used this exercise in all his work, and finds it not only helpful and interesting to the pupil, but of special advantage in obviating the possibility of dizziness, and the consequent unpleasantness and loss of time.

[18]





After acquiring a degree of ease in the execution of these movements to Mazurka music, it is advisable to vary the rhythm by the introduction of Spanish or other clearly accented Waltz music, before using the more liquid compositions of Strauss or such modern song waltzes as those of Danglas, Sinibaldi, etc.

It is one of the remarkable features of the Boston that the weight is always opposite the line of direction—that is to say, in going forward, the weight is retained upon the rear foot, and in going backward, the weight is always upon the front foot (direction always radiates from the dancer). Thus, in proceeding around the room, the weight must always be held back, instead of inclining slightly forward as in the other round dances. This seeming contradiction of forces lends to the Boston a unique charm which is to be found in no other dance. [19]

As the dancer becomes more familiar with the Boston, the movement becomes so natural that little or no thought need be paid to technique, in order to develop the peculiar grace of it.

The fact of its being a dance altogether in one position calls for greater skill in the execution of the Boston, than would be the case if there were other changes and contrasts possible, just as it is more difficult to play a melody upon a violin of only one string.

The Boston, in its completed form, resolves itself into a sort of walking movement, so natural and easy that it may be enjoyed for a whole evening without more fatigue than would be the result of a single hour of the Waltz and Two-Step. [20]

Aside from the attractiveness of the Boston as a social dance, its physical benefits are more positive than those of any other Round Dance that we have ever had. The action is so adjusted as to provide the maximum of muscular exercise and the minimum of physical effort. This tends towards the conservation of energy, and produces and maintains, at the same time an evenness of blood pressure and circulation. The movements also necessitate a constant exercise of the ankles and insteps which is very strengthening to those parts, and cannot fail to raise and support the arch of the foot.

Taken from any standpoint, the Boston is one of the most worthy forms of the social dance ever devised, and the distortions of position which are now occasionally practiced must soon give way to the genuinely refining influence of the action. [21]



Of the various forms of the Boston, there is little to be said beyond the description of the manner of their execution, which will be treated in the following pages.

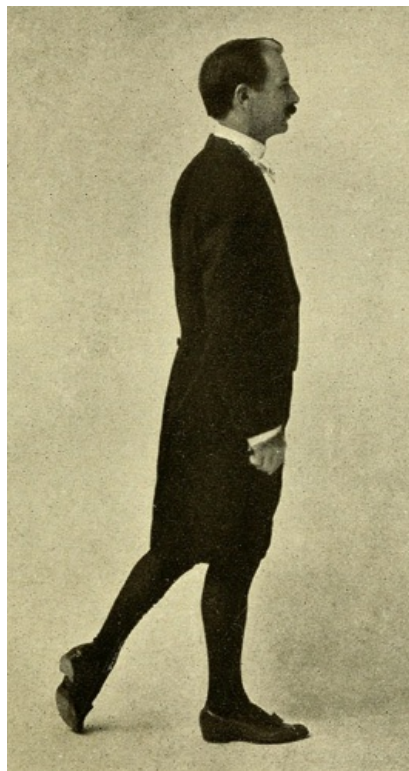
It is hoped that this book will help toward a more complete understanding of the beauties and attractions of the Boston, and further the proper appreciation of it.

[22]

*All descriptions of dances given in this book relate to the lady's part. The gentleman's is exactly the same, but in the counter-motion.*

### THE LONG BOSTON

The ordinary form of the Boston as described in the foregoing pages is commonly known as the "Long" Boston to distinguish it from other forms and variations. It is danced in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, either Waltz or Mazurka, and at any tempo desired. As this is the fundamental form of the Boston, it should be thoroughly acquired before undertaking any other.



### THE SHORT BOSTON

[23]

The "Short" Boston differs from the "Long" Boston only in measure. It is danced in either  $\frac{2}{4}$  or

6/8 time, and the first movement (in 2/4 time) occupies the duration of a quarter-note. The second and third movements each occupy the duration of an eighth-note. Thus, there exists between the "Long" and the "Short" Boston the same difference as between the Waltz and the Galop. In the more rapid forms of the "Short" Boston, the rising and sinking upon the second and third movements naturally take the form of a hop or skip. The dance is more enjoyable and less fatiguing in moderate tempo.

## THE OPEN BOSTON

[24]

The "Open" Boston contains two parts of eight measures each. The first part is danced in the positions shown in the illustrations facing pages 8 and 10, and the second part consists of 8 measures of the "Long" Boston.

In the first part, the dancers execute three Boston steps forward, without turning, and one Boston step turning (towards the partner) to face directly backward (1/2 turn). 4 measures.

This is followed by three Boston steps backward (without turning) in the position shown in the illustration facing page 10, followed by one Boston step turning (toward the partner) and finishing in regular Waltz Position for the execution of the second part.



## THE BOSTON DIP

[25]

The "Dip" is a combination dance in 3/4 or 3/8 time, and contains 4 measures of the "Long" Boston, preceded by 4 measures, as follows:

Standing upon the left foot, step directly to the side, and transfer the weight to the right foot (count 1); swing the left leg to the right in front of the right, at the same time raising the right heel (count 2); lower the right heel (count 3); return the left foot to its original place where it receives the weight (count 4); swing the right leg across in front of the left, raising the left heel (count 5); and lower the left heel (count 6). 2 measures.

Swing the right foot to the right, and put it down directly at the side of the left (count 1); hop on the right foot and swing the left across in front (count 2); fall back upon the right foot (count 3); put down the left foot, crossing in front of the right, and transfer weight to it (count 4); with right foot step a whole step to the right (count 5); and finish by bringing the left foot against the right, where it receives the weight (count 6). 2 measures.

[26]

In executing the hop upon counts 2 and 3 of the third measure, the movement must be so far delayed that the falling back will exactly coincide with the third count of the music.



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## THE TURKEY TROT

[27]

*Preparation:—Side Position of the Waltz.*

During the first four measures take four Boston steps without turning (lady forward, gentleman backward), and bending the supporting knee, stretch the free foot backward, (lady's left, gentleman's right) as shown in the illustration opposite. 4 meas.

Repeat in opposite direction. 4 meas.

Execute four drawing steps to the side (lady's right, gentleman's left) swaying the shoulders and body in the direction of the drawn foot, and pointing with the free foot upon the fourth, as shown in figure. 4 meas.

Repeat in opposite direction. 4 meas.

Eight whole turns, Short Boston or Two-Step. 16 meas.

Repeat at will.

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A splendid specimen for this dance will be found in "The Gobbler" by J. Monroe.

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## THE AEROPLANE GLIDE

[28]

The "Aeroplane Glide" is very similar to the Boston Dip. It is supposed to represent the start of the flight of an aeroplane, and derives its name from that fact.

The sole difference between the "Dip" and "Aeroplane" consists in the six running steps which make up the first two measures. Of these running steps, which are executed sidewise and with alternate crossings, before and behind, only the fourth, at the beginning of the second measure requires special description. Upon this step, the supporting knee is noticeably bended to coincide with the accent of the music.

The rest of the dance is identical with the "Dip". (See page 25.)



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## THE TANGO

[29]

The Tango is a Spanish American dance which contains much of the peculiar charm of the other Spanish dances, and its execution depends largely upon the ability of the dancers so to grasp the rhythm of the music as to interpret it by their movements. The steps are all simple, and the dancers are permitted to vary or improvise the figures at will.

Of these figures the two which follow are most common, and lend themselves most readily to verbal description.

### TANGO No. 1

[30]

The partners face one another as in Waltz Position. The gentleman takes the lady's right hand in his left, and, stretching the arms to the full extent, holding them at the shoulder height, he places her right hand upon his left shoulder, and holds it there, as in the illustration opposite page 30.

In starting, the gentleman throws his right shoulder slightly back and steps directly backward with his left foot, while the lady follows forward with her right. In this manner both continue two steps, crossing one foot over the other and then execute a half-turn in the same direction. This is followed by four measures of the Two-Step and the whole is repeated at will. 8 measures.



## TANGO No. 2

[31]

This variant starts from the same position as Tango No. 1. The gentleman takes two steps backward with the lady following forward, and then two steps to the side (the lady's right and the gentleman's left) and two steps in the opposite direction to the original position. 8 measures.

These steps to the side should be marked by the swaying of the bodies as the feet are drawn together on the second count of the measure, and the whole is followed by 8 measures of the Two-Step. Repeat all as desired.

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## TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

Punctuation has been corrected without note.

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected as follows:

Page 8: duplicate word *the* removed.

Page 23: duplicate word *and* removed.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE FASCINATING BOSTON \*\*\*

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