

Ladies and Gentlemen being without partners, should apply to the Master of the Ceremonies, whose place it is, if possible, to provide them.

Should any couple stop or perform the same figure twice with the same couple, they must drop one couple, or stand out, as they must not interrupt those that follow on in the same figure.

No person should leave the room, or even sit down, before the Dance is finished, unless upon some very particular occasion; and not then, without first informing the Master of the Ceremonies

Snapping the fingers, in Country Dancing and Reels, and the sudden howl or yell too frequently practised, ought particularly to be avoided, as partaking too much of the customs of barbarous nations;* the character and effect by such means given to the Dance, being adapted only to the stage, and by no means suited to the Ball Room.

**Introduced in some Scotch parties as partly national with them*

Allowing for modern interpretation:

The rules contain many provisions relating to numbers being allocated to dancers - since this is not the custom in modern times, they have been omitted.

Also omitted, are those provisions relating to the allocation of the Lady's privilege (often allocated by those numbers) of calling the dance and the tune, since this is not now the modern practice. In its time, this privilege was often the cause of heated discussion

This rule is quoted (but not in modern times observed) to enable the reader to understand how dances worked originally:

When the couple calling the dance has gone down three couples, then the second couple should begin and so on with all couples in succession, till after the one who called it has regained the top and proceeded again three couples downwards, where the Dance is finished: and the couple that called it must now stand at the bottom for the next Dance

You can see that there was a lot of standing around (particularly with triple minors) with the opportunity to engage with your partner in flirtatious badinage!

Excerpts from
THE
ETIQUETTE
OF
THE BALL ROOM
AS IT PARTICULARLY RELATES
TO
COUNTRY DANCING
AND THE MORE
RECENTLY AND FASHIONABLY IMPROVED
Species of Dancing
*Quadrilles, Spanish Dances, Ecossoises,
Waltzing and Quadrille Country dancing*

(Thomas Wilson 1815)

Gentlemen are not permitted to enter the Ball Room, in boots, spurs, gaiters, trowsers or with canes or sticks; nor are loose pantaloons considered proper for a Full Dress Ball.



The usual honours of bows and courtesies should be observed at the commencement and conclusion of each Dance

No Dance ought to be performed twice the same evening.

When it so happens, that the company are divided into two or more sets, care should be taken in forming the Sets, so that each of them shall, if possible, contain an equal number with the other; and should it unavoidably occur, as sometimes is the case, that one of the Sets contains more than the others, and as more time will be required to finish the Dance by that Set, the persons composing the other Set, or finishing the dance, should retire to their seats, till the dance shall be gone through by each couple in the longest set, and the Master of the Ceremonies declares the dance to be finished, and by giving a signal to the leader of the band, shall silence the music.

When a Company is divided into different Sets, no person must attempt to change their Set, without the permission of the Master of Ceremonies

The different sets should all begin the Figure at the same time as the top couple

Two Ladies or two Gentlemen, cannot Dance together, without permission of the Master of the Ceremonies; nor can permission be given while there are an equal number of Ladies and Gentlemen

In the absence of Gentlemen, when Ladies are permitted to form couples, and in the absence of Ladies, when it occurs that Gentlemen are permitted to form couples, they must always stand at the bottom of the set.

No person during a Country Dance, should attempt to hiss, clap or make any other noise to interrupt the good order of the Company.

No couple ought to refuse to stand up directly the Dance is called, as it shows great disrespect to the Lady who calls it.