Tripping In Tartan

by Kate Kirman

Oh, I'll never get the hang of Scottish dancing.
The words don't always mean quite what they say.
When someone called out "Teapots!" I thought, "Time to have a break!
I could just do with a cuppa and perhaps a piece of cake."
But it seemed it was a starry sort of figure we'd to make,
Holding hands in quite a chummy kind of way.
They use some funny phrases, Scottish dancing.

And they go at such a pace in Scottish dancing! There simply isn't time to stand and stare. A strathspey makes me wobbly, a hornpipe leaves me weak, While halfway through a jig or reel I'm too puffed out speak, I should have started younger, 'ere my bones began to creak. I wonder, can I stand the wear and tear That it puts upon the body, Scottish dancing?

Progression's tricky, too, in Scottish dancing, It's not a simple journey down the line. "Now, we must start the dancing for we're couple number one." We went through all the figures, so of course I thought we'd done. But, "Start again!" my partner yelled. My word, I had to run! The dance was nearly spoiled, the fault was mine. There's so much to remember, Scottish dancing.

You have to point your toes in Scottish dancing, A thing which Cecil Sharp would not approve. In third or fourth position I am waddling like a duck, If schottische step works out for me, it isn't skill, just luck. Once, setting fast to right and left, my knees got really stuck. It took three days before my legs could move. It's a very risky business, Scottish dancing.

Then you need to be a linguist, Scottish dancing, With words like *pas de basque* and *allemande*. They said, "*Poussette*!" I thought, "That's French!" and checked *mon dictionnaire*, And looked in vain for what it said: "A little child's push-chair." But my partner grabbed both hands and pushed and pulled me here and there. I wonder if I'll ever understand The foreign words they use in Scottish dancing.

There are lots of famous folk in Scottish dancing, Like the Gows (Niel and Nathaniel) long ago. Miss Milligan's known far and wide, as famed as you can get, They mention Petronella as they twirl across the set, They talk a lot about her—I've not come across her yet. I hope we'll meet; I'm sure she's nice to know, Like the others that I see while Scottish dancing.

For they're such a friendly crowd at Scottish dancing. They're kind because they know I've just begun. I'm often lost—they lead or push me safely into place, And with their help I get there, though I lack both style and grace. "Enjoy yourself!" they cry, "and put a smile upon your face!"

To my surprise, I find I'm having fun. So I think I'll carry on with Scottish dancing!

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