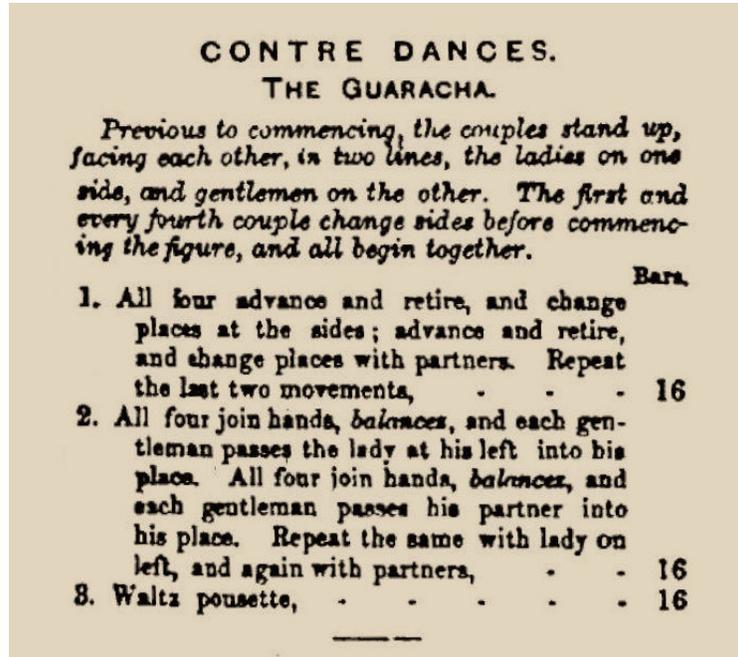


The Guaracha, Spanish Dance, Eletezka Espagnole

Reconstructions by Richard Powers

From BALL-ROOM GUIDE; A MANUAL OF DANCING by H. D. Willock, Glasgow, circa 1864



Longways contradance formation. The description says every fourth couple changes sides but other descriptions (see page 4) clarify that Willock meant every fourth *person* changes sides, therefore every other couple ("duple improper" in today's terminology). All begin together.

Part 1

- 4 Waltz balance forward and back to vis-a-vis at the sides, change places, probably with an open 2-hand turn, but not specified.
- 4 Balance forward and back to partner, change places
- 8 Repeat both, to places.

Part 2

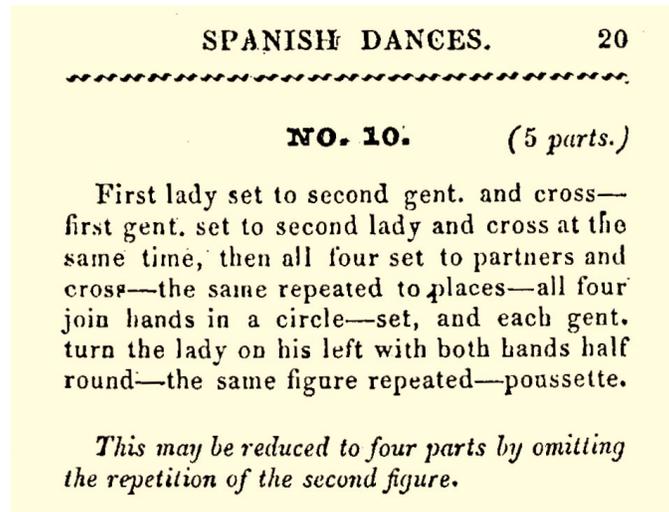
- 4 Taking hands-4, all balance forward & back, then the gent turns the lady at his L halfway, with a CW open two-hand turn, both exchanging places. Note that the description says, "into *his* place" instead of "into the place at his right side," implying that the Lead vacates his place, moving into the space that the Follows was.
- 8 Repeat three more times, to places.

Part 3

- 16 Waltz pousette, which in most mid-century sources meant waltzing to progress one place. By the 1860s the 18th century style of pousette—an open 2-hand hold traveling without rotation—had largely disappeared.

This Part 2 was added to G.M.S. Chivers' original version of *The Guracha* (original spelling), as shown on page 3. The name Guaracha is significant because it separates this version from the other Spanish Dances.

Willock's Guaracha is identical to Spanish Dances, No. 10 in J.S. Pollock's ca. **1828** *La Terpsichore Moderne*, London, perhaps done with the old version of Pousette in 1828.



I reproduce this here to show Pollock's optional modification: "This may be reduced to four parts by omitting the repetition of the second figure." That would result in this version:

Part 1

- 4 Set (steps not specified) to vis-a-vis at the sides, change places, probably with an open 2-hand turn, but not specified.
- 4 Set to partners, change places
- 8 Repeat both, to places.

Part 2

- 4 Taking hands-4, all set, then gent passes the lady at his L to his R side.
- 4 Repeat just one more time, to places.

Part 3

- 8 Pousette: Giving partner both hands, ladies back as gents advance (some pousettes back the gent instead) then head couples back the gent into the place below and the second couples back the lady into the place above.

Spanish Dances were popularized by Edward Payne in 1815-16, and were soon picked up by Thomas Wilson, G.M.S. Chivers, Nathaniel Gow and others. These Spanish Dances were longways sets where the top couple crosses over (duple improper). They were not necessarily in waltz time. Most of the Spanish Dances in the 1820 collection below were in 2/4 time.

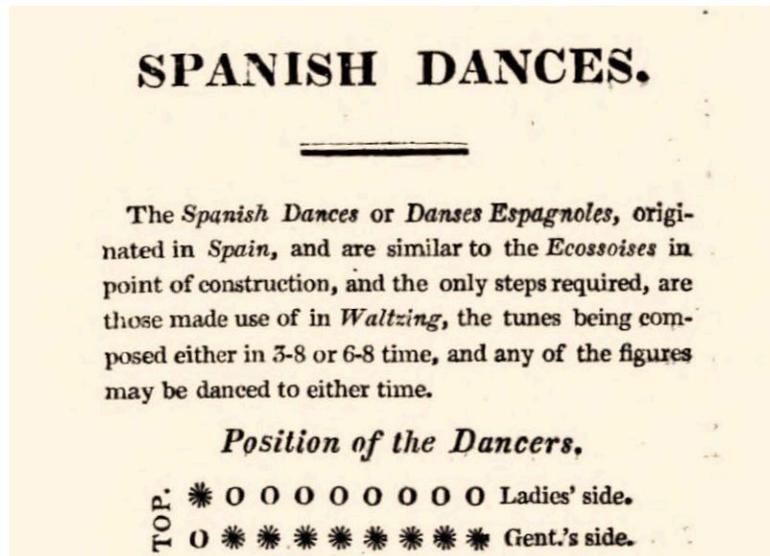
N.B. The English figures above, are as near explanations of the Spanish terms as they will admit of. Spanish Contre-dancing, is the application of Quadrille figures to the situations of English country Dancing its essential difference from the latter is that the top Cu: change places, the Lady to the Gent: side, and the Gent: to the Ladys side, & the Cu: who leads down the dance may by substituting a different figure lead again.

No. 1 of Spanish Dances (a collection of six Spanish Dances), published by C. Wheatstone, London, 1820

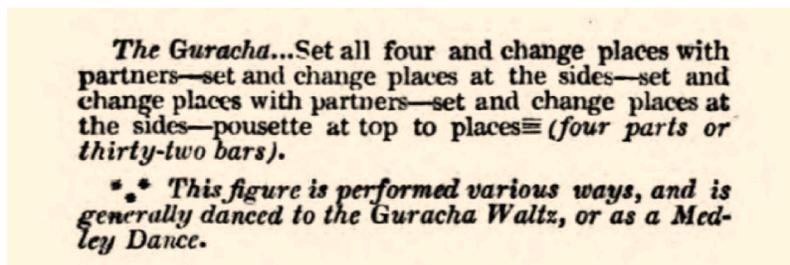
The specification of "All begin together" was apparently added later, in the mid-19th century.

G.M.S. Chivers began teaching Spanish Dances in 1818 (as mentioned in a November 1818 ad in *The Morning Post*). Chivers described 12 Spanish Dances in his **1821** *The Dancers' Guide*.

Unlike some earlier versions, Chivers' Spanish Dances were all in **waltz time**:



One of Chivers' 12 Spanish Dances was **The Guracha**. Note that it only has two parts, to four parts of music. Also note that the change of places was first done to partners, not vis-a-vis.



The **name** of the dance comes from the name of tune that Chivers preferred, Guracha Waltz, which Chivers also used in his 1822 Moscovian Quadrilles (then spelled Guaracha Waltz).

Part 1

- 4 Take hands-four (not specified) and set, change places with partners, probably with an open 2-hand turn, but not specified.
- 4 Set then change places with to vis-a-vis.
- 8 Repeat both, to places.

Part 2

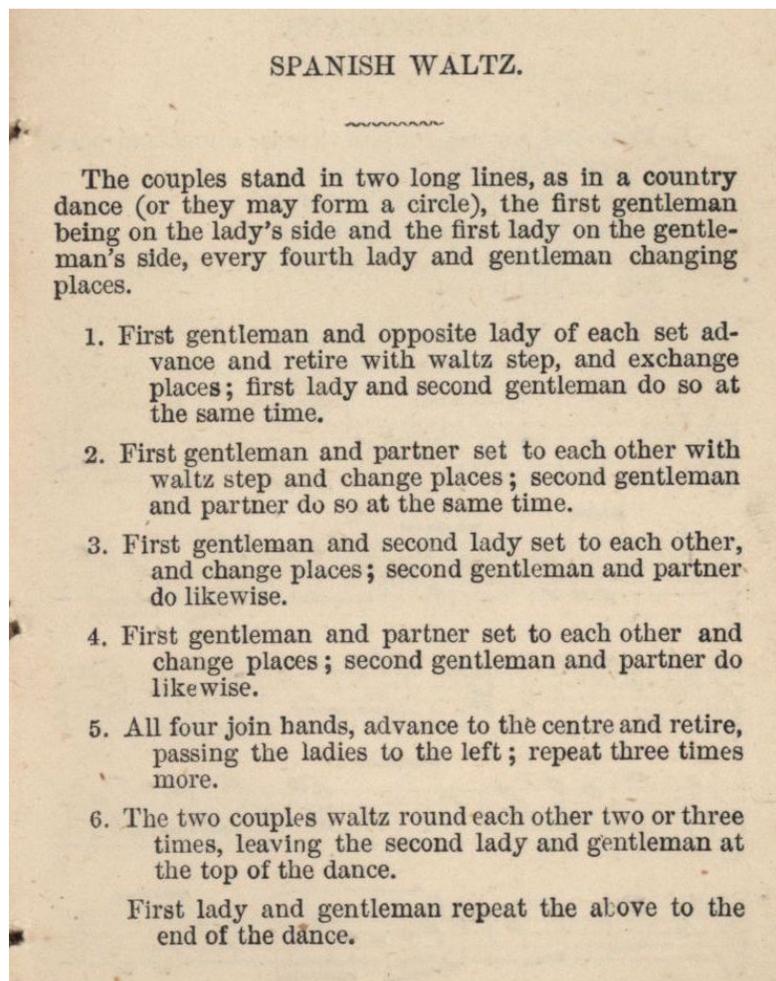
- 16 Pousette: Giving partner both hands, ladies back as gents advance (some pousettes back the gent instead) a full circle to places then head couples back the gent into the place below and the second couples back the lady into the place above.

Many gracious thanks to Paul Cooper for some of the information on the early Spanish Dances.

Spanish Dance / Spanish Waltz

Over time, the dozens of Spanish Dances fell away and only the Guaracha versions survived. By the mid-19th century there remained two different primary versions of this dance, now called the Spanish Dance or Spanish Waltz. The version below helps explain some unanswered questions with Willock's Guaracha, and vice versa.

From PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE BALLROOM, Wm. Clowes & Sons Publ., London, 1875



This is almost identical to Willock's Guaracha and Whale's Spanish Dances, No. 10, except Part 2 can be interpreted as passing the ladies in the opposite direction, from the gent's right to his left. Another possible interpretation of "ladies to the left" might be "passing the lady who *is* to his left side," which would therefore be the same as Willock's Guaracha. Regardless, several other 19th century descriptions clearly passed the gent's partner from his right to his left, so both versions were done.

Sicilian Circle formation is now specified as an alternative to duple improper contra formation.

The "waltz pousette" of Part 3 is now clearly described as waltzing around the opposite couple.

Part 1

- 4 Waltz balance forward and back to vis-a-vis at the sides, change places, probably with a 2-hand turn, but not specified.
- 4 Balance forward and back to partner, change places
- 8 Repeat both, to places.

Part 2

- 4 Taking hands-4, all balance forward & back, then gents pass a lady to his other side (with the two possible interpretations mentioned on the previous page).
- 8 Repeat three more times, to places.

Part 3

- 16 2 couples waltz around each other to progress one place. The specification of waltzing around "two or three times" explains the long 16 bars of music.

Spanish Dance (with Moulinet)

On the following page is the mainstream 19th century version of the Spanish Dance. This description (William B. DeGarmo's *THE DANCE OF SOCIETY*, New York, 1875, the same year as the previous Wm. Clowes & Sons version) is exactly the same as the **1841** Spanish Dance in *The Ball-Room Instructor* (sic), Huestis & Craft, publ., and many other sources, but I chose DeGarmo's to reproduce here because it's the clearest description of the dance.

The illustrations at the top of DeGarmo's description clarify the "every fourth couple changes sides" question. Also note that it's "danced to slow waltz music." My experience has found 132-136 bpm to be an ideal tempo range, which is indeed slower than the typical 19th c waltz.

Part 1

- 4 Waltz balance forward and back to vis-a-vis at the sides, change places, probably with a 2-hand turn, but not specified in any source that I've found. Today, many historical dancers prefer a "Pastourelle" ladies' underarm turn in changing places, holding inside hands with vis-a-vis.
- 4 Balance forward and back to partner, change places
- 8 Repeat both, to places.

Part 2

- 4 Moulinet (Right Hand Star) by the R hand, with gent's hands held above the ladies'. Turn inward on the 4th bar, to prepare offering L hands.
- 4 Moulinet by the L hand back to places.

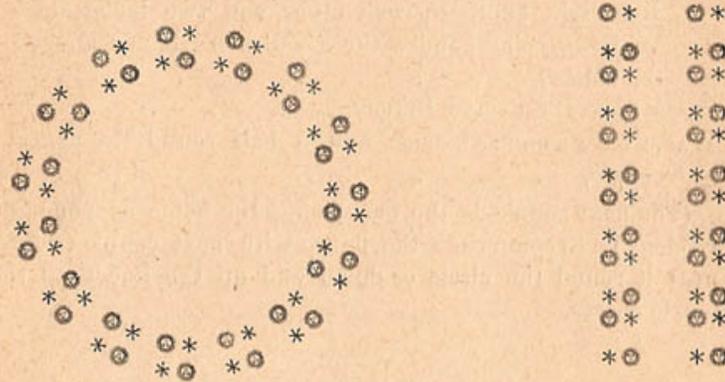
Part 3

- 16 2 couples waltz or promenade once and a half around each other to progress one place to the next couple. Waltz in a circle once around to places, then continue for another half-circle, on to the next couple.

SPANISH DANCE.

DANCED TO SLOW WALTZ MUSIC.

Form in Circle all around the room thus : or in lines, thus :



N. B.—The couples nearest each other, in diagrams, have their backs to each other, and dance in opposite directions ; half the couples face one way and half the other.

If there are too many couples to form one circle, two circles may be formed, one within the other. The couples are not numbered in this dance.

At the commencement of 2d strain—

ALL FORWARD.*—They all forward towards <i>vis-à-vis</i> (1 measure) ; back (1 measure) ; forward again and change partners (2 measures), which causes a quarter turn to the left,	Measures. 4
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* The gentleman takes lady's left hand in his right. They forward toward *vis-à-vis*—the gentleman advances one step with left foot (counting *one*) ; then brings right foot to and behind left (counting *two*) ; and then rises slightly on the toes (counting *three*)—taking one measure of music ; he then steps back with right foot (*one*) ; and draws left foot to and in front of right foot (*two*) ; rises (*three*)—taking another measure of music.

The lady does the same step at the same time, but advances with the right foot and steps back with left. After which exchange partners, etc.

As the couples advance toward each other, the hands which are joined should be slightly moved toward *vis-à-vis* ; and, as they retire, the hands are brought back again. This movement of the hands and arms, when gently and gracefully executed, harmonizes prettily with the step, the movement of the body, and the measure of the music.

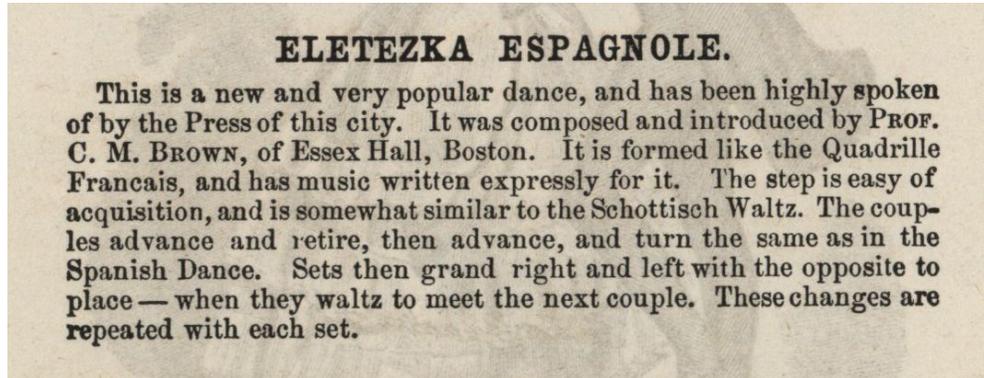
Repeat, to regain partners (which causes another quarter turn to the left),	Measures. 4
Repeat the whole (ending by facing as at first),	8
CROSS RIGHT HANDS AND GO HALF ROUND (the two gentlemen give right hands to each other, and two ladies the same—crossing hands—the gentlemen's hands above the ladies'),	4
CROSS LEFT HANDS AND RETURN,	4
WALTZ OR PROMENADE, once and a half round, to next couple,	8

(The next couple is the one facing the same as your late *vis-à-vis*.) Recommence the figure with next couple and repeat it round the circle or down and up the line until the music ceases.

Eletezka Espagnole

By Prof. C. M. Brown, of Essex Hall, Boston

A different but related dance from HOWE'S COMPLETE BALL-ROOM HAND BOOK, Boston, 1858.



Formation: Longways set down the hall with couples standing side-by-side at the sides, facing vis-a-vis couple on the other side. The Quadrille Francaise is formed the same way. Today this is called Beckett Formation.

The step is "easy of aquisition" but is never described. Since the first figure is "the same as in the Spanish Dance" which uses waltz footwork, and it ends with a waltz, we can default to a waltz step here. I haven't found the original music yet, but if the step "somewhat similar to the Schottisch Waltz" is in schottische time, perhaps like a two-step, it might be in 4/4 time.

Part 1

- 4 Waltz balance forward and back to vis-a-vis, facing across, change places.
- .
- 4 Balance forward and back to partner, change places.
- 8 Repeat both, to places.

Part 2

- 8 Giving R hands to vis-a-vis, Grand R and L Chain around the set of 4 couples, taking 2 waltz steps for each passing of the hand. On the 4th pass it works best if you don't pass your partner with the R hand, but rather approach your partner and take waltz position without passing. This way the gent is in position to back in front of his partner to commence a waltz.

Part 3

- 8 2 couples waltz once and a half around each other to progress one place to the next couple. Waltz in a circle once around to places then continue for another half-circle, with the active couple traveling down the set on the outside, and the inactive couple traveling up the other side of the set, one place.

When couples reach the end of the line, wait out one round standing at the end, then continue crossing over to commence dancing on the opposite side.