Thomas Hillgrove's description of the Sicilian Circle.

From *HILLGROVE'S SCHOLARS' COMPANION AND BALL-ROOM GUIDE*, New York, 1858.

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Sicilian Circle.

This dance is formed precisely the same as the Spanish Dance, and the figures are danced the same as the first number of a Quadrille, as follows:

Music—Four parts,
1. RIGHT AND LEFT. (8 bars.)
2. BALANCE TO PARTNERS, and turn. (8 bars.)
3. LADIES CHAIN. (8 bars.)
4. ALL PROMENADE—Passing once and a half round and finish facing the next couple, with whom the same figure is again repeated. (8 bars.)

Each time the figure is repeated the dancers will all face a new couple, and the dance is finished at the option of the master of ceremonies.

This dance was formerly a great favorite at all public balls, but is now very seldom danced, on account of the rude manner of performing it. For, instead of setting to their partners and turning in places, or passing once and a half round in the promenade, the majority of our rude dancers rush off with a gallop, sometimes passing more than half the length of a ball room, and are frequently at a crowded ball unable to find the places where they left off. When properly danced, however, it is a very social dance.

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We dance historians wish to reconstruct what was actually danced at balls in the 19th century, not just what dance masters wished were done. Dance manuals usually portrayed the author's ideal of what should be done, so we have to look deeper for the occasional description of non-conforming behavior. Note that Hillgrove wrote that "the majority" of rude dancers did this romp. And of course, what some dancers considered fun would be considered "rude" by a dance master. Another source for discovering non-conforming dances is in anti-dance books, which were sometimes quite detailed in describing the "objectionable" dancing being done in ballrooms and dance halls, especially in the early 20th century.