

## THE GRENOSIDE SWORD DANCE.

GRENOSIDE, from whence the second example of the long-sword dance was derived, is a small hamlet in the West Riding, within an easy walk of Sheffield. The performers are miners who live in the village or in the neighbouring town of Ecclesfield. The performances used to take place annually on Christmas Eve and the following days, but of late years they have been discontinued owing, so I was told, to the indifference shown by the general public. Sometimes the dancers, after performing in their own village, would go round the country for two or three weeks, dancing in the villages and towns that they passed through, after the fashion of the Morris dancers at Whitsuntide in other parts of England. During the six or seven weeks immediately preceding Christmas, regular rehearsals used to be held two or three evenings a week, at which the younger and inexperienced dancers were instructed by the older men, a privilege for which they paid a few pence a week. This, again, is similar to the practice of the Morris men in the Midlands and Southern England.

The Grenoside men call themselves "Morris dancers," and explain the derivation of the term by saying that the dance originally came to them from the Moor lands further north.

An interesting and vivid account of the Grenoside dance was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 8th, 1885.

The performers are seven in number, the Captain and six dancers.

### COSTUME.

The dancers wear loosely-fitting tunics of pink flowered calico, trimmed—back, front and sleeves—with blue and red braid, which is frilled and disposed in straight or waving

lines, ovals, circles, &c. These designs, though similar in type, vary considerably in detail and in quantity; as much as fifty or sixty yards of trimming are sometimes used in the decoration of a single tunic. The collar is of frilled braid, and small bows or rosettes of the same material are sewn on the coats wherever fancy dictates. The trousers are white overalls with a red stripe, an inch in width, down each leg. The small, tightly-fitting peaked caps are made of black velvet, with thin yellow stripes down the gores and a yellow button on the crown. The dancers wear clogs and carry swords similar to those of the Kirkby Malzeard men, the leader using a small cavalry sabre.

The Captain's dress is substantially the same as that worn by the dancers, except that perhaps his tunic is trimmed rather more lavishly. Instead of a cap, he wears a cloth helmet covered with a rabbit's skin, with the head of the animal set in front, surrounded with four bunches of coloured ribbons.

The musician plays an accordion and is dressed in his ordinary clothes.

### THE MUSIC.

The dance is divided into two parts, separated by a short interval, and, unlike the Kirkby dance, it is always performed to the same tunes. Each figure and movement has its own proper music, and must be executed in a prescribed number of bars, in accordance with the directions given in the following descriptions and notation.

### THE STEPS.

At certain places in the course of the dance the performers stand in position and "step," that is, dance a "double-shuffle" or a "break-down." This "stepping" was not executed in the same way by all the dancers; but most of



them danced a step which they adapted to the different measures in the following way:—

6/8

FEET. { Right. T.T. T.T. T. T.T. T.T. T. stamp.  
Left .T. T. T. T.T. T.T. T.

9/8

FEET. { Right. T.T. T.T. T.T. T. T.T. T.T. T. T.T. T.T.  
Left .T. T. T. T.T. T.T. T.T. T.T.

stamp.

4/4

FEET. { Right. T.T. T.T. T. T.T. T.T. T. stamp.  
Left .T. T. T. T.T. T.T. T.

T.T. means a glancing stroke (something between a scrape and a tap), forwards and backwards, of the toe or ball of the foot. T indicates that the foot thus marked is to support the weight of the body.

In the evolutions, the performers simply walk, or rather tramp, in time with the music. The step is similar to that used in the Kirkby dance, but firmer and less elastic. This rhythmical tramping is one of the most characteristic features of the dance, and is especially noticeable, as well as extremely effective, in the concluding figure where the tempo is gradually increased to breakneck speed. It is for this reason, no doubt, that clogs are worn, and that the Grenoside men always prefer to dance indoors, in a kitchen or inn parlour with a stone-flagged or sanded floor for choice.

## THE DANCE.

The dancers arrange themselves in two rows, facing each other, thus:—

4>	<3
5>	<2
6>	<1

## AUDIENCE.

No. 1 is the leader.

The Captain walks up and down between the files and sings the following song:—

- i. O ladies and gentlemen I'd have you make room,  
Contented awhile for to be,  
It is I and myself that has brought us along,  
And my trade you will quickly see.
- ii. Whilst in foreign parts we rambled,  
All both proper stout and tall,  
Though we passed through many dangers  
And at length we've caught a fall.
- iii. Wounded by a charming lady  
Her charms I almost dread;  
To die for her I am quite ready,  
And at length I conquered her.
- iv. Six stout lads have I a-by me,  
Both of honour and renown;  
Christmas time it's growing nigher  
And, since we've come in this town,
- v. Since that we have all come hither,  
Fiddler, draw thy strings, advance!  
Play beside us, here to guard us,  
And these lads will show 'em a dance.

At the conclusion of his song the Captain moves away from between the files and the following figures are performed.