

As you bask there at attention in the sun, you are painfully aware of the die-hards singing in Irish (if the soloist is singing in English) or the die-hards singing in English (if the soloist attempts the Irish.)

Eons pass.

Eventually the stages spring to life. You can start over to the center of the field to watch, but you might as well wait until the pipe band which has been marching bravely around the outside is just a few feet away, and then dart out, much to the consternation of the committee member whose job it is to clear the way. If you time it right, the front lines will stop short and the back lines will bump into them, and the pipes will add a few peculiar notes to the martial air they have been droning out for the last ten minutes.

When you do get there (where??) you can ask a committee member or, preferably, one of the judges trying to watch all the participants in a six-hand reel, "When will the senior dancing begin?" If you're lucky, he will tell you "in about an hour"; if he isn't that cooperative you can find another judge or committee member. There are lots around.

By this time your feet are caked with dust, your hair is wind-blown, and your lips parched. You head in the direction indicated by the imposing sign "Lounges" and find that you are being led out through another gate. While the man in charge is engaged with new arrivals, you saunter out. When you come back about ten minutes later, try to sneak past the man who didn't see you leave. If he stops you and asks you if you were stamped, disclaim any knowledge of any stamp whatsoever, and spend a few minutes rummaging around for your temporarily misplaced ticket. Produce it triumphantly, just when the man is about to call a policeman over, and leave him dispatching one of the minor society officials to the other gate, to tell them in rather heated terms to be sure and stamp everyone who comes in.