

wall, and connect it with the new buildings, carefully preserving the beautiful little doorway, and as much of the old building as possible. A bridge over the road to unite the new and the old buildings is also proposed by the College. The balustrade crowning the old Ashmolean Museum has been renewed. The new Fellows' Houses, belonging to Merton College, opposite the Examination Schools, are complete; re-facing and alterations have been done to the Warden's House at New College. At Queen's College most interesting discoveries have been made. It is hoped that the Society may be able to hear further and detailed accounts of these next term. Many other buildings, too numerous to mention, have sprung up. It is to be hoped that, while provision is made for the increasing wants of a growing town, all due respect will be shown for the works of past ages, and a careful record kept of any discoveries of artistic or historical value that are made during the progress of new work.

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## Children's Games.

By Mrs. C. M. A. Peake.

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It has been pointed out by several writers on folk lore that Children's games, particularly those which have traditional songs and ritual attached to them, may in time serve to throw some light upon the social and religious observances of our ancestors in the remote past.

Most of these games can be classed under a few heads. Firstly come the Courting or Wedding games, next the Funeral ones. After these a large and somewhat vague class of Sporting or Pastoral games, among which perhaps we may put the various interesting Robber games, at any rate those in which the thieves confine their efforts to the acquisition of their neighbour's property rather than his sons or daughters. There is also a species of Story game, such as *The Milking Can* and a large number of games which would appear to be merely organized romps, some simple games of skill (*Hop Scotch*) and Lot Casting ceremonies such as *Bingo*.

Among the Courtship games mentioned in the following list, that of "*Nuts in May*" is very typical and *Poor Jenny Jones* is an equally typical Funeral one, while "*My Sheep come home*" seems to combine the Robber and Sportsman element in one.

*Skiping up the Green Grass* is more difficult to class. It certainly seems to have some likeness to a Courting game, but mixed with several other elements and the dance round and final fall of the performers seems to afford a hint of a religious ceremonial or perhaps merely a war dance after a marriage by capture.

It is only by collecting a large number of variants of each game and comparing them with each other that we can hope to disentangle any thread of original meaning from the accretions and corruptions that are the result of changes in language and surroundings during the centuries the game has been orally handed down from generation to generation. Although several collections have been made there is still room for future work in getting together local material, with a view to collecting together, if possible, an exhaustive list of the games, their songs, ritual, and any variants current in Berkshire. I add a few typical games giving in each case the Boxford version and a list of games played in Boxford at the present day.

"MY SHEEP, MY SHEEP COME HOME."

*Shepherd.* "My Sheep my Sheep come home."

*Sheep.* "Afraid."

*Shepherd.* "What of"?

*Sheep.* "The Wolf."

*Shepherd.* "The Wolf has gone to Devonshire, and won't be back for many a year, my Sheep, my Sheep come home."

Wolf runs out and Sheep run to Shepherd, those caught go to the Wolf's den.

In Hoe Benham there appear to be two wolves. In Boxford one.

This game seems to have a supplement in which the Shepherd goes to look for the Sheep and has a conversation with the Wolf, in prose not verse, but the accounts I have received so far are very confused.

Variants.—In *Boxford*, *Jericho* sometimes for *Devonshire*. In *Hoe Benham*, *Sheep's Mother* sometimes for *Shepherd*. In *Boxford*, *Seven year for many a year* sometimes.

"SKIPPING UP THE GREEN GRASS."

"Skipping up the green grass  
 Dusk a dusk a dusk  
 All my pretty playmates  
 Come along with us,  
 Choose once, choose twice  
 Choose the fairest daughter (or son)  
 \*The fairest daughter (or son) that I can see  
 Is M.—N. (some players name), come to me,  
 He (or she) can hop and he (or she) can skip  
 And he (or she) can play the organ trick  
 All around the chimney pot  
 I. O. U."

I have not, as yet, the complete ritual of this most interesting game, but at the last line all fall down together.

It does not seem to be known in *Chaddleworth or Hoe Benham*. So far I have no variants except *fiddle* for "*organ trick*" in Boxford.

It has been suggested that "Dusk" is a corruption of "Dess" (I suppose from the rhyme pronounced something like "Dus").

"Dessit," the right hand. See quotation in *Brands Popular Antiquities*, p. 486 Bohn's Ed.

The Couplet marked \* appears in a version of "The Duke a riding" from Wallingford.

"POOR JENNY JONES."

"We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, poor Jenny Jones, poor Jenny Jones,

We've come to see poor Jenny Jones and how is she now."

"Poor Jenny Jones is washing (three times),

Poor Jenny Jones is washing, you ca'n't see her now."

We've come to see—etc.

Poor Jenny Jones is Starching—etc., you ca'n't see her now.

We've come to see—etc.

Poor J. J. is hanging out clothes—etc.

Ironing—etc.

Is ill—etc.

She's dying—etc.

She's dead—etc.

*Question as before.*

What shall we dress her in,

Shall we dress her in red? and will that do.

Red is for Soldiers, Soldiers, red is for Soldiers,

And that won't do.

Blue is for Sailors and that won't do.

Yellow is for jealous—etc.

White is for weddings—etc.

Black is for funeral and that will do.

(They carry her away).

} *Question as before.*

I have not the full ritual for this game at present. It is a well known one and is I believe very widely distributed.

#### "NUTS IN MAY."

"Here we come gathering Nuts in May, Nuts in May, Nuts in May,

Here we come gathering Nuts in May on a cold and frosty morning."

"Who will you have for Nuts in May—etc.,

On a cold and frosty morning."

We'll have (A. B.) for Nuts in May—etc.

Who will you send to fetch her (or him) away—etc.

We'll send (X. Z.) to fetch her (or him) away—etc.,

On a cold and frosty morning."

In this song the children form up in two lines facing each other, and each holding his neighbour's hand, advance and retreat singing. The two selections (one from each band) join hands and each tries to pull the other across a central line marked on the ground, whichever succeeds adds the captured player to his own side and the game goes on till all on one side are captured. I have generally seen this game with a captain or leader for each side and I believe each leader chooses an (A. B.) alternately.

I have no variants of this game which like Jenny Jones appears in many different places.

#### LIST OF CHILDREN'S GAMES PLAYED IN BOXFORD.

Polly Polly what's the time (arithmetic game). Tit Tat Toe (arithmetic game). Stealing Masters' turnips. Here we go round the Mulberry bush. Filling up the gap. Rosy apple, mellow pear. Poker. Margery Daw. Dukes a riding. One, two, three red rover. The leaves are green. Stuff dummy. The postman. Can I go out to play. Lazy Mary. Roman Soldiers. When I was a Sailor. Sally Waters. Who goes round my stoney wall? (C. Jack Nimble). Skipping up the green grass. Sheep come home. Green gravel. Naming Birds. Last and Bottom Den. Brown Bear. Poor Puss

lost his corner. Blind man's buff. Kissing in the ring. Oranges and Lemons (supposed to have been introduced lately). Stag. Dit (ordinary dit). French dit. Nuts in May. Jolly Hop Girl (supposed to have been introduced lately). Buy me a pair of milking cans. Isabella. Bingo (H. B. the Farmer's dog, C. the Miller's dog). Bull in the park. Ring a roses. Follow Mother to market. Poor Mary is a weeping (H. B., Jenny, C., Jenny, W., Jenny). I sent a letter to my love. Dibs (five stones like knuckle bones). Drawing a bucket of water. Jenny Jones. Hide and seek. Hiding a stick. Cross tag. On the mountain is a young man. Leap Frog. Hop Scotch. Open the gates and let me through. Poor Robin is dead. In and out the window. Madam de Pompsy's dead.

This latter is described as a "French game" and when I asked the little girl who described it to me why she thought so she said "because of the name." It is not generally known in Boxford but the child had it from her Mother who is of the neighbourhood. I have no proof but I cannot help thinking Madam de Pompsy is a corruption of Madame de Pompadour. The game itself is one of the class that impose a succession of ridiculous tasks or actions on the players with a penalty for laughing.

By the kindness of Mrs. Batson I have been able to compare her list of Hoe Benham games, Miss B. C. Wroughton's list of Chaddleworth games, and Miss Price's list of Wallingford games, with the list furnished me by the Boxford Children.

I have marked games down on the Hoe Benham list H. B., those down on the Wallingford list W., and those on the Chaddleworth list C. I do not however imagine that either the Boxford or any of the other three lists are complete as a large number of these games seem to be known in the neighbourhood.

CHELSEA OR CHOLSEY.—Mr. Harold Peake has written a learned article in *The Antiquary* on "Where were the Councils of 'Chelseæ' held?" in which he combats the received notion that Chelsea, near London, is meant. Bosworth gives Ceoles-ige as the Saxon form of Chelsea, and this Mr. Peake identifies with Cholsey, Berks. He thinks that Chalk Hill, near Kingsbury, is the Cealchylle of Edward the Confessor's charter. The whole article, especially that relating to the derivation of Lichfield, is worthy of careful study.