

XI 4 b

GAMES, AMUSEMENTS

Additional notes, various  
districts.

### GAMES. AMUSEMENTS.

From Early MSS. - a collection of notes, some of which occur in XI, 4a

Dancing singly or in groups forms one of the amusements of the girls and there is a kind of ball playing indulged in by them similar to that of the young men. They were also very fond of making the fleshy part of their thighs quiver and shake for quite ten minutes at a time, those who could keep up the quivering longest being considered the winners.

Young girls learn the songs and music of all the dances which they are permitted to see, as women may in all these dances supply the vocal and instrumental music. They may sometimes be assisted or led by one or two old men, but in general, the women furnish the music of ordinary dances. Thus the young girls master the air and words of the songs of certain dances from the elders, and when they have reached womanhood and marriage, are ranked amongst the professional female singers. They learn time easily, almost instinctively and will master both the time and tune of English, French or German songs in an incredibly short period.

They must also learn handclapping, beating the wanna (digging stick) on ground or on meero, or playing with the closed fist on the rolled kangaroo skin, before they can become members of the female orchestra.

As a rule the very old women rarely sing or dance, being content to watch and criticise the performances of the younger people.

Woolber, informant

GAMES

Ngabong = games

The Gingin natives played a kind of hide and seek called "kamban".

Kambaning = sending a young man away to hide and then looking for him, shouting kamban kamban, ah Woolber!

Beejar eeja or Beejar abbin

Kala joogurning, kala jalaburn

The fire game. They pretend to make a fire and cook meat on it, get a jalgar (bough plate) arrange it for the meat, get the meat out, sit on the prepared boughs leaving a place for the kardoo (wife), brush off ashes with another bough, then divide the meat and eat it. Then the wife is asked, is her stomach full? Yes, she replies. Then they pretend to hang up all the rest to eat by and by when they are hungry.

Baabur's games, kombong

Jinnee ngaman billee billee dabulgur

Komba burrong (kambong burrong, game of "catching hold")

Some feathers were tightly tied round one end of a stick, the other end being stuck firmly into the ground. One native stood beside the stick and kept the others from taking the feathers off the stick. No kicking was indulged in, but the natives were pushed away by the young man guarding the stick. They tried to get under his legs, beneath his arms and every way possible to break the guard. The game continued until the feathers were pulled off the stick or the natives tired.

The Injibandis have many guessing games in their camps at night. For instance, a young man who has been away all day on a hunting expedition will begin by saying, "I saw something today, very funny, no one can tell me what it was." Then the guessing goes on amidst roars of laughter. This is a game very similar to the "Animal, vegetable and mineral" game common amongst white people.

It has been stated that ball playing was a sport of the W.A. natives before the advent of the white man, the ball being usually made of opossum skin wound or stitched with sinew or hair string. The player dropped the ball and before it reached the ground he gave it a kick with the instep of his right foot, the other players rushing to catch it football fashion.

Wrestling was also stated to have been a favorite game with the young male natives. The young men engaging in this pastime placed their hands on each other's shoulders and struggled, pushed and pulled until one of them falls. The victor at once returned to his place, often quite exhausted with the contest, which generally lasted some time.

(Banya goongar = perspiration rolling off him.  
Gobblegurt = pregnant) boorna jokkee

Mimic war took place amongst the men. One man stood in the centre and a line of nyungar would range in front of him and send blunt spears at him all at once, which he dodged with great dexterity. This game might be continued all day. In this manner they perfected themselves in spear throwing and spear dodging.

Kumbong You placed a nut far down in the ground and four or five strong young boys kept guard over this and prevented an equal number of others from digging out the nut; they forced their hands away and carried them bodily from the place. A scrummage somewhat similar to "footer" took place amongst the boys until each side got tired. The beaten side usually resumed the game after a month or so.

When the nut was obtained by the victors all the nyungar shouted "Kaia, kaia," the winners crying, "Yaang, yaang, yang, doojara (I beat him), ngai jinnong jinnong (see, see, I've got it)." A black boy top was set alight, and then sides would be formed of 4 or 5 each, the game was for one side to put the fire out, while the other side prevented them.

Falbuk, informant

Games = "wabba"

Boojoor-el-eeja, before described. A meeja (or nut) was put in the ground to the depth of about a foot and the game consisted in a number of natives trying to get this nut out while an equal number would guard the nut and prevent its being taken.

The game of boorna jokkee (throwing blunt spears at a human target) common in W.A. was also played by the Victorian tribes.

The Capel natives were very good swimmers and held many diving, floating and swimming games. Point to point swimming races of two or three miles in length would be held on the river, not in the estuary, as that lent to cheating. Women were expert swimmers and invariably beat the men whenever they entered against them.

Jubyche is my murraman or kordamat.

Vasse The S.W. people also played a game similar to our rounders, says Whitchurch, red gum nuts being used in place of a ball.

The nuts of the red gum were used by the southern natives as spinning tops, "mee-jee coorong", the game was called. The country of the red gum was occasionally called "meejee-meejee".

Kyley throwing Kyleys were thrown in the air and the nyungar whose kyley remains longest in rotatory motion and flies highest is the winner.

Booloolul wabbin = playing hockey (Albany district)

Kal boming = playing fire game

Amongst the Roebourne district children a game was played somewhat resembling "hide and seek", a whistle being the signal to commence the search.

A clever game or trick was that of trying to jump over a stick laid flat on the ground while holding your toes with your hands.

Mr. Bridson states that he has noticed that wild natives burn green trees as signals, semi-civilised natives burn dry trees. This custom is also usual in N.S.W.

Ngalyart, informant

Native game of hockey

Nandap Toordeet = red gum nut

Hockey stick = out

This game is almost similar to the European game except that there is an unlimited number of players and there are no forwards, etc. Two goals are fixed and two natives start the Toordeet.

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Wabbain nyinning = games

Deedagurt = native hockey, played with a meetcha (red gum nut) and bandeegurt (crooked stick). About 20 men and women joined in this game. Rings were made at either end of a piece of cleared ground and the natives divided themselves into two parties. Two natives started the meeja and then the others joined in. The goals were marked off on a tree and those that had the most marks on the tree were declared the winners when the game ended; it was played from almost sunrise to the late afternoon.

Barreegup, near Mandurah, (3 miles east of Mandurah) was a famous hockey ground and the fishing season (jilba) was the time when the natives assembled to play the game.

Mr. L.F. Hall states that the Hay district natives, when assembled for a corroboree which drew great numbers of tribes together, played during the day a game similar to hockey, curved sticks and a gum nut being the implements used. At these large gatherings, very little time was spent in seeking or preparing food. Exchange or barter was also carried on at these corroborees.

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The aborigines are without doubt a happy and contented people and in the districts which furnish an abundance of daily food, their evenings are nearly always spent in amusements of some kind. They have many and various games which they indulge in as soon as evening sets in; the boys generally commence by throwing sticks or pieces of bark at each other, which are either parried with a rough shield of bark, or are evaded by jumping aside. A piece of rounded bark is often trundled along the ground hoop fashion for the boys to practise spear and kyley throwing at. It has been noticed that all their games have an instructive tendency, a frequent amusement being the making of animals' and birds' tracks on the flat surface of some sandy spot pressed into uniformity for the occasion. The tracks are usually made with the fingers and finished off with a little stick and sides are sometimes taken by the older men as to the relative correctness of the markings.

Eyre says (Eyre's Disc. 226 et seq. II) "Boys who are very young have small reed spears made for them by their parents, the ends of which are padded with grass, to prevent them from hunting each other. They then stand at a little distance, and engage in a mimic fight, and by this means acquire early that skill in the use of this weapon for which, in after life, they are so much celebrated. At other times round pieces of bark are rolled along the ground, to represent an animal in the act of running, at which the spears are thrown for the sake of practice.

Another favorite amusement among the children is to practise the dances and songs of the adults, and a boy is very proud if he attains sufficient skill in these to be allowed to take part

in the exhibitions that are made before other tribes. String puzzles are another species of amusement with them. In these a European would be surprised to see the ingenuity they display and the varied and singular figures which they produce."

Perfect representations of emu's feet, kangaroos and other animals have been made from a piece of string by Jubyehe, the Guildford native, and many intricacies in what is known as "cat's cradle" amongst English children, are practised by the women and children. (Dreffenbach states that this is also an amusement of the N. Zealand children, Vol. II, 32) The youngsters are taught to make string from human hair, kangaroo sinews, and from spinifex, to manufacture spears, kileys, and other native weapons, to climb trees, to help in collecting roots, etc. (though this task is the prerogative of the little girls). Tracking is mainly instinctive but it is brought to its high state of perfection by careful training, boys and girls being taught this necessary accomplishment.

The elder boys often indulge in mock fights, being encouraged in this by their elders in order to acquire dexterity in handling their weapons. (Catlin gives an account of a similar practice amongst the North American Indians, Vol. I, 131).

An amusement of the adults (according to Eyre) is "a large bunch of emu feathers tied together, which is held out and shaken as if in defiance, by some individual, whilst the others advance to try and take it out of his hands. This occasions an amusing struggle before the prize is gained, in which it is not uncommon to see from ten to twenty strong and lusty men rolling in a heap together (rather like a "rigger" game). This is a sort of athletic exercise amongst them, for the purpose of testing each other's strength."



STRING GAMESNyamel

Names of movements, opening A, opening A, positions 1 and 2.

Radial, thumb string

Ulna " "

Radial 1st finger

Ulna 1st finger

Radial 2nd finger

Ulna " "

Radial 3rd ?

4th ?

Proximal side nearest arm

Distal end of fingers

Navahoe movement

The West Kimberley young men were very fond of playing a hunting game, one person representing the quarry, the others being the hunters. Wallee ngan weerup, the game is called.

A few sentences used by the players are given :-

Pindan yangarrama - We will play the bush game.

Joon wanjoolboo - You drive him.

Nowloo goon weerup - Hit with club.

Joona joodoo joodoo wongoola - You throw him down there.

Booroo ngan dammajinna - I missed him.

Kai! kala! ngan barrin - Hurra! I've got him.

Wandiarra, let be! let it alone.

Guna djunggula nyinnain

Yuria nyinnain

Mundongga guna dhunggulu nyinnain

guna daggudhula nyinnain, bunari, best one

All terms used when spinning the quandong kernel.

Jiji yaggu guna

Jiji madu guna

Guna djuga gula nyinnain

Waddi jilbi guna munda

Jung galu nyinnain

Kungga womba gunanga mundanga

jula nyinnin  
(soft)

Kungga womba ulainyi  
old woman crying  
(humming sound)

Bommilya and Wadhingga used these expressions as they spun the widerr(kernel of burnburn - quandong) on a wooden slab by my tent. They held the widerr between first and second fingers.

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Warnini - to spin kernel, werrarda, warnin

Bunari - best one, leader

(Used when spinning quandong nuts and it keeps spinning for a long time.)

Yuri nyinnain - spinning (what we call a "sleeping top") - spinning still or quiet - kutu - "eye" - the top of the sleeping kernel.

#### HIDE AND SEEK

In playing this, the seeker calls out, "Kommi" and looks, and when the hider is discovered, or comes herself from her hiding place, she calls out, "Katta korgör" (head = katta).

Nandari and Bomilya played this game.