

# STRING FIGURES



CAROLINE FURNESS JAYNE



# STRING FIGURES



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STRING FIGURES





"LIGHTNING."

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A STUDY OF  
CAT'S-CRADLE IN MANY LANDS

BY  
CAROLINE FURNESS JAYNE

WITH AN ETHNOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION  
BY  
ALFRED C. HADDON  
M.A. S.D., F.R.S., F.R.G.S., F.Z.S., M.R.I.A.  
Cambridge, England

ILLUSTRATED

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## PREFACE

THIS book may be regarded as an introduction to the study of String Figures—games which are widespread among primitive peoples, and played by weaving on the hands a single loop of string in order to produce intricate patterns supposed to represent certain familiar objects. I have gathered together the facts already known concerning these games, and, adding my own studies and the unpublished records of other observers, I have here described and illustrated the methods whereby about one hundred string figures are made. My purpose has been twofold: to interest other students in the subject, in order that additional figures and their methods may be collected among various tribes and races; and to reach a still larger public, that more people may share in the fascinations of the games themselves. The games are certainly fascinating, appealing as they do to young and to old, and to those debarred from all pastimes demanding physical exertion. Moreover, they are not unduly difficult; and, capable as they are of infinite variations, their charm ought to be inexhaustible.

It gives me great pleasure to express my thanks to Dr. Alfred C. Haddon, of Cambridge, England, who first interested me in the subject by teaching me the games he had collected, for the permission to use his photographs and unpublished notes; to my brother, Dr. William Henry Furness, 3rd, for the string figures from the Caroline Islands, for the finished patterns from the Marshall Islands, for photographs, and for aid in collecting new figures; to Mr. S. Chapman Simms, of the Field Columbian Museum, Chicago, for assistance in studying the games of the North American Indians and the African Pygmies at the St. Louis Exposition, and for photographs of natives under his charge; to Dr. William P. Wilson, Director of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, for the opportunity of collecting games on the Philippine Reservation at St. Louis; to Dr. George B. Gordon, Curator in the Philadelphia Free Museum of Science and Art, for the Eskimo



and Indian games which he secured for me during his recent trip to Alaska; to Mr. John Lyman Cox, of Philadelphia, for figures collected at the Indian School at Hampton, Virginia; and to Mrs. Morris Cotgrave Betts, for her skill and accuracy in the drawings.

Without constant aid and encouragement from my husband, Dr. Horace Jayne, I should never have written this book.

CAROLINE FURNESS JAYNE.

PHILADELPHIA, October, 1905.

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