INTRODUCTION

IN Ethnology, as in other sciences, nothing is too insignificant to receive attention. Indeed it is a matter of common experience among scientific men that apparently trivial objects or operations have an interest and importance that are by no means commensurate with the estimation in which they are ordinarily held.

To the casual observer few amusements offer, at first sight, a less promising field for research than does the simple cat's-cradle of our childhood; and, indeed, it is only when the comparative method is applied to it that we begin to discover that it, too, has a place in the culture history of man.

As a child I had played cat's-cradle and had seen various string tricks, but it was not until the year 1888 that I saw in Torres Straits some of those elaborate string figures of savage peoples that put our humble efforts to shame. I found that a couple of natives do not play together as we do, "taking off" from each other, but that each plays separately, though in exceptional cases two players may be required to construct a particular figure. They can make much more intricate devices than ours and the manipulation is correspondingly complicated, toes and teeth being at times pressed into service; on the other hand, although many figures pass through elaborate phases in the making, the final result may be simple.

Travellers in various parts of the world have had a similar experience. We are informed that these figures are much more complicated than are ours, and they represent various natural and artificial objects in a state of rest or motion.

Occasionally a list has been published of some of the figures made by a particular people, and in rare instances with illustrations of the completed figure. So far as my information goes, Dr. Franz Boas (1, p. 229)* was the first to publish a descriptive account of the method employed by a primitive people in making any of these figures; unfortunately he gives descriptions of but two of the five Eskimo

* For the full title of a work referred to in parentheses after an author's name consult the bibliography at the end of this volume. Other references are to pages of this book.

figures he illustrates. Mr. Harlan I. Smith (p. 282, Fig. 270) has published sketches illustrating the various stages in the making of two string figures of the Salish Indians of Thompson River, British Columbia.

It became evident to me that no progress could be made in the comparative study of string figures and tricks until a definite nomenclature had been devised which would indicate with precision all the stages involved in making a figure. A second visit to Torres Straits afforded me the requisite opportunity, and Dr. W. H. R. Rivers and I (p. 146) managed to devise a method of recording string figures and tricks which enabled us to write down some thirty Papuan examples. Since then the nomenclature has been adopted for the recording of the string figures of other peoples, and now my friend Mrs. Jayne has simplified our procedure and has produced this elaborate volume, which will enable any one to indulge in this fascinating amusement. Not only has she added a new joy to life, but this book will undoubtedly be the means of considerably increasing our knowledge of the forms of the game and their distribution, and therefrom we may hope for more light upon the various problems that await solution.

On making a general survey of string figures, or, to adopt the English colloquial term, "cat's-cradles," it seems that they fall into two main groups; but as our knowledge increases we may find that this generalization will have to be somewhat modified. In the European and Asiatic type two strings pass around the back of each hand, and the crossing loops are taken up by the middle fingers. In the Oceanic and American type there are no strings at the back of the hand, and the crossing loops are taken up by the indices. The former invariably requires two players, while one person suffices for the usual figures of the latter type. I propose to designate these two types as the Asiatic and the Oceanic respectively.

ASIATIC TYPE

In **Korea,** according to Culin (**2,** p. 30), "cat's-cradle is usually played by girls. The figures, which are the same as in our own children's play, are named as follows: 1, Cover for hearse; 2, chess-board; 3, chop-sticks; 4, cow's eyeball; 5, rice-mill pestle." The game is called "woof-taking."

My friend Dr. H. H. Weir informs me that "the Koreans play cat's-cradle almost as in England, but there are two actions with which I am not familiar. The first six figures are as in England, but 6 (cat's-eye) is made into a new figure which reverts to 3 (candles)."

"In **Japan,**" according to Culin (**2,** p. 30), "cat's-cradle is called *aya ito tori*, 'woof pattern string-taking.' The figures are identical with those in Korea, but receive different names: 1, Unknown; 2, a mountain cat into which a domestic cat is supposed to transform itself; 3, a musical instrument, or the two pieces of wood under the sole of clogs; 4, horse-eye; 5, a musical instrument."

Culin (**2,** p. 30) states that in southern **China** cat's-cradle is called "well-rope." It is spoken of as an amusement of girls, but is known to most Cantonese laborers; they make the same figures as those of Korea and Japan. Miss Fielde (p. 87) says that the children of Swatow play cat's-cradle precisely as do the children in America and Europe; but the Chinese call it "sawing wood," in allusion to the final act in the performance.

This last statement evidently refers to a figure which is made thus: make the "manger," or "inverted cradle"; the other player picks up one of the straight strings in the middle, passes it under the other, and holding the latter in the middle, draws these two strings as far apart as possible; the first player releases all the strings except those on the little fingers; the two players make sawing movements with the strings. I have an impression that this figure is played in England.

"Sawing Wood" was taught to me by Zia Uddin Ahmad of Trinity College, Cambridge, who said it was known in Delhi and Lucknow under the name of *Qainchi*, "scissors." It is made thus: Opening A (cf. p. 11), the other player passing his left hand over all the strings, pulls the straight little-finger string toward the original player, and with his right hand, under the remaining strings, pulls the straight thumb string toward himself; the first player releases all but the index loops; the sawing movement can then be made. This figure and the trick described on p. 345, and one very similar to "The Lizard" (p. 337), which Dr. S. Levinstein taught me, are all the string games that I have yet heard of from India. A Scottish method of making this figure is described by Maclagan (p. 190), the two operators chant alternately:

"See saw, Johnnie Maw,
See san, Johnnie man."

East Indian Archipelago. A. R. Wallace (p. 183) tells us: "One wet day in a Dyak house [Borneo], when a number of boys and young men were about me, I thought to amuse them with something new, and showed them how to make 'cat's-cradle' with a piece of string. Greatly to my surprise, they knew all about it, and more than I did; for, after I and Charles had gone through all the changes we

could make, one of the boys took it off my hand and made several new figures, which quite puzzled me. They then showed me a number of other tricks with pieces of string, which seemed a favorite amusement with them." De Crespigny (p. 344) writes of the Dusuns of Borneo: "Near me were two children playing at cat's-cradle exactly as I remember to have played it in my childhood." This precisely coincides with my own experience in the same island.

When I visited the Philippine Reservation at the St. Louis Exposition, in 1904, I played cat's-cradle with some of the natives, and I found they played in the same manner as we do. My time was too limited to learn the names of the figures or to see what others they knew. Mrs. Jayne was more diligent, and she learned a few new figures from some of the natives. It will be noticed that the Bagobo Diamonds (pp. 43, 46) begin with Opening A. Schmeltz (p. 230) says girls are skilled at this game in Soerabaja in Java, and he states that Matthes records it as a very favorite child's game among the Macassarese and Bugis of South Celebes. It is called *toêká-toêká*, "the ladder game," derived from *toêká*, "steps." We have no indication whether this is the Asiatic or the Oceanic type.

Europe. So far as I am aware no description of the British form of cat's-cradle has been published sufficiently explicit to enable one to play the game thoroughly. Mrs. Gomme in her excellent monograph (p. 61) gives illustrations of the figures, and states they are produced seriatim as follows: 1, Cradle; 2, soldier's bed; 3, candles; 4, cradle inversed or manger; 5, soldier's bed again or diamonds; 6, diamonds or cat's-eye; 7, fish in dish; cradle as at first. Other English names are barn-doors, bowling-green, hour-glass, pound, net, fish-pond, the lady's bed, fiddle; but it is not clear to what figures all these names refer. Three or four figures are described and figured by E. Nister (p. 73), but he does not describe the whole series, neither does he give names to any of the figures.

I have heard of cat's-cradle from Denmark, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France and Netherlands, but details are lacking.

My friend, Miss B. Freire-Marreco, informs me that a Dane of her acquaintance does exactly the same as in the English cat's-cradle though giving different names to the various figures; they are as follows, the English name preceding the Danish: 1, Cradle, cradle; 2, church-window, unknown; 3, pound of candles, mirror; 4, cradle, cradle; 5, soldier's bed, hour-glass; 6 [7, ?], fish in dish, whale.

De Cock and Teirlinck record *Afpakken: Dradenspel* ('Taking off: String-game') from Molenbeek-Brüssel; they give three figures illustrating the method of making the cradle and three figures from Mrs. Gomme. They add the following information: "In Germany it is also known under the name of *Abheben* ('Taking off'), *Faden-abheben* ('Taking-off strings'), and *Fadenspiel* ('String-game'). The figures are variously named; in Brabant they are known as *Wasser* ('Water'), *die Schere* ('Scissors'), *die Geige* ('Fiddle'), *die Wiege* ('Cradle'), (cf. Georgens, Sp. für Knaben, bl. 263). Andree (*Braunschw. Volkskunde*) calls it *Hexenspiel* ('Witch's game'), and *Auf- und abnehmen* ('picking-up and taking-off'). In the neighborhood of the town of Nantes it is known as *la scie* ('Saw'); the best known figures are called: *le berceau* ('Cradle'), *les chandelles* ('Candles'), *les carreaux* ('Squares'), *les ciseaux* ('Scissors'), etc. (R. des Trad. pop. XIII, 15.)"

OCEANIC TYPE

There is no need to give all the references by travellers of the occurrence of cat's-cradle over this vast area, but the following will suffice to indicate its universal occurrence:

Australia. Eyre (p. 227) refers to the "varied and singular figures" made by the Australians and remarks that "our juvenile attempts in this way are very meagre and uninteresting compared to them." Bunce (p. 75) says: "Some were playing with a puzzle made of string, '*Cudgi Cudgick*.' This puzzle was played between two individuals and required two pairs of hands, in the same manner as the juvenile game of 'cat's-cradle' common to our own country." It is not clear from this description whether they played as we do or whether, as elsewhere in Australia, two people are required to make some figures.

Roth (p. 10) has paid more attention to this subject than any one else in Australia. He states: "With any fair length of twine, adult women and young children, of both sexes, will often amuse themselves for hours at a time. It is thus used in the form of an endless string to play the game known to us Europeans as 'cratch-cradle.' Thus played with, it is met with everywhere throughout North Queensland. In some districts it is even indulged in by adult men; it is the women and children, however, who are most partial to it. Some of the figures are extremely complicated, passing through at least eight or nine stages before completion. During the process of manufacture such a one requires not only the hands, but even the mouth, knees, etc., to make the different loops, twists, and turns. In addition to variations in complexity, certain of the figures may be made with two endless strings, while to complete others again it may be necessary to have one or even two assistants. Strange to say, similar figures may be met with at distances extremely remote, with

and without similar interpretations. Occasionally the endless string may be arranged on the flat, or on the ear." Dr. Roth has given careful drawings of seventy-four North Queensland cat's-cradles and to most he has added a small figure to illustrate the original object which is copied, but unfortunately he does not give any indication of how they are made. My friend, Mr. W. Innes Pocock, has, however, been able to discover ways in which many of these figures can be constructed; these I hope will be published by the Anthropological Institute of London in *Man*. One (pl. V, Fig. 6), which is called a "Duck in Flight," is the same as the Torres Straits "Casting the Fish-spear" (p. 131).

New Guinea. Turner (p. 483) was the first to record cat's-cradle from New Guinea, where he found it played by the Motu children of Port Moresby. Later, Finsch (1891, p. 33) found it as a child's game in Bentley Bay, and I have seen it played by children at Hula, Port Moresby, Delena, and on Kiwai Island. Thilenius (p. 20) hazards the suggestion that the figures made in this game may even have had an influence upon the decorative art and wood carving of the Papuans. I have more than once (**1**, p. 361; **2**, p. 224; **3**, pp. 38, 175, 201) alluded to its occurrence among the Papuans of Torres Straits. The general name for the game among the Western Islanders is *Womer*, and by the Eastern Islanders it is called *Kamut*. In 1888 I transferred on to cardboard a few figures that were made for me by a native of the Western Islands; three of these have been published by Edge-Partington & Heape (pl. 341, 1-3), they are *Gud*, mouth, *Umai*, dog, and *Ger*, sea-snake (cf. p. 34). Several examples from this region have been published by Dr. Rivers and myself, a few more will be found in this book, and some additional ones will be published in Vol. IV of our Reports. The thirty-four figures we wrote down fall into Mrs. Jayne's three groups (cf. p. 4). Of the patterns, 16 were figures at rest and 11 figures in motion; there were 6 tricks and 1 catch, and we know of the occurrence of many others; altogether the figures in motion appear to be as numerous as those at rest. More than one-third represent animals. Two of the fish, besides being well known as fish, are the subjects of a very popular folk-tale of the Murray Islands. One figure which represents boys playing is subsequently converted into two rings, which represent two of the sacred grounds of Mer (Murray Island), in which the very important initiation ceremonies into the Malu fraternity were held; and another is supposed to represent the passing of the stone-headed clubs from hand to hand during one of the Malu dances, as is described in Vol. VI of the Reports. With these exceptions there does not appear to be anything of a religious nature in the game as played in Torres Straits, and I think that these

figures have no such significance. Words are said or sentences muttered while most of the figures are being made, but it is difficult to make sense of some of these, and it is quite impossible to understand others. In Murray Island these are called *Kamut wed*, "Kamut songs."

Nageg upi seker dike, abele lar upige seker dike.
Nageg tail comb* it is here, that fish on the tail comb it is there.

Le sik, le sik, sik erapei, le sikge, le sikge, uteidi
Man bed, man bed, bed breaks, man on a bed, man on a bed, asleep lies,

uteidi. sik erapei.
lies asleep, bed breaks.

Mònan patibili Peibri-em enau aroem.
Monan rolls to Peibri enau fruit† for eating.

Tup igoli umi Waierge, Waier kesge, Waierge Waier kesge.
Tup swim round to Waier, Waier in the channel, to Waier Waier channel.

Pageia mai nagedim upi etauerida kai amarem pekem.
Sea-snake you to where tail strikes I to side.

The natives of Torres Straits do not know how to play the Asiatic form of cat's-cradle.

Melanesia. "It was interesting to me," writes Finsch (1888, p. 143), "that the taking off of a thread stretched between the fingers is also found in New Ireland; fairly large lads occupied themselves with it. They were able to make very beautiful figures and in so doing sang a not unpleasant melody." Codrington (p. 341) records that "cat's-cradle, in Lepers' Island *Lelegaro*, in Florida *Honggo*, with many figures, is common throughout the islands." He also says (p. 30) that the people of Florida are grouped into six exogamous divisions, or *Kema*. The names of two of these are *Honggo-kama* and *Honggo-kiki*, respectively the "Great" and the "Little Cat's-cradle." Buchner (p. 269) records the game from Fiji, and he makes the improbable suggestion that the natives had been taught it by the missionaries.

* This has reference to the series of small spines at the base of the tail of the *Nageg* fish, i. e. "trigger fish" or "leather jacket" (*Monocanthus*); in the folk-tale *Nageg* is the mother of *Geigi*.
† The Wangai "plum" (*Mimusops Kaukii*).

Polynesia. The knowledge of this pastime was certainly common to the members of the Polynesian stock before they separated off into different groups, as we find it played from the Hawaiian Islands in the north to New Zealand in the south, and as far east as the Hervey group.

Culin (**1,** p. 222) figures sixteen examples from Hawaii and refers elsewhere (**3,** p. 106) to three more, but says, "many others are said to be known." They are known as *Hei*, "net." Elmer E. Brown (p. 163) refers to the unpublished investigations of Mr. J. S. Emerson into the folk-lore of the Hawaiian Islands. "With reference to the Hawaiian cat's-cradle," says Mr. Emerson, "I have collected most carefully a considerable amount of valuable information, which I propose to publish as soon as I can get at it. The last bit of information with regard to the subject I came upon almost unexpectedly this morning at South Cape (Ka Lae). It was the last resting-place (in stone) of the famous rat that saved the human family from starvation when the god Makalii hung up the food in a net to a cloud in the heavens. Thus, little by little, scrap by scrap, all over the islands, I gather the detached materials of a most strangely interesting structure that requires all my patience and ingenuity to dovetail together. There is no native now living who knows enough to give a full and connected story of this remarkable Hei, Koko or Makalii. Part of it comes from Iole, the home of the rat in Kohala. Part must be looked for in Waioli, Kanai, where the net was hung up to the cloud. And at last I have stumbled unawares upon the stars (Pleiades), the home of Makalii, his net, and the rat, all in the rock at South Cape." Mr. Brown goes on to say: "I think Mr. Emerson has fully established its connection with superstitious rites and beliefs in the Hawaiian Islands."

Two early travellers give us the following account of the game as played in New Zealand. Dieffenbach (p. 32) writes: "In the game of *Maui* they are great proficients. This is a game like that called cat's-cradle in Europe, and consists of very complicated and perplexing puzzles with a cord tied together at the ends. It seems to be intimately connected with their ancient traditions, and in the different figures which the cord is made to assume, whilst held on both hands, the outlines of their different varieties of houses, canoes, or figures of men and women are imagined to be represented. Maui, the Adam of New Zealand, left this amusement to them as an inheritance." Taylor (p. 172) says: "*He whai*, or *maui*, the 'cat's-cradle,' is a game very similar to our own, but the cord is made to assume many more forms, and these are said to be different scenes in their mythology, such as Hine-nui-te-po, Mother Night bringing forth her progeny, Maru and the gods, and

Maui fishing up the land. Men, canoes, houses, etc., are also represented. Some state that Maui invented this game." Tregear (**1,** p. 115; **2,** p. 58) calls the game *Whai*, *huhi* or *maui*, and says sometimes a whole drama was played by means of the changing shapes. Two of the favorites were the ascent of Tawhaki, the Lightning God, to heaven and the fishing up of the land by the hero Maui. There were proper songs chanted as accompaniments to the movements of the players' hands. Gill (p. 65) informs us that in the Hervey group "cat's-cradle (*Ai*) was a great delight of old and young. Teeth were called into play to help the fingers. One complication, in which the cord in the centre is twisted into a long slender stem, and therefore called 'the coco-nut tree,' I have never known a European to unravel."

America. Several authors have recorded the occurrence of cat's-cradle among the Eskimo (Hall, **1,** p. 316; **2,** p. 129). Klutschak (pp. 136–139) found even old men of King William Land playing it with reindeer sinews. They showed him 139 named figures; of these he gives 3 illustrations, *Tuktuk* (Reindeer), *Amau* (Wolf), and *Kakbik* (Pig). Andree very truly points out that there is no pig in this region, but his suggestion that the natives learned the game from Europeans ("Nordmen") is untenable. Tenicheff (p. 153) copies the first two of the figures, but does not say what they are meant to represent nor where he obtained them. As previously mentioned, Boas (**1,** p. 229) has published a few figures, and elsewhere (**4,** pp. 151, 161) he gives the observations of Capt. G. Comer that in Iglulik, "While the sun is going south in the fall, the game of cat's-cradle is played, to catch the sun in the meshes of the string, and to prevent his disappearance" (p. 151). Also on the west coast of Hudson Bay, "boys must not play cat's-cradle, because in later life their fingers might become entangled in the harpoon-line. They are allowed to play this game when they become adults. Two cases were told of hunters who lost their fingers, in which the cause was believed to be their having played cat's-cradle when young. Such youths are thought to be particularly liable to lose their fingers in hunting ground-seal" (p. 161).

According to Murdoch (p. 383), "the [Point Barrow] women are very fond of playing cat's-cradle whenever they have leisure. One favorite figure is a very clever representation of a reindeer, which is made, by moving the fingers, to run down-hill from one hand to the other." Nelson (p. 332) was amused for an hour or more by an old man at Cape Darby, near Behring Strait, who "made a constant succession of patterns with his sinew cord, forming outlines of various birds and other animals of the region."

In a criticism of Andree's statement (**2**, p. 214, subsequently repeated, **3**, p. 96) with regard to the distribution of cat's-cradle, that its occurrence among the Eskimo is quite isolated and probably due to European influence, Boas (**2**, p. 85) affirms that the game is known to all the eastern Eskimo peoples and the figures made by them are very numerous, although it appears each has only a limited range. Thus the Cumberland Sound Eskimo did not know the figures given by Klutschak. The game is known on the Mackenzie, and it is probably played all along the whole coast of arctic America. Boas also states that it is known along the north-west coast of America and, as among the Eskimo, is played only by one person at a time. The Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Kwakiutl all play it; the most southerly point at which Boas saw it played was at Comox, on Vancouver Island. He goes on to say: "The way in which the game is played is very interesting. While the figure is being made, the player sings the song belonging to it, which describes what the figure illustrates. Many of these figures illustrate actions. The Eskimo have a figure which illustrates two reindeer fighting, the Tsimshians have dancing shamans, the Comox (Catloltq) a mink which runs along the sea-shore. The game is also known to the Salish tribes of upper Frazer River and Thompson River."

Cat's-cradle has been recorded from various North-west tribes as well as among the Cherokee, Omaha, Pawnee, Navaho (Haddon, **5**), and Pueblo Indians; indeed, it seems to be spread over the whole of North America.

So far as I am aware records are lacking of its occurrence in Central America. It does occur in South America, for Ehrenreich (p. 30) states that the game of cat's-cradle representing animal figures is played by the Karaya of the Rio Araguaya (Goyaz), and quite recently I have heard of string games amongst the Chaco Indians of Paraguay, but details are not forthcoming.

As in so many other subjects, E. B. Tylor (p. 26) was the first to draw the attention of students to this game and to treat it from a comparative point of view. He states quite correctly that it is evident the Dayaks and Polynesians did not learn these string games from Europeans "and," he continues, "though cat's-cradle is now known over all Western Europe, I find no record of it at all ancient in our part of the world. It is known in South-east Asia, and the most plausible explanation seems to be that this is its centre of origin, whence it migrated westward into Europe, and eastward and southward through Polynesia and into Australia."

I, too, can find no early mention of this game in Europe, and as our method is precisely similar to that of Eastern Asia I can only conclude that, like the kite, it was introduced directly into Europe from that part of the world. At present it is impossible to say more exactly where it arose, whether in Korea, China, or Indo-China; presumably it passed from the main-land to the Asiatic Islands.

We should expect to find the overlap of the Asiatic and Oceanic types of the game in the East Indian Archipelago, and therefore we need not feel surprised that Mrs. Jayne has discovered the latter form (p. 43) among the Filipinos. My friend, Miss A. Hingston, has worked out a method by means of which the ordinary Asiatic opening can be converted to the Oceanic Opening A, but I do not know that it is actually practised. Her method is as follows: Cat's-cradle opening. With little fingers take up the ulnar (far) middle-finger strings below the point where they cross. Pass the straight string from the radial (near) side of the indices to the ulnar (far) side of the little fingers. Press thumbs against the indices to hold the radial (near) index string firm. Bring the straight ulnar (far) string that passes over the back of the hand over the tips of all fingers and thumbs. Transfer middle-finger loops to indices. Result, Oceanic Opening A.

So far as I am aware the only figure in Europe which begins with the Oceanic Opening A is that known as "The Leashing of Lochiel's Dogs" (p. 116). I am unable to explain the significance of this anomaly.

It is a highly significant fact that the American cat's-cradles belong to the Oceanic type, and that nowhere in this whole region, so far as is yet known, does the Asiatic type occur. This type must be extremely ancient, otherwise it would not occur among such widely different races as the Australians, Melanesians, Polynesians, Eskimo, and North American Indians.

It is surprising what an enormous number of figures can be made from an endless loop of string, and there are very numerous varieties in every place where the Oceanic type of the game is played. No surprise, therefore, need be felt if similar figures occur in various places; at all events if they are of simple construction, a complex figure or one with difficult manipulation is not so likely to be often invented independently.

So far as our knowledge goes the figure known as "The Leashing of Lochiel's Dogs," "Crow's Feet," etc. (p. 116), is the most widely spread of all, as versions of it occur in North Queensland (Roth), East Africa, North America, and the British Islands. Mr. W. Innes Pocock has discovered that it can be made by a dozen different methods.

The "Fish-spear," which is a simple figure, has also a wide distribution. It is found in Torres Straits ("Fish-spear"). H. I. Smith described it from the Salish of Thompson River, B. C. ("Pitching a tent"). I found it played by the Clayoquaht Indians, Nootka tribe, Vancouver Island, at the St. Louis Exposition ("Sea-egg [Echinus] spear"), and there is a Zuñi, N. M., example in the Philadelphia Museum.

No cat's-cradles or string tricks have hitherto been recorded from Africa. I have for some time been aware of the sparse occurrence of one or two string tricks from that continent, but very recently my friend, Dr. C. W. Cunnington, has collected fifteen patterns and three tricks from various tribes in East Africa, mainly in the neighborhood of Lake Tanganyika ; these will, I hope, be published by the Anthropological Institute of London. Three of these begin with Opening A, the rest have varied beginnings. In four cases the final patterns are similar, but the construction differs in each case. Three figures possess movement. The pattern known as *Umuzwa*, "a wooden spoon" made by the Ulungu, of the south end of Tanganyika, is "practically the same in result as the Cherokee figure, 'Crow's Feet.'" One string trick from Wajiji "is precisely the same as *Kebe mokeis*, 'the mouse,' from Murray Island, Torres Straits, a trick also known to the Omaha Indians." Several patterns are known to widely separated tribes, but under different names. Mrs. Jayne's discovery of a Batwa Pygmy pattern is of great interest, and it will be noticed that, like the majority of those since known from Africa, it has an original opening.

It may seem a superfluous question to some to ask, Why is this game played? But the Ethnologist is bound to do so, for he knows from experience that practically everything man does has a meaning, and it is his business to endeavor to find out whether there is any reason for the performance of any action, and if so to discover its significance.

The Asiatic type, so far as our present knowledge goes, does not appear to possess much interest; but two facts seem to be significant with regard to the Oceanic type. These are: (1) The widely spread accompaniment of words or chants, and (2) The frequent representation of persons, incidents, or objects connected with religion or mythology. These facts are interesting and suggest that we have here to do with some symbolism that has in course of time become obscured. On the other hand, it may merely be a pastime, and the figures and designs may be nothing more than casual illustrations of mythology, as they are of innumerable natural objects.

The Eskimo evidence proves that cat's-cradle may, in part, have a magical significance and suggests a line for future inquiry, for we know that all over the world strings, cords, and knots enter largely into magical practices. The information at present available is too scanty for us to discuss these questions with profit.

ALFRED C. HADDON.

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