

## Outlandish Toys.



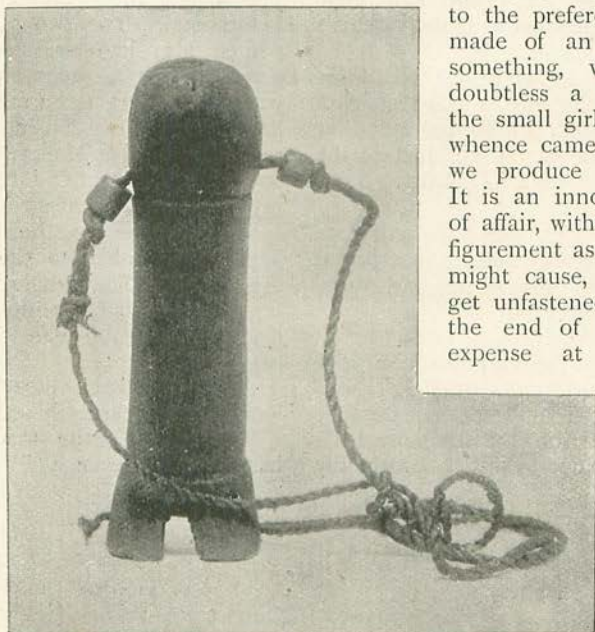
TOYS, joys, boys, noise. These are the rhyme-words—the framework, so to speak—for a nursery rhyme which somebody ought to have made a long time ago; anybody can make it now for himself. Wherever small boys and girls are to be found—and they have been reported present in every inhabited neighbourhood yet discovered—there are toys. They were probably invented as early as eating and drinking were, and no doubt antedate by centuries the patent for the first birch; for doubtless primeval man corrected his ill-behaved offspring by knocking it over with the well-picked drumstick of his late enemy; while the obedient young cave-dweller sat near, playing with the merry-thought of yesterday's unroasted pterodactyl. To-day, when pterodactyl skipjacks have become comparatively uncommon, toys have a way of being made in thousands and in Germany, and conveyed seriously from country to country as articles of merchandise. This, at any rate, is the case with European toys; but in savage countries toys still remain a domestic manufacture, and rarely travel, as articles of trade, farther than from one little waistcoatless savage to his brother or sister. Consequently there is an individuality about such toys, and a striking divergence from

the types proper to the Lowther Arcade. It is of some of these toys that we intend to treat in this article, as well as of a few from such places as Ceylon and Japan, where, in an old civilization, toys are something of a separate manufacture, though in designs unfamiliar among ourselves.

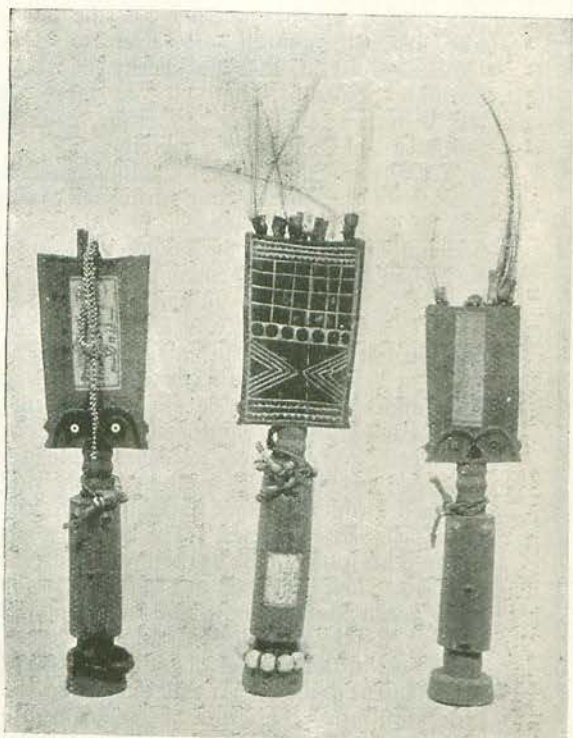
No doubt the earliest manufactured toy of all was the doll. Little girls play with dolls everywhere, and have always done so. Indeed, among the Bechuanas and Basutos at the present moment, married women carry dolls until they are supplanted by real children. There is for its possessor a curious individuality about a doll, altogether unaccountable to other people. How often may it be observed that a child will neglect the splendid new five-shilling waxen beauty, with its gorgeous finery, and cling faithfully to the disreputable, noseless wreck of rags that has been its favourite hitherto? Something causes other children, besides Helen's babies,

to dislike "bued dollies," even to the preference for an article made of an old towel. This something, whatever it is, is doubtless a great comfort to the small girls of Mashonaland, whence came the doll of which we produce a photograph (1). It is an innocent, armless sort of affair, without any such disfigurement as waist or shoulders might cause, no knee-joints to get unfastened, and nothing at the end of its legs to cause expense at the shoemaker's.

As regards dress, it is inexpensive; the whole suit of apparel consisting of a piece of string threaded through a hole humanely bored through the head; the string being use-



1.—DOLL FROM MASHONALAND.



2.—DOLLS FROM ASHANTEE.

ful to hang the whole thing about the little Mashona's neck. By close and attentive inspection one may detect a faint attempt to indicate features, but this weakness seems to have stopped short at a scratch where the nose ought to be, and a rather deeper scratch for an eye. The whole thing was such a piece of training for the youthful imagination that one regrets these half-hearted struggles for realism.

More elaborately designed, but still full of scope for imagination, are the three rectangular-headed dolls from Ashantee (2). There are eyes of mother-of-pearl, and there are triangular noses; but mouths are dispensed with—which is an advantage in a large family. Legs and arms, also, are absent, which indicates a charming Ashantee ideal of babyhood; excluding the appurtenances which in an ordinary baby cause a deal of mischief and noise. In the central doll, indeed, the artist boldly undertakes to abolish the customary face altogether, and to substitute a primitive draughts and backgammon board; but he returns to Nature when he comes to the hair, and crowns the work with what seems to be a dissipated company of five shaving-brushes. In the right-hand example the designer has not confined himself

slavishly to shaving-brushes in the matter of hair, but has secured a certain jauntiness by the introduction of a wisp from a whitewash brush on one side. But the central problem of the whole picture lies, as is proper, in the middle doll. And it is this; is the white bead necklace round the doll's neck, or round its waist, or round its ankle?

The Kaffir would seem to be champion doll-maker of Africa, if we may judge by the specimen of his work here illustrated (3). Legs, arms, hands, feet, features, ears—all are there, and the whole affair will bear comparison with the rag or leather dolls of this advanced country. Indeed, there are people, grown-up, who would vastly prefer this to any doll you might select in the best toy-shop in London; for on the long bead necklace, which is festooned about it, two large pearls are threaded. One may better judge the size of these when it is observed that the height of the doll, complete, is half



3.—KAFFIR DOLL.



4.—PUPPET FROM JAVA.

an inch more than a foot. The covering is leather, very neatly sewn, and the toy was probably once the possession of some little Zulu prince or princess.

In Java the national drama is the galanty-show—the *ombres chinoises* of the French idiom. The mechanical actors in these shows are the toys of the grown-up Javanese. A white sheet is stretched before the company, with a light behind it, and the *Dálang*, who is the stage-manager, acting-manager, scene-shifter, prompter, and call-boy rolled into one, sits invisible, and works the figures behind the sheet. These figures are flat, and made usually of thick buffalo hide, with jointed arms. A thin strip of horn hangs from each arm, and by the aid of these strips the operator works the figures. Notwithstanding the fact that to the "house" nothing is visible but the black silhouetted shadow of each character, the figures are most lovingly and conscientiously decorated with paint and gold, after

the thorough-going manner of the actor who blacked himself all over to play *Othello*. And another peculiarity of these leathern actors is that all are more or less distorted and made grotesque, even in the cases of heroes and heroines. There is a tradition that an early Mohammedan missionary prompted this distortion as a sort of compromise between the Javanese national drama, which he couldn't afford to set at naught, and the Mohammedan precept that forbids any image in the human form. Let that be as it may, it will be seen from our illustrations that the Javanese, in these cases at least, run little risk of infringing Mohammed's law. The flat image of a rather stout lady (4) has a quaintness and a humour of its own, and two very impressive bunches of toes; while her ear and the ear-ring attached would attract attention in the most fashionable circles. The three figures in the other photograph (5) are rounded, and of wood. They are used in a variation of the more usual shadow-show, and are displayed without the intervention of an illuminated sheet, just in the manner of our own plays of marionettes; but they are still worked by the little horn rods. The three specimens before us are evidently comedians. There is little

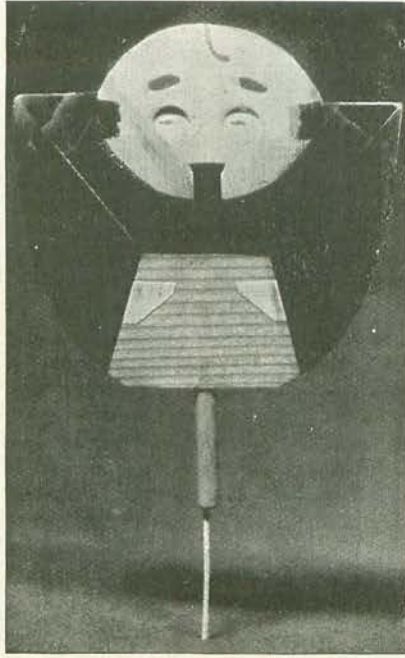


5.—PUPPETS FROM JAVA.

of the tragic about them, unless it be in the face of him (or her) in the middle, which might be the face of a china-shop keeper, contemplating the tragic entrance of a bull. It is by means of these curious shows of fantocini that the legendary history of Java has been kept alive for ages among a people mostly illiterate; and the enthusiasm with which the shows are regarded may be guessed from the fact that crowds will sit or stand whole nights through, profoundly attentive to them, and noisily applaudive at the critical parts.

Not strictly a doll, perhaps, but somewhat of that nature, is the curious little flat figure (6) familiar among the happy children of Japan, which protrudes its tongue and rolls its eyes. It is an extremely cheap thing, costing something merely fractional, and occupies in Japan much the position occupied among us by the penny puzzles and toys sold along the curbs of the Strand and Cheapside. It is made of broad, coloured rush straws folded over to represent, approximately, a human figure seated in the characteristic Japanese squat, and wearing the square-shouldered ceremonial robes of old Japan. The toy is held from below by a hollow reed, and through this passes another and a smaller reed, which, thrust up and down, protrudes the tongue (made of red straw), and causes the eyes to roll tremendously. The specimen from which our photograph was taken was brought from Japan by Mr. J. Edge Partington.

Rattles and drums—anything which makes a hideous noise—have ever been delightful to children and savages—children of a larger growth. At Loango, West Africa, the grown natives use rattles of a curious sort in their dances. They are made of a sort of hard brown wood, highly polished; they take the form of a bell, usually with a human figure upon them by way of handle. Within the bell hangs a little bunch of clappers, made of reeds; and when a large crowd of healthy negroes is dancing and shaking these



6.—JAPANESE BOGEY MAN.

rattles in unison, the noise is of a fine and conspicuous sort. There are no Mohammedan scruples to deter the artists responsible for these rattles, but they keep as far from the human form usually met with as do the Javane. In our illustration (7) the figure kneeling on the bell on the left is that of a negress, with a child slung on her shoulders by a band. It is a knowing sort of child, and seems, with its hand raised to screen the remark from its mother's hearing, to be whispering impertinences to the on-looker. An oval box of some sort rests on the woman's head, supported by her left arm, not to be seen in this view of the object. The figure

in the middle rattle is that of a dark gentleman with a broken nose, holding in his hands what is said to be a musical instrument, but which might easily be a hat which he was thinking of substituting (very advisably) for that on his head. The third figure, unlikely as it may seem, is intended to

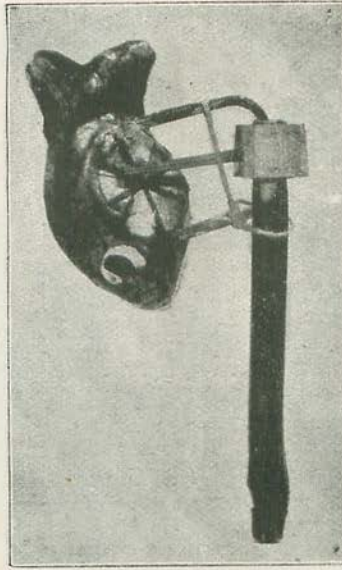


7.—RATTLES FROM WEST AFRICA.

represent a European, as may be observed by his whiskers, indicated by the ridge between ear and cheek. The artist has sought further to increase the likeness, and more strongly to bring out the characteristics of civilization, by placing a bottle in each hand—or, at any rate, something intended for a bottle. Moreover, the enlightened European is seated on what appears to be a gallon jar. The negro responsible for this carving had begun to learn.

For the small children of China a surprisingly loud rattle, though but a small one, is provided in the shape our photograph indicates (8). The whole thing measures but  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in., and the fish, of thick earthenware, is but  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. in length. The fish is painted red, the handle is of bamboo, and the secret of its working is made plain by the picture. A twisted string is stretched across the frame holding the fish, and in it is inserted the striker, just in the way made familiar in the wooden jumping-frog of our own country. When the rattle is sprung, exactly in the same way as our old policeman's or watchman's rattle was sprung, the angular projections at the head of the stick alternately lift and release the short end of the clapper, while the opposite end beats the hollow fish with a monstrous clatter, the delight of the small boy the world over, whether Celestial or—otherwise. This particular specimen was brought to England by Mr. G. K. Barnes, of the Royal Navy, and presented to the British Museum by that gentleman; as also was the toy drum, likewise from China, shown in the succeeding illustration.

This drum (9),  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. across, is made of wood, and painted gaily in red, white, and green. Strings hang from the sides, each with a bead at its end. By the handle attached, the drum is spun rapidly in



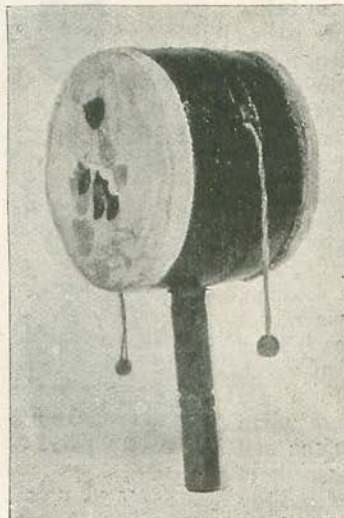
8.—CHINESE RATTLE.

alternate directions, so that the beads, flying wide, strike the tympani in turn, and produce a rapid and (they say) not unpleasant sound. Quite pleasant, no doubt, to the dear little rascal who handles the article. This particular specimen was made at Yau-ma-ti, in the Howloom Peninsula.

A distant striver after the ways of the Lowther Arcade was the gentle Basuto who modelled in clay the animals and the man we show in another illustration (10). For here, plainly, is the Noah's Ark of commerce in its early conception, with two legs for Noah and the ark left out. It will be observed that the gentle Basuto is timid, and never rises to the daring Lowther Arcade pitch of making the dove as large as the cow, and the cow the same size as the elephant. For his elephant (though its trunk is broken off), his rhinoceros (though its horn has wilted down over its nose), his antelope, his buffalo, his leopard (observe the spots), his lion, and his wild cat are somewhat in the proportions in which Nature makes them; they vary, indeed, from 3 in. or 4 in. to 9 in. or 10 in. in length. In this respect the Basuto is behind us; but in regard to obscurity of identity, he is really not so far inferior to our own toy makers.

It is not quite, though almost, as difficult to distinguish the Basuto's elephant from his rhinoceros, and his lion from his buffalo, as to discriminate the strange monsters in a regular civilized Noah's Ark. But in the little animal just at the rear of the wild cat—the animal which looks rather like a cross between a Sky-terrier, a bulldog, and a kitchen colander—in this particular instance the Basuto rises to heights of genius, and beats the European altogether. For that is a creature that one may defy anybody to identify.

Tops are in; spin 'em agin.  
Tops are out; smugging about!

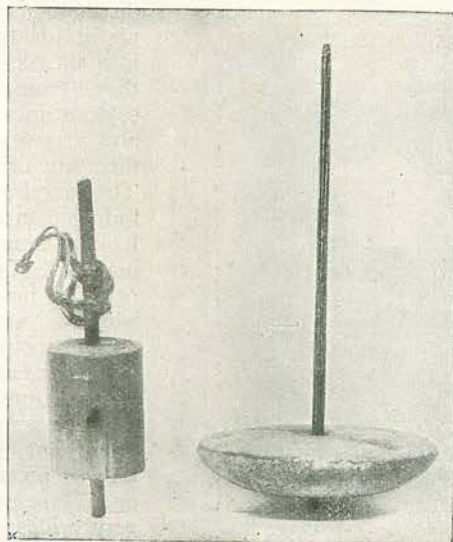


9.—CHINESE DRUM.



10.—BASUTO NOAH'S ARK.

What mysterious force of Nature it is that rules that tops shall be "in" at one period of the year, and "out" for the rest, will probably never be discovered. But perhaps the top-inclination is of the nature of a pestilence, passing successively through different parts of the world, so that while tops are "in" among the Polynesian islanders, they are "out" in Ceylon, and so forth. However this may be, certain it is that the top is a universal toy, just as the doll is, and all over the world it is made of all sorts of materials, just as they may be handy or seem suitable. We put two extreme instances together in one of our illustrations. The first top (the left-hand one in Fig. 11) comes from the Stewart group of the Solomon Islands, and is made of a bamboo cylinder, closed at the ends, and pierced with a stick. The bottom end of the stick is the peg, and to the top end is attached a piece of string for spinning purposes. A hole is pierced in the side of the bamboo, and there lies a humming-top, in all essential particulars similar to those in our own shops. The top by the side of this comes from New Guinea, and the body of it is a piece of buff-coloured stone, with a human figure painted on the upper face in red. The stick which passes through the stone is rotated rapidly between the palms of the hands, and thus the stone top is set spinning.

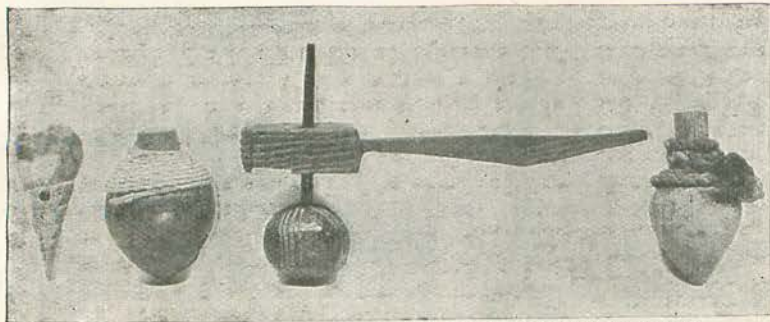


11.—TOPS FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS AND NEW GUINEA.

Another of our illustrations (12) shows four tops, each remarkable in its way. The first is made from a sea-shell; it comes from the Persian Gulf. The second is a sort of disarranged peg-top with no peg, and wound and spun by a string on the upper instead of on the lower surface. It was made at Selangor, in the Straits Settlements, of some sort of hard brown wood. A wood of similar appearance has been used in the production of top number three, but that comes from a very different part of the globe—from Nootka Sound, in fact, on the North-West Coast of America. It was brought to this country by Captain Vancouver, who gave his name to the large island on the coast of which Nootka Sound lies. Here we see a wooden handle, identical in principle, and almost in shape, with that used on our own wooden humming-tops. The last of

these four tops is noticeable for the neatness and care wherewith it has been fashioned with no other implement than an ordinary knife. The wood is of a light colour, and the string has been ingeniously twisted of pieces of print of Manchester manufacture. The toy comes from Ritabel village, in Timorlant, one of the Tenimber Islands, some way off the coast of North Australia.

Here we have a football (13), of an open transparent complexion, and most ingeniously made from plaited cane.

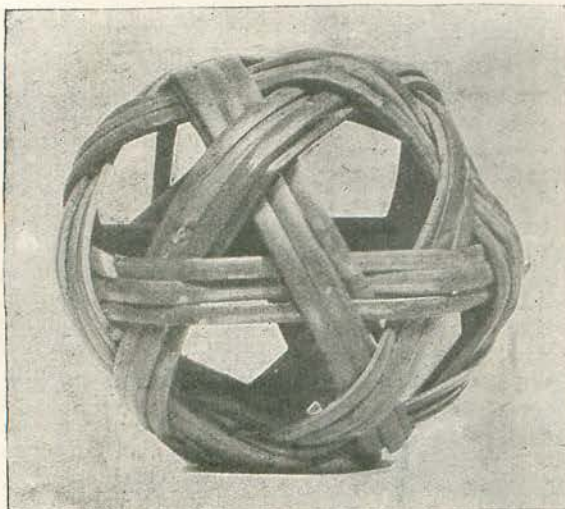


12.—TOPS FROM PERSIA, SELANGOR, NOOTKA SOUND, AND TENIMBER ISLANDS.

It comes from the Straits Settlements, and it was shown in 1886 at the Colonial Exhibition.

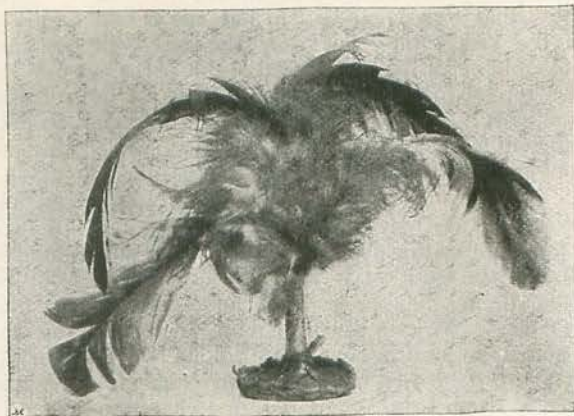
It is a little less than 5 in. in diameter, and, of course, extremely light. Lightness, indeed, would seem to be desirable in this case, since the naked feet of the natives who play it would find anything in the nature of a heavy, sodden Association leather-globe a trifle disconcerting for the toes. As it is, there would seem to be excellent opportunities to get a toe jammed in one of the pentagonal holes. This ball is not any the better for inflating, and if it were, the task would be troublesome. Just such a ball as this is now in use at the Indian Exhibition, where a number of Burmans play the game publicly.

Between this game of football and one of shuttlecock there may seem to be small affinity; but the game played with the shuttlecock which we illustrate (14)



13.—FOOTBALL FROM STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

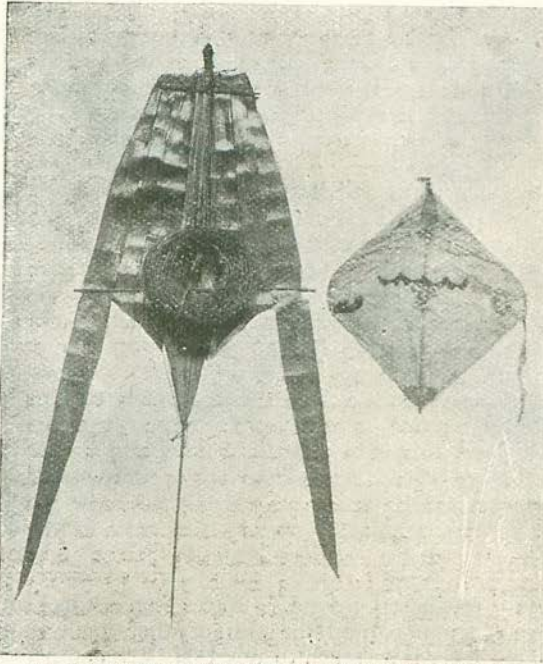
ment. A player takes a short run, springs from the ground, and smites the descending



14.—SHUTTLECOCK FROM COCHIN CHINA.

shuttlecock with the sole of his foot. Up it flies into the air, and descends in the direction of another player, who jumps up in his turn and kicks it again into the upper atmosphere; and so they "keep the pot a-boiling." Very seldom does a player miss his kick, and very seldom does he fail in his direction of the shuttlecock's flight. The exercise must be rather like that indulged in by the boy who tries to kick his hand extended at a level with his head. The bottom of the shuttlecock is made of leather, and it is weighted with two or three of those curious copper coins with a square hole in the centre. These coins jingle as the shuttlecock is tossed about, and give notice of its flight.

Perhaps one is apt to regard the kite as pretty exclusively a Chinese or a Japanese toy, but that, too, is a very widespread favourite. Of the two kites we illustrate (15), the first



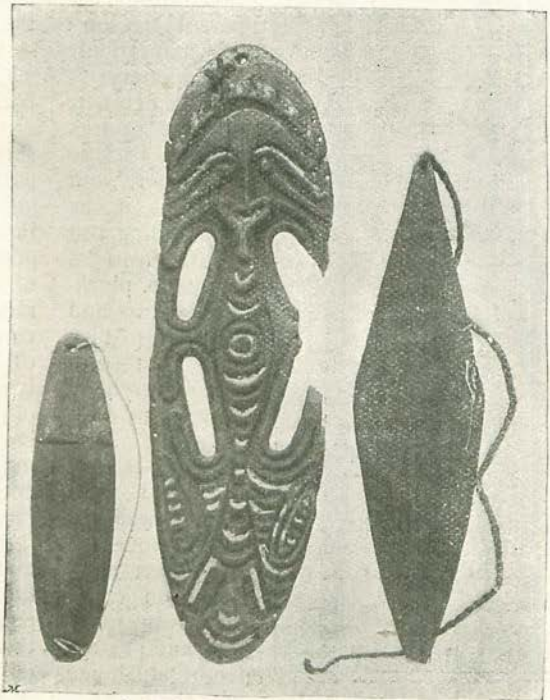
15.—KITES FROM THE SOLOMON AND EAST INDIAN ISLANDS.

is from the Solomon Islands. The material is the leaf of the sago-palm, and the structure is stiffened with thin cross-bars of cane. The Solomon Islanders often put these kites to use in fishing. A long string is hung to a kite, with a hook and a bait at the end, and the kite is flown over water, forming a fine, handsome, and conspicuous "float," ready to bob and plunge desperately at the first bite. Our second kite is a child's toy, and comes from the East Indian Islands. It is made of very thin material of the nature of "tapa," and it is ornamented with pieces of black, red, and yellow paper. The framework consists of two slender slips of bamboo, and the kite is a foot in length and  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. broad. Kite-flying seems to be growing less popular than of yore with English boys. But among their elders the kites with a revenue stamp on one corner are more popular than ever, and are being flown with great perseverance, regardless of weather, at this moment.

A toy familiar in many parts of this country, but becoming singularly unfamiliar in others, is the bull-roarer. Sometimes it is called by other names, but the thing itself is probably familiar to most people. It is a flat piece of wood, variously shaped, according to

fancy, tied at the end to a length of string, and whirled rapidly and persistently till it emits a noise like unto the buzzing of a bluebottle as big as a sheep. The bull-roarer, too, is a widespread toy, known the world over. Indeed, it is not always a toy, but, as in the Torres Straits, is often invested with a supernatural character, and used in the initiation of priests, and in other religious ceremonies among heathens. Among the Australian natives, the bull-roarer is called a "turndun," and its din is much venerated. The three specimens of which we reproduce photographs (16) are from New Zealand; the middle one, though damaged, is a fine figure of a bull-roarer, with a grotesque face, indicated among the carving at its upper end. The bull-roarer, of one pattern or another, is found in Mexico, in Australia, in New Zealand, in Africa, and in Middlesex. Whether it is a mere toy elevated in some places to sacred honours, or a sacred instrument degraded in other places to the uses of a mere toy—this is a question ethnographers have not yet settled.

The boomerang needs no introduction; what weapon so mysteriously famous? In



16.—BULL-ROARERS FROM NEW ZEALAND.

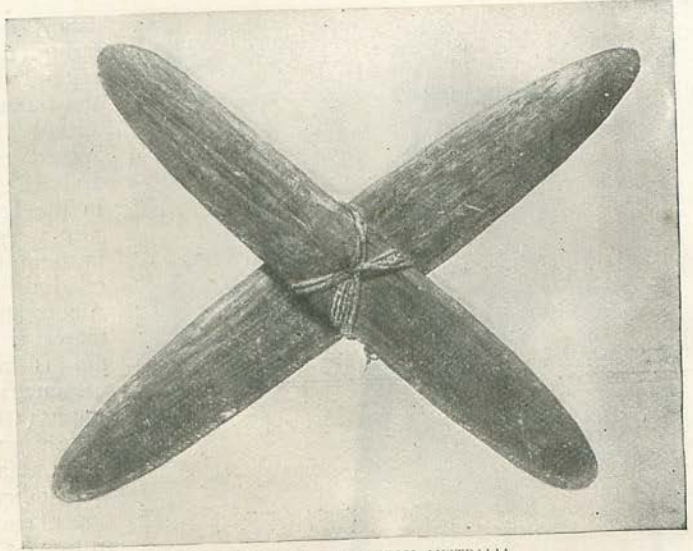


our own toy-shops little boomerangs are sold at this present time, though whether any happy English child has achieved any more wonderful feat with one than smashing a window (for which an ordinary British brick does quite as well) one is justified in doubting. In the land of the boomerang, and among the Australian aborigines who use it, the toy boomerang used by the children (17) is of a wholly different shape from the crooked wooden blade which illustrations and the toy-shop miniatures have made familiar. It is, indeed, of the form of a cross; but it is used by the children just in the way that their elders use the larger crooked single blade. The boomerang is *not* a widely distributed toy or weapon; it is native to Australia alone. To describe at length the peculiarities of the boomerang in flight would

be to retell a fifty-times-told tale. How it changes its directions without apparent reason; how it unerringly hits whatever is round the corner; how it comes dutifully back to its owner, and licks his boots, after killing two ducks and a kangaroo, plucking the two and skinning the one; these things everybody knows.

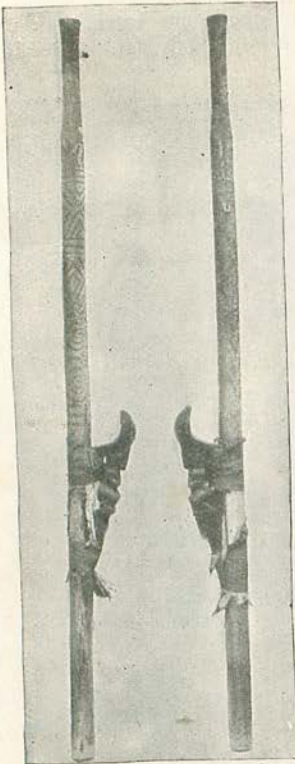
In the Marquesas Islands the great sport is stilt-walking. The Marquesans are expert acrobats on their supplementary legs, and are perfectly at home with them on the

17.—TOY BOOMERANG FROM AUSTRALIA.

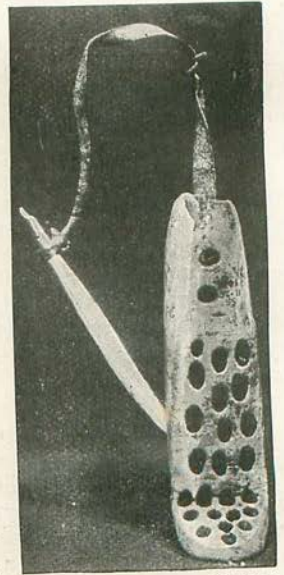


roughest ground. Races on stilts are common, and the aim of the simple stilt-racer is as much to upset his competitors as to get ahead of them by hard striding. Our specimen pair of stilts from Marquesas (18) is of soft yellow wood, carved elaborately—this as regards the shafts. The stirrups are of a darker and much heavier wood, and are carved to represent human figures; they are bound to the shafts by strands of cocoa-nut cinet.

The cup and ball is another toy found in widely distant countries. The cup and ball of the Esquimaux of Hudson's Strait (19) is particularly distinguished by its total innocence of a cup and its entire lack of a ball; it is, indeed, less of a cup and ball than of a cribbage-board. It consists of a piece of walrus ivory, pitted with many holes; to this another piece of ivory, in form of a little stick, is attached by a strip of hide, and the game is to toss the smaller piece of ivory and catch it in one of the



18.—STILTS FROM THE MARQUESAS ISLANDS.



19.—ESQUIMAUX CUP AND BALL

holes. The Esquimaux would appear to be a patient people.

Whatever instruments or engines grown people use, toy copies will be demanded—

lock-carriage (21), which is our last specimen, also has its interest. It is from Limree, in the Bombay Presidency, and is made of a sort of terra-cotta. The wheels and the body of

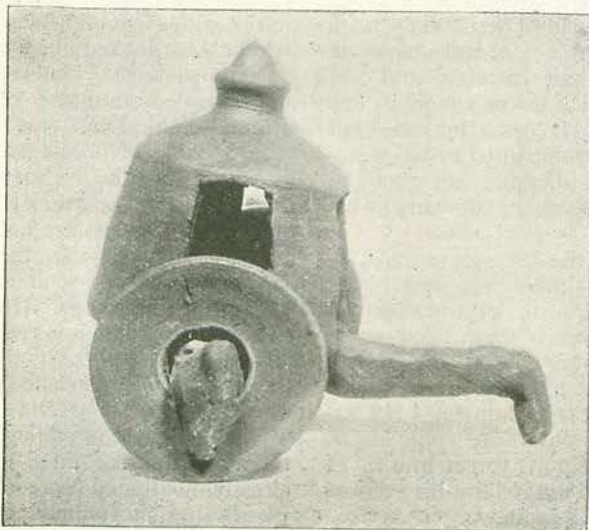


20.—TOY-CART FROM CEYLON.

and obtained—by the children. Toy swords, guns, fire-engines, trains, scales and weights, and spades attest this in our own country, and in Australia, as we have seen, the little aborigine flings his little boomerang. Carts, of course, are toys wherever man has risen to the dignity of vehicular traffic. Quite a superior little toy is this bullock-cart from Ceylon (20), with its tilt of woven rushes, its reins of string, its well-made wooden wheels, and its quite recognisable bullock, though this last may look a trifle like a donkey. The whole thing is, in fact, a fairly exact model of a Cingalese bullock-cart, and it would be received with satisfaction in the most fastidious European nurseries. Observe the neat and ingenious cordage over the tilt. The earthenware bul-

lock-carriage are, as may be perceived, turned on the potter's wheel, while the pole—the carriage is evidently intended for a pair of bullocks—and the axle have been fashioned by hand; though perhaps not delicately fashioned. The height of this carriage is 6in., and it is 7in. long. How the passenger is to enter it without either climbing over a bullock's back or diving through the window is not made altogether clear; but the little people who have carriages 6in.

high are not over particular, neither in India nor in this country. Else what would become of the common, old-fashioned wooden horse, with its peg legs, its barrel body, its rabbit's tail, its flat head, and its plasterings of blue and red paper? Surely, on the whole, the most outlandish toy of all.



21.—EARTHENWARE CART FROM LIMREE, BOMBAY.