

Hoosier Folklore

Indiana
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HOOSIER FOLKLORE

VOL. VII SEPTEMBER, 1948

NO. 3

FOLKTALES AND JESTS FROM DELAWARE, OHIO¹

By HERBERT HALPERT

"The best storyteller in Delaware," my informant said, "is Jim Henry. He's a tailor. On Main Street." Since I had never heard of a tailor who told folktales, I climbed the flight of stairs to the tailor shop without too much hope. I found Mr. James F. Henry, a thin little man, nearly bald and somewhat hard of hearing, busily operating a noisy steam presser.

Mr. Henry told me he was seventy-one on the twenty-first of June, 1947, and had been a tailor since September, 1910. "I was born and raised in this town," he said. "My father was a tailor and cutter. He was born in the old country [Ireland]. He was pretty darn witty too."

Mr. Henry is active in the local Republican party. He had been appointed court bailiff shortly before I first met him. He told me: "It's a funny thing but I like to meet people. I'll bet there isn't a feller around here who's better acquainted in the county than I am. Gosh, I know 'em all around. I have a lot of fun with politics but I never try to make anybody mad."

His wife, a cheerful person who is his regular audience, usually helps him in the shop. Often some crony of his sits in the corner by the window. Inevitably others come up singly to pass the time of day and to tell Jim a new story and hear one in turn from him. Mr. Henry tells stories in stores, at his lodge, in court, and at the Republican club, as well as at his shop. After he had told me one yarn, I asked from whom he had learned it. "Father told me that," he replied. "He could tell 'em. I had a brother that died that could tell 'em. Oh, I can tell a few myself." Then he added, laughing: "My wife always told me if I'd educated myself in something instead, I'd be a pretty

¹ Most of the material in this article was collected in 1947 while the writer was a Rockefeller Foundation Postwar Fellow in the Humanities.

smart fellow. . . . I've got a awful [good] memory on stuff that don't amount to nothing. . . . I don't know where I get all that junk; I hear so doggone much. Oh, I have a lot of fun; they kid me about the Irish, but I don't mind. My father, he could match you."

Although his father used to tell stories about banshees and cemeteries, Mr. Henry never cared enough for them to learn any. He does, however, remember several of his father's humorous "Irishman stories." Besides these, he tells many other Irishman stories, a few tall tales, a number of Scotch, Negro, and German stories—many of them in dialect—and a very large number of jokes. A few of his stories come from his magazine reading, but most of them, as he suggests above, he has heard from some of his many acquaintances. In this connection is worth noting his wife's comment: "Jim was always great to number among his friends people older than he was." I suspect some of his stories come from these older people.

His wife appreciates her husband's way of telling stories although she claims to pay no attention to them because she has heard them so often. She said that he had "the Irish humor and wit"; and when I asked her what made her husband so good a storyteller, replied very positively, "His Irish dialect!" Mr. Henry does have a slight but noticeable brogue which he exaggerates to good effect in his storytelling. He can also imitate Scottish, German, and Negro pronunciation, a point which his wife stressed as important for good storytelling. "When you tell a story, you want to tell what he says—Scotch, German, or colored—you want to be able to switch to the way he tells it."

Mr. Henry mentions his own Irishness frequently. On several occasions he remarked, "I tell them I'm an FBI—'a full-blooded Irishman'." But with equal pleasure he said, "That's the Irish for you:

First in war,

First in peace,

And first in the hands of the City Police."

It was interesting to note how readily he accepted the humorous stereotypes of the German, Scotchman, and Irishman reflected in his own tales. That Germans are often stupid and Scotchmen stingy he seemed to feel were valid generalizations. Yet he told with relish both tales of the absurd behavior and

ignorance of the Irish, and others showing Irish wit. It is obvious, of course, that many of these stories of foolish behavior are standard folktales with a long history both orally and in jest books.²

All but two of the stories given here were collected on later visits, from Mr. Henry's dictation. Since time was limited I concentrated on tales that seemed to have traditional patterns, and added a few others to show something of Mr. Henry's repertory. He probably knows many other traditional yarns, and his stock of jokes seems almost unlimited. Often I told a story and he capped it by relating several others in rapid succession. Usually I did not take them down the first time he told them, since it would have interrupted his train of thought.

Except for an occasional shift from direct to indirect discourse, there seemed little or no variation between his straight narration and his dictation, which was punctuated by the hiss of the steam presser. I wrote rapidly until he stopped talking and turned to his pressing machine. When he had adjusted the garment and had brought down the presser, I raised my voice and repeated the last lines I had written, and he went on from that point. The only time I recall his changing his stories or omitting details was on my last visit when he was very busy and somewhat distracted. At that time his wife, who had said on an earlier visit that she could not tell stories, came to the rescue. She frequently reminded her husband of a story I asked for, warned him of details he had left out (see no. 13), and finally, when Mr. Henry got too involved with work, retold two of the stories (nos. 11 and 12) very competently for me to write down. She still insisted, "I'm not very fond of stories"; and when I said she remembered them very well, said firmly, "I couldn't tell it to make it sound nice."

Perhaps the most striking facet of Mr. Henry's storytelling is his extreme terseness and economy of language. His stories are reduced to the dramatic core with the descriptive element almost ignored. Although many tales told both by rural and urban yarn-spinners are comparatively short, good storytellers usually lengthen them by elaborating details of the setting. Urban humorists tell brief jokes, but the only rural storytellers I have heard tell many stories without amplification are those

² For discussion pertinent to these topics, see my "Aggressive Humor on the East Branch," NYFQ 2: 86-89.

who, like Mrs. Henry, can remember stories or story plots, but do not consider themselves performers.

Mr. Henry is completely different from this latter group. He is recognized as a storyteller, admired by others, and confident of his own skill. He has a tremendous repertory available which he tells expressively, though without gestures, and with evident enjoyment.

That the brevity of his storytelling style is conscious with him is clear from his own comments in reply to my question about what makes a good storyteller. "I think a lot of fellers monkey around with a story. I think the quicker they come to the point, the better off they are." (Don't you like long stories?) "No, I don't. Takes too long to get to 'em; wears a man out." And later he reiterated his belief: "I think the way to do with that is to make it as short as you can make it. Right to the point." Apparently the punch line is the thing, as it is with the ordinary joke teller and the jesters of the professional stage and radio.

Mrs. Henry recognized and approved her husband's extreme brevity, remarking: "If I were tellin' a story, I would always add a little bit. I'd tell it a little better, I think; I'd embellish it. All of Jim's are short. He gets it over before they get tired. Jimmy leaves all preludes out."

Mr. Henry's storytelling style and repertory represent a curious blend of traditions. By inheritance he knows some "Irishman stories" not current in the modern urban repertory. Living in Delaware, the county seat for a predominantly agricultural area, he has picked up tall tales and a few other yarns from the rural tradition. But the town is close to Columbus, on a well-travelled highway, and the orientation of many residents is towards the city. Mr. Henry's store of current jokes and his storytelling style, which stresses brevity and the final punch rather than the rural yarn-spinner's "dead pan," leisurely delivery, show the influence of urban tradition.

I. TALL TALES

1. *Useful Sack*

Old Tom Gardner—he was an awful liar. He said he was out in the woods one day and there was a bear. And the bear took after him. He says, "I had a wet sack." And he says, "I took it and beat the brains out of the bear. Then I put the bear in the sack, tied the sack with my necktie, and took him home."

2. *Trapped On Fast-growing Corn*

Farmer planted some corn and his boy got playin' around it and climbed up on it. Him and the hired man went and got an axe and tried to chop it down. But they couldn't hit twice in the same place, it was growin' so fast. Next morning they went out. He knew the boy was all right because the ground was covered with cobs where he et corn all night.

(For a text and references, see Halpert, CFQ 4: 373, and note. Add Dorson, WF 6: 180-181.)

3. *Unusual Escape From Bear*

One warm day in July—fourth of July³—this man said he took the gun out to get a shot at something. Saw a bear. He shot the bear just enough to sting him, and he said the bear started after him. And he says he ran him and ran him. He says, "I crossed the ice," and he says, "The bear fell in and drowned—the ice was too thin." Then the feller says to him, "I thought it was a warm day in July." He says, "It was; but that bear ran me and ran me from July fourth to December twenty-fourth."

(See *Hoosier Tall Stories*, compiled by Federal Writers Project in Indiana, WPA (1937), p. 8; A. P. Hudson, *Humor of the Old Deep South* (New York, 1936), pp. 171-172; V. Randolph, *Funny Stories About Hillbillies* (Girard, Kansas, 1944), p. 11; *Joe Allen's Fireside Tales* (New Bedford, Mass. 1941) pp. 13-14 (told in verse). A New York text is in the Louis C. Jones Archive, and one from Alaska is in the Halpert MS. Usually the chase starts in berry time.)

4. *Wouldn't Lie For One*

He went in the woods and he had two bullets, and he saw a lot of wild pigeons on a tree. And he says he shot and split the limb—cracked the limb—and they all got their toes in there—held them. And he said he took the next bullet and shot the limb off. And he counted them, and he had just ninety-nine pigeons. The feller said, "Why didn't you make it a hundred?" And he said, "Why, I wouldn't tell a lie for one pigeon!"

—Mr. Merritt told me that up at the store. *Mrs. Henry*: It's an old old story.

(For a text and references, see Halpert, CFQ 4: 375 and note. Add R. M. Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), pp. 112-114.)

5. *Clinching The Spike*

The feller was tellin' he climbed up to the moon. The Irishman said, "I did too." He says, "I drove a spike in the

³ This story was told on July 3rd.

moon." The Irishman says, "I clinched that spike on the other side."

—*Mrs. Henry*: That's also old.

(For a text and references see HFB 1: 91.)

6. *Ingenious Bedbugs*

Two Irishmen sleepin' in bed and the bedbugs got after them. One feller got up and he got a molasses cup and put a ring of molasses around the bed. But he says, "That didn't do no good. They crawled up on the ceiling and dropped on us."

(A variant form in which tar replaces molasses is in Wehman's *Yankee Drolleries* (New York, n. d.), p. 24; Loomis, WF 6: 31. These nearly identical texts continue with the motif of the bedbugs using straw to cross the tar. For the latter motif, with molasses instead of tar, see O. C. Hulett, *Now I'll Tell One* (Chicago, 1935), p. 98; E. E. Selby, *100 Goofy Lies (Tall Tales)* (Decatur, Ill., 1939), p. 6. Sticks are used by the bugs to cross a ring of tar in Fauset, MAFS 24: 73-74.)

II. FOOL TALES

7. *Bedbugs With Lanterns*

Two Irishmen were gettin' bit by the bedbugs. There was a lightning bug flew in, you know, and one of them says, "We might as well go; they've got lanterns lookin' for us."

(For a text and references with mosquitoes instead of bedbugs, see Halpert, CFQ 4: 368-369. To the notes add: Melville D. Landon, *Wit and Humor of the Age* (Chicago, 1883, 1891), p. 494; Hudson, *op. cit.*, p. 452. There are unpublished texts from New York in the Jones Archive; from New Jersey, in the Halpert MS; from Virginia, in the Richard Chase MS.)

8. *Waking The Wrong Man*

This Irishman was going down to New York to meet his brother—was coming from the Old Country. He couldn't find a place to stay, only with a colored man—he had to sleep with a colored man. And during the night somebody'd blackened his face—blackened him up. And he woke up early in a hurry of course; naturally he didn't take time to wash. Next morning when he went to meet his brother, he says, "Hello, brother." His brother says "I have no brother a colored man"; he says, "look in the glass." *He* says, "By gard, they woke up the wrong man."

—My father told that story and he's dead and gone and forgotten.

(Motif J 2013.1, *White man made to believe that he is a Negro*. See also: Fauset, MAFS 24: 63; Parsons, JAF 45: 317; F. Meier, *The Joke Tellers Joke Book* (Philadelphia, 1944), pp. 162-163. For a variant with a baldheaded man and a fool whose head gets shaved, see: *Anecdotes for*

the Steamboat and Railroad, by an Old Traveller (Philadelphia, 1854), p. 212; W. C. Hazlitt, *The New London Jest Book* (London, 1871), pp. 180-181. A text from New Jersey is in the Halpert MS.)

9. *Mare's Egg*

There was an Irishman was in this country and he never saw a pumpkin. They told him it was a mare's egg, and if he carried it for ten days, it would have a colt. And he was carryin' it on the top of a hill. It rolled down—it was quite an incline—and hit a brush pile. Rabbit run out. The Irishman began to whinner (!) like a horse. He says, "Hold on; here's your mother!"

—My father used to tell that. I believe it's about the first story I ever heard. I think it was.

(For an Indiana text and good references to this very popular tale, see Brewster, *Folk-Lore* 50: 298, and also Boggs, JAF 47: 303. Add JAF 12: 226 (reprinted from *Southern Workman* 28: 192-193); Parsons, MAFS 26 (Part 3): 314; Kirwan, CFQ 2:29; Meier, *op. cit.*, 201; Randolph, *op. cit.*, 12; *Idaho Lore*, compiled by the Federal Writers' Project, WPA (Caldwell, Idaho, 1939), p. 131; T. R. Brendle and W. S. Troxell, *Pennsylvania German Folk Tales, Legends, etc.* (Norristown, Pa., 1944), pp. 169-170; M. C. Boatright, *Gib Morgan, Minstrel of the Oil Fields* (Texas Folk-Lore Society Publication, No. 20, 1945), p. 11; J. Jacobs, *More Celtic Fairy Tales* (New York and London, n. d.), pp. 111-112.)

10. *Better Grip*

Two Irishmen on a bridge and the train was comin' and they crawled down—on the side. One feller got ahold of the other feller's legs till the train went by. Top feller says to the lower one "Hold on, Mike; I'm gonna spit on me hands."—They were both gone.

(This is a variant of Type 1250, Motif J 2133.5, *Men hang down in a chain until top man spits on his hands*. See Brendle and Troxell, *op. cit.*, 115; E. C. Lewis, *After Dinner Stories* (New York and Boston, 1905), p. 91, and cf. *Anecdotes, etc., op. cit.*, 66; Hazlitt, *op. cit.*, 29-30. This tale is usually combined with Type 34, Motif J 1791.3, *Diving for cheese*. Brewster, *Folk-Lore* 50: 297-298, has an Indiana text and good references for this combined form. Add: JAF 12: 226-227 (reprinted from *Southern Workman* 28: 193); Halpert NYFQ 2: 91; Bales, *Folk-Lore* 50: 73. There are unpublished texts from New Jersey in the Halpert MS, and from Virginia in the Chase MS.)

11. *Moving Hell*

Told by Mrs. Henry.

There was two Irishmen in a hotel and he heard a noise and opened a window to see what it was. It was the fire department. And of course Pat had just come to this country. So he

called to Mike, "Let's get out of this! Let's get out of this!" Pat says, "What's the matter?" Mike says, "They're moving hell and they've moved two loads already."

—I've heard Jim tell it so many times. I don't know any stories. Nothing humorous about me.

(See Fauset, MAFS 24: 61; Lewis, *op. cit.*, 37; Meier, *op. cit.*, 162. There are unpublished texts from New York and South Carolina in the Halpert MS; from Virginia in the Chase MS.)

12. *Automobile's Offspring*

Told by Mrs. Henry.

There were two Irishmen walkin' the road. An automobile passed and Mike says, "Be careful, Pat, you'll get hurt." Well then they started down the road, and a motorcycle came along and hit Pat. Mike says, "Now what did I tell ye?" Pat says, "I didn't know it had a colt."

13 a. *Too Large*

Feller was carryin' a grandfather clock down the street. An Irishman kept followin' him, and they'd rest you know. And the Irishman finally he asked him, "Why don't ye's carry a watch?"

13 b. *Too Large*

(Immediately after Mr. Henry finished telling the above, his wife corrected him—said he hadn't told it right. He said, "Oh, yes," and then retold it immediately.)

They was movin' a grandfather's clock and this Irishman kept followin' 'em. They'd stop every once in a while to rest. The Irishman finally commenced to laugh and they wanted to know what was the matter. And he says, "Why don't ye's carry a watch?"

14. *Runaway Houses*

A kid saw a passenger train and he never saw one before. And he run in the house, and he says, "Oh mother, come out quick. There's a blacksmith shop runnin' away with a row of houses!"—I think I read that somewhere.

15. *Appendicitis*

The Irishman says to one of his friends, "I went home last night and found my wife with appendicitis." The other Irishman says, "I know that Dago son-of-a-gun, he's a brick-layer."

16. *Sun Or Moon*

Two fellers was drunk and they was goin' home. And they got into an argument about whether it was the sun or the

moon. One said it was the moon; one said it was the sun. Then the stranger come along and they decided to prove it by him.

They asked him; one said it was the sun, the other said it was the moon. And the feller said, "I don't know; I'm a stranger in this town."

(Cf. Motif J 2271.1, *The local moon.*)

III. SURPRISING ANSWERS

17. *Nothing But A Shower*

This was about Noah's time—time of the flood. Fellow was on the highest mountain he could get and water was up to his neck. Noie came floatin' along, and he tried to get on and Noie wouldn't let him on. And he says, "Go on wid your little boat. It's nothin' but a shower anyhow!"

18. *Hand Work*

Irishman was arrested for beatin' up on a feller. The judge says, "What weapon did you use?" He says, "There was no weapon, your honor. It was all hand work."

19. *Two Suppers*

The Irishman went to work for a farmer. And he worked him real late and give him his supper. Called him real early and give him his breakfast. The Irishman says, "The greatest country ever I was in. Two suppers in one night!"

20. *Wild Oats*

The farmer come with his lantern—it was still dark—and called the hired man to get up. Said they was goin' to cut oats. And the hired man didn't get up. And the farmer come back and called him the second time. And the hired man says, "Are them wild oats?" And the farmer wanted to know why. The hired man said, "I thought you had to slip up on them when it was dark."

21. *Saving Time*

The Scotchman was lookin' in the well and he fell in. His wife heard him out there and she run out and she says, "Will I get the hired man?" He says, "What time is it?" And she says, "A quarter after eleven." He says, "Never mind, I'll swim around a bit."

—He was swimming till noon; he was savin' time.

22. *Deciding Nationality*

The Englishman and the Scotchman were arguin' about if an Englishman was born in Scotland; the Scotchman claimed he was a Scotchman; the Englishman said he was an Englishman. And an Irishman was comin' down the street and they asked him to decide. And he said, "If your cat had kittens in the oven, would they be biscuits?"

—That's a good story; that's a good answer.

23. *Job For The Stupid*

I was talkin' to this feller, I think he was German, and he was kiddin' about the Irish. He said, "They're dumb. What makes 'em so dumb, Jim?" I said, "You know what they do with the dumb Irishmen?" He says, "What?" I says, "Send 'em over to Germany and make a schoolteacher of 'em."

—He laughed about that. He saw the fun of that.

(Cf. Halpert, NYFQ 2: 95.)

24. *National Difference*

He's dead and gone and forgot about. Bill Miller—his parents were born in Germany. He asked, "What's the difference between a Dutchman and a German?" And he said, "The only difference is the Dutchman wears wooden shoes and the German sticks his hand out the window to feel if it's daylight." —He was a German, too!

25. *Advice*

It was in the fall of the year. Weather was cool and there was a Chinaman ridin' on the street car. He wore his shirt outside his trousers like they do. And it was cool. He wanted to say, "It's very cold," but he said, "Belly cold." This old Irishwoman says, "Stick your shirt inside your pants and your belly won't be cold."

26. *Poor Eyesight*

Fellow asked for Bill Smith and the feller answered him and said, "You mean the moonshiner?" And he said, "Yeah." "He's dead!" Then he wanted to know what killed him and he said "Poor eyesight." He says, "How did that happen?" He said, "He shot at a revenuer—and missed him."

(When did you hear that?) Oh, I don't know. I know so darn much foolishness I couldn't begin to tell you the time.

27. *Large Beet (Beat)*

Did you hear the story of the two fellers was arguin' about the biggest vegetable they ever saw? One feller said that he saw a turnip so big that if it was hollowed out you could put two babies in it. The other fellow says, "That's very small;" he says, "you can go around town any night and find two policemen asleep on one beat."

—That's an old story.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MOTIFS

A. *Full Day*

He says he went to work for a farmer, and he was the nicest man he ever worked for. Says he didn't ask you to do a day's work in twelve hours: he gave you twenty-four.

B. *Rope By Prescription*

I told a feller: "You come from that part of Pennsylvania where a Dutchman had to get a prescription to buy a rope."

—You see, they were all committin' suicide.

C. *Forgetful*

My father used to tell me that. A feller in Ireland was so forgetful he was lookin' for his horse when he was ridin' him.

(Motif J 2022, *Numskull cannot find ass he is sitting on.*)

D. *Playing Safe*

A feller was walkin' over a ravine on a narrow plank. And he was afraid, and he said, "God is good—and the Devil ain't a bad feller."—He's gettin' in the clear both ways—no matter which way he went.—My father told that.

Murray State College

Murray, Kentucky

FORFEIT GAMES FROM GREECE AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

By PAUL G. BREWSTER

A forfeit game is one in which, for failure to observe certain injunctions or prohibitions, the unlucky player must deposit with the leader a pledge of some kind, which he later redeems by undergoing a punishment imposed either by the leader or by the whole group. This forfeit usually consists of some personal possession, such as a ring, a hair ribbon, a knife, or a comb. Penalties imposed may occasionally take the form of physical punishment, but ordinarily are designed to embarrass and humiliate the culprit rather than to cause him any bodily discomfort.¹ Closely related but composing a separate group are what may be termed penalty games, those in which an infraction of game rules results in the guilty player's losing his turn or having to perform some unpleasant task.² In the latter type no forfeits are exacted.

The forfeit game is very popular, and some form of it is to be found in nearly every country. Essentially an indoor game, it is admirably suited to the whiling away of long winter evenings and hence is much played in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Latvia, and other northern countries. The game which we know as Feathers or Horns has, for example, parallels or analogues in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Ireland, England, Scotland, Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Greece, Jugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and probably other lands as well. Among the more commonly known forfeit games in our own country are Spin the Plate (Spin the Platter) and The Priest Has Lost His Cap (Priest of the Parish, The Prince of Paris, etc.).

¹ Typical sentences are the following: to hop around the room three times, to sing a song or recite a nursery rhyme, to imitate some animal or bird (e.g. crow like a rooster), etc. A common penalty (?) in American pioneer days was to "bow to the prettiest, kneel to the wittiest, and kiss the one you love the best."

² In this group are to be included such games as Clubfist, Old Mother Hobble-Gobble, and Simon Says "Wigwag." However, in some localities these, too, are played as forfeit games.

For the following descriptions of forfeit games from Greece, I am indebted to the kindness of Miss Georgia Tarsouli, of Athens, a well-known folklorist and collector.³ Those included here were sent to me in a series of letters covering the period 1947-1948.

1. *The Pumpkin Vine*

This game is played by both boys and girls and is known throughout Greece. Several players, say eight or ten, form a circle and designate a leader, who takes his place with them. Each player, with the exception of the leader, takes a number. The one to the left of the leader takes the number 1, the player next to him the number 2, and so on around. Or each player may choose any number he likes, provided that the number chosen is not larger than the total number of players in the game. Each must listen carefully for his number to be called, for on his attentiveness depends his success or failure.

The leader says first, "I have a pumpkin vine which bears three little pumpkins." As soon as he says this, the player who has the number 3 must rise quickly and reply, "Why does it have to bear three?" The leader then demands, "How many do you want?" and the other answers, "I want it to bear five." Hearing his number, the player who is 5 rises and asks, "Why does it have to bear five?" and the game continues in this manner. If one of the players replies without giving his own number or forgets to reply as soon as his number is mentioned or if he calls a number which no one has, he must pay a forfeit. The leader takes all these forfeits and conceals them. As soon as the game is over, he slips his hand into the place where he has hidden them, pulls out one, and shows it to the other players. He then asks, "What shall this one do?" The others reply, "Bray like a donkey, crow like a rooster, etc.," or impose other penalties.

2. *Sparrow, Sparrow*

In this variant from the Ionian Isles, each of the players takes the name of a tree: citron, almond, olive, etc. The leader stands facing the other players, who are seated in a semicircle. He calls, "Where is the sparrow perched? He is perched on the almond tree!" The player who is the almond tree must then rise quickly and reply, "He is not perched on the almond tree!"

³ Miss Tarsouli was for some years editor of the official magazine of the Greek Boy Scouts. At present she is a commentator with an Athens radio station.

"Where is he perched then?" demands the leader. "He is perched on the olive tree!" Then the player just alluded to must jump up and say, "He is not on the olive tree!" and the game continues in this fashion. If one of the players makes a mistake, he is marked with a piece of charcoal. At the end of the game all those who are marked must pay some kind of penalty.⁴

3. *The Song of the Devil*

This game is most popular in western Greece, but is known in other parts of the country as well. It is usually played by boys of twelve to sixteen years of age. Only occasionally is it found being played by girls. Before the game begins, each of the players chooses a song. Then all line up side by side and begin singing, each player singing his own song and trying not to be influenced by what his neighbor sings. The leader, who faces them, watches them carefully and imposes a penalty on any player who misses the words or the tune of his own song.

4. *The Symphony*

The following game was recovered in Thrace, where it is a favorite. Each of the players chooses a musical instrument: flute, violin, guitar, etc. The leader also chooses an instrument. When he gives the signal, all start playing, each imitating the playing of the instrument he has chosen. At intervals the

⁴ Both this and No. 1 are similar to *The Priest Has Lost His Cap*, variants of which are to be found in the following works: Newell, pp. 145-146; Strutt, p. 313; Gomme, II, 79 (*Priest of the Parish*); Douglas, p. 83 (*Daddy Red-Cap*); Billson, p. 62; Beckwith, p. 13 (*Master and Boy*); Parsons, p. 201 (*El Fichilingo*); Rochholz, p. 440 (*Der Abt von St. Gallen*); Böhme, p. 637; Reyes and Ramos, p. 66 (*Juego de Prenda*); Maclagan, p. 115 (*Parson's Mare Has Gone Amissing*); Smith, *Games . . .*, p. 67 (*Whose Hat?*); Boyd, p. 95 (*The Prince of Paris*); Hedges, p. 95 (*Priest of the Parish*); van Gennep, p. 648 (*Le Corbillon*).

In a Filipino variant given by Reyes and Ramos, one player, the King, sits at the head of the group, to each of whom he has given the name of a flower. Then he says, "The butterfly of the king flies and stops at (name of flower)." The player named replies, "It is not here." "Where is it?" asks the King. The other answers, "It is in (names another flower)." This continues around the circle. Forfeits are collected for mistakes and are redeemed at the close of the game. Roumanian children have a similar game, which they call *De-a florile* (game of flowers).

The Yugoslav *Gospod kapucin je cepico zgubil* is played in exactly the same way as our *The Priest Has Lost His Cap*. See Kuret, *Veselja Dom*, p. 94.

leader changes his instrument; for instance, from playing the flute he begins to play the mandolin. Then the player who has been playing the mandolin must quickly begin playing the flute. If anyone is slow or fails to do what he should, he has to pay a forfeit and redeem it at the end of the game.⁵

5. *The Man with a Burden*

In this game there must be an even number of players, as they are to be in pairs. The leader also has a partner. The players of each pair exchange names, John becoming George for the time being, and vice versa. All form a circle, one partner in front of the other. In the center of the circle is a fair-sized stone. The leader says to his partner, pointing to the stone, "Isn't it too bad that the earth bears so great a burden?" "It is too bad," replies the other, "but who would be able to carry it?" "John could do it," answers the leader. Then the player who is for the present bearing this name must reply quickly. "Why should John do it?" "Who should do it then?" demands the leader. "Peter should do it," answers the other. Then Peter's partner must reply as did the first player, naming someone else in the circle. If the real possessor of the name answers when the name is called or if one does not respond when his partner's name is mentioned, he must pick up the stone and carry it until another player makes a mistake.

6. *The Goose*

This game is played by both children and adults during winter parties and particularly during the Carnival season, when all sorts of liberties of speech and action are permitted.

Players are seated close together in a circle. They select a leader, who is chosen for his humor and quick wit. The leader says, "I have a goose; what part do you take?" The player seated at his side replies, for example, "I take the head." The others answer in their turn, "I take the bill, I take the feet," etc. Then the leader says, "I eat my goose." The next player must say, "I eat my head," etc. The leader continues, "I suck my goose," and all must repeat their parts. Finally, the leader says to his neighbor, "I put my goose in your head." The latter then says to *his* neighbor, "I put my head in your entrails," etc. If anyone fails to speak when his turn comes or

⁵ Cf. the Dutch *De Muzikanten* (de Cock and Teierlinck, IV, 57-58); Züricher, No. 1045; GutsMuths, p. 365 (*Die schwäbischen Musikanten*).

forgets what part of the goose his neighbor has chosen, then he is "burnt" and must pay a forfeit.

7. *It Flies, It Flies*

The following game is widely known in Greece. It is played by both boys and girls of six to twelve, and sometimes also by adults.

One of the older children seats himself in the middle of an open space, and the rest take their places around him, sitting on the ground or on stones and placing their right forefingers on their knees. The leader does the same. When the game begins, he raises his forefinger quickly as he says, for example, "It flies, the crow flies!" The others, hearing the name of a bird, must also raise their fingers. The leader thus continues to name birds, and each time the other players must lift their fingers quickly. Finally the leader says, "It flies, the cat flies" This time he doesn't raise his finger, and any player who does so is penalized. The leader does all in his power to cause the others to make mistakes. One of the favorite ways is to follow the name of a bird with a similar-sounding name of an animal. The usual penalty is for the loser to get down on his knees before the leader, place his head on the latter's knee, and close his eyes while the others in turn strike him on the back, saying:

Upper hand,
Lower hand,
Whose is the uppermost

If he is successful in guessing whose hand it is, he takes his former place and the game continues. If not, he receives blows until he does guess correctly or until the leader frees him.⁶

⁶ Other penalties frequently imposed are the following:

The player gets down on all fours. Another takes him by the ears and pulls his head from right to left and from left to right in imitation of the movement of a blacksmith's bellows. Another, who is the smith, puts the forefinger of the left hand on his back and strikes with his right hand in imitation of the smith's striking his anvil.

The player gets down on all fours. Another picks up his feet, and a second gives him blows on the legs with a belt.

The culprit must let himself be struck on the nose by the middle finger of the other players, held back by the thumb and then suddenly released. This penalty was known to the ancients as "goadling."

For other variants, see Gomme, I, 228; Maclagan, p. 157 (All the Horns in the Wood); Beckwith, p. 15 (Bird Fly, Horse Fly); Böhme, p. 679; de Cock and Teierlinck, VIII, 330; Vernaleken and Branky, p. 94

The Czech games with which I conclude this paper were sent me in 1947 by Miss Eliska Dolezalová, at that time a student in the University of Brno and now a teacher in that city. She writes me that she played both of them often as a child.

8. *Black, White, Yes, No*

Players are seated in a line or a circle. One of them is the "merchant." He pretends to give to each of the other players an amount of money (30 haller, 20 haller, 10 haller). When he has finished, he asks the first, "What did you buy with your money?" The other answers that he bought a house, a hat, a coat, etc. Then the "merchant" asks quickly, "Was the house (hat, coat) new, black, old . . . ?" The player must not say the words black, white, yes, or no. If he does, he must pay a forfeit.

9. *Trades*

Players are seated around a table. One, the leader, sits so that all the rest can see him. He taps on the table top with both forefingers, and the others do the same. Suddenly he calls out, "The blacksmith forges iron," and imitates the work of the blacksmith, all the other players following his example. Then he calls, "The baker kneads bread," "The dressmaker sews," etc., and each must imitate the action named. If a player is clumsy or slow, he must pay the leader a forfeit, which is redeemed at the end of the game.⁷

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⁷ The tapping of the forefingers upon the table top and the exacting of forfeits from players who fail to duplicate the action performed by the leader mark this as being a variant of Horns. The imitating of the work of various tradesmen by the group, however, reminds one of New York (Lemonade, Jamestown, Pretty Girls' Station, etc.).

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CHILDREN'S GAMES

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Children's games are numerous, but nearly all of them have one thing in common: they will accommodate any number of players. Children like numbers, and usually they are happier when several join their group. That is very likely the reason why their games can be adapted to any number of players. There are two general divisions, the outdoor games and the house games. Because it is natural for children to like to play outdoors, the outdoor games are more numerous than the others. Weather conditions, cold and rain, make the inside games a necessity.

Simplicity is a marked characteristic of the games. They are so simple that the most naive can understand them and the very young can participate. It is remarkable how many games a very young child can remember and even direct.

Some games are very old; children from generation to generation seem to enjoy them and never tire of them. Some of them differ slightly; the difference may be caused by misunderstanding by some director in the group who "starts" the game in his own group, or the difference may be the result of some clever player's own initiative.

These games¹ are only a few which any collector will find if he observes children at play. All of these are played by child groups in Illinois. Perhaps all of them are played in all states of the Union. Some of these are very old; some are fairly new. Certainly they are not a complete collection of children's games.

OUTDOOR GAMES

1. *Poison Tag*

Any number of people may play poison tag. One player is chosen to be "it," and he must tag another player before he can become one of the regulars. The one tagged then must become "it." The one who is tagged must hold his hand on

¹ My students wrote these games for me; they had played these games many times. In general, I have kept the wording of the writers.

the spot that was tagged by "it" and keep it in that position until he tags someone else. The fun of the game consists in "it" tagging a player in an unusual place for him to hold his hand. For example, if "it" tags a player's heel, it is not easy to keep a hand on the heel and chase another player to tag him.

2. *Drop the Handkerchief*

This old game of drop the handkerchief differs slightly from some of the older games by this name. The children form a circle holding hands and singing. "It" is outside the circle holding a handkerchief, running around the circle as the song is sung. This is the song:

A tisket, a tasket, a green and yellow basket,
I sent a letter to my love, and on my way I dropped it.

On the word *dropped* "it" drops the handkerchief behind a player and continues running. The one behind whom the handkerchief was dropped picks it up and runs around the circle in the opposite direction. The one first reaching the empty space in the circle remains there; the other is "it."

3. *London Bridge Is Falling Down*

Two players "take the game." They select two objects of similar type, such as apples and pears or spring and autumn; but they do not tell the players which object represents which person. All other players form a circle joining hands. "The takers" join hands and hold them high, one standing inside the circle, the other outside, allowing the players to pass under the hands as they go around in a circle singing:

London bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down;
London bridge is falling down and caught my true love in it.

At any point in the song the "takers" may drop their hands around a player, and the circle stops. The one caught is whispered the two chosen words and asked which he will take. He selects one, and the "taker" who is represented by that chosen object tells the caught player to get behind him. The caught player stands directly behind the "taker," and the game continues until no one is left in the circle. Instead there are two lines, one line behind each "taker." Then each player puts his arms around the waist of the person in front of him and holds his hands tight. The two "takers" hold their hands tight, and a tug of war begins, each line trying to outpull the other. If one player breaks hands, all the line behind him is out of the