A STUDY OF EGYPTIAN POLK GAMES
AND
THEIR ADAPTATION FOR RECREATIONAL USE

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Inception of This Thesis

This thesis owes its inception to the interest taken by the writer in Egyptian folk-games, and their value as a useful source of material for planning recreational programs for Egyptian youth outside of schools. Before the year 1936 organized recreational opportunities for youth were mainly provided through school curricula, whether public or private. Since that time some intelligent Egyptian citizens have endeavored to provide these essential opportunities for youth outside of schools. Among these efforts were the movement launched by His Highness Prince Ismail Dawood which resulted in organizing many athletic clubs for the farming youth in the rural areas; the pioneer work of the Cairo Y’s Men Club under the leadership of Mr. Yacoub Fam, Secretary of the Boys’ Department of the Cairo Y.M.C.A. with the result of establishing Fort Lemon Boys’ Club and on its heels some twenty other boys’ clubs. Interest was also taken by some political parties in establishing a
chain of recreational clubs for youth. Significant also was the establishment of some settlement houses; the establishment of the Fallah Department with its rural social centers; and last but not least the establishment of the Public Recreation Department of the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs. All these movements directed towards providing recreational opportunities for Egyptian youth has motivated the writer to make an effort to collect some of the games played by the common man with the purpose of calling attention to utilizing them in public recreation programs.

This thesis is based on a short treatise presented to the Cairo School of Social Work in the year 1941 which was appraised by the play leaders in that country.

Nature of the Report

The collection of the material presented in this work, by its very nature, has been based, like other branches of folklore, on oral sources and the actual practices of the Egyptian common people, mainly the peasants. As observed by the writer, this was the only possible way of collecting this material for very few printed sources concerned itself with this branch of knowledge, and the collector was obliged to rely heavily on hearsay as well as on observing the games in practice whenever he had the opportunity. This method is by no means alien to the methods of folklore research. One author states:
Folklore is as rich and varied and wide in scope as literature, and it is older. Its beginnings extend back to the most primitive stages of culture. Today it still lives with the illiterate all over the earth. It always has been a vital force and inspiration for literature. We can gain no idea of its enormous bulk because it circulates orally.¹

This method of circulation as well as the method of demonstration of the practice by the older generation to the younger ones and their handing it down from generation to generation was the means by which the young learned these games from their elders. Miss Haavie, the Finnish anthropologist, confirmed this method in her statement:

By traditional games I mean that, like popular customs and beliefs, folk-songs and folk-tales, form a spiritual attribute of the people; games that have not been learned from any printed sources.²

E. S. Hartland, describing the method by which folklore is preserved, states:

The knowledge, organization and rules thus gathered and formulated are preserved in the memory and communicated by word of mouth and by actions of various kinds.³

Similar Studies

One anthropologist writes:

The folk tale is the novel of the folk. The ballad and folk lyric are the epic and lyric of the folk. Legends and traditions are folk history. Proverbs express the philosophy of the folk.1

Considering this statement, very few works have been concerned with the study of Egyptian folk tales. Only Egyptian folk proverbs have been comprehensively studied and commented upon by the late Egyptian writer, Mohammed Taymour Bey. But with regard to Egyptian folk games, only occasional historians have written a few lines on ancient Egyptian games as a commentary on Egyptian history and social life as understood from antiquity. Concerning modern Egyptian folk games, only Edward W. Lane has touched this subject in a general way when he discussed modern Egyptian life in his work entitled The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians.2 From some commentaries on the subject, the writer has learned that the French scholars which Napoleon brought with him to Egypt at the dawn of the nineteenth century mentioned some fragments of Egyptian customs in one of their writings entitled The Great French Work on Egypt; this one is entitled "Essai Sur les Moeurs des Habitans Modernes de L'Egypte," but according to Lane the author appears to have fallen into an error of con-

siderable magnitude, in applying to the Egyptians, in
general, observations which were, for the most part de-
scriptive of the manners and customs of the naturalized
rulers, the Mamelukes. However, the writer has not had an
opportunity to see that work. Moreover, writing specific-
ally on the subject of Egyptian folk-games has never be-
fore been attempted, as far as the writer has been able to
discover.

Value and Use

It is a well-known fact that to men, whether savage
or civilized, things are what they appear to be. But there
is nothing so helpful in bringing on an optimistic frame of
mind as the natural and spontaneous intoxication of purely
physical exuberance. Such a state of mind is produced by
music, stimulants and more or less violent movements of the
body. Often enough we have a combination of the three,
and in so far as optimism is decidedly the best of philoso-
phies so far invented, there is no reason to find fault
with the means, however artificial, of helping it along. It
seems that Djalal-uddin Rumi, the most profound of the
Islamic mystics, appears to have had the same idea in his
verse:

He who knows the power of dance
Lives in God,
For he knows how Love may kill.

Hence, the spontaneity of the folk-games which have
been invented by the people themselves to answer their needs is evidently of paramount importance and should not be neglected in planning recreational programs for the people concerned. The writer, out of his own experience, is convinced that among the best activities which may be used in a recreational period with the common people are the folk-games with which they are already familiar. It is observed that many a recreation leader may lose his group's interest because of the use of games totally unfamiliar to the group with which he works.

Furthermore, by neglecting these folk-games, the Egyptian recreation leaders in the organized institutions unintentionally give the participants an idea that these games are things with which no intelligent person would concern himself, that they are games for only the underprivileged people. This idea breeds class feeling, a problem which efforts are being made to combat in that country.

The third value of this study, it is hoped, is that the glimpses given here may arouse further interest to delve into the byways of Egyptian folklore from anthropological and cultural angles. The vast, unexplored depths of Egyptian folklore may prove to contain hidden treasures of great value to the field of anthropology. A collection, or rather an ouvrage d'ensemble handbook, of Egyptian folklore—including folk-songs, folk-tales, folk-legends, folk-arts, folk-proverbs, and popular ballads—is desperately wanting.
Among other advantages of using folk-games in recreational programs is their inexpensive nature, a fact which is of supreme importance in Egypt.

Moreover, beside the low cost of equipment, large numbers of people can participate in some of these games, and thus they seem to be of much more value. By the use of folk-games in organized recreational programs, the common man will sense his worth and see that he counts in the community and also that he has something to contribute; likewise he gets to realize that he can make effective use of his leisure by engaging in those wholesome activities. Too, we should not be blinded to the fact that folk-games stand as an epitome of national life. Their color and quality record the feelings and traits of a people, as their forms represent past ceremonials and customs of deep religious and social significance. As expressive of an ethnical inheritance of energy and physical skill, they are extremely suggestive to the student of physical education and of recreation.

The trend in Egypt is towards providing more and more leisure for the people. Hence, the importance of the use of these folk-games.

The recent gains in leisure for the Egyptian common man starts with the ratification of the Versailles Treaty after World War I. Article 427, Section Four, of this treaty states that the working hours of the people all over
the world should be gradually reduced towards eight hours daily and forty-eight hours a week. Section Five of the same article states that the workers should get one day off a week. Egypt, like all other countries, followed these recommendations gradually. The Egyptian legislature has been committed to the fact that worker production, decreased by boredom or fatigue, can be increased if the workers are given sufficient periods of rest and reasonable working hours. A review of the legislation enacted in Egypt in the last few years will show the gradual increase of leisure and the growing need for its satisfaction.

Before World War I, the only labor law had been jurisprudence Number 14 of 1909 which forbade juveniles of less than 13 years of age from working in cotton ginning mills. Among its rules was one, ruling the prohibition of child labor in any form for youngsters of less than nine years of age; and another, ruling that those youngsters between nine and thirteen years of age should not be allowed to work more than eight hours a day. The same law authorized the Minister of Interior to apply the same article on any similar injurious industry other than cotton ginning; and he did order it applied with regard to the tobacco and cigarette industries, as well as to spinning and weaving of cotton, linen, silk and wool. Besides this law there have been
the law of August 28, 1904, which contains rules and regulations concerning the control of places which are considered a hazard to either public sanitation or public comfort, such as noise producing places.

When the Labor Bureau was established on November 29, 1930, it was its function to enforce these two laws as well as to suggest needed new bills as it deemed necessary. This Bureau grew to be the Department of Labor which promoted the following laws:

1. Law Number 49 of 1933 dealing with the regulation of juvenile labor of both sexes, in industry.
2. Law Number 80 of 1933, which was amended by Law Number 52 of 1936, dealing with the employment of women in industry and trade.
3. Law Number 147 of 1935, setting limits to working hours in some industries.
4. Law Number 64 of 1936 dealing with compensation for labor injuries.
5. Another law in 1945 limiting working hours for all industries to no more than eight daily for all workers regardless of the type of industry or the age or sex of the worker.

There are many other laws. The important thing to us is that there is an evident trend toward the expansion of leisure time for the Egyptian people; and the use of folk-games in planning to meet their recreational needs is of
obvious importance.

Limitations

The title of this thesis may lead to the belief that this study is concerned with the entire field of folklore. Although folk-games are part of the study of folklore which is in turn a branch of the field of anthropology, yet this study is not intended to be an anthropological study. This fact can well be understood, if we explore the meaning of folklore. Folklore is a term used to designate either a branch of anthropology or a branch of the science of history. The former view is taken by E. S. Hartland, who defines it in the following statement:

... so folklore does investigate (among other things) the meaning of fairy tales and of cures for warts. But these are only a small part of folklore, as folklore itself is but a part--though, as I venture to think, a very important part--of the larger science of anthropology--the science of man. The portion of anthropology with which folklore deals is the mental and spiritual side of humanity.1

Another author takes the latter view and regards folklore as a part of the science of history, and the title he gives to his book *Folklore as an Historical Science* reveals his thesis. In defining folklore, he writes:

... my profound belief in the value of

folklore as perhaps the only means of discovering the earliest stages of the psychological, religious, social, and political history of modern man.¹

From the foregoing discussion, we want to make it clear that this study is neither an attempt to deal "with the mental and spiritual side of humanity," nor does it deal with "discovering the earliest stages of the history of modern man." It is a report concerning some of the folk-games, or traditional games as practiced by the common people in Egypt, especially the peasantry, and nothing more. It is an attempt to make known those games which I have been able to collect. Therefore, no bibliography, and no dissertation on comparative folklore, should be sought for in this work.

Furthermore, I make no pretension to having exhausted the subject; I recognize, on the contrary, that I have only touched its fringes.

Definitions of Terms

Folklore - The term folklore was first used in the middle of the ninth century to denote folk traditions, festivals, songs and superstition. Much of the anthropological material called folklore comes from rural populations of the civilized world. It is the field in which the culture of the

¹. Gomme, George Laurence, Folklore as an Historical Science. London: Methuen and Co., 1908, p. IX.
peasants in the civilized world is most obviously similar to the cultural traits of primitive peoples and as such has been used to document the parallelisms of primitive and modern culture.

Games:

Are an expression of the play drive, a distinct form of play. A study of them includes a definition of games as distinguished from play; and a consideration of games from historical, educational, and recreative viewpoints. While the term play includes games, so that we "play games," it is technically applied to informal play activities, such as playing in the sand. In such play there are no fixed rules, no formal modes of procedure and generally no climax to be achieved. The various steps are spontaneous not predetermined and subject to individual caprice. In games on the contrary there are prescribed acts, subject to rules, and lead to a climax generally in the form of the victory of strength, speed, or skill.

Folk-games:

Or traditional games; games that have been handed down from the elder folks to the younger generations, and perpetuated through imitation and assimilation by children and adults of the game patterns and
traditions of those somewhat older.

Leisure:
The time surplus remaining after the practical necessities, duties and responsibilities of life have been met.
CHAPTER II

LEISURE AND FOOL-GAMES IN ANCIENT EGYPT

"In fact, civilizations were the product of leisure."

- Cutten

The Rise of Leisure and Its Blessings

In early primitive societies, man used all his mental and physical energies struggling for bare existence. This included continuous struggle with the rugged elements of the surrounding environment—its rugged topography, its flora, fauna and the changing weather—and trying to derive his means of subsistence—food, clothing, and shelter—out of it. Upon societies of inferior constitution or of less knowledge in the struggle with nature, that vital struggle bore heavily. Upon fortunate societies which had these abilities developed to a greater degree, or who had an abundance of natural resources falling to their lot, this struggle bore much more lightly.

The Egyptians and the Assyrians were among the latter. The blessing of the annual flood of the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates Rivers on their level valleys and the retirement of these floods resulted in plenty of nutritious plants providing food without much effort on the part of those peoples. The struggle for existence was much easier for them; thus, they found themselves saved of arduous labor


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and with spare time on their hands to use enjoyable activities. In other words, they had some leisure.

Hence, their high level of civilization.

Necessity, to be sure, has been the mother of many inventions and discoveries. But as long as it took most of the time and energy to eke out a living few new objects were created. Art, music, dancing, sculpture, painting, personal adornment, religion with its many rituals and beliefs, mythology, magic, medicine, language, writing, social organization, law, games, and dramatic activities, science, and many other aspects of culture date to the leisure of peoples.¹

This phenomenon of the Nile flood and its retreat leaving a watered rich land which yielded abundant crops without much effort and its effect on the rise of the Egyptian civilization is a fact which was noticed by Herodotus, the Greek historian who visited ancient Egypt, and wrote about Southern Egypt:

It is certain, however, that now they gather in fruit from the earth with less labour than any other men and also with less than the other Egyptians, for they have no labour in breaking up furrows with a plough nor in hoeing nor in any other of those labours which other men have about a crop; but when the river has come up of itself and watered their fields and after watering has left them again; then each man sows his own field and turns it into it swine, and when he has trodden the seeds into the ground by means of the swine, after that he waits for the harvest, and when he has threshed the corn by means of the swine, then he gathers it in.²

The ancient Egyptians themselves defined Egypt to be the land watered by the Nile, which means that they deeply felt its importance:

'Egypt' according to an utterance once made by an oracle of Ammon, 'is all the land watered by the Nile; and all those who dwell north of the city of Elephantine; the elephant isle, and who drink of that river's water are Egyptians.'

This leisure gave them time to develop their tools and methods for the attainment of both domestic convenience and military might. Such fact is revealed also by Herodotus as he wrote:

Of the Egyptians themselves, those who dwell in the part of Egypt which is sown for crops (Southern Egypt) practice memory more than any other men and are the most learned in history by far of all those of whom I have had experience.

This progress led them to the possession of better tools to subdue both more natural resources and adjacent peoples. Whenever they met other people in an armed conflict, they were the victors; they captured the subdued fighters as war prisoners and brought them back with them as slaves to perform their hard labor. Those slaves saved them more time which they used in further developing their techniques. This went on and on until they achieved that height of civilization for which ancient Egypt is

known. Herodotus bore testimony to that view when he wrote:

Then Sesostiris (one of the Pharaohs), having returned to Egypt . . . employed the multitude which he had brought in of those lands he had subdued, as follows:— These were they who drew the stones . . . , and also these were compelled to dig all the channels (from the Nile). But the reason why the king cut up the land was this, namely because those of the Egyptians who had their cities not on the river but in the middle of the country, being in want of water when the river went down from them, found their drink brackish. 1

Amusements and Games as Products of Leisure

Moreover, the leisure they had at their disposal they used in enjoying the beautiful things in life with an optimistic merry philosophy which honored amusements, health, aesthetics, and the gratification of their spiritual needs by surrounding their religious rituals with beautiful works of art. They enjoyed all these things without indulging in immoral extremes or other cruel practices as the Greek or the Romans did. Such a notion we have got from a statement by Wilkinson who asserts that:

It does not, however, appear that the Egyptians condemned culprits, or captives taken in war, to combat with wild beasts for the amusement of an unfeeling assembly in Ancient Rome; nor did they compel them to fight as gladiators, to gratify a depraved taste, which delighted in exhibitions revolting to humanity; and though we may feel disposed to blame them for compelling prisoners of

1. Ibid., p. 52.
war to labor at public works, it must be
recollected that the usages of society, in
those early ages, tolerated a custom which
modern civilization has abandoned; and it is
evident that neither the refined Greeks nor
Romans can vie with the Egyptians in their
manner of treating slaves; a remarkable proof
of which is evinced in the behavior of Potiphar
towards Joseph; for in few countries, even at
the present day, would the crime of which he
was supposed guilty have been visited with
more lenient punishment. 1

Their merry philosophy can as well be observed in
Herodotus' narrative:

For three successive days in each month
they purge, hunting after health with emetics
and clysters, and they think that all the
diseases which exist are produced in man by
the food on which they live, for the Egyptians
are from other causes also the most healthy of
all men next to the Libyans. In the enter-
tainment of the rich among them, when they
have finished eating, a man bears round a
wooden figure of a dead body in a coffin, made
as like the reality as may be both by painting
and carving, and measuring about a cubit or
two cubits each way; and this he shows to each
of those who are drinking together, saying:
"When thou lookest upon this; drink and be
merry, for thou shalt be such as this when
thou art dead." 2

In another inscription they wrote that men ought "to
love one another, and avoid those evils which tend to
make them consider life too long, when in reality it
is too short." 3

1. Wilkinson, Sir J. Gardner, The Manners and Customs of
   the Ancient Egyptians. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.,
   1876; p. 77.
From the narrative of Herodotus we gather that the ancient Egyptians strove to live the happy life; they cared for their physical well-being and hence their pioneer advancement of medicine; their interest in having a good time made them engage in amusing activities.

Their optimistic philosophy was always lying underneath all their gay activities and love for splendor and fancy. From the earliest history this trait seems to have been remarkable. This fact is described by Professor Donald A. MacKenzie in the following manner:

The Egyptians were a good-tempered, merry people. 'Let us make a happy day' was one of their favourite maxims—and they loved to be surrounded by beautiful and gaily coloured things in life—and in death.¹

In their gatherings and social get-togethers, their extravagance and generosity were at their best, and a description of one of their banquet menus is very interesting as reported by MacKenzie who wrote that:

The Egyptian menu, withal, was a long and varied in character as that of any modern banquet. Even during the Pyramid Age . . . there was abundance at the elaborate meals provided in the houses of the great. A tomb inscription, translated by Breasted, gives an example of an Old Kingdom aristocrat's menu, which includes 'ten different kinds of bread and cakes, six kinds of wine, four kinds of beer, eleven kinds of fruit, beside all sorts of sweets and many other things.'²

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² Ibid., p. 255.
Yet, another reference to Egyptian customs at meals is found in the Biblical story of Joseph. When that distinguished Hebrew, who had evidently been completely Egyptianized, provided entertainment for his brethren, "they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth right, and the youngest according to his youth; and the men marvelled one to another." Apparently they were not accustomed to so much formality. Joseph himself sat apart among the Egyptians, "because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians."  

Among the features used in celebration and entertainment were various kinds of athletic meets, games and sports. In this connection, Herodotus reports that contests in athletic feats and competition in games, occupied an important portion of the festivals held for honoring their deities. He wrote:

... and they do in honour of Perseus (name of one of their gods)—they hold an athletic contest, which includes the whole list of games, and they offer in prizes cattle and cloaks and skins.  

The above quotation shows that popular games were in use in Egypt from the earliest periods of history.

2. Herodotus, p. 45.
Play Activities and Games of Ancient Egypt

In dealing with play activities, perhaps children's play should be described first.

A. Children's Play

Amidst the splendor of palace luxury, as in humble homes, the children, who have been the same in all ages, amused themselves by imitating their elders. They had their toys and their games. The girls were little mothers and the boys little hunters and soldiers and vendors of wares. The youngsters' amusements were such as tended to promote health by the exercise of the body, and to divert the mind by laughable and gay stunts. Throwing and catching the ball, running, leaping, and similar feats were encouraged as soon as their age enabled them to indulge in them; and a young child was amused with painted dolls. When the bodies of children were mummified, their parents deposited beside them in the tombs the small vases and bowls and other toys which they amused themselves with during life and were supposed to require in the Otherworld. Little carved and painted dolls have been found associated with the tiny mummies. (Fig. 1)
Some are rudely shaped; others are of quite elaborate character, with hair strings of diminutive beads, and gaudy attire. Occasionally the dolls have movable arms and legs (Fig. 2). Donald MacKenzie goes as far as to state that mechanical toys were in use, in his words;

Even in these far-off days there were mechanical toys, such as workers baking bread or washing clothes: the limbs were attached by pins, and could be set in motion by pulling a cord, just like the modern 'jumping jacks.' Grotesque monsters with mouths that could be
made to gape and close with a snapper were also popular.

(Fig. 2)

The little balls used in games were likewise placed in the tombs. Evidently there were artisans who employed themselves making toys in ancient Egypt as in modern countries, and no doubt the custom prevailed of making presents of these in connection with such occasions as festivals.

B. Adult Games

As for the adults, from the sculpture of Bani-Hasan, we learn that the ancient Egyptians had numerous objects

indicative of physical exercises and games. The games of
draughts was played in different ways. There are some
relief sculptures of this game, one of the time of King
Rameses III, where the king himself is playing; the other
of Psammaticus II; both of Thebes. Ball, mora and other
well-known modern amusements were common at the same
period (about 1740 B.C.).

1. Odd and Even and Mora Games

The most usual games within doors were odd and even
and mora.

The 'mora' game is known in English as
'Buck, buck, how many hours do I hold up!'-
the Romans called it 'mugare dicitis'; its
present Italian name being Morra.1 (Fig. 3)

\[\text{Fig. 1, Playing at mora.}
\text{2. At odd and even.}\]
These games were found to have existed in Egypt from the earliest periods of which their paintings remain, even in the reign of the first Usertesen. "Most of the games were as old as the 'Fourth Dynasty.'"\(^2\)

2. **Draught Games**

The same antiquity may be claimed for the game of draughts. As in the two former games, the players sat on the ground or on chairs, and the pieces or men being ranged in line at either end of the table, probably moved on a chequered board, as in our own chess and draughts; but the presentations being always given in profile, it is impossible to ascertain the exact appearance or the number of squares it contained. They generally played with six pieces, in the same manner as the modern game of Siga is played—the description of which will be given at length in the next chapter, and the set of each player was alike, but distinct in color from that of his opponent. The most ordinary form was the cone or conoid, either plain or surmounted by a pointed or spherical head; but there were several varieties of shapes, as in Fig. 4.

Fig. 7. From the sculptures of Rameses III.
1. Of wood.
2. Of porcelain, human-headed.
3. Of porcelain, inscribed with the name and titles of Nebo I.
4. Wooden draughtman.
5. Of porcelain, cat-headed.
6. Of porcelain, jackal-headed.
7. Of porcelain, jackal-headed.
According to Wilkinson:

A very old type of porcelain in the British Museum, No. 6143a, is a human head, and no doubt represents the t'a or robber, ... another type was a cat—or possibly dogheaded (British Museum No. 6414); and another decidedly dog—or jackal-headed (No. 6414h) of black porcelain, probably represented the Kuon, or dog, as the Greeks called these pieces. The games was one of the delights of the Egyptian Elysium, and played in the future state, according to the 17th Chapter of the Ritual [the famous ancient Book of the Dead], and boards and men, five of one kind and four of the other, in all 153 squares. They were alternately coloured red and black. The draughtsmen were called ab. An account of the games is given by Birch, Rev. Arch., 1864, p. 56. 1 Zeit Schrift für aegyptische Sprache, 1866, p. 7.

The pieces were all of the same size and form, though they varied on different boards, some being small, others large with round summits; many were of lighter and neater shape—probably the most fashionable kind, since they were used in the palace of King Rameses. These last seem to have been about one inch and a half high, standing on a circular base of half an inch in diameter; it is of hard wood, and was probably painted the same color, like those occurring on the Egyptian monuments. (Fig. 5)

(Fig. 5)

They were all of equal size standing on opposite sides, and each player raising it with the finger and thumb advanced his pieces in a certain direction and according to certain rules, but though we are unable to say if the moves were done in a direct or diagonal line, there is reason to believe they could not take backwards, just as in the American game of draughts or chequers, the men being mixed together on the board. There is reason also to believe the same rules which the modern Egyptians still follow had been also in use in ancient Egypt (Fig. 6).
According to Wilkinson, the board of the game was called "sent," and a small box with draughts, "ab," found at Thebes. It was cut of a solid piece of wood, and was 28 inches long by 7 inches broad, ... and had cut in on the sides the squares for the game. On one side it was divided into thirty squares, three on the breadth, and ten down the length. On the opposite side, at one end, was a space of twelve squares, three along the breadth and four deep, and from the middle line eight other squares were continued to the end of the board,
the rest of which was plain. A small drawer, with a stud, drew out of the box, and held the pieces, some of which resembled reels. (Fig. 7)

3. Game of the Vase

There was another game in use in ancient Egypt which they called "the game of the vase." An account of this is given by Wilkinson:

In the tomb of Rases, of the Fifth Dynasty, at Saqqarah, is represented another kind of game, called hab em han, the game of the vase. The board is circular, and has ten concentric bands, along which the pieces move to the centre, where the bands terminate.
in a kind of line. One player has seven flat circular pieces, like modern draughts, on the last or innermost lines, the other has three pieces, one of which he is in the act of placing in the centre, and so winning the game.¹ [Fig. 8]

(Fig. 8)

4. Guessing Games

Analogous to the game of odd and even was one in which two of the players held a number of shells or dice in their closed hands, over a third person who knelt between them, with his face towards the ground, and who was obliged to guess the combined number before he could

¹. Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 58.
be released from that position; unless indeed it be that one of the persons will strike the kneeling one, and he had to guess which one of the other players struck him. (Fig. 9)

A game perhaps similar to the Greek *kollabismos*.

(Fig. 9)

5. **The Hoop Game**

Another game consisted in endeavoring to snatch from each other a small hoop, by means of hooked rods, probably of metal; and the success of a player seems to have depended on extricating his own from the adversary's rod, and then snatching up the hoop before the other had time to stop him. It also may have been played the same way
as the American game, "Snatch the Bacon," that is, each player tried to snatch the hoop and return to a certain line drawn behind him without his rod being touched by his adversary's. A third probability is that the circle represented in the picture may have been drawn on the ground, and so the game was played in the same way as the modern Egyptian folk-game called "Sattet Battet," mention of which will be made later. (Fig. 10)

(Fig. 10)

Some other games are represented in the paintings, but not in a manner to render them intelligible, and many which were doubtless common in Egypt are omitted both in the
tomb and in the writings of ancient authors.

6. Dice Are an Egyptian Invention

It is, however, evident that dice were already used by the Egyptians. Dice were discovered at Thebes in a simple form in which the conventional number of six sides was adopted. They were marked with small circles, representing units, generally with a dot in the center; some were made of bone or ivory, varying slightly in size. According to Wilkinson:

Mercury being represented playing at dice with the moon previous to the birth of Osiris, and winning from her the five days of the epact, which were added to complete the 365 days of the year.  

7. Ball Games

Furthermore, the game of ball was not confined to children, or to either sex, though the mere amusement of throwing and catching it appears to have been considered more particularly adapted to females. They had different methods of playing. Sometimes a person unsuccessful in catching the ball or losing in whatever prescribed ball game was being played was obliged to suffer another to ride on her back (just as they do now in modern Egypt), and it seems that she continued to enjoy this post until

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she also missed it. The ball being thrown by an opposite party, mounted in the same manner, and placed at a certain distance, according to the distance previously fixed by the players, and, from the position and office of the person who had failed, it is not improbable that the name applied to that game was asses (as the Greeks and Modern Egyptians call it), and were obliged to submit to the commands of the victors. Another interpretation of the game, I suggest, is that they played a game like the modern Egyptian folk-game called "Khara and Senno" and the losers would suffer the riding. The position of the players in the following illustration together with the meaning of the words "Khara," in ancient Egyptian meant "behind," and in it the player throws the ball backwards, and "Senno" close to "Senow" which meant "second," being the second series of throws in the game— all these are suggestive of the possible form of survival of the ancient game. (Fig. 11). The modern game of "Khara and Senno" will be described later in this work.
(Fig. 11)

Sometimes they showed their skill in catching three or more balls in succession, the hands occasionally crossed over the breast; and the more simple mode of throwing it up to a height and catching or hitting it was common in Egypt—or that one party threw the ball as high as he could, and the other, leaping up, caught it on its fall, before his feet again touched the ground.

When mounted on the backs of the losing party, the
Egyptian women sat sidewise. Their dress consisted merely of a short petticoat without a body, the loose upper robe being laid aside on these occasions: it was bound at the waist with a girdle, and supported by a strap over the shoulders.

The balls were made of leather or skin, sewed with string, crosswise, in the same manner as the modern ones, and stuffed with bran or husks of corn; and those which have been found at Thebes are about three inches in diameter. Others were made of the stalks of rushes, plaited together so as to form a circular mass, and are, like the former, covered with leather; instances of both are to be found in the British Museum. They appear also to have had a smaller kind of ball, probably of the same materials, and covered, like many modern ones, with slips of leather of a rhomboidal shape, sewed together longitudinally, and meeting in a common point at both ends, each alternate slip being of a different color. (Fig. 12)
Fig. 1. Leather ball, three inches in diameter.
2. Of dark and light blue painted earthenware.

(Fig. 12)

8. Games of Strength and Dexterity

Sometimes, in their performances of strength and dexterity, two men stood together side by side and, placing one arm forward and the other behind them, held the hands of two women, who leaned backwards, in opposite directions, with their whole weight pressed against each other's feet, and in this position were whirled round; the hands of the men who held them being, sometimes crossed, in order more effectually to guarantee the steadiness of the center, on which they turned. (Fig. 13).
Sometimes two men, seated back to back on the ground, and passing the elbows of the opposite arms within each other, endeavored to rise in that position, without touching the ground with the disengaged hand; each, probably, trying to rise before his companion, and striving to prevent his opponent's success, in order to obtain the merit or the reward of superior dexterity. 

(Fig. 13)
Men swinging women round by the arms.

(Fig. 13)

Sometimes two men, seated back to back on the ground, and passing the elbows of the opposite arms within each other, endeavored to rise in that position, without touching the ground with the disengaged hand; each, probably, trying to rise before his companion, and striving to prevent his opponent's success, in order to obtain the merit or the reward of superior dexterity. (Fig. 14).
(Fig. 14)

C. Darts

Another game consisted in throwing a knife, or pointed weapon, into a block of wood, in which each player was required to strike his adversary's, or more probably to fix his own in the center of a ring painted on the wood; and his success depended on being able to ring his weapon most frequently, or approach most closely to the center. (Fig. 15).
D. Conjuring

Conjuring appears also to have been known to them, at least "the game of cups," in which a ball was put, while the opposite party guessed under which of four it was concealed, or might be that four balls were used and with the skill of the performer the audience was put under the illusion that they were placed in certain places while they were cleverly put in quite different ones. (Fig. 16).
Conjurers, or thimble-rig.

(Fig. 16)
Inscription read ar en or, "atop one another."

E. Wrestling

The games of the lower classes and of those who sought to invigorate the body by active exercise, consisted of feats of agility and strength; wrestling was a favorite amusement; and the paintings of the grottoes at Bani-Hasan present all the varied attitudes and modes of attack and defense of which this sport is susceptible. And, in order to enable the spectators more readily to perceive the position of the limbs of each combatant, the
artist has availed himself of a dark and light color, and even ventured to introduce alternately a black and red figure. It is not, however, necessary to give an instance of every position indicated in those varied subjects; and a selection of the principal groups will suffice to convey some idea of their mode of representing the combatants, and of their general system of attack and defense.

It is probable that, like the Greeks, they anointed the body with oil, when preparing for these exercises, and they were entirely naked, with the exception of a girdle, apparently of leathern thongs.

The two combatants generally approached each other, holding their arms in an inclined position before the body; and each endeavored to seize his adversary in the manner best suited to his mode of attack. It was allowable to take hold of any part of the body, the head, neck or legs; and the struggle was frequently continued on the ground, after one or both had fallen, a mode of wrestling common also to the Greeks. It was most probable that they used the simplest form of wrestling, now in use in modern Egypt, where the winner is the one who simply throws his opponent to the ground, or when they both fall, the winner is the upper one. (Fig. 17).
F. **Single Stick Duelling**

They also competed in the single stick duel, the hand being apparently protected by a basket, or guard projecting over the knuckles; and on the left arm they wore a straight piece of wood, bound on with straps, serving as a shield to ward off their adversary's blow. (Fig. 18).
Singlesticks.

(Fig. 18)

G. Heavy Weight Lifting

Among their feats of strength or dexterity may be mentioned that of lifting weights. Bags full of sand were raised with one hand from the ground, and carried with a straight arm over the head, and held in that position (Fig. 19). Most likely they competed in lifting wheat bags in the same manner, just as the modern Egyptian farmers do nowadays.
H. Mock Fights

Mock fights were also an amusement, particularly, I imagine, among those of the military class, who were trained to the fatigues of war by these manly recreations. One party attacked a temporary fort, and brought up the battering-ram, under cover of the other attackers; another defended the walls and endeavoured to repel the enemy; others, in two parties, of equal numbers, engaged in single stick, or the more usual (nabboot), a pole wielded with both hands; and the pugnacious spirit of the people is frequently alluded to in the scenes.
portrayed by their artists.

The use of the (nasabout) game seems to have been as common among the ancient as among the modern Egyptians, the game of the latter will be described hereafter. Crews of boats are sometimes represented attacking each other with the earnestness of real battle. Some are being desperately felled by their more skilful opponents, are thrown headlong into the water. (Fig. 20)
I. Buffoonery

In buffoonery they also took great pleasure, and in witnessing the performances of those who danced in the streets to the sound of a drum, decorated with whatever could add to the extravagance and ridicule of their appearance, as ribbons, long pendant tassels, or fools' caps; and, judging from a custom still common in Egypt, it is probable that these jesters made impromptu remarks concerning the spectators, abounding either in the wit of satire or the flattery of praise. For, besides professional dancers and musicians, who were hired at entertainments, many ambulant bands went from village to village to amuse the lower classes and gained a livelihood by their occupation; and all the tricks and gestures were resorted to on those occasions which the ingenuity of a clever people could suggest, to excite the generosity of the bystanders and contribute to their amusement.

J. Bull Fights

Bull fights were also among their sports, and men appear occasionally to have courted the approbation of their friends, and displayed their courage and dexterity, in attacking a bull single-handed, and baffling his attacks. This they did without the harsh and cruel methods of the Romans. In Wilkinson's words:

It does not, however, appear that the Egyptians condemned culprits, or captives taken in war, to
combat with wild beasts, for the amusement of an unfeeling assembly, as in ancient Rome; nor did they compel them to fight as gladiators, to gratify a depraved taste, which delighted in exhibitions revolting to humanity; and, though we may feel disposed to blame them for compelling prisoners of war to labor at public works, it must be recollected that the usage of society, - in those early ages, tolerated a custom which neither the refined Greeks nor Romans can vie with the Egyptians in their manner of treating slaves. 1

Bull fights appear sometimes to have been encouraged by the higher classes, and to have been held in the dromos, or avenue, leading to their large temples. (Fig. 21).

No. 345. Bull-fight.

(Fig. 21)

K. Sports of the Field

There are other sports of the field, and all classes of the ancient Egyptians delighted in practicing them. The peasants deemed it a duty as well as an amusement to hunt and destroy the hyena, and those animals which were enemies of the fields or flocks, and they shot them with the bow, caught them in traps, or by whatever means their dexterity and ingenuity could suggest.

According to Wilkinson:

Plato reckons the huntsmen as one of the castes of the Egyptians; and though persons who followed this occupation may have constituted a particular body, or a minor subdivision of one of the castes, we are not to suppose that the sports of the field were confined to those who gained their livelihood by the chase; or that the wealthy classes of the Egyptians were averse to an amusement so generally welcomed in all countries. Indeed, the sculptures of Thebes, Beni-Hassan, and other places assure us that they took particular delight in chasing the wild animals.¹

The variety of games of the field and of big game hunting in ancient Egypt together with modes of fishing and trapping would warrant a special study. To relate them all would require too much space in the present work; and also we feel it is beyond the scope of it.

CHAPTER III

CONTEMPORARY EGYPTIAN FOLK-GAMES

By contemporary Egyptian folk-games, we mean the games played by the contemporary common man in Egypt. Some of these games might be old, and even might have survived from the time of ancient Egypt, yet so far as they are still in use nowadays, we would still, according to the previous definition, consider them contemporary. They are the games which have not been learned from any printed sources and are peculiar to the Egyptians.

In the following pages we will give brief descriptions of these games. They are classified into two categories: games played within doors which will be termed "Indoor Games"; and games usually played in a field which require considerable space, which have been classified as "Outdoor Games."

Indoor Games

1. The "Seega"

This game seems to be one of the oldest of the Egyptian folk-games. Although, it may not always have been played according to the same rules as nowadays, a game with a very similar board, the same pieces or men, though different in number, has been found in one of the ancient Egyptian tombs (Fig. 22).
AN EGYPTIAN'S PASTIME

A model gaming table of mud, with its movable pieces, from an early grave at El Mahasna, gives us a glimpse of the lighter side of Egyptian life. At all periods some game played with pieces like draughts was a favourite relaxation.

(Fig. 22)

The game is mostly played by the Egyptian peasants who amuse themselves by playing it in their leisure. It is played in different modes ranging from the simple to the more complex. The simplest mode, the description of which will be given here, is played by young persons.

a. The Three Row Mode

This game may be described in a comparatively few words. The "seega" or board employed in this game is simple: it consists of a number of holes, generally
made in the ground; in this case three rows of three holes each. The holes are called "oyon" (or eyes, in the singular "eyn"). In this "seega," they are nine in number. The players have each three pieces of distinct color or size. They are called "kilab" (or dogs); in the singular "kalb." This name, the Egyptian must have got from the Greeks when they mingled with them in the reign of Ptolemy. According to Wilkinson the Greeks called the piece Kuon; dog.

The game commences this way: each player puts his "kalbs" in the three holes next to him. Then the first player moves one of his "kalbs" in any forward or side direction (but no diagonal move). This they do alternately with the purpose of lining the three pieces in a straight line whether horizontally, perpendicularly or diagonally, before his adversary does—but the line next to the player where he started does not count (Fig. 23).
The player is not allowed to jump his adversary's "kalba." The skill of the player lies in his foresight before he makes the moves, and in forcing his adversary to move his pieces and leave vacant the desired position, by blocking his adversary's other pieces. The winner will move first in the next game. Some people play it by placing one piece each alternately until all pieces are placed; then the game commences.

B. Five, Seven, or Nine Row "Seega"

The game played according to this second mode seems to be a survival from the mode of play of ancient Egypt, as it is presented in one of Bani-Hasan's discoveries when the pieces are placed alternately as it is with this mode. The "Seega" in this mode may be made of five rows of five holes each, seven rows of seven each, or nine rows of nine each. The first kind is called "Khamsawee" from Khamsa, five; the second, the "Sab-awee"; and the third, the "Tis'awee." A Khamsawee Seega is here presented (Fig. 24).
(Fig. 24)

The players have each twelve "kalbs," similar to those used in the previous game (the larger seegas, in like manner, require a sufficient number of kalbs to occupy all the holes except one). One of the players places two of his kalbs in the eyns, marked a, a; the other puts two of his in those marked b, b; they then alternately place two kalbs in any of the eyns that they may choose, except the central eyn of the seega. All the eyns but the central one being thus occupied (most of the kalbs are placed at random), the game is commenced. The party who begins moves one of his kalbs from a contiguous eyn into the central. The other party, if the eyn now made vacant be not next to any one of those
occupied by his kalbs, desires his adversary to give him, or open to him, a way; and the latter must do so, by removing, and thus losing, one of his own kalbs. This is also done on subsequent occasions, when required by similar circumstances. The aim of each party, after the first disposal of the kalbs, is to place any one of his kalbs in such a situation that there shall be, between it and another of his, one of his adversary's kalbs. This, by so doing, he takes; and as long as he can immediately make another capture by such means, he does so, without allowing his adversary to move. These are the only rules of the game. It will be remarked that, though most of the kalbs are placed at random, foresight is requisite in the disposal of the remainder.

The seven, or nine row, modes are played exactly in the same manner but on a larger scale.

2. The Mankalah

One of the games which was most common among the Egyptians, and which is now rarely played is that of the "mankalah." Two persons play at this, with a board (or two boards joined by hinges) in which are twelve hemispherical holes, called "byyout" (plural of beyt, home), in two equal rows; and with seventy-two small shells, of the kind called cowries; or as many pebbles: these, whether shells or pebbles, are termed the "hasa" (in the singular hasawah, pebble).
A. Simple Mode

To explain the game of mankalah, I must distinguish the beyts of the board by letters (Fig. 25).

(Fig. 25)

The beyts marked A, B, C, D, E, F belong to one party; and the opposite six beyts to the other. One of the parties, when they are about to play the game in the most simple manner (for there are two modes of playing it), distributes all the hasa unequally into the beyts, generally putting at least four into each beyt. If they were distributed equally, there would be six in each beyt; but this is seldom done; for, in this case, he who plays first is sure to lose. The act of distributing the hasa is called "tabweez." When one party is dissatisfied with the other's distribution of the hasa, he may turn the board around; and then his adversary begins the game; which is not the case otherwise. Supposing the party to
whom belong the beyts A, B, C, D, E, F, commences the game, he
takes the hasa from beyt F, and distributes them to the
beyts a, b, c . . . etc., one to each beyt, and more remain
in his hand, he proceeds in the same manner to distribute
them to his own beyts, in the order A, B, C . . . etc.; and
then if he has still one or more remaining, to his adversary's
beyts, as before, and so on. If the last beyt into which
he has put a haswah contain but one (having been empty
before he put that in; for it may have been left empty at
the first) he ceases; and his adversary plays; but if it
contain two or four, he takes its contents, with those of
the beyt opposite; and if the last beyt contains two or
four, and one or more of the preceding beyts also contain
either of these numbers, no beyt with any other number in-
tervening, he takes the contents of these preceding beyts
also, with the contents of those opposite. If the last
beyt into which he has put a haswah contain (with this
haswah) three, or five, or more, he takes these out, and
goes on distributing them in the same manner as before;
for instance, if, in this case, the last beyt into which
he has put a haswah be D, he puts one from its contents
into E, another into F, a third into a, and so on; and
thus he continues, until making the last beyt to contain
but one stops him, or making it to contain two or four
brings him gain, and makes it his adversary's turn to play.
He always plays from beyt F, or, if that be empty, from
the nearest beyt to it in his own row containing one or more haswahs. When one party has more than a single haswah in one or more of his beyts, and the other has none, the former is obliged to put one of his into the first of his adversary's beyts. If only one haswah remain on one side, and none on the other, that one is the property of the person on whose side it is. When the board is completely cleared, each party counts the number of the hasa he has taken; and the one who has most reckons the excess of his above his adversary's number as his gain. The gainer in one board begins to play the next board; his adversary having first distributed the hasa. When either party has made his successive gains amount to sixty, he has won the game. In this form the game of mankalah is regarded as the simpler mode, and is played by young persons; and hence this mode of playing is called "the game of the beginner or of the ignorant" ("leab el-ghasheem"); others generally play in a different manner, which is termed "the game of the wise, or intelligent" (leab el-skil"), and which will now be described.

B. Advanced Mode

The hasa in this mode are distributed in one or more beyts on one side, and in the corresponding beyt or beyts on the other side; commonly in four beyts on each side, leaving the extreme beyts of each side vacant; or they are distributed in any other conventional manner; as, for
instance, about half into beyt A, and the remainder in beyt a. The person who distributes the hasa does not count how many he places in a beyt; and it is at his option whether he places them only in one beyt or each side, or in all the beyts. Should the other person object to his distribution, he may turn the board around; but in that case he forfeits his right of playing first. The person who plays first may begin from any one of his beyts, judging from observation, which will bring him the best fortune. He proceeds in the same manner as previously described: putting one haswah in each beyt, following the same procedure as in the former mode, and then the other person plays. After the first gain, he counts the hasa in each of his beyts; and plays from that which will bring him the greatest advantage. One of the parties may stop the other to count the hasa which he takes out of a beyt to distribute, in order to insure his distributing them correctly. The gain of one party after finishing one board is counted, as in the former mode, by the excess of the number he has taken above the number acquired by the other; and the first who makes his successive gains amount to sixty wins the game. This game is of use in affording the players practice in calculation. It was very commonly played at the coffee-shops, and the players used generally to agree that the loser shall pay for the coffee drunk by himself and his
adversary and the spectators, or possibly for a certain number of cups.

3. The "Tab" Game

"Tab" is the name of the game in Southern Egypt, and "Talb" is its name in the North. The game is played in two distinct modes. In its simpler mode, it is entirely a game of chance.

A. The Simple Mode

The play materials in this game are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Small pieces of stick, of a flat form, about eight inches in length, and two-thirds of an inch in breadth, are first prepared: they are generally formed of a piece of palm-branch; one side of which being cut flat and smooth, in white; the other, green or, if not fresh, of a dull yellow color; the former side is commonly called white, and the other, dark or black. These are called the &quot;Tab&quot; and each one is called waraka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Piece formed of the thick end of a palm-stick and about 20 inches long. Two or three splits are made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the thicker part of it. This is called in the North "Makrash" and in the South "Tirtaka."

1 Piece about 12 inches long. This is decorated with the knife and called the "Wazeer", visier.

1 Piece about 8 inches long and is called the "Walad," boy.

The game is often played by four or more persons. A toss is made to find out who is going to play first; this is done by allowing each player to have one throw in a clockwise direction. The player does this by shuffling the sticks; that is, holding them horizontally and throwing them up a little and holding them back for some time, and then throwing the sticks all together against a stick thrust into the ground, or held in the hand with one end resting on the ground (usually the "Wazeer" piece), or against a wall, or against a stick inclined against a wall. This they do successively until one of them gets four white sides upwards; this is the player to play first and the turn goes from him to the rest in a clockwise direction. This player starts the game proper, if he gets a successful throw, he continues to play; if he gets an unsuccessful one, he ceases, and the play passes to the next player.
The successful throws are either one of these:

4 white sides upwards - He gets the Tirtaka and is named the "Sultan."

4 green sides upwards - He gets the "Wazeer."

3 green plus 1 white upwards - He gets the "Walad."

If he gets anyone of the above, he proceeds to throw another time. In this case he may win another piece and here also he continues; he may win the three pieces. But, on the other hand, he may lose the piece he has just won if he gets the same result in his second attempt (that is, suppose he won the Tirtaka by getting four white sides upwards, he then throws again, but if he gets another four white sides upwards, he loses the Tirtaka). This applies also to the "Wazeer" - but the one who holds the "Walad" does not lose it by a second similar result. The play passes to the next player if he gets any one of the unsuccessful throws (such as two of each color upwards, or a majority of white, 3 white plus 1 green, and by losing sometimes he gets one blow from the "Sultan").

After all pieces have been acquired the players stop for judgement. The "Sultan," that is, the holder of the Tirtaka has the authority of execution. He asks the "Wazeer" for advice; the "Wazeer" passes judgement as to how many blows the "Sultan" should give each of the losers (those who failed to possess any piece), and the
"Sultan" has to do exactly as the "Wazeer" rules. The holder of the "Waled" is immune against any punishment invoked. Each time the holder of the "Waled" gets another "Waled" he gets a point, and when his gain amounts to four points he gets the "Wazeer;" when he gets seven points he gets the Tirtaka.

Again if one player gets all the pieces, he can both judge and execute. Also, the holder of the Tirtaka, if he fails to execute exactly what the "Wazeer" has ruled, he loses it. If he has lost it this way he cannot get it back if he gets a "Waled." Whereas if he has lost it by a second throw, he can take it back if he gets a "Waled." This also applies to the player who has lost a "Wazeer" this way; that is, he may get it back if he gets a "Waled." Usually, they prohibit hard blows, as well as striking the hands and legs.

B. The Advanced Mode

This mode is played by two persons. The "tab" here serves as a dice to tell the number of moves. The sticks when thrown will indicate a number according to the following table:

1) Only one with white side upward and "Waled" counts one

2) Two white sides upward and two green count two

3) Three white, and one green count three

4) All four white count four
5) All four green (black) count six

When one player throws "Walad" four, or six, he throws again; but when he has thrown two, or three, the turn passes to the next player. It is necessary in this mode to be provided with a board, or "Seesa." This is a board, divided into four rows of squares, called "beyts" or "dars," each about two inches wide, or it consists of similar rows of holes made in the ground, or in a flat stone; the beyts are usually seven, nine, eleven, thirteen, or fifteen, in each row. To describe the mode of playing the game, I shall here represent a "seesa" of nine beyts in each row; and distinguish the beyts by letters. In each beyt of one exterior row is usually placed a little piece of stone, or dingy brick, about the size of a walnut; and in each beyt of the other exterior row, a piece of red brick or tile. Or sometimes, pieces are placed only in a certain number of beyts in those rows, as, for instance, in the first four. The pieces of one row must be distinguished from those in the other. They are called "Kalbs."
(Fig. 26)

To one of the players belongs the row of beyts A, B, C, D, ... etc.: to the other, that of a, b, c, d ... etc. They first throw alternately until one has thrown Walad (one); and he who has done this then throws again until he has thrown two, or three. Supposing him, at the beginning of the game, to have thrown "Walad" and four and two, he removes the kalb from beyt I, and places it in the seventh beyt from I, which is Q. He must always commence with the kalb in beyt I. The other party, in like manner, commences from beyt I. Neither party can remove
a kalb from its original place but by throwing a "Walad" or "Tab" before each such removal. The kalbs before removal from their original places are called "mayet," dead or stationary; and after removal it is called "hay," alive or movable. Each time that a player throws "Walad" or "Tab," he generally makes a kalb alive or movable, until he has made them all so, and thus prepared them to circulate in the beyts. Each player may have two or more kalbs in circulation at the same time. Let us suppose (to make the description more simple) that the person to whom belongs the row of beyts A, B, C, D . . . etc., is circulating a single kalb. He moves it through the two middle rows of beyts in the order of the letters by which I have distinguished them, from K to S, and from k to s; and may then either repeat the same round or enter his adversary's row, as long as there is any kalb remaining in that row. But in the latter case, he does not continue to circulate the same kalb, except in circumstances which will be mentioned hereafter. Whenever a throw, or any of two or more throws, which the player has made enables him to move his kalb into a beyt occupied by one of his opponent's kalbs, he takes the latter. For instance, if one party has a kalb in the beyt m, and the other has one in o, and another in s, and the former has thrown tab (or one), and then four, and then two, he may take the kalb in o by the throw of two; then, by the throw of four, take that in s; and, by
the throw of tab, pass into a, and take a third kalb if
it contains one. A player may, by means of a suitable
throw, or two or more throws, move one of his kalbs into
a beyt occupied by another of his own; and these two to-
gether, in like manner, he may add to a third, or he may
add a third to them: thus he may united any number of his
own kalbs, and circulate them together, as if they were
but one; but he cannot divide them again, and play with
them separately, unless he throws tab. If he avail him-
self of a throw which he has made to bring them back into
a row through which they have already passed (either separ-
ately or together), they become reduced to a single kalb:
but he need not avail himself of such a throw: he may
wait until he throws tab. Two or more kalbs thus united
are called an "eggah," scrambled eggs. The object of so
uniting them is to place them as soon as possible in a
situation of safety; as will be seen by what immediately
follows. If either party pass one of his kalbs into his
adversary's row, he may leave it there in safety as long
as he does not want to continue to play with it, because
the latter cannot bring back a kalb into his own row.
The former, however, cannot continue to circulate the
kalb which has entered that row until he has no kalb re-
maining in his own row; or unless he have only an "eggah"
in his row, and does not throw tab, which alone enables
him to divide the eggah. In circulating through his
adversary's berts, he proceeds in the order of the letters by which I have marked them. He cannot pass the same kalb again into his adversary's row. After it has passed through that row, he circulates it through the two middle rows only, in the same manner as at first.

4. The Nodding Bee

(Fig. 27)

This is not a game in the usual sense of the word. It is rather an amusement feat played by little children in which they swing using their backs as see-saws (Fig. 27). Two children stand back to back passing the elbows of the opposite arms within each other. One player starts singing, "I am the bee . . ." and bends his trunk forward, thus carrying his partner on his back. Next he straightens his body and his partner in like manner bends his trunk forward, carrying the former on his back while singing, "I am the wasp . . . ." This they do alternately. This feat, though not a game, may be of use when modified to
become an amusing game for a number of players.

5. The Roaming Fox (El-Talab Fat)

Players form a circle whether sitting or standing. One player acts as "fox." He holds a whip made by rolling one end of a handkerchief with a knot made to keep it in this shape. A folded newspaper may serve the same purpose. This "fox" runs around outside the circle while the rest of the players sing:

El talab fat fat  (The fox passed passed
Fi delo saba lafat  (in his tail are seven curls

The "fox" then chooses one player and places the whip behind him. All the players are alert to such a surprise. If the one behind whom the whip was placed notices it, he gets the whip and chases the "fox." If the chaser catches
up with the "fox" he beats him with the whip until he reaches the fox's place, and at the same time tries to occupy his former place before the "fox." If he does not, the fox occupies his place and the chaser becomes the "fox." But if the one behind whom the whip has been put does not notice it, the "fox" when he reaches his place gets the whip and starts beating him, until he rises and runs outside the circle once around and gets the whip which the "fox" has left and occupied the chaser's place, and now the chaser is the "fox."

6. Whirl the Spinner ("Duk el maghzal")

(Fig. 29)

Two players are chosen who face each other and bend their trunks forward so that their heads will touch each
other. The rest of the players now, one after another compete in the length of their breath. They all start singing a certain refrain until the reach the last word which is "zinn." The first player starts running around the two bending ones uttering the word "zinn" in one breath. The rest or the umpire will count how many turns each player could make around the bending ones without taking another breath. The two players with the worst records will bend instead of the former and the competition of the rest starts again one after another.

7. Sallah (Hit the Hand)

A toss is made to choose one of the players to be "it." This player turns his back facing a wall or a corner, and puts his left hand under his right arm with its palm opened. The right hand covers his eyes, or just the right side of his eyes (Fig. 30).
The remainder have a leader who gives a silent gesture to one person who hits the person "it" on the palm. They all then raise their fingers. "It" turns and tries to guess who hit him. If he succeeds, the hitter becomes "it" and the game continues. If he does not, he remains "it" until he succeeds in guessing who the hitter is.

8. The "Baggoul" Game

The "baggouls" are the seeds of the cucu plant as they are called in Southern Egypt. The cucu plant is called in Arabic "doam." The size of this seed is about that of an egg. Each player has a number of these seeds. One of the players is chosen by a toss to throw one seed in the center, if they are standing in a circle, or at a certain distance if the players are standing in a row. This seed will serve as a "tagga," target. The player next to the one who threw the first seed starts to throw one seed at this target. Each player in a clockwise turn tries to hit the target, and he who succeeds in so doing, will win all the seeds on the ground and the next player to him will throw another "tagga" and so on. If one player exhausts his seeds and nobody has won what is on the ground, he has the right to stop the game. They then collect what is on the ground and divide the seeds equally among them, and the game proceeds. The one/who exhausts his seeds has to wait for his following turn and if the player before him
wins he is broke and is out. If all the players fail to hit the target, until they have all exhausted their seeds, in like manner they collect them and divide them among all the players.

9. The "Hagla"

This game is played only by little girls. They draw with chalk on the ground a rectangle of about three by six yards and divide it into two equal rectangles perpendicularly and into four equal sections horizontally, thus making 8 equal squares or "boysts" and sometimes they number them as in Fig. 31.

(Fig. 31)

They have a little piece of flat limestone four inches
by four, or a disc of equal size called the "balata." The first girl will stand still outside the "beyt" and throw the "balata" in square number one. She then hops into that square on one leg and hops until she takes the right position close to the balata and in one kick she tries to get it out. If she succeeds, she tries the same in square 2 by kicking the balata first to square 1 and from one another kick to get it out. This she does, one square after another until she finishes them all, then she has to hop around these squares as many times as agreed upon with one hop in each square without the balata this time. If she succeeds she may have a "beyt," home. This means that she may select any of the squares, draw a little square in its corner, and whenever she arrives at that beyt in a subsequent turn, she may rest on both her legs as long as she wants, but without moving her feet. If she makes another round, she may have another "beyt" and so on. If a girl while throwing the balata in a certain square fails to get it in, or if when she kicks, the balata rests on a line or outside the right square, or if her second leg touches the ground, she is out and the next girl plays. This game is played by two, three, four, or even five girls.
Outdoor Games

1. The Boksha

The equipment for this game includes:

A ball made of palm fibres which are pressed in a ball shaped and covered all around tightly with a string made of palm fibres.

Every player has a hat formed of the thicker end of the palm branch after it has been trimmed, and put into a warm oven of slow heat until all the sap in it dries up and thus it becomes lighter. It is about one yard long, or as long as the player can conveniently use to hit the ball.

The dimensions of the field are undefined; it is usually a space of land about thirty by ten yards. This field is divided in the center by a cross line, and also two horizontal lines to define the ends, which will serve as goals.

The players divide themselves into two teams of equal numbers. Each team has a leader within it who assigns half his team to be attackers and the other half to be defenders. Each of these halves are distributed at random without a definite position for each player.

The ball is then put in the center. The team of the leader who won the toss to choose players first is now the defending team. The other team has the serve. The leader
of the servers shouts to the opposite team to get ready, saying, "Tarniza." The opposite leader signifies his team's readiness by saying, "Rah el-Giza." Then the server hits the ball with his bat towards his opponent's goal; the opponents do the same towards the opposite goal and each player does the same. The object of each team is to drive the ball behind his opponent's goal line (just like they do in soccer or hockey). The winning team is that which scores more goals, or as they call them "redez." The winning team rides on the backs of the losers the length of the field.

2. Senno

This game is the most popular of all. It is played in two modes. One mode is played by the people of the North, and the other played by those of the South.

A. The Northern Egyptian Mode

This mode of playing the game seems to be the oldest for some reasons: The game starts with a series of throws called "khara" in which the ball is hit backwards. This word meant in ancient Egyptian behind. The second series is called "senno" mispronounced from "senow" which meant in ancient Egyptian second, being the second series of hits. The murals of Bani-Hasan present players in the different positions of that game (Fig. 33).
The players are divided into two equal teams. A toss is made to decide who are the batters and who are the catchers. The batters stand behind the goal "meese," which is usually a brick laid on its side. The first player announces the name of the series of hits, the catchers signify their readiness. For instance he says "first of khara," that is, the first hit of the khara series. He then turns his back to the catchers facing the "meese," throws the ball in the air with one hand and as it comes down hits it backward with his palm, as hard as possible. If the catchers catch the ball in the air the batter is out, and the next batter takes over. If they do not, they get the ball on the ground before it goes far and from
that place the one who caught it rolls it on the ground with the purpose of hitting the "meese" with it. If he does, the batter is out. If the batter succeeds, he repeats the same procedure two more times, and if he succeeds in these three successive hits, he starts another series of hits as will be described in the subsequent lines. Any series of hits is complete if the batter succeeds in his three hits. If the batter is out after completing a series, the player who follows him in batting will start from the beginning of that first series. So every player from the batting team helps advance the series of hits, and when one or more batters complete all the series that team wins. The series of hits (3 times each) are as follows:

Khara - hitting the ball backwards with one hand
Senno - throwing and hitting the ball forward with one hand
Sas-fe - throwing the ball in the air, clapping the hands, and hitting it with one hand
Kahko - throwing the ball in the air, whirling the hands around each other, and hitting the ball with one hand.
Shakko - throwing the ball in the air with one hand and hitting it with the other forward
Sadfo - throwing the ball after swinging it under one raised knee and hitting it with one hand forward
Reglo - kicking the ball with the foot after throwing it forward with the hand.

Mahlo - throwing the ball in the air, whirling the body around one turn, and hitting the ball with one hand forward.

So, we see that one or more batters may win the game for the team if they go through all the series successfully. If some of the batters complete the series as such, as some players on their team did not bat; the group of batters invoke on the losers the punishment agreed upon, and then they proceed batting another inning with those who did not bat doing the batting. If those fail, the inning is over and teams exchange.

If after all players of the batting team have batted and have failed to go through the entire series successfully, they exchange positions with the catchers, and if the latter in like manner fail, the former will go back to batting starting from the beginning of the last successful series they completed previously.

The winning team will ride on the backs of the losers for a distance agreed upon. They may agree that only the leader of the winning team will ride the leader of the losers, and thus seated plays one series of hits against the losing team and if he succeeds, the rest of the batters will ride the remainder of the losers as described.
B. Southern Erypt Mode

In this mode the goal is called "nasoub."

A player may be chosen to play on both sides as a batter (usually the best). This player is termed the "taesha," and he cannot be put out except by his ball being caught in the air.

It is played in the same manner as previously described, except that instead of a series of hits (which were three in mode A), now each type of hits is executed only once. If the first batter is out before he completes the first three hits, his follower starts from the very beginning of the game. But if he goes through the first three successfully and then is put out, the next batter starts from the fourth hit. The batting team has to complete successfully twelve kinds of hits. In the last one, each one of the catchers is given a chance to hit the "nasoub" with the ball, from the distance it reached when it was picked up. The leader of the catchers is offered three chances to do so. Here all the losers except the leader bend at the wall and the winners ride on their backs - at this time the leader of the losers plays as batter against the leader of the winners. If he passes through the first three hits successfully, the rest of the losers are relieved. Otherwise both leaders alternate, and now if the catcher puts the batter out, his team is relieved from their position. Afterwards, teams
exchange and the game goes on.

3. **Bent el-dank**

In this game, the players choose one from among themselves to bend his trunk forward, putting his hands on his knees and standing at a distance from the rest of the players. The game proceeds according to either one of the following two sets of rules:

A. In this mode, the rest of the players divide themselves into two equal teams with a leader at the head of each, who will set the kind of jump his followers are to imitate. On the back of the bending player a head-cap or a handkerchief is placed. The leader of the first team runs towards this bending player and jumps over him in the manner he chooses, and the rest of his team will follow jumping in the same manner saying, "I follow my leader." The leader of the second team follows with another type of jump and the rest of his team imitate him in the same manner. If the leader of either team repeats the kind of jump twice, he will bend instead of the bending player, and this becomes the leader in his place. Any player who causes the cap or the kerchief on the back of the bending one to fall, in like manner, will bend instead of him.

B. In this second mode, the bending man is chosen as
as in the former. The players agree on a rotating order in which each one will act as an umpire for a while, or that an adult will be the umpire for the whole game. The umpire in consultation with the one who will bend decides on a certain category such as fruits, vegetables, birds . . . etc., and on a secret member of this category. The umpire announces this category to the rest of the players. Each player runs in his turn and jumps over the bending man while naming one of these fruits or vegetables, . . . etc. If he fails to name one before his jump is made, or if he mentions the name of the secret one, upon which the umpire decided with the bending man, this player has to bend instead. If the game advances on one category and one of the players thinks that the names are exhausted, he may stop jumping and ask the umpire to choose a new category. But if the umpire does not agree, and this player cannot think of a name, he must bend instead.

4. Asfours, the Sparrow

In Northern Egypt the game is termed "asfours," the sparrow, and in Southern Egypt they call it "sattet battet." The equipment for this game are the "asfours" and a bat. The asfours is a piece of rounded wood, which
may be formed from a broom stick. It is about six inches long and one inch in diameter. This they sharpen at both its ends. The bat is about four inches in width, formed of a flat piece of wood, and it is about one yard long. Its handle, on one end, is made rounded. The handle to allow a grip for both should be about eight inches long. A hole of about eight inches in diameter and three inches deep is dug in the ground, around which a circle of about the length of the bat in diameter is drawn (Fig. 33).
The players divide themselves into two equal teams, and a toss decides as to which team will pitch and which will bat. The batting team stands behind the circle with one of them holding the bat and ready to hit the asfoura.

One of the pitching team now holds the asfoura and pitches it from a mark agreed upon with the purpose of putting it into the circle. If the batter fails to hit it and it settles in the circle, the batter is out and another one of his team takes over. If he fails but the asfoura settles outside the circle, he is given another two chances to hit the asfoura in which the same rules apply. If the batter succeeds in hitting it he has to bat it a certain agreed upon distance in three trials other than the original hit from the circle. He may reach it in the original hit or in one, two, or three more hits. This he does by striking on the pointed end of the asfoura with his bat, and when it flies in the air he hits it with the bat. Each time he touches the asfoura is counted one trial whether it flies up or not, or if it flies up and he fails to hit it before it falls back to the ground. If he fails he is out, and if he succeeds he takes the asfoura back to the hole, places it into it so that one of its ends is showing and easy to hit. He, in like manner, has another three chances to make the asfoura go as far as possible. If he gets a less distance than the prescribed goal, he does not add
anything and does not lose either. But if he gets the asfoura farther than the prescribed goal, he sets a record and the opposing team has to reach this farther distance instead of the nearer prescribed one, and thus adds to their difficulty. By batting the asfoura to the prescribed point, he wins a point for his team, and another batter comes up. This continues until all the players of one side have batted. Then the teams exchange and those who get more points are the winners.

5. The Lugum

The field of this game is about forty yards by twenty. On one end, a semicircle is drawn on the ground to be the safety zone; on the other end a line is drawn on the ground: outside of this line is the "home." In the center between the safety zone and the home line a mark is made to designate the pitching place (Fig. 34).
The equipment for the game includes:

A. A bat like that for soft ball.

B. A ball made by stuffing a stocking with rags, tying it with a string at the end of the stuffed part. The end of the stocking is then rolled back and forth until it takes the shape of the ball and then the ends of the stocking are sewn to the body.

The players divide themselves into two teams, batters and pitchers. The first batter holds the bat in a state of readiness behind the line of the semi-circle with the rest of his team behind him in the safety zone.

The first pitcher holds the ball and stands on the center mark, with the rest of his team scattered around him. The pitcher now pitches the ball within hitting distance of the batter, and the batter tries to hit the ball. If he fails to hit the ball for three successive times, his team takes the field and the fielding team become batters. But if he succeeds, one of his partners, or more, try to cross the field to the home zone. If the pitching team gets the ball and tags any of the crossing men, the batting team is out and they exchange positions. The same thing happens if the ball is caught in the air. But when the batters succeed, they repeat and the batter has three trials after every successful hit. One batter stays batting until his team is out. The players who have reached home may cross back to the safety zone to give
the pitcher's opportunity to tag them.

Sometimes a team is considered to have won when all the members reach home safely. Sometimes every crossing is counted as one point, and each player has the opportunity to cross back and forth to gain more points for his team, and at the same time, to give the catchers more opportunity to tag him. Also, sometimes the players may agree that when the first batter is put out one of his partners takes over, and so on, until all the batters are out. This is different from the first procedure where the team is out if one batter fails.

6. The Hopping Game

This game is played in the summer, especially at night in the full moon when the peasants thresh their wheat. The players usually are dressed only in their shorts so that one cannot catch them by the garment. The players divide themselves into two equal teams. A toss decides which team will play attacker and which will play defender.

The field is usually about thirty yards by ten, and divided in the center by a line. On one side (that of the defenders), a post is designated to serve as the goal. The defenders are scattered on the goal side with one of them standing in the rear to act as a guard.

The attacking team will naturally be on the other side of the field, with one of the players in the rear designated
as the bride, "arousa." (Fig. 35)

(Fig. 35)

When the game starts, each player bends one of his legs behind the other and holds the foot in his opposite hand, and each player is now standing on one foot. The attackers then attack the other side of the field, and each player tries to unlock his opponent's hold on his foot. Each player unlocked in this way on either team is out. In the confusion the arousa tries to sneak hopping towards the goal; his partners try to defend him; and the defenders try to tag him. If the arousa is caught or unlocked, this
player is out, and another one of the attackers is designated as an arousa and so on until the whole attacker's team rotate in this position one after another. After this, both teams exchange positions. Every time the arousa succeeds in touching the goal, the attackers win one point. Then another attacker becomes the arousa and so on.

7. Abouna Darabouns (Father! They Beat Us)

There are two modes of playing this game. In both modes the players divide themselves into two equal teams, each team has a leader. A toss decides which team is to be the runner and which the chaser.

Mode A. Chasers sit in a circle with their leader standing. The runners disperse and hide. After the leader of the chasers counts, say ten, he starts chasing the runners leaving the rest of his team seated as described. Here the runners from their hiding places watch the chaser until they see that he is far enough from his team to permit the hiding team to go to them and start hitting them. The beaten group then yell to their leader saying, "Father, they beat us." On hearing this, their leader comes back to chase the beaters. Any one he catches is added to his team until he catches all the runners. Both teams then exchange positions.
Mode B. In the second mode, after the runners hide, all the chasing team go after them trying to find them, and whenever one of the chasers tags one of the runners, this runner is taken where he stands in an appointed place. If one of the runners can tag this captured one he may run again. When the chasers have tagged all the runners, the teams exchange positions.

8. Tahtesh, or "Nabbout," Single-Stick Fencing

(Fig. 36)
In this game usually two peasants contend with each other, for more amusement, or for a trifling wager or reward, with "neboots," which are thick staves, five or six feet long. The object of each is to hit his adversary any place on the body and at the same time try to take his adversary's blows on his own stick. For instance, when one player tries to strike the other on the head, the latter holds his stick quickly with both hands above the head as a bridge to defend the blow. Naturally, they just try to touch the other player. The two players commence by whirling around in a circle, sometimes to the tune of music. Each one tries to exploit the undefended parts of his adversary's body and discover his weaknesses. The player who touches the other first is the winner; then a third from among the spectators (who sit in a circle around the players), may challenge the winner. The peasants of Southern Egypt are so noted for their amazing skill in this game that sometimes they turn the game into real combat, and the loser may be wounded. This game is a survival of the ancient Egyptian contests which were previously described.

9. The "Gareed" Game

This game, no doubt, is a survival of the Arabic culture, and is still played by the Bedouins on the desert. It is often played by the peasants in Egypt on the occasion
of the marriage of one of them; or on that of a circumcision; or in a public festival. The combatants usually consist of two parties, of different villages; each party being from twelve to twenty or more in number; and each person mounted on a horse or mare. The two parties station themselves about five hundred feet or more apart. A person from one party gallops towards the other party and challenges them. One of the latter, taking in his left hand, four, five, six, or more "gereeds," (each six feet, more or less in length, but generally equal in length to the height of a tall man, and very heaving, being the lower part of the palm-stick, freshly cut, and full of sap) pursues the challenger at full gallop. He approaches him as near as possible; often within arm's length; and throws at his back one gereed after another until he has none left. The gereed is blunt at both ends. It is thrown with the small end foremost; and with uplifted arm; and sometimes inflicts injury. The person against whom the gereeds are thrown endeavors to catch them, or to ward them off with his arm or with a sheathed sword; or he escapes them by the superior speed of his horse. Having sustained the attack, and arrived at the station of his party, he tries his skill against the person by whom he has been pursued, in the same manner as the latter did against him.

This sport which reminds us of the tournaments of the old Arabs, continues for several hours. In Northern
Egypt, a greeed only half the length of those above described, or a little more, is used in playing this game.
CHAPTER IV

ADAPTATION OF THESE GAMES FOR RECREATIONAL USE

In the previous chapter, we have described the folk-games as they are played nowadays in Egypt. These games, by their very nature, might not, in some instances, lend themselves readily to use in homes, clubs, playgrounds or other organized recreational settings. In other instances, the equipment might not meet desired standards and the rules might involve or at least invite harsh practices. All of these undesirable things need to be adjusted and improved so that the game might be suitable for general use.

Therefore, we thought it might be worthwhile to suggest some improvements for each game. Obviously, we make no claim that these suggestions are the best possible. They are rather the opinions of the writer and the reader is invited to feel free to use his imagination, since he might have better ideas than those here suggested. At any rate, the following suggestions are those which have been developed out of the writer's experience.

In this chapter we will present description of the suggested adaptations for each game taken in the same order as that of the previous chapter.
Indoor Games

1. The Seega (see p. 51)

The rules of this game are good and need not be changed in all its modes. The best things to be done for its improvement would be to substitute its stone pieces and its board - which is prepared by making rows of holes in the ground - with clean pieces and a portable board.

We suggest that the pieces should be formed of wood. The method of preparing them would be as follows:

A stick of rounded wood (like a broom stick), 3/4 of an inch in diameter is sanded. Eighty pieces of equal length are cut from it, each 1 1/2 inches long. A mark is drawn around each a quarter of an inch from one end. A circle is drawn on the base of this end a quarter of an inch in diameter, and the wood outside of it is sanded or filed off (Fig. 37).

(Fig. 37)

The other end is shaped round. Each forty pieces are then painted into two distinct colors. As for the
board, we suggest that it should be made of wood, and one board should be made suitable for playing the game in all its modes. The method of preparing the board should be as follows: A piece of flat wood is cut into a square nine inches by nine. Each side would be divided by straight lines, one inch apart both ways, thus making 81 little squares of one square inch each (Fig. 38).

(Fig. 38)

After one square each way, a heavy line is drawn around; thus we will have a heavy line around each of the square 7 x 7, 5 x 5, and 3 x 3. By drawing two
diagonal lines across each little square (1 x 1), we can mark the center of each. Around each of these centers a little hole of a little more than a quarter of an inch in diameter is cut hollow so that the thin parts of the pieces can be fitted into them. Now each fringing big square (those of 9 x 9, 7 x 7, 5 x 5, and 3 x 3) are painted a distinct color. If the players want to play the simplest mode, they could use the innermost square (painted in blue), and using three pieces each, of different colors. In the 5 x 5 game, they use the red one and plus the blue and play with 12 pieces each. In the 7 x 7 game, they use the orange, red, and blue squares and play with 24 pieces each; and in the 9 x 9 game they use the whole board (yellow, orange, red, and blue), and 40 pieces each.

2. The Mankala (see p. 52)

The board of the game as it is, is good. Only, instead of using pebbles or shells, seventy-two beads could be used.

3. The Tab (see p. 61)

The use of the tab (the four pieces of palm-sticks) for the purpose of finding a number (the biggest number being six) suggests that a single dice can serve the purpose.

The Tirtaka, instead of being formed of palm sticks,
could be replaced by a rolled newspaper, or by putting several slips of carton above each other and fastening them together at one end with a staple. In its advanced mode where a board is used like that of the seega, the board and pieces can be prepared just as described in preparing the seega.

4. The Nodding Bee (see p. 68)

This fact as it is played by the youngsters is not in the form of a game. For this reason we suggest it be modified into a competitive relay race. (Fig. 39)

(Fig. 39)

The field of that game can be marked by a rectangle, twelve yards by nine. The length of the field is divided
by lines, 3 yards apart. Suppose we have six players to play the game. They are to be made of 3 couples. Each couple will stand on the center line 3 yards from the next couple. Each couple will be standing back to back, and passing the elbows of the opposite arms within each other. In front of each player, on both sides, are two removable flags, 3 yards apart, and beside each couple a basket is placed.

When the umpire announces the commencement of the game, the players facing the right will bend forward, thus carrying their partners on the back, would run towards flags row A, and pick up the flags. The bending player then straightens himself and his partner bends, thus carrying the former and runs back to the center line, deposits the flat in the basket, and proceeds to flag B, then flags C, and D, and back to the center line in the same manner. The couple which does this and reaches the center line first is the winner.

5. The Roaming Fox (see p. 70)

This game does not need any modification.

6. Whirl the Spinner (see p. 71)

The fact that the player is required to run while holding his breath is unhealthy for one obvious physiological reason. To adapt the game and improve it, a circle should be drawn on the ground of, say, five yards in
DISTRIBUTION OF PLAYERS ACCORDING TO THE SIZE OF THE TEAM MAY BE MADE IN LINE WITH THE FOLLOWING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number on team</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal keeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-backs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forwards</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
diameter. Players can agree upon a certain number of times they repeat the song for every player running, and see which of them can make the greater number of rounds before the singing stops.

7. Sallah (see p. 72)

This game as it is played is individualistic. To make it a social activity, we suggest that the players might divide themselves into two equal teams. When the hitter is named after his first attempt, his whole team exchange position with the others who gain two points. If the guessing player fails to recognize the hitter two successive times, he is out and another player of his team takes over, and by this his team loses one point. When all the team is put out, the teams exchange. In this way every player would be playing for his team and not for himself, and thus the game will have a social value.

8. The Baggoul (see p. 73)

The game is good in its present mode, but the cuci seeds are not always available. The game, therefore, can be played with large size marbles.

9. The Hazla (see p. 74)

The game is very good as it is for girls. Some improvements can be suggested, however. The floor should be made of smooth wood, like that of the shuffle board
game, to facilitate the sliding of the balata. The piece of flat stone should be replaced by a disc of hard, heavy wood. I have seen some girls who used instead an empty boot polish can, filling it with plaster of paris and sealing its cover.

Outdoor Games

1. The Hokma (see p. 76)

The suggested improvements for this game concern primarily improving the equipment, standardizing it, and drawing up a set of rules to insure greater safety.

As for improving the equipment we suggest

1. That a softball be used instead of the crude one.

2. The bats formed from the thicker end of the palm-stick should be used only after the thicker part has been trimmed so that its width is equal to that of the thinner part. It must be dried of its sap; and the handle should be covered with either rubber, leather or tape.

3. The goal "red" can be made of a frame of wood four yards wide and three high. A net should preferably be attached to the rear of the goal so that it would hold the ball.

4. The number of players on each team should be five, seven, or nine players and no more for the better enjoyment of the game and for safety.
5. Players of one team should be distributed according to the positions of the game, such as one player as goal-keeper, one to three half-backs, and three to five forwards, according to the size of the team. (See page 103a.)

6. The field should be 30 x 15 yards.

7. Rules should be designed to insure safety as well as to control the natural development of the game. For instance:
   a. A player should hold the bat with both hands.
   b. The ball should be put in play from the center line when starting the game, after every score, and after every recess.
   c. The period of playing the game should not exceed forty minutes divided into two periods. Between the periods there should be a recess period of ten minutes after which teams exchange sides.
   d. When the ball goes outside the field it can be played as a free hit for the opposing team to that which sent it out. In case of an outside ball from either side line the ball can be served therefrom. Outside of either end, the ball is to be served from the end line.
   e. Each score counts one point in favor of the scoring team, and the winners are those who
score more goals.

f. When a player commits one of the following fouls, a free hit is given the opposing team, and the player who suffered from it is entitled to the hit.

g. A foul is counted against the team in the following cases:

1. When a player holds the bat with one hand while driving the ball before him.

2. When a player raises the end of his bat above his shoulder in either attack or defense.

3. When the body of the player interposes his body between his opponent and the ball.

4. When a player attempts to hit the ball while he is running behind the one who is driving the ball.

5. When a player attempts to hurt one of his opponents.

6. When a player shows contempt towards the referee.

h. In case a player takes a position close to the opponents' goal without any player of the opposing team being there between the former and the goal, he is considered off-side and any pass to him is counted "off side." This entitles the
suffers to a free hit.

2. Senno (see p. 77)

The rules of this game are good. But we do not agree with the punishment used in which the winners ride upon the backs of the losers. Nevertheless, this is not a rule. Punishments and rewards are less objectionable when all the players agree upon applying any form of them. The modifications suggested here are mainly concerning the field and the equipment.

The field should be either covered with grass or of clean sand; the former is preferable.

Hitting the ball with the bare hands is another weakness in the game. Therefore, we suggest that the players use leather gloves like those used in the game of handball, and instead of the crude ball used, a rubber ball like that for handball could be used.

Differences often arise as to whether or not the ball has touched the goal "maesse." For eliminating this problem we suggest that the goal should be made of a frame of steel, ten inches long and six high. This frame can be fitted in permanent holes fixed in the ground by placing two small hollow tubes of steel in it. Behind the maesse, a little net is attached of a shape like that used in hockey and soccer. This way the net would hold the ball (Fig. 40).
Players should not number more than seven on each team. Around the meese, a semicircle of two yards diameter should be drawn on the ground, and the latter should be considered out if he passes out of this semicircle when batting.

3. *Hank al dank* (see p. 82)

This game in both its modes is good and need not be modified.

4. *Asfours* (see p. 83)

This game is also good as it is. The only modification needed is that the asfours itself be made of some softer material than wood, so that it would not hurt when it hits the face. We suggest that it should be made of hard rubber, like that material of which shoe heels are
made. This way it can be played in the same manner, but it will be safer.

5. **The Lurum** (see p. 86)

The crude bat used in the game should be replaced by a softball bat. A softball could be used instead of the crude ball. The rest of the rules are good. The score should count one point in favor of the batting team whenever one of its players makes a home run, and each player should be entitled to score only three points and no more by crossing back and forth.

6. **The Hopping Game** (see p. 88)

In this game, the shorts worn by both teams should be of two distinct colors. The goal could be a flag, and the aroos should capture this flag in order to win the point. The rest of the game is acceptable.

7. **Abouna Darabouna** (see p. 90)

Mode A of this game, in my opinion, is not a good game because all members of the chasing team are left idle, except their leader who is active chasing the runners. We also do not approve of the beating inflicted upon the chasers by the runners. Therefore, we recommend that the game should be played only in its B mode which is very interesting and provides recreational opportunity for a considerable number of youngsters at no cost. It is a
very agreeable active game for youngsters of less than fifteen years of age.

9. The Tahteeb (see p. 91)

This game in spite of the hazard that goes with it is considered to be a very interesting duel. It requires alertness, agility, use of judgement, and considerable muscular control. It even exceeds in interest the games of fencing and sabre. Some improvements should be added to eliminate its hazards.

a. The sticks should be made of cardboard, instead of the usual staves, so that they would not injure.

b. The handles of the sticks should have a shield to guard the hands against injury.

c. A helmet of steel wire should be worn to cover the head and protect it from injury.

d. The score should be made by mere touching, and every hard strike should disqualify the player.

e. A touch on the head should score two points, and one on the body only one point. Players should have three trials each.

f. Strikes on the legs should be eliminated under pain of disqualifying the player.

9. The Sesreed Game (see p. 92)

This game is not as common as the others, being played
only on horseback. There is a considerable hazard in this
game as it is, because of the fact that the players throw
heavy sticks at each other's backs from close range. For
adults, we recommend that little rubber balls, rubber rings
like those of deck-tennis, or small rubber pieces of an
old hose be used. A point is scored for each hit, and the
winning team would be that which scores more points.

For youngsters, we recommend that the game be played
on foot. Players should be divided into two teams facing
each other within a distance of thirty yards. In front of
each team, and at a distance of four yards a line is drawn
on the ground to mark the challenge area. Now, in the same
manner as the players of vreede do, a player from team A
would advance until he crosses the challenge line of the
opponents and then would run back towards his team. The
opposite player from team B, holding little rubber balls
or nuts would chase him and throw at him. The score can
be counted as suggested for the original game.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Egypt now is in a transitional stage. Efforts are being made to solve the age-bound social problems of its low economic groups. Leaders in the field of social engineering in that country are convinced that recent progress in the many areas of national endeavor falls short to the extent that the social standard of the multitude is below the desired decent life. In achieving this purpose, provisions for giving more and more leisure time to the working people who constitute the great majority are progressing by leaps and bounds. Consequently, many provisions for recreational activities have been promoted. In this thesis we have attempted to point out the value of exploring folk-games and improving them so that they can conveniently be used in these recreational activities.

By their very nature, folk-games are especially adaptable for community recreational programs. Following are some of the chief reasons:

1. They are familiar and do not need much demonstration to be learned.

2. The equipment is made of local material which is inexpensive in price, and easy to make.

3. In most of these games, relatively large numbers of individuals can participate, a fact which adds
to their social value.

4. By putting these games into common use, the well-to-do people would learn to accept and even admire the manners of the common people, and at the same time, the common people themselves would take pride in their heritage. This could result in minimizing class feeling which is very desirable in the Egyptian scene.

We have also mentioned that among the possible uses of this work are the following:

1. It can serve as source material for play leaders, not only in Egypt, but also in other lands.

2. Considering folk-games as part of the study of folklore, this work might be suggestive of a more comprehensive study of Egyptian folklore whose anthropological and historical value is obvious, especially in a land of as great antiquity as Egypt.

3. Persons interested in recreation find in the games of other lands valuable material for their use.

4. In Egypt, the use of this work may extend to providing play suggestions for schools, homes and other institutions when interest is taken in reviving these games.

We have also mentioned that this work is the first
attempt to discuss this subject exclusively, for as far
as we have been able to discover, no other writer has
written specifically on contemporary Egyptian folk-games.

We have reviewed briefly labor laws enacted in the
last few years as an indication of the general trend
towards more and more leisure for the common people in
Egypt. We have made a brief review of the recent develop-
ment of organized efforts to meet the ever increasing
recreational needs, and hence the significance of using
folk-games.

It was necessary to state that this study is not
meant to be an anthropological treatise, nor is it con-
cerned with the entire field of folklore.

We have tried to show the manner in which folk-games
were practiced in ancient Egypt. We have given an account
of the rise of leisure in ancient Egypt and its far-
reaching effect on the rise of its early civilization.
We have described how the Nile flood helped in growing
food crops and the effect of that on cutting down drudgery
and thus providing for some leisure which was used in
further reducing toil and improving tools. We have pointed
out how the result of this process was love for amusements,
and among these a variety of play activities and games
was developed. We have then given a brief account of the
games they used to practice as could be inferred from the
available records.
As the study was developed, we gave a brief description of the contemporary folk-games as they are practiced now, classifying them as "indoor" games and "outdoor."

In Chapter IV an attempt was made to suggest improvements which would help make these games suitable for common use in schools, homes, clubs, and other institutions.

In conclusion, it was stated that it is hoped that this work would serve the purposes for which it has been written, and that those to whom it may have interest may find in it ample use.
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