

**GAMES AND SONGS  
OF AMERICAN  
CHILDREN;**

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Games and songs of American children; by William Wells Newell

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**WILLIAM WELLS NEWELL**

**GAMES AND SONGS  
OF AMERICAN  
CHILDREN;**





CHILDREN'S GAMES.

[From an old engraving by Van der Venne.]

GAMES AND SONGS  
OF  
AMERICAN CHILDREN

COLLECTED AND COMPARED  
BY  
WILLIAM WELLS NEWELL



NEW YORK  
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS  
1884

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## EDITOR'S NOTE.

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THE existence of any children's tradition in America, maintained independently of print, has hitherto been scarcely noticed. Yet it appears that, in this minor but curious branch of folk-lore, the vein in the United States is both richer and purer than that so far worked in Great Britain. These games supply material for the elucidation of a subject hitherto obscure: they exhibit the true relation of ancient English lore of this kind to that of the continent of Europe; while the amusements of youth in other languages are often illustrated by American custom, which compares favorably, in respect of compass and antiquity, with that of European countries.

Of the two branches into which the lore of the nursery may be divided—the tradition of children and the tradition of nurses—the present collection includes only the former. It is devoted to formulas of play which children have preserved from generation to generation, without the intervention, often without the knowledge, of older minds. Were these—trifling as they often are—merely local and individual, they might be passed over with a smile; but being English and European, they form not the least curious chapter of the history of manners and customs. It has therefore been an essential part of the editor's object to exhibit their correspondences and history; but, unwilling to overcloud with cumbrous research that healthy and bright atmosphere which invests all that really belongs to childhood, he has thought it best to remand to an appendix the necessary references, retaining in the text only so much as may be reasonably supposed of interest to the readers in whom one or another page may awaken early memories.



He has to express sincere thanks to the friends, in different parts of the country, whose kind assistance has rendered possible this volume, in which almost every one of the older states is represented; and he will be grateful for such further information as may tend to render the collection more accurate and complete.

The melodies which accompany many of the games have been written from the recitation of children by S. Austen Pearce, Mus. Doc. Oxon.

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