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down the declivity of the rock surface to the other group of three grinding places close to Fig. 1, without going into the latter, thus supplying six places with the necessary water for grinding purposes. In using the single grinding place below Fig. 1, water could be obtained from another groove discharging itself some distance above it. It is unnecessary to state that if the ovens were full of water, it could be dipped out by the natives as required, when using these grinding places.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM, SYDNEY.

The GAME of TEETOTUM as practised by certain of the QUEENSLAND ABORIGINES. By R. ETHERIDGE, Junr., Curator.
[WITH PLATE XVIII.]

(Published by permission of the Trustees of the Australian Museum.)

THE game of Teetotum engaged in by any section of the Australian aborigines, will, I think, be a new fact for the consideration of most of the members of the Anthropological Institute. Comparatively little appears to be known about it, and so far as I have been able to gather the practice appears to be confined to a limited geographical area.

The only published reference to this interesting pastime, known to me, is a brief record of the exhibition of similar tops, for after all, that is what they really are, before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria in Melbourne, by Mr. A. H. S. Lucas, M.A., Head-Master of Newington College, Sydney.

My attention was first called to these tops by my colleague Mr. A. T. North, F.L.S., through the presentation of three to the Australian Museum, by Mr. W. S. Day, who obtained them on the Barron River, near Cairns, North Queensland.

Inquiry thus set on foot resulted in the unearthing of a fourth top, already in the Museum, that had been obtained by Mr. Robert Grant when on a collecting tour on behalf of the Trustees in the Cairns District. Through the information supplied in the first instance by Messrs. Day and Grant, who both saw the teetotums in use, I am in a position to afford authentic information on this interesting subject.

The Barron River flows into Trinity Bay at Cairns. The tops were found in a black's camp at Kuranda, on the Upper Barron, twenty-one miles from Cairns.¹ The single one obtained

¹ "Victorian Naturalist," 1894 ix, No. 9, p. 62.

by Mr. Grant was found in another camp about four miles from Boar Pocket, at Lake Eicham, also in the Cairns District, after the "dispersal" of the local tribe by the armed constabulary.

The teetotums are made of a small gourd, growing in the neighbourhood, and vary slightly in size, the largest being 3 inches in length, and about the same in diameter. A wooden spindle is passed exactly through the centre protruding at the upper end to form a shaft, and sufficiently at the lower to form a peg. The spindles are secured to the gourds, top and bottom, by black gum-cement in three instances, and by a yellow gum in the fourth. In the three examples obtained by Mr. Day, two holes are burnt on opposite sides and through the gourd, side by side, by means of a fire-stick, and the holes for the insertion of the spindles are similarly produced. In the Lake Eicham top, on the contrary, the holes are above one another, the upper on each side being the larger.

Mr. Day says that the black gum-cement is prepared by the "gins," or women, chewing the kino of a eucalypt for a day, when it is sufficiently soft and ready for use. The tops are spun between the palms of the hands, the rotatory motion thus brought about giving sufficient impetus to produce a loud hum. The blacks with whom Mr. Day was associated spun on a piece of government blanket, or on an old coat, but they informed him that previous to the advent of the white, a small mat was employed, made by steeping the bark of a eucalypt in water, and then pounding it into fibre with stones, previous to weaving.

At Lake Eicham, Mr. Grant informs me, the tops are simply spun on any piece of hard ground, a track preferred, and are often used to amuse the children.

Confirmatory evidence has been obligingly supplied by Sub-Inspector P. Galbraith, of Cairns, through the Commissioner of Police, Brisbane. The inspector says, "Top spinning is a pastime amongst the aborigines of [Mount] Bellenden-Ker, and the Musgrave River. It is indulged in by adults as well as the children. The top is made out of an indigenous gourd averaging about 3 inches in diameter, a small stick being placed in two holes through the centre, and held there by clay and honey wax." This information is exceedingly satisfactory, and quite confirms the statements of Messrs. Day and Grant.

As I have already explained the tops are met with, so far as at present known to me, only within a limited geographical area. The Barron River, Lake Eicham, Mount Bellender-Ker, and the Musgrave River, are all in the Cairns District, and comparatively speaking not far apart. Whence, therefore, did

the aborigines obtain the idea of teetotum spinning? So far as one can learn certainly not from the whites, at any rate there is no evidence to support such a conclusion. On the contrary, we have the testimony of Mr. Day, a most reliable observer, that they were used before the occupation of this part of the country. I regret that I am not in a position to solve this question, but there is the bare possibility that they may be a remnant of Malay or Papuan influence. It is a significant fact that the further we go north on the Australian Continent, the more apparent is the resemblance between the weapons and implements of the North Australian aborigines to those of New Guinea. Through the researches of Mr. C. H. Read, stone spinning tops are known to have been used on Murray Island in Torres Strait, in the form of circular lenticular discs, with a central hole through which is passed a stick of palm wood. They are used simply as toys, and are spun with the hands.¹ Mr. Read does not think the natives of the island invented the idea, but obtained it from some of the Asiatic Archipelago people to the west and north. The nearest known locality to Murray Island at which top-spinning occurs is Timor Laut, one of the Tenimber Islands. The toy used here, however, appears to be a true top. In the Straits Settlements, on the other hand, Mr. Read says a humming-top is used, made from a section of a bamboo.

At the exhibition of similar tops to the present before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, already referred to, Mr. Lucas is reported to have said that they were the "first instance of a toy amongst the aboriginals." I think this remark attributed to Mr. Lucas is too casual. Games, other than strictly athletic exercises, accompanied by toy-adjuncts, are certainly known amongst the Australian aborigines. Mr. A. W. Howitt says² "that the game of ball was probably known to most of the tribes of South-east Australia." The *Kurnai* made the ball used by them from the scrotum of an "old-man" kangaroo; the *Woiworung* of rolled-up pieces of opossum skin, calling it *mangūrt*. The late Mr. R. B. Smyth³ informs us that this game of ball was called *marn-grōok* in some tribes, and the ball made of twisted opossum hair. The ball made from the kangaroo scrotum, by inflating it with air, was called *dirlk*.⁴ Toy weapons were also made for and used by the male children.⁵ But the most interesting toy is the *weet-weet*, or "kangaroo rat," a plaything of the natives of Victoria probably for ages.⁶ It

¹ "Journ. Anthrop. Inst. Great Britain and Ireland," 1887, xvii, p. 85.

² "Journ. Anthrop. Inst.," xviii, p. 316 (footnote).

³ "Aborigines of Victoria," 1878, i, p. 176.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 353.



consists of a knob and handle, and the game depends on the skill with which it is thrown to a distance. An interesting description¹ of this game has also been given by Mr. W. E. Stanbridge, and is important, inasmuch as it differs in some particulars from the account given by Smyth.

I hope on a future occasion to forward to the Institute the native name of these tops, and the systematic name of the gourd of which they are made.

Explanation of Photograph.

Three tops from the Barron River, obtained by Mr. W. S. Day.

NEGRITHES in BORNEO. By H. LING ROTH.

THE question, "Are there any Negrithes in Borneo?" is one of great interest, and has been as yet by no means solved.

The interest in the question lies in the fact that while in the surrounding countries the existence of Negrithes has been more or less proved, no European has yet met with a Negrith in Borneo. There are plenty of Negrithes in the Philippine Islands (A. B. Meyer, "Die Philippinen," II, Negrithos; Dresden, fol., 1893), and while Alex. Dalrymple says there are none in Palawan, Mr. A. Hart Everett says he could hear nothing of any Negrithes in that part of Palawan visited by him. They exist in the Malay Peninsula. In Sumatra the Kubus had been considered to have at some remote period intermingled with the Negrithes, while their osteology leans decidedly to the Malays. (Dr. Garson, J.A.I., xiv, 132.) In Java and Madura I cannot find that Negrithes are proved to have existed, although the Kalangs are very like them. In Sumbawa there is a race of people of whom almost nothing is known (F. H. H. Guillemard, "Australasia," II, 1894, p. 358), but it is not stated they might be Negrithes. "It is highly probable that a low and primitive race² did once inhabit Celebes, but if so, it has, so far as we know, completely disappeared" (*ibid.*, p. 288).

It was for this reason—namely, widespread surrounding negritic population—that, when at the meeting of the British Association at Oxford in 1894, I pointed out we must suspend our judgment as to the existence of Negrithes in Borneo, I was told probabilities were against me, as Borneo was in the midst

¹ "Trans. Ethnol. Soc., 1861," p. 297.

² Not necessarily negritic—nor is this inferred by Dr. Guillemard.—H. L. R.