

feature, that the head of the girl standing in the centre of the ring is covered with a shawl, and a portion of the game turns upon her recognition by another player. This indicates, thinks Mrs. Gomme, that "in this game we have preserved one of the ceremonies of a now obsolete marriage-custom—namely, the disguising of the bride and placing her among her bridesmaids and other young girls, all having veils or other coverings alike over their heads and bodies. The bridegroom has to select from among these maidens the girl whom he wished to marry, or whom he had already married, for until this was done he was not allowed to depart with his bride. This custom was continued in sport as one of the ceremonies to be gone through after the marriage was over, long after the custom itself was discontinued. This ordeal occurs in more than one folk-tale, and it usually accompanies the incident of a youth having travelled for adventures, sometimes in quest of a bride. He succeeds in finding the whereabouts of the coveted girl, but before he is allowed by the father to take his bride away he is required to perform tasks, a final one being the choosing of the girl with whom he is in love from among others, all dressed alike and disguised. Our bridal veil may probably originate in this custom." A further instance of the complete alteration of character which befalls a custom as it passes through the various stages of its downward evolution, may be studied in the well-known child's song, "Green Gravel," which, little as the children or their mothers suspect it, is, according to the authority just cited, evidently a funeral game. The green gravel and green grass indicate the locality of the scene; "green" as applied to the gravel meaning probably, freshly disturbed, just as a green grave means a freshly-made grave. The tenant of the newly-made grave is the well-loved lady of a disconsolate lover, and probably the incidents of washing and dressing the corpse, putting an inscription on the place where it is laid, and