

Swimming was also a favorite amusement. Almost all the men, women, boys, and girls could swim. Some of them were able to swim across lakes three or four miles wide, and across the widest rivers of the country. Their mode of swimming was, as a rule, animal fashion, very few of them using a breast stroke. They turned partly over on their left side, and drew the left arm underneath them, at the same time reaching above water and forward with their right. This was in turn drawn underneath, palms backward, the hand being held somewhat cup shape. Then they turned on their right side, raising the left hand as they had the right, and so on. The legs were sometimes shoved backwards together, but just as frequently one after the other; while some shoved only one leg, the other foot striking the surface of the water. The men and women always bathed in different places. During the months of July and August, many of the Indians still indulge in gambolling in the waters of the Thompson River.

Many children's games were played by the smaller boys and girls. "Cat's-cradle" was one of these (Fig. 270). Strings were fixed on the fingers in different ways, so as to present many forms, such as the "beaver," the "deer," the "buckskin," the "conical lodge," the "women's house," the "man stealing wood," etc. Games of hide-and-seek were often indulged in. Slings were used by the boys in just the same manner as among the whites. They were made of Indian-hemp cord or of thong, with a piece of buckskin, in which the pebble was placed. They were never used to hit or to kill, but only for throwing to as great a distance as possible. Tops or whirligigs were used. These were generally made of a thin circular piece of wood, or more frequently a piece of yellow-pine bark, through the centre of which was inserted a pin a fourth to half an inch in diameter, and about five or six inches long, the circular piece of wood being allowed to remain about the middle of the pin. The one who made his top spin the longest won. Bull-roarers were made of a circular piece of wood, with two holes near the centre, through which a string passed. All these games are occasionally played at the present day.

Tobogganing was a favorite amusement, and was indulged in by boys and girls until full grown. At the present day little sleds are used; but formerly flat stones, planks, and pieces of thick birch-bark turned up in front, were used. In very steep places fir-branches tied together at their thick ends served as toboggans. These latter were sometimes used by men for sliding down mountain-sides when the snow was frozen hard.

Snowballing, making snow men, rolling large snowballs, making hobby-horses on which to run races, were all amusements of the boys and girls. The horses were small poles, which they straddled, and dragged along underneath them. They had miniature tails and manes made of grass; and the ends of the poles were bent down, or carved rudely in imitation of horses' heads. They ran races on their pole steeds, whipping them as they went along.

Indian children made, and often do yet, figures of birds, people, canoes, etc.,