



The Game of Goose

Author(s): Henry Carrington Bolton

Source: *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 8, No. 29 (Apr. - Jun., 1895), pp. 145-150

Published by: [American Folklore Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/533178>

Accessed: 11/10/2013 17:04

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



American Folklore Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of American Folklore*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE GAME OF GOOSE.¹

The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The Twelve Good Rules, the Royal Game of Goose.

GOLDSMITH'S *Deserted Village*.

THE "Sociable Snake" played by children in Great Britain, the "District Messenger Boy" in the United States, the "Schwarzer Peter Spiel" in Germany, the "Jeu de l'armée Française" in France, the "Giro del Mondo" in Italy, and the "Paardentrampspel" in Holland, are modifications of the old game mentioned by the British poet above cited. These and similar variations embody the underlying principle of the parent game, viz. : to reward good luck and to punish bad luck, to reward by promotion or by a draft on the common purse, to punish by degradation and by fines.

The typical game of Goose is arranged as follows : the variations will be noted later. The game is played by two, three or more persons and requires a special board, dice, counters, and one marker of distinctive color for each player. The board is divided into 63 number spaces arranged in a spiral, the centre space being marked to indicate the goal. The spaces are filled with pictures of common objects, mostly without significance ; but beginning with No. 5 each ninth space (5, 14, 23, 32, 41, 50, and 59) is occupied by the representation of a goose. Certain other spaces are filled with these objects : No. 6 a bridge ; No. 12 another bridge ; No. 19 an inn ; No. 31 a well ; No. 42 a maze ; No. 52 a prison ; No. 58 a death's head ; No. 63 a goose in a lake.

The game proceeds thus : each player in turn throws dice and places his marker on the space bearing a number equal to the sum thrown ; on the successive rounds the markers are moved forward and the player whose marker first reaches the goal wins the game. But the player is liable to encounter helps and hindrances, since certain of the spaces bring him good luck and others bad luck. If the dice-throw places his marker on the space occupied by a goose he advances it double the amount of the throw ; at No. 6, the bridge, he advances it to No. 12 ; when he reaches No. 19, the inn, he must remain there until all the players have had two throws each ; if he fall on No. 31, a well, he must pay a fine with the counters, and remain there until freed by another player ; if he fall on No. 42, in the maze, he pays a fine and retreats to No. 30 ; if he falls on No. 52, the prison, he must pay a fine and remain there until freed by another player ; if he fall on No. 52, the death's head, he pays a fine and must begin

¹ Paper read at the Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society, Washington, D. C., Dec. 28, 1895.

again at No. 1. When one player meets another on the same space he goes back to his place and pays a fine. When in the very first throw a player gets a 6 and a 3, he advances to space No. 26 occupied by two dice; if the first throw be 5 and 4 he goes to No. 53, a space also indicated by two dice. If a player approaching the goal passes No. 63, he counts back a number equal to the excess, and if this brings him to a goose he counts back a number equal to twice his throw.

In place of counters the directions suggest the use of nuts and bonbons.

Such are the rules of this simple game, which enjoys a popularity throughout Europe and America seemingly out of all proportion to its merits, for adults find the game exceedingly dull. Variations in the rules are numerous, the only limit being the fancy of the publisher. The boards vary greatly in size and in disposition of the spaces; the spaces are increased in number up to 100, they are arranged in fanciful shapes, and they are occupied with pictures in almost endless variety. Instead of dice the tee-to-tum is used in England, and the spinning arrow in America. Even the games which may be regarded as standard, present to the eye great diversity of appearance, differing in artistic merit from the crudest black-and-white diagram on cheap, thin paper to the brightly illuminated and skilfully designed pictorial chart mounted on stout cardboard.

The "Mansion of Happiness" will be remembered by many members of the Folk-Lore Society as a game common in their youth; it is a modification of the old game of Goose adapted to ethical teaching for the benefit of young people. It was invented by Miss Abbott, daughter of a Beverly clergyman, and was the first board-game published in America. The following lines show its object:—

At this amusement each will find
A moral to improve the mind.
It gives to those their proper due
Who various paths of vice pursue,
And shows (while vice destruction brings)
That Good from every Virtue springs.
Be virtuous then and forward press
To gain the seat of Happiness.

The number of spaces is 60, when a dice-throw places the player in the space marked "Idleness," he has to go back to "Poverty," and in like manner "Pride" throws the player back to "Humility;" in short, every vice is punished by an appropriate penalty and virtue is duly rewarded.

In France a game quite analogous to the Mansion of Happiness is now current, called "Jeu moral et instructif."

As intimated at the outset, the game in its various forms is widely distributed in Europe, and during a recent sojourn on the continent I made a collection of one hundred and thirty examples. In France the game is called *Feu de l'oie*, in Germany *Ganse-Spiel*, in Holland, *Ganzenspel*, in Denmark, *Gaasespil*, in Sweden, *Gåsspelet*, and in Italy, *Giuoco dell' oca*, all being literal translations. In these countries the boards are similar in design, the rules are similar even when adapted to special variations, and the specific objects used for certain spaces are alike in kind. The wide circulation of the cheaply printed boards is shown by the fact that on many the instructions are printed in four languages. In Germany I found the greatest variety, both as to style and ingenious modifications; in France I found the finest specimens of color printing; in England the game is comparatively rare; in Italy the prints and paper are of the poorest quality.

The modifications of the game retain the principles of reward for good luck and punishment for bad luck, and are adapted to attract children of every grade of intelligence. Those who are fond of travels, or horse-racing, or hunting, or railway experiences, or yachting, will find games to please them, and the patriotic child will delight in the "Flaggen-Spiel," or the "Jeu de l'armée Française," according to his nationality. Some of the modifications are ingeniously designed to impart instruction in an entertaining way; such are the historical games "Kaiser-Spiel," and the "Jeu historique de la France;" those who take interest in their own country will find geographical games such as the "Grand jeu du pigeon voyageur," and the "giuoco istruttivo per l'insegnamento pratico della geografia elementare;" the former taking players from town to town on the map of France, and the latter doing the same for Italy. Even ethical teaching may be imparted by the use of the "Mansion of Happiness," or the "Jeu moral et instructif."

A highly ingenious adaptation is that by a firm in Holland celebrated for an article of household consumption; the board is attractively printed, and the game serves as an excellent advertisement.

Annexed is a list of the games collected and exhibited at the Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society held in Washington City, December 28, 1894.

German	60	American	9
French	37	Danish	1
Dutch	12	Swedish	1
Italian	24		—
English	4	Total	148

GERMAN.

[The numbers in parentheses denote the number of spaces in each game.]

- Gänse-Spiel. (Six different styles.)
 Neues Gänse-Spiel. (Five styles.)
 Allerneuestes Gänse-Spiel. (Two styles.)
 Neues Wettrennen-Spiel (33). Another style (61).
 Neues deutsches Flaggen-Spiel (100).
 Neues Reise-Spiel mit Hindernissen (70).
 Neuestes Post- und Reise-Spiel (44).
 Müller- und Schornsteinefegereselle auf der Wanderschaft (42).
 Allerneuestes Lotterie-Spiel (55).
 Kaiser-Spiel (30).
 Neues Gänse-Spiel; Fuchs du hast die Gans gestohlen (65).
 Kriegs-Spiel (70).
 Robinson-Spiel (34).
 Schulze und Müller's Wettreise durch Afrika (48).
 Blumen-Spiel.
 Affen-Spiel (63).
 Neues-Affen-Spiel (63). Another style (54).
 Neuestes Affen-Spiel (100). Another style (63).
 Wer will schwarzer Peter werden (70).
 Eisenbahn-spiel (70). Another style (36).
 Neues Glücks-Spiel (100).
 Das Vogelschiessen (29).
 Der Seefahrer (25).
 Die Fuchsjagd.
 Das Matrosen-Spiel (40). Neues Matrosen-Spiel (32).
 Die Reise um die Welt (41).
 Das Jagd-Spiel (41).
 Allerneuestes Wettrenn-Spiel (100).
 Neues Eisenbahn- und Dampfchiffahrts-Spiel (36).
 Luft-ballon-Spiel (35).
 Touristen-Spiel (36).
 Allerneuestes Kriegs-Spiel (45).
 Das Turnier-Spiel.
 Hanswurst Spiel (32).
 Neues Schwarzer Peter-Spiel (70).
 Neuestes Jagd-Spiel (35).
 Jagd-Spiel (36).
 Wölker-Spiel (25).
 Neues Hintz- und Peter-Spiel (85).
 Hasen-Spiel (63).
 Neues Hasen-Spiel (73).
 Die Sonntags-Jäger (63).
 Pferdebahn-Spiel (36).
 Die Menagerie (25).
 Neues Bank-Spiel (100).

FRENCH.

- Jeu de l'oie, renouvelé des Grecs. (Twelve styles.)
 Le Tour du Monde (46).
 Grand jeu du pigeon voyageur. (Map of France.)

Grand jeu Franco-Russe (63).
Jeu de la chasse (50).
[Nameless], represents deep-sea fisheries.
Jeu du Juif-Errant (63). (Two styles.)
Jeu des mystères de Paris (63).
Grand jeu du Sorcier (63).
Jeu des Rois de France (63). (Two styles.)
Jeu moral et instructif (63). (Two styles.)
Jeu des Nations (12).
Jeu de l'armée Française.
Jeu du conscrit (63).
Jeu de la marine (63).
Jeu du petit voyageur (63).
Jeu du chemin-de-fer (63).
Jeu du soldat (63).
Jeu militaire (63).
Jeu historique de la France militaire (63).
Jeu des courses de chevaux.
Grand jeu du pont terrible (52).
Grand jeu de l'amour (40).

DUTCH.

Post en Reisspel (36).
Wedrennen.
Sporweg-Spel (36).
Riddertoornooi (36).
Roeiwedstrijd (36).
Robinson-Spel (30).
Belegerings-Spel (29).
Vossen-en Ganzenspel (50).
Luchtballonspel (39).
Paardentranspel (63).
Reis door Europa (36).
Regatta-Spel (36).

DANISH.

Allernyeste Gaasespil (100).

SWEDISH.

Nya Gåsspelet (100).

ITALIAN.

Giuoca dell' oca. (Nine styles in colors and six in black and white (90).)
Il nuovo giuoco dell' oca (90).
La lanterna magica (73).
Giuoco istruttivo per l'insignamento pratico della Geografia elementare. (Map of Italy.)
Il Giro del mondo (80).
Giuoco del barone (77).
Giuoco Sport.
Giuoco dell' amore e dell' imeneo (80).
La battaglia del '48.
Giuoco del Tramway.

ENGLISH.

The New Royal Game of Goose; 63 spaces arranged on the body of a goose.
Tee-to-tum.

Upidee, a race game (85).
 Race game (100).
 The Sociable Snake.

AMERICAN.

The Mansion of Happiness.
 Life's Mishaps.
 Lost in the Woods.
 Innocents Abroad.
 From the Log Cabin to the White House.
 The Travellers' Map Game. To Chicago.
 Round the World with Nelly Bly (73 days).
 The District Messenger Boy.
 The World's Fair Game.

The wide distribution of this game and the large number of variants constantly being produced attests its great popularity; I have observed that in those countries where the governments conduct lotteries, and a spirit of gambling is rife, the popularity is greatest, and its cheap styles place it within reach of the poorest children. Thus it takes the form of an education, leading children to become familiar with the principles of the lottery and preparing them for the higher methods so profitable to the Crown and the State, but so demoralizing to the people.

Henry Carrington Bolton.