

ready to inflict punishment. The owner of the bear then shouted out the following doggerel:—

One, two, three,
My bear's free;
If thou touches my bear
I'll touch thee.

At the last word the lads strike at the bear with their weapons, and the bellert makes a rush at the lads, trying to tick them. The rules of this game were:— If a lad struck at the bear before the word 'three' was spoken he had to be the bear. The bellert generally dodged a bit in reciting his rhyme to cause that result. It was the bellert's duty to protect his bear. To do so he kept walking round it trying to catch the dogs as they came to inflict punishment. The first boy that the bellert happened to tick had then to take the part of the bear, and had the privilege of choosing his own bellert. This was a very ancient, barbarous, cruel and painful game. I have known lads who have carried marks on their backs a long time after playing at it.

We had also a very rough game which was called 'Scoo Page,' the derivation of which, I imagine, has come from 'school page.' To commence this game someone would bring a worthless hat or cap and volunteer to protect it. The cap was then thrown on the ground, the other boys commenced to kick it, and the owner did his best in trying to regain it. If a luckless lad kicked it and the owner caught it before it alighted on the ground, then he that kicked it last had to doff his cap, throw it on the ground, and protect it in a like manner. I have had several caps which have had their peaks kicked off and otherwise damaged by taking part in this foolish game, and when I have gone home I have received severe chastisement at the hands of my mother.

Another game was called 'Cocksticks,' which was very largely patronised by the youths, both in the workshops and in the streets, on Shrove Tuesday. The confectioners in those days manufactured a kind of coarse gingerbread, which they baked in large flat tins. It was rolled flat whilst in the tins. It was then stamped with a die, which cut the gingerbread into the form of small hearts, and was then placed in the oven and baked. These small gingerbread hearts were sold at about sixteen for a penny. The way we played the game was this: We placed a brick on its end on the ground (that is if we could get one). As many as were playing placed a gingerbread on this upright brick. Some lad would bring out of the house his mother's rolling-pin; then we were complete for the game. We went about a dozen yards from the brick, and each in turn had a throw with this rolling-pin at the gingerbreads placed on the brick-end. The thrower had all he knocked off; if he had the good luck to knock the brick down then he had all that was placed on it. This was repeated until the stock of gingerbreads got into one or two lads' hands. This was a relic of a barbarous game common in England centuries ago, which would astonish the officials of the Humane Society, also of all right-thinking men who saw it practised. Those taking part in what was the forerunner of 'Cocksticks' drove a stake or a stick in the ground. A live cock was then fixed on the top, its legs having been fastened to the stake with cords, and the game commenced. As in the game of cocksticks, each had a throw at this live bird in turns, and those who could break its legs that it could not stand, or kill it, claimed the body, and bore it home as a trophy.

We had a game called 'Cockalorum,' which I have neither seen nor heard of being played since. It was performed in the following manner: We cast lots which lad should be the 'horse' first. The 'horse' then placed his arms and head against a wall, holding his back in a horizontal position. A lad then