

# The Aboriginal Names of Rivers in Australia Philologically Examined.

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[Read before the Royal Society of N.S.W., 4 August, 1886.]

It is the purpose of this paper to pass in review the names which the aborigines of Australia have given to the rivers, streams, and waters generally of the country which they have occupied. More specifically, attention will be directed to the principles if discoverable on which the names have been given. In this inquiry constant regard will be had to the question whether the Aborigines have followed the same general principles which are found to prevail in other languages of the world. Without further preface, it may be stated that all available vocabularies will be searched for the terms used to designate water, whether in the shape of rivers, brooks, or creeks; expansions of water, as oceans, seas, bays, or harbours; lakes, lagoons, pools, or waterholes; swamps, or marshes; springs, or wells; rain, or waterfalls; and any other form in which water is the important element.

**M**, imitative of the sound of Waters.

*Words for Water containing the letter M.*

To make a beginning, let one of the imitative root words for water be chosen as the basis of experiment. There is the letter *M*, which represents the *humming* sound pertaining to water, whether flowing in streams or moved by tides and winds in ocean expanses. In carrying out the experiment the method followed will be (1) to examine the vocabularies for root-words designating water in any of the shapes already indicated, and embodying in the present case the letter *m*; (2) to examine the gazetteers of the several colonies, to ascertain how the same letter is embodied in the actual names of rivers, streams, and waters generally; and (3) to compare the results with the root words for water in other parts of the world.

Proceeding tentatively then with the letter *m*, is it to be found embodied in root words meaning water within the four corners of Australia? To this question there is the answer that the simple form *amu*, meaning *water*, is found in the region of the Ballonne. At Rockingham Bay the form *hammoo* is found also meaning *water*. Here, there can be no doubt, the same root is concerned, although the *m* is doubled and the word is increased by the addi-

tion of an aspirate at the beginning. In Victoria such forms as *immut* and *ammitch* for *sea* are found. Here then are tolerably plain evidences that the letter *m*, as a matter of fact, was used by the aborigines as in some way specially fitted to occupy a place in words intended to represent *water*.

Turning now to the gazetteers and books of Australian travel for the actual names of rivers and streams, there are found such names as *Ma-Ma* and *Mi-Mi* Creek in Queensland. In New South Wales there is *Ooma* Creek, a form which so closely resembles the word *amu*, *water*, which has already come before us. Still further, in Victoria, there is the *Moe* swamp. In such cases, where there is no other consonant than the radical *m* itself, the conclusion seems every way reasonable that *Ma-Ma* and *Mi-Mi* and *Ooma* and *Moe* just signified the *water* in the lips of the people who lived on the banks of these waters respectively. In farther consulting the gazetteers, large numbers of compound words for rivers and waters are found to contain the termination *ma*. Thus there are such names as the *Murruma* Creek, *Muttuma* Creek, and many more. Here, however, an apparent difficulty occurs, for as the aboriginal names are scrutinized the form *Mia-Mia* is found to designate a mountain. In the meantime it may suffice to point out that *m* is found to be a radical form used to designate water, but not mountains; and (2) such a name as *Mia-Mia* pretty plainly points to the aboriginal term used in some parts of Australia, meaning a shelter of boughs and branches broken off the trees. The *Mia-Mia* mountain, accordingly, was very probably so named from some circumstance regarding aboriginal shelters upon it.

The next stage in our inquiry is to compare the result so far attained with what has taken place among tribes and nations in other parts of the world. In pursuing this part of our subject, it is to be noticed that the form *mo*, for *water*, remounts to a very high antiquity, as it was employed by the Egyptians. Closely allied was the Phœnician form, *mu*; in Hebrew *maim* is the plural for *waters*. At this point it is not amiss to point out that the letter *m*, especially in its running still more than in its capital form, has a pictorial significance in addition to its fitness to represent water owing to its humming sound, for the letter *m* is taken from the hieroglyphic representation of the ripple on the surface of water, and has found its way into a large number of the alphabets of the world. But, still pursuing the subject, it is to be noticed that the form *ma* is the Arabic for *water*; *uma* is the Draverian; and the same root-letter is found in the Tungusian and other Asiatic dialects. Still farther, *mam* means *fresh water* in the island of Tarawa, while *mem* means the same in Rotumah; *amai* and *huamo* denote the swell of the sea in Maori; *mî* is *water* in the Tigre language; and the root occurs in many more African dia-

lects. *Mem* is *water* in the Upper Sacramento in North America. Whatever may be the ultimate meaning or value of the foregoing facts, one point is clear, that the aborigines of Australia, in adopting largely the imitative *m* to denote water, have gone on the same principle as many other tribes of the human family in other parts of the world.

*Root-words for Water represented by MB.*

Having started with the letter *m*, we must be guided by the phonetic laws to which letters are subject; or, indeed, as we are proceeding tentatively, our inquiry may be regarded as keeping an eye to the question, whether or not language amongst the aborigines of Australia was subject to the same leading general laws which are found to prevail elsewhere.

But as to the affinity between the two letters *m* and *b*. We are familiar with such illustrations as these:—*Brotos* means a *mortal* in Greek. With the primitive *a* there would be *abrotos*, an *immortal*. But *b* in any such predicament displays its affinity for *m*, hence the actual form is *ambrotos*. So, reciprocally, the affinity of *m* for *b*: from the Greek *gameo*, I marry, there would be some such form as *gameros*, one related by marriage, a son-in-law, but the actual form is *gambros*. Dealing with the names of rivers, we have the *Sabis*, the name of a stream in Gaul mentioned by Cæsar; but at the present day the *Sabis* of Cæsar is the *Sambre*. In this case both an *m* and an *r* have been added to the earlier form. Again, there is the *Abers* of Ptolemy; that river is now understood to be the *Humber*, in the north of England. Here not only has the *b* shown its affinity for the *m*, which has been introduced to keep it company, but another tendency of language is also illustrated: it is the lengthening and strengthening of the initial syllable—the feeble vowel is fortified by the introduction of the aspirate. Now, the aspirate is closely akin to the gutturals *g* and *k*, and, as we shall see, the aboriginal names of streams present a large number of illustrations in *cmb*, *gmb*, *kmb*, with their phonetic equivalents.

But proceeding with our task, and working up step by step to the longer forms, we have to look at the materials which illustrate the combination of the letters *mb* in root-words for water. In the vocabularies we notice *yambaai*, a lagoon, and *alumbah*, a spring, *kalumbo*, salt water, in Western Australia. In the gazetteers we find *Amby* River and *Einbo* Creek, *Umby* Creek *Wambo* Ponds, *Combo* Creek *Wecoma* Lake, *Mowamba* River, *Wallombi* Brook, *Yarimba* Creek. Also, it is this combination of *mb* which supplies some of the most stately forms for names of streams, as *Waramba* and *Warragamba* Rivers. Also, such a name as *Tumby* Island, in South Australia, illustrates the fact that root-words for water are used to denote islands and promontories.

Looking now beyond the boundaries of Australia, we find illustrations to our present purpose in the Malay and Feejee languages. There is in Malay *ombak* a wave, *kumbah* to wash, *Tambak* a fishpond, *tumba* to draw water. In Sumatra there is a river named *Jambi*, exhibiting the combination of letters *mb*. Moreover, this river gives name to a district, which drains the waters of several other streams besides the *Jambi* itself. In the Feejee vocabularies occur the words *dhomba* to throw water, *mbiau* a wave, *tomba* a bay of the sea. The foregoing forms, both Malay and Feejee, are in *mb*; but the Malay supplies some in *mp*, thus: *ampah* and *limpah*, to overflow. But in dealing with *mb* there must not be omitted the form *ambu*, water, in the Sanscrit. The Latin *nimbus*, a rain-cloud, is also an example to the point. It may be noted that while the stately forms in *mb* are so conspicuous in Australian, Malay, and Feejee, they seem to be very deficient in Maori.

#### Amplifications of MB in MBL, MBN, MBR.

The addition of the liquid letters *l n r* to the combination *mb* produces some of those euphionous names which have often been admired; thus there are *Barambil* Creek, *Bourimbla* Creek, *Currambene* Creek, *Wiambone* Creek, *Piambong* Creek, *Piambra* Creek, and *Wamberal* Lake.

In looking to other languages root-words can be found in *mb* and *mbr* referring to water, thus in Malay *ombal* means wet, *tembul* is to rise to the surface, *galambung* is foam, *kijambang* is a water plant, *panambang* a ferryman, *tambang* to be conveyed by water, *lembang* to drain. Including this last word is the name *Palembang*, which is applied to designate a district in Sumatra, which drains the waters of a number of rivers besides those of the *Palembang* itself. Malay forms in *mp* are such as *ampang*, a float, *ampuhan* and *lampang*, a flood. The Malay words ending in *ang* and *bang* remind us not a little of similar terminations to Australian words. But further: the euphionous names in *mbr*, in so far as they indicate connection with water, run parallel with words of Greek, Latin, and Gothic stocks. There is the Greek *ombros* a shower, with its near relative in Latin *umber*, also a shower. Moreover the *Ambrones* were so called as being river people, just as *Umbria* seems to have been so called as being a river country. In fact, forms in *mbr* are of special interest. The existence of words of this form in different languages and among different peoples in Europe, is held as pointing to a very important fact in the history of the human family. It is held that this form *mbr* must have been in existence while the human race were associated together in Asia, and therefore before that dispersion whereby the form was carried to different parts of the world. But still farther as to the illustrative names in Europe: *Amberloo* is the meadow of

the water; *ambra* is another name relating to water. So also as to such names as *Ammer* and *Emmer*; these last would be formed from such originals as *Amber* and *Ember* by the regular and well-known law of assimilation. According to this law the words in question might become either *Ammer* and *Emmer* or *Abber* and *Ebber*.

#### River names in K, MB, L, N, R.

Hitherto we have had as the basis of operation root-words for water in the forms *m* and *mb*, with their phonetic equivalents. Or taking *m* to represent the very beginning of the stream, *b* comes in as an important tributary. Gathering strength as it goes along, a tributary joins the combined currents in the shape of the initial aspirate or guttural. Incidentally, some examples have come before us already, but now they appear directly on their own account; thus we have the names *Cambalong* Creek, *Kiambala* Creek, *Eucumbene* Creek, *Gambenany* Creek, *Cumborah* Springs, *Gallagambroon* Creek, *Bungambrawartha* Creek.

Looking now to other languages, we find the forms *Comber* and *Cumber* meaning a confluence of streams employed in the Celtic languages. *Cumbernauld* just means the meeting of the streams. The names *Kemper* and *Quimper* in the west of Europe have the same meaning. *Kemberleach* in Brittany means the place of the confluence.

#### B, (Non-imitative.)

##### Root-words for Water in Ba, Pa, Wa.

After finding tributaries to the stream which started with *m*, and also after finding something analogous to ana-branches in the liquids *l, n, r*, we now come to a marked division in the waters of the stream, to the formation of a delta where two or more main streams flow separately. For, notwithstanding all affinities, the *m* can stand alone, and so also can the *b*. The first point has been already illustrated; and the other comes before us now for proof to the same effect. But more than this, we are now crossing the very line at which great discussions have taken place regarding the origin of language, for in *m* we have an imitative root to signify water, but not so in *b* or its phonetic representatives. The humming sound which pertains to *m* does not pertain to *b*; nevertheless, as we have seen, the one letter in certain circumstances introduces us to the other. The fact here developed is of obvious importance in drawing the boundary lines determining how far the influence of the imitative principle extends in the words of a language.

Proceeding with our inquiry, we have now to contemplate the fact that root-words in *b, p, w* for water are very numerous although not imitative of the sound of water. *B* as a labial may,

indeed, be regarded as having more softness about it than dentals, sibilants, and gutturals. In that respect it has a fitness for being shown to represent water; still, it is not to be regarded as having the important imitative element in any such way as pertains to *m*. Searching the vocabularies, we find the simple form *oba*, *water*, with variations, such as *oboit* and *obait* about Port Essington in the north-west. At Cape York there is *epi*, meaning *fresh water*, and *bubba*, meaning *a stream*; still at Cape York is *upu* meaning *a chain of ponds*. In Western Australia there is *appa*, *water*, and in South Australia, *apu*, *appa*, *appu*, *appy*, all meaning *water*. But now further, *b* and *p* in other languages, by ordinary course of phonetic wear and tear, soften down to a mere vowel sound, or to a sound represented by *w* or *v*. Have the aborigines displayed the same tendency in the words used to designate water? We have seen the abundant use of the forms in *b* and *p*; how does the matter stand at the point now raised? The vocabularies soon settle that question, for we find the forms *ow-wa*, *auwie*, *owey*, *ovy*, all meaning *water* in West and South Australia. When we come to the gazetteers we find such forms as *Obi-obi* Creek in Queensland, *Bobo* Creek in the Manning district. This name, it may be noticed in passing, closely resembles the word *bubbu*, *a stream*, at Cape York. There is also *Bubbah-Bubbah* Swamp. Still, farther there is *Bobi* Creek, also *Boobala* Creek in New South Wales; and closely resembling these, *Booby-alla* River in Tasmania. There are *Boomi* and *Bema* Creeks, *Wingecaribbe* Creek and Swamp, *Goadradigbee* River, *Ingeegoodbee* Waterfall, *Umutbee* Swamp, *Wollonaby* Creek, *Munyibbee* Creek, *Werrabee* River, *Wallianippie*, native name of Smoky Bay in South Australia. In the softer form such examples are found as *Walowa* Marsh, *Goolwa*, a name of the Murray River; *Currowa* Springs, *Mattewae* Fort Denison, *Stelowie* Creek, *Nepowie* Creek, *Narowie* Creek. To these may be added *Eba* and *Pulbah*, names of islands, one in South Australia, the other in Lake Macquarie, New South Wales. These are noticed now because as we proceed the evidence will multiply that islands, headlands, and meadowlands have received names from words which have reference to water, the same thing having occurred in ordinary course in other parts of the world.

But turning now to other parts of the world, we find as follows: In the venerable Sanscrit, as also in the Persian, is the form *ab*, meaning *water*. In the Celtic is *abh*, *water*; *abi* is river in Turkish; *vi* and *bu* mean *river* in Ugrian; *oba* is *river* in Pushtu; *be* and *bu* occur in African dialects for *water*; while in South American dialects the forms *beai* and *eubi* mean the same. *Punjab* in India is the country of the five rivers. The forms in *p* are also numerous. *Apu*, *water*, is Sanscrit. *Aph*, *water*, is found in Beloochistan. In the west of Europe, numerous streams whose names end in *p* are understood to embody the same root: thus *Barop*, *Lennepe*, *Oppa*.

The forms in *wa* have been illustrated so far as the vocabularies of Australian dialects are concerned. Turning to the gazetteers we find *Awaba* the native name of Lake Macquarie, *Merriwa*, *Boorowa*, and *Williwa* Creeks. *Wammerawa* is the name given to the marshes into which the waters of the Macquarie River expand. *Goolwa* is a name given to a part of the Murray River. Similar phonetic peculiarities appear to have been as fully manifested in other lands and languages. The *Danube* is found as the *Donau* in German maps. Here there can be no doubt about the connection between the two forms. The real root obviously is identical in the two cases. *Loch Awe* in Scotland and *ow* in Ireland illustrate the same point. *Aw* is *water* in Kurdish and Persian. *Wa* is *water* in Paropamisian, *waha* in Hunarie. The form *wai* is Malay and Polynesian. *We*, *water*, is Papuan. *Awa*, *a river*, and *wai* occur in Maori; *Dhalawai*, *a pool*, is Feejeean, also *nawa* to *float*. *Vai* is *water* in Rotumah, and the forms *invai*, *tavai*, and *tivai*, meaning *water*, occur in the islands of the New Hebrides.

#### *Names of Streams in Bar, Par, War, Mar.*

The counter processes of lengthening and shortening could be well illustrated by tracing the history of names. Short words are lengthened, and long words are shortened. A process of growth and decay takes place. Although we have got a world-wide root in *b* and its phonetic equivalents for water, yet few of the tribes of the human family were content to stop with that. In dealing with the leading channel for water, names connected with *m*, we found the effect of the fact that *m* had a natural affinity for *b*, and *b* came in very copiously, though not possessing the imitative qualification. At the present point, it is rather a principle of natural selection that operates. There is no such special affinity between *b* and *r* as there is between *m* and *b*; yet *r* has independent qualifications in the circumstances. If *m* represents the *humming* sound, *r* represents the *vibratory* sound, which makes it a very suitable letter to be used in words intended to denote water. We shall accordingly find that forms as summarily represented by *bar*, *par*, *war*, and *mar*, are pretty extensively employed to designate water. The very form *bar*, pure and simple, is found meaning *a river* at Lake Hindmarsh in Victoria. Other forms are numerous as *buar*, *boar*, *burong*, also meaning *river*. In Kamilaroi language, including the north of New South Wales, and the south of Queensland, the form *boaring* is found meaning *rain*.

As to forms in *Par*, the root is found pure and simple in Victoria, meaning *a river*; also *proah*. At Adelaide is the form *parri*, *river*, a component of *Onkaparinga*, a sounding name of a river in South Australia. More exactly, however, the native name was *Ngaukiparri*. At the lower end of the Murray, *parnar* means *rain*. Also *poorai* means *rain* at Eden, in New South Wales.

As to forms in *War*, with the ordinary variations, there is *war* or *woor* at Cape York for *sea*. At Brisbane, there is *warril* for *river*. There are *wooree*, *sea*, *wurran*, *river*, *warren* and *waring*, *sea*, in Victoria. *Wirra* is *rain* at Port Lincoln, in South Australia.

As to root forms represented by *Mar*: there is *mornee* *rain*, at Port Darwin; *morala* is *sea* at Mountmorris Bay; *Mara* is a pool at Port Lincoln, South Australia; also *mirra* a *swamp*. *Murrian*, *sea*, is also found.

So far the vocabularies; now for the gazetteers. Forms in *Bar* are *Bara* Creek, *Baroo* Creek, *Barraba* Creek, *Bericó* Creek, *Boren* Creek, and dozens more. Forms in *Par*, *Para* Creek and river, *Parabel* Creek; *Parata* Creek, *Paroo* River *Prooa* Lake, in New South Wales. *Parriepoolan* Creek, *Parga* Creek, in Queensland. *Ngankiparri*, the real aboriginal name of what is called the *Onkapingara*, *Parabarana* Creek, *Paralana* Creek.

Along with this are to be mentioned the *Karrauwirraparri*, or *River Torrens*, *Murtaparri* creek. *Warriparri* the *Sturt* River. Also the *Parabana* and *Paralana* Creeks, *Bullapingara* creek, all in South Australia. *Parait* and *Parwan* Creeks, in Victoria.

Forms in *War*: *Warrak* Creek, *Warroo* Creek, *Warra* Wanda Creek, *Warrego* Creek, *Waramba* River, *Warlero* Brook, *Warialda* Creek *Warradugga* Creek, *Warragamba* River, *Warrego* River, *Warre-warrak* Creek. To these may be added *Warraburrabri* Island, in the *Clarence* River, and *Warautee* or *Wardong* Island, in South Australia, as again illustrative of the fact that root-words for water are employed to denote islands. Forms in *Mar*: *Mara-Mara* Creek, *Marra* Creek, *Marara* Creek, *Maraba* Creek, *Maragle* Creek, *Margalong* River, *Marool* Creek, *Maroombile* Creek.

It remains now to produce anything parallel to the foregoing from other parts of the world. Following the same order, there are forms in *Bar* to be looked for. *Beer*, a well, is Hebrew, with *bir*, the Arabic form. *Bior*, Celtic, is *water*. There is also the root form *vahr*, in Arabic, meaning *lake* or *inland sea*. *Bahr* Lut is Lot's Lake, or the *Dead Sea*. *Bahar*-belame is the *waterless river*. *Bahari* designates a *maritime district*. *Bahreïn* denotes also a group of *islands* in the *Persian Gulf*. Here we have a cluster of illustrations of the point already noticed, that root-words meaning water are often used to designate islands, headlands, meadows, or lands bordering on water. The form *bar* occurs, meaning *water*, among the *North American* tribes. Among the *Malays*, *Baruna* or *Varuna* is the *regent of the sea*.

Forms in *Par* have also a very wide distribution. *Perath* is the earlier form of the river which was enlarged by the *Greeks* into the *Euphrates*. But to this day in the *East* it is called *Abi* *Frat*, *River* *Frat*. *Pharpar*, one of the "rivers of *Damascus*,"

embodies twice over the form with which we are dealing. It was the form *par* that struck the traveller *Humboldt* among the rivers of *South America*. As names which had been given to the *Orinoco*, he found such as these, *Yuyapari*, *Huriaparia*, and *Urapari*. In these and other instances he thought he could recognize the radical form *par*, meaning *water*, in parts of the continent widely separated from each other. *Para* means *rain* in *Peru*; *parani* to *rain*. *Paria* is a *lake*. In *Carib*, *parana* means a *sea*. *Para*, *Pari*, and *Parana* are names of rivers in *South America*. *Pari* also means to *flow*, as the *tide* in *Maori*.

Forms in *War*, very numerous in *Australian* geography, are illustrated by examples of that root meaning *water* in some of its aspects in the *Malay* and other languages. *Wayr* is *water* in *Malay* and *Papuan*; *weyr* is *water* in *Polynesia*; *muwara*, the mouth of a *river*, is *Malay*; *war*, *water*, is *Malay*; *waer*, *warari*, *weari*, meaning *water*, are found in *New Guinea*.

The form *Mar* brings us at once to the *Latin* *mare*, *sea*, the root of many words in the countries of *Europe* on which the *Roman* language was so deeply stamped. The same root, as *muir*, appears in the *Celtic* family of languages. There are also the *Teutonic* forms in *mere*, *meer*, as *Thirl-mere* and *Rydal-mere*. Words represented by the *English* *marsh*, but which occur in *Scandinavia* and *France*, belong to the same large family. *Murun* is a river in *Mongol*, and *Mari* a *lake* in *Ugrian*. *Meren* is a *sea* in *Malay*, and *miri* to *rain* in *Feejee*.

With these materials we conclude one section of our work. The stream starting with *m*, which we have followed, with its affluents and delta arrangement, drains about one-third of the whole area to be examined, that is confining our attention at this point to the *Gazetteer* of *New South Wales*. We have, indeed, not by any means taken up all the smaller currents flowing into the main stream which would have to be considered in an exhaustive investigation; yet the area operated upon may be represented as including about 250 of the rivers and waters which make up the total of nearly 800, which occur in the *New South Wales* *Gazetteer*. One conclusion, so far, is pretty plain, that there is broadly a very notable analogy existing between the aboriginal principles and method of dealing with names for rivers and the principles which have been seen to prevail so extensively in other parts of the world.

#### N, NG (Imitative).

We proceed now to trace the course of another stream, which drains a large area, as regards aboriginal names for rivers and waters, the representative letter now is *N*, one which has close kinship to *M*, already considered. It belongs to the imitative class of letters. It is well fitted to indicate the *din* of the waters, as *n* sets forth

the *hum*. In the simple form *n*, the root-words indicating association with water are not numerous. There are such as *nano*, a *swamp*, in Western Australia; *naoi*, a *canoe*, in the neighbourhood of Port Jackson. It is when we take *n* in conjunction with *g* that a flood of illustrations pours in upon us. For, as *m* has its natural affinity for *b*, so *n* has its natural affinity for two classes of letters, the gutturals *g*, *k*, and the dentals *d*, *t*, we shall follow out the illustrations in connection with the nasal *ng* and *nk* sounds. At Cape York there is *ung-onya*, salt water; *narung*, lagoon, about the Manning River; *ngarugi*, to *drink*, in Kamilaroi, north of N.S.W., and south of Queensland; *ngayuwa* and *ngating*, fresh water, at Lake Macquarie; *yaang*, lagoon, Victoria; *nguke*, water, at Lake Alexandrina; *ngarru*, breaker, at Port Lincoln; *ngyanga*, wave, in Western Australia; *ngura* and *uringo*, a pool, at Champion Bay, Western Australia. Along with all these may be given *ngarong*, meaning an island, as showing again how root-words for water are used to denote islands.

Forms in *nk* are such as these: *Nuken*, river, Moreton Bay; *nukou* and *nuko*, water, Lower Darling; *nguk* and *ngukko* on the Lower Murray; *nucho* on the Murray; *tainke*, swamp, at Lake Alexandrina. The word *killink* is specially imitative, as describing as well as denoting the sound made by a stone when allowed to fall plump into the water.

Looking now into the gazetteers for illustrative names, there occur Beleringa Creek, Carralunga Creek, Myponga River, Kayinga; Lake Alexandrina; Aldinga Lagoon and Bay; Bullaparinga Creek, Corong Lake, Pandlotinga Creek, Tooraringana Creek, Wildanunga Creek. Besides such as these, there are the streams of names ending in *long*, *wong*, and *gong*. Those ending in *gong* will be more specially examined hereafter. As between the forms in *ng* and *nk* there may be noticed in passing a notable result. Out of nearly 800 names of rivers and waters in the Gazetteer of New South Wales, upwards of 100 contain the nasal *ng*, while only a few units exhibit *nk*. Of this last class are such names as *Yanko* Creek. In South Australia there is *Yankalilla* River.

Looking to other languages of the world, we have the nasal in the Shemitic *ngahyin*, a fountain. This is the word which, shortened into *ain* and *en*, so often indicates the locality of wells in books of Eastern travel. *Ayun* Musa, are the wells of Moses. There is *sungei*, a river, in Javanese; *arung*, to *wade through water*, in Malay, also *ongagu*, a river and *ngusor*. In Maori, there are *ngaehi*, tide; *ngaeki*, swamp, and *ngongi*, water.

### K (Non-imitative).

*Root-words for water in ka, ga, ya.*—In pursuing our inquiry we come now to a point precisely parallel to what was encountered after starting with the letter *m*, as supplying a root-syllable for

expressing *water*. We pass the boundary-line between imitative forms and those which are not. Forms in *ang* and *ank* are imitative, but forms in *ag* and *ak* are not; indeed, here we have a sudden and complete reversal of the idea of the imitative principle. In the case of *m*, which brings us to *b*, a labial, we have a comparatively soft class of letters to deal with. But *k* is one of the hardest letters in the alphabet. It suits well for such words as *hack* and *tack*, but on its own merits it is one of the last letters that would be chosen to denote water. Yet we see how such forms as *anga* and *anka*, by regular phonetic law of assimilation, are transformed into *agga* and *akka*, forms which were notably imitative of the *sinjing*, *ringing*, sound of waters, into forms which are quite the reverse.

Then in the language of the aborigines who have shown, as we have already seen, a strong disposition to use euphonious names for streams and waters, how does the matter stand when we come to such hard forms as *k* to represent water? The illustrations of the form are numerous enough, and seem to prove that language flows in a channel, and according to laws which operate and assert themselves even against strong opposing elements. Thus, we find the hard root for *water* pure and simple in such words as *ook*, *ooko*, *acah*, found on the Darling and Murray. There is *kokoin*, water, at Lake Macquarie; also *koiwon*, rain, at the same place. *Ugoa* means *flood*, also *wukawa*, in Kamilaroi; *eake* is *water* at Port Darwin; *uki* and *nuki* mean fresh *water* at Massied, a small island in Torres Straits, though nearer New Guinea than Cape York. As to names in the gazetteers, we look for forms in *ka*, *ga*, *ya*, or their phonetic representatives. There is the Koko Creek, the *Kiah* River, *Bega*, or *Bemboka* River, *Bargo* River, *Micalago* Creek, *Boiga* Creek, *Cowriga* Creek, *Culgoa* River, *Dundaralago* Creek, *Nacka* *Nacka* Creek, *Nagha* Lake, *Perica* Creek, *Towaca* River, *Tungo* Creek, *Umbango* Creek and *Swamp*, *Paika* Lake, *Yaouk* Creek, *Paruka* Lake, *Wondowye* Creek. To these may be added *Yargai* Island, in the Clarence River, again illustrating that the same root-words are used for waters and islands.

Besides all these, there is one notable name which occurs in the gazetteers upwards of a score of times. It is the name *Oakey*, applied to creeks. It might be surmised for a moment that this is some British name, but the frequency of its occurrence and its wide dispersion in New South Wales and Queensland render this impossible. Thus, in Queensland there is *Oakey* Creek in County Aubigny (twice), in Canning, Cavendish, Clinton, Cook district, Newcastle county, Normanby district, Springsure district, and county Wicklow. In New South Wales there is *Oakey* Creek in counties Ashburnham, Bathurst, Darling, Dudley, King, Murray, Napier (twice), Roxburgh, and Wellington. Here it

can scarcely be doubted for a moment that in all these cases *oakey* simply meant *water*.

In now looking beyond the Australian Gazetteer the root in *k*, or its equivalents, is found extensively. It occurs in the Latin *agua* in the former part of the word; it occurs in the old German *aha*; and in the first syllable of the Gothic *ahva*, *water*. It also appears in the Old French *ax*. The root is embodied in such names as *Saltach*, *Wertach*. *Aachen*, the German form of the name *Aix-la-Chappelle*, doubly illustrates the point at issue. The chapel was built at the locality of the mineral *waters* where Charlemagne was buried. The root is wide-spread also in the Celtic family of dialects, as in *uisge*, *isge*, the Gaelic and Armorican words for *water*; *kya*, *water*, is Nepalese; *acho*, *akwo*, *agho*, *ek*, *water*, are African; *aki* and *akei*, *water*, are Malay; *gia*, *rain*, is Polynesian; *ok*, to *drink*, is Curnicobar; *kau*, *sea-coast*, *pokaka*, a *shower*, are Maori; *ko*, *okah*, *kha*, *oquie*, *water*, occur among the North American tribes; so also *kuik*, *river*, *eukehi*, *lake*, *ko* and *kaya*, *rain*. *Ak* and *kioko*, *water*, belong to Texas; *go*, *ochke*, *akwaken*, *water*, *ukwii*, *rain*, are found in tribes of North-west America; *yacu*, *water*, is Peruvian; *caqua*, *yge*, *yg*, *agua*, *ochi*, *ko*, *water*, are found among South American tribes.

So far, we have followed the course of two of the chief channels in which the aboriginal names for streams and waters have been found to flow. The two put together account for about half the river names in the Gazetteer of New South Wales. There is indeed the combination of the nasal *n* with the dentals *d t*, but the illustrations at this point are not nearly so numerous as in the combination of the nasal with the gutturals *g k*. Including the dental combination with *n*, nearly two-thirds of the names in the New South Wales Gazetteer are accounted for, leaving the remaining third to be made up of the less euphonious combinations with dentals and gutturals as well as the intermediate labials.

#### *Combination of the roots ka ba.*

Before we leave the forms in *ka*, *ga*, *ya*, there is a point which may be properly considered. It is the combination of the two roots represented by *k* and *b*. Thus we find *ca-pe*, *ca-pi*, *ga-be*, *ga-bbi*, *ku-yp*, *ky-pe*, *kuy-pa*, *ky-pi*, *ky-pbi*, *ki-op*, all meaning *water* in Western Australia; also *ca-ppy*, *ka-pi*, *coo-bie*, *water*, in South Australia. In all these forms the combination of the *k* root and the *b* root, with their equivalents or variations, is quite evident. Moreover, these roots appear in connection with the names of places where water is to be got. There is Wademar *Gaiippe*, Berinyana *Gaiippe*, Beelimah *Gaiippe*—places where water is to be got by digging in the sand. To the same list belongs Yeer Kumban *Kauwe* at the head of the Great Australian Bight, which, as well as those already mentioned, were on the track of the traveller

Eyre, on his perilous adventure from South Australia along the coast to Western Australia. In this last instance *Gaiippe* appears as *kauwe*; but this is in strict accordance with the phonetic laws which have already been so frequently exemplified. In the labial letters we run down the scale thus: *ba*, *pa*, *wa*. But this is abundantly shown by other examples. In South Australia there is the common form, *co-wie*, *water*, spelt also *ko-ue*, *kau-wi*, *ko-wee*, *ko-we*, *kau-we*. At Port Lincoln the two forms are found, namely, *ka-pi* and *ka-wo*, lake, *cope-cope* or *gope-gope* is the same word, and the lake is so called because it drains the waters of the district. The common form, *coo-wee*, in South Australia, used to denote *water*, reminds us of the far-famed Australian call, "*coo-ee*," and the question arises, can there be any possible connection? Considering the multiplicity of dialects throughout Australia, how has this one form of call succeeded in establishing itself among so many tribes? In the sandy region of South Australia, when an anxious search for water was successful, the loud and joyful cry to the members of the tribe at a distance would really and literally be *ko-wee—water!* Indeed, in ordinary course, we have the record of something of the kind. Bishop Salvado narrates how he and his company were disappointed by not finding water where it was expected, and had to spend the night in a very uncomfortable manner. Next morning an aboriginal attendant guided him to another place where water might be found; but here, too, there was none. Still a third place was sought; and here the precious element was obtained. After the manner of the savages, he says, there was now sounded the loud *Cu-i*, as he spells it, to those who were behind. The word meant "*water*," as well as "*we are here*."

But returning from this digression, it remains to notice that the peculiarity which has now been illustrated in the combination of the two roots for water among the Australian aborigines appears to have taken place in other parts of the world. Thus the Latin *aq-ua*, *ah-wa*, *ah-ba*, have all the appearance of being a combination of the same two roots, for we have seen that in Europe these two roots are widely distributed in the names of streams. In the combined form also they appear to have supplied names for numbers of places. Thus, the present *Yooire* was in ancient times *Aquaria*, the water country. *Aquitania* was the land of rivers or waters. Numbers of names of places in ancient Gaul are adduced as containing the root *agua* as the foundation of the forms into which they have been shaped in the course of time. Besides the Latin *agua*, there is the Gothic *ah-va*, *water*. Here again appears to be the same combination of guttural and labial as in *agua*, for the aspirate *h* is closely akin to the gutturals. The subject of a plurality of roots, each meaning *water*, and making up one name applied to water in some shape, will receive further illustration as we proceed.

*River names in Bad, Wad.*—Although we have taken up leading channels in which the aboriginal names are found to flow, yet there are more isolated cases which yet have made a prominent place for themselves in the gazetteers of the Colonies. One of these is the form in *bd*, *bt*, with the forms which according to phonetic law arise from this source, namely, *pd*, *pt*, *wd*, *wt*. The most important, however, are the names of which *bad* and *bat* as well as *wad* and *wat* may be taken as the representatives. There are *badto*, *water*, and *bodo*, *rain*, at Champion Bay, in Western Australia. *Bado* also is *water* at Port Jackson; *bato*, at Lake Macquarie. This word *bado* is recorded by three of the earliest vocabulary writers, Tench, Hunter, and Collins. The forms *bato*, *batoo*, *batu*, and *battu*, are also found. When we turn to the maps and gazetteers, we find a *lake* called *budda*. Also, we have one of the more important rivers of New South Wales called the Murrumbidgee. This simply means the big *water* or *river*. Other illustrative names are such as *Batmaroo* Creek, *Bethungra* Creek, *Botobolar* Creek, *Butheroo* Creek, in New South Wales. *Burrumbet* Creek and *Lake* are in Victoria.

As to root words in *wad* or *wat*, or their equivalents, we have *ga-wata*, a *swamp*, at Cape York. *Weedi*, to drink; *pa-wat*, a *swamp*; *koeeweet*, *rain*; *wadby*, to *swim*; as also *watpuli* and *widyara*, to *drink*, all in New South Wales. As to names of rivers, there is the *Calewatta*, a name of the Darling, *Arrawatta* Creek, *Watte* Creek, *Watia* River, *Wattawa* Creek, *Watagan* Creek. Here again it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that to the inhabitants on the banks of the different streams the *watta* was just the *water*. In Tasmania the form *wattra* is found joined to a river. There is the *Waatra* karoola, Piper's River. As to *Karoola*, it may just be noticed in passing there is the *Karaula*, on the borders of Queensland, where Mitchell camped for some time, and there is an *Ar-caroola* Creek in South Australia.

Looking beyond Australian boundaries, we find the root now discussed to have a wide range of existence. The form *bedu*, *water*, has been preserved to us as an old Phrygian word. There is the Sanscrit *patum*, to *drink*; the Latin *poto*, and the Greek *kotidzo* I give to *drink*; *poti*, to *drink*, Slavonic. Also, the German *bad* and English *bath* belong to the same extensive connection. *Budo*, *water*, is an African form, and *batean* is *water* in Samarang. *Wad* and *wat* have also a very ancient and wide existence. *Udus wet*, Latin, and the word *wet* in English as well as the Sanscrit *udum* belong to the same root. *Wadi* is a *watercourse*, Arabic. *Udama* is *rain* in the Malay Archipelago. *Udha*, *rain*, *wadha*, low *water*, *udhi wai*, creek, are Feejeean; *wut* and *wit* occur frequently in North West American words for *water*. *Wata*, *water*, occurs in New Guinea; *wato* is Gothic, *voda* is Russian, and the forms *ouata* and *wat*, for *water*, are African.

### *River Names in Yar.*

There are three more important roots for river names in Australia, to which attention will be shortly directed. There are *yar*, *gong* and *kal*. These will be taken in their order. Following the usual method, we shall consult the vocabularies for proofs that the form is applied as a radical one, meaning *water*. Thus, *yurong*, *rain*, at Moreton Bay; *yuro*, *rain*, in New South Wales; *yuri*, to *pour*, and *yerro*, *water*, occur at Lake Macquarie; *yarn*, *yarram*, *yerram*, and *yarran* for *river*, *sea*, and *spring*, are in all parts of Victoria; *yerlo* is *lake* at Adelaide. Turning now to the gazetteers, the illustrations are numerous. Thus, in Victoria there is the notable *Yarra-yarra* River, the meaning of which was ascertained at a very early date to be *flowing-flowing*. There is the *Yarra* rivulet, *Yarrayne*, the aboriginal name of the Loddon River, *Yarriambiack* Creek, *Yarrowee* River, *Yarrum* Creek. Then *Yerang* Creek, *Yering* Lake. Turning to the Gazetteer of New South Wales we find, *Yarenaigh* Creek, *Yarimba* Creek, *Yarralow* Creek, *Yarran* Creek, *Yarrangobilly* Creek, *Yarrara* Creek, *Yarra-Yarra* Creek, *Yarren-Yarren* Creek, *Yarimgah* Creek, *Yardowindidja* Creek. Here again we find a root-word for *water* applied to an island, as *Yargai* Island, in the Clarence River, and *Yerunu*, name of an island in South Australia. Besides all these, there are forms in which the *yar* is not at the beginning of the name.

Turning now to other parts of the world, we find the forms *Yaro* and *Yero* remounting to a venerable antiquity as very early Egyptian names applied to the Nile. There is also the Hebrew *yor*, which means a *river*. In the British Islands a number of streams appear embodying this root, the *Farrow*, the *Yair*, the *Yar*, names which so closely resemble those already adduced as existing in Victoria and New South Wales.

### *River Names in Gong.*

Here is a form which is common to mountains and streams. As to mountains we have such names as the *Warragong* Mountains, *Bogong* or the *Round Mountains*, the *Merrigong* and *Mittagong* Ranges, *Caralgong* and *Mundarugong* Mounts, as well as others. But there is also a goodly array of *gongs* from the side of the waters. There are *Burrangong*, *Cudgegong*, *Brongong*, *Kallobungong* Creeks, *Wagonga* Inlet, *Tragong* Creek. In such forms as the following the *gong* or some equivalent is also plain enough—*Bongongalong* Creek, *Gangangar* Creek. *Kangaloola* Creek. Also the forms in *y*, *Noeyango* Lake, *Yango*, *Yanko*, *Yengo*, *Yonga* Creeks. Now leaving the mountains aside, we have to see whether there are any root forms in *gong* or its equivalents meaning *water*. The vocabularies supply us at once with



such words as *kung* or *kong*, meaning water at Moreton Bay, and *kongun*, water on the Peel River. The forms *guong* and *guang*, rain, occur at Wellington. *Kaiung* at Illawarra means sea; in compound words *turagung* at Port Jackson meant a creek. *Nulla-konggor* in Kamilaroi means a waterhole. At Illawarra *ngait-yung* is water. *Nagung* is water at George's River. These materials prove abundantly that there is a root-word for water which may be represented with its variations by the form *gong*, which occurs in the names of so many creeks and designations for water. When we look beyond the Australian area our attention is arrested by the great River *Ganges* in India. This name was formed just in the way which seems to have been universal among the Australian aborigines. The word *ganga* or *gunga* is the Sanscrit for river. To those who settled in the far back ages upon its banks, it was simply the river. So, after all the illustrations which have been given that the same radical form exists among the aborigines here, we cannot doubt that such names as appear in the gazetteer as *Congai*, and *Gungulwa* and others, just meant the river or the water. Besides the great Indian *Gunga*, which means river, it should also be recorded that in the Chinese, at Shanghai, *kong* is the name for river.

#### River names in Kal.

The vocabularies here also supply abundant evidence that forms in *kal*, *gal*, *yal* or their equivalents are used as root-words to denote water. Thus Mitchell in the district of the Bogan records the forms *kally*, *gally*, *gallo* as meaning water. *Calle* is water at Regent's Lake; *kally*, rain, and *kollee*, water, in New England; *kaling* is water at Lake Macquarie. *Kuliman*, a tub, is the water-holder. *Gol-gol* is the word for a spring, as well as the name of a creek. When we come to names of streams, we find that there is the *Coola* Creek, the *Caloola* Creek. Moreover, the aboriginal name for the Lachlan River was *Calare*; for the Peel River, *Callala*; and one of the names of the Darling was *Calewatta*. Also, one of the names for the Murray was *Goolwa*. In all these cases applying to the Peel, the Darling, the Lachlan, and the Murray, we cannot doubt that to the inhabitants on the banks of the respective streams each of them was simply the water. When we look beyond the Australian boundary we find *Khola* is a river in Tamul; *Kul*, a river in Cashmerian; *Kali* is a brook in Javanese; *Golem* is rain in the Malay Archipelago; *Tatathi* is the sea in Feejee.

#### Plurality of Root-words for Water in the same Name.

As we have passed along, some indications have transpired to the effect that the name of a river, or a word for water, was really made up of two separate roots, each meaning water. There is

the notable case of *Cowie*. From the multiplicity of forms and spellings in which this word is found, there is no doubt that it contains the two roots represented by *k* and *b*. Also, there is no doubt, from the evidence adduced, that these do represent two roots which have entered extensively into the names of streams and waters over the whole of Australia. But, does the gathering up of several roots into one name extend any farther? For example, there is the formidable name *Yeer kumban kauwe*. This is not the name of a large river or ocean; it is the name of water covered with sand, at the head of the great Australian Bight, which was reached by Eyre on his perilous adventure from South to Western Australia. Now, here plainly we have the *kauwe*, but what of the *yeer kumban*? After the materials which have been reviewed, we have little difficulty in identifying *yeer* as an old friend and near relation of the large families of *yars* and *yers*, which have come under our notice. Here then is another root meaning water, *yar* added to *ka* and *wa*. So also of the form *kumban*; as a root, we find it in the vocabulary of Bishop Salvado associated with water, and we have seen how largely the sounding syllables enter into names of creeks and waters. Still further, *Kumban* is a name which occurs in Indian mythology. It applies to a potentate who is identified with one of the signs of the Zodiac, and the significant point is that the sign is *Aquarius*, the water-bearer.

Here there are four different roots, which, with very little room for doubt in the case, have been agglomerated together in the course of successive generations by the aborigines. More of the long names seem to yield easily to resolution into their primary elements. There is the jingling name *kalingabungagay* for a creek. Now, here we can have little scruple in setting down the *kaling* and *kalung* as the same word repeated, and we know that the forms are conspicuous in the vocabularies as meaning water. Then, as to the last part of the word *gagay*, the mere pronouncing of the syllables reminds us of the well established root in *ga* or *ka*. This also is repeated as in the case of the former part of the name. Yet again, there is the *Galla gam broon* Creek. This yields easily to analysis in view of the examples which we have had in the foregoing pages. Forms in *gmb*, *gmbn*, and *gmb*, seem almost interchangeable. Their association with forms employed as designations for rivers and creeks has been fully illustrated. Then as to *galla*: that is one of the well-established roots for water, and is embodied in the form *kaling*, which we have just been considering in connection with another word. Yet again, there is the formidable name of a spring *Widge galla gambone*. But here the *galla* and *gambone* were disposed of in the name dealt with immediately previously. The only part remaining is *Widge*; but this is evidently of the *Bad* and *Wad* connection, meaning water, like the *bidge* in Murrumbidgee.

Now, when we go beyond the Australian tribes, we find that other people have done the same thing. Thus, in the north of England we have such a stream as *Wansbeck Water*. Now, *wan* or *vand*, and *bec*, are Scandinavian words for *water*. To the two words, each meaning *water*, the English word *water* is added, making up a repetition of the same radical idea three times over. But this matter dovetails into questions of historical interest. Thus, we know that the little river *Yair*, in Norfolk, was called *Gariennus* under the Romans, though it has resumed its original or aboriginal name. Now, *Gariennus* has every appearance of embodying the Celtic *amhainn*, river, in the Manx form *aon* the origin of the *avons* that are found as the names of streams in the British Isles. But this addition of *amhainn*, river, to the primitive form *gar* or *yar* comes out more plainly in the case of the *Garonne*, in France. *Gar amhainn* has every appearance of supplying the original which Cæsar converted into *Garumna*. But as both of the roots conjoined here belonged to languages foreign to the Romans, he added to *Garumna flumen*. Thus, as in *Wansbeck Water*, we have three different roots amalgamated together, meaning *water* or *river*. Now, the point of historical interest is that these metamorphic processes form some sort of index to the migrations or conquests of the people who are concerned in the case. Thus, suppose we start with the aboriginal *yar* or *gar*, for the *water*, the *river*, then *yar amhainn* indicates the advent and settlement of the Celtic race. Then the farther development into *Garumna flumen* is a remnant of the invasion of Gaul by the Romans. So also the *Garonne Fleuve* of the French maps of the present day is an index to the important changes which have taken place since the subversion of the Roman Empire. Now, on the same general principle, the time may come when such a combination of roots as appears in *Yeer cumban kauwe* may enable some Australian investigator to trace the course of migration of the Australian tribes, at least in that part of the island continent.

#### TASMANIA.

A glance must be taken at Tasmanian names for rivers and waters. Though only about half a dozen aboriginal names retain their places on the map, yet about seventy or eighty have been preserved in vocabularies and otherwise. We have here to proceed with caution as regards the Gazetteer; for, such names as *Illawarra* and *Parramatta*, and a number of really aboriginal names, have been imported by the white settlers from the Australian mainland. As we consult the vocabularies, the most prominent root for *water* appears in the forms of *l* and *ln*. Thus *lea*, river or lake; *liah le*, ocean; *lileah*, water. In compound words and terms bringing in words associated with water, there

occur *liah-pota*, river, creek; *lia-mena*, lake, *loa-maggatangta*, deep water; *lia-tarightea*, to flow; *lia-laratame*, foam; *lia-wenee*, water; *lay-ka*, wet; *le-areaway*, an island, thus again illustrating what we have had so often in regard to the names of islands on the other side of Bass' Straits. In the longer form *ln* we have *lina* or *linah*, the common word for river; *liena* and *lena*, water; *lena* also the sea; *lenone*, lake; *lienire*, fresh water; *laina*, to drink; *wia-line*, exudation. When we look at the names of rivers, the word *linah* is often appended just as we append *river* to the name by which the river is called; thus, *Kuta-linah* is the Jordan River; *Promenalinah* is Brown's River; *Mangana-lienta* is the South Esk River. Now again we find the islands re-echoing the word for water in their names; thus, *Luna maunaelounah* is Bruny Island, which contains the same radical form twice. *Tiarerrymeeal-onah* is Maria Island. The shorter form in *l* is to be seen in the following names of streams: there is *Leeaberryade*, or *Leeaberra*, Douglas River; *Leillateah* is Recherche Bay; *Moyente-lea* is Toom's Lake.

The prevalence of the root form in *l* is notable, as it has not come conspicuously before us when dealing with the more important roots for water used on the mainland of Australia. In actual names it occupies a prominent place. Its imitative character is brought into requisition in naming a picturesque waterfall in Victoria, by the reduplicated form *Lal-Lal*. As quite a curiosity in nomenclature, there is the rather remarkable South Australian word

Warralliallialliallialia,

as the name of a spring of fresh water. It is worthy of notice that the forms *linah*, *lonah*, and the variations of the same radical form have a parallel in the Polynesian form *lanu*, water.

But there is another root from which have sprung a number of Tasmanian names relating to water. It is the root *g* or *k*, with which we have had much to do on the mainland of Australia. We find traces of it in such words as *moyo moko*, mocha meaning water, fresh water. Also in such words as *lay-ka wet*, *mayniack*, rainy, *liemkane-ack*, a drop of water, *luggatick*, the tide, *kukamena-mena*, foam. In the names of rivers and other waters it is found as follows: *Leeaberryack* Douglas River; *Poyanannuppyack*, Oyster Bay; *Parraloongatek*, Macquarie Harbour; *Tunganrick*, Arthur River. Now, besides these names applying directly to water, there are names of islands, headlands, and land on the sea-coast in which the same root occurs. Thus, *Tittanariack* is Governor's Island; *Reeneka* is Hunter's Island; *Muracompyack* is East Bay Neck; *Teeralinnack* is Eagle Hawk Neck; *Kennaook* is Cape Green; *Monattek* and *Romanraik* are two names of the conspicuous Circular Head; also, *Purrika* is the name of a portion of the sea coast extending south-east from Circular Head Promontory. Now all these cases would fit

to the general rule that root-words for water are also employed to designate islands, headlands rising out of the water, land adjoining water, and meadow-land. In the present case, however, there is an *ek* which cannot be brought under any of the cases enumerated. It is *Mebbelek*, the aboriginal name for Frenchman's Cap, a mountain too far inland to be regarded as a headland rising out of the sea. Of course, this might imply no more than that the same form of root was common both to waters and mountains. We had a notable case of the same thing in the *gong* form, so fully exemplified both ways on the Australian mainland. As to the *ek* root for mountains, we find it well exemplified in the Scandinavian geography. Thus there are *Loms-eggen*, *Jukul-eggen*, *Skardals-eggen*, and more. *Eggen* is the plural of *eg*, which again is akin to our English word *edge*. In the French there is *aiguille*, *needle*, a term also applied to mountain pinnacles, as copiously exemplified in the names of rocky spikes in the Mont Blanc group of mountains. In Latin are the cognate roots in *ac*, as *acuo*, I *sharpen*, *acus* a *needle*, *acer*, *keen*, *acies* an *edge*. In Greek also are such forms as *akē*, *point*, *akis*, *edge*, also *akoke* and *akme*. There is *akon* a *dart*, with the Sanscrit relative *acan*, also a *dart*. Moreover, in Greek there is the adjective form in *ekes* to be added to words to give the idea of *edge*, as *amphekes* *double-edged*. It may be mentioned that the form *mocha*, *water* in Tasmanian has a parallel in the same form *mocha*, *water*, in Western Australia, and at the extreme opposite corner, the form *muki*, at Massied, one of the small islands in or near Torres Straits.

#### NAMES OF ISLANDS AND HEADLANDS.

Numerous examples have occurred in the foregoing pages to show that root-words for water have often been used to denote islands and headlands. The principle of so applying names applies also to peninsulas, coast-lands, and meadow-lands. In all these cases the association with water is clear. The islands, peninsulas, and headlands rise up from the water. The coast is washed by the waters of the ocean, and the meadow-lands on the river banks are at times overflowed with the waters of the stream. Besides the individual examples which have already been adduced illustrative of the subject now under consideration, there are various points to be brought out. Thus, at Lake Macquarie we have *ngarong*, an *island*. On the Hastings this has become *gnarook*, which means both a *swamp* and an *island*. Now here we notice the operation of phonetic laws. The more flowing form in *ng* has hardened into the hard guttural *k*. But it remains that we indicate how the application of root-words for water in other parts of the world have been applied to islands and headlands. Thus the Greek *nesos*, an *island*, is from *neo*, I *swim*. The idea of an island

appears to be that of something *in the water*. The Latin *navis* and the Greek *navis*, a *ship*, are accordingly so named because they *float upon the water*. The Port Jackson word for *canoe*, namely, *naoi*, seems to have been adopted on the same principle. Further, the Latin *insula* appears to supply the same connection with *water*. *Insula* is something cast *in salsum*, *into the ocean*. Cognate with this is the Celtic *innis*, which applies to *island*, *headland*, *peninsula*, and *meadow-land*. There is *Inchkeith*, an island. There is *Durness*, *Doirbh-innis*, *Stormy Island*, only the island in this case is a peninsula. Then there are the famous *inches* of Perth, in Scotland, which are *meadow-lands*. Let it be noted also that the Greek *nesos*, an island, is applied to a *peninsula* in the notable case of the Peloponnesos the *island* (*peninsula*) of Pelops. In the Gothic stock of languages similar phenomena occur. The form *ea* in Anglo-Saxon is an *island* and also *running water*. *Eaton* is the *water-town*. Many places have names determined by their relation to water. In Scandinavian *oe* is *water*, hence *oeland*, an *island*, is *waterland*. *Zea*-land is *sea land*. In Germany, forms in *au* indicate meadow-lands, as on the banks of rivers. Thus *Rhein-au*, and many more.

#### Root-words for Water and their bearing on Grammar.

Besides the arrangements whereby root-words for water are used to denote islands and headlands, there is a trace of another development of language which may be noticed. It is a matter in which we possibly get a glimpse into the primitive operation of ideas which led to the formation of some of the grammatical peculiarities of language. In connection with all that we have had to notice about rivers and streams, and the circumstances of the aborigines in regard to them, there are some points which come to the surface enabling us to see how words have passed from the state of nouns to the state of prepositions, and how insensibly a process of generalization seems to have taken place in the aboriginal mind. But to proceed to the materials concerned. In a vocabulary we find that in two different dialects a camp is represented by the aboriginal words *koiong* and *ngurang*. The former means *fire*, and the latter means *water*. The association of ideas is simple enough. The *fire* is a source of significant and compendious reference to the place where the camp or settlement is established. So with regard to the indispensable article of *water*, the *watering* place is the *camping* place. Now along with this we put information which we get from the vocabularies. We are familiar now with the root *ap*, *op*, or *up* in Western Australia as very extensively concerned in the Australian names on the map for waterholes, springs, and wells. But we learn that *ap* and *op* become terminational particles added to names, to indicate a place suitable as a *resting place*. We have seen that the *watering place*

is the fit place for the *camping* or *resting place*. While in many cases rivers, as such, often a mere chain of ponds, are not designated by specific names, yet resting places are designated with great minuteness. Now, beyond doubt, the most important of these *resting* places were *watering* places. Hence then, to all appearance, the explanation of the numerous names in Western Australia ending in *up*. Thus, *up* as a root for *water* agrees perfectly with the information that *ap* and *up* are used as terminal particles to indicate a resting place.

But we have seen that numerous roots are used for water—does the same peculiarity transpire in connection with any more of them? This would seem pretty plainly to be the case. Thus in South Australia we have become familiar with the nasal sounds in *ng*. Now, in the vocabularies we learn that in South Australia the forms *ungai* and *angh* are used as prepositions where the idea of *rest* is signified. This obviously follows up very closely upon the heels of what we have met regarding *up* in Western Australia. Still further, it may here be mentioned that the addition *inga*, which is found in the South Australian river name *Onkaparinga*, has the same explanation. The form *inga* is prepositional (though here put after the word which it qualifies), and means *at* or *near*. *Onkaparinga* therefore means *at* or *near* the river concerned in the matter. Some names besides that of *Onkaparinga* have found their way in the prepositional shape into the maps and gazetteers. Thus *Bullaparinga* Creek, *Pandlotinga* Creek, *Wadnaminga* Springs. As to the actual manner in which the form in *ngga* appears in prepositional words we have such illustrations as these: *Mikangga* means *before*, literally *in the eye of*; *Ngurrungga* means *behind*, literally *in the back of*; *Marrangga*, *alongside*, literally *at the hand of*; *Tangkanugga*, *inside*, literally *in the liver of*. Still further, we are familiar with the forms in *war* referring to rivers and waters. Now, this very form has also found its way into the list of prepositions used to indicate that the idea of *rest* is signified. Here then are three distinct roots all agreeing in being root forms for water, and all agreeing in having been used for the grammatical convenience of supplying prepositions to signify rest. As to the forms in Western Australia so frequently taking shape in names ending in *up*, it remains to be pointed out that the equivalent comes to the surface in New South Wales. This is in the particle *ba*, which indicates locality. Thus *Mulubin* is the name of a species of fern which grew where Newcastle now stands. By the addition of *ba* to *Mulubin* there was formed *Mulubinba*, the native name adopted to designate Newcastle, and meaning the place where the fern called *mulubin* grows.

Following the course pursued all through this paper, it remains only to point out that something very similar to the foregoing has been developed in the history of other languages. A good

example is easily found in the Shemitic languages. In the case now contemplated it is the important word for *house* that undergoes transformation till it is converted into a preposition. In the Hebrew we read of the ark being pitched *within* and without. Here the expression translated *within* is in point of form "*from the house*." In the Syriac, one of the Shemitic languages, where we say *in the tomb*, the idiom of the tongue just named takes the form "*in the house of the tomb*." And still farther, where we would speak of a man appointing a festival to be held *on* his birthday, the Syriac idiom admits of the expression in point of form "*in the house of his birthday*." The stage naturally followed of abbreviating the word for *house*, and using it systematically as one of the fixed prepositions in the Shemitic languages. Its use was so extensive that the rabbis divided it in a threefold manner, namely, into the classes of cases in which the meaning was set forth by *in*, by *at*, and by *with* respectively.

On the subject of the euphonious names given by the aborigines to rivers and waters, a very few sentences must suffice. The softly flowing syllables which go to make up many of these names have often been the occasion of remark. Upon the most cursory examination it is found that many of these names are characterized by a predominance of what are called the liquid letters, namely, *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*. Hence the melodious smoothness of such names as *Aranain*, *Maranoa*, *Araluen*, as applied to streams. Indeed, names can be picked out of the gazetteers containing the whole four liquids with no other consonant. Thus *Mullinurran* Creek and *Neumerella* Creek. But the moment we come to figures, as between the liquids and soft labial on the one side against the dentals and gutturals on the other side, the result is very marked. Take the forms in *mar* or *bar* and *wat*, or their equivalents. *Mar* occurs in about sixty names of creeks or waters, *Bar* in about eighty, and *wat* in only about a dozen—that is, in the Gazetteer of New South Wales. The choice between the softer and harder forms of letters of the same class has some quite remarkable exemplifications. Thus, taking the three leading channels for names to designate rivers or waters, namely, in *mb*, *ng*, and *nd*, as against the harder forms in *mp*, *nk*, and *nt*, and the result is very decided. In the former case, the forms are embodied in upwards of 170 names of streams or waters in New South Wales, while hardly half a-dozen examples are found of the latter. In the longer forms, *mb*, *mbn*, *mbr*, *ngl*, *ngn*, *ngr*, *ndl*, *ndn*, *ndr*, as against, *mpl*, *mpn*, *mpr*, *nkl*, *nkn*, *nkr*, *ntl*, *ntu*, *nt*, the result is equally decided. The former class are exemplified in upwards of 110 cases, while the latter are exemplified in one or two cases. Here a few possible oversights in searching through a large volume would make no substantial alteration in the relative places occupied by the classes of names compared. Still further,

take nine forms, such as *ml*, *mn*, *mr*, *bl*, *bn*, *br*, *wl*, *wn*, *wr*—where we have the liquids and soft labial—and compare them with any such forms as *wg*, *wk*, *wd*, *wt*, *pg*, *pk*, *pd*, *pt*—where these are mostly gutturals and dentals—and the result is quite decisive. The former list enters into the names of nearly 400 creeks, streams, and waters, while the latter list barely musters twenty. Of course, exhaustive detail would bring out some peculiar points; but there is no mistaking the general drift and direction of the figures adduced, taking the Gazetteer of New South Wales as supplying the area of observation. Out of about 4,700 names of all sorts, about 3,000 are aboriginal. Of these, again, nearly 800 are names applied to rivers, creeks, and streams generally, as well as to water in its other forms.

Summing up, and carefully avoiding sweeping generalizations from one corner of a subject, it may at least be concluded that in the matter of fixing or adopting root-words for water, the aborigines, or rather their forefathers, take rank broadly with the rest of the world. But even this simple conclusion has its decided bearing on some questions which have been raised:—Thus, (1) let it be supposed for a moment that the aborigines of Australia are a special centre of creation, and have existed, say, 100,000 years on this continental area; in that case, the substantial amount of identity displayed between them and other races in the world, in the matter of adopting names for water, cannot escape notice. Plainly, if this identity should be found to extend over a wide area of comparison, then, so far, the supposed necessity of resorting to the theory of special centres of creation for the human race must disappear. Then, (2) there is the observation as to the amount of change which might take place in languages such as the Australian, which are exposed to the operation of certain capricious influences. Thus, upon the death of a chief named “River,” the word *river* would suddenly drop out of use. Now, in the course of centuries, to say nothing of decades of millennia, the changes so produced in the vocabulary of a language would be very considerable. But, in full view of all such considerations, it is pretty plain that if the forefathers of the aborigines of Australia broke off from a parent stock only 2,000, or 3,000, or 4,000 years ago, their descendants have faithfully retained the use of the primeval root-words for waters and streams, and have given them a permanent existence in the numerous names which have been adopted from the black man by his white successor.

## DISCUSSION.

Rev. R. COLLIE, F.L.S., intimated that on looking over the paper he found that the name Alambar was included by Mr. MacPherson amongst aboriginal names, whereas it was an Indian word, having been the designation of a gentleman's residence in India, who, having finally settled in this Colony near Glen Innes, called the name of his station Alambar.

I have looked over carefully the above paper, and examined it with the native names for water in Victoria, South Australia, and the Malay Archipelago. The study of Hebrew and the cognate languages evidently gave the impulse to Mr. MacPherson to take up this subject. Starting with the root-letters in the Hebrew word for water, he tries to discover how many native names have the letters *m* or *mb*, *mp*, applied to water in rivers, creeks, lakes, lagoons, &c. Not only so, but the ancient languages of the world are also consulted. Thus, the Phœnician “*mu*” for water, and the Egyptian, “*me*,” are taken into account.

Reference is made to the names of streams in Australia in “*emb*,” “*gnb*,” “*kmb*,” such as Wamba Ponds and Wallomba Brook. Similar words, says the author, are found in the languages of the Malay Archipelago. In looking over 59 words, furnished by Wallace, representing as many languages for the word water, I find that there are only two which have the slightest resemblance to the above specimens, “*manu*” and “*banyu*.” Again, it ought to be remembered that the various languages of the natives of Australia have nothing in common with any language outside the continent, and indeed have very little resemblance to one another. The natives of one side of a creek have a different language from those on the other side. Hence the difficulty to do any good to them by missionary enterprise, &c. Such being the case, the forms of words which seem to have a common origin are generally accidental, and must not be pressed too much to support any theory. I fully expected to have found more words in the languages of the Malay Archipelago for water with “*m-m*” or “*m-u*” than I did, as it is generally agreed that the aborigines came from the north, and must have lingered for some time among the islands of the Archipelago. I have examined several vocabularies of the native tribes in South Australia, and have found nothing to lead me to suppose that the letters “*m*,” or “*mb*,” or “*mp*,” had anything to do with water. I have also examined the vocabularies of the native tribes of Victoria, as furnished by Smythe, with the same result.

The method of consulting the various gazetteers in New South Wales for the meaning of native names is not to be commended. Names have been introduced which are Indian, &c., and are found in the gazetteer as native, and in one instance at least the writer

of this paper has fallen into the trap. "Farrucabad," near Glen Innes, has been regarded by many as a native name, but it comes from India, as the owner of the station resided in India for many years.

The so-called native names are sometimes only a modified form of English words, and the greatest care has to be taken when reference is made to gazetteers, as was often done by the writer of this paper.

Sir ALFRED ROBERTS suggested that the paper be subject to revision before being printed with the Society's transactions.

Mr. J. F. MANN pointed out that many instances had occurred of attempts on the part of blackfellows to pronounce European names being recorded as aboriginal words. The names Gabo and Woolloomooloo were aboriginal corruptions of the words Cape Howe and windmill. The natives appeared to name rivers from the different kinds of trees and shrubs growing on their banks. This was the case with the prefix "yarra," which is of frequent occurrence, and indicates a particular sort of gum-tree. Sometimes, as in the case of the Murrumbidgee, a river was known by over 50 names throughout its whole course, and aboriginals appeared to know every bend by some particular name.

Mr. JOHN F. MANN writes as follows:—I have read with much attention the accompanying paper bearing the above title. The object of Mr. Macpherson is to discover whether, in giving names to a river, or water of any description, the aborigines were guided by certain laws, and adopted the principles which are found to prevail in the languages of the world. The language of these aborigines is extremely expressive, every name almost is a compound word, each syllable of which has a signification; so that the name of a place at once expresses and describes the particular locality. Before commencing to analyse any of these names, it is well to make certain that the word is a genuine one; failing in this, Mr. MacPherson has unconsciously fallen into one or two slight errors. (See "alumbah," page 3, and "Oakey Creek," page 11.) It is much to be regretted that in the early days of settlement so little attention was paid to the nomenclature, or that when a name was obtained greater care was not practised in the orthography. Taking this carelessness into consideration with the distortion which all the native names have been subjected to, it is a matter of difficulty now to obtain a reliable word. "Any way will do to spell a native name," I have heard said on more than one occasion. One of our most reliable and accomplished surveyors confused the name "Cape Howe" so as to represent a name "Gabo," and when such euphonious names as "Eurobodella," "Taralga," "Larella," and others are converted into "Boat Alley," "Trialgang," "Larry's Lake," &c., it behoves a philologist to proceed with

caution; for so common have these misnomers become that many of the younger generation of blacks have adopted the altered word.

Mr. MacPherson assumes that each compound name includes one or more syllables which indicate a root-word used by the aboriginals to refer to water, and then in many cases identifies this word with one having a similar signification as used in other parts of the world, and gives innumerable examples in support of his argument. However ingenious this theory may be, I think that it will prove a difficult one to carry out, for one will find that in following up the arguments you suddenly come upon a similar name attached to a hill or land of some sort. Take the letter *m*, for instance. This being the first example selected by Mr. MacPherson, it applies well to the name of the river Murrumbidgee, as representing the humming sound of water as it flows over stones, &c. But following the argument up, and the river down, as it increases in importance, and gathers more roots, you come upon a hill in the neighbourhood of Yass, and about 15 or 20 miles from the Murrumbidgee, named *Murrumbateman*; and so you may follow on until the peculiar humming sound of *m* culminates in a range of mountains, near Molong, known as the "*Mumbles*."

Again, take the Wollondilly River as an example. It is true that the Wollondilly is joined by the Mulwarree Ponds at Goulburn, but the "murmur of the waters" can be only heard in the Wollondilly branch, which throughout the whole length flows through a hilly and mountainous country; whereas the Mulwarree is but a long chain of ponds rising in a swamp, and flowing only in time of flood through marshy land. To follow the reverend author through the long list of references which he gives in support of his theory is more than I dare attempt, even supposing that I felt myself competent to do so.

Mr. MacPherson gives (page 17) the word *bidge* as meaning water. Mr. de la Poer Wall, in his "Manual of Physical Geography of Australia," page 77, describes the name Murrumbidgee as meaning "beautiful river." In connexion with this I may refer to the name Kurkerduebidgee. This is the native name of a small plain or flat on the Shoalhaven River, about 12 miles on the Goulburn side of Braidwood. According to my informant, an aboriginal, *kur* means a mouth; *kur-kur*, a long mouth or beak; and *kur-kur-duc*, the bird known by us as the "native companion." This plain was, and probably is now, the resort of this bird, a large crane, hence the word *kur-ker-duc-bid-gee*. *Kurkur* also means "mouth" in the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle dialects. I am under the impression that the termination *bid-gee* means a flat by the river side; and this explanation will agree with a description of the Murrumbidgee River; but which syllable refers to water I do not undertake to say.

The name Currockbilly or Kurwikkbilly is given to a high mountain in the coast range near Braidwood. Two long valleys in this mountain are known as the great and little *Kurradus*; on account of the resort of this bird. The same name may be found for a place near Mittagong, which possibly this bird at one time frequented. I mention this case also to show that in naming places the aborigines were guided by circumstances, adapting the name to natural features, the growth of certain trees or flowers, the feeding place of animals, birds, etc.

"Billy-bong" literally means a blind creek, *bong* means dead, the water flowing over low level land, and occasionally vanishing amongst the grass; consequently, *billy* refers to the water. Repeating a word indicates extent, great, large, etc. Thus Bong Bong applies correctly to that part of the Wingecarribbee River which flows past Throsby Park, the land being so level there as to make it a matter of difficulty to trace the course of the river. On the Bredalbane Plains we find the name of Mut-mut-billy and Mill-bang or bong. *Mill* means to see; Mill-bong means blind or dead eye. I do not know what *mut-mut* alludes to, but these names evidently refer to the spread of water over this large extent of flat land, and to its being invisible on account of grass, etc., at times. The terminal *dilly* also, no doubt, refers to water, but I can give no interpretation of *Wollon*.

I endeavoured to reconcile the termination *gong* with a word meaning a swamp. Mittagong proper is the range separating Wingecarribbee Swamp from the Nepean River. The site of the railway-station is quite out of position. It was across this range that the first settlers penetrated into what was for many years afterwards known as the new country, now better known as Bowral, Bong Bong, Sutton Forest, etc., and was for a length of time called the Argyle Road. This large swamp lies at the base of this range; *Tom Thumb* Lagoon adjoins Woollongong; then there is the *Terragong* Swamp at Kiama, and the extensive swamps at the head of the *Cudjegong* River. But this leaves *Gulgong*, *Gerriegong*, and many other places without a swamp, so that this arrangement becomes futile, and the same result occurs in many other similar cases.

At page 11 Mr. MacPherson assumes rather decidedly that the name Oakey as applied to a river or creek simply means *water*. I cannot agree with this assertion. The word "oakey" simply refers to the native oaks, or casuarina tree which fringe the banks of a stream; the name occurs in numerous instances throughout the country, and is used in a similar manner as sandy, stony, wattle, and other such things to denote a particular stream. (This tree is in no way allied to *Quercus*).

It must be borne in mind that the author writes tentatively only. As he states, he puts forth his suggestions by way of experi-

ments; but he—the result of long and patient research—gives such a vast amount of information, so many examples of words used in all parts of the world to mean water, that the paper must be considered as an extremely valuable one, as it paves the way for anyone who chooses to follow up this interesting subject. I have only ventured upon making a few remarks; but in the hands of a philologist it is a matter which could be extended considerably. The way to proceed would be to obtain the services of intelligent natives, who might be able to interpret many of these compound names; though I am aware that many of these men know nothing of the origin of these names. How few Liverpool men know the origin of that name! which, like *Kumiduebidge*, is attributed to a similar bird feeding on the adjoining swamps. If a true interpretation cannot be obtained, some clue might be discovered as to the principle adopted in the formation.

The word *naoi* (see page 10) canoe, is also given to Orion's belt by the aborigines. The three stars are supposed to be three rowers who are on their way to the pleiades in search of wives.

The late Sir Thomas Mitchell was a most reliable author; being a good linguist, and possessing a good ear for sound, he noted every syllable correctly. He preserved the native name of Darling Point, where he resided for many years, the name being Yarranabee, the meaning of which I do not know. The site now occupied by the garden of Mr. Jas. S. Mitchell was formerly a large lagoon surrounded by high reeds or rushes. The word Yarra appears in several places about the Murrumbidgee near Yass, or Yarrh, but I cannot attach a swamp or lagoon to any of these spots.

In riding to Sydney from his residence—which he did daily, Sir Thomas suffered much annoyance when passing Rusheutter Bay, by numerous small dogs rushing out from a hut and barking at him, he named the place "Barking Glen", hence *Barcom Glen* has become a permanent name.

Mr. E. DU FAUR remarked that the original plans of the Murrumbidgee River showed names for every part of it, and that some of the words were of eight syllables, and unpronounceable by Europeans.

Mr. TREVOR JONES said that S does not occur in native names, and that the aborigines cannot pronounce the letter F, but both these letters are often found printed on maps and plans in native words.