

The Aborigines of New South Wales.

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THE negro has suffered much at the hands of his fellow-man. The curse is upon him—"A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Yet he is our brother, for his ancestry is the same. Let me, therefore, introduce my subject by endeavouring to show, historically, the relations of the Austral-negro race to the others.

In the far past, one man and his wife, his three sons and their wives, were the only surviving representatives of mankind; the patriarchal home was in Armenia, under the shadow of Ararat; but soon the family peace was broken, and a son went forth, an outcast and a fugitive, carrying with him a heavy burden of guilt and a father's curse. Gathering together their wives and little ones, their flocks and their herds, Ham and his son Canaan seem to me to have passed through the gorges of snowy Niphates and to have proceeded southwards along the course of the Euphrates, planting themselves first in the highlands of Upper Mesopotamia; then when, in the course of time, their families and goods had increased, they occupied fresh territory further to the south, still between the two rivers, a prolific region. Here, I imagine, they lived long in peace, the sole possessors of the riches of the land, till they were dislodged by fresh bands issuing too from Armenia, that *officina gentium*, where surrounding circumstances were unfavourable to permanent occupation by these infant races. The newcomers were the Shemites, descending through the northern passes, and the Turanian Scyths, probably from the north-east by the way of Mount Zagrus and the Tigris. Finding the way barred by the Hamites already in possession of all the country between the two rivers, the Shemites and the Scyths hurled themselves upon them from above, and scattered them in fragments to the east and the south and the west. Accordingly, the position of the Hamite or black races at the opening of history is, in Genesis x. 6, indicated ethnically by the names Kush and Mizraim and Phut and Canaan, which geographically are the countries we call Ethiopia and Egypt and Nubia and Palestine. The Kushites, however, were not confined to Africa, but were spread in force along the whole northern shores of the Arabian sea: they were specially numerous on the lower courses of the Euphrates and Tigris, their original seats, and there formed the first germ whence came the great empire of Babylonia. In this sense the later Greek tradition (*Odyssey* I—23-24) speaks of both an eastern and a western nation of Ethiopians, because the black races, many centuries before the Trojan

war, had spread themselves from the banks of the Indus on the east right across to the shores of the Mediterranean, while towards the south-west they occupied the whole of Egypt and the Abyssinian highlands. Thus they held two noble coigns of vantage, likely to give them a commanding influence in the making of the history of mankind—the valley of the Nile, which, through all these ages to the present hour, has never lost its importance—and the luxuriant flat lands of Mesopotamia. A mighty destiny seemed to await them, and already it had begun to show itself, for the Kushites not only made the earliest advances towards civilization, but under Nimrod, that mighty hunter, smitten with the love of dominion, they threatened at one time to establish a universal empire with Babel as its chief seat. And not without reason; for the Kushite tribes were stalwart in stature and physique, in disposition vigorous and energetic, eager for war and conquest. But a time of disaster came which carried them into the remotest parts of the earth—into Central Africa, into the mountains of Southern India, whence, after a while, another impulse sent them onwards towards our own island-continent; hither they came, as I think, many centuries before the Christian era, pressed on and on from their original seats by the waves of tribal migration which were so common in those early days. Similar was the experience of the Celts, a very ancient tribe; soon after their first arrival in Europe we find them occupying Thrace and the countries about the mouth of the Danube; but fresh immigration from the Caucasus plateau pushed them up the Danube, then into Belgium and France, thence into Britain, and last of all the invading Saxons drove them westwards into Ireland, and into the mountains of Wales and Scotland. So the successive steps of the Kushite displacement, in my opinion, were these:—First into the valley of the Ganges, where they were the original inhabitants, then into the Deccan and into Further India, then into Ceylon, the Andaman Islands and the Sunda Islands, and thence into Australia. These stages I will examine presently more in detail.

But, meanwhile, let us look at the old Babylonian kingdom. Its ethnic basis was Kushite; its ruling dynasty continued to be Kushite probably down to the time of the birth of Abraham, B.C. 1996. But before that date, the Babylonian population had been materially changed. Nimrod had conquered Erech and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar; an Akkadian or Turanian element was thus incorporated with his empire; he had built Nineveh and Rehoboth and Resen (Genesis x. 11); a Shemite element was thus or in some other way superadded; other Turanians and Shemites and Japhetic Aryans too, perhaps attracted by the easy luxuriance of life on these fertile plains, had all assembled in Chaldæa and Babylonia. In consequence, we

find that about twenty centuries B.C. the Kushite kingdom had become a mixed conglomerate of four essentially different races—Hamites, Turanian, Shemite, and Japhetic—which on the inscriptions are called *Kiprat-arbat* “the four tongues.” Then, as the Babylonian worship of Mulitta demanded free intercourse as a religious duty, a strange mixture of physical types must have been developed among the children of these races, the Ethiopian, Scythic, Shemitic, and Aryan all blending—a rare study to the eye of a physiologist, who would have seen sometimes the one type sometimes the other predominating in the child. This Chaldæan monarchy—the first of the five great monarchies of ancient history—was overthrown by an irruption of Arab (Shemitic) tribes about the year 1500 B.C. And now, as I think, another wave of population began to move towards our shores, for these Arabs were pure monotheists, and in their religious zeal must have dashed to pieces the polytheistic and sensual fabric which the Babylonian conquests had extended from the confines of India westwards to the Mediterranean (cf. Chedorlaomer’s expedition, Genesis xiv. 9). Those portions of the Chaldæo-Babylonian people that were unable to escape from the dominion of the Arabs were absorbed in the new empire, just as many of the Celtic Britons were in the sixth and seventh centuries merged in the newly formed Saxon kingdoms. But the rupture of the Babylonian State and the proscription of its worship must have been so complete as to drive forth from their native seats thousands of the people of the “four tongues” and force them westwards into Africa, or eastwards through the mountain passes into the table-land of the Punjaub, and thence into the Gangetic Plains. Here, I imagine, were already located the pure Hamites of the Dispersion; but finding these to be guilty of a skin not exactly coloured like their own,* and not understanding their language, these later Kushites of mixed extraction regarded them as enemies and drove them before them into the mountains of the Deccan, where, to this hour, the Dravidians and Kolarians are black-skinned and savage races. Ere long, these Babylonian Kushites were themselves displaced and ejected from the Ganges valley by a fair-skinned race, the Aryans, another and the last ethnic stream of invaders from the north-west. These Aryans, in religion and habits irreconcilably opposed to the earlier races of India, waged on them a relentless war. Hemmed up in the triangle of southern India, the earlier Hamites could escape only by sea; the Babylonian Kushites, on the other hand, could not seek safety in the mountains of the Deccan, as these were already occupied; they must

* Occasionally a copper-coloured man has been found among the native tribes in Australia. One such was exhibited in Sydney many years ago. Another was found in the Gringai tribe, near Dungoo. An aboriginal, who shared his *gunyah*, watched one night till he was asleep, and cut off his head!

therefore have been pushed down the Ganges into Further India and the Malayan peninsula; thence they passed at a later time into Borneo, and the Sunda Islands and Papua, and afterwards across the sea of Timor into Australia, or eastwards into Melanesia, driven onwards now by the Turanian tribes, which had come down from Central Asia into China and the Peninsula and islands of the East Indies.

Thus, in my view, our island first received its native population, in two different streams, the one from the north, and the other from the north-west.

Many known facts favour this view:—

- (1.) Ethnologists recognize *two* pre-Aryan races in India. The earlier had not attained to the use of metals and used only polished flint axes and implements of stone; the later had no written records, and made grave mounds over their dead. The Vedas call them “noseless,” gross feeders on flesh, “raw eaters,” “not sacrificing,” “without gods,” “without rites”*; they adorned the bodies of the dead with gifts and raiment and ornaments. All this suits our aboriginals; they are noseless, for they have very flat and depressed noses, as contrasted with the straight and prominent noses of the Vedic Aryans; they have no gods and no religious rites such as the Vedas demand. The Nairs in the south-west of India practice polyandry; so do our aboriginals in certain circumstances.
- (2.) The Kolarian and Dravidian languages have inclusive and exclusive forms for the plural of the first person. So also have many of the languages of Melanesia and Polynesia. Probably also the dialects of the north-western coast of Australia have this peculiarity, but I have no information about them.
- (3.) The aborigines on the south and west of Australia use the same words for *I, thou, he, we, you* as the natives of the Madras coasts of India.
- (4.) The native boomerang of Australia is used on the south-east of India, and can be traced to Egypt—both of them Hamite regions.
- (5.) Among the red races of America—who are Turanian—four is a sacred number, having a reference to the cardinal points. In Egypt the pyramids have square bases, and the Great Pyramid is found to have its angles pointing exactly to the four cardinal points. The Chaldeans also built their temple-towers as pyramids, and

* The Akkadian religion of Babylonia had no temples, and no fixed public worship.

their partiality to the number four is seen in their four-fold arrangement of cities, &c. Their “tongues” were four. The castes of India are four, possibly an arrangement adopted by the Aryans from the earlier Kushite inhabitants of India. With all this, I compare the universal division of the native tribes of Australia into four intermarrying classes.

- (6.) These class names form their feminines in *tha*, as *Ipai* (masc.), *Ipa-tha* (fem). This is a peculiarly Shemitic inflexion. So also in Hamitic Babylonian, we have *Mul* (masc.), *Muli-tta* (fem.); *Enu* (masc.), *Enu-ta* (fem). This seems to indicate that among our native tribes there exist the same mixed elements as in the old Babylonian empire.*
- (7.) So also does the fact that several tribes practise circumcision, that one tribe in Queensland has distinctly Shemite features, and that there are among the tribes so many varying types of men. Some are Hamite negroes in colour and cranial shape; others are evidently mixed Kushites; and others again seem to be pure Turanians.
- (8.) In some parts of Australia, as at Tenterfield, our natives erect stages—the Parsee “towers of silence”—on which to place the bodies of their dead, a custom which their ancestors, I believe, brought from Asia. In other parts of New South Wales they do not bury the body, but place it in a hollow tree, and, even where they do dig a grave, the body is so wrapped in bark and so tied up that the earth does not touch it. In South Australia the body is desiccated by fire and smoke, then carried about for a while, and finally exposed on a stage. All this corresponds with the Persian religious belief in the sacredness of the earth, which must not be contaminated by so foul a thing as a putrefying human body. In Chaldea also, the same ideas prevailed; for the dead were not interred; they were laid (1) on mats in a brick vault, or (2) on a platform of sun-dried bricks, and over this a huge earthenware dish-cover, or (3) in a long earthen jar in two pieces fitting into each other; the body did not touch the earth.
- (9.) There is nothing improbable in the supposition that the first inhabitants of Australia came from the north-west, that is, from Hindostan or Further India. The native traditions of the Polynesians all point to the west or north-west as the quarter from which their ancestors

* Two of the Australian classes are called (in Kamilaroi) *Kum-bo* and *Kub-bi*. I think I find these names in *Kam* (black), the inscriptional name for the land of Egypt, and in *Ai-gup-t-os, E-gyp-t*.

came. So also the Indias are to the north-west of our island. The distance from Madras to Sumatra is about 1,200 miles, and from Sumatra to the coast of Australia about 1,400 miles. Such a distance is not impracticable to a savage; for in January 1858, a boat, with a numerous family on board, was driven by the westerly winds from the Union Group in Polynesia to Mangaia, a distance of 1,250 miles, in a south-easterly direction, and other similar instances of involuntary emigration have occurred. In some such way, perhaps fleeing from the conquering Aryans, some of the early Kushites of Southern India may have come to Sumatra, and thence also to our shores. In the woods and mountains of that island there are still two aboriginal races (the Malays occupying the coasts), and one of these is called Kuba, a name identical with our tribal class Kubbi. The interior of Borneo is also the refuge of three native black races, and one of these is very like that in the interior of Sumatra. Of these Sir James Brooke says: "These people are mild, industrious, and so scrupulously honest that not a single case of theft has come under my notice; in their domestic lives they are amiable, without white vices; they marry but one wife, and their women are always quoted for chastity." I may add as a coincidence, that the native name for Borneo is Bruné, and that Bruné is also the name of a large island in Storm Bay, near Hobart.

It thus appears that the islands of the East Indian Archipelago were at first inhabited by aboriginal black races, which had come from the adjoining continent. When the Malays entered, these blacks either fled into the interior or left the islands; and, as Java and Timor especially are near Australia, a large portion of our native population must have come hither by that route.

- (10.) The languages spoken by non-Aryan races on the south-east of Hindustan along the Coromandel coast are the Tamil and the Telugu; the system of kinship among these races is the same essentially as among the Australian tribes.
- (11.) Identity of language is a strong evidence of identity of origin; thus, I take the Australian tribes to be homogeneous, for some words of theirs are found distributed over the whole continent; for instance, the word *dimna* "foot," with only slight phonetic changes, exists in the native languages from Cape York all over Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. The word *mil*, "eye," is also widely distributed. In the

names for the numeral "one," there is great diversity, as in the Aryan languages, but *bular*, "two," extends from Cape River (Queensland) into New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and even as far south as Bruné Island near Hobart. This last fact is rather remarkable, for, although I endeavoured for more than a year to trace a connection between the dialects of Tasmania and those of Victoria and New South Wales, I had failed until, quite recently, I have found in Tasmania some remarkable correspondences with the Gringai language of New South Wales; for instance, "ear," *mung-enna* (Tasmania), *mug-u* (Gringai); "foot," *lugf-ana** (Tasmania), *trug-anai* (Gringai); also *wee*, "fire" (Kamilaroi), *wee-al-utta*, "red hot embers" (Tasmania), *wee-na-leah*, "fire" (W. Tasmania); *rim-utta*, "hand" (Tasmania), *rima* (Polynesia), *'ima* (New Guinea).

These eleven points are the main features of an argument by which I would maintain that our black people came originally from the shores of the Persian Gulf, and that they came to us through India.

But I pass on to the proper subject of this essay—the aboriginal tribes of New South Wales. And now my narrative is founded on statements either made to me personally by the blacks with whom I have conversed, or communicated to me orally or in writing by friends† who have long been familiar with the habits and condition of our native races. In order to proceed methodically, I shall first give a sketch of the tribal arrangements which affect the three periods of life,—(1) YOUTH, (2) MANHOOD, (3) OLD AGE; and to avoid needless repetition, which must present itself if I were to describe the customs of each tribe separately, I will frame a narrative applicable to all; but, wherever any material difference of usage exists in any particular among the tribes, this difference will be noted. I expect thus to give an intelligible view of aboriginal life in general, without specifying the locality where each individual feature of the description is to be found. All that follows is the product of original research, but if in any instance I refer to the printed statements of others, I shall name the authors whom I quote. The tribes with which I am acquainted are chiefly those of the northern half of our territory,

* *d* or *t* and *l* are interchangeable; as in Latin *odor, olor*; *dedicare, dedicare*; *lingua* (*dingua*), E. tongue.

† I owe special acknowledgments to Mr. C. Naseby, Maitland (for the Kamilaroi tribe), and Mr. J. W. Boydell, Camyrallyn, Gresford (for the Gringai tribe). Both of these gentlemen have had an intimate acquaintance with these tribes for more than thirty years.

the Gringai, the Kamilaroi, and the Ooaloroi, and to these I add a slight knowledge of the Wiradjery and Yūin tribes. As it is impossible within the limits of an essay to discuss fully so large a subject as this, I will dwell upon those points which seem to admit of original investigation, and will omit altogether or touch lightly upon those features of my subject which are generally known.

I.—YOUTH.






An aboriginal child is heir to a tawny skin, "the vellum of the pedigree they claim," and exposure to the air soon deepens the swarthinness. The depth of colour varies in different tribes, for some of them, according to my hypothesis, are more purely Nigritian in their origin, while others are from the mixed Kushi-ite race; and tribes that have long dwelt in swampy regions are darker, while those occupying the uplands are lighter in colour than others.

The advent of the baby is not always a source of joy to the parents. The mother, in parturition, is left to the assistance of one or two female friends, often left entirely alone, at a little distance from the main camp, and ere long she joins her husband with or without the baby. If the season has been hard and there is a scarcity of food, or if the mother is already burdened with many children or with heavy labour for her lord, the little one is left to perish. A native woman at Goodooga thus abandoned several of her children in succession, and then, after an interval of seven or eight years, suckled and reared another, which is now alive. We condemn this inhuman practice of infanticide among the black races; but what shall we say of the intellectual and polished Athenians who, by law, allowed a father to order any one of his infant children to be exposed to death? Our blacks in the Ooaloroi country, soon after the arrival of the white man in that district, spared the females at their birth, but left all the males to perish; they feared that these half-caste males, if they grew to be men, would have the qualities of a superior race and would be too intelligent, too strong, too dangerous for the tribe, and so they suffered none of them to live.

If a child should die, the parents and even the neighbours make great lamentation over it, weeping bitterly; when they have buried the body, they forthwith shift their camp. They have an idea that an evil spirit, the Krooben, haunts the graves, and they fear to be near him. At Kunopia, when an infant dies, they roll the corpse in a thin sheet of bark and keep it over the smoke of a fire for about a fortnight; the smoke-dried corpse is carried about till twelve months after the birth; it is then buried.

Mothers are very attentive to their children; they nurse them carefully and continue to show them every token of affection. They carry them on their backs, wrapped in a rug or blanket. As

soon as the boy is able to walk, his father and his elder brothers delight to teach him the elements of all manly accomplishments—to swim, to throw the boomerang and spear; from his mother he learns to dig up roots, to gather edible sedges from the margin of the lagoon, and to become expert in other useful arts. Dawson says that even at the early age of one or two years, but often later, the Gringai tribe mark parts of the body of the child with scars in the form of some simple device, using for the purpose the sharp edges of shells. I know that this practice exists in Queensland and in New South Wales; in the Kamilaroi tribe it is called the man's *mombarai* or "drawing," and assumes such forms

as  or  or  or , and in Queensland .

These marks are placed on the upper front of the arm near the shoulder, or on the chest on each side of the breast bone, or on the back. A white man, who had been bled by cupping on the back, and who, consequently, bore the marks of it, was believed by the blacks, who saw him bathing, to have been formerly one of their race, from the resemblance which the scars had to their *mombarai*. I think it likely, although I have not been able to obtain satisfactory evidence on this point, that each family had its own *mombarai*, or at least a peculiar modification of the *mombarai* which, I suppose, belongs to each clan in the tribe, for a friend tells me that on one occasion he had an opossum cloak made for him by a man of the Kamilaroi tribe, who marked it with his own *mombarai*; when this cloak was shown to another black man some time after, he at once exclaimed, "I know who made this, here is his *mombarai*." * These markings are not so elaborate as the tattoo of the Maori, or so neat as the similar arm brands of the Papuans; they can scarcely be intended as ornaments, but they may have been adopted for the purpose of identification in battle or otherwise.

Meanwhile the training of the boy proceeds. As soon as he is old enough, perhaps seven or eight years old, he goes forth with his father to the chase, and learns to stalk the kangaroo, to recognize on a tree the mark of an opossum's recent ascent, to knock down the pigeon from its branch, to follow the honey-bee to its nest, to dive under water and spear the fish in their resting-places, and all other accomplishments, which in old England would have been included under the name of "woodcraft." He is early taught also to exercise his faculty of observation, and he becomes quick of eye and acute in understanding all natural phenomena, and in detecting the disturbances which the foot of man or of beast has worked in the aspect of nature around him. Thus at a tender age

* Most of my experts assure me that the *mombarai* is merely an arbitrary brand.

he can tell by the faintest tread on the grass or on the bare soil, by the stones upturned by the foot, or the pieces of dry wood broken on the rocky ground, how many men have passed that way and how long before; if he sees a native bee he catches it, fixes a little bit of white down on its body, then sets it free and follows it with his eye, running hard until he knows where its nest is; his reward is a feast of honey. If he sees a pigeon perched on the limb of a tree and wishes to have it, he makes a great circuit until he is behind the tree, so that the trunk hides him from the eye of the bird, he then moves forward very stealthily until a blow from his stick secures the prize. Perhaps he assists in hunting the kangaroo. When the men see one quietly grazing, they spread themselves in a circle, such as in the hunts of Celtic Scotland is called a *tiomcholl*, round about and at some distance, each carrying a leafy branch of a tree before him; with these they cautiously advance, halting and assuming the appearance of rooted saplings whenever the kangaroo looks up alarmed; at last the circle has so closed in, that when the quarry does at last detect the enemy and begins to hop away he finds a spear or a club everywhere near enough to give him his death blow. In the rivers where large fish are to be found the black boy learns to dive and remain for a time under water; * walking on the bed of the river, with his eyes open, he dislodges from their lairs the lazy fish and kills them, or spears the smaller ones as they hurry past him. In this practice the blacks show wonderful precision and dexterity.

When game is scarce, the black man must subsist on fish or roots. At Brewarrina, on the lower Barwon, there is or was an ingenious fish cage, constructed in the river by the blacks, and called by the settlers the "Fishery." The cod-fish come up here from the Darling of all sizes, from 4 to 40 lbs. weight. Here they lodge in the deep waterholes, and, feeding on mussels and smaller fish of their own and other kinds, they attain to a huge size, their body sometimes weighing from 120 to 150 lbs. To catch these fish of the smaller size the blacks took advantage of a "falls" or shelving part of the river, just below the crossing-place, and placed in the river, from bank to bank, a solid wall of stones, each about as large as two men could carry. Below this solid wall they laid in the river other stone walls at right angles to each other, much like the dividing lines of a chequer board, thereby forming open spaces, each 8 feet square and about 3 feet 6 inches deep. In these walls, which cross each other, they left small slits open from top to bottom and about 15 inches wide, thus large enough to let a fish of 40 lbs. pass through. The uppermost

*In hot weather the boys and girls are very fond of swimming and diving in the river; they throw themselves in doubled up, and thus make a great splashing noise.

wall next the crossing place was made the most substantial of all, to resist the force of the current in the river. It also rose higher out of the water, the others being just so much lower as to cause a slight ripple over them. This fish trap was used in flood-time, and the builders of it, knowing the habits of the cod-fish, which abound here, have so arranged the slits in the lower walls that the fish in going upwards can proceed only in a zigzag direction, and, as they never try to turn back, they at last collect in great numbers in all the squares, but especially in the uppermost ones, from which there is no exit, as the wall is solid throughout. Meanwhile our tyro is getting experience in fish-spear practice, for the blackfellows stand in the squares and ply their spears with such effect that tons of fish are landed on the bank. The river is here about 800 yards wide.

Our young boy also assists in an important operation, that of axe-sharpening. One of the earliest developments of civilization is the stone axe, but the axe to be useful to the savage must be kept sharp, and this he can accomplish only by rubbing. Near Yaggabi, on the Gwydir, there is a great rubbing place, which must have been used by the tribes around for many generations. It is an extensive deposit of sandstone of a gritty nature, fit for grindstones. The rock rises out of a deep reach of the river, and slopes backwards for about 30 feet, and then terminates in a flat top, much of which is now covered with grass. Yet over at least 2 acres of this top there may be seen innumerable hollows made in the stone by the blackfellow when sharpening his axe; for as soon as one groove became too deep he would begin another beside it. Not only on the top but also on the sloping side these marks are seen down to the water's edge, and below it as far as the eye can penetrate. In 1841 there was a great drought in these parts, so severe that the large timber on the black ridges and elsewhere all died over an extent of 10 or 12 miles. At that time the water in the river at the rubbing-place was very low, and yet the rub-marks could still be seen far below the surface of the water. How many generations of Kamilaroi blacks had encamped there we cannot tell, but the rocks still testify why they came there and how laboriously they had toiled.*

Although these are the labours in which the native boy is required to join, yet it must not be supposed that his life is solely or chiefly one of toil. When the pressure of hunger—his greatest physical enemy—is relieved, the black man, feeling comfortable within, is disposed to be pleased with himself and with all around him. Then they lounge on the ground in groups,

* Here is an instance of their perseverance in rubbing. Many years ago a party of surveyors was killed on the Gwydir. The blacks broke the tires of the dray wheels into small pieces and made them into tomahawks by rubbing!

and tell each other stories or recollections of former times, at which they laugh heartily. The young people amuse themselves in various ways; sometimes they propound riddles to one another. Here is one of their riddles: A long time ago, there lived an old woman of our tribe, who was so strong that she could overpower any of the men; so she used to catch young fellows and eat them. One day she caught a young man and left him bound in her *gunyah** while she went to a distance to cut some sheets of bark to wrap the body in, before she laid it in the fire where it was to be cooked. While she was away, two young women, who had observed her doings, slipped into the hut and released the prisoner; they then hurried to the river and, first knocking some holes in the bottom of the old woman's canoe to hinder her pursuit, they all escaped safe to the other side in another canoe. Meanwhile the old dame returned and saw her victim was gone; she hastily repaired the damaged canoe and crossed, but only to find the young man surrounded by his friends ready to defend him with their spears. She boldly advanced, heeding not the spears thrown at her, although they were sticking in her body everywhere; she had seized the young man, and was making off with him again, when the great wizard of the tribe opportunely arrived, and, giving magical power to the blow, thrust her through and through with his spear. Thus the young man was safe. Who was this old woman? Do you give it up? It was a *porcupine*.

Now, although there is not much ingenuity in this riddle, yet it reveals two things:—(1) the existence of cannibalism, and (2) the belief that a wizard's magic can overpower all natural strength and every opposing influence.

Until his formal reception into the tribe through the Bora, the boy is *wommal* and must eat only the females of the animals which he catches; the males he brings to the camp and gives them to the aged and infirm and those who have large families.

II.—MANHOOD.

(A.) *Initiation.*

When a boy approaches the age of puberty, a feeling of restless anticipation spreads over his mind, for he knows that his opening manhood has brought him to the threshold of ceremonies of mysterious import through which he is to be formally received into the tribe and thereby acquire the dignity of a man. The rites of initiation are important, numerous, and prolonged, and as his admission does not concern himself or his family merely but the whole tribe, these observances call together large assemblages and are the occasion of general rejoicing. This assembly—the most solemn and unique in the tribal life—is called the Bora and sometimes the

* A tent or hut formed of the branches and the bark of trees.

Kobborra. I take *Bora* to be only a shorter form of Kobborra—a name which seems to me to be identical with *Cobra*, meaning in the Ooalaroi and Gringai dialects a head; thus the Bora is the “head” or chief of all the meetings of the tribe.*

The whole proceedings are interesting; they are essentially the same everywhere in their general features and teachings, but the details vary among the different tribes. Therefore, instead of a separate narrative for each tribe, I will endeavour to present a full view of the Bora, taking the Gringai mode as the basis of my description, but introducing, from the other tribes, such features as appear to me to be necessary to complete the significance of the ceremonies. †

The chiefs of the tribe know that some boys are about twelve or thirteen years of age and therefore ready for initiation; they accordingly summon their *marbull* or “public messenger” and bid him inform the tribe that a Bora will be held at a certain time and place, the time being near full moon and the place being usually a well known Bora-ground; they also send him away to invite the neighbouring tribes to attend; this invitation is readily accepted, for, although the tribes may be at variance with each other, universal brotherhood prevails among the blacks at such a time as this. The day appointed for the gathering is perhaps a week or two distant, and the intervening time is filled with busy preparations by the leading men of the novice's tribe. They select a suitable piece of ground, usually near water and level for convenience in sitting or lying on, and form and clear two circular enclosures—a larger and a smaller, about a quarter of a mile from each other with a straight track connecting them; the trees that grow around the smaller circle they carve at about the height of a man, often much higher, with curious emblematical devices and figures; the circuit of these two rings is defined by boughs of trees laid around, and in the centre of the larger one they fix a short pole with a bunch of emus' feathers on the top of it. ‡ Everything is now ready for the rites of initiation, and there is a large concourse; the men stand by with their bodies painted in stripes of colour, chiefly red and white;

* This derivation is only a conjecture.

† The description of the Gringai Bora here given was communicated direct to a friend of mine by a young black who had recently been initiated. I have the utmost confidence that it is circumstantially correct, for I have tested it by inquiries made elsewhere. The facts about the Yuin Bora were similarly obtained by my friend, Mr. Howitt (see page 14), who also purposes to verify them personally. It is every year becoming more difficult to obtain reliable information about the Bora, for it is falling into disuse, the younger men refusing to pass through the ceremonies, and the older men are usually reticent and refuse to tell.

‡ Two such poles, painted red, adorned atop with the white down from the cockatoo, were placed recently at the grave of the king of a tribe near Roma, Queensland.

the women, who are permitted to be present at the opening ceremony only, are lying on the ground all round the larger ring with their faces covered. The boy* is brought forward, made to lie down in the middle of it, and covered with an opossum rug; such of the old men as have been appointed masters of the ceremonies now begin to throw him into a state of fear and awe by sounding an instrument called *tirricoty*, similar to what an English boy calls a "bull-roarer."† The men use this on all occasions when they wish to frighten the women and the boys, who cower with fear whenever they hear it. It is made of a piece of thin wood or bark; it is about 9 inches long, and is sometimes shaped like a fish. The roaring sound is supposed to be the voice of a dreaded evil spirit,‡ who prowls about the camp, especially at night, and carries off, tears, and devours those he can seize. The Kamilaroi tribe call him the Krooben. When the performers think that the *boombat* (so they call the novice) has been sufficiently impressed, *tirricoty* ceases to speak; they then raise the boy from the ground and set him in the ring so that his face is turned towards the cleared track which leads to the circle of imagery; they paint him red all over; then an old man comes forward, breathes strongly in his face and makes him cast his eyes upon the ground, for in this humble attitude he must continue for some days.

Two other old men next take the boy by the arms, and lead him along the track to the other enclosure and set him in the middle of it. (As soon as this is done, the women rise from their prostrate position and begin to dance and sing; after this they go away to a distance, for they are not to see any more of the ceremony at present.) The Yūin tribe,§ on our S.E. coast, place along this path figures, moulded in earth, of various animals (the *totems*), and one of Daramūlan, a spirit-god whom they fear. Before each of these figures, the devotees have a dance, and a Koradjie ("doctor") brings up out of his inside, by his mouth the *jo-e-a* ("magic") of the *totem* before which he stands; for the porcupine he shows stuff like chalk, for the kangaroo stuff like glass, and so on. Meanwhile the boy has been sitting in the smaller circle with downcast eyes; he is told to rise and is led to the foot of each of the carved trees in succession, and is made to look up for a moment at the carvings on them, and while he does so the old men raise a shout.

* For convenience, I speak of the boy in the singular number, but there are usually several boys initiated at once.

† This instrument is variously named by different tribes: as *turndam* (in Victoria), and in N.S. Wales *wundaba*, or *goonunganiga*, or *goonung tuckia* = *stercus humanum edens*.

‡ I had one of these "roarers" made and sounded it the other day in the presence of a blackfellow who visits me. He shrank from it and exclaimed "Bail (=no) me like that."

§ The more correct designation for this tribe would be the *Murring* (from the Shoalhaven River to Cape Howe); the Yūin is a sub-tribe.

They now give him a new name,* which must not be revealed to the uninitiated, and they hand to him a little bag of stringy-bark containing one or more small white stones of crystal quartz; this bag he will always carry about his person, and the stones must not be shown to the uninitiated on pain of death.† This concludes the first part of the performance.

The *boombat* is next conveyed, blindfolded, to a large camp at a distance of several miles, no woman being near, and food is given to him, which he eats still with eyes cast down; here they keep him for eight or ten days and teach him the tribal lore by showing him their dances and their songs; these he learns, especially one song of which I can tell nothing further than that it is important for the boy to know it. These songs they say, were given them by Baiamai, the great Creator.‡ At night, during this period, the *boombat* is set by himself in secluded and darksome places, and, all around, the men make hideous noises, at which he must not betray the least sign of fear. At some part of the ceremony he is shown a sacred wand; of this Ridley says—"This old man Billy told me, as a great favour, what other blacks had withheld as a mystery too sacred to be disclosed to a white man, that '*dhūrumbulum*,' a stick or wand, is

* As to the new name, "My father," says a correspondent, "sometimes found out what the name was, and would tease the men by pretending to reveal it to the women; when he did this they would get angry and chase him away."

† The tribal laws against the revealer of the mysteries were strictly enforced. Many years ago, some shepherds on the Upper Williams had obtained a few of these crystals and had shown them to the gins. When this became known to the chiefs of the tribe, they assembled in council to consider what should be done; one old man, a great orator, made an inflammatory speech, declaring that the white men should be put to death and not the gins. Accordingly the blacks watched their opportunity, killed the shepherds separately, and feasted on their bodies—a well authenticated case of cannibalism in the Gringai tribe. One old gin long carried about with her in her shoulder-net a hand of one of these shepherds; she would bring it out at times, and pulling the sinews make the fingers move, and say "Bail (no) you make doughboy any more." For this murder one of the blacks was afterwards hanged at Dungog. At the execution many of his comrades were clustered on the trees near by, eager to witness this novel form of the white man's retribution.

Another instance of the women's dread of the white crystals comes from the same locality. Near the Barrington a gin was digging out a *tarak* root, when she turned up a round lump of yellow metal, heavy and smooth. She took it to the camp; the wise men smelled it and felt it and bit it, but to no purpose; then they struck it hard, and finding it yield to their blows, they flattened it and cut it up into small pieces and used them as slugs for their muskets to shoot kangaroos. Some white men saw the pieces and knew them to be gold, but the gin could not be persuaded to go with them and show them the spot; she was afraid, she said, for there were too many white crystals there. So the Barrington or North Copeland Diggings were not discovered till many years afterwards.

‡ The Akkadian root *ba* means "to create," in Kamilaroi *baia* means to shape, make."

exhibited at the Bora, and that the sight of it inspires the initiated with manhood. This sacred wand was the gift of *Baiamai*. The ground on which the Bora is celebrated is *Baiamai's* ground. Billy believes the Bora will be kept up always all over the country,—such was the command of *Baiamai*.”

These formalities being completed, the *boombat's* probation is at an end. They now proceed, all of them together, to some large water-hole, and jumping in, men and boy, they wash off the colouring matter from their bodies, amid much glee and noisy merriment; when they have come out of the water they paint themselves white.

Meanwhile the women, who have been called to resume their attendance, have kindled a large fire not far off, and are lying around it with their faces covered as before; the two old men who were the first initiators bring the boy at a run towards the fire, followed by all the others, with voices silent but making a noise by beating their boomerangs together; the men join hands and form a ring round the fire, and one old man runs round the inside of the ring beating a *heelaman* or shield. A woman, usually the boy's own mother, then steps within the ring, and, catching him under the arms, lifts him from the ground once, sets him down, and then retires; everybody, the boy included, now jumps upon the decaying red embers, until the fire is extinguished.

Thus ends the Bora, for the youth is now a man; he is a member of the tribe, undertakes all the duties of membership, and has a right to all its privileges, but may not take a wife for some time yet; the restrictions as to food, however, are now removed, and he may eat anything he can find.

Although these are the formalities observed in admitting a youth into the tribe, yet in the Bora, as in Freemasonry, the novice does not become a full member all at once, but must pass through several grades, and these are obtained by a certain number of Boras; thus the process of qualifying for full membership may extend over two or three years. In his tender years the boy has been taught that he must eat only the female of the opossum or bandicoot, or other animals; all others that he gets must be brought to the camp and given to the aged and those who have large families; when he has attended one Bora he receives permission to eat the male, say, of the paddymelon; after another Bora he may eat the “sugar-bag,” that is, the honey, of the native bee; a step higher and he may eat the male of the opossum, and so on until his initiation and instruction are complete and then he may eat anything.*

* Some instances may here be given to illustrate these rules. On a certain occasion, perhaps forty years ago, a dray was travelling on the Great Northern Road, and as the driver was rather short of provisions he said to his black boy, “Georgie, go and catch an opossum; we have no beef.”

Another conspicuous part of the inner Bora customs is the knocking out of one of the upper front teeth of the *boombat*. This does not seem to have ever been practised by the Kamilaroi tribe, although it prevailed among the coast tribes, both here and in Queensland, but among them also it is falling into disuse.* One of my correspondents says: “One of the older fellows places his bottom teeth against the *boombat's* upper teeth, and gives a sudden jerk in such a way as to snap the lad's tooth. On one occasion when one of the black boys had been initiated, I noticed his teeth or tooth was not broken. In explanation he said, “Old Bony nearly broke his own teeth in trying; he tried only three times.”

Another correspondent says with regard to the Yuin tribe, who occupy our S.E. seaboard: “The tooth after being knocked out was conveyed by the head *gommera* of the tribe to the head *gommera* of the next tribe at Wollongong; thence, I am told, it was carried up as far as Newcastle, thence round by Lake Bathurst to Yass and Gundagai and round by way of Cooma to the Yuin country, where the head *gommera* either kept it or gave it to its owner. It is said that an ancient shield (cf. the sacred

Georgie soon caught an opossum and brought it to the camping ground, but threw it down beside the fire. His master said “Why don't you skin it and roast it and eat it?” Georgie replied, “Bail (no), massa; you know me must not eat male 'possum.” “But, Georgie, nobody will know, nobody will see you.” “The Krooben, he see me, he come and take me, that fellow see everything.” “Nonsense,” said his master, “Tell him I lade you; you eat.” “Well, you are my massa; you bid me eat and I eat.” And Georgie did eat at his master's bidding, and so escaped the Krooben!

Some years after, when this black boy was about thirteen or fourteen years of age, the dray was down in Maitland for station supplies. His master observed that Georgie was very restless and anxious to go off into the bush; divining the cause, he said to him, “You wait, Georgie, till we are up the country again and you have a gin from your own tribe.” So when they reached home, Georgie went to the native camp and took a gin. In a few weeks they started again for Maitland, master, black boy, and his gin. They had not proceeded far on their journey when the master noticed that they were followed from day to day by a party of black men, armed with spears, who concealed their movements as much as possible by keeping off the main road and skulking among the trees. Suspecting something wrong, he one day, when they were near, stopped his dray and hailed them. They came to a parley, and when questioned informed him that they were bent to kill Georgie for breaking their law; he had not attended enough of Boras to entitle him to take a wife. The master explained that Georgie had done this by his orders, and therefore was not to be blamed. After some further conciliatory talk, the blacks departed, fully satisfied.

A mysterious virtue also resides in the Bora. A black boy at Goodooga would not be persuaded to try to make fire in the usual way by friction, he said, he had not been to Bora, and it was of no use to try!

* Indeed in various directions the aborigines have left off many of their native customs in consequence of their contact with white men, and it is only by converse with those who knew them long ago that one can obtain a faithful picture of their undiluted state.

Ancilia in Rome) handed down from past ages in the Yüin tribe—regarded as almost equal to *Daramitlan* himself—accompanied the tooth.”

These, then, are the ceremonies of the Bora; but, before proceeding, I wish to draw attention to the fact that the Hamite negroes of Upper Guinea had seventy years ago—long before ethnography became a science—certain religious mysteries singularly like those of our Bora, and I suppose they have them still. These, like the Bora, are ceremonies of initiation, and not only bring a youth to a knowledge of his country's gods, but qualify him to have intercourse with spirits and to hold civil power and authority in the State; all the uninitiated are to him a *profanum vulgus*, who, on the least transgression of orders, are hurried away into the woods, there to be destroyed by the evil spirits which the magical power of the initiated can control. As this assembly is convened but four or five times in a century, and occupies a period of five years, only a small portion of the male population can acquire the qualification necessary for power in the State. The king issues, when he pleases, an order for the holding of this assembly. The preparations are committed to the care of the old men, known to be best acquainted with the mysteries. These choose suitable places in the woods, and make ready there every appliance which can produce surprise, awe, and chilling fear on the minds of the novices. All women, children, and strangers are warned from the spot, and the novice believes that if he reveals any of the secrets of the grove, the spirits, knowing his faithlessness and profanity, will in one way or other bring destruction upon him. The country three or four miles around is sacred and inviolable, and the evil spirits will carry off those who intrude.

The essential idea prominent in this negro ceremony of initiation is that of a death and of a new birth,—a regeneration. Hence the catechumen, before he proceeds to the groves, gives away all his property and effects, as if about to die to the world, and on the completion of his novitiate, when he returns to his kindred, he pretends to forgot all his past life and to know neither father nor mother nor relations nor former friends—his is a new life—his whole aspect is that of a new man, for he now wears on his head a cap made of the bark of a tree, he is adorned with feathers, and as a badge of his new rank he wears a collar of leopards' teeth round his neck. During the five years of his training, the probationer is attended by some old and experienced devotees who act as his instructors; they teach him all the ritual of their religion, various songs and pieces of poetry, mostly in praise of their chief god, and in particular he learns from them a dance of a frenzied kind. While this course of education is proceeding, the king frequently visits the groves and examines the candidates. When their training is sufficiently advanced, they receive each a

new name, and, as a token of their regeneration, several long wounds which afterwards become permanent scars, are made on their neck and shoulders. They are now conducted to some retired place at a distance, where women may attend them. Here, their religious education being already complete, they are instructed in those principles of morals and politics which will make them useful as members of the State and fit to act as judges in civil and criminal causes. This done, they leave the groves and their tutors, and, with their new badges of perfection upon them, they exhibit their magical powers in public by means of a stick driven into the ground with a bundle of reeds at its top, or they repair to the public assemblies and join in the solemn dances of the wise men, or in the duties of civic rulers.*

Now, when I cast my eye over the Bora and its regulated forms, I feel myself constrained to ask “What does all this mean?” I, for one, do not accept the “autochthony of the Australian aborigines,” nor can I believe that the Bora with all its solemnities (for the rites were sacred, and the initiated were bound not to divulge what they had seen and done) is a meaningless self-developed autochthonous thing, still less that the same thing can be autochthonous in Australia and in farthest Africa; I prefer to see in it a symbolism covering ancestral beliefs—a symbolism intelligible enough to the Kushite race at first, but now little understood but yet superstitiously observed by their Australian descendants.

Looking at the ceremonies, I notice that in many respects the Bora observances resemble those of the religions of the ancient world.

(4) There are two circles; the one is less sacred, for the women may be present there, although only on the outskirts; in it certain preparatory things are done in order to bring the *boombat's* mind into a fit state of reverential awe for the reception of the teaching in the other circle,—the *adytum*, the *penetralia*—where the images of the gods are to be seen; the women and the uninitiated must not approach this inner circle, for it is thrice holy; “*procul este profani*.”

(a) In the earliest religions, the circle is an invariable symbol of the sun, the bright and pure one, from whose presence darkness and every evil thing must flee away (cf. the disk as a symbol of the sun-god in Egypt, Chaldæa, Assyria, Persia, India, China). This fact is so well known that it is needless to multiply examples. Those who are within the circle are safe from the powers of

* Re-arranged and condensed from Hurd's “Rites and Ceremonies,” Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1811.

evil. The sacredness of the circle in those early ages is seen in the Chaldean name (Genesis xxxi. 47) *jegar sahadutha*, "the circle of witness"—a name that bore witness to a solemn compact of friendship. In Persia to this day, in the southern parts of it, which were originally inhabited by a Hamite race of an almost purely negroid type, there are to be seen on the road-sides large circles of stones which the tradition of the country regards as set there by the Caous, a race of giants, that is, of aboriginals. Their name closely resembles the name Kush, as does also Cutch, near the mouth of the Indus, and other geographical names along the Arabian seas. Then in the classic nations, both in Greece and in Italy, some of the most famous temples were circular in form, especially the Pantheon at Athens, and at Rome the temple of Vesta, the goddess of the eternal fire. At Rome also, for 100 years after the foundation of the city, the worship of the gods was celebrated in the open air (cf. the Bora), often in sacred groves, and there also the temple of Janus, the oldest and most venerated of the Roman gods, was merely a sacred enclosure on which no building stood till the time of the first Punic War. The *pomoerium*, or circuit of the walls of Rome, was a sacred ring, and the Circus was consecrated to the sun and was open to the sky. In Britain too, the fire-worship of the Druids led them to construct ring-temples in various parts, and especially at Stonehenge, where there are two rings as in the Bora, but concentric. Even the rude Laplanders, who are sprung from the same Turanian race that we found to be one of the earliest elements in the population of Babylonia, make two circles when they sacrifice to the sun, and surround them with willows; they also draw a white thread through the ear of the animal to be sacrificed.

- (B) In the Bora, the two rings, both of them sacred, communicate with each other by means of a narrow passage, in which are earthen representations of certain objects of worship. The inner contains the images or symbols of the gods, carved on trees, and the novice is so placed in the outer ring that he faces the passage and the shrine of the gods.
- (b) The inner shrine is an arrangement common to all religions. At Babylon, in the temple of Belus, which was built in stages, the worshipper had to pass through seven stages of Sabacism before he reached the shrine; this was the topmost of all and contained a golden image of the god; each of these stages was devoted to

the worship of one of the Babylonian gods. In Greece and in Rome, the roofed temples were commonly arranged in two parts, an inner and an outer, and the statue of the god was so placed that a worshipper, entering by the external door, saw it right before him. At the very ancient temple of Dodonaean Zeus, in Greece, the god was supposed to reside in an oak-tree, and there is good reason for believing that the *Xoanon* or wooden image of the god was here and in other grove worships merely a carved piece of bark. The student of Biblical archaeology will also remember the Asherah of the Hebrew idolaters, a wooden pillar or statue of the goddess which could be cut down and burned (2 Kings, xxiii, 6.)

- As to the images in the passage to the inner circle, something analogous exists in Hinduism, for, on the birthday of Ganesa, the lord of evil spirits, clay images of him are made and worshipped for several days and then thrown into water.
- (C) In the Bora, the novice in the outer circle has his body all painted over with red, but at the close of his novitiate he washes in a pool, is thereby cleansed, and then paints himself all white. The other members of the tribe, who have previously been initiated, paint themselves red and white for the ceremony; they too, at the close, wash in the pool and retire white like the *boombat*. This transformation is to them a source of much rejoicing.
- (c) Among the black races the colour red was the symbol of evil, and so Plutarch tells us that the Egyptians sacrificed only red bullocks to Typhon, and that the animal was reckoned unfit for this sacrifice if a single white or black hair could be found on it; in certain of their festivals, the Egyptians assailed with insults and revilings any among them who happened to have red hair, and the people of Coptos had the custom of throwing an ass down a precipice because of its red colour. The god Typhon was to the Egyptians the embodied cause of everything evil, malignant, destructive, man-hating in the economy of nature, just as Osiris, the bright and beneficent sun, was an emblem of all that was good. Set or Sutekh, that is, Typhon, hates his brother Osiris, and every evening murders him, the darkness kills the light, the evil slays the good. In Numbers xix. 2, the red heifer is a sin-offering for the Israelites, probably with some reference to the Egyptian ideas about this colour. In India, Ganesa, the lord of all mischievous and malignant spirits, is symbolized by

red stones,* and the Cingalese when they are sick offer a red cock to the evil spirit that has caused the sickness. The blacks of Congo wash and anoint a corpse and then paint it red,† and their black brethren of Madagascar, when they are celebrating the rite of circumcision, never wear anything red about them lest the child should bleed to death. The negroes of Upper Guinea—far enough removed from our Australian Boras to prevent even a suspicion of borrowing—make a similar use of the colours red and white; for in Benin, when a woman is first initiated in the rites which the Babylonians sanctioned in honor of their goddess Mulitta, she seats herself on a mat in a public place and covers her head, shoulders, and arms with the blood of a fowl; she then retires for her devotions, and these being finished she washes herself, returns, and is rubbed all over with white chalk where the blood had been.

The young ladies of Congo—also a black country—have a similar custom, but they besmear their faces and necks with red paint.

Those who pass through the Bora paint themselves *white* at its close. It is well known that in the ancient rituals white was the colour sacred to the Sun, the benign god, before whom darkness flies away; evil spirits must depart at the crowing of the cock, the harbinger of the dawn.

“ I have heard

The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine.”

In India *white* agates represent Siva, the eternal cause of all blessings; in Persia *white* horses were sacred to the Sun; in Celtic Britain, some of the Welsh people even now *whiten* their houses to keep away devils; and so with many other examples.

In these senses the *boom* enters the Bora, with the brand of Typhon upon him, exposed to all evil influences, to disease and death from animals, men, and spirits, but after he has made the acquaintance of his fathers' gods and has learned the sacred songs and dances of his tribe, he comes forth another man; he

* Ganesa must have been originally a deity of the native black races, not of the white Aryan conquerors. So also Krishna.

† See note, p. 13.

washes away the badge of darkness and evil and assumes the livery of the children of light. The other men, whose mottled colour is a confession of mingled good and evil in their lives, also emerge new men once more, purified and devoted anew to the service of the good, and freed from the power of the evil.

This felt subjection to unseen evil and aspiration for deliverance from it, in the minds of our native races, is not only natural to man everywhere, but was a marked feature in the whole system of Akkadian magic; for these old Chaldeans believed that innumerable spirits, each with a personality, were distributed throughout nature, sometimes in union with animate objects and sometimes separately. Existing everywhere they had each both an evil and a good aspect, at one time favourable, at another unfavourable, controlling birth, life, and death, regulating all the phenomena, beneficial or destructive, of air, earth, fire, water. A dual spirit, bad and good, was attached to each of the celestial bodies, and each living being; a constant warfare existed and was maintained between the bad and the good, and, according as the one principle or the other held sway, so did blessings or disasters descend upon nature and upon man. Hence the value of religious rites such as the Bora: for, the due observance of these, repeated from time to time, gave, for a while at least, the victory to the good spirits and brought blessings to the faithful. Thus, then, I explain the red colour of the novice at the Bora, the red and white of the celebrants, and the white colour of the whole when the service was completed.

(D) Ridley says that the Bora is Baiamai's ground. He adds “ Baiamai sees all; he knows all, if not directly, yet through Turramulan, a subordinate deity. Turramulan is mediator for all the operations of Baiamai to man, and from man to Baiamai.” “ Women must not see Turramulan on pain of death. And even when mention is made of Turramulan or of the Bora, at which he presides, the women slink away, knowing that it is unlawful for them so much as to hear anything about such matters.”

(d) We have also seen that the Yūin tribe make an image of Daramulun and set it up at their Boras. In the Gringai tribe, the bull-roaring instrument, whose voice begins the ceremony of the Bora and warns the women not to look, is called *Turricoty*, and is often made in the shape of a fish; the magic wand that Ridley mentions

is *durumbulum*; and the great ancestral Bora ground of the Kamilaroi tribe is at *Tirri-hai-hai*. In Victoria this same instrument, a correspondent tell me, is called *twendun*, a name which I think should be written *durum-dun*. All these names are identical, and only modifications of *dara-mül-un*, the original form; thus with a slight alteration of the spelling we have *dara-mül-un*, *turra-mül-un*, *durru-m-dun*, *därru-mbulum*, *tirri-coty*, *tirri-haihai*. The root of all these forms is *dara*, *dar*, Sanskrit *dri*, meaning to "protect," a root found in all the great branches of human speech and furnishing derivatives which mean "a prince," "a governor," "a lord," a "supreme ruler." Of the other portions of these names I cannot at present give any satisfactory account. But I take the name Daramulun to mean something like "Lord of the mysteries," for it is evident that he presides at the Bora, and is the source of the blessings therein communicated. The use of a fish-shaped roarer to indicate his presence leads me to compare him with the Chaldean god, *Hoa*, *Hea*, half man half fish, who, in the Chaldæo-Babylonian religion, was revered as the revealer of all religious and social knowledge. His abode was the sea, the Persian Gulf, where he passed the night, but by day he remained among men to instruct them; thus he became a legislator and protector. *Hea*, as a god, "sees that all is in order," and, being acquainted with all sciences, he can baffle the powers of evil by his magic arts. (Cf. the "magic" shown by the Koradjie in the Bora in the presence of Daramulun's image.) The Akkadians, and from them the Babylonians, invoked the aid of *Hea*, when spells and enchantments were found unavailing against the power of demons. So, in the Bora passage, when Daramulun had been duly honoured and magic influence conjured up for the driving away of all adverse spirits, the lad is taken into the inner circle and sees the gods of his fathers, and learns to know them and their attributes, just as in the greater Eleusinia of Greece the duly qualified were, after a course of previous preparation, led into the inner sanctuary in the darkness of night, and there by a dim light allowed to see and know the holy things.

The Indian Ganesa seems to correspond with *Hea* and Daramulun, for the rite of marriage and other undertakings are commenced by the worship of Ganesa, who drives away the malign effects of the malice of the evil demons. He, too, must have come from the sea, for the

clay images which have been set up on his birthday festival are afterwards thrown into water, as it were his native element.

- (E) The next step in the process of initiation is interesting; the *boombat* is shown a sacred wand, he gets a new name, and certain white stones are given to him.
- (e) (1.) The wand. In this there is the notion of consecration and sacredness, for, on the Egyptian monuments, the deities are constantly represented as holding in one hand a long rod or wand with a crook on the upper end of it. The king also, and some of the highest officers of state, carry this "crook." In India, we find *Yama*, the regent of the south, has a name from a sacred staff or rod, and some religious impostors wear as badges of sanctity a "staff" and a deer's skin. The Magi of Persia carried the *Bareçma* or *barsom*, a divining wand, as one of the badges of their ministry, and the magicians of Egypt similarly had rods in their hands when they stood in the presence of Pharaoh (Exodus vii. 12). The traditions of Peru speak of a sacred golden wand borne by the son and daughter of the Sun. These are analogies, but the nearest approach to the use of the wand in the Bora is, I think, to be found in the Finnish *Kalevala*, where there is reference to a "celestial wand" (evidently as in Peru a sun-wand), which protects its possessor from all spells and enchantments. Even the gods are glad to use it against the powers of evil. (2.) A new name. Having now acquired a knowledge of sacred things, the initiated is a new man, he is "twice born," and like his kinsman in Upper Guinea, already described, he will come forth to the world under a new character, renouncing his former estate. In India, a youth becomes one of the "twice born" by investiture with the sacred cord, receiving thus a spiritual birth; thereafter like our *boombat*, he passes into the hands of religious preceptors who teach him the sacred prayers, mystic words, and devotional ceremonies. In more modern times, when a monastic house or a nunnery received, from the world without, one more recluse, a new name was given by which he or she might thenceforward be known in religion. The underlying idea in all these instances is that a religious profession gives one a new character and a new relation to the rest of the world. And who will deny that this is true, whether the professor be black or white? (3.) The white stones. I am inclined to think that the *boombat* receives only one of these at a time, and that the number of them increases according

to the number of Boras he attends, until he becomes a full and accepted master of the craft.* In any case they are used as talismans, and are carried in the belt for life. They are merely small pieces of quartz crystals, but are so sacred that they must not be shown to the women. (See page 15.) The negroes of Guinea use small stones as fetishes, which they carry about their necks or under their armpits. These the priests sell after a formal consecration. The white colour is a sun-colour and is beneficent, as already shown; hence the Hindus dedicated white stones to Siva, the eternally blessed one.

Under this head may I venture to quote the solemn and sacred words:—"I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

(F) The initiated lad is next led to a camp at a distance; he is kept there for eight or ten days, receiving instruction specially in songs and dances; he also eats here, and his confidence in divine protection is tested by hideous noises during the darkness of the night.

(f) It is rather singular as a coincidence that the Dionysia and the greater Eleusinia of Greece also lasted nine or ten days, and that part of them was a solemn meal and a solemn bathing or purification by water; thereafter instruction was given. So also a Brahman must reside with his preceptor for some time until he has gained a thorough knowledge of the holy books; he must pass through certain purificatory rites which remove the taint of original sin; one of these is the cutting off of the hair, and with this seems to correspond the knocking out of a front tooth practised by so many of our native tribes.

The singing and the dancing are everywhere essential parts of negro worship, and the dance is in its origin religious.

Would that some one could gather together these songs of our aboriginals as used in the Bora ere our native races become extinct! I believe that in these songs we should find their religion and their mythology, at present so little known.

* I am confirmed in this view by a conversation which I had the other day with a black of the Gringai tribe, who comes from the Manning River. He says that Boras are not often held now, but that two years ago they had a Bora there at which eight were initiated, some of them big young men. A boy begins to attend the Bora when nine or ten years of age, and receives a white stone each time until he has six; he is then a man and may take a gin.

(G) Then come the washing and the purification, which I have already explained, but after that they join hands all round, dance round the fire, and then jump into it and through it.

(g) To illustrate this I give a few quotations from Napier's "Folk Lore." "On May Day the Druids used to light large fire on the summits of the highest hills, into which they drove four-footed beasts, using certain ceremonies to expiate for the sins of the people. The Pagan ceremony of lighting these fires in honor of the Asiatic God Belus gave its name to the entire month of May." "Until very lately in different parts of Ireland, it was the common practice to kindle fires in milking yards on the first day of May, and then many women and children leaped through them, and the cattle were driven through in order to avert evil influences." In Rome, on the feast of Pales, in April, the same forms of purification and dedication were observed. The Medes and Persians were fire-worshippers in the very region from which our Kushites came, and even the Hottentots of the present day retain the old customs, for they make their cattle pass through the fire as a preservative against the attacks of wild dogs. These observances came from the far East, and are widely spread there; we may not wonder, then, that our Australian blackfellows, if, as I believe, they came from Babylonian lands, have not forgotten them, and still trust in the protection of the fire-god! If a black-fellow is going to the river for water at a spot to which his superstitious fears have given a bad name, he takes a fire-stick in his hand to drive away the Krooben (an evil spirit), and, if he thinks that the place where he is camped at night is haunted, he kindles a fire there and removes a little distance off, safe in the protection of the fire.

In India, the youth, when about to be invested with the sacred thread, stands opposite the sun and walks thrice round a fire, and in the marriage ceremony the bride is led thrice round the sacred fire. An incantation used by the Chaldean sorcerers has these words:—"May the god Fire, the hero, dispel their enchantments" or spells for the injury of others.

I have thus considered at some length the institution of the Bora, because it is the most important of all the social regulations of the aboriginal tribes, and because its universal distribution, although with slight local differences in the manner of its celebration, seems to me a strong proof that our black tribes are homogeneous, of common origin, and not autochthonous, as some allege.

Is it possible that so many tribes differing in language and confined by their laws and habits each to its own hunting-ground, should have evolved from their own consciousness ceremonies so similar, and which, when examined, correspond in so many points with the religiousness of the ancient world? How is it that the blacks of Australia and the blacks of Guinea have similar ceremonies of initiation? Is it not because they have come from the same ethnic source, and have thus a common ancestry and common traditions?

(B.) *Marriage.*

But let us now proceed with our subject. The last of the twelve Sanskâras or purifications through which the young Brâhman has to pass is *Vivâha*, marriage, and this completes his equipment as one of the "twice-born." Our *boombat*, likewise, as soon as his course of Boras is complete, is allowed to take a *gin*. And here again there meets us a very interesting field of inquiry—the marriage laws of the aborigines—but as the whole subject has been fully discussed by Messrs. Fison and Howitt, in their book on the "Kamilaroi and Kurnai" systems,* there is little room for original research here, and I shall therefore content myself with stating a few facts known to me, and a few conclusions therefrom.

Our Australian aborigines know nothing of those romantic preliminaries to marriage, love and courtship, which the higher and more civilized forms of life have established in society. They marry, it is true, and are given in marriage, but not on terms of equality or mutual esteem; for the woman becomes the property of her husband, is treated as his drudge, and often receives cruel usage at his hands; her position is that of an inferior; when he walks abroad, she follows, as a lackey does his master, two or three yards behind, and if he speaks to her, or she to him as they walk, he does not stop or turn round to converse, but goes right on with an air of native dignity and conscious superiority, talking all the while. In forming this relation of marriage, the woman has no choice, unless indeed, when she elopes with some young man; but this is hazardous to both, for the male relatives of the woman pursue, and, if they overtake the fugitives, the man has to defend himself against their attacks; if he displays superior prowess and beats off his assailants, he keeps the woman, but, if he has to surrender or is killed, the woman is taken back to her parents; if they manage to escape pursuit for a time, they are safe.

An aboriginal community is divided into four intermarrying classes, which in the Kamilaroi tribe—one of the best known—are called—

	1	2	3	4
Male	Ipai	Kumbo	Murri	Kubbi
Female	Ipatha	Butha	Matha	Kubbitha

* *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* by Fison & Howitt. *Geo. Robertson, Melbourne.*

The first and second of these classes have each the same subdivisions, named after native animals, which they take as their *totems*, viz., Emu, Bandicoot, Black Snake, while the third and fourth take Kangaroo, Opossum, Iguana. The Gringai tribe has the same class divisions, except that Murri is with them called Biah, and their subdivisions are Black Snake, Bandicoot, Eaglehawk, Black Crow, and Stingaree. Other tribes elsewhere have still the four classes, but under different names and with different sub-classes. The law of intermarriage is such that there is no marrying between members of the same class, but an Ipai must marry a Kubbitha, a Murri a Butha, and so on. The rule of descent, as given by authors who have written on this subject, is this:—"Descent is reckoned through the mother." To this rule, however, there are exceptions, where the children follow the *father's* classification. I am therefore disposed to offer this as a more generally applicable rule:—"Children take the class and totem of their grandparents," and this rule, so far as I can see, admits of no exceptions in the tribes which I have examined. It corresponds also with a natural impulse among ourselves in the naming of our children. I tabulate my view thus:—

LAWS OF DESCENT AMONG THE ABORIGINES.

RULE:—"Children take the classification of their grandparents."

FOR MALES.

Murri (kangaroo) is the son of Ipai (emu): therefore his sons are Ipai (emu).
 Kubbi (opossum) is the son of Kumbo (bandicoot): therefore his sons are Kumbo (bandicoot).
 Ipai (black snake) is the son of Murri (iguana): therefore his sons are Murri (iguana).
 Kumbo (bandicoot) is the son of Kubbi (opossum): therefore his sons are Kubbi (opossum).

FOR FEMALES.

Matha (kangaroo) is the daughter of Kubbitha (kangaroo): therefore her daughters are Kubbitha (kangaroo).
 Kubbitha (opossum) is the daughter of Matha (opossum): therefore her daughters are Matha (opossum).
 Ipai (emu) is the daughter of Butha (emu): therefore her daughters are Butha (emu).
 Butha (black snake) is the daughter of Ipatha (black snake): therefore her daughters are Ipatha (black snake).

The lineal descent thus becomes :—

FOR MALES.		FOR FEMALES.	
Ipai	Kumbo	Kubbitha	Butha
Murri	Kubbi	Matha	Ipatha
Ipai	Kumbo	Kubbitha	Butha
Murri and so on.	Kubbi and so on.	Matha and so on.	Ipatha and so on.

It is also a curious arrangement in these tribes that every man in any one class is supposed to have marital rights over every woman in the class with which he can marry ; thus every Ipai regards every Kubbitha woman as his wife *in posse*. Hence a young man of the Ipai class, as soon as by tribal ceremonies he has acquired the right to marry, may go to the abode of a family of Kubbitha girls and say to one of them, in the presence of her parents—

Ngaia *coolaid* *karramulla* *yaralla*
I wife will take by and by.

His demand thus made cannot be refused, and the parents must keep the girl until he comes to take her as his wife. When he does return, and his presence in the camp is recognized, the woman whom he has chosen retires to a little distance, constructs a *gunyah*, that is, a rude hut of branches and bark of trees, kindles a fire, and sits down within. The bridegroom is then led to the spot by his father or some old man of the tribe, occupies the hut with her, and without further ceremony they are husband and wife. But the marriage relation is not always formed in so peaceful a fashion as this ; for there may be a blood feud between this *murri* (black man) and the family of the *gin* (woman), and although the parents cannot, according to tribal law, refuse the demand when made, yet they do not allow the woman to go and signify her consent to the marriage by preparing the *gunyah* and the fire. In this case the *murri* secures the assistance of some young fellows of his own class ; watching their opportunity, they seize the woman and carry her off by force : thus the marriage seems to be by capture, but is really the assertion of a right which the law sanctions.* The man, however, is not likely to have quiet possession of his bride—the blood feud forbids ; and so the male relations of the Kubbitha assemble and pursue the

* I think that the Rape of the Sabines is an instance of this, the blood feud probably arising from the slaying of Remus.

pair ; the *murri* is challenged to meet their champion ; if he is victorious in the single combat, he keeps his wife ; if not, he loses his wife and perhaps his life ; thus the blood is atoned. But, if he is a warrior and his superior prowess is known and acknowledged by his adversaries, they do not encounter him openly, but sneak about and watch until they can take him unawares, perhaps asleep or stooping to drink ; then they pierce him through with their spears ; thus again the blood is atoned.

Sometimes the men carry off the wives of others. This we may call aboriginal abduction. Where the husband has been oppressive or cruel, the wife probably expects to have greater comfort in her new relation. On one occasion two men carried off two *gins*. The one of the men, being afraid of the consequences of his act, gave back the woman he had. The other stood and defended himself with his *heelaman* (shield) against forty others armed with spears and boomerangs. He won the *gin*.

Sometimes they exchange wives, so as to assort ages better.

One strange social custom exists among them. A man must not speak to his wife's mother ; they converse through a third person. In the Ooalaroi country, a friend of mine one day said suddenly to his black boy, "There's Mary ; call her ; I want to speak to her." The boy took no notice of the command, and when challenged for this, he replied, "You know I can't speak to that fellow." But there is no restriction on their converse with the wife's father.

A man's dignity and importance in the tribe are measured by the number of wives he has, as amongst us by the number of servants or retainers. Thus the chiefs have often three or four wives, while the commonalty have to content themselves with one only. A white man, who escaped from penal discipline here long ago and lived many years among the blacks, had four wives assigned to him by the head man of the tribe, to carry his baggage and to do all servile work for him.

(C.) Condition and duties as a man.

The *murri* is now subject to tribal government and tribal law. He has assumed the position of a man and a member of the tribe, and is henceforth under authority and answerable to an administrative and executive power which can punish him for wrongdoing. This power—this authority—is, by tribal custom, placed in the hands of the chiefs—the old and experienced men—an aboriginal senate and witenagemot. In the Kamilaroi tribe, at least, the rank of chief does not appear to have been hereditary ; for a man who showed conspicuous valour as a warrior, or sagacity in counsel, or skill as an orator, might attain to a seat in the senate, while the sons of a chief might lose their father's place, if they were found unworthy of it. Nor are our blackfellows

without precedent in this, for in more civilized communities elsewhere, in which hereditary right was fully acknowledged, the heir to a throne has been set aside because of his unfitness for the duties of the office; while, on the other hand, the mere force of worth and ability has raised a stranger even to the imperial purple. The general council of the tribe, then, consists of these chiefs, who have the sole control of all its affairs, the determination of peace and war, the power to summon assemblies, and the right to enforce the execution of tribal punishments. The tribe, if not too small, is divided into several sub-tribes, each one occupying its own *tawrai* or hunting and food ground, within which it must strictly confine itself.* The head man of each of these sub-tribes is a chief and a member of the Council. When a matter occurs which demands deliberation, they assemble apart from the camp and discuss and resolve. "I once," writes a friend, "came suddenly upon a lot of the old men sitting in a circle in anxious consultation. As I passed on, one of them whispered to me not to tell anybody that I had seen them." In these meetings the oldest chief presides, and such is the respect shown to old age that he could carry a measure by his single voice. The chiefs sit as magistrates to decide on all complaints that are brought before them. The punishments they impose are various; for serious offences against tribal law, such as the divulging of sacred things, they decree death by the spear; if a man has spoken to his wife's mother, he is obliged to leave the camp and pitch his *gunyah* at some distance from it, and to remain there for some time; if a husband complains that his wife is *turumu* ("wanton"), and the council finds her guilty, she is taken without the camp and exposed there to the insult of all who choose to come; but for smaller offences, the man is ordered by the chiefs to stand forth armed only with a *heelaman* or shield and defend himself against the spears and boomerangs thrown at him by a set number of men varying according to the nature of the fault he has committed; only one spear is thrown at him at a

* To illustrate the cogency of the *tawrai* regulation, I give this anecdote. Long ago, in the Oalaroi country, one division of the tribe had increased so much in numbers that their hunting-ground was too strait for them, and a scarcity of food ensued. They therefore sent their messenger to the adjacent sub-tribe requesting them to surrender a portion of their ground. This was refused, on the ground that it was against tribal law, and that even as it was, their own *tawrai* furnished them barely enough of food. The former then sent back an insolent message to say that they would come and take what they wanted and would leave the others only grass to eat. The latter replied, that, if so, they would appeal for justice and aid to the neighbouring sub-tribes. Notwithstanding, the two sections assembled their forces and met; as usual, numerous parleys ensued, much talk and angry oratory; at last it was agreed that next day an equal number from each side should fight it out, but when the time for action came, their courage, I suppose, began to fail them, for the dispute was settled by single combat. This is the common course and issue of a tribal quarrel.

time and he is warned each time of throwing; his relatives stand by in his interest. In some tribes if the offence is not of any magnitude, the offender's *gin* is allowed to stand beside her husband armed with a *conny* ("yamstick"); with this she strikes down the spears as they approach. Many grievances, however, are settled without the intervention of the magistrates, in the rough and ready way common among schoolboys. For instance, a man has been found stealing from his neighbour, or two men quarrel about women; a fight ensues, and with any weapons which may happen to be at hand; the one or the other gets his head broken and there the matter ends. In a set duel, the one man with his *nullah* pounds away at the other, who defends himself with his *heelaman*; he continues showering blows until he is tired; then his adversary sets to work with his *nullah* in the same manner, until the one or the other succumbs. Sometimes also, in more serious matters the chiefs are not required to intervene. If a man has by force married a woman in violation of tribal law, the woman's relatives complain to the man's class; they are bound to compel the man to give back the woman; if they do not, a party feud arises which can be appeased only by blood. The following description of such a party battle was written nearly fifty years ago, and is copied from a private journal. —10th September, 1833.—I was to-day present for the first time at a battle of natives, ten men being engaged on each side. A clear spot had been selected as the place of combat. The two bands advanced to about thirty paces from each other; then a parley commenced in which words got higher and higher until in exasperation two or three *boomerangs* were thrown from the one side; presently the others returned the challenge in the same way, and then the parties gallantly closed and began belabouring one another's heads unmercifully with their *waddies*; three or four of the combatants were soon prostrate, and the blood on their backs showed that the blows had been forcibly applied. Threats dark and deep were now heard, spears were got ready for action, and the dreadful howl of defiance was raised; the combatants again opposed each other, but with more deadly weapons than before. But while the sight of blood arouses the valorous feelings of the men, it evidently excites the softer sensations of the other sex; for now all at once rushed between the parties a hag bearing the name of woman; her eloquence was great if we may judge from the noise she made; she 'suited the action to the word and the word to the action'; and as often as a man lifted a spear to throw, she interposed herself; her violence was becoming outrageous, when there came forward from the opposite side a woman also armed with a tomahawk, and seemed inclined to take summary means to quiet the first intruder; she, however, was not to be so daunted, for in reply she brandished her stick as though game to

the backbone. The angry mood, however, of these two females suddenly changed, for they ceased to threaten, and agreed to endeavour to preserve peace between their friends. But the first, finding her efforts in this direction unavailing, abandoned herself to despair, and, seizing a tomahawk, cut her head with it in a most dreadful manner. Whether she intended also to cut short her existence or no remains an unsettled question, for the tomahawk was wrested from her hands.

"The female affray was to me by far the most amusing part of the business, and no London fisherwomen could have assailed one another with greater seeming virulence, or with more ready language.

"The one party had hawks' feathers stuck in their hair—a sure sign that their intentions were deadly."

In some tribes when a blood feud has to be atoned, the whole *totem* (say, black-snake) of the aggressor meets the *totem* (say, bandicoot) of the victim; champions are selected to represent each side as above, and the remainder of the men of these *totems* are spectators.

The council of chiefs also appoints the public officers of the tribe. The principal of these is the *marbull*, the "herald" or public messenger. He must be a man fluent of speech and a good traveller. He passes in safety between and through hostile tribes, for his person is inviolable, and he is known to be a herald by the red net which he wears round his forehead. Charged with a message from his tribe, he approaches the camp of the enemy, and makes his presence known by a peculiar *cooee*. This brings around him all who are within hearing of his call; he sits down and remains silent for a long time,* nor do they speak a word to him till at last his tongue is loosed and then his eloquence is like a rapid torrent; he is listened to with the greatest attention; the chiefs consult, and he waits there for the night or perhaps for several days to receive their reply.

A *nauri* when carrying a white man's message is likewise allowed to pass safe even through a hostile territory. He carries in his hand a piece of stick with a notch at the end and fixed in this is a piece of white paper having the message written on it. To attack or injure this messenger is to raise a feud with the whole tribe of white men.

In some parts of Queensland, the tribes use "message sticks." These are pieces of bark or of thin split wood, oblong in shape, with nicks on the edges and marks on the flat side. In some way intelligible to them these nicks and dimpled marks indicate the number of men and women about whom information is wanted or sent.

* It is always a grievous violation of native etiquette to ask a man why he has come; he is allowed to choose his own time to speak.

Thus it is that the chiefs administer the affairs of the tribe and maintain the order of the community. Those whom they govern hold them in the highest estimation. But other classes of men of great influence in the tribe are the *Koradjies* or "doctors," and the "wizards" who are supposed to deal in magical arts. These men have no share in the government, although a chief, if he is so inclined, may practice as a *Koradjie*.

The favourite mode of cure in disease is the sucking of the part affected. And here the *Koradjie* is both a mountebank and a successful practitioner, for there is no doubt that his method will often work a cure, for, like a sinapism or any counter-irritant, it draws the disease from its seat in the inner tissues and makes it depart through the pores of the skin. But, along with this, they endeavour to secure the curative influence of imagination and therefore work upon the credulity of their patients. A man has a pain in his arm or a lump in his side; he applies to the *Koradjie*, who sucks the part and in a little produces from his mouth a small piece of quartz, which he says is the pain or the magic cause of the pain, extracted from the arm; or he shows a round pebble from the man's side; the patient firmly believes that this stone was thrown at him and into him some days before by the malevolent spirit of some blackfellow, whose grave he passed; or again, a boy has his foot burned; the *Koradjie* sucks the wound and brings out of his mouth a large piece of charcoal, and now the wound must heal. The blacks firmly believe in the efficacy of these means of cure, and do not like to be told that it is all nonsense. The sucking however is really effective in the case of snake-bites; two or three *Koradjies* continue sucking the bitten spot, relieving each other, until the patient is out of danger. They have also some rational modes of cure; they gather herbs, the virtues of which it is part of their profession to know, and give them to the sick man, who prepares them according to their directions, and applies them externally. They also use the earth bath for a heavy cold which other remedies have failed to dislodge; for a bath, they dig a hole in any loose moist earth which they can find, and place the patient in it, filling in the earth around him until it is up to his neck; he continues in the bath four or five hours, and during this time he shouts for pain; drinks of water are supplied to him and a profuse sweat is induced. The strong recover, but sometimes the patient dies from exhaustion.

The wizards are a more dangerous and dreaded class of the community than the doctors. They are believed to cause sickness and death at will, to bring or drive away rain, and to do many other similar things. They pretend to have converse with the spirits of the departed; they can climb into the sky by ropes or by turning themselves into birds; there they talk with the ghosts and get knowledge and assistance from them. Sometimes the

spirit of an animal, such as the native bear, would enter a wizard, who thenceforward could speak *corroboree* songs as one inspired.

In all these experiences of our initiated *murri*, now that he is a member of the tribe, there is nothing unique, nothing so peculiar that it may not be found, in essence at least, in other savage communities. Having therefore thus stated a few facts to show the conditions under which the *murri* continues to live, I pass on to

III.—THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE.

Here we meet with an amiable feature of the aboriginal character; they never desert their aged or treat them with inhumanity. Many a time have I seen blind old Boko led about by the hand, as carefully and patiently as a mother leads her child; if his guides were offered food, Boko received his due share; even the glass of rum was held to his lips that he too might have his mouthful of it. From their earliest years the young people of the tribe are taught to respect the old, and one of the duties laid upon the novice in his instruction at the Bora requires him when a successful hunter to bring the best of his prey and lay it at the door of the aged and infirm.

Some of our blacks are long-lived. I know of one or two who are supposed to be over eighty years of age; "another," says a friend, "must be nearly a hundred years of age from all accounts"; but wherever they are brought into contact with the vices of white men, as in our larger towns, they die off very rapidly. I am told that in the Maitland district fifty years ago there was a warrior known as Jimmie Jackass; he and his son and grandson all died within thirty years.

An old person, when no longer able to follow the camp as it moves about from place to place, and evidently near death, is left at a suitable spot in charge of one or two others; if a woman, she is tended by a woman and a girl; if a man, by a man and a boy. When death comes, they dig the grave and inter the body or otherwise bury it, and then rejoin the camp.

The blacks bury in any soft ground which may happen to be near, but some tribes, as those on the Paterson and the Upper Bogan, have regular burying grounds which have been used for generations, and are considered sacred. To these a corpse will be brought from the distance of many miles. "My black boy," says a correspondent, "wishes to be buried where he was reared." I need not compare with this similar practices and desires in all ages and countries.

Wherever a tribe does not inter the dead, the body is simply wrapped in two sheets of bark, which are secured with cords of kurrajong;* it is then placed in a hollow tree. If interment is the

* A native tree with very tough twigs.

practice, a grave is neatly dug, round but not very deep, and a friend goes down into it and tries if it is suitable. The body in the meantime has, while warm, been made into the form of a ball, knees to chin, and tied up in bark; it is brought to the grave, but before it is lowered into it, a wizard, standing by, questions the deceased and asks him who caused his death, and so on, to which answers are given by an old black on the other side. When the body is in the grave, weapons and articles of clothing are placed beside the dead man,* all present, and especially his relatives, contributing something; the women and men then utter pitiful yells and cut their heads till they stream with blood; then all is covered up, and the company departs. The mourning for the dead is continued for three or four months; the relatives, mostly the women, smear their heads with pipeclay, and at supper time and at night raise loud yells and cut their heads with tomahawks or knives; the streaming blood is left to dry there.

Elsewhere the grave is like ours in shape, and the body is laid in flat, on a sheet of bark; above the body is another sheet of bark and then grass, logs, and earth, the earth on the surface being left in a mound somewhat in shape like a half-moon; the trees also near the spot are decorated as in the Bora; the chiefs are sometimes buried in the Bora ground. In one part of Queensland two sticks are set up in the ground near the grave; each is about 2 feet long, shaped like a *mullah* and painted red; their tops are covered with the fine white down from the cockatoo. In the Kamilaroi country, not only is the bark of the adjacent trees marked with devices, but another grave is dug and no body placed in it; this they do, the blacks say, "to cheat the Krooben." The Krooben, as I have already explained, is a malevolent spirit that wanders about at night and carries off little children from the camp; and "cheating the Krooben" seems to imply that he also tears and devours the spirits of the dead. A correspondent tells me that "the Kulin tribe (Victoria) believed that each man and animal had a *mürrip*, 'ghost or spirit,' which could pass into other bodies; the *mürrip* of a man could, during his life, leave his body in sleep and visit others in dreams; after his death it was supposed to wander about, revisit the grave, interview the *mürrips* of its living friends in dreams, eat up the remains of food left lying about, and warm itself at the night fires. Thus, when Buckley was seen sitting on a grave with a broken spear in his hand, he was naturally regarded as a *mürrip* come back to visit his body."

Something analogous to this is found among the blacks of Lower Guinea. When a man dies, they ascribe his decease to the enchantments of an enemy. At the grave they ask the corpse

* Thus they show their belief in a life after death, as many other nations do.

who bewitched him, who took away his life; why he departed, was it because he was dissatisfied, and so on. They believe that souls pass into other bodies, but that the deceased still lives in another state, and therefore they inter with him most of his effects and valuable presents from his friends. They believe also that the wizards by their incantations can raise the dead man, and make him hunt and fish and work as a slave for them; therefore, they erect at the burying ground a wooden image of the god who is the guardian of their dead; thus the wizards are foiled. Is this the meaning of the carvings on the trees and the red sticks at the graves of our aboriginals?

Our blackfellows desert their camp where one of them has died; so also do the Hottentots. An explanation may be found in a belief shared by many ancient nations, but most developed among the Hindus—that when the “gross body” is laid in the grave, or burned, the soul still lives in a material form, but that at first this is only a “subtile” not a real body, and therefore restless and miserable—a foul wandering ghost “unhoused, disappointed, unaneled,”—so miserable as to have delight in doing malignant acts and taking revenge on all living creatures. Hence, also, of old, among various nations, savage and civilized, funeral rites were renewed at various intervals, for it was by these that the soul gradually attained to the possession of a real body capable of enjoying its new life.

To illustrate the funeral arrangements of the Gringai tribe, I again quote from the private journal to which I have already referred—King Jackey’s funeral, August, 1833. “A long neck of land is here formed by the junction of a creek with the river, and the extremity of it, surrounded on three sides by the brush, was the place of interment, as pretty a spot for the purpose as I know of anywhere. When I approached I saw an old man digging the grave; this was a most laborious task, for the ground was very hard, and the only tool he used was a tomahawk. The form of the grave was oval, and the depth when finished short of 4 feet. There were about a dozen or more of blacks squatting or standing around, and amongst them the father, mother, and several brothers of the deceased. The parents were howling in company, the man’s voice resembling the three sounds *a— a— ar*; long dwelt upon; the female’s more treble, like *ei— ou—*. This noise they kept up without intermission. The body itself, trussed up in as small compass as possible and wrapped in rugs, was on the ground about 4 yards from the grave, supported by two relatives, who, as they bent over it on their knees, gave full tokens of their grief and affection. The digging being finished, the sexton went to some of the youngest and freshest-looking trees, and, breaking off the small leafy branches, proceeded to line the grave with them. When this was done, the brother of the deceased descended to try

whether the grave was comfortable, which he did by lying in it in the position the body was to occupy. Some slight alterations were required, and when these were made the younger members of the family came forward and, surrounding the corpse, lifted it from the ground. While doing this they gave a great shout and blew with their mouths* and waved with their hands over the body. These same observances were repeated while the body was being lowered into the grave, where the brother of the deceased had already placed himself ready to receive the body and to lay it carefully so that not a particle of earth should touch it. The shout then set up by all of them was awfully deafening. The old father, rushing by me, seized a tomahawk and cut his head in several places† until the blood gushed in quantities from the wounds. Another old man snatched the instrument from him and covered his own head with gashes; three or four did the same, some most viciously, while others seemed to think that a very little of that sort of thing was enough; the howling continued all the while. Bark was now placed carefully over the body, and the old men stretched themselves at full length on the ground and howled dreadfully. One of them at length got up and took a piece of bark which he placed across the grave and stretched himself on it, crying with all his might. I then left them, nothing of the ceremony remaining but the filling up of the grave.”‡

An instance of the affection of the black—savage (can we call him so?) attended the burial of King Jackey. His mother could not be induced to leave the spot; she sat there refusing food until one morning she was found dead on the grave! She was buried beside her son, and not long after a little dog that had belonged to the old woman was also found dead on her grave. These are facts.

These, then, are the chief points of interest in connection with old age, death, and burial—the third and last head of my subject.

And now, as this essay has already swollen to unexpected dimensions, I will conclude with one or two specimens of aboriginal mythology which, I believe, are entirely new. Our native races are attentive observers of the stars; as they sit or lie around the camp fire after night-fall, their gaze naturally turns to the starry vault above, and there they see the likenesses of many things with which they are conversant in their daily life— young men dancing a corroboree (Orion), and a group of damsels looking at them (the Pleiades), making music to their dance—the

* The blacks do this also when they are driving away the rain-clouds. They rub their hands together, and looking up puff away the rain.

† Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 28; also Deut. xiv. 1.

‡ One mode of burial seems to be more honorable than another, for while King Jackey was buried trussed up, others have been buried at the same spot only wrapped up in bark at full length.

opossum, the emu, the crow, and so on. But the old men of the Gringai tribe say that the regions "above the sky" are the home of the spirits of the dead, and that there are fig-trees there and many other pleasant things; many men of their race are there, and that the head of them all is a great man, *Menee*; he is not visible, but they all agree that he is in the sky. A greater than he is the great *Garaboong*, or *Garaboong*, who, while on earth, was always attended by a small man; but now the two shine as comrades in the sky—the "Heavenly Twins." Both *Garaboong* and *Menee* are "skeletons." In his mortal state *Garaboong* was a man of great rank and power; he was so tall that his feet could touch the bottom of the deepest rivers; his only food was snakes and eels; one day, not being hungry, he buried a snake and an eel; when he came back to eat them he saw fire issuing from the ground where they were; he was warned by his companion, the little man, not to approach, but he declared he did not fear the fire and boldly came near; then a whirlwind seized him and carried him up "above the sky," where he and his companion still are and "can be seen any starlight night."

These two legends are interesting. *Menee* is to them the father and king of the black races, whom he now rules and will rule in spirit-land; he was once a mortal, but now he is a "skeleton"—a spiritualized being, without flesh and blood. I observe that his name, strange to say, is exactly the same as that given on the hieroglyphic inscriptions to the first king of Egypt, *Menee*—by Herodotus called *Menes*—the head of the First Dynasty of mortals. He was a public benefactor, for he executed several important works, and taught his people the worship of Phtah, the great artificer-god of Egypt (Herodotus II. 99). He must have some mythical relation to the human race, for in Greece he is *Minos*, king of Crete, "Minoia regna," author of many useful laws, and afterwards a judge of the shades of the dead; in Greece also, he is *Minyas*, the founder of a race of heroes; in India he is *Menu*, and in old Germany *Manuus*.

The story of *Garaboong* seems to correspond with that of the Dioscourai—*Castor* and *Pollux*—who also were mighty heroes and benefactors of mankind. The ancient Germans (Tacitus, Germ. 43) worshipped them in a sacred grove and called them *Alcis*, which may mean the "mighty" ones, tall as the deepest rivers.

How have our blackfellows come to have the name *Menee* and such a myth about him. Are the name and myth invented by them, autochthonously? Are they not rather a survival—derived from a common origin—of traditions which belong to the once undivided human family.

In conclusion, let any one ask me how it is that our aborigines, if they are of such an origin as I assign to them, have sunk so low

in the scale of humanity as to be regarded among the most degraded of the races of men. I deny that this estimate of them is well-founded; on the contrary, I assert that it was formed long ago by those who imperfectly understood the habits and the social organization of our native tribes, and has been ignorantly passed from mouth to mouth ever since; that, when these are thoroughly examined, our blackfellows are not the despicable savages that they are too often represented to be. They have or had virtues which we might profitably imitate; they are faithful and affectionate to those who treat them kindly; they have rules of family morality which are enforced by severe penalties; they show the greatest respect to age; they carefully tend and never desert the sick and infirm; their boys are compelled to content themselves with meagre fare, and to bring the best of the food which they have found and present it to the aged members of the tribe and to those who have large families. I am assured by one who had much intercourse with them for thirty years that he never knew them to tell a lie and that his property was always safe in their hands; another, who has been familiar with them since he was a child, says:—"Naturally they are an affectionate, peaceful people, and considering that they have never been taught to know right from wrong their behaviour is wonderful; I leave my house open, the camp close by, and feel the greatest confidence in them."

Then, again, although the material civilization of the world was commenced by the race of Ham, yet the task soon fell from their hands, for morally they were unfit for it; for the conservation and first dissemination of a pure and undefiled religion we are indebted to the race of Shem; while the sons of Japheth have gone forth to rule the earth and the sea—*audax Japeti genus*—and to spread the blessings of good government and the arts and inventions of an enlightened age to the remotest lands. The Hamites, on the other hand, have continued to sink in the social scale, have been persecuted and oppressed by the other races, and thus debased; and wherever, as in our island, the sky above and the earth beneath have conspired to render the means of life meagre and precarious, there the process of decay has been accelerated, and physically their condition has been very low, but still among their social institutions there are traces of better things. Would that we had a full record of what they really are before they pass away from among us!