

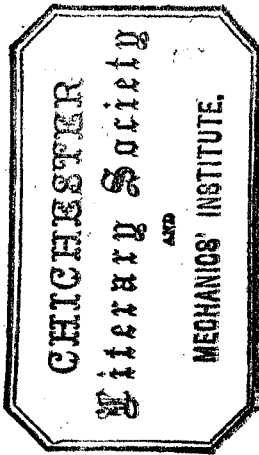
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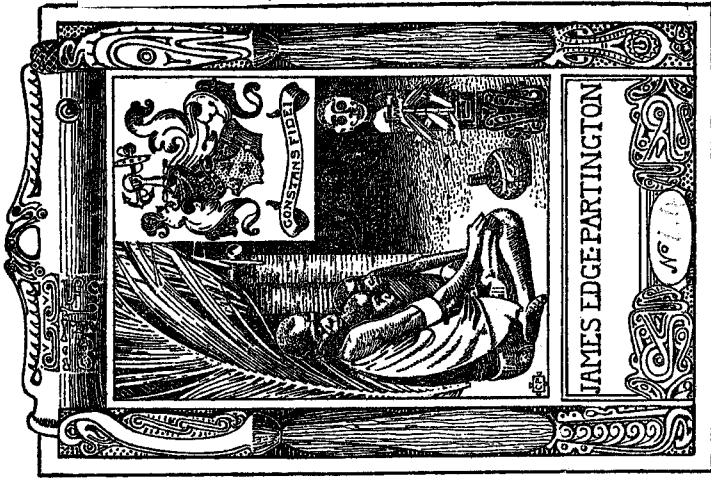
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 206 **New South Wales.**—SYDNEY.—New Government House, from Botanical Gardens; Domain, Original Pencil Drawing, subscribed "Royal Draft," showing the Government House across the creek, with the castellated entrance seen on the right, size 7¼ by 9¾ in., unsigned and undated, but the work of J. J. Martyr, £2 2s circa 1840



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**NEW SOUTH WALES**

by

**M. AUROUSSEAU**

AN

# AUSTRALIAN GRAMMAR,

COMPREHENDING

THE PRINCIPLES AND NATURAL RULES

OF THE

LANGUAGE,

AS

*SPOKEN BY THE ABORIGINES,*

IN THE VICINITY OF

HUNTER'S RIVER, LAKE MACQUARIE, &c.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

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BY L. E. THRELKELD.

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SYDNEY:

PRINTED BY STEPHENS AND STOKES, "HERALD OFFICE,"  
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1824.

TO THE  
VENERABLE THE ARCHDEACON  
OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES.

REVEREND SIR,

In presenting these first fruits of labour under your auspices, it would be unpardonable not to acknowledge the generous assistance granted at your recommendation by His Majesty's Government, which enabled me with less difficulty to accomplish the present work, than otherwise would have been sustained; and also, the aid afforded by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge towards carrying the work through the press.

To the mere Philosopher this grammar will afford abundant matter for speculation, in addition to which, the Christian will perceive another instance of the Providence of HIM who has said, "*I will draw all men to me.*" For this object alone the laborious task has been undertaken, and must be considered only as the prelude to the attempt of bringing the Aborigines of New South Wales to the knowledge of God our Saviour. For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher in their own tongue the wonderful works of God?

That He who ruleth on high by His Spirit in the midst of the Churches may abundantly b'less your ministerial labours amongst *an enlightened people*, and render this attempt instrumental for the Glory of God amongst "*A Foolish Nation,*" is the fervent desire of,

Reverend Sir,

With unfeigned respect,

Your most obedient servant,

L. E. THRELKELD.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IN the year 1826 the writer printed a few copies entitled "Specimens of a dialect of the Aborigines of New South Wales," in which the English sounds of the vowels were adapted. Subsequently, it has been found, that many inconveniences arose in the Orthography which could only be overcome by adopting another system. Many plans were proposed and attempted, but none appeared so well adapted to meet the numerous difficulties, which arose, as the one in use for many years in the Islands of the South Seas wherein the elementary sound of the vowels do not accord with the English pronunciation. This however does not meet all the difficulties, because, there is a material difference in the Idiom of the language, namely: In the Tahitian, &c. &c., the vowels always retain their elementary sound, because, a consonant never ends a syllable or word: In the Australian language, a consonant often ends a syllable, or word, and therefore the coalition with the sound of the vowels affects the sound and consequently shortens it. Whilst in many instances the elementary sound of the vowel is retained *when closed by a consonant*, as well as, when the syllable or word is ended by the vowel, to meet this an accent is placed over the vowel, when the elementary sound is retained, without such accent the sound is shortened.

### *Illustration.*

Bun, to sound as the English word Bun, a little cake.

Bún, to sound as the English word Boon, a gift,

Tin, to sound as the English word Tin, a metal.

Tín, to sound as the English syllable teen, in thirteen.

A set of characters cast expressly for the various sounds of the vowels would be the most complete in forming speech into a written language, but in the present instance it could not be accomplished. The present orthography is therefore adopted, not because it is considered perfect, but from the following considerations, viz. :—

1. It appears upon consideration, impossible so to express the sounds of any language to the eye, as to enable a stranger to pronounce it without oral instruction. The principal object therefore is to aim at simplicity; so far as may be consistent with clearness.

2. There appears to be a certain propriety in adopting universally, if possible, the same character to express the same sounds used in countries which are adjacent; as, Polynesia and Australia, even though the language be not akin. Especially when those characters have been adopted upon mature consideration, and confirmed by actual experience in the Georgian and Society Islands, the Sandwich Islands, the Feejee Islands, the Friendly Islands, New Zealand, and numerous other places in these Seas.

Having resided many years in the Island of Raiatea, and having been in the constant habit of conversing with and preaching to the natives in their own tongue, enable me to trace the similarity of languages used in the South Seas one with the other, proving they are but different dialects, whilst the natives themselves, and we also at the first interview could not understand the people of neighbouring Islands who spake radically the same tongue! The names of the Islands correspond with the change of dialect, for instance, Tahiti. The name of the Island in which sound the aspirate H abounds. Ru-ru-tu, about four hundred miles distance where the aspirate H is not used, the natives speaking more in the throat in consequence of the omission. At Ai-tu-tak-i, the language has the addition of the K, and at Ro-ro-tong-a, the language adopts the nasal ng, whilst at New Zealand, the nasal ng and k also abound. The Sandwich Islands drop many letters and insert instead the K and L, sounds unknown to the Tahitians. It is impossible to state which is the parent tongue. The table subjoined, page 7, displays at one view, their various alphabets. The following extract from a letter sent by Ka-rai-mo-ku from the Sandwich Islands to the Rev. W. Ellis, will shew the affinity betwixt the Sandwich Island tongue and the language of the Tahitians underlined.

Sandwich Island,	Eia kau wahi orero ia oe, ahea oe e
Tahitian,	Teia taau parau ia oe, ahea oe e,
English,	This is my communication to you, when will you
Sandwich Island,	hoi mai ia nei a noho mai ai io matou nei ?
Tahitian,	hoi mai io nei e noho mai ai io matou nei ?
English,	return hither and dwell with us ?
Sandwich Island,	Ke ao nei no makou i ka orero a ki Akua ;
Tahitian,	Te haapii nei matou i te parau a ti Atna ;
English,	Learning are we the word of God ;
Sandwich Island,	ke malama nei no makou i ka olelo ake Akua.
Tahitian,	te haapii nei matou i te parau a te Atua.
English,	regarding are we the word of God.

Owing to a peculiar custom at Tahiti when any word had a sound similar to that which was contained in the King's name, such word was changed, many words now obsolete are found in the Sandwich Islands: as, Orero the word in Tahiti for tongue, and used formerly as such, but now, by custom parau is used for speech, so also, ao is used to warn, to preach, &c., in Tahitian; but, since learning has been in vogue, haapii has been introduced for the verb to learn, and ao is in this sense obsolete. There is a much nearer affinity in the languages of the Islands in the Pacific Ocean than can be described within our limits, so many references to custom being necessary to explain the subject fully.

The following is a comparison of the Tahitian, Sandwich Island, and New Zealand languages, being the 19th of John, 30th verse.

Tahitian,	E ia inu aera Jesu i taua vinega ra,
Sandwich,	A i inu ana o Jesu i ka vinega,
New Zealand,	A no ka inu a Ihu i te wineka,
English,	And when drank Jesus the vinegar,
Tahitian,	Ua taupe ihora tana upo i raro,
Sandwich,	Ku rou ihora i ka poo,
New Zealand,	Ka pi ko iho tana matenga,
English,	Bowed his head down.
Tahitian,	duu adura i *tana varua.
Sandwich,	akuu aku la ka uhane.
New Zealand,	ka tuku ake i te wairua.
English,	(and) gave up the spirit.

In the Australian tongue there appears to exist a very great similarity of Idiom, as it respects the dual number and use of the form expressive of negation, and though it is observed by a

NOTE.—\* Tana in the Tahitian means His, te would be the article the, in which case the affinity is much closer than the translation adopted allows, also in the Tahitian words duu a dura, it is very much disputed by natives and many of the Missionaries whether t should be used instead of d, this would bring the language with the New Zealand much closer in resemblance. It appears that the New Zealanders always insert k for the break of a double vowel in Tahitian, or else the nasal ng. for instance in the Tahitian Taata means man, in New Zealand it becomes Tangata. Tuu or duu in Tahitian means to give. In New Zealand it becomes Tuku, and Ingoa the word for name becomes Tahitian, by dropping the ng, thus Ioa the Tahitian for name. The Sandwich Islanders insert k for d or t, and often an l for the r: as, Tahitian Ua oti; Sandwich, Ua oki, it is finished. Tahitian, Orero: Sandwich, Olilo, the tongue, or speech. It appears that the Sandwichers omit the t also: as, Eia, this; which in Tahitian is Teia, whilst tau is transformed to kau, by them, for, mine.

writer in the article Greek language, *Rees Cyclopædia*, that, "The dual number is by no means necessary in language, though it may enable the Greek to express the number two or pairs with more emphasis and precision." Yet this assertion is not at all borne out by facts, because in this part of the hemisphere, all the languages in the South Seas in common with New South Wales, possess a dual number, and so essential is it to the languages, that conversation could not be carried on without this form of speech. There is a peculiarity in the dual of the Australian tongue which does not exist in the Islands, namely, a conjoined case in the dual pronouns in which the nominative and accusative are blended as shewn in the pronouns, whilst the verb sustains no change, excepting when reflective, or, reciprocal, or continuative. Whilst in the Islands there are dual verbs. The mode of interrogation and replication are very much alike in Idiom in both languages, and so peculiar as hardly possible to be illustrated in the English language, scarcely ever giving a direct answer, but in such a manner as leaves much to be implied. The Aborigines of this colony are far more definite in the use of tenses than the Islanders, who have nothing peculiar in the use of the tenses. The subject of tenses caused much perplexity and diligent examination, nor, did the observations of eminent writers on the Theory of language tend to elucidate the matter. Because the facts existing in the language of the Aborigines of New Holland are in direct contradiction to the note (R), article *Grammar Encyclopædia Britannica* in which certain tenses are represented "as peculiar to the Greek, and have nothing corresponding to them in other tongues, we need not scruple to overlook them as superfluous." Now the Aborigines use the verb, and also the participle, in a tense denoting time past in general; and, time past in particular; as, this morning only; and, time past remote: as, in some former period: as, when I was in England, or was a boy, &c. The future time of the verb, and, participle is also specified in a similar manner, specifically either now or to-morrow morning, or generally, as in futurity; besides which there is another curious fact opposed to the conclusion of the writer's note, which reads thus: "Of the Paulo post fusturum of the Greeks, we have taken no notice, because it is found only in the passive voice; to which if it were necessary, it is obvious that it would be necessary in all voices, as a man may be about to act, as well as to suffer immediately." Now such is the very idiom of this language, as will be seen in the conjugation of the participle, for

the pronoun being used either objectively or nominatively, will place the phrase either in the one sense or the other, such change in the pronoun constituting the equivalent to the passive voice or the active voice. The most particular attention is necessary in the tenses of the participle as well as that of the verb, each tense being confined to its own particular period, as shewn in the conjugation of the verbs. The various dialects of the blacks may yet prove, as is already ascertained in the Islands, to be a more apparent difficulty than real; but when one dialect becomes known, it will assist materially in obtaining a speedier knowledge of any other that may be attempted, than had no such assistance been rendered.

Although tribes within one hundred miles do not at the first interview understand each other, yet I have observed that after a very short space of time, they are able to converse freely, which could not be the case were the language, as many suppose it to be, radically distinct. The number of different names for one substantive may occasion this idea. Water for instance has at least five names, and fire has more, the moon has four names according to her phases, and the Kangaroo has distinct names to each sex, according to size, or the different places of haunt, so that two persons would seldom obtain the same name for a Kangaroo if met wild in the woods, unless every circumstantial was precisely alike to both inquirers. The quality of a thing is another source, from which a name is given as well as its habit, or manner of operation. Thus one man would call a musket, a thing that strikes fire, another would describe it as a thing that strikes, because it hits an object; whilst a third would name it a thing that makes a loud noise, and a fourth would designate it a piercer, if the bayonet was fixed. Hence arises the difficulty to persons unacquainted with the language, in obtaining the proper names of that which is desired, for instance, a visitor one day requested the name of a native cat from M'Gill, the Aborigine, who replied Minnaring. The person was about to write down the word Minnaring, a native cat, when I prevented the naturalist, observing that the word was not the name of the native cat, but, a question, namely, What is it? you say being understood. The Black not understanding what was asked. Thus arise many of the mistakes in Vocabularies published by transient visitors of foreign parts.

In a "description of the natives of King George's sound, (Swan river colony,) written by Mr. Scott Nind, and communicated by R. Brown, Esq., F. R. S., read before the Royal Geo-

graphical Society, &c., 14th February, 1831," there is an interesting account of the natives, and also a vocabulary, not one word of which appears to be used or understood by the natives in this district, and yet from a passage at page 24, the following circumstance leads to the supposition, that the language is formed on the same principles, and perhaps radically the same tongue, the writer observes: "It once occurred to me to be out shooting, accompanied by Mawcurrie, the native spoken of, and five or six of his tribe, when we heard the cry Coo-whie, Coo-whie-cá-cá, upon which my companion stopped short, and said that strange blackmen were coming." Now in this part of the colony under the same circumstances, a party of blacks would halloo, Ka-ai, Ka-ai, kai, kai. Which allowing for the difference in orthography, would convey nearly, if not precisely the same sound, the meaning is halloo, halloo, approach, approach. Also at page 20, the same word used by the natives here in hunting and dancing is mentioned, as spoken by those Aborigines in the same sort of sports: viz., Wow, which in this work is spelt Wau. It means move. Also at page 28, the phrase absent, at a distance is rendered Bó-cun, and Let us go away, by Bó-cun oola, or Wat-oola, here the natives would say, Wai-ta wol-la: see the locomotive verb in the conjugation of which a similarity of use will be perceived. At Wellington Valley the names of things are the same in many instances with those of this part, although three hundred miles distant, and in a small vocabulary with which I was favored, the very barbarisms are marked as such. Whilst mistaken names are written, the natural result of partial knowledge; for instance, Ki-wung, is put down, the Moon, whereas it means the New Moon, Yellen-na, being the moon. In the higher districts of Hunter's River, my son was lately conversing with a tribe, but only one could reply, and he it appears had a few years back been to this part, and thus acquired the dialect. Time and intercourse will hereafter ascertain the facts of the case.

The arrangement of the grammar now adopted, is formed on the natural principles of the language, and not constrained to accord with any known grammar of the dead or living languages. The peculiarities of its structure being such, as totally to prevent the adoption of any one as a model. There is much of the Hebrew form in the conjugation. The dual of the Greek and the deponent of the Latin. However these terms are not introduced, excepting the dual, the various modifications of the verb and participle exemplifying the sense in which they are used.

The peculiarity of the reciprocal dual may be illustrated by reference to a custom of the Aborigines, namely: When a company meet to dance, each lady and gentleman sits down opposite to one another, and reciprocally paints each others cheek with a red pigment, or if not a sufficiency of females, the males perform the reciprocal operation. Also in duelling, a practice they have in common with other barbarous nations, the challenge is expressed in the reciprocal form. The terms adopted to characterise the various modifications, may not ultimately prove the best adapted to convey the various ideas contained in the respective forms, but at present it is presumed they are sufficiently explicit. Many are the difficulties which have been encountered, arising principally, from the want of association with the blacks, whose wandering habits, in search of game, prevent the advantages enjoyed in the Islands of being surrounded by the natives in daily conversation. It would be the highest presumption to offer the present work as perfect, but so far as opportunity and pains could conduce to render it complete, exertion has not been spared. It is necessary to notice certain Barbarisms which have crept into use, introduced by sailors, stockmen, and others who have paid no attention to the Aboriginal tongue, in the use of which both blacks and whites labour under the mistaken idea, that each one is conversing in the others language. The following list contains the most common in use in these parts:—

### BARBARISMS.

<i>Barbarism,</i>	<i>Meaning,</i>	<i>Aboriginal proper word.</i>
Boojery,	Good,	Mur-ro-rong.
Bail,	No,	Ke-a-wai.
Boge,	To bathe,	Nu-róng-kil-li ko.
Bimble,	Earth,	Pur-rai.
Boomiring,	A weapon,	Tur-ra-ma. A half moon like implement used in war.
Budgel,	Sickness,	Mun-ni.
Cudgel,	Tobacco,	Kut-tul. Literally smoke.
Gammon,	Falsehood,	Na-ko-i-ya-ye.
Gibber,	A stone,	Tu-núng.
Gummy,	A spear,	War-re.
Goonyer,	A hut,	Ko-ker-re.
Hillimung,	A shield,	Ko-reil.
Jin,	A wife,	Po-ri-kun-baj,
Jerrund,	Fear,	Kin-ta.



<i>Barbarism,</i>	<i>Meaning,</i>	<i>Aboriginal proper word.</i>
Kangaroo,	An animal,	Ka-rai. Various names.
Carbon,	Large,	Kau-wul.
Mije,	Little,	Mitti. Wa-re-a.
Mogo,	Axe,	Bai-bai.
Murry,	Many,	Mu-rai-ai, also Kau-wul- kau-wul.
Pickaninney,	Child,	Won-nai.
Piyaller,	To speak,	Wi-yel-li ko.
Tuggerrer,	Cold,	Ta-ka-ra.
Wikky,	Bread,	Kun-to. Vegetable provi- sions.
Waddy,	A cudgel,	Ko-tir-ra.
Wommerrer,	A weapon,	Ya-kir-ri. Used to throw the spear.
Strike-a-light,	Meaning to make known,	Wi-yel-la. Say de- clare, &c.