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§ 12. The Aborigines of Australia.[1]

1. **Theories as to Origin.**—The Australian aboriginals are generally allowed to belong to one of the most primitive races of mankind. A primitive or generalised, or non-specialised race, like a primitive animal, is not necessarily primitive in all or even in most of its physical characters; on the contrary, it is usually on account of its possessing some one or several very greatly specialised characters that it has been able to survive and to remain generalised, or because it has been geographically cut off and not subjected to competition in the struggle for existence with outside competitors. In the case of some animal forms it is very easy to point out such greatly specialised characters. Man, for example, though but poorly specialised in body generally when compared with the donkey or the deer, has one particular and peculiar feature that stands out prominently as a mark of distinction and specialisation. That feature is his brain. A highly specialised brain means less necessity for specialisation of the other parts of the body. His teeth and jaws remain generalised because he can catch and cook. His skin is smooth and thin because he can provide means of shelter and defence.

The question arises: What characters indicate primitiveness, and what characters indicate specialisation, or a departure from primitive conditions? In the case of the great mammalian order of Primates, of which man forms one branch, the Hominidæ, the available results of comparative anatomy regarding origins and affinities are scanty, because the labourers have been few, very few. But there is now beginning to be a consensus of zoological opinion as to what characters are to be considered as indicating primitive animals and what are to be regarded as indicating specialised animals. Zoologists are becoming agreed upon what features or points shall count, and what relative values are to be assigned to these features when determining origins and tracing affinities.

It is now regarded as fairly certain that man's nearest relatives are the anthropoid apes, viz., the gorilla, orang, gibbon, and chimpanzee. He possesses about 300 structural features in common with the gorilla and the chimpanzee that are not found in any of the lower monkeys. Turner has pointed out that the simian features are not all concentrated in any single race. It is allowed, however, that the Australian aboriginals have furnished the largest number of ape-like characters. The more one investigates, the more confirmation does this statement receive. Recent advances in science have given two unexpected proofs of affinity in entirely new fields. The homolytic test puts human blood and the blood of the apes in the same class, and separates both from the blood of the lower monkeys. Again, man and the anthropoid apes are subject to a class of diseases that does not affect any other animals.

If the aboriginal is the nearest to the original stock, what are his affinities? Formerly the Australian was classed with the American negro, because both possessed flat nose, protruding lips, projecting jaws, and large-sized teeth. But this is just as if one should put the echidna and the porcupine in the same order on account of their spines, to the total disregard of the broadest and most fundamental structural distinctions. The characters mentioned are very variable, not only in the Australian aboriginals and in the negroes, but in all races, and are just those characters that change very rapidly in the individual and in the race on account of changes in habits. Further, they are the characters that would become specially developed and fixed in the apes and lower human races on account of similarity of food, habits, and surroundings.

With respect to the brain of man, Professor Elliot Smith, of Cairo, has been able to do a great deal towards establishing what anatomical characters shall be considered primitive and what shall be accepted as evidence of specialisation—what value shall be

1. Contributed by W. Ramsay Smith, D.Sc., M.B., C.M., F.R.S.E., Permanent Head of the Department of Public Health of South Australia.

attached to the various features of the brain as an indication of specialisation and racial affinities. By applying the criteria he has established to Australian aboriginals' brains, Dr. Flashman, of Sydney, has been able to say, with a fair amount of certainty considering the all-too-limited material at his disposal, that, on the important points that count, the aboriginal shows undoubted primitive racial features.

Other parts of the body also furnish evidence regarding the origin and the racial affinities of the aboriginal. For example, it has been found that the molars and wisdom teeth in the upper jaw develop in a manner quite different from what is found in the white man, but similar to what obtains in certain of the lower animals. Researches on this subject have not as yet proved sufficiently extensive to enable one to say what other races, if any, exhibit a process of dental development similar to what is found in the Australian aboriginal.

Again, it was believed until recently that the shin bone in the Moriori, the original race inhabiting New Zealand, and now found only in the Chatham Islands, showed a nearer approach to the sabre-shape in its upper part than in any other race; in other words its platycnemic index was the lowest. Now, however, it has been found that the Australian aboriginal shows indices very much lower than the Moriori. In this respect, then, these two races are brought into close affinity. This condition is found in the shin bones of prehistoric man, and occurs in all the anthropoid apes except the orang. A condition associated with this, viz., retroversion of the head of the shin bone, which is very marked in the aboriginal, also occurs in prehistoric man and in the human embryo in all races, but disappears early in Caucasian children, persisting, however, in some of the lower races.

The question now arises: Where did the Australian race come from? To this various and varied answers have been given. Topinard and others had concluded that Australia was originally inhabited by a race of the Tasmanian type that disappeared before a taller race that came from—somewhere. Flower and Lydekker, in 1891, thought the Australians were a cross between two already-formed stocks. Keene still holds that they are a blend of two, or at the most three, different elements in extremely remote times.

Huxley held that the Australians were a homogeneous group. Finsch, from extensive observations, concluded in 1884 that they were all of one race. Alfred Russel Wallace, in 1893, pointed out the aboriginal's resemblance to certain Asiatic races, the Veddas, Todas, and Ainus, and concluded that the Australian aboriginals were really a low Caucasian type.

Dr. Semon, in his work "In the Australian Bush," 1899, adopts the theory, giving the reasons that lead him to do so, that the Australians and the Dravidians, primitive inhabitants of India, have sprung from a common branch of the human race, and that the Caucasians have undoubtedy sprung from the Dravidians. This makes the Australian aboriginal more nearly allied to us than the comparatively civilised Malays, Mongols, or Negroes. Speaking popularly, according to this view the Australian aboriginal, racially, would be the uncle of the Caucasian.

Lydekker, in 1898, abandoned the two-race theory, and reached independently the same conclusion as Wallace. Most anthropologists now accept the one-race theory. Professor Gregory, in "The Dead Heart of Australia," says he accepts this view and abandons the position he took up in 1903 in "The Geography of Victoria."

This view certainly enhances our interest in the aboriginal, and brings the subject of the anthropology of the black nearer home to us. Some writers give the Australian even greater importance. Stratz has taken him as a central unit, a prototype, around which he groups all the rest of the races of men; and another writer, Schoetensack, holds that all the races of men were evolved in the Australian continent.

In a recent communication to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Sir William Turner discusses the Craniology, Racial Affinities, and Descent of the Aborigines of Tasmania in a comprehensive and detailed manner, and incidentally deals with their relation to, and their affinity with, the Australian aboriginals. He revises and adds to the recorded physical characteristics of the Tasmanians, and compares these with the recent observations on New Caledonian skulls made by Dr. Waterston and others. After reviewing all

the trustworthy evidence available, he sums up thus:—"The whole question of the descent of the Tasmanians is one of great complexity and difficulty, which has been much discussed by ethnologists. Huxley considered them to be the Negrito modification of the great Negroid type or division of mankind, which had migrated eastwards to New Caledonia and subsequently southwards to Tasmania. Topinard, whilst of opinion that they were the remains of an autochthonous race, recognised that they might be a cross between it and an invading member of the Polynesian family. Barnard Davis regarded them as a peculiar and distinct race, dwelling in their own island. De Quatrefages and Hamy said that, owing to their special characters, they had no affinities with any other race, and that they formed a distinct subdivision of the black races. Flower thought them to be aberrant members of the Melanesian group modified from the original type. Ling Roth considered that the physical characters, manners, customs, mental qualities and language of the Tasmanians supported the theory that they were the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia, in course of time displaced by the present straight-haired Australian natives.

"If the Tasmanian occupied his island when it formed continuous land with Australia, and arrived in it along with the marsupial animals, his advent would go back to a time before land and water had assumed their present relations, thousands of years ago. If a great migration eastwards from Asia of the early Negritos did take place, they may at that period have reached Tasmania by way of the Australian continent. Though, as has already been stated, a woolly-haired race is not now represented in Australia, the tendency of the South Australians to show Tasmanian characters in the cranial vault is worthy of consideration in this particular, as an indication of the probable route of migration and of racial affinity."

The differences between the Australian aborigines and neighbouring races are given thus by Sir William Turner:—"The aborigines of Australia as known to the British colonists present in their affinities and descent, equally with the aborigines of Tasmania, an ethnological problem. They have racial characters which distinguish them from the dolichocephalic, mop-haired, black-skinned Papuans and Melanesians; from the brachycephalic, brown-skinned Polynesians; from the brachycephalic, straight black-haired, yellow-skinned Malays; and from the brachycephalic, woolly-haired, black-skinned dwarf-like Negritos."

This is being confirmed by every additional observation. The unity of the race may be accepted as established. The latest word on the subject is expressed by the same author thus:—"The balance of opinion is indeed in favour of the view that throughout Australia the present natives generally conform to one pattern in features, colour, and mental character; though possibly on the coast, local infusion of Papuan, Polynesian or Malay blood may from time to time have been introduced amongst them. Indeed, as Giglioli has suggested, the idea of an existing woolly-haired race in Australia is probably due to the loose way in which the terms woolly and crisp have been used by explorers who were not anthropologists."

Much anthropological observation has confirmed the conclusions drawn by Eyre in 1845 from other considerations. He said:—"The aborigines of Australia, with whom Europeans have come in contact, present a striking similarity to each other in physical appearance and structure; and also in their general character, habits, and pursuits. Any difference that is found to exist is only the consequence of local circumstances or influences, and such as might naturally be expected to be met with among a people spread over such an immense extent of country. Compared with aboriginal races, scattered over the face of the globe, the New Hollander stands alone."

Summed up, it appears established that the aboriginals are a homogeneous race, unmixed in descent, of Caucasian stock, not negro or negrito, but differing from every race in geographical propinquity to them in their physical characters and language, and in their ignorance of such matters as pottery, agriculture, sea-craft, bows and arrows and architecture—a primitive race, a relic of the oldest human stock.

While the Australian race is one, and exhibits a large substratum of uniformity, too much must not be inferred from mere casual examination; and one must be prepared to find a large amount of well-marked variation. The examination of a number of Austra-

lian aboriginals will show facial resemblances to all the known recognised human types, Ethiopian, Mongolian, Caucasian, American. In this respect there is some analogy between the Australian aboriginals and the Australian fauna. The primitive marsupials, distinguished by certain features, such as epipubic bones, inflected angle of the lower jaw, 'aplacentation,' double uterus, etc., having been cut off at an early period from competition with nearly all other classes of mammals, have developed along lines similar to those along which other forms have specialised, and now mimic other classes of animals, *e.g.*, carnivora, insectivora, rodents, etc. The Australian aboriginals have to a certain degree undergone similar development, and now mimic in facial expression the four primary groups of Hominidæ, as well as many intermediate forms. These statements are made generally, not in strictly scientific language nor in detail. When Professor Klaatsch, of Heidelberg, was in Adelaide in 1905, Dr. Rogers showed him a large number of photographs showing these variations of type, and presented him with some illustrative examples.

As to the physical and mental differences found in tribes in various parts of the continent, say in the Alligator River district and in certain parts of Central Australia, it was pointed out, long before the days of Darwinism, that food and climate and mental degradation will, within a comparatively short time, cause enormous variations in the people. Prichard, in "Researches into the Physical History of Mankind," gives a number of careful observations on the subject. Much has to be learned in this connection, judging from the amount that has been forgotten.

2. **Distribution Initially (1788) and Now.**—It is generally supposed that, from a centre in the north or north-west, the continent became peopled by tribes that dispersed or migrated in certain definite directions. These lines of migration are defined according to the occurrence along them of tribes possessing similar physical characters, dialects, traditions and customs. The fact that adjacent tribes often shew considerable differences in these respects is explained by supposing that they arrived at these particular places at different times and by different routes, having acquired variation in the process of migration.

With the limited knowledge of dialects, weapons, habits, customs and traditions of the various tribes at his disposal, Eyre hazarded the opinion that "Australia was first peopled on its north-western coast, between the parallels of 12° and 16° S. latitude. From whence we might surmise that three grand divisions had branched out from the parent tribe, and that from the offsets of these the whole continent had been overspread. The first division appears to have proceeded round the north-western, western and south-western coast, as far as the commencement of the Great Australian Bight. The second, or central one, appears to have crossed the continent inland to the southern coast, striking it about the parallel of 134° E. longitude. The third division seems to have followed along the bottom of the Gulf of Carpentaria to its most southerly bight, and then to have turned off by the first practicable line in a direction towards Fort Bourke, upon the Darling. From these three divisions various offsets and ramifications would have been made from time to time as they advanced, so as to overspread and people by degrees the whole country round their respective lines of march, each offset appearing to retain fewer or more of the original habits, customs, etc., of the parent tribe in proportion to the distance traversed, or its isolated position, with regard to communication with the tribes occupying the main line of route of its original division; modified also, perhaps, in some degree by the local circumstances of the country through which it may have spread."

Eyre also entered into further particulars regarding subdivisions and lines of route. He expressed his confidence that the precise original divisions and the routes of distribution might be determined when more particulars were collected regarding the various tribes. It is to be feared, however, that there is less hope now of doing this than there was in Eyre's time. Further study by Spencer and Gillen and Howitt has led to the conclusion that there were three main lines of distribution corresponding roughly to those laid down by Eyre. The chief evidence is founded on the occurrence in the various

tribes of similarities in grammar, dialects, the practice of circumcision, subincision, knocking out certain front teeth, and other observances.

It is obviously impossible at the present time to form any accurate estimate of the numbers of aboriginals in various parts of the continent towards the end of the eighteenth century. Not until men like Grey, Eyre, Threlkeld, Teichelman, Schurman, Meyer, Schürmann, Taplin, Wyatt, and Gascon began to write and record do we find materials available for estimating the numbers existing over half a century ago; and what impresses one in the writings of each and all of these observers is the extreme difficulty the authors encounter in arriving at even an approximation of the number of the aborigines. Eyre despairs of forming an opinion, even approximating the truth, of the aggregate population of the continent, or the average number of persons to be found in any given space. A district, he says, that may at one time be thinly inhabited, or even altogether untenanted, may at another be teeming with population. The wanderer may at one time be surrounded by hundreds of savages, and at another, in the same place, he may pass on alone and unheeded. Grey says he has found the number of inhabitants to a square mile to vary so much from district to district, from season to season, and to depend upon so great a variety of local circumstances, that he is unable to give any computation which would even nearly approach the truth. Modern writers, however, shew remarkable unanimity in recording the aboriginal population at 150,000 at the time of the settlement of Europeans. If there were any means of proving or disproving the correctness of the estimate something critical might be said regarding it. All that can be said is that it is a guess.

When we come to inquire into the numbers in districts occupied by Europeans at the time when observations were attempted, we find that the observers express the great difficulty they experienced on forming conclusions. In South Australia (*i.e.*, not including the Northern Territory) Mr. Moorhouse concluded that in 1843 there were about 1600 aborigines in regular or irregular contact with the Europeans, distributed in the Adelaide district, Encounter Bay, Moorunde, Port Lincoln, and Hutt River. He estimated that there were about 3000 scattered over a tract extending 160 miles north and 200 miles east of Adelaide. Eyre thought there must be about twice as many. Mr. J. D. Woods, on the basis of Eyre's estimate, calculated that there might be about 12,000 in all in South Australia. The census of 1876 gave a total of 2203 males and 1750 females for the whole province, only 1000 of these being in contact with the settled districts. Mr. Woods estimated that in forty-two years 67 per cent. of the black population had disappeared.

Since then the numbers have been decreasing. In the districts where Mr. Moorhouse sixty years ago estimated 1600 only a dozen or two can now be found. With the exception, perhaps, of a solitary member, the Gawler, Adelaide and Port Adelaide tribes are extinct. Not one individual survives in the Kapunda, Burra, or Rufus districts. The Port Lincoln tribe is reduced to about half-a-dozen. In 1840 the Narrinyeri tribe numbered about 3000; in 1877 it had dwindled to 613. At the present day only two individuals survive. The hundreds or thousands of blacks in the Murray district fifty years ago are represented to-day by a score or two among the 320, half of whom are half-castes, at the Point Macleay Mission Station on Lake Alexandrina. At the Point Pierce Mission Station on Yorke's Peninsula there are 20 blacks and over 130 half-castes. Three other mission stations furnish a total of from 300 to 400 blacks and half-castes. The total aboriginal population of South Australia in 1908, exclusive of the Northern Territory, was 3386 and 502 half-castes. The number in the Northern Territory is estimated at about 22,000.

3. **Physical Characteristics.**—The Australian aboriginals are a primitive race. This established and accepted fact, taken in conjunction with superficial observations of early explorers, the misrepresentations of some of the early settlers, and inaccurate reports of later writers, has given rise to an impression that they are a degraded race. But primitiveness and degradation are not synonymous. Hand-reaping by the hook or sickle is a primitive method of harvesting compared with the self-binder or the stripper, but it is not on

that account degrading. And here one must record definitely and emphatically that the Australian race is not a degraded one, physically, mentally, or morally. Some tribes and some individuals may exhibit inferior and degraded traits, but as a race it shows no signs of retrocession, degeneration, or degradation.

The average height among aboriginals is little, if anything, less than among the English. Very tall individuals, over six feet, are not uncommon, and they may occur anywhere—Mr. David Lindsay's boy, Dick Moogee, from Central Australia, who was twenty-one years old, was 6 feet 6 inches high. The upper part of the body is usually better developed than the lower; but although in many the legs are proportionally long and lack girth, especially in the calves, this is not always so. Many show excellent proportions, and are well-built and muscular. The wrists and hands are small and finely formed. The lunule of the nail is as well-marked as in Europeans. The men have fine deep and broad chests. They may remain lithe, active and supple to a very great age; the women, as a rule, "go off" in condition early, probably on account of the hard work and privations to which they are subjected.

The skull of the aboriginal is long, the sides are nearly vertical, and the vault is rafter-like or roof-shaped. The forehead is low and flat. The hair is long and straight, wavy, or curly, never woolly like the negro's, and not frizzy except from manipulation. It is usually worn short by both sexes, and is abundant and of a silken, glossy appearance. In colour it is very dark brown or black; its shaft, in section, is oval and relatively thick, although one meets with many specimens of very fine silky hair. In some women the hair is as black and lanky as among the Mongolians. Beards and moustaches are common. Some natives are very hairy all over the body. Old women sometimes grow very strong grey beards and moustaches. The hair turns grey on all parts of the body. Baldness is almost unknown. When it occurs it appears to begin on the forehead and to extend backwards. The skin is usually velvety in smoothness and is chocolate-brown, or dark copper colour, but varies much in its depth of tint, very largely on account of the amount of exposure to which it is subjected. When thoroughly clean it may shew marked iridescence. The sooty tinge of the African negro is said not to occur. The skin of the newly-born child is of a honey colour, but it soon grows dark. The bodies of children are often covered by long, soft, downy hair, especially along the spine. The skin of children shews the same varieties of tint as in older people. The aspect of the face varies greatly in tribes and in individuals. The eyes are sometimes said to be far apart; sometimes to be near; but examination shows that in this respect they resemble those of the European. They are deeply set, and are of a dark-brown or reddish-hazel colour, soft and intelligent looking, with black eyelashes. The pupils are large and dark, and the "whites" are yellowish. The blacks are said to have much keener vision than Europeans; but vision, like some other senses, is so much a matter of inference and cultivation that the statement requires qualification. The deep notch at the root of the nose and the overhanging brows are very characteristic. These characters are very quickly "bred out" in crossing with the white, and the same is true also of the dark colour of the skin. The progeny of half-castes with half-castes or whites, as in the case of the Maoris, is nearly white. The nose is very flat and very wide. The excessive width of nose and the openness of the nostrils is usually ascribed to the custom of wearing a "nose stick," but it is well-marked in young children. A Jewish cast of countenance, possibly more apparent than real, is frequently and widely met with. The mouth is wide; the lips are rather thick, but not swollen like the American negro's; and the jaws are usually somewhat projecting. The teeth are large, well-formed, regular, and, in the uncivilised individual, they may be evenly worn from excessive use but not decayed. Any irregularities are almost invariably due to crowding in the front part of the jaws. The grinders are of large size. The upper jaw in the vast majority does not overhang the lower, but bites flush against it. The cheek bones are often high, and the chin receding. The neck is short and thick. The ankles are small. The heel resembles that of the European. The forepart of the foot is usually very broad and thick, the great toe is "loose," and a native is as ready to pick things up by the foot as he is with his hand. The carriage of the aboriginals is graceful, with the trunk erect, the head thrown back

and the knee lifted forwards in a peculiar fashion rarely seen in any other race. One can hardly be said to have seen human grace of carriage who has not seen an aboriginal walk. In sitting on the ground, which is his usual custom, the blackfellow crosses his legs and brings his heels nearly under him; a woman usually sits almost on her knees with one foot right in the crutch. These positions, like the difference in the "fighting fist" of whites, seem to be sexual distinctions. The men in standing often place one foot against the opposite knee and help to balance themselves with a wommera or some other weapon or implement. Even the young children naturally assume this figure-of-four pose.

The body exhales an odour quite characteristic of the race, noticeable by whites, horses, cattle and dogs.

The voice is soft and musical, and rich in inflections.

Mentally the aboriginal in his native surroundings is observant, self-reliant and quick. Under civilisation, however, he lacks stability. Children in school can be educated like white children and to the same extent, and the parents object to any distinction in the curriculum or the standard required. It is usually said that they never pass a certain stage, that they come to a dead wall beyond which they cannot progress, and that in arithmetic particularly they are deficient, and unable to count above two or four. There is really no evidence for such assertions. In some tribes uncivilised, there are numerical names for children up to the number of ten. A blackfellow, born of uncivilised parents and brought up among whites or mixing a great deal with them, will tell off the distance between two places thus: A to B, 10 miles; B to C, 6; C to D, 14; D to E, 8; E to F, 5, and say the total, 43, without a halt. The ordinary blackfellow is as good at figures as his white brother. Some become great in oratory and speak English chastely and beautifully. Some train themselves in music and can play classical choruses and such-like pieces on the organ with great skill and expression. Some shew great mechanical ingenuity, and read and understand books on mechanics and physics. Women learn all sorts of domestic work, and can read and write as well as their white sisters in similar circumstances.

As a race the aboriginals are polite, proper in their behaviour, modest, unassuming, gay, fond of jokes and laughter, and skilful mimics. Even in rough "horse-play" they seldom lose temper. Some possess a fund of humour. They are by nature frank, open and confiding, and of a lively disposition, and cheerful under all sorts of privation. Sometimes they shew great delicacy of feeling. In many things the aboriginal is scrupulously honest; and his morality, according to his lights and teaching, is as high as among the generality of uneducated white people. Inter-tribal etiquette is punctilious, and breaches of it lead to fighting. In many cases the aboriginals shew great courage.

Edward John Eyre, in 1845, said it would afford him much gratification to see an interest excited on behalf of the blacks proportioned to the claims of a people who have hitherto been misjudged or misrepresented. Since that time the misjudgment and misrepresentation have continued, due very largely to the fact that those who know the aboriginal most intimately have not had the inclination or opportunity to write or speak what they know about him, and that the writings of those who investigate and record from the point of view of physical or mental science, are not so well known as they ought to be by literary people who prepare hotch-potch for the reading public.

Eyre himself was resident, in responsible authority, in the most densely populated native district in South Australia for three years. No settler had ventured to live there before him, and before he arrived frightful scenes of bloodshed, rapine, and hostility between the natives and parties coming overland with stock, had been of frequent and very recent occurrence. During his stay there he went almost alone among hordes of those fierce and bloodthirsty savages, as they were then considered, and stood singly amongst them in the remote and trackless wilds, where hundreds were congregated around, without ever having received the least injury or insult. During the whole of the three years he was resident there, not a single case of serious injury or aggression ever took place on the part of the natives against the Europeans; and the district, once considered the wildest and most dangerous, was, when he left it, looked upon as one of the most peaceable and orderly in the province. With reference to murders, or retaliations or whatever name one

calls the acts by, Eyre says :—"I believe were Europeans placed under the same circumstances equally wronged, and equally shut out from redress, they would not exhibit half the moderation or forbearance that these poor untutored children of impulse have invariably shown." In reading recent works on the aboriginals we must remember that history is not always written by experts in ethics or in law.

4. **Manners, Customs, and Religion.**—The task of gathering information regarding the manners and customs of aboriginals is beset with difficulty. In the first place, a blackfellow desires to please and will give the answer that he thinks his questioner desires. Secondly, his answer may be entirely misunderstood; for example, the name of a river may be stated on the authority of a blackfellow to be such and such, the word really meaning "I don't understand." Thirdly, both in regard to information supplied by the blackfellow and in regard to what an observer sees for himself, it must be remembered that what is true for one tribe may be quite misleading when applied to another in close proximity. Writers are liable to be right in what they affirm, but very apt to be wrong when they begin to deny.

(i.) *Clothing.* Clothing and decency are not synonymous. Decency is a matter of custom and education among savages and civilised alike. Prudery and self-consciousness begin with clothing, whether the covering be a necklace or a loin cloth. The Australian aboriginal in the northern parts wears nothing, and has no desire to wear anything. Even civilised blacks there when alone throw off their clothing; and when they hear that a white fellow is coming along, they make a scramble for European dress. Among southern tribes kangaroo rugs and skins of the oppossum and wallaby form the chief or only articles of clothing. One single garment only is worn, varying in size according to the season. It is usually oblong in form and is worn fur side out, over one shoulder and fastened with a wooden pin in front, so as to leave the other shoulder bare and the arm free. In some places sea-weed or rushes are made into clothing, and the tough fibrous material formed by the scum of the lakes, when dried on the beach in large flat pieces, is used as blankets. No head covering is worn or used, except at times perhaps some green bunches or wet weeds.

(ii.) *Ornamenting.* The scarring of the skin so commonly found throughout the Continent, is usually placed in the category of the ornamental. The fact that the scars are preceded in children by painted imitations, would seem to lend weight to the explanation. It is probable, however, that this scarring, in the male at least, did not originate in the ornamental or artistic. Among some tribes in the Northern Territory the scars in women have reference to the family history of the individual, and show the number and sex of the children and whether they are dead or alive; also they indicate other relationships and widowhood. In men they do not appear to have a similar significance; and it is remarkable that they occur in such positions in the body as would brace up the joints and prevent the looseness of tissues that is so apt to occur in well-fed individuals, but that is so detrimental to their fighting powers. In this respect the aboriginals remind one of the Scythians and Nomades, mentioned by Hippocrates, who produced similar scarring with a very definite object in view. This subject increases in importance when one takes into account the theory of the origin of the Caucasian origin of the Australian.

The ornaments most commonly seen are brow decorations made of the lower incisor teeth of the kangaroo; broad fillets made of string smeared with ochre; necklaces made of fur spun or twisted into string, or of short pieces of the stems of grass threaded together, or made of a shell threaded by string; tassels made of the tips of the wild dog's tail; armlets made of woven grass or strips of skin; belts made of scores of yards of hair or of bark carved and coloured; and pieces of wood, bones, or feathers stuck through a hole in the septum of the nose. The practice of painting and anointing the body in connection with bellicose or funeral or joyous occasions may also be included. The native is fond of his decorations and not a little vain when wearing them.

(iii.) *Carving and Drawing.* The aboriginal is not devoid of artistic tendencies, although the results of his efforts do not shew much skill. It has to be noted that he does

not exhibit any tendency towards indecency, and he rarely attempts to depict the female form. Weapons and implements are usually carved, sometimes very elaborately. The rock pictures in the neighbourhood of Sydney Harbour have been studied, and are the subject of a monograph by Mr. W. D. Campbell. They are mostly plain outlines representing men and animals more or less recognisable. Sir George Grey reproduces pictures he discovered on the north-west coast; but the art they show differs in matter and manner from what is found anywhere else. Some of them are like children's attempts at reproducing ecclesiastical pictures. Dr. Herbert Basedow has reproduced a number of rock drawings and paintings of animals and other objects he found in the Ayres Ranges and the Victoria and Katherine Rivers and also some bark drawings. As artistic productions they seem much superior to those found near Sydney. Many drawings have been found in various parts of Queensland.

(iv.) *Dwellings and Camps.* A blackfellow camping for a night usually makes a breakwind of bark, boughs, or bushes on the side from which he expects the wind to blow during the night. His forecast is almost invariably correct, but if there should be occasion to alter the three-foot high erection he has made, he can do so in a few minutes. The camp forms a greater or less segment of a circle, the convexity being exposed to the wind and the fire being between the occupant and the open gap to leeward. It is made before darkness sets in. The bed is formed of green twigs, reeds or grass. Camps intended to be more stationary usually consist of bark huts open in front. In some places bark is almost exclusively used, and makes excellent huts, since it can be procured sometimes in slabs about twelve feet long and ten broad. Overhanging rocks, hollow trees and caves are sometimes used, although caves are not in much favour. When many natives happen to camp together, there are recognised rules and customs regarding the position and arrangement of the huts and the mode in which various parties pass to and fro in camp. All boys and uninitiated young men sleep at a distance from the huts of the adults. Each inmate or family has a separate fire or several fires. Large common fires are not used in camps.

(v.) *Occupations.* The Australian is a wandering hunter, and a gatherer of such things as Nature produces for him, without any special foresight on his part or any effort except what is required in the capture or the search. He is not an agriculturist in any sense. Even when civilised and apparently domesticated, he has, and she likewise, an intense and irrisistible longing to "go bush," and he becomes really ill if this longing or home sickness is not satisfied. A native who can continue at laborious work for any length of time without growing ill bodily is a curiosity, seen sometimes, but very rarely.

The men pass their time in hunting, fishing, fighting, and making arms and implements. The women gather and prepare food, make nets and bags, and attend to the children. On the march they are the camp baggage carriers. A good idea of the relative occupations and duties of man and wife may be gathered from Grey's accounts of their equipment. He says :—"The Australian hunter is thus equipped : Round his middle is wound, in many folds, a cord spun from the fur of the opossum, which forms a warm, soft and elastic belt of an inch in thickness, in which are stuck his hatchet, his kiley or boomerang, and a short heavy stick to throw at the smaller animals. His hatchet is so ingeniously placed, that the head of it rests exactly on the centre of his back, whilst its thin, short handle descends along the backbone. In his hand he carries his throwing stick, and several spears, headed in two or three different manners so that they are equally adapted to war or the chase. A warm kangaroo skin cloak completes his equipment in the southern portions of the continent; but I have never seen a native with a cloak anywhere to the north of 29° S. lat.

The contents of the native woman's bag are :—A flat stone to pound roots with ; earth to mix with the pounded roots; quartz for the purpose of making spears and knives; stones for hatchets; prepared cakes of gum, to make and mend weapons, and implements; kangaroo sinews to make spears and to sew with; needles made of the shin bones of kangaroos, with which they sew their cloaks, bags, etc.; opossum hair to be spun into waist belts; shavings of kangaroo skins to polish spears, etc.; the shell of a species of

of mussel to cut hair, etc. with; native knives; a native hatchet; pipe clay; red ochre, or burnt clay; yellow ochre; a piece of paper bark to carry water in; waistbands, and spare ornaments; pieces of quartz, which the native doctors have extracted from their patients, and thus cured them from diseases; these they preserve as carefully as Europeans do relics; banksia cones (small ones), or pieces of a dry white species of fungus, to kindle fire with rapidly, and to convey it from place to place; grease, if they can produce it from a whale, or from any other source; the spare weapons of their husbands, or the pieces of wood from which these are to be manufactured; the roots, etc. which they have collected during the day. Skins not yet prepared for cloaks are generally carried between the bag and the back, so as to form a sort of cushion for the bag to rest on. In general each woman carries a lighted fire-stick, or brand, under her cloak and in her hand."

(vi.) *Hunting.* Hunting, in the case of the aboriginal, is not a mere matter of endurance, speed, or accuracy of aim; it is observation brought to a fine art and acted upon. The blackfellow knows the track, cry and habits of every animal, and takes advantage of its every peculiarity or characteristic to secure his prey. His knowledge of animals, and his skill and inexhaustible patience and perseverance, make his securing of them a certainty. He will track the opossum by its claw-marks on a tree-trunk, or by observing the flight of mosquitoes if no claw-marks are visible. He will decoy pelicans within his reach by imitating the jumping of fish by throwing mussel shells or splashing the water with his fingers. Being almost amphibious in habit, he will creep or swim up to the ducks with grass round his head and pull the birds one by one under water, breaking their necks and letting them float till he has enough. He will find and capture snakes by watching the movements of their companions the butcher birds. He will catch a bee, stick a piece of feather or down on it, let it go, and follow its flight until he finds its hive and honey. He will walk into the sea at a place where a white man cannot see a single shell and in a few minutes, by digging in the spots of yielding sand with his feet or fingers, he will find enough of cockles for a meal; in short, he will find abundance, and live at ease where a white man would see nothing and starve to death. His power of tracking is due to observation and not to instinct. A white man can learn the art without very much difficulty.

The blackfellow's ingenuity is seen almost as much in fishing as in hunting. Hooks made of shells or tortoise-shell, harpoons, spears, baskets, cages, nets, hollow log traps, weirs, dams, fences and poisoning are all employed as a means of obtaining fish. The remora or sucker-fish, with a string attached to its tail, is used as a guide to direct the blackfellow to turtle, dugong, or to other fish.

(vii.) *Food.* The variety of food is enormous, both from necessity and from choice. The dietary extends from clay to kangaroo, from nardoo to honey. Dr. Walter E. Roth has catalogued and described 240 edible plants and 93 species of molluscs used by the North Queensland aboriginal. When it is considered that many of these articles of food require special methods of preparation, some of which are necessary in order to modify their poisonous properties, it will be understood that the blackfellow's knowledge of food and cooking is of no mean order. In some places white clay as a great delicacy is elaborately prepared and eaten, as is also the clay forming the outside covering on the ant-hills. Among articles of food used by the aboriginal, but not usually favoured by whites, are ants, grubs, caterpillars, moths, the larvæ of wasps, lizards, iguanas, frogs, rats, mice and snakes. The native is sometimes pitied on account of his having to eat such things as grubs, but this is just like commiserating an Englishman for eating oysters, or a Frenchman for eating frogs. These things are really luxuries, or articles of ordinary diet. Even white children of all classes will indulge in eating tree-grubs. The native, in fact, lives well. He is more of an epicure than a gourmand. He knows what every district produces and when the products are in season, and how he can obtain them. He wanders about in consequence. The varying food supply has made him a nomad.

The aboriginal, from our point of view, is very wasteful as regards his food supply; he kills immature animals and even devours young birds in the egg. It is often said

that he has no foresight in the matter of providing food. This is a mistake; he rarely leaves the gathering or catching of food until he is hungry. On journeys he husbands his provisions with the greatest care; in some instances he looks even a long way ahead in the matter of supplies. The huge beds of cockle-shells, some of them about a mile long and some hundreds of yards across, with ovens of flat stones *in situ*, found among the sandhills near the shore, in parts of the country, testify to the enormous numbers of molluscs gathered and cooked; and inquiry shews that the preparation and preserving of this sort of food was quite an extensive industry in those parts.

One is struck with the very extensive knowledge displayed by the aboriginal in the methods of preparing and cooking food. Cooking is certainly a fine art. One writer is so astonished that he thinks the blackfellow received his knowledge of certain culinary operations by divine interference. Among the processes employed are broiling, roasting, grilling, baking, steaming and sometimes boiling; and the results would satisfy the utmost requirements of any ordinary civilised individual.

(viii.) *Drink.* In many parts of Australia the water problem is a serious one on account of the general lack of springs; and this fact has made the aboriginal an expert water-finder. By looking at certain rushes or other vegetation and noting the disposition of the ground, he is able to tell where and at what depth water will be found, and he sinks his water-hole accordingly. Further, he has such an intimate knowledge of every foot of country, that he knows where he will find water after a shower or on a dewy morning, which he can collect and store in his water bag. In some places shells, the haliotis, for example, are used as drinking dishes; in others, skulls may be similarly employed. Among the Narrinyeri tribe, who lived in places where water was at times very scarce, skulls, with the sutures sealed up, were used as water-containing and water-carrying vessels. It is doubtful if such a custom obtains in any other tribe in the world. In some parts large shells, like the Melo, are used for water-carrying. Very commonly water-bags are made of the skins of animals. In desert places the aboriginal is able to obtain water in quantity from the long lateral roots of the gum scrub—a good root yielding about two-thirds of a pint. The captain of H.M.S. *Beagle* records that the blacks about the Gulf of Carpentaria have accustomed themselves to drink salt water almost habitually for lack of fresh. An artificial drink is made in some places by dissolving manna or gum in water. Various plants are used for sweetening drinks.

(ix.) *Stimulants and Narcotics.* It does not appear that the aboriginal anywhere manufactures intoxicants. The use of pituri, or pitcheri, as a narcotic is very general. Tribes will send messengers hundreds of miles to obtain by barter the parts of this plant which are prepared for chewing. It produces a voluptuous, dreamy sensation. Sometimes it is smoked in pipes. In some parts, at corroborees, the natives chew the leaves of the stinging tree and thereby produce a condition of frenzy. Sexual stimulants are not unknown. At Port Keats, in the Northern Territory, the men use an infusion of the leaves of a plant as a local application for this purpose. In the civilised state both men and women use tobacco universally, and some are much addicted to alcohol if they can obtain it. Others acquire the opium habit, and will make opium pipes out of beer bottles.

(x.) *Medicines.* The subject of medicine is much bound up with magic, sorcery, witchcraft, and disenchantment. Nevertheless there is a fairly large amount of rational or empirical medicine practised, consisting in the use of a few animal and vegetable preparations, taken inwardly, and liniments, lotions, resins, poultices, fomentations, heat, ashes, dust, ligatures, and such-like, applied externally. Bleeding, as a general and local remedy, is not uncommon. Fractures are treated by splints of wood or bark and bandages. Snake-bite is treated in various ways, sucking the wound after applying ligatures to the limb being one of the commonest and most successful. The blackfellow recovers very quickly from all sorts of surgical injuries that would inevitably prove fatal to a European under treatment; but he has very little power of resistance against what may be termed "medical diseases."

(xi.) *Weapons and Implements.* Excepting perhaps in some parts of Queensland the use of the bow and arrow is unknown. The chief weapon everywhere is the spear. The long spears, with stone points or barbs cut out of the wood, are thrown by hand or by means of the wommera, and are used in war. Short spears, with the fore portion made of heavy hardened wood, and the main shaft made of reeds or light wood, are also thrown by the wommera, and are used in hunting and also in fighting. Fishing spears are short and usually barbed with bone. In some places the long spear is used only at corroborees, but the native almost invariably carries the flat wommera.

Speaking generally there are two sorts of wommeras, the flat and the round. The flat wommera measures from 20 to 40 inches in length, and may be lath-like or expanded and flattened in the middle part, and sometimes hollowed on the spear-side. The round wommera is usually about 40 inches long and is formed of light wood or a reed. In both, a tooth of a kangaroo or some similar pointed body at the posterior end fits against the hollowed end of the spear, while the other or fore end of the wommera, on which a knob is formed, is held by the hand which also grasps the spear.

The boomerang is a thin, flat piece of hard wood about two feet long and about two inches wide, and is of two sorts. The return boomerang is short, and flat on one side and somewhat rounded on the other. It is slightly twisted on its long axis. This form is used as a toy and sometimes for killing birds in flocks. The other form is longer and heavier and is not twisted. It is used in hunting and in war, and does not return. Clubs are of various sizes and sorts. In some places two-handed wooden swords are used. These appear to be variations of the boomerang, which they resemble in appearance, bu are straight. Pointed sticks from one to two feet long are used in hunting. The shields used when fighting with the spear are light and thin; those employed for defence against the club are thick and strong and hard or tough. The handle, which is of a piece with the shield, is always very small, too small for a European's hand. Wommeras, boomerangs, and shields are usually carved.

The tomahawk, or axe, consists of a stone head, very similar to what is found all the world over, with a handle made of a flattened sapling bent round it and secured to it with string and gum. It is extensively used in the manufacture of shields, clubs, houses and canoes. A modification of it, shaped somewhat like a spear-head, is used for cutting honey out of hollow trees. In some places "knives" are made by attaching pieces of flint or quartz to the edge of a piece of wood somewhat in the form of the teeth of a saw. Chisels are made by fixing a piece of stone to the end of a short stick by means of twine and gum. The knives used for circumcision and subincision in various parts of the continent are made of flinty quartzite and fixed in short wooden handles. They are kept in a sheath made of bark surrounded with string composed of hair or fur.

Canoes are found among the lake and river tribes and on parts of the coast. They are commonly made of a large sheet of bark removed from a tree-trunk, and bent or shaped into form by heating. A large one, twenty feet long, to hold seven or eight people, can be made in a day. On some parts of the north coast there are wooden canoes with outriggers; and in other parts catamarans are found, made of several logs of light wood tied together.

Among the implements may be mentioned needles and awls from the leg-bones of the emu or kangaroo; netting-needles, made of sticks or reeds about the size of a lead pencil; thread, of emu or kangaroo tendon; nets for hunting or for making bags or other purposes, made from the tendons or the fur of animals or the fibres of plants, the fibres being prepared by chewing; and string made of fibres twisted by rubbing on the thigh.

For grinding grass-seeds and other similar substances into flour the natives use stones. The lower stone is usually large, from a foot to eighteen inches in diameter, flat or hollowed out from use, and made of sandstone; the upper stones are rounded, are about the size of the fist, or somewhat larger, and are usually harder. Good nether stones, in districts where the nardoo plant is found, will be carried many miles with the tribes, and will be brought at first from districts at an immense distance.

Fire is made by taking a round fire-stick about a foot long and placing its blunted point against another stick either similar or flat and softer, and twirling the fire-stick rapidly by means of the palms of both hands. In other cases a groove is made in a piece of wood and a stick rubbed quickly backwards and forwards generates heat sufficient to set tinder or grass alight. Sometimes fire is obtained by sawing one stick against another.

It often happens that one tribe wishes to pass into or through the country of another for the purpose of gathering food, or obtaining it or other necessaries by barter. On such occasions a very rigid etiquette is observed. A messenger is sent in advance, dressed elaborately in emu feathers or other recognised ornaments and bearing his credentials—a message-stick somewhat larger than a finger, or a "pass-it-on" cubical stone about three-quarters of an inch in size. Message-sticks are also used between members of the same tribe. These are usually regarded as merely the credentials of the messenger, and the markings are believed not to have any significance apart from what may have been agreed upon beforehand between the sender and the receiver. It is possible, however, that there may be something more than this, but the subject, like that of smoke-signals, has not been thoroughly investigated.

(xii.) *Fighting Customs.* These are somewhat peculiar. One does not find one tribe carrying on a well-directed or continued war of extermination or of vengeance against another. The reasons for a fight are clearly recognisable, and its beginning, its form, and its end can all be predicted, whether it be between individuals or tribes. The rules or conditions of fights appear to be as definite as those of civilised tournaments or duels.

(xiii.) *Marriage.* Grey, writing in 1841, noted that the natives were divided into certain great families, all the members of which bore the same names, as a family, or second name; further, that in different districts the members of these families gave a local name to the one to which they belonged, which was understood in that district to indicate some particular branch of the principal family. He found that these family names were perpetuated, and spread through the country, by the operation of two remarkable laws:—(1) That children of either sex always take the family name of their mother; (2) That a man cannot marry a woman of his own family name. He also concluded that these family names were derived from some vegetable or animal being very common in the district which the family inhabited, and that hence the name of this animal or vegetable became applied to the family. He says:—"A certain mysterious connection exists between a family and its *kobong*, so that a member of the family will never kill an animal of the species to which his *kobong* belongs, should he find it asleep; indeed, he always kills it reluctantly, and never without affording it a chance to escape. This arises from the family belief that some one individual of the specie is their nearest friend, to kill whom would be a great crime, and to be carefully avoided. Similarly, a native who has a vegetable for his *kobong*, may not gather it under certain circumstances, and at a particular period of the year." Grey pointed out the similarity of the *kobong* to the totems of the North American Indians.

The subject of marriage has been very much studied of recent years, and it has given rise to not a little controversy. Here it will be sufficient to set forth the main facts without referring to the origin of the practices or the principles underlying them.

The simplest, and probably the most primitive, marriage arrangement is met with among a few tribes in the Lake Eyre district. A tribe is divided into two "phratries," or classes for marriage purposes. Each individual belongs to one or other of these. A man or woman is forbidden to marry an individual of the same phratry, *i.e.*, mating cannot occur between two persons of the same phratry. This ensures exogamy, or outbreeding, to a certain extent. But this is not all. Each phratry is subdivided into several totemic-groups; and similar rules are applicable to these as regards mating. By these means exogamy is further ensured. The children usually take the phratry name of the mother, not of the father. The reason for this is apparent, when one considers that a woman once married becomes the legal or matrimonial property of her husband's brothers, in fact of every man in the group. In certain tribes the two phratries are sub-

divided into four or eight classes or sub-phratries. This gives rise to greater complexities and further ensures out-breeding. In some tribes, however, there is a provision for the compulsory marriage of cousins—a man must marry his mother's elder brother's daughter. This is of special interest in connection with the subject of the fertility and the vitality of the children of such marriages among the Fijians, where this system of marriage of the children of brother and sister was compulsory, the marriage of the children of two brothers or two sisters being forbidden.

Writers refer to promiscuous intercourse and lack of morality among the aboriginals. There could be no greater mistake. The punishment for adultery and incest may be death; and it is carried out. All care is taken to see that, except when they are temporarily suspended, the laws regarding marriage and marital fidelity and etiquette are strictly obeyed and the recognised punishments inflicted for breach of them.

It used to be supposed that all the marriage customs had direct reference to the subject of in-and-out breeding; but it seems probable that some of them had reference to the food supply, and that this vital subject was at the root of this and other social institutions.

Property in land, not for agricultural purposes but for food supply, is clearly recognised among the aboriginals, wanderers though they are, and the limits of each tribe's country are accurately defined and recognised.

(xiv.) *Children.*—The aboriginal child, like all children of uncivilised races, comes into the world very easily. The mother may be at her duties a few minutes after its birth, which is hardly an incident in the routine of the camp or the march. A blow on the head may terminate its existence, if its mother be young or if it be likely to be an encumbrance to the parents. Women may bear as many as a dozen children; the average is about five; but in many places only two of these would be reared.

Female children are betrothed within a few days of their birth, and their future is determined according to their relations to their husband and his relatives, and not by their own parents. They usually go to their husbands at about twelve years of age, but do not bear children before sixteen, although they menstruate for some years previously. Childhood as a rule is a happy time. The blacks are fond of their children, and seldom beat or correct them. There are many games and amusements for them. Idiocy is uncommon. Mania sometimes occurs. Deaf mutes are often very intelligent and express themselves intelligibly.

(xv.) *Corroborees.* The Corroboree appears to be a universal institution. It is "the medium through which the delights of poetry and the drama are enjoyed." It is also the occasion for all sorts of festivities and enjoyments, gymnastic displays and competitions, displays of dress that do not interfere with displays of the figure, religious observances, and secret rites; and it is the tribal circuit court. Descriptions of it are not uncommon.

(xvi.) *Initiation Ceremonies.* Initiation ceremonies of various sorts are practised in all the tribes. They consist of such rites as knocking out one or more front teeth, circumcision, partial subincision, complete subincision, excision of the clitoris, incision of the perineum, depilation of various parts of the body, and amputation of part of a finger. We are accustomed to regard these initiatory mutilations from the same point of view as a blackfellow would judge one of our surgical operations, the necessity or reason for which was not apparent to him. But they are not inflicted for the sake of mere cruelty, nor in any case with the idea of limiting population, which they do not effect, but on account of certain beliefs that find their necessary expression in these ritualistic ceremonies.

In some parts women are warned off from the neighbourhood of the men's initiation ceremonies by the "bull-roarer," "buzzer" or "bummer," which must not be shewn to a woman, under pain of death to her and to the one who shews it.

The desire to initiate every individual seems ingrained in the moral and physical fibre of every member of every tribe. A blackfellow at the present time, living among whites, will tell how all his life he has had to be on the watch not to come in contact with his fellow-tribesmen, who are as constantly on the watch to capture him and initiate him. The relation of the blackfellow to these rights, ceremonies, privileges, food-tabus, and such-like, is set forth by Grey thus:—"The whole tendency of their superstitions and traditional regulations is to produce the effect of depriving certain classes of benefits which are enjoyed by others; and this monopolising of advantages often possesses, amongst savages, many characteristics which violate all the holier feelings of our nature, and excite a disgust, of which it is divested in civilised life. In the latter case we see certain privileges even hereditarily enjoyed; but the weak and strong, the rich and poor, the young and old, have paths of honourable ambition laid open to them, by entering on which they can gain like immunities. While in the savage condition we find the female sex, the young and the weak condemned to a hopeless state of degeneration, and to a lasting deprivation of particular advantages, merely because they are defenceless; and what they are deprived of is given to others, merely because they are old and strong; and this is not effected by personal violence, depending on momentary caprice and individual disposition (in which case it might be considered as the consequence of a state of equality), but it is enforced upon the natives of Australia by traditional laws and customs, which are by them considered as valid and binding as our laws are by us."

Eyre also remarked upon the complete subserviency of the younger people of both sexes to the older or leading men as a very serious evil, and as the greatest bar to their civilisation and improvement. This power of the old men is not merely a family matter, but affects the whole tribe, since government, such as it is, and it is a very great deal when all is known, is entirely in the hands of the old men's council.

From a consideration of all these customs and their effect upon every individual's life and actions, one can see how impossible it was for any blackfellow or any tribe to shake off the fetters of the traditions or break through the practices that kept the tribe and the race in the same condition for century after century. Spontaneous emergence into civilisation was a moral and physical impossibility, even if the necessaries for a settled and civilised existence had been within his reach, such as the means of agriculture, the possession of domestic animals, and a certain amount of skill in sea-craft.

(xvii.) *Disposal of the Dead.* The method of disposing of the dead varies in different tribes, and more than one mode may be found in the same tribe. Cannibalism, to a limited extent and occasionally, is practised in some tribes, but the circumstances connected with it and the reasons for it are not well known. Some tribes carry the dead with them for a time, after having subjected them to a preliminary temporary burial or roasting. Sometimes the bodies are wrapped up in bark and string and become mummified. Sometimes they are exposed on platforms formed in forked trees or on props. Burial of the body is very commonly carried out by placing the corpse in a sitting position with the knees under the chin and the elbows against the sides. Sometimes the body is laid at length, with leaves and twigs in the graves. Wailing ceremonies at death, and mourning ceremonies at the graves, are not uncommon. Some of these, like the wearing of widows' caps on the Murray, appear to be practised locally only. After death no reference is made to the deceased, nor is his name mentioned. Relatives bearing the same name find a substitute, and the names of many things also are changed on this account. Death from violence is understood; but death from natural or unknown causes is ascribed to an evil spirit or to sorcery or witchcraft on the part of some individual for whom a search is made. Death from suggestion is common in connection with pointing "death-bones" or otherwise; but sometimes the victim dies from blood-poisoning through being stabbed by a "bone" previously prepared with decomposing flesh.

(xviii.) *Religion.* The subject of the religion of the blackfellow is dealt with by many people very shortly. What they say amounts to this—he has not got any.

This arises from a lack of knowledge of the blackfellow, or from defining religion in such a way as to exclude him from the category of the religious. Suppose we adopt Matthew Arnold's definition: "Religion, if we follow the intention of human thought and human language in the use of the word, is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling." Ethics deals with conduct, "eating, drinking, ease, pleasure, money, the intercourse of the sexes, the giving free swing to one's temper and instincts; all the impulses which can be conceived as derivable from the instinct of self-preservation in us and from the reproductive instinct, these terms being applied in their ordinary sense, are matters of conduct. It is evident this includes, to say no more, every impulse relating to temper, every impulse relating to sensuality. How we deal with these impulses is the matter of conduct, how we obey, regulate, or restrain them; that and nothing else."

From this point of view we are not much concerned whether or not the aboriginal believes in and worships a god, or has clear notions of a heaven, a hell, or a hereafter. The prime questions are first, whether he has any ideas of right and wrong and acts accordingly, *i.e.*, whether he has any morality; and secondly, whether he is influenced, and how and to what extent, by feeling as a motive power in conduct, *i.e.*, whether he is in any sense religious.

Judging from this standpoint we must allow that the more we know of the blackfellow the more we are constrained to say that he is saturated with religion; but writers have been calling it sorcery, witchcraft, superstition, and such-like names. We must recognise that we have to review all our knowledge of the beliefs and actions and motive forces of the aboriginal if we are really to understand anything of his morality and religion. For instance, we recognise that the morality or religion of the early Jew was to be gauged by his attitude towards the law—civil, moral, and ceremonial, every point of which was of equal importance to him as regards consequences—blessings or curses as the case might be, and these of an arbitrary sort, until he evolved a higher sort of religion. The hope or fear of these consequences was the motive power. The aboriginal has systems of sanitation not only comparable to the Mosaic, which is still the wonder of the world, but superior to it in two ways: firstly, because they are in many respects more comprehensive and more detailed, and secondly, because the motive power appeals much more to him—his fear of wrong-doing may be a lower motive than the Jew's hope of worldly success for well-doing; but it is certainly a stronger one. The Jew buried his excreta at once and on the spot because the law said "thou shalt" and imposed penalties. A blackfellow destroys every bone of a teal he has eaten because he knows that another blackfellow can do him serious injury, and even cause him to die if he should obtain possession of it—and he will die despite the savage or civilised doctor. The black mother, even the civilised and Christianised mother, refuses to give a lock of her child's hair, not from the idea that such bodily "refuse" not destroyed is insanitary, but because she has been taught that if the child dies its spirit will find no rest while that lock of hair survives. If these things do not actually constitute religion they are certainly the stuff that religion is made of, and the aboriginal's whole nature and actions must be restudied from this point of view.

(xix.) *Language.* Speech almost everywhere is soft and musical. The sounds of f, j, q, s, v, x, and z are absent. Those of h and th occur rarely. The vocabulary changes readily and extensively on account of peculiar customs; but structurally all the dialects belong to one common language, which is in the agglutinative stage, and is unlike any other known tongue. It is poor in abstract terms and numerals, but rich in verb forms, and it possesses some distinctions found in few if any other languages. In many localities there is a very extensive system of gesture language.

5. **Folk-Lore.**—Folk-lore is usually defined as including such traditional or archaic beliefs, customs, superstitions, legends, or tales as have become obsolete or are no longer believed.

The aboriginal, like every other citizen of the world, has his stock of fables, for the benefit of the youth principally—stories obviously intentionally invented for the purpose of pointing a moral or enforcing some useful truth or precept. He also has his parables of the same nature and for the like purpose. His legends, using the term in a somewhat loose sense, are fairly numerous. It is when we come to mythology, however, that real interest is aroused and practical difficulty arises in connection with the aboriginal's beliefs. If we accept a myth as "a tale handed down from primitive times, and in form historical, but in reality involving elements of early religious views, as respecting the origin of things, the powers of nature and their workings, the rise of institutions, the history of races and communities and the like," then we find that in dealing with the aboriginal we are studying "folk-lore in the making." This is where the interest lies. The difficulty arises when we try to determine how much of the material is actual belief influencing the native's thought, action, conduct, life, i.e., how much comes within the category of religion; and how much has become mere tradition, interesting only as history or amusement, i.e., what comes within the category of folk-lore. The task of the apostle of anthropology is to resolve the literary nebula into "gospel" on the one hand and "old wives' fables" on the other.

The materials for this study of "folk-lore in the making" are very numerous and very suitable for the work, particularly so in respect to such subjects as conception, pregnancy, birth, and reincarnation. A study of the beliefs and practices of the aboriginal in respect to these has revolutionised all our ideas regarding aboriginal marriage, social and sexual customs, corroboree practices, ceremonies connected with the dead, charms, enchantments and witchcraft, child betrothal, infanticide, bodily ornamentation, interdiction of food, phratries, and totemism. Until quite recently all these matters were investigated and recorded as mere detached items of belief or practice in various tribes, or at most with the idea that a study of them would give clues to the lines of distribution of the various tribes from an original home in the North-west. Now we begin to realise that the religion, morality, mental attitude and even physical actions of the blackfellow are mostly, if not altogether, "of a piece," and that he is to be judged, as we judge ourselves, from the point of view not of isolated beliefs or acts, but of his life and being as a whole, and of how the individual conducts himself relatively to his beliefs, instruction, training and exercise of will.

Grey appeared to have some notion that there was a single key to the multifarious problems, when he said:—"It is remarkable that although so many persons have described isolated customs of this people, no one has yet taken the trouble to digest them into one mass, and to exhibit them in the aggregate, so that an inference might be drawn as to how far the state in which the natives of Australia are at present found is caused by the institutions to which they are subjected."

It would obviously be impossible to give any accurate or unified idea of these matters, considering how incomplete the knowledge of them is, and how much difference of opinion exists regarding those that have been the subject of some study. Reference to detached customs and practices will be found in other parts of this article. All that can be here done is to say that the blackfellow has stores of legendary lore, varying in different tribes and even in divisions of the same tribe, dealing with the origin of the race, of totem names, of white people, of all things in the world, of weapons, of rites, of ceremonies, of death, of fire. His gods are numerous, and consist of good spirits and bad spirits. He has legends also of a deluge, of fabulous animals, of the propping up of the sky, of the origin of the sun, who, by the way, is a woman, and of where the sun goes at the end of the day, and of why it makes this journey; of how the moon, who is a man, came to be in the sky, and of why it waxes and wanes; of eclipses, comets, shooting-stars, and the constellations.

6. **Destiny.**—In the early days the numbers of aboriginals were diminished by quarrels with the settlers, offences by the whites, retaliation by the blacks, and *vice versa*. For something that from a white man's view was a crime a whole tribe would,

in official language, be "dispersed." Private enterprise did not hesitate to follow similar methods. The law and circumstances were such that the aboriginal had little protection and no redress. But, after all, it would almost certainly have been better for the black if he had been an uncompromising fighter, declining to have anything to do with his spoilers. Some scheme might have been devised whereby his rights would have been recognised, and he would have been kept from contact with our civilisation. Such contact as has occurred and now obtains does not tend to absorb or graft on the blackfellow to our race; it withers or rots him.

The half-caste problem threatens to become serious. In the early history of the settlers the tribes sometimes solved the difficulty by means that were effective if rough, such as killing them all. The great difficulty is that the half-caste has no family life, or social place, or legal position with either the blacks or whites. He is made to feel this, and he acts accordingly. Sometimes, no doubt, he has an honourable place among the blacks, or a place of trust among the whites, but this does not often occur. The increase in the number of half-castes is very marked. In South Australia, during the seven years 1901-08, there was a decrease of 316 blacks and an increase of 125 half-castes.

The dying out of the aboriginals is due to a number of causes, some of which are fairly well known and marked. Epidemics of small-pox or a disease indistinguishable from it have almost annihilated whole tribes. This disease and venereal disease, introduced by overlanders, was almost the sole cause of the extinction of the Coorong blacks. Venereal disease acts as an exterminator in another way, by making the black women sterile. This cause is widespread wherever there is contact with civilized people. Consumption, which is inseparable from the habits of clothing and housing, is responsible for a large number of deaths. It has been remarked that while many die from our diseases a great many also die from our treatment.

If matters go on as at present for the next two or three generations there appears to be no prospect of anything but difficulties and complications for us, and misery, disease, and death for the black. Seventy years ago Lord John Russell wrote in a despatch to Sir G. Gipps :—"You cannot overrate the solicitude of Her Majesty's Government on the subject of the Aborigines of New Holland. It is impossible to contemplate the condition and the prospects of that unfortunate race without the deepest commiseration. . . . . It is impossible that the Government should forget that the original aggression was our own; and that we have never yet performed the sacred duty of making any systematic or considerable attempt to impart to the former occupiers of New South Wales the blessing of Christianity, or the knowledge of the arts and advantages of civilised life." Some gentlemen objected to sections of land being appropriated for the natives before the public were allowed to select. To them Governor Gawler replied and referred to the rights of the natives thus:—"The invasion of those ancient rights by survey and land appropriations of any kind, is justifiable on the ground, that we should at the same time reserve for the natives an *ample sufficiency* for *their present* and future use and comfort, under the new style of things into which they are thrown; a state in which we hope they will be led to live in greater comfort, on a smaller space, than they enjoyed before it occurred, on their extensive original possessions." In 1840 the South Australian *Register* in a leading article said; "We say distinctly and deliberately that nothing comparatively has yet been done—that the natives have hitherto acquired nothing of European civilisation, but European vices and diseases, and that the speedy extinction of the whole race is inevitable, save by the introduction of means for their civilisation on a scale much more comprehensive and effectual than any yet adopted." The *Register* might reprint this to-morrow as a statement of fact applicable to the present position of affairs. Apart from some State pittances and a modicum of State supervision, the aboriginal is of little interest to anyone but some benevolent societies and a few ardent anthropologists. The problem of what to do with the race, the most interesting at present on earth and the least deserving to be exterminated by us, and the most wronged at our hands, is not a difficult one to solve, were a solution really desired.

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