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Notes on Some Tribes of New South Wales

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*Notes on some TRIBES of NEW SOUTH WALES.*

By A. L. P. CAMERON, Esq.

§ 1. *Introduction.*

To say that the aboriginal inhabitants of New South Wales, as indeed of the whole of Australia, are rapidly passing away, is to utter what may be called a truism. Almost every writer on the subject has borne testimony to their rapid decadence; and even to the uninquiring and little interested, the fact that they are swiftly and surely treading the path to utter annihilation must be evident. In the vicinity of all large centres of population the natives are now extinct, and in the thinly inhabited, and even the newly-settled parts of Australia, the same causes which have destroyed them near the towns are proving just as fatal, although acting less swiftly. The rapidity with which this extinction of the native race is proceeding may be estimated from the following facts. In 1868 I saw gatherings of from 800 to 1,000 in Western Queensland, about 150 miles north of the New South Wales boundary line, and now I am told, on trustworthy authority, that the whole district could not produce a third of that number.

I note that the late Rev. George Taplin, who had a large experience, and who made good use of his opportunities for studying native character, held the opinion that the best means of saving the race from extinction would be found in their conversion to Christianity. Nevertheless, I can scarcely think that very much can be done in this direction. Missionary labour among Australian races has invariably proved up-hill work. I have known several natives who were educated in the doctrines of Christians, who professed themselves to be Christians, and who were, so far as I could judge, fair examples of christianised blackfellows. On a close examination as to what they really believed, I found that many of the absurd beliefs of their forefathers were still cherished by them. Side by side with the new doctrine that teaches them to forgive their enemies I found the old *lex talionis*, which commanded them to procure the death of an enemy by any means in their power, among which sorcery takes far from a subordinate position.

§ 2. *The Tribes.*

It is somewhat difficult to arrive at the number of tribes in New South Wales, as no single enquirer can well possess sufficient information as to all parts of the colony, to enable him,

even approximately, to define the territory of the different tribes; and where one has to depend upon information collected by friendly correspondents in different parts of a large colony, who have not previously given much attention to the subject, mistakes are likely to occur as to whether the information refers to a tribe or to a clan of a tribe. It may be well here to give a definition of what I mean by "tribe." When the word is used in this paper it refers to a whole community of people, whose language, laws, institutions, ceremonies, and customs are the same, and who call themselves by a certain name. The word "nation" will be applied to a group of kindred tribes, who are on friendly terms, and whose language and laws are somewhat but not altogether similar. The word "clan" will be used in reference to subdivisions of a tribe having the same language, laws, &c.

I think it probable that there were not more than five or six nations in New South Wales, each nation consisting of from five to twenty tribes, and in some parts of the colony these tribes were again subdivided into clans.

These numbers are merely an approximate supposition, and I do not pretend to anything approaching strict accuracy, as it would require years of labour and constant travelling over the colony to determine with any degree of certainty the number of tribes in New South Wales, and the boundaries of their respective territories.

Although I do not in these notes deal with the Kamilaroi tribes, yet it is necessary that I should, in connection with my subject, briefly refer to them by saying that they constituted a nation which was foremost in strength and importance among those of New South Wales. Many other tribes, which do not speak the Kamilaroi language, although they understand it more or less, use the same words to denote their class-divisions, and in the organisation of their society strongly resemble that of the Kamilaroi-speaking people.

I now proceed to enumerate the *nations* and *tribes*.

(1.) *The Wiradjeri*.<sup>1</sup>—This was a powerful nation, and may have been one of the largest in New South Wales. Its country extended from Mudgee to Hay, and for a long distance down the course of the Lachlan River.

(2.) It seems to me probable that the Wonghi or Wonghibon tribe, concerning which I shall give some information in these notes, was in fact a branch of the Wiradjeri nation. In speaking of a Wonghi black to one of the Wathi-wathi tribe, who had

<sup>1</sup> I have heard it pronounced Wiradjeri and Wiraduri in different places. I have no doubt it is the Wiradhuri mentioned by Ridley ("Kamilaroi," p. 119) as inhabiting the Wellington district.

referred to him as a Wiradjeri—I said, “He is not Wiradjeri, he is Wonghi,” and my friend replied, “It is all the same, only they talk a little different; Wiradjeri blackfellows say ‘*Wira*’ for No! and Wonghi black fellows say ‘*Wonghi*,’ but they are all friends.” This Wonghi tribe occupied a tract of country lying along the Lachlan River from Whealbah about eighty miles up stream, and back from the river for a distance of about one hundred miles.

(3.) Adjoining the Wiradjeri I find another considerable nation, for which I have not as yet succeeded in finding any common distinguishing name. It consists of the following tribes, in the order in which they follow each other down the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers: Ithi-ithi, Wathi-wathi, Muthi-muthi, Ta-ta-thi, and Keramin. These tribes speak different languages, but a man of any one of them usually speaks two or three, and understands more.

(4.) The last described group of tribes extends down the Murray River almost to the Darling River junction at Wentworth. At this place commences the country of another very large nation, the name of which is *Barkinji*, extending along the course of the Darling as far up at least as Menindie, and east and west of the river for perhaps a mean breadth of eighty miles.

This Barkinji nation is composed of the following tribes, some of which may be perhaps sub-tribes or even clans: Kairongo, Pūlali, Lamona, Wa-imbo, Mothingo, Murkurilla, and Karndilke, I am not able to fix their respective localities in the Barkinji country.

(5.) Between the Barkinji, the Wiradjeri, and these tribes along the Murrumbidgee and Murray, of which the Ta-ta-thi is one, I find another large tribe, or perhaps nation, called *Berri-ait*, of which at present I know little beyond this, that it is composed of the following subdivisions: Lagerung, Murro, Milparo, Boanjilla, Pūlarli,<sup>1</sup> Nielyi-gulli, Kurlki-gulli, and Karndūkūl.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is much difference in the pronunciation of the Pūlali of the Barkinji and the Pūlarli of the Beri-ait. In the latter the “u” is short and the “r” well sounded.

<sup>2</sup> The vocabulary given at p. 366 shows a great resemblance between the languages of the Barkinji and Beri-ait. I suggested to my informants that they were parts of the same tribe, but they would not hear of it. I suggested that before the whites came the Beri-ait blacks must have been forced to go into the rivers in summer time. They said that now and then they did so, but went in a sufficiently strong party to fight any section of the river tribes they might meet, and that when they had no water they lived on what they obtained from the roots of the Mallee and of a species of *Hakia*. I was told that a proof of their being totally distinct was that any old Barkinji black could swim, but that *no* Beri-ait could.

To some it may seem strange that any tribe could live in the almost waterless region between the Lachlan and Darling Rivers, where the territory of the

Some, but not all of the above tribes, are named from the negative in their language, for instance the Wiradjeri from *Wira*, the Wonghibon from *Wonghi*; others are named after the name of the language but not after the negative, as in the whole of the third group, for instance, Ta-ta-thi. But some tribes have two names, for instance the Ta-ta-thi is also called Nimp-mam-wern, that is to say, the "Light-lip." The Wathi-wathi tribe is also called Narinari.<sup>1</sup>

There seems to have been some bond uniting the Tatathi group of tribes with the Barkinji and the Wiradjeri.

As far as I can make out there are no very clearly defined boundaries between these tribes or their greater aggregates, the nations. The tribes seem to melt into each other. For instance, A, B, and C being tribes, B is on intimate terms with both A and C, understanding and talking the language of each. But A rarely holds intercourse with C, merely understanding some of the language, but not speaking it.

To the south of the Murray River, and of the tribes which I have enumerated, there was in the Colony of Victoria a large nation, whose males were called Kulin, but with which I have no further concern in these notes.

### § 3. *The Class-divisions.*

Every tribe with which I am acquainted in New South Wales is divided into two exogamous intermarrying classes, and in many tribes the division is into four such classes.

All Kamilaroi-speaking people are divided into *Ipai*, *Kumbu*, *Murri*, and *Kubbi*; the female equivalents being *Ipatha*, *Butha*, *Matha*, and *Kubbitha*. These class names are also used by tribes which are wholly unacquainted with the Kamilaroi

Beri-ait is located. Considerable quantities of water may, however, be obtained from the roots of trees, notably from those of the Mallee and of a species of *Hakia*, locally known as the "needle bush."

The means adopted for obtaining water from these trees is as follows:—The lateral roots, say of a Mallee, are dug up in lengths of from eight to ten feet, stripped of their bark, cut up in lengths of say a foot or eighteen inches, and placed upright in a vessel with thicker end downwards and allowed to drain. The roots selected are from one to three inches in diameter, and are readily dug up, as in many localities they extend laterally for ten feet without varying much in thickness, and do not go more than nine or ten inches into the ground. The facility with which these roots may be obtained depends of course a good deal upon the nature of the ground, and in some patches of Mallee it is very difficult to obtain them. A good root, say ten feet long and two inches and a half thick, would yield a quart of water, which, though not very palatable to those unaccustomed to it, is liked very well by those who have used it for a time.

<sup>1</sup> My Wathi-wathi informant was much surprised to learn of another Narinari, or Narinyeri tribe on the lakes into which the Murray River flows. He could not understand how it was that he had never heard of it. I could not learn from him that the word Narinari had any meaning in his language.

language, but among whom the organisation of society is the same as in the Kamilaroi tribes.

There are good reasons for believing that where we meet with four classes they have been formed by the subdivision of two primary classes.<sup>1</sup> Each tribe has a further subdivision into totems or animal names, which are borne by every member of the tribe.

The following are the tabulated class systems referred to, so far as I have been able to determine them:—

*Wonghibon Tribe.*

Four classes.	Totems. <sup>2</sup>
Ipai. .. ..	W <sup>a</sup> gun (Crow).
Kumbu .. ..	Murua (Kangaroo).
Murri .. ..	Tali (Iguana).
Kubbi .. ..	Kuru (Bandicoot).
	Kurakai (Opossum).

<sup>1</sup> I have followed the method of tabulating the class divisions used by Mr. Howitt, See Notes on the "Australian Class Systems," "Journ. of the Anthropol. Inst." May, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately I cannot assign the Wonghi totems to their respective classes. I regret also that I am unable to give the list of Barkinji totems, but I remember that they are almost the same as those of the Ta-ta-thi, *i.e.*, Kulthi = Emu, and Kultuba = Whistling Duck for Mukwara, and Karni = Lizard, and Turltha = Kangaroo for Kilpara. There are also other totems.

I am indebted to Mr. J. D. Scott for the classes and totems of the Barinji tribe of the Paroo River, which I subjoin.

*Barinji Tribe.*

Two classes.	Totems.
Mukwara ..	Biliari (Eaglehawk). Turlta (Kangaroo). Kurte (Bilbae, a rabbit-like burrowing animal). Tickara (Turkey). Kültuppa (Whistling Duck). Burkunia (Bandicoot).
Kilpara ..	Kulthi (Emu). Turru (Snake). Kami (Lizard). Murinya (Wallaby). Bu-una (Iguana). Kuntara (Native Companion).

*Barknji Tribe.*

Two classes.	Totems.
Mukwara.	..
Kilpara.	..

*Ta-ta-thi Tribe.*

Two classes.	Totems.
Mukwara ..	{ Waip-illi <sup>1</sup> (Light Brown Eaglehawk). Parna-iri (Teal Duck). Wirak-gintha (Jew Lizard).
Kilpara ..	{ Wala-kili (Crow). Wai-im-bali (Iguana). Wa-ip-illi (Brown Coloured Eaglehawk).

The Keramin people are separated by a distance of 400 miles, or nearly, from the Barinji, yet we find that they have some totems in common; the Mukwara in both tribes having Kangaroo and Bandicoot, and the Kilpara having Emu and Snake.

*Keramin Tribe.*

Two classes.	Totems.
Mukwara ..	{ Mundhill (Dark Coloured Eaglehawk). Birak (Red Kangaroo). Tiri-in (Teal Duck). Wiri Kuruk (Spoon-bill). Lant Wong (Bandicoot). Mungo-ine (Lizard).
Kilpara ..	{ Maneru (Silverfish). Runganyi (Emu). Wak (Crow). Turath (Padymelon). Dhoke (Whipsnake).

Of the Beri-ait class system I only know that it divides into Mukwara and Kilpara.

<sup>1</sup> The words Waip-illi and Wa-ip-illi are pronounced differently, and the two birds are different.

In the Ta-ta-thi group of tribes, besides the regular totems, the Bat is very much revered by the men, and is never killed by them, while should a woman kill one, there is a great row, in which the women sometimes get hurt. A small owl is likewise revered by the women, who attack the men if they try to kill one. By the Ta-ta-thi the Bat is called *Rakur*, and the small owl *Dhrail*; the Wathi-wathi call them *Benalongi* and *Yeraliri* respectively.<sup>1</sup>

In this group of tribes a man never kills his totem, but he does not object to eat it when killed by another.

Everything in the universe is divided among the different members of the tribe; some claim the trees, others the plains, others the sky, stars, wind, rain, and so forth.

#### § 4. *Marriage and Descent.*

The following table shows the marriages and descents in one of the tribes referred to. In all of them descent is counted in the female line:—

*Wonghibon Tribe.*

Male.	Marries.	Children are
Ipai .. ..	Matha .. ..	Kubbi and Kubbitha.
Kumbu .. ..	Kubbitha .. ..	Murri and Matha.
Murri .. ..	Ipatha .. ..	Kumbu and Butha.
Kubbi .. ..	Butha .. ..	Ipai and Ipatha.

I was much surprised to find that the marriage arrangements between these classes are so different from those of the Kamilaroi, and I suspected some mistake. I made every effort to discover the truth, and found that the above statement is correct. The Wonghi intermarry with the Wiradjeri, among whom I knew that the rule is that (for instance) Ipai marries Kubbitha, and I

<sup>1</sup> I note that Messrs. Howitt and Fison, in a paper "From Mother-right to Father-right" ("Journ. of the Anthropol. Inst.," August, 1882), give the Bat and the Nightjar as totemic subdivisions of the Mukjarawaint tribe, and the Emu-wren and Superb Warbler as totemic divisions of the Kurnai tribe. As seen by the light of the tribes which I now describe, I regard the Bat and Small Owl, Bat and Nightjar, Emu-wren and Superb Warbler, not as totems in the same way that other animal names are. The daughters of a Kilpara woman whose totem is Lizard (Ta-ta-thi tribe) is Lizard like herself; the daughter of a Mukwara woman whose totem is Emu, is Emu like herself, but both of them reverence the Little Owl. Another reason that makes it evident to me that the Bat and Little Owl are something different from ordinary totems is, that a man, though he will not kill his own totem, has no objection to anyone else killing it, and will then eat it, but no man of these tribes will kill a bat, nor let a woman kill it, to whom the bat is not sacred. I have heard men and women speak to each other as "Rakur" (bat) and "Dhrail" (little owl).

have endeavoured to find out whether a Wonghi Ipai would marry a Wiradjeri Matha according to his own class laws, or a Wiradjeri Kubbitha according to hers. I am not yet certain as to this rule. My Wathi-wathi informant told me that though he did not know much about the Wonghi, he could understand that the difficulty could be got over readily by the totemic names of the individuals, and from what he said I could gather also that it would have been a very different matter had it been asserted that Ipai could marry Butha or Ipatha instead of Matha.

I have learned from Barkinji, Ta-ta-thi, and Keramin blacks that Mukwara is the equivalent of Murri-Kubbi, and Kilpara of Ipai-Kumbu; and they also assert that any totem of Mukwara may marry any totem of Kilpara. This seems strange, for a Keramin Kilpara of Emu or Padymelon totem is Kumbu, and Kilpara Silverfish, Crow and Whipsnake is Ipai, and so on with the others.<sup>1</sup>

The class divisions are always strictly exogamous (Mukwara marrying Kilpara, and Kilpara marrying Mukwara), yet this general rule is restricted by nearness of blood, so that, apart from the class regulations, there are special laws prohibiting consanguineous marriages.

The strictness with which the class laws are always carried out is surprising. Even at the present day, when the decrease of their numbers has made it very difficult to obey all their ancient customs, any infringement of the marriage law, if persisted in, is punished by death. I know of an instance of such infringement having recently occurred in the Wonghi tribe. A man took a woman of a forbidden class as his wife, and carried her off to the country of a neighbouring tribe, with which he was on friendly terms. This case is not yet settled, but I was told by some of the natives that the Wonghi men of the delinquent's class name were on his track, and that his death is certain, unless he at once leaves the woman, and even then he will have to submit to severe punishment in expiation of his offence.

Even in casual amours, which are not of infrequent occurrence, the class laws are invariably observed.

Instances might be found in each of the tribes I am concerned with, but one from the Ta-ta-thi will perhaps suffice to show the general resemblance of custom. In this tribe there is at times a good deal of promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, but this is always within the class limits, any infringement of

<sup>1</sup> I take this opportunity of correcting the information which I gave to Mr. Howitt as to the equivalents of Mukwara and Kilpara (quoted in "Notes on the Australian Class Systems," p. 10).

which always brings down upon the offenders the swift wrath of the tribe. My Ta-ta-thi informants tell me that members of this tribe were rarely ever known to break the law, but that if a man and a woman of forbidden classes did marry, the man would be put to death and the woman be beaten or speared, or both, till she was nearly dead; the reason given for not meting out to her the same punishment as to the man being that she was in a manner probably coerced.

In all the tribes to which I refer in these notes, a few men had two wives, but the greater number had only one. They married within their own tribe, always paying due regard to the class laws, and also intermarried with the other surrounding tribes. Little or no ceremony attends the actual marriage.

Girls are very frequently promised when children, and when marriageable are taken to the future husband's camp by the mother,<sup>1</sup> or mother's brother; the mother giving her daughter a bag to carry things in, and a yam-stick. The father has nothing to do with the disposal of his daughter. The reason given is that the daughter belongs to the class of her mother's brother, not to that of her father. Notwithstanding this they believe that the daughter emanates from her father solely, being only nurtured by her mother.

The woman is bound to be faithful to her husband, the penalty being whatever punishment he thinks fit to administer. But the rule does not apply to the man.

It is not permitted that a girl should have intercourse with any young man until this has taken place with some old man, or old men of that class with which her class intermarries. I am not certain as to the influence of the totem in this case.

In the tribes which are organised into two classes, for instance, the Barkinji, every Mukwara man speaks of each Kilpara woman as "wife," while every Kilpara woman speaks of each Mukwara man as "husband." Similarly in the tribes organised into four classes, the Ipai men speak of the Kubbitha woman as their "wives," and are spoken of by the latter as "husbands;" and so on with the rest of the classes.<sup>2</sup>

A female captive belonged to her captor if of a class from

<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a certain amount of restriction in the intercourse of a man and his promised wife's mother, but it is not so pronounced as after his marriage. I remember that in Queensland I observed a case in point. The man was often about the camp of his destined father-in-law, when I remarked that he never spoke to his promised wife's mother, though she joined in a general conversation when he was present, and he did not appear to shun her as much as he did after he married her daughter.

<sup>2</sup> It must be borne in mind that the Wonghi are an exception to the usual rule, in so far that Ipai marries Matha.



§ 5. *The Relationships.*

The terms which I have tabulated show the relationships of the Wathi-wathi tribe. They are as real to them as are our own to us, and any man who married a woman who was, according to this system, his sister, that is to say, the daughter of his father's brother, or of his mother's sister, would be deemed guilty of incest, and would incur the penalty of death. The same system of relationships is found in all the tribes I deal with in these notes, and in them all a man regards his mother's sister's child, or his father's brother's child in precisely the same light as he regards his mother's child or his father's child.

English.	Wathi-wathi Tribe.
Elder brother .. ..	Wawi.
Younger brother .. ..	Mamui.
Elder sister .. ..	Tatui.
Younger sister .. ..	Minukui.
M.* Father's brother's son .. ..	†Wawi or Mamui.
F. Father's brother's son .. ..	†Wawi or Mamui.
M. Father's brother's daughter .. ..	†Tatui or Minukui.
F. Father's brother's daughter .. ..	†Tatui or Minukui.
M. Mother's sister's son .. ..	†Wawi or Mamui.
F. Mother's sister's son .. ..	†Wawi or Mamui.
M. Mother's sister's daughter .. ..	†Tatui or Minukui.
F. Mother's sister's daughter .. ..	†Tatui or Minukui.
M. Father's sister's son .. ..	Neripui.
F. Father's sister's son .. ..	Malūnui.
M. Father's sister's daughter .. ..	Malūnui.
F. Father's sister's daughter .. ..	Indapui.
M. Mother's brother's son .. ..	Neripui.
F. Mother's brother's son .. ..	Malunui.
M. Mother's brother's daughter .. ..	Malunui.
F. Mother's brother's daughter .. ..	Indapui.
Father .. ..	Mamui.
Father's brother .. ..	Mamui.
Mother's sister's husband.. ..	Mamui.
Father's sister's husband .. ..	Kukai.

\* M signifies male speaking.

F " female "

† According as the person spoken of is younger or older than the speaker.

munication and intercourse with his own daughter, although there is with respect to his mother-in-law.

Again, when the tribe is divided into four classes, the mother-in-law is not of the same class as the wife, and therefore the argument could not apply. Of course it might be urged that the custom came into existence at a time when the tribe had only the two primary classes, but we generally find that when the necessity for a rule ceases to exist, the rule itself falls into disuse, and it would be necessary to show that in tribes having four classes the rule was not so stringent as in those having only two.

English.	Wathi-wathi Tribe.
Mother .. .. .	Kukui.
Mother's brother .. .. .	Gūnui.
Mother's sister .. .. .	Gūnui.
Father's brother's wife .. .. .	Gūnui.
Mother's brother's wife .. .. .	Ni-inqui.
Father's sister .. .. .	Ni-ingui.
M. Son .. .. .	Wa-ipui.
M. Brother's son .. .. .	Wa-ipui.
M. Wife's sister's son.. .. .	Wa-ipui.
M. Wife's brother's son .. .. .	In-gipui.
M. Sister's son.. .. .	In-gipui.
F. Son .. .. .	Wa-ipui.
F. Sister's son.. .. .	Wa-ipui.
F. Husband's brother's son .. .. .	Wa-ipui.
F. Husband's sister's son .. .. .	Natowui.
F. Brother's son .. .. .	Natowui.
Father's father .. .. .	Matui.
Father's father's brother.. .. .	Matui.
Father's father's sister .. .. .	Matui.
Father's mother .. .. .	Mi-imui.
Father's mother's sister .. .. .	Mi-imui.
Father's mother's brother .. .. .	Mi-imui.
Mother's father .. .. .	Naponui.
Mother's father's brother.. .. .	Naponui.
Mother's father's sister .. .. .	Naponui.
Mother's mother .. .. .	Kokonui.
Mother's mother's sister .. .. .	Kokonui.
Mother's mother's brother .. .. .	Kokonui.
M. Son's son .. .. .	Matui.
M. Brother's son's son .. .. .	Matui.
F. Brother's son's son .. .. .	Matui.
F. Son's son .. .. .	Mi-im-ui.
F. Sister's son's son .. .. .	Mi-im-ui.
M. Sister's son's son .. .. .	Mi-im-ui.
M. Daughter's son .. .. .	Naponui.
M. Brother's daughter's son .. .. .	Naponui.
F. Brother's daughter's son .. .. .	Naponui.
F. Daughter's son .. .. .	Kokonui.
F. Sister's daughter's son .. .. .	Kokonui.
M. Sister's daughter's son .. .. .	Kokonui.
Husband .. .. .	Nopui.
F. Husband's brother .. .. .	Nopui.
Sister's husband .. .. .	Nopui.
Husband's sister's husband .. .. .	*Wawi or Miamui.
Wife .. .. .	Nopui.
Wife's sister .. .. .	Nopui.
M. Brother's wife .. .. .	Nopui.
Wife's brother's wife .. .. .	*Tatui or Minukui.
Wife's brother .. .. .	Pingaipui.
Husband's sister .. .. .	Indaipui.
M. Sister's husband .. .. .	Pingaipui.
F. Brother's wife .. .. .	Indapui.
M. Son's wife .. .. .	Bo-ika-thui.

\* According as the person spoken of is younger or older than the speaker.

English.				Wathi-wathi Tribe.
M.	Daughter's husband	..	..	N'gutha N'guthui.
F.	Son's wife ..	..	..	Bo-ika-thui.
F.	Daughter's husband	..	..	Natundui.
F.	Husband's father ..	..	..	Bo-ika-thui.
M.	Wife's father ..	..	..	N'gutha N'guthui.
F.	Husband's mother..	..	..	Bo-ika-thui.
M.	Wife's mother ..	..	..	Natundui.

The following are the tabulated class systems of the tribes herein referred to, so far as I have been able to determine them:—

*Wonghibon Tribe.*

Class Division.				Totems.
Ipai ..	..	..	..	Wagūn (Crow).
Kumbu ..	..	..	..	Mūrūa (Kangaroo).
Kubbi ..	..	..	..	Tali (Iguana).
Murri ..	..	{	{	Kūrū (Bandicoot).
				Kūrakai (Opossum).

§ 6. *Tribal Government.*

In these tribes the office of headman was in a sense hereditary, that is to say, the son would inherit the position of his father if he possessed any oratorical or other eminent ability; but if not, then the son of the deceased's brother would hold the position, or, failing him, then the nearest relation having the same class name.

The Wathi-wathi will serve me for an illustration. If the son of a deceased headman was, for some sufficient reason, not deemed worthy of the office, an assembly of the whole tribe selected some one else, and the successor ought to be a brother of the deceased, or one of the nearest relations. This principle of succession by the brother, or by the nearest relation of the same totem, rather than by the son, is closely connected with uterine descent, which obtains in all these tribes. It comes out clearly in cases of death where property is left. Most of it is buried with the deceased, but the dogs, and perhaps some valuable tomahawk, would be given to the dead man's brother.

Sometimes, when an expedition was agreed upon, a leader was appointed by the majority of the party going upon it, but I believe that while the men forming the party chose their own leader among themselves, the party as a whole was selected by the old men of the tribe.

In quarrels between individuals, which also sometimes spread even to the whole classes, it is class mate who helps class mate; but there is a curious exception in the Wonghi tribe, that Murri helps Ipai, and *vice versa*, while Kumbu helps Kubbi, and Kubbi Kumbu, for the reason, as it has been explained to me, that Ipai is the father of Murri, and Kumbu of Kubbi, and so on.

### § 7. *The Bora Ceremonies.*

By far the most important among the ceremonies practised by the aborigines of New South Wales is the Bora,<sup>1</sup> at which youths are initiated to manhood, and among almost all tribes of New South Wales, and many of those of the other colonies, the knocking out of one of the front teeth, and sometimes two, from the upper jaw, is the visible sign that the initiation has taken place.<sup>2</sup>

The ceremony is, I think, much the same in all parts of the colony. There are a few variations in the mode of assembling the tribe, and in the actual initiation, but there is, so far as I know, no very essential difference, judging by the descriptions I have had from members of different tribes.

In the Wonghi tribe the youths on approaching manhood attend a meeting of the tribe. The ceremonies of initiation are secret, and at them none but the men of the tribe who have been initiated attend with the novices. At the spot where the ceremonies are to be performed, a large oval space is cleared. The old men of the tribe conduct the ceremonies, and the "medicine man" of the tribe is the master of them. Part of the proceedings consists in knocking out a tooth and giving a new designation to the novice, indicating the change from youth to manhood. When the tooth is knocked out, a loud humming noise is heard, which is made with an instrument of the following description: a flat piece of wood is made with serrated edges, and having a hole at one end, to which a string is attached, and this swung round produces a humming noise. The uninitiated are not even allowed to see this instrument. Women are forbidden to be present at these ceremonies, and should one, by accident or otherwise, witness them, the penalty is death. The penalty for revealing the secrets is probably the same.

<sup>1</sup> "Bora" is a Kamilaroi word, and has now become well known to white men as a term signifying these ceremonies, and it may be well to adopt it for this purpose. In the tribes I describe it is called Boorpung, and by the Barungi Barali.

<sup>2</sup> The initiation is a sacred rite, and I know of only one instance beside that of Mr. Howitt of a white man having been present.

When everything is prepared the women and children are covered with boughs, and the men retire, with the young fellows who are to be initiated, to a little distance. It is said that the youths are sent away a short distance one by one, and that they are each met in turn by a Being, who, so far as I can understand, is believed to be something between a blackfellow and a spirit. This Being, called Thuremlin, it is said, takes the youth to a distance, kills him, and in some instances cuts him up, after which he restores him to life and knocks out a tooth. Their belief in the power of Thuremlin is undoubted.

The following is a description of a Bora among the Wathi-wathi.<sup>1</sup> It was furnished me by Makogo, a very intelligent member of that tribe, and was verified by the statements of others.

When it happens that a sufficient number of youths are old enough for initiation, the chief or headman sends messengers to the various sections of the tribe, informing them that a Bora (or Boorpung as they call it) is to be held at an appointed place. To each of the messengers of the Bora is given an instrument called "Poopanderi," which is made of the fur of opossums twisted into yarn, plaited into a circular form, and fixed on a piece of thin flat wood. When the messenger arrives he shows the poopanderi to the men and announces his mission; he is, however, very careful not to allow it to be seen by women, children, or uninitiated youths. The following day the party depart, and on arriving near the place of meeting advance towards the camp in a sinuous manner, and with many pantomimic gestures. All the men are painted, and many have their heads adorned with feathers.

When the whole of the tribe is assembled at the Bora ground the messengers produce the poopanderi and place it in the forehead band. On seeing this, many of the youths, knowing what it is the signal of, attempt to escape, but are immediately seized by their Waingapuis, that is to say, the men who have charge of them during initiation.<sup>2</sup> Each youth is invested with a belt made from the twisted fur of opossums, and a fringe made from strips of skin of the same animal hangs down in front. After the adjustment of this belt no further attempt to escape is made, and the youths resign themselves to the inevitable. The night previous to the ceremony is devoted to a "Korroboree," and various kinds of amusements. One will simulate the actions of an emu which some of the others pretend to hunt; another will

<sup>1</sup> The Wathi-wathi ceremonies are attended by the Barkinji, Ta-ta-thi, and more rarely by the Muthi-muthi.

<sup>2</sup> The term Waingapui is reciprocally applied by the youths and their guardians.

endeavour to imitate a dingo, and all appear to thoroughly enjoy the rude dramatic attempt, and keep up the festivities to a very late hour.

During some of the day following, the women and children are made to lie down, and are covered with boughs, while at the same time each of the youths is seized by his Waingapui and hurried off to the scene of initiation, which is generally in a scrubby place, two or three hundred yards from the camp. Here they are all laid on the ground in a row, and covered with opossum skins, and are left in that position for an hour or so, while the men discuss matters connected with the coming ordeal.

They are then raised up, but the rugs are kept over their heads; in this position they are kept for another hour, and sometimes for much longer. Should they require anything the Waingapui of each attends to his wants. Two holes, each about a foot or fifteen inches deep, are made, and into these holes the feet of the youth are inserted, and the holes filled up. This is done to keep him steady and prevent struggling. The Waingapui stands behind the youth, and a man who is accustomed to the office advances with a mallet and a small wooden wedge, which is driven between the teeth for the purpose of loosening them. The tooth is then knocked out and kept for some time by the Waingapui.

During this operation one of the tribe, who is concealed in the scrub at some distance, whirls the humming instrument round his head. This instrument is supposed to have a wonderful magic influence. By the Wathi-wathi it is called Kalari.<sup>1</sup> After the Bora it is generally given into the keeping of some unmarried man, who either carries it about him, or secretes it in some safe place.

After the knocking out of the tooth is completed, the youths are brought back to the camp and shown to the women, who pretend to feel deep sorrow for them, but who are in reality very proud of having their sons or brothers initiated to manhood, as it gives them a status in the tribe which they did not before possess. The youths are then taken by the Waingapuis into the bush, where for two or three months they must remain excluded from women. During this period their Waingapuis live with them, and their return to camp is gradual. Thus the young men will at first return to the camp at night, and each time of returning will prolong their stay. At the initiation the names by which they are known are changed. Boys are called *Ngwi-mkowi* before they attend the Bora; from their initiation

<sup>1</sup> The Ta-ta-thi call it Kalk, that is to say, word.

till their return to the tribe they are *Bo-il-api*; after their return they become *Bin-api*.<sup>1</sup>

Everything connected with the Bora is considered sacred, and there is no doubt that any woman found prying into its mysteries would be severely punished, probably killed. It is said that should a Waingapui even touch a woman in any way while the Bora is going on, she would become seriously ill.

Initiation confers many privileges on the youths, as they are now allowed to eat many articles of food which were previously forbidden to them. They may also leave the camp of their parents and join that of the young men, and are permitted to take a wife.<sup>2</sup>

### § 8. *Doctors and Sorcery.*

Sorcery is a powerful element in the life of the Australian savage, and although belief in its effects has been considerably weakened by contact with whites, there are very few, even of the most civilised, who have not a feeling of dread lest its evil influence should be directed against them by an enemy. The modes of practising sorcery are various, but there is still something similar in them, wherever practised.

In all these tribes there were and are men who practised what may be called sorcery. The whites knew them as doctors, and the blackfellows by various names. The Wonghi, for instance, call them *Walmera*. A doctor is believed to acquire his powers in one or two ways, either by being trained from boyhood by his father, or by being instructed by the spirits of the dead. The Ta-ta-thi tell a story of a renowned sorcerer which is very characteristic. It is said that he cut off a large circular piece of skin and fat from a dead woman's abdomen. This he kept until dry, and then cutting a small piece off and sucking it, the dead woman's "gumatch" (ghost) bore him up from the ground and took him to the sky, which is thought to be a solid vault. In the sky there was a hole or window guarded by a gumatch. The man procured admittance through this window, and was permitted to wander in the country beyond, where his spirit would eventually dwell. The friendly gumatch, having imparted to him valuable knowledge, did not permit him to

<sup>1</sup> The Wonghi call a boy Eramurrung; when being initiated, Bimbadjeri for a few months, after that Bigumjeri; when middle-aged, Gibera, and when old, Giribung.

<sup>2</sup> Among a few of the tribes in the north-western parts of New South Wales, I have heard that circumcision is practised. It is not known in the tribes I herein describe. I am told that wherever circumcision is practised, another operation is performed upon the men for the purpose of preventing a too rapid increase of population, but I have not sufficient data as to the localities in which this operation is customary to say whether the above is the true reason.

remain, and he returned to earth. The remainder of the dried skin he cut into small pieces, which, having been properly treated with blood, fat, and raddle, were believed to have formed for him a powerful poison.

One of the most dreaded arts of the sorcerer is the abstraction of the kidney fat of some victim. The operation is believed to be performed in the following manner. A string about six feet long is made of human hair taken from the dead. This is attached to the small bone of a kangaroo, and the power of the spell is considered to be increased by having previously anointed the bone with human kidney fat. All being now prepared, the sorcerer in the dead of night steals towards the camp of his victim, while at the same time a friend and accomplice moves a magic wand, somewhat resembling the Kallak, or sacred instrument already mentioned. This produces a low noise, which is supposed to throw the unfortunate object of the machinations into a profound sleep. The sorcerer having stealthily approached the sleeping place of his victim, fastens the string round his throat and legs, and carries him away to a distance of a quarter of a mile, where he makes an incision in his side and removes the kidney fat. The incision heals instantaneously by his magic art by merely pressing it together with the finger and thumb. The man is borne back to his camp, and is utterly unconscious that anything has taken place, but in a month or so he sickens and eventually dies.

The natives do not believe in death from natural causes; therefore all sickness is attributed to the agency of sorcery, and counter charms are used to destroy its effect. Many of the remedies are ridiculous in the extreme. I have seen a man suffering from a serious cold, which he assured me was the result of a spell exercised against him by an enemy in a neighbouring tribe. He had a string made from opossum fur fastened round his body and held by a doctor, seated at a distance of five or six paces from the patient. The doctor had a vessel containing water by his side, and at short intervals would take a mouthful and keep it in his mouth, while at the same time he rubbed that part of the string which he held in his hands rapidly across his gums, till blood came and mingled with the water in his mouth, which every now and then he spat out. I asked the sick man how this operation could possibly effect a cure, and he told me that the blood did not come from the doctor's gums as I had innocently supposed, but that it came from his (the patient's) body, and passed along the string into the doctor's mouth. He said that the blood so drawn from him contained the magic with which his enemy had afflicted him.

I have seen very ugly wounds received in fighting cured by an application of clay, put on sufficiently thick to entirely exclude the air.

There is a deadly practice of inflicting injury possessed by some of the tribes of the Murray River, but I have never heard of it in any of those east of the Darling River. A piece of bone is sharpened to a very fine point, and is inserted into a decaying corpse, being left there for some time, until it becomes thoroughly saturated with the poison. It is then wrapped up with some of the putrid matter and kept ready for use. A very slight stab with this is said to cause death.

In all these tribes there are men who profess to make rain, and I should imagine that the position of rainmaker for some of the districts of New South Wales would be no sinecure; it is perhaps fortunate for these gentlemen that the plan of remuneration is not payment by results. Although the operations of the rainmaker so often result in failure, he is not in the least discouraged, and, like the doctors, invariably attributes his want of success to the counteracting influence of an enemy.

In the Ta-ta-thi tribe the rainmaker uses a piece of transparent quartz, which he wraps up in emu feathers, having first broken off a small piece of it, which he spits towards the sky. The quartz and feathers are then soaked in water, and carefully hidden somewhere.

In the Keramin tribe the method is that the rainmaker retires to the bed of a creek, with a round flat stone, on which he allows a little water to drop, and then carefully covers it over and conceals it.

The rainmaker is very careful not to let any one see any part of this performance. If it failed he would no doubt be silent, while if rain came within a short time he would take the credit to himself. But in justice to the aboriginal sorcerers I must say that they are as firm believers in magic as their friends.

### § 9. *Death and Spiritland.*

As a man's death is never supposed to have occurred naturally, except as the result of accident, or from a wound in battle, the first thing to be done when a death occurs is to endeavour to find out the person whose spells have brought about the calamity. In the Wathi-wathi tribe the corpse is asked by each relative in succession to signify by some sign the person who has caused his death. Not receiving an answer, they watch in which direction a bird flies, after having passed over the deceased. This is considered an indication that the sorcerer is to be found in that direction. Sometimes the nearest relative

sleeps with his head on the corpse, which causes him, they think, to dream of the murderer. There is, however, a good deal of uncertainty about the proceedings, which seldom result in more than a great display of wrath, and of vowing of vengeance against some member of a neighbouring tribe. Unfortunately this is not always the case, the man who is supposed to have exercised the death-spell being sometimes waylaid and murdered in a most cruel manner.

The following is the description of the burial ceremony among the Wathi-wathi, Ta-ta-thi, Muthi-muthi, Keramin, Wonghi, and Beri-ait tribes. Some of the relations wrap the corpse in an opossum rug, which is securely fastened round it. The body is then enveloped in a piece of netting and carried to the place of interment, the friends and relations of the deceased having their heads covered with clay as mourning. A deep grave is made on some dry site, and a fire is lighted in it, which is kept burning for some time in order to thoroughly dry it. Having removed the fire, a sheet of bark is laid in the bottom of the grave, and this is covered with a thick layer of grass. The body is lowered into the grave, and the son, or nearest relative present, is allowed to stand in it for a moment, in order that he may not forget him who has gone. Another thick layer of grass is then placed over the body, and on this a sheet of bark, after which the grave is filled up with earth.

The ground in the vicinity of the grave is swept clean, and a rude hut built over it. Friends of the deceased attend occasionally to keep the place in order for two or three months, but after a year or two the covering is pulled down and laid on the grave.

These people believe that the spirits of the dead visit the earth and are frequently seen. Male ghosts are called by the Ta-ta-thi *Nguma-gumatch*, and female ghosts *Biriup-gumatch*, and ghosts in general *Durundera*, or *Thurundera*,<sup>1</sup> white men are also called gumatch.

There is the greatest reluctance to speak of the dead, and the blacks will often resort to peculiar devices to avoid mentioning their names. Among a people who entertain a great fear of witchcraft and sorcery, a belief in ghosts and their power to revisit the scenes wherein their lives were passed is sure to find a place. I was one day speaking to a blackfellow on the subject, when he asked me if I had not often seen an object in the distance which I took to be a human being, but which on approaching it I found to be a black stump. I told him it was quite possible, when he said, "That fellow was gumatch, only when you came up he made himself like a stump." He assured

<sup>1</sup> *Nguma* is male and *Biriup* is female, while *Gumatch* is spirit or ghost.

me that he had once seen two gumatches, and as they appeared so suddenly, and so close to him that he was unable to run away, he tried to hit them with a "nulla-nulla" which he held in his hand, upon which they vanished.

The people of all these tribes appear to have a belief in a Deity, and in a future state of some kind. The Wathi-wathi and the Ta-ta-thi, though living in close proximity to each other, use different terms for the Deity. That of the Wathi-wathi is *Tha-tha-puli*, and that of the Ta-ta-thi is *Tulong*.<sup>1</sup> He is regarded as a powerful spirit, or perhaps a supreme supernatural being. They say that he came from the far north, and now lives in the sky. He told each tribe what language they were to speak. He made men and women and dogs, and the latter used to talk, but he took the power of speech from them. The Ta-ta-thi do not care to speak much of Tulong, and say that he does not often come to the earth. Although it seems that in many of the Australian tribes there is only a very dim idea as to the attributes of the Supreme Being and of a future state, yet in the Ta-ta-thi and its allied tribes there is certainly a belief not only in a future state of existence, but also in a system of rewards and punishments. My Ta-ta-thi informant stated that one of the doctors ascended long ago through the sky, and there saw a place where wicked men were roasted.

Makogo, an intelligent member of the Wathi-wathi tribe, gave me a succinct account of the belief of his people before they came in contact with Europeans, and expressed an opinion that, whether right or wrong, they would have been better off now had their beliefs never been disturbed.

The Wathi-wathi made, according to him, a distinction between the ghost and the spirit, as we might do between our soul and spirit. The moment it leaves the body it is called Bo-oki, but afterwards the ghost of a dead man is called Boongarnitchie. The Boongarnitchie having started on its course in the sky is met by another Boongarnitchie, who directs him the road for good men. After proceeding some distance, he sees two roads running parallel and close together, one of which is swept clean while the other is dirty. The spirit of a good man would choose the dirty road, as it would know that the other is kept clean by bad spirits, in order to induce the unthinking to follow it. He is next met by a woman who endeavours to seduce him, but, escaping from her lures, he shortly after comes to where two women hold a rope, which they are twirling round after the manner of a skipping-rope. The woman who stands on the clear side of the road is blind,

I cannot obtain any translation or English equivalent for these names.

and endeavours to trip the Boongarnitchie, but keeping on the dirty road, and as far as possible from her, he avoids such mishap.

The next obstruction is a deep and narrow pit extending across the two roads, from which flames alternately rise and fall. Watching his opportunity, the good spirit leaps across in safety, and is then met by two very old women, who take care of him till he becomes accustomed to his new abode. After a time the Deity, Tha-tha-puli, comes with a host of spirits to see the new arrival, and to try his strength. A "nulla-nulla" is given by Tha-tha-puli to one of the old women, who hands it to him. A number of emus are next driven past, at one of which the weapon is hurled, and the emu stricken down. When the Wathi-wathi sees a shooting star they believe it to be the passage of such a nulla-nulla through space, and say, "Tha-tha-puli is trying the strength of some new spirit." The spirit of a bad man, if it escapes the traps that are set for it, is sure to fall into the hell of fire. Many of the natives have had their beliefs modified by contact with the whites, and I feel doubtful whether the pit of fire was not of this kind, and questioned my informant very closely on the subject, but he assured me that there was no doubt whatever that the above was the exact belief of his tribe before the settlement of the country by the white men.

#### § 10. *The Languages.*

Although there is a very wide diversity in the languages and dialects spoken by the Australian aboriginies, there is no doubt that they have all sprung from the same source, and it is remarkable that some words are the same or nearly the same in tribes very far apart. Thus I find "tina" or "dhina" (foot) in use by tribes of Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales, while the word for head is totally different in each. These languages appear to be very deficient in metaphysical expressions, and have very few generic terms.

There is a name for every tree and plant that grows, as well as for the animal creation, from the kangaroo down to the most insignificant insect, and I have often been struck with the facility with which even children acquire and retain a knowledge of the names of these different things.

The following is a comparative table of words in the languages spoken by the different tribes dealt with in these notes:—

English.	Keramin.	Beri-ait.	Barkinji.
Man .. ..	Narik .. ..	Wa-im-budthin ..	Wa-imbi.
Woman .. ..	Gooram .. ..	Kūmbuka .. ..	Nūngū.
Boy .. ..	Irow .. ..	Birillo .. ..	Kūnūnda.
Girl .. ..	Bi-irow .. ..	Wūngū .. ..	Katchu.
Young woman ..	Wakwak .. ..	Tamba .. ..	Tallaru.
Baby .. ..	Biranootch.. ..	Katchalūka ..	Moatpu.
Head .. ..	Dirirt .. ..	Tartoo .. ..	Tartoo.
Hair .. ..	Dirirt Kitch ..	Bulki .. ..	Bulki.
Brains .. ..	Petuledo .. ..	Tartoo birti ..	Tartoo bira.
Forehead.. ..	Dene .. ..	Biko .. ..	Pikū.
Eye .. ..	Mi .. ..	Mi-iki .. ..	Mi-iki.
Cheek .. ..	N'gelriging ..	N'girili .. ..	N'girili.
Lips .. ..	Dhuk .. ..	Mimi .. ..	Mimi.
Teeth .. ..	Rūk .. ..	Andhi .. ..	Andhi.
Tongue .. ..	Ma-at .. ..	Turling .. ..	Talling.
Ear .. ..	Mung .. ..	Uri.. ..	Munga.
Chin .. ..	Mit.. ..	Mirti .. ..	Murti.
Beard .. ..	Knalk .. ..	Waku bulki ..	Bulki.
Moustache ..	Thukitch .. ..	Muna bulki ..	Murnū bulki.
Throat .. ..	Toarikmura ..	Kūngaru .. ..	Bimbah.
Neck .. ..	N'guru .. ..	Berinbah .. ..	Kurengula.
Breast .. ..	Bi-ee .. ..	Bundhūlū .. ..	Bundhula.
Back .. ..	Kump .. ..	Turna .. ..	Turna.
Shoulder blade ..	Nyk niwill.. ..	Karta bina ..	Karta bina.
Shoulder .. ..	Niwill .. ..	Karta .. ..	Kartu.
Arm .. ..	Mul .. ..	Wunya .. ..	Wunya.
Elbow .. ..	Boort .. ..	Kop .. ..	Murnkū.
Wrist .. ..	Ka-ink mul ..	Ilpabrind .. ..	N'gūrnū.
Hand .. ..	G'wan .. ..	Murra .. ..	Murra.
Thumb .. ..	Knaki-g'wan ..	Utu-tu-murra ..	Uma murra.
Little finger ..	N'git g'wan ..	Ilki murra.. ..	Ilki murra.
Side .. ..	Tarndrea .. ..	Tirkiki .. ..	Tirkiki.
Ribs .. ..	Muntha .. ..	Bunda .. ..	Bind.
Heart .. ..	Murnt .. ..	Tūrlū .. ..	Tūrlū.
Lungs .. ..	Dhalk .. ..	Dhalk .. ..	Dhalk.
Liver .. ..	N'gulkur .. ..	Tungunyah ..	Tungunyah.
Kidneys .. ..	Būng-būng ..	Burthedd .. ..	Paindah.
Belly .. ..	Meart .. ..	Urntū .. ..	Kurntū.
Thigh .. ..	Bening .. ..	Karka .. ..	Karka.
Knee .. ..	Doort .. ..	Thingi .. ..	Thingi.
Leg .. ..	Gant .. ..	Yalko .. ..	Yelkū.
Calf .. ..	Bum n'gunt ..	Unda burtūnya ..	Unda.
Foot .. ..	Dhin .. ..	Thuia .. ..	Thuia.
Emu .. ..	Rūnganui .. ..	Kulthi .. ..	Kulthi.
Kangaroo ..	Birack .. ..	Turltha .. ..	Turlthu.
Dingo .. ..	Gell .. ..	Kirli .. ..	Kirli.
Hedgehog .. ..	Iranunk .. ..	Tantchili .. ..	Tantchili.
Iguana .. ..	Wiri .. ..	Tha kulu .. ..	Tha kulu.
Opossum.. ..	Bult .. ..	Yarengi .. ..	Yarengi.
Bandicoot .. ..	Mering .. ..	Būrnūnia .. ..	Meringyah.
Day .. ..	Nūnk .. ..	Yūkū .. ..	Yūkū or Kalkui.
Daylight .. ..	Ba-nūnk .. ..	Mūparkū .. ..	Muparkū.
Morning .. ..	Wa-ing-gruimitch	Kūyūrū .. ..	Kūrū.
Evening .. ..	Gin-in-nūnk ..	Kalkui .. ..	Tūnkūnka.
Dark .. ..	Waingrui .. ..	Tūnka .. ..	Thunka.
Light .. ..	Dhriik .. ..	N'ginga .. ..	N'gunyah.

English.	Keramin.	Beri-ait.	Barkinji.
Moonlight	But-ruk	Bat yuka	Batchunya.
Dust	Büdth	Budthyara.	Büdthara.
Ghost	Dthow	Tambürü	Tambürü.
Egg	Bit	Birti	Birti.
Feathers	Gitch	Ülki	Pürki.
Fire	Nik.	Künika	Kürnid.
Flood	Wyirunk	Tülpu	Thülpu.
Flower	Mi-gurra	Bürni	Bürni.
Frost	Lukrui	Beringura	Mullara.
Grave	W'gwalth	Wampündüra	Pampanthüra.
Grass	Tulum	Muttu	Kulthu.
Hailstones	Migurra	Wirtu	Wirtu.
Hill	Booei	Dthirna	Tülüli.
Hungry	N'gow, n'gow mun	Wilka wilka	Wilka wilka.
Mountain	Dü-tick	Karnü	Kürnü.
Mud	Uldri	Windhya	Uleru.
Path	Dthini	Yerinka	Utherü.
Pine tree.	Mi-krai	Pinpah	Würkira.
Plain	Lähk	Fülka	Bülka.
Quiet	Nut mün	Mutehjah.	Mutehi.
Rain	Mukra	Mukera	Mukera.
Rainbow	Türurt	Muntharimbura	Kurinderi.
River	Ludt	Pahka	Pahka.
Sky	Teriel	Karabur	Karkunyah.
Sleep	Umun	Bumpapa	Emau.
Smoke	Dthur	Bü-ündü	Büründü.
Stars	Berril	Burti	Burti.
Thunder	Bethung	Bindthi	Pindi.
To-morrow	Gün maroocy	Karanki	Kara munki.
Water	N'guk	N'gogo	N'goko.
Watercourse	Bu-yuri	Bürürü	N'gulkurra.
Whirlwind	Wiraynip	Yandanki	Pira-arune.
Wing	Wyni	Wy-ini	Wunyi.
God	Daint-luk	Nürali	Nürali.

English.	Wonghi.	Wathi-wathi.	Ta-ta-thi.
Man	Mil.	Wüngi	Ngüma.
Woman	Wineth	Liorki	Beri-rup.
Husband	Opon	Nopui	Mululu.
Wife	Opon	Nopui	Mululu.
Head	Bulla	Po-ipi	Derart.
Nose	Murutha	Thiundhi	Kup.
Eye	Mil.	Mi-ingi	Lanung.
Tongue	Tallai	Tallung	Meart.
Throat	Nuki	Tulugundi	Gurumal.
Arm	Bi	Daki	Mul.
Thigh	Durra	Garipi	Kuppul.
Leg		Kingi	Ngun.
Foot	Dinni	Tinangi	Tin.
Sun	Thuni	Ngangi	Nüng.
Moon	Kubbitha	Waingaipui	Batchi.
Water	Kali	Ki-ini	Ngük.
Fire	Wi	Winapi	Murrung.
Good	Witchirione	Biri-imuli	Gündgal.
Bad	Wari	Thilika	Nyungun.

§ 11. *Traditions.*

There are many traditions among the Australian aborigines, which to Europeans are sufficiently absurd; many of them are very obscene, and quite unfit for publication. They are, however, not more obscene or more absurd than many of the classic legends of Heathen Mythology.

There is a tradition very widespread among the tribes I am concerned with, that the earth was originally peopled by a race much more powerful, especially in the arts magic, than that which now inhabits it. This first race is in different localities known by different names, but as the legends regarding them are much the same, those of one tribe will serve for illustration.

The Wathi-wathi call them Bookoomuri, and say they were famous for fighting, hunting, &c., and were eventually changed into animals by Tha-tha-puli, who then created the present race. Others say that the Bookoomuri effected the transformation themselves, and that as animals they felt an interest in the new race that succeeded them, and imparted to it much valuable knowledge. A belief exists that the magical powers of the doctors, disease makers, and rainmakers has been handed down to them from the Bookoomuri.

The following is a tradition of the manner in which fire was procured.

Two Bookoomuri, Koorambin (a water rat) and Pandawinda (codfish), were the sole possessors of fire, which they jealously guarded in an open space among the reed-beds of the Murray River.

Many efforts were made by other Bookoomuri, and by the present race, to obtain a spark of it, but without success, till one day Karigari (a hawk), who of course had originally been a Bookoomuri, discovered Koorambin and Pandawinda in the act of cooking mussels, which they had obtained from the river. He flew up to such a height that they could not see him, and then caused a strong wind to blow the fire among the dry reeds. This was, however, extinguished. He then sent a wind from the opposite direction, and eventually a whirlwind, which scattered the fire in every direction, causing a conflagration which set the whole of the reed-beds on fire, and extending to the forests, laid waste vast tracts of country, upon which trees have never since grown, so that where there were once forests we find now immense bare plains.

The Ta-ta-thi have another version. Ngwoorangbin (water rat), who lived in the Murray River, had a large hut in which he kept the fire for the purpose of cooking the mussels which he brought out of the river. This fire he very jealously guarded,

but one day whilst he was down in the river gathering mussels, a spark flew out of the hut and was caught by Kiridka (a small hawk), who, having some inflammable materials ready, kindled a fire, by means of which he burned down the house of Ngwoorangbin, and also at the same time a large tract of forest, so that it is now open plains.

It is said that it was after this event that the blackfellows became possessed of the knowledge that fire could be obtained by friction.

Another legend is told of two Bookoomuri who had a wonderful chase after a gigantic kangaroo which lived near Hilston on the Lachlan River. He was followed by the two Bookoomuri for hundreds of miles, but they eventually lost sight of him. Following the track, however, for some days, they at last came to where another Bookoomuri, who having met the kangaroo in an exhausted state, had, with the assistance of his dog, killed it and already had partly cooked it.

The visitors were invited to partake but they refused, and waiting for a few minutes till the attention of the other was engaged on something else, they restored the kangaroo to life, to the great indignation of its captor, who immediately sent his dog after it. The two hunters, however, placed a magic spell on the dog which prevented its running. They then followed the kangaroo, and eventually killed it near the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers. The Willandra Creek, which has a course of more than three hundred miles, is supposed to be the track of the Kangaroo when flying from its pursuers. The few hills which occur in the district are the camps of the Bookoomuri when following it.

The Merowie Creek is also supposed to be the track of some mystic animal which the Bookoomuri hunters had been pursuing.

There are many traditions of the wonderful feats performed by the Bookoomuri, and I think that most, if not all, the tribes of New South Wales, and perhaps of Australia, believe that the country was formerly inhabited by a different race from that which occupies it at the present day.

Is it possible that the totemic divisions of a tribe are connected with this belief in a race of men who afterwards became animals? It might be, for instance, that the class which has for its totems Eaglehawk, Kangaroo, Bandicoot, believes that the Bookoomuri who were transformed into those animals were the ancestors of that class. But I have no direct evidence of such a belief.

The Ta-ta-thi relate that the moon, which is supposed to be a not too-chaste female, had a special claim on a tract of country

where yams grew in abundance; that on one occasion two Kilpara women, having discovered the locality, helped themselves to some of the yams, but, being discovered in the act, were buried beneath a large pile of stones by the moon. Here they remained for some time, the stones having been placed in such a manner that they were not killed by the pressure, the intention being to destroy them by starvation. They were rescued by Rakur (the Bat), who took them to Lake Victoria, where they became his wives.

### § 12. *Conclusion.*

Of late very little has been done in New South Wales to ameliorate the condition of the aborigines, and although I believe that between the years 1821 and 1842 large sums of money were expended in protectorates in that colony, very little good was effected.

That our present position in respect to the original occupiers of the soil is not an equitable one, is beyond dispute. We have taken from them a country, where, after their own fashion, they were contented and happy, and in return we have bestowed on them a civilisation which destroys them.

I do not say that this could altogether have been avoided, for experience everywhere proves that races in a state of savagery, and even those races which are beginning to emerge from it, are unable to withstand the advance of European civilization. But it is to be hoped that something will be done without delay to at least ameliorate the condition of the tribes now fading from the earth under the influence of our presence.

Very little has been done so far, and that little almost entirely by private individuals, who have found time amidst arduous business avocations to collect and publish valuable records of the tribes with which they have come in contact.

Government aid is however required in the matter, not only to carry out thorough researches into the past and present history of the tribes, but also as to the best measures for the amelioration of their condition.

It seems strange that in an age in which so much time and money are devoted to science, so little should have been done towards securing an authentic record of the organisation of aboriginal society. Such a record would be a most valuable addition to the history of mankind, and the cost of securing it would be trivial in comparison to its value when secured.